The Role of Social Media and Podcast Applications in Supporting English Listening Skills

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The rapid development of digital technology has created new opportunities to support English listening skills through social media and podcast applications. However, differences in content formats, platform characteristics, and listening strategies require further investigation. This study aims to analyze the role of social media and podcast applications in supporting English listening skills. This study employed a qualitative approach using document analysis. The research materials comprised [number of documents] academic documents, including scientific journal articles, academic books, and relevant scholarly publications, selected based on their relevance to English listening comprehension, social media, podcasts, and digital language learning. Data analysis involved document identification, information extraction, thematic coding, categorization, and synthesis of findings. The findings indicate that Spotify, TikTok, and YouTube offer distinct learning opportunities through audio and audiovisual content, repeated listening, exposure to authentic spoken English, and flexible learning activities. Furthermore, listening strategies, learning motivation, and content suitability are important considerations in supporting listening comprehension. However, challenges such as unfamiliar accents, rapid speech, limited concentration, and variations in content quality may constrain learning opportunities. This study concludes that social media and podcast applications have the potential to serve as supplementary resources for English listening practice. However, their effectiveness in improving listening proficiency requires further empirical investigation.

Keywords: Digital Language Learning, English Listening Skills, Listening Comprehension, Podcasts, Social Media.

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1. Introduction

English listening skills constitute a fundamental component of language learning because they enable individuals to comprehend spoken information, interpret meaning, and respond appropriately in communicative situations. Listening involves active cognitive processes rather than merely receiving auditory information. According to Tompkins[1], listening provides an essential foundation for developing language proficiency and other communication skills. However, English language learners frequently encounter difficulties in understanding unfamiliar vocabulary, pronunciation patterns, different accents, and rapid speech. Umiyati et al[2], in their study involving students at SMP PGRI 3 Denpasar, identified limited interest and insufficient listening practice as concerns in English language learning. These challenges highlight the importance of accessible and engaging learning resources that provide opportunities for continuous and meaningful listening practice.

The development of information and communication technology has expanded opportunities for English language learning beyond conventional classroom environments. Social media platforms enable individuals to access, exchange, and distribute information through various digital formats. Arif et al[3] explain that social media facilitates communication and information dissemination, while Siregar[4] highlights its

potential to support wider public engagement. In educational contexts, Asmar and Ardi[5] discuss the application of digital listening media in preparing instructional materials. Similarly, Ardiansyah[6] reports that authentic audiovisual materials can support listening instruction. Despite these opportunities, the availability of digital materials does not necessarily ensure effective listening comprehension, as their educational value depends on content quality, learner engagement, and appropriate listening strategies.

Podcasts represent an alternative digital learning resource that provides access to spoken English through interviews, storytelling, conversations, educational discussions, and other audio-based programs. Anggraini[7] identifies English-language podcasts as potentially useful resources for supporting listening comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and pronunciation. Their flexibility allows learners to access and replay materials according to their learning needs and preferences. Furthermore, Shabrina et al[8] examine the development of video podcasts as educational media, illustrating how audio and visual elements can be integrated into learning materials. Nevertheless, the educational potential of podcasts depends on the suitability of the content, the complexity of spoken language, and the extent to which learners actively participate in listening activities.

Several previous studies have examined the application of digital media in educational and communication contexts. Asmar and Ardi[5] investigated the preparation of listening materials using digital applications, while Ardiansyah[6] examined the use of authentic videos in listening instruction. Anggraini[7] explored the use of English-language podcasts in supporting language skills, whereas Shabrina et al[8] focused on video podcasts as educational resources. Additionally, Fitri and Edlina[9] investigated podcast-based communication through YouTube. Although these studies provide relevant insights into digital media utilization, listening instruction, and podcast-based learning, the reviewed literature provides limited comparative discussion of the distinctive characteristics and potential educational contributions of Spotify, TikTok, and YouTube in supporting English listening practice.

This study addresses this research gap by examining the distinctive characteristics of Spotify, TikTok, and YouTube through qualitative document analysis. Spotify primarily provides access to on-demand audio podcasts and educational discussions, TikTok emphasizes short-form audiovisual content, and YouTube accommodates various audiovisual formats, including educational videos, interviews, and video podcasts. These differences offer distinct opportunities for listening practice, repeated exposure to spoken English, pronunciation awareness, and contextual comprehension. The originality of this study lies in integrating platform characteristics, listening strategies, learning motivation, and educational opportunities within a comparative analytical framework. Rather than measuring the effectiveness of individual platforms, this study synthesizes relevant literature to identify their potential contributions and limitations in supporting English listening skills.

Accordingly, this study aims to explore and analyze the role of social media and podcast applications in supporting English listening skills, identify the distinctive characteristics of Spotify, TikTok, and YouTube as supplementary learning resources, and examine the opportunities and challenges associated with their educational utilization. Through qualitative document analysis, this study is expected to contribute to the literature on digital language learning by providing a conceptual understanding of the relationship between platform characteristics and listening practice. Practically, the findings may assist educators and learners in selecting appropriate digital resources and designing meaningful listening activities according to their educational objectives and learning needs.

2. Literature Review

Social Media and Digital Language Learning

Social media refers to digital communication platforms that enable individuals to create, distribute, exchange, and access information through interactive online environments. These platforms facilitate communication through various features, including content sharing, commenting, following accounts, and participating in online communities. Arif et al[3] explain that social media serves as a medium for communication and information dissemination. Similarly, Siregar[4] emphasizes the role of social media in expanding public access to information and encouraging audience participation.

In educational contexts, social media provides opportunities for learners to access learning materials beyond conventional classroom environments. The availability of digital content enables individuals to explore educational resources according to their interests, learning objectives, and proficiency levels. Asmar and Ardi[5] highlight the relevance of digital applications in preparing listening materials, while Ardiansyah[6] discusses the utilization of audiovisual resources in listening instruction. These perspectives demonstrate the potential of digital media to complement conventional language learning activities.

In English language learning, social media can facilitate access to authentic conversations, pronunciation exercises, educational videos, and podcast-related content. However, the availability of these resources does not necessarily guarantee successful learning outcomes. Content credibility, material suitability, learner engagement, and potential digital distractions remain important considerations. Therefore, social media should be understood as a channel for accessing and distributing educational resources rather than as an independent determinant of English listening proficiency.

Listening Comprehension Theory

Listening comprehension is an active cognitive process involving the reception, recognition, interpretation, and evaluation of spoken information. Unlike hearing, which primarily involves the physiological reception of sounds, listening requires individuals to construct meaning from auditory messages. Tompkins[1] identifies listening as a fundamental component of language learning that supports the development of broader linguistic competencies. Furthermore, Hargie[10] emphasizes that effective listening requires attention, cognitive engagement, interpretation, and appropriate responses.

Listening comprehension involves several interconnected processes that enable individuals to understand spoken language. Ardiansyah[6] discusses listening activities that involve recognizing, interpreting, summarizing, and evaluating spoken messages. Similarly, Wibowo[11] emphasizes the importance of structured listening strategies in facilitating comprehension and interpretation.
Based on these theoretical perspectives, this study proposes six analytical dimensions of listening comprehension, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Analytical Dimensions of Listening Comprehension

Dimension	Description	Application in Podcast-Based Learning
Attention	Concentrating on spoken information.	Focusing on podcast conversations and explanations.
Recognition	Identifying vocabulary, pronunciation, and linguistic expressions.	Recognizing unfamiliar words, accents, and pronunciation patterns.
Comprehension	Understanding the main ideas and supporting information.	Identifying the central message of podcast episodes.
Interpretation	Constructing meaning from spoken messages and their contexts.	Interpreting speakers' intentions and contextual meanings.

Dimension	Description	Application in Podcast-Based Learning
Evaluation	Critically assessing information, arguments, and credibility.	Evaluating opinions and information presented in podcasts.
Response	Providing appropriate responses to spoken information.	Summarizing, discussing, or answering questions about podcast content.

Source: Authors' conceptual synthesis based on Tompkins (2018), Hargie (2021), Ardiansyah (2018), and Wibowo (2016).

Furthermore, Asmar and Ardi[5] discuss three stages of listening instruction: pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening. Pre-listening prepares learners to understand the topic and relevant vocabulary. While-listening involves identifying and interpreting spoken information, whereas post-listening encourages reflection, evaluation, and responses to the material.

These six dimensions and three instructional stages provide a conceptual foundation for examining the potential contributions of social media and podcast applications to English listening practice. In this study, the dimensions serve as analytical categories for qualitative document analysis rather than instruments for directly measuring learners' listening proficiency.

Podcasts as English Listening Resources

Podcasts are digital audio or audiovisual programs distributed through online platforms and generally accessible on demand. They encompass various content formats, including interviews, storytelling, conversations, educational explanations, and thematic discussions. Their accessibility and flexible distribution provide opportunities for individuals to engage with spoken-language materials outside formal learning environments.

Anggraini[7] discusses the utilization of English-language podcasts as learning resources that support language skills. Podcasts expose learners to various pronunciation patterns, vocabulary, accents, speaking styles, and communication contexts. Such exposure provides opportunities to encounter authentic spoken English that may differ from conventional instructional recordings.

In addition to audio-based podcasts, video podcasts incorporate visual elements that may provide contextual information. Shabrina et al[8] examine the development of video podcasts as educational media, illustrating the integration of auditory and visual elements within instructional materials. Although their research focuses on geography education, its approach provides a relevant perspective on the educational potential of audiovisual podcast formats.

Nevertheless, podcast-based listening also presents several challenges. Unfamiliar vocabulary, rapid speech, complex pronunciation, variations in audio quality, and inappropriate content difficulty may create barriers to comprehension. Therefore, podcasts should be considered supplementary listening resources whose educational potential depends on material selection, structured listening strategies, and active learner engagement.

Comparative Characteristics of Spotify, TikTok, and YouTube

Digital platforms differ in their technological characteristics, content distribution mechanisms, and forms of audience interaction. Although Spotify, TikTok, and YouTube provide access to spoken-language materials, they represent different digital media environments. These conceptual distinctions are important for identifying their potential contributions to English listening practice.

a. Spotify
   Spotify is a digital streaming platform that provides access to music, audio podcasts, and video podcasts. Its on-demand distribution model allows listeners to select episodes according to their

interests and learning objectives. Educational podcasts such as 6 Minute English and The English We Speak illustrate the types of materials that may support independent English listening practice.

Anggraini[7] highlights the relevance of English-language podcasts in supporting language learning through exposure to spoken English. In this context, Spotify offers opportunities for repeated listening, vocabulary recognition, pronunciation awareness, and comprehension practice. However, audio-dominant content may require greater concentration because visual contextual information is generally limited.

b. TikTok

TikTok is a social media platform characterized primarily by short-form audiovisual content and interactive communication. Salsabila et al[12] discuss TikTok as a digital platform associated with social interaction and user behavior.

In English language learning, TikTok may provide brief educational materials, including pronunciation demonstrations, vocabulary explanations, short conversations, and podcast excerpts. Its content format offers opportunities for short listening exercises. However, fragmented information, digital distractions, and limited contextual explanations may constrain comprehensive listening practice. Therefore, TikTok is more appropriately considered a supplementary resource for focused listening activities.

c. YouTube

YouTube is a video-sharing platform that facilitates the distribution of audiovisual content, including educational presentations, interviews, instructional videos, and video podcasts. Fitri and Edlina[9] examine the utilization of YouTube as a distribution channel for podcast-based communication. Furthermore, Shabrina et al[8] highlight the educational potential of video podcasts through the integration of auditory and visual materials.

YouTube provides opportunities for learners to interpret spoken information with additional contextual support, including facial expressions, gestures, illustrations, and subtitles when available. These characteristics may support comprehensive listening activities and contextual understanding.

Table 2. Comparative Characteristics of Digital Platforms for English Listening Practice

Analytical Criteria	Spotify	TikTok	YouTube
Platform category	Digital streaming platform	Social media platform	Video-sharing platform
Primary format	Audio and video podcasts	Short-form audiovisual content	Audiovisual content and video podcasts
Content duration	Variable	Predominantly short	Short to extended
Playback features	Pause, replay, and speed adjustment	Pause and replay	Pause, replay, and speed adjustment
Transcript or subtitle support	Available for selected content	Available for selected content	Available for selected content
Audience interaction	Content following and selected interactive features	Comments, likes, and sharing	Comments, likes, and sharing
Potential learning opportunities	Repeated listening and auditory comprehension	Short listening and pronunciation exercises	Contextual and audiovisual comprehension
Potential limitations	Limited visual support in audio-only content	Distractions and fragmented information	Potential dependence on visual information

Source: Authors' conceptual synthesis based on Anggraini (2025), Salsabila et al. (2021), Fitri and Edlina (2022), and Shabrina et al. (2023).

The conceptual comparison indicates that each platform offers distinctive opportunities for English listening practice. However, these characteristics do not establish the comparative effectiveness of the platforms in improving listening proficiency.

Learning Motivation and Listening Engagement

Learning motivation is an important psychological factor associated with individuals' willingness to participate in educational activities. According to Ryan and Deci[13], motivation can be distinguished into intrinsic motivation, which originates from personal interest and satisfaction, and extrinsic motivation, which is associated with achieving external outcomes.
In English language learning, intrinsic motivation may encourage learners to engage with podcast materials that correspond to their personal interests. Conversely, extrinsic motivation may encourage learners to practice listening to achieve academic objectives, professional requirements, or language proficiency goals.

Rodiyah et al[14] discuss the relevance of motivation in English listening activities. Similarly, Bukit [15] examines the application of collaborative listening activities as an instructional approach to supporting learning motivation. These perspectives emphasize the importance of meaningful participation in educational activities.

The availability of diverse digital materials may provide opportunities for independent and collaborative listening practice. Nevertheless, motivation alone does not guarantee successful listening comprehension. Learners also require appropriate listening strategies, sustained attention, and suitable educational materials. Accordingly, learning motivation and engagement are considered supporting analytical dimensions in understanding the educational potential of social media and podcast applications.

3. Method

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design using document analysis to examine the role of social media and podcast applications in supporting English listening skills. Qualitative research emphasizes understanding phenomena through the interpretation of meanings, concepts, characteristics, and contextual information[16]. According to Bowen[17], document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing and evaluating documents to obtain meaningful information, develop understanding, and generate knowledge.

This approach was considered appropriate because the study focused on examining theoretical perspectives, previous research findings, and the educational potential of digital platforms, particularly Spotify, TikTok, and YouTube. The study did not involve direct observation, interviews, questionnaires, or experimental assessments of learners' listening proficiency. Accordingly, the findings represent interpretations and syntheses of the reviewed documents rather than empirical measurements of individual learning outcomes.

Data Sources

This study relied on secondary data obtained from 20 documents, comprising 16 academic publications and four official platform documents. The academic publications included scientific journal articles, academic books, and conference proceedings published between 2013 and 2025. These documents were retrieved from Google Scholar, academic journal websites, and scholarly publication sources, while supplementary technical information was obtained from the official documentation of Spotify, TikTok, and YouTube.

The documents were purposively selected based on their relevance to the research objectives, academic credibility, accessibility, and information completeness. The selected materials addressed English listening comprehension, social media, podcast-based learning, digital platform characteristics, listening strategies, and learning motivation. Academic publications provided theoretical foundations and empirical perspectives, whereas official platform documentation supported the comparative analysis of technological characteristics and potential educational applications.

Document Selection Criteria

Document selection was guided by inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure the relevance and credibility of the research materials. Bowen[17] emphasizes the importance of assessing the relevance, authenticity, credibility, and representativeness of documents in qualitative research.
The inclusion and exclusion criteria are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

No.	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
1	Scientific journal articles, academic books, and scholarly publications.	Non-academic publications without credible sources.
2	Documents relevant to English listening skills, social media, podcasts, or digital language learning.	Documents unrelated to the research objectives.
3	Publications within the specified publication period.	Publications outside the specified publication period.
4	Documents with identifiable authors and publication information.	Documents with unclear authorship or publication information.
5	Documents with accessible full-text content.	Documents without accessible full-text content.
6	Publications containing relevant theoretical or empirical information.	Duplicate publications or documents containing insufficient relevant information.

Source: Authors' methodological framework adapted from Bowen (2009).

These criteria were designed to ensure that the selected documents provided relevant information for examining the potential contributions and limitations of social media and podcast applications in supporting English listening skills.

Data Collection Procedure

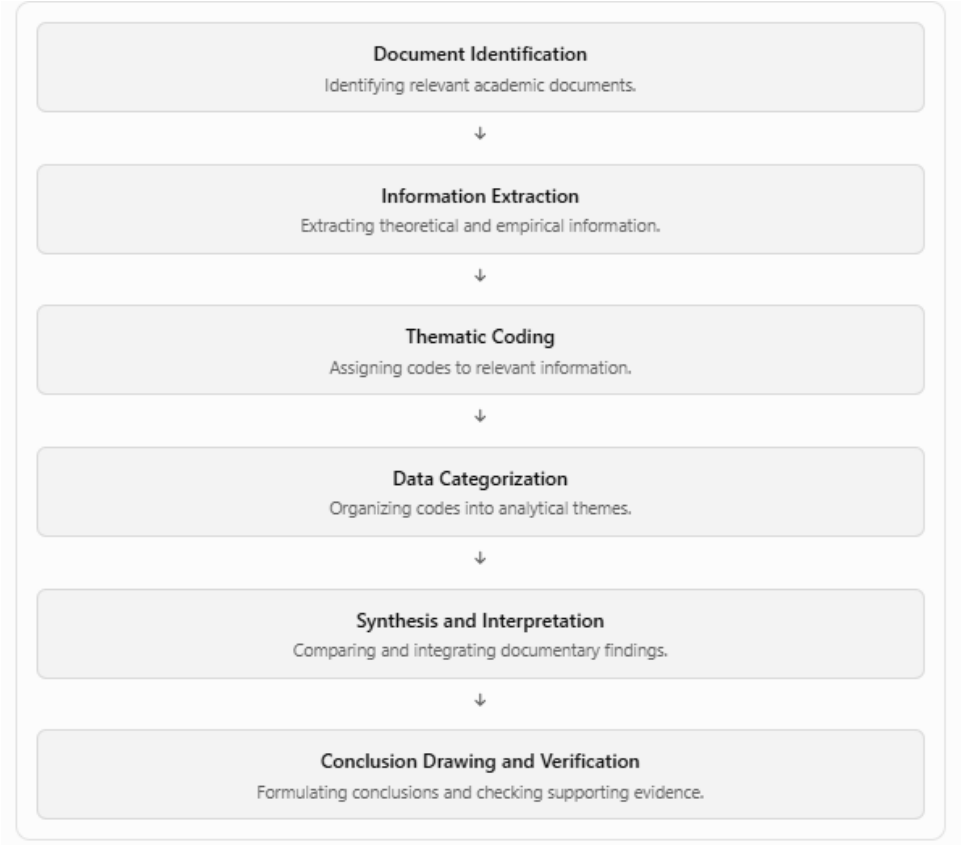
Data collection followed a document-based procedure consisting of document identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and final selection. Relevant literature was identified using keywords such as *English listening skills*, *listening comprehension*, *social media*, *podcast-based learning*, *Spotify*, *TikTok*, *YouTube*, and *digital language learning*.

The selection procedure involved reviewing publication titles and abstracts to determine their relevance to the research objectives. Subsequently, the full texts were assessed against the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Relevant documents were organized according to their publication characteristics, theoretical perspectives, research findings, and contributions to the investigated topic.

The information extracted from each document included the authors, publication year, research objectives, methodological approach, principal findings, and relevance to English listening practice. This procedure provided a structured basis for comparing and interpreting information obtained from different academic sources.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis employed qualitative thematic analysis within a document analysis framework. Bowen[17] explains that document analysis involves examining and interpreting documentary materials to identify meaningful information and relevant patterns. Furthermore, Miles et al[18] propose three interconnected components of qualitative data analysis: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Drawing on these methodological perspectives, the analytical procedure consisted of six stages, as presented in Figure 1.



Source: Adapted from Bowen (2009) and Miles et al. (2014).

Figure 1. Qualitative Document Analysis Procedure

The thematic coding framework was organized into five analytical categories, as presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Thematic Coding Framework

Code	Analytical Theme	Analytical Focus
T1	Listening Comprehension	Attention, recognition, comprehension, interpretation, evaluation, and response.
T2	Podcast-Based Learning	Authentic spoken English, vocabulary, pronunciation, and repeated listening.
T3	Digital Platform Characteristics	Content formats, duration, playback features, subtitles, and audience interaction.
T4	Learning Opportunities and Challenges	Accessibility, flexibility, content suitability, linguistic difficulties, and digital distractions.
T5	Learning Motivation and Engagement	Intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and active listening engagement.

Source: Authors' analytical framework (2026).

The findings were synthesized by identifying similarities, differences, and complementary perspectives across the selected documents. Particular attention was directed toward the distinctive characteristics of Spotify, TikTok, and YouTube and their potential contributions to English listening practice.

To support analytical credibility, interpretations were checked against the relevant documentary evidence. The conclusions were limited to the information provided by the analyzed literature. Consequently, this study does not establish causal relationships or directly measure improvements in listening proficiency, learning motivation, or audience engagement.

4. Results and Discussion

Results

Characteristics of the Analyzed Documents

The document-based synthesis focuses on five analytical themes: listening comprehension, podcast-based learning, digital platform characteristics, learning opportunities and challenges, and learning motivation and engagement. These themes provide a conceptual framework for examining the potential contributions of social media and podcast applications to English listening practice.

The relevant literature encompasses theoretical perspectives and previous research concerning listening comprehension, digital learning resources, podcast distribution, and learning motivation. Table 5 summarizes the principal contributions of the literature supporting the analysis.

Table 5. Summary of Relevant Documents and Their Contributions

No.	Author(s) and Year	Research Focus	Main Contribution to the Analysis
1	Anggraini (2025)	English-language podcasts	Podcasts as supplementary language learning resources.
2	Ardiansyah (2018)	Video-based listening instruction	Audiovisual materials for listening activities.
3	Asmar and Ardi (2013)	Digital listening media	Preparation of technology-based listening materials.
4	Budiman et al. (2019)	Social media utilization	Digital information distribution and accessibility.
5	Bukit (2017)	Collaborative listening activities	Learning motivation and collaborative participation.
6	Fitri and Edlina (2022)	YouTube podcast communication	Podcast distribution through audiovisual platforms.
7	Gamble and Gamble (2018)	Listening classification	Four types of listening based on communicative purposes.
8	Hargie (2021)	Interpersonal communication	Cognitive engagement and active listening.
9	Rodiyah et al. (2016)	English listening motivation	Motivation in English listening activities.
10	Ryan and Deci (2017)	Self-determination theory	Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.
11	Salsabila et al. (2021)	TikTok and user behavior	Social interaction within digital media environments.

12	Shabrina et al. (2023)	Educational video podcasts	Integration of auditory and visual learning materials.
13	Siregar (2022)	Social media communication	Information dissemination and public engagement.
14	Tompkins (2018)	Language literacy	Listening as a foundation for language learning.
15	Umiyati et al. (2022)	English listening instruction	The relevance of listening practice in language learning.
16	Wibowo (2016)	Directed Listening Thinking Approach	Structured listening strategies.

The literature provides complementary perspectives on the educational potential of digital platforms. Studies concerning listening instruction emphasize the importance of appropriate learning materials and structured listening activities, whereas studies concerning digital communication highlight accessibility, content distribution, and audience interaction. Motivation-related literature provides a theoretical perspective on learners' willingness to engage with educational materials.

The integration of these perspectives establishes an analytical foundation for examining digital platforms as supplementary English listening resources rather than as independently verified determinants of listening proficiency.

Listening Comprehension and Types of Listening

Listening comprehension represents a multidimensional process involving attention, recognition, comprehension, interpretation, evaluation, and response. Hargie[10] emphasizes the cognitive and interpersonal characteristics of effective listening, while Tompkins[1] identifies listening as an important foundation for language learning.

Gamble and Gamble [19] distinguish four types of listening according to their communicative purposes: appreciative, empathic, comprehensive, and critical listening. These classifications provide a theoretical basis for identifying the relevance of different podcast formats to listening activities.

Table 6. Types of Listening and Their Relevance to Podcast-Based Learning

Listening Type	Main Characteristics	Potential Application	Theoretical Source
Appreciative listening	Listening for enjoyment and personal satisfaction.	Entertainment and storytelling podcasts.	Gamble and Gamble (2018)
Empathic listening	Understanding emotions, experiences, and perspectives.	Interviews and personal narratives.	Gamble and Gamble (2018); Hargie (2021)
Critical listening	Evaluating information, arguments, and credibility.	Debates, discussions, and opinion-based podcasts.	Gamble and Gamble (2018)
Comprehensive listening	Understanding main ideas, supporting information, and intended meanings.	Educational podcasts and English language lessons.	Gamble and Gamble (2018); Tompkins (2018)

Source: Authors' synthesis based on Gamble and Gamble (2018), Hargie (2021), and Tompkins (2018).

Table 6 demonstrates the conceptual relationship between listening purposes and podcast content. Appreciative listening emphasizes enjoyment, empathic listening focuses on understanding personal experiences, critical listening involves evaluating spoken information, and comprehensive listening emphasizes understanding the intended message.

These classifications complement the six analytical dimensions of listening comprehension established in the literature review. While the four listening types describe communicative purposes, the six analytical dimensions describe the processes involved in understanding spoken information. Accordingly, different podcast formats may be selected according to specific listening objectives.

Podcasts as Supplementary English Listening Resources

The literature identifies podcasts as digital learning resources that provide opportunities to encounter spoken English through conversations, interviews, storytelling, and educational discussions. Anggraini[7] discusses the utilization of English-language podcasts to support language learning, while Asmar and Ardi[5] emphasize the relevance of technology-based listening materials.

Podcast accessibility and flexibility allow learners to select and replay content according to their educational needs. Furthermore, the integration of auditory and visual elements in video podcasts offers additional opportunities for contextual comprehension[8].

Nevertheless, the educational potential of podcasts depends on the suitability of the selected materials, the complexity of spoken language, and the listening strategies employed. Exposure to podcast content does not automatically establish successful listening comprehension.

Table 7. Potential Benefits and Challenges of Podcast-Based Listening

Analytical Aspect	Potential Benefit	Potential Challenge	Supporting Literature
Accessibility	Flexible access to digital listening materials.	Device and connectivity limitations.	Budiman et al. (2019); Fitri and Edlina (2022)
Authentic language	Exposure to diverse accents and speaking styles.	Unfamiliar pronunciation and rapid speech.	Anggraini (2025)
Learning flexibility	Opportunities for independent and repeated listening.	Limited concentration during multitasking.	Anggraini (2025); Hargie (2021)
Content diversity	Materials tailored to different learning interests.	Content may not match learners' proficiency levels.	Anggraini (2025); Ryan and Deci (2017)
Vocabulary recognition	Exposure to expressions within meaningful contexts.	Unfamiliar vocabulary may constrain comprehension.	Anggraini (2025); Tompkins (2018)
Listening strategies	Opportunities for structured listening activities.	Passive listening without deliberate comprehension.	Asmar and Ardi (2013); Wibowo (2016)
Audiovisual support	Additional visual context for spoken information.	Potential dependence on visual information.	Ardiansyah (2018); Shabrina et al. (2023)

The comparison indicates that podcast-based listening involves both educational opportunities and potential challenges. Therefore, podcasts should be positioned as supplementary resources whose educational value depends on purposeful selection and utilization.

Comparative Analysis of Spotify, TikTok, and YouTube

The comparative analysis identifies Spotify, TikTok, and YouTube as digital platforms with different technological characteristics and educational opportunities. Although all three platforms provide access to spoken-language content, their primary functions, content formats, playback mechanisms, and interaction features differ.

Spotify operates primarily as a digital streaming platform that distributes music and podcasts. Its audio-oriented environment provides opportunities for repeated listening and independent comprehension exercises. TikTok primarily distributes short-form audiovisual content, offering potential applications for brief listening activities, vocabulary recognition, and pronunciation awareness. Meanwhile, YouTube provides access to audiovisual materials of varying durations, including educational presentations, interviews, and video podcasts.

Fitri and Edlina[9] highlight the relevance of YouTube as a podcast distribution channel, while Shabrina et al[8] discuss the integration of auditory and visual elements in educational video podcasts. These perspectives support the conceptual distinction between audio-oriented and audiovisual learning resources.

Table 8. Comparative Characteristics of Spotify, TikTok, and YouTube

Analytical Criteria	Spotify	TikTok	YouTube
Platform category	Digital streaming platform	Social media platform	Video-sharing platform
Content format	Audio and video podcasts	Predominantly short-form videos	Videos and video podcasts
Content duration	Variable	Predominantly short	Short to extended
Playback features	Pause, replay, and speed adjustment where supported	Pause and replay	Pause, replay, and speed adjustment
Transcript or subtitle support	Transcripts for selected podcasts	Captions for selected videos	Subtitles and captions for selected videos
Audience interaction	Following, sharing, and selected interactive features	Likes, comments, and sharing	Likes, comments, and sharing
Potential listening activities	Repeated listening and auditory comprehension	Brief listening and pronunciation exercises	Contextual and audiovisual comprehension
Relevant listening types	Appreciative and comprehensive	Appreciative and comprehensive	Comprehensive, empathic, and critical
Potential limitations	Limited visual context in audio-only materials	Distractions and fragmented information	Potential dependence on visual information

Source: Authors' synthesis based on Anggraini (2025), Salsabila et al. (2021), Fitri and Edlina (2022), Shabrina et al. (2023), and supplementary official platform documentation.

The comparison suggests that the three platforms offer complementary educational opportunities. Spotify may be suitable for sustained auditory practice, TikTok may accommodate brief and focused listening

exercises, and YouTube may provide opportunities for contextual comprehension through audiovisual materials.

However, these characteristics represent potential educational applications rather than comparative evidence of learning effectiveness. The suitability of each platform depends on the learning objectives, selected materials, and listening strategies employed.

Learning Motivation and Listening Engagement

Learning motivation represents an additional analytical theme in understanding podcast-based listening activities. Ryan and Deci[13], through self-determination theory, distinguish between intrinsic motivation arising from personal interest and satisfaction and extrinsic motivation associated with achieving external objectives.

In podcast-based learning, intrinsic motivation may encourage individuals to select materials that correspond to their personal interests, whereas extrinsic motivation may encourage engagement with content relevant to academic, professional, or language learning objectives.

Rodiyah et al[14] discuss motivation in English listening activities, while Bukit[20] examines collaborative listening activities as an instructional approach associated with learning motivation. These perspectives provide a conceptual basis for understanding the relationship between material selection, learning objectives, and listening engagement.

Table 9. Potential Contributions of Motivation to Podcast-Based Listening

Analytical Dimension	Potential Contribution	Supporting Literature
Intrinsic motivation	Selecting content based on personal interests and enjoyment.	Ryan and Deci (2017)
Extrinsic motivation	Engaging with content to achieve educational objectives.	Ryan and Deci (2017)
Learning engagement	Participating purposefully in listening activities.	Rodiyah et al. (2016)
Collaborative learning	Discussing and interpreting spoken information.	Bukit (2017)
Cognitive engagement	Maintaining attention and actively processing spoken messages.	Hargie (2021)

The literature suggests that accessibility, content relevance, motivation, and cognitive engagement are complementary considerations in podcast-based learning. However, the present study does not directly measure learners' motivation or participation. These findings represent theoretical interpretations derived from the relevant literature.

Discussion

The Potential Contribution of Podcasts to English Listening Skills

The findings indicate that podcasts offer potential opportunities to support English listening practice through access to authentic spoken-language materials, flexible learning activities, and repeated exposure to diverse communication contexts. Their educational potential is associated not only with the availability of audio content but also with the extent to which the materials correspond to specific listening objectives.

These findings are consistent with Anggraini[7], who examines English-language podcasts as resources for supporting language skills. Similarly, Asmar and Ardi[5]discuss the relevance of digital listening applications in preparing instructional materials. Both studies emphasize the importance of technology-

based resources in facilitating listening activities. However, whereas these previous studies focus on particular learning resources, the present analysis integrates podcast characteristics, listening purposes, platform differences, and educational challenges within a broader conceptual framework.

Furthermore, Hargie[10] emphasizes that listening involves active cognitive engagement rather than passive exposure to auditory information. This theoretical perspective suggests that repeated exposure to podcasts should be accompanied by purposeful listening activities, including identifying main ideas, recognizing linguistic expressions, interpreting spoken messages, and evaluating information.

The contribution of the present analysis lies in distinguishing between technological accessibility and educational potential. Although podcasts provide opportunities for listening practice, the availability of digital materials does not automatically establish successful learning outcomes. Their potential contribution depends on appropriate material selection, structured listening activities, and meaningful cognitive engagement. Consequently, podcasts should be positioned as supplementary English listening resources rather than as independently verified instruments for increasing listening proficiency.

Comparative Educational Potential of Spotify, TikTok, and YouTube

The comparative analysis demonstrates that Spotify, TikTok, and YouTube represent distinct digital environments that may accommodate different listening objectives. Spotify emphasizes audio-oriented content, TikTok provides opportunities for brief audiovisual exposure, and YouTube accommodates audiovisual materials with varying levels of contextual information.

These findings complement Fitri and Edlina[9], who examine podcast distribution through YouTube, and Shabrina et al[8], who investigate the development of video podcasts as educational media. Both studies highlight the relevance of audiovisual technologies in distributing information. In addition, Ardiansyah[6] reported positive listening achievement outcomes following the use of authentic videos in an instructional setting.

Nevertheless, the present study differs from these previous investigations in its methodological orientation and analytical scope. Rather than developing instructional media or measuring learning outcomes through an intervention, this study compares the characteristics of three digital platforms through document-based synthesis.

The analysis extends previous discussions by incorporating consistent comparative criteria, including content format, duration, playback features, transcript availability, audience interaction, and potential listening applications. These criteria provide a conceptual basis for selecting digital materials according to specific educational objectives.

Accordingly, Spotify may accommodate repeated auditory comprehension exercises, TikTok may support short and focused listening activities, and YouTube may offer additional contextual information through audiovisual presentations. However, these potential applications do not establish the superiority of one platform over another. Comparative effectiveness would require direct empirical investigation involving learners and standardized listening assessments.

Listening Strategies and Cognitive Engagement

The findings emphasize that meaningful listening practice requires more than access to digital content. Listening comprehension involves attention, recognition, interpretation, evaluation, and appropriate responses to spoken information. These processes are important in determining how learners engage with English-language podcasts and other digital materials.

The findings are consistent with Hargie[10], who emphasizes the cognitive and interpersonal dimensions of active listening. Similarly, Wibowo[11] examines the Directed Listening Thinking Approach as a structured strategy for supporting listening activities. Asmar and Ardi[5] also provide a relevant perspective on the preparation of technology-based listening materials.

While previous studies emphasize listening strategies and instructional materials, the present analysis integrates these perspectives with the characteristics of contemporary digital platforms. This integration suggests that platform selection should be accompanied by structured listening activities involving pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening stages.

During pre-listening, learners may identify the topic, predict the content, and review relevant vocabulary. During while-listening, learners may identify main ideas, recognize pronunciation patterns, and interpret specific information. During post-listening, learners may summarize the content, evaluate spoken messages, and discuss their interpretations.

The theoretical contribution of this analysis lies in connecting listening strategies with the educational characteristics of digital platforms. Rather than assuming that unrestricted exposure to podcasts produces learning outcomes, the analysis emphasizes the importance of purposeful cognitive engagement. These instructional applications represent recommendations derived from the literature and require further empirical validation.

Learning Motivation and Content Selection

The findings suggest that learning motivation and content selection represent complementary considerations in understanding the educational potential of podcast-based listening. Digital platforms provide diverse materials that may correspond to individuals' interests, preferences, and educational objectives.

This interpretation is consistent with Ryan and Deci[13], who distinguish between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Within podcast-based learning environments, intrinsic motivation may encourage individuals to select enjoyable or personally relevant content, whereas extrinsic motivation may encourage the selection of materials associated with academic or professional objectives.

Furthermore, Rodiyah et al[14] discuss motivation in English listening activities, while Bukit[20] examines collaborative listening activities in relation to learning motivation. These studies provide relevant perspectives on the importance of participation and engagement within educational environments.

The present analysis differs from previous studies by positioning motivation within a broader framework that incorporates platform characteristics, content suitability, listening strategies, and cognitive engagement. The availability of diverse digital materials may provide opportunities for independent learning, but their educational potential remains dependent on the suitability of the selected content.

Materials that are excessively difficult may create barriers to understanding, whereas materials that provide insufficient linguistic challenges may offer limited opportunities for meaningful practice. Therefore, content selection should consider learners' proficiency levels, interests, and educational objectives.
The analysis does not establish a causal relationship between podcast utilization and learning motivation. Instead, it identifies motivation as a theoretical consideration that may help explain engagement with digital listening resources.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, this study contributes to the literature on digital language learning by integrating listening comprehension, listening purposes, digital platform characteristics, learning motivation, and cognitive

engagement within a comparative conceptual framework. This integration extends previous discussions that predominantly address individual instructional resources or digital communication platforms.

The proposed framework distinguishes between the technological characteristics of digital platforms and their potential educational applications. Listening comprehension theory provides a foundation for understanding cognitive processes, while self-determination theory offers a complementary perspective on learning motivation[10][13].

From a practical perspective, educators may consider Spotify, TikTok, and YouTube as supplementary English listening resources. Spotify may be incorporated into repeated listening exercises, TikTok may be utilized for brief pronunciation and vocabulary activities, and YouTube may provide audiovisual materials for contextual listening exercises.

Furthermore, educators may design listening activities according to learners' proficiency levels, educational objectives, and the characteristics of the selected materials. The integration of pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening activities may provide a structured approach to podcast-based learning.
These implications represent conceptual and instructional recommendations derived from the reviewed literature rather than outcomes verified through direct educational interventions.

Research Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, the research employed qualitative document analysis and did not involve direct observations, interviews, questionnaires, or experimental assessments of learners' listening proficiency.

Second, the findings are restricted to the scope and characteristics of the selected academic documents. Differences in research contexts, methodological approaches, and publication objectives may influence the interpretation of documentary evidence.

Third, the comparative analysis of Spotify, TikTok, and YouTube focuses on their technological characteristics and potential educational applications rather than their experimentally verified effectiveness. Platform features may also change over time.

Future research should incorporate empirical approaches, including experimental or quasi-experimental designs, to examine the effectiveness of podcast-based listening activities. Further investigations may also compare the educational contributions of different digital platforms by considering learners' proficiency levels, listening strategies, motivation, and engagement.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that social media and podcast applications offer potential opportunities to support English listening skills through accessible, flexible, and diverse learning resources. Spotify, TikTok, and YouTube provide distinctive technological characteristics and content formats that accommodate different listening objectives. Spotify offers opportunities for repeated auditory practice, TikTok supports short and focused listening activities, and YouTube provides audiovisual materials that may facilitate contextual comprehension. The findings further highlight the importance of appropriate content selection, structured listening strategies, learning motivation, and cognitive engagement in supporting meaningful listening practice. However, challenges such as unfamiliar accents, rapid speech, limited concentration, digital distractions, and variations in content quality should be considered when utilizing these platforms as supplementary English language learning resources.
Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the research employed qualitative document analysis without directly involving participants or measuring their English listening proficiency.

Consequently, the findings cannot establish causal relationships, measurable improvements in listening skills, or the comparative effectiveness of the three platforms. Second, the findings are limited to the scope, relevance, and quality of the selected documents. Third, differences in platform characteristics and technological developments may influence their educational applications over time. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted as conceptual insights rather than empirically verified learning outcomes. Future research is recommended to employ experimental or quasi-experimental designs involving direct assessments of learners' listening proficiency through pre-tests and post-tests. Further studies may also investigate the comparative effectiveness of digital platforms, listening strategies, learning motivation, and learner engagement in supporting English listening skills.

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