



Exploring Listening Skills and Motivation for Autonomous Learning with TED Talks: Does It Have an Effect?

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Abstract

Listening skills are rarely emphasized in English classes compared to other skills so there is a need for additional media such as TED Talk. Moreover, it is still rarely used as a learning medium in high school. Therefore, this research aims to investigate secondary school students' responses using TED Talks for their motivation to improve listening skills autonomously. This research uses qualitative methods with questionnaires using Google Forms and Focus Group Discussions using Zoom or Google Meet. The sampling was conducted randomly with 10 participants from class XII students at SMAS Dua Mei in South Tangerang. This study analyzes students' knowledge and perceptions of TED Talk videos as autonomous learning media in listening skills. The researchers are interested in exploring how TED Talk can help students' motivation for autonomous learning and their interest in learning by listening after watching it. The results showed that some students still needed to familiarize themselves with TED Talks. Their responses became more positive after watching the video. Videos that balance an interesting speaker with various expressions, relevant topics, and audio-visual aspects are more likely to be well-received by students. They believe that TED Talks as supplementary material can improve listening skills by motivating them to learn autonomously.

Keywords: *Autonomous Learning; Listening Skills; Motivation; TED Talk*

Introduction

Listening is the first language skill that foreign language learners acquire. Students must develop listening skills to be able to master English (Izzah et al., 2020). Listening comprehension is understanding what other people say orally with the ability to process what is heard and guess the meaning. Listening will help verbal communication skills to be able to communicate with each other because it is necessary to hear the speaker's speech and understand it (Wah, 2019). Therefore, developing listening skills repeatedly and continuously is important for effective communication skills in improving students' English proficiency. However, in reality this skill is less emphasized in English classes than other English skills (Wallace, 2022). Listening is a challenging skill for learners to master. Students need help recognizing words and sentences that prevent them from understanding the context of the text or speech they hear when doing listening exercises. Damayanti, (2022) state that listening comprehension skills must not only be mastered but must also be measured to determine the level of students' English proficiency. In the teaching of listening in high school and junior high school, it has been stated that listening ability is one of the essential competencies that must be measured.

Learning listening comprehension may be difficult for students, so it is necessary to modify their listening exercises to make them more effective (Puspita & Amelia, 2020.) The problem calls for video-based learning media resources that allow students to develop language proficiency through authentic speech and enable them to learn at their own pace. Therefore, these video-based media resources are important in the learning process to promote positive attitudes towards education, motivation, and self-awareness in Asian educational environments (Humenuk et al., 2021). TED Talk is one of the video learning tools that has been tested by various studies to develop students' listening skills. The TED Talks channel allows speakers to express their ideas quickly. TED Talks provides many videos on various topics. Students' freedom to use TED Talks where, when, and how much has a positive influence on improving their listening skills (Tilwani et al., 2022)

Utilizing TED Talks will be a more engaging learning option and inspire students to learn English lessons more enthusiastically. The development of digital and multimedia tools such as TED Talks has given students access to a wide range of information and learning opportunities. The opportunity for students to choose

where, when, and how many times to watch TED Talks can help improve their listening skills, this is because students have the opportunity to listen when they are ready, can concentrate better on the talk, and are cognitively better prepared to learn (Tilwani et al., 2022). Ahluwalia (2018) also said another benefit of watching TED Talks is that students can improve their self-confidence, communication skills, and become better listeners.

Autonomy, on the other hand, is also needed by the students to enhance learning because of the limited time allocated to learning English in a conventional teaching classroom. Recard et al., (2020) Motivation is essential in influencing the extent to which students take initiative in their learning process and promote independent learning. María A et al., (2018) and Puspita & Amelia (2020) underline the role of motivation in enhancing learning independence by stating that intrinsic motivation leads to greater autonomy and better educational outcomes. Competent students who find tasks on various topics interesting and enjoyable show a strong desire to achieve their goals in and out of the classroom by expressing optimism in overcoming challenges (Ceylan, 2021). The benefits of multimedia technology, such as TED Talks, in inspiring students and developing independent learning are emphasized by Puspita & Amelia, (2020) who state that there is a more significant shift from a teacher-centered to a student-centered education model.

Students who were taught through TED Talks performed better than those who were not (Damayanti, 2022). The understanding of student responses to TED Talks in terms of learning motivation, interest, content understanding, and learning outcomes is positive. TED Talks also had a positive effect on listening skills and students' vocabulary learning. This emphasizes the importance of authentic sources such as TED Talks which is considered a significant tool for language learning and skill development due to their original content and wide range of topics. Another important point is the importance of listening skills in language acquisition with text referring to research showing that technology can improve students' listening skills.

Damayanti (2022) is limited only to the potential benefits and impact of TED Talks on students. There is a need for a more thorough investigation of the components that contribute to these effects on listening skills. Moreover, Gavenila et al., (2021) and Puspita & Amelia (2020) focused on English Education Study Program students about how the application of TED Talks can help listening comprehension and increase listening learning motivation. It shows that there is a

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lack of research at the secondary education level. Another study used quantitative methods to examine the development of students' listening skills (Tilwani et al., 2022)

This study aims to investigate SMAS 2 Mei students' responses to the use of TED Talks for autonomous learning in listening skills using qualitative methods. This research will help examine and analyze the use of TED Talks in high school students' autonomous listening learning. By investigating the usefulness of TED Talks, this study can contribute to bringing new knowledge about the efficacy of their use in improving language skills, especially listening skills and motivation in autonomous learning. There are two research questions: (1) How familiar are students with TED Talks as a learning resource and insight into the learning process? (2) How does the application of TED-Talk as supplementary material affect students' development of listening skills and motivation in the context of learning autonomy?

Method

This research uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. This research used random sampling on 10 participants from class XII of SMAS Dua Mei in South Tangerang. Class XII was chosen because they know more deeply about English listening skills. The questionnaire instrument uses Google Forms with ten questions to see students' familiarity with TED Talks as a listening learning media. The next instrument is a Focus Group Discussion using the Zoom or Google Meet application to find out student responses after watching the TED Talks video. Data collection in this instrument includes TED Talk videos, notes, and student discussions. The researcher will explain TED Talks and how they can help students improve their listening skills. After students watch the video provided, the researcher then creates a space for students to express their opinions about using TED Talks as additional material in developing their listening skills and motivation in the context of learning autonomy. This study used a descriptive analysis technique for the questionnaire and a simple thematic analysis for Focus Group Discussion. Researchers can see the potential of TED Talks as a learning medium by evaluating students' responses on how they can motivate themselves to develop their listening and learning skills independently. Student 1, Student 2 to Student 10 are used for the initials of the participants.

Results

Student's Familiarity with TED Talks as a Learning Resource and Insight into the Learning Process

The study found a significant difference in students' familiarity with TED Talks despite their familiarity with popular foreign-language media such as YouTube, podcasts, and others. This can be seen in the 6 students who admitted they did not know about TED Talks. This lack of familiarity was also related to their English learning experience with their answers stating that they had never used TED Talks in their teachers' lessons. Most students had never used TED Talks as a learning resource in secondary school, with only a small minority claiming to have used them. The data illustrates that TED Talks still need to be used in the formal education environment, as seen from students' unfamiliarity with using TED Talks as learning media.

The Application of TED-Talk as Supplementary Material Affects Students' Development of Listening Skills and Motivation in the Context of Learning Autonomy

After the participants filled out the questionnaire, the researcher gave them TED Talks videos. The two videos are "Teen Stress from a Teen Perspective" and "How a student changed her study habits by setting goals and managing time." The researchers want to explore students' responses by conducting a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) on how the application of TED-Talk as additional material affects the development of their listening skills and motivation in the context of learning independence. A list of the themes and codes is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Themes and Codes

The application of TED-Talk as supplementary material affects students' development of listening skills and motivation in the context of learning autonomy	
Interpretive Theme	Descriptive Codes

Students' factors like watching TED Talks	Interesting topic and speaker
TED Talks to improve English listening skills	Increasing Vocabulary Improving Pronunciation
TED Talks for autonomous learning to improve listening skills	Depends on students
Increasing Motivation with TED Talk	Varied Topics Interesting with native speakers
Students' perception of using TED Talk as a learning medium in schools	Easy to understand Related to the context of school Add to other English knowledge

Students' Factors Like Watching TED Talks

From the participants' answers, overall, they liked both the interesting topic and how the speaker presented the material. It could be seen from some students' responses below:

"I like the topic, and the speakers are clearer because usually, when we hear people speak in English, it is not clear, but in this TED Talk, it is quite clear to understand." (Student 8)

"I like the topics because there are many light and interesting topics that can be listened to, especially for teenagers like me." (Student 7)

"I have watched it a lot so I like it a lot. The speakers are of all ages, from young to old. Not only the topic but also the target audience. The topics can be interesting for learning English with various topics such as teenagers, the future, and how to succeed." (Student 10)

As we could see from their answers, when watching TED Talks, they liked the speakers' clear and interesting presentation of the material. In addition, TED Talks have a variety of topics, making them interesting and accessible to all ages.

TED Talks to improve English Listening Skills.

The results of TED Talks to improve English listening skills show that they agree TED Talks can improve listening skills in understanding the context of the speaker. Several points stand out in the development of listening using TED Talk. Some students said that the TED Talk video could improve their vocabulary. It can be seen from their description:

"I think TED Talk is good for improving English listening, such as increasing vocabulary and understanding the context of the conversation by watching TED Talks, even though I may not fully know the vocabulary presented" (Students 6)

"Yes, Foreigners speak differently from the English I learn in school, which is just a standardized language. English talk shows use a lot of unknown words. It is different from what we are taught in school, and so are TED Talks. There are some scientific words that speakers use when delivering. So, learning by listening is great for improving English learning because the TOEFL test is listening. It can be a listening exercise for the vocabulary they mention." (Students 9)

There is a student answer stated that not only vocabulary but also can increase grammar knowledge:

"Yes, I think TED Talk can improve our listening skills because I like seeing new grammar or vocabulary that I do not know, I can look up what it means." (Students 7)

From the results above, some students believe that watching TED Talks can improve their understanding of vocabulary and grammar. Moreover, they feel that the content of the TED Talk is rarely taught at school, so they are more familiar with many new vocabularies that they can learn. The other result states that

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students' pronunciation of the words by the TED Talk speaker was so good that they could understand well and learn how to pronounce the words correctly.

"Yes, it can improve listening skills because here we hear how to pronounce each word well. The TED Talk given is also easy to understand by the speaker." (Student 2)

"Yes, the speaker's pronunciation is clear so I can understand the words they say. The video also has subtitles so we can see the words we don't understand and find out what they mean." (Student 10)

Some students feel that pronunciation can also improve after watching TED Talk videos. The vocabulary they have learned and have not learned becomes more familiar with pronouncing it properly. Therefore, almost all students stated that TED talks can improve their listening skills if they continue to study.

TED Talks for Autonomous Learning

Based on the results of the participant's responses, there are two opinions about TED Talks for independent or autonomous learning to improve listening skills. Some agree that TED Talks can be used for autonomous learning in improving listening skills. The reason is that they like learning by watching videos, adding to the learning resources lacking in school, and motivating them to learn to listen independently.

"TED Talks are very useful for independent learning because they can improve our English listening skills and motivate us to deepen our English listening skills" (Student 7).

"In my opinion, it is possible because I prefer learning that way. It is easier to hone our listening skills, and the words used are almost understandable" (Student 1).

Other opinions disagree because everyone has different learning methods and a basic understanding of English. They feel they need guidance and have not been able to learn independently in listening learning.

"It depends on the ability of each individual; for those who already deepen their knowledge of English, it can be used for independent learning so that there is continuous improvement. But, for those who only understand the basics of English and have not yet reached a more complex vocabulary, it may be difficult to understand the material presented by TED Talks. Therefore, they need help to understand more deeply and cannot learn independently" (Student 6).

Increasing Motivation with TED Talk

Several students said that TED Talks fostered their interest and motivation to improve their listening skills through various topics from TED Talk videos. This can be seen from their answers:

"Yes, the topic can increase our motivation in terms of developing our listening skills." (Student 1)

"It can increase our motivation because the topics are varied, and many are related to our lives, so motivation will come when we like the material or the program." (Student 3)

"Yes, because the topics presented in TED Talks are very diverse, and the teachers who provide the material are also very good. I'm able to understand the speaker's explanation and interested in the topics" (Student 9)

"There are various topics so you can choose the topic you want to listen to. So it is suitable for those who want to improve their English skills." (Student 10).

Some students also thought that they were motivated by the speakers when delivering the material:

"I think it is possible because the motivation I got from this TED Talk video further improved my listening skills from the first video I saw. It also improved my way of speaking as if we were following a native speaker who was speaking and getting carried away by the atmosphere." (Student 7)

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"I think it is possible because the speaker in the TED Talk is quite interesting in terms of his native speaker, his explanation, his words are also quite clear, and his delivery is not monotonous, seeing him not just stay in place. It can be seen in video no 1 that the speaker dares to express himself. As for me, video 2 adds to my knowledge of this learning method." (Student 8)

Overall, TED Talks can increase interest and motivation in learning listening skills, starting with an interesting speaker to attract the audience's interest in listening continuously to the desired topic.

Students' Perception of Using TED Talks as a Learning Medium in Schools

Most participants believed that using TED Talks as a learning medium in schools can improve listening skills for three reasons/codes. First reasons, students admitted that the material or topic was easy for them to understand, as seen from the answers:

"It can, because it is quite easy to understand the material or topics that are very diverse, so it is good to be a source or addition to learning." (Student 1)

"I think it can because the material can be understood. I believe that the use of TED Talks in schools can be a medium to improve English listening skills." (Student 6)

"I believe it, because the delivery is clear and easy to understand for the students. In addition, the topics discussed are also useful for students and can increase their motivation." (Student 8)

The ease of content, topics, or materials in TED Talks makes them feel that its application is suitable for listening activities at school. The second reason is the content of the TED Talks videos that the researchers provided related to them as students:

"I think the TED Talks material relates to the context of learning at school. The use of TED Talks at school can be a medium to improve English listening skills." (Student 4)

The suitability to the school context makes them believe that its application can maximize listening learning at school. Lastly, Participants felt that its implementation in schools would increase English knowledge, such as in grammar:

"I believe that TED Talks at school are necessary because they can improve our ability to understand English listening. We can also learn grammar that we have never learned before." (Student 7)

Discussion

Students are not Familiar

This research indicates that most students must become more familiar with TED Talks. They have never used it in English learning because the teacher has never incorporated it into their lesson, where they only have three times listening learning experiences in grade 11 with material about daily conversation. This shows that the school environment is less focused on listening skills, so using TED Talks media still needs improvement. Choirunnisa & Sari (2021) stated that a TED Talk is an open presentation used by people who are not professional speakers, so it needs to be more academic in the school environment. Teachers mostly use materials from academic backgrounds, such as textbooks. Therefore, students' incomprehension of TED Talks occurs because teachers use academic rather than non-academic materials. Utami & Noviana (2021) also show that more lecturers use TED Talks as a digital platform for teaching than high school teachers. More lecturers use it as a technological learning media because it is easy to apply and helps focus students without feeling bored while learning in English classes (Hanan & Dedy, 2023)

Students Like Both Topics and the Speakers when Watching TED Talks

Students' opinions changed to be more positive after the TED Talks video. The speaker and topic factors that make students like watching TED Talks. Balanced results were obtained between students who liked the topic and the speaker. Students were attracted to TED Talks videos featuring clear and engaging speakers discussing relevant and appropriate topics to their age group. Videos that balance these factors are more likely to be well-received by students. TED Talks have very potential as an English learning medium. Gavenila et al., (2021) and María et al., (2018) show that topic is one of the factors affecting the selection of TED Talks for extensive listening. They feel more comfortable because they can

choose topics that match their background knowledge and interests. In addition, Utami & Noviana (2021) point out that audience attention will focus more on speakers who master gestures or body language, pronunciation, and vocabulary. They prefer the unconventional and casual tone of TED Talk speakers, contrasting with standard academic techniques, they emphasize the motivational and inspirational value they discover in these talks (Kozińska, 2021).

Improving Vocabulary, Grammar, and Pronunciation

The speaker and interesting topics in TED Talks make students think that this media can improve listening skills, including vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Vocabulary is one of the language components to support students' English listening skills. (Izzah et al., 2020) confirm that increasing vocabulary knowledge is useful for developing students' English skills. Likewise, correct grammar in the speaker's clear pronunciation makes them understand the context of the conversation when watching TED Talks. TED Talks can encourage students to learn English in pronunciation and listening. This media makes them more excited about learning English because of the native speakers (Diniya, 2023). Moreover, Nurhidayat & Syarifah (2023) showed that the speakers in TED Talks who come from all over the world make students realize that learning English is more than just perfect pronunciation, no matter if it is correct or not, perfection will come with practice.

Encourage Students to Learn Autonomously

The use of TED Talks can improve listening skills and encourage students to learn autonomously. They positively felt that this media was useful since it had yet to be implemented at school. Therefore, autonomous learning will encourage students to get used to listening to native speakers. These results are supported by Gunawan et al., (2023) who state that TED Talks have a variety of topics to encourage students to learn to listen independently. Recard et al., (2020) stated that students have the confidence to develop independent listening learning by using TED Talks effectively. Puspita & Amelia (2020) also stated that the extensive vocabulary and variety of English accents that students like use TED Talk as an independent learning resource for listening. However, there are challenges for some students with low vocabulary knowledge so they have difficulty understanding. They need assistance from teachers or others to understand the material from the speaker. So, the use of TED Talks in independent listening learning depends on each student's ability.

Students' Motivation Increased

Students' motivation has a great impact on their initiative to learn. Interesting speakers and desirable topics make TED Talks able to increase students' interest and motivation in acquiring listening skills. Gavenila et al., (2021) found that interesting and relevant topics with quality ideas from the speakers can motivate students to listen to TED Talks. These materials will motivate them to study different TED Talk topics in the future (Wu, 2020). In addition, the varied language style with many expressions encourages their desire to follow the speaker. Many people watch TED Talks because speakers use social words, and positive emotions can motivate students in language skills such as listening (MacKrill et al., 2021), *TED Talks can be Supplementary Material at School*

After responding to several questions, the students believed that TED Talks could be used at schools to practice listening skills as supplementary material. The ease of the videos given relates to them as a student. Rohmah (2022) said that the topics presented make students enjoy watching TED Talk videos because they are easy to understand. Video-based concepts in TED Talks make students more able to explore them because of the ease of understanding (Fitria, 2022). They also believe that applying it at school will increase their English knowledge. This is in line with Merdianti et al., (2023) which states that TED Talk is useful for language learning since it provides a variety of videos that teachers can use. Wu (2020) found that students recall language knowledge when watching content in TED Talks. The reason is that this medium is to share knowledge and ideas in English through short speeches.

Conclusion

Before the TED Talk video was given, some students needed to familiarize themselves with the TED Talk. However, their answers became more positive after watching the video. The results concluded that these TED Talks can improve the students' listening skills, which include vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Videos that balance an interesting speaker with various expressions, relevant topics, and audio-visual aspects are more likely to be well-received by students. Therefore, their motivation to learn independently based on what they notice when the speaker delivers the material can be boosted. In addition, the material that relates to them as a student makes TED Talk potentially helpful in schools to train listening skills.

This study contributes to present data on students' opinions of TED Talks. By

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collecting data using questionnaires and Focus Group Discussions, this study assesses how familiar students are with TED Talk media and how TED Talk can be used as additional material to improve students' listening skills and motivation in independent learning. The implications of this research for educators and curriculum developers highlight the potential benefits of incorporating TED Talks into language learning programs. It also underscores the importance of considering different students' familiarity and comfort levels with the content.

This research can introduce new insights by stating various students' opinions on the effectiveness of TED Talks in improving listening skills to motivate autonomous learning. This study focuses more on using qualitative methods with a small sample size, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. In addition, the study was in a specific school, so it needs to be representative of the broader population of secondary school students. Future research could use mixed methods. Quantitative descriptive methods can be used to determine the improvement of students' listening performance based on the scores obtained, and qualitative descriptive methods are used to determine students' opinions regarding the independence of learning to listen using TED Talks. The participants can compare different secondary schools to determine the impact on a more extensive and diverse student population.

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