

A Narrative Study on Students' Perception Towards Using TED Talks Videos for Listening Comprehension

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Abstract

This narrative study aimed to explore undergraduate students' perceptions of using TED Talks videos to enhance their comprehension skills and the challenges they faced in the process. The research employs a qualitative narrative inquiry approach to explore the experiences of second-semester English major students at Universitas Tanjungpura during the 2022/2023 academic year. Data were collected through written reflections using narrative frames and semi-structured interviews with three purposively selected participants who had experience with TED Talk videos in their listening comprehension courses. Thematic analysis was conducted to identify patterns and themes from the collected data. The respondents shared their experiences through written and oral narratives, highlighting the benefits, challenges, and strategies they employed when using TED Talks for listening comprehension. The findings revealed that students valued TED Talks for their role in expanding vocabulary, exposing learners to diverse topics, and providing motivational content. However, challenges such as fast speech, unfamiliar vocabulary, and audio quality issues were also identified. To overcome these obstacles, students employed strategies such as active listening, note-taking, and summarizing key concepts points. In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into students' experiences with TED Talk videos, emphasizing their potential benefits while acknowledging the challenges that need to be addressed in educational settings.

Keywords: *Listening Comprehension; Narrative Study; Perspectives; TED Talk videos*

INTRODUCTION

The challenge of teaching English today is greater than ever. English teachers must provide engaging, interesting and modern teaching materials to help students become more proficient of language skills. Compared to the other skills, listening is key to effective communication. It enables the listener to comprehend, determine, and identify what the speaker is saying. Listening comprehension is crucial in English language learning, especially among undergraduate students. A higher understanding of listening makes learning a language more enjoyable and easier, facilitating effective communication.

Listening skills are important, but they can be difficult to learn. It remains challenging for students as they must pay attention to what they hear while simultaneously comprehending its meaning. Furthermore, every student has different abilities when it comes to listening comprehension (Izzah et. al, 2020). Anxiety among

students is a major factor, as listeners often feel worried, panicked, afraid, and frustrated due to their inability to understand what they have heard during the listening process. Furthermore, Ehsan et. al. (2019) say that, as listening comprehension is a complex progressing process which includes the communication of different elements, numerous students think that it's hard to understand spoken input and have little familiarity with why that happens. This problem can be solved by selecting a good media to enhance listening skills.

One of the ways to enhance listening skills are learning through audiovisual. Audiovisual aided activities like watching movies, listening to the English-spoken news, watching videos and listening to the television commercial are examples of activities that can be engaged with the aid of audiovisual media (Adnan, 2015). In fact, using video as a learning medium can enhance listening skills and increase students' interest and motivation to learn English (Kurniawati, 2016). Videos aided the learner to both content and process of language learning in particularly to enhance English learning skill. One of good example of suitable videos to enhance listening skill have been bring forward by number of researcher is TED Talk videos (Fitria 2022; Gavenila, Wulandari, and Renandya 2021; Izzah et al. 2020)

TED Talk Video is one of the audiovisuals suitable for listening comprehension and can be accessed with an Android device (Puspitasari, 2022). According to Izzah et. al. (2020), TED Talk is a platform for speakers to share well-thought-out ideas in under 18 minutes. However, in recent years, it has been expanded to include any topic of public concern. Besides, the TED Talks program is a public speaking system in which anyone can speak. It is worthwhile to clarify that our interest in TED is because of its feature that brings the conference's transcription besides the characteristic that every video has its own subtitles that are not auto-generated as it happens with many videos on YouTube, for instance.

According to Brookes (2010), it is crucial to understand students' perceptions since perception is the process through which information is gathered through sense receptors (such as the eyes, ears, nose, and skin) and then changed into a perception of what we think, see, hear, smell, taste, or touch. In this sense, students' perceptions must be aware of the fundamental fact that they are the subject of the educational process. The success of the learning process can be enhanced by making the necessary adjustments once it is known how pupils view the situation. Thus, in this way, perception plays a crucial role in boosting lecturers' teaching motivation, particularly when it comes to teaching listening. According to the researcher's experience at Universitas Tanjungpura, there are some lecturers who have use TED Talk videos to teach listening during the teaching and learning process, especially during the second semester. Based on the researcher own experience, TED Talk video has positively affect her listening comprehension skill. This might affect the rest of the second semester student who took listening comprehension class. Hence, researcher is intrigued to find out student perception of using TED Talk videos for listening comprehension.

According to a study conducted by Izzah et al. (2020), high school students have a favorable perception of TED Talk videos for improving their listening skills. The listening skills material, which included TED Talk videos as a medium to enhance listening skills, received positive feedback and high marks from participants in terms of usefulness, difficulty and variety. This research was conducted on the eleventh grade

students through the data collection method of questionnaire. By using similar method, this study will try find out the perception of university student in using TED Talk video.

Second similar study from Miftah (2019) that investigated the effectiveness of using TED talks video in improving students public speaking skills . The researcher distributed questionnaire to 34 high school students of 11th grade in one of senior high school in Ciamis. The data collected showed that the students responded positively to using TED Talk videos to improve their speaking skills. To address the gap in previous research, the researcher will use qualitative approaches to understand the perceptions of University students, particularly at Universitas Tanjungpura, regarding improving their listening skills.

In addition, Takaesu (2017) investigated the impact of TED Talks on extensive listening for his freshman college students enrolled in his English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course. Setyawan (2020) The findings revealed that both lower and higher proficiency students enhanced their listening comprehension skills. In terms of the perceived benefits of watching TED Talks, the majority of students said that watching TED videos helped them learn new words, enhance their listening fluency and comprehension, and boost their motivation. They also stated that the ease of access to TED Talks, as well as their highly stimulating content, were two of the primary motivators for them to watch more TED Talks. Although many researchers have conducted studies on students' perceptions using TED Talks Video to enhance student listening skills, the previous study did not specifically discuss undergraduate students' perceptions using TED Talks Video for listening comprehension.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative narrative inquiry approach to explore how TED Talks videos can be utilized for listening comprehension among second-semester English major students at Universitas Tanjungpura for the 2022/2023 academic year. The qualitative approach was applied through a narrative study, focusing on students' personal experiences and reflections regarding their utilization of TED Talks for listening practice. In addition, the approach was used to gather structured responses on students' perceptions, providing measurable insights into their learning progress and challenges.

To conduct the study, three participants from the English Language Study Program were selected based on specific criteria: they must be enrolled in the English Education Department, have engaged with TED Talks for online learning, and have taken a listening comprehension course in their first or second semester. Data collection involved written and oral narratives, allowing participants to provide detailed reflections and spontaneous discussions on TED Talks' influence on their listening comprehension skills.

The narrative study component was implemented using the narrative frame method, in which participants completed a structured story template with their experiences and thoughts on TED Talk videos. According to Barkhuizen (2014), narrative frames help participants construct coherent narratives by filling in incomplete sentences and blanks, facilitating their reflections on language learning. The research also adhered to the recommendations of Azmin et al. (2022), who suggested that the narrative frame should include elements of interaction, continuity, and context to effectively capture participants' experiences with TED across the past, present, and future Talks.

In addition to written reflections, semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain deeper insights into students' perceptions of TED Talk videos. Open-ended questions guided the discussions, focusing on three key aspects: (1) students' experiences with TED Talk videos, (2) their perceptions of using TED Talks for listening skills, and (3) challenges faced when using TED Talks for listening comprehension. The qualitative data from narratives and interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the approach outlined by Braun & Clarke (2006), which involved organizing, coding, and identifying emerging themes. This comprehensive methodological approach provided valuable insights into the benefits and challenges of integrating TED Talks into language learning, ensuring a more in-depth understanding of students' experiences and perspectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section involved analyzing data from the students' stories and the interview transcriptions under a designated theme. For narrative inquiry, the researcher retells the respondents' stories as a narrative text. The researcher also transcribed the interviews from S1, S2, and S3. The findings of this study were divided into two themes: students' perception of using TED Talks videos to enhance their listening comprehension and the challenges that students perceived in utilizing TED Talk videos for listening comprehension.

The researcher analyzed the data gathered from participants to assess their views on using TED Talks videos to enhance listening comprehension. The results from the data prove that the respondents, S1, S2, and S3, responded positively to utilizing TED Talks videos for their listening comprehension. One of the key benefits that the respondents derived from the videos was enhancing their listening comprehension skills. S1 noted that before entering University, they believed their listening skills were weak due to a lack of practice: *"Back in high school, I rarely practiced listening, so I struggled a lot when I had to listen to English conversations"* (S1.P1.Line 3-4.Written Story). Similarly, S2 and S3 also mentioned that they had limited exposure to listening practice and vocabulary in high school, which led to difficulties in understanding spoken English: *"In high school, I did not have many chances to listen to English, and my vocabulary was very limited, making it hard to understand conversations"* (S2.P1.Line 2-4.Written Story); *"I used to avoid listening exercises because they felt too difficult"* (S3.P2.Line 6-8.Written Story). However, after engaging with TED Talk videos, all three respondents acknowledged an improvement in their listening comprehension skills. S1 stated, *"Watching TED Talk videos helped me learn new words and improved my ability to understand spoken English"* (S1.P2.Line 20-21). S2 also emphasized the role of TED Talk videos in providing additional listening practice, leading to gradual improvements in comprehension: *"The more I listened to TED Talks, the easier it became to understand them. I did not even realize I was getting better at first"* (S2.P2.Line 21-23).

Beyond enhancing listening comprehension skills, the respondent said that the benefit of utilizing TED Talk videos for listening was gaining motivation and self-confidence. Before being exposed to more English learning opportunities, respondents S1 and S3 expressed a lack of motivation in learning English. S1 mentioned that they had little interest in English lessons during high school, which contributed to their struggles with listening comprehension: *"English was never my favorite subject. I always felt frustrated when I couldn't understand what was being said"* (S1.P2.Line 5-6.Written

Story). Similarly, S3 noted that neglecting listening practice led to a significant gap in comprehension: *"Since I didn't practice listening regularly, I found it very hard to follow along when someone spoke fast"* (S3.P1.Line 14-16.Written Story). However, TED Talk videos provided the respondents motivation and a sense of accomplishment. S1 expressed, *"The variety of topics in TED Talks made learning fun for me. I found myself looking forward to watching them"* (S1.P1.Line 12-14.Written Story). S2 also found that successfully comprehending TED Talk content boosted their confidence in understanding spoken English: *"When I realized I could understand TED Talks without subtitles, I felt proud of myself"* (S2.P2.Line: 23-24). These findings align with Lestari (2021), who found that students who engaged with TED Talks as a listening resource reported increased motivation and interest in learning English due to the topics' engaging content and real-life applicability.

The findings of the narrative study on students' perception of using TED Talks videos for listening comprehension elucidate several key themes. Participants expressed a prevailing perception of inadequacy in their listening skills before engaging with TED Talk videos. This sentiment was often linked to limited exposure to listening practice and a lack of vocabulary, particularly during their high school education. However, upon incorporating TED Talk videos into their learning routines, participants reported notable enhancements in their listening abilities, vocabulary acquisition, and overall comprehension. This aligns with findings from Izzah et al. (2020), who asserted that using TED Talk videos was viewed favorably, providing opportunities for self-enhancement, motivation, and the broadening of insight and knowledge. Wu (2020) also found that students' listening comprehension improved alongside vocabulary acquisition after engaging with TED Talks. Furthermore, findings from Sun & Zhang (2022) suggest that TED Talk videos improve both passive and active vocabulary acquisition, contributing to greater retention and comprehension of spoken English.

Nevertheless, challenges were identified in using TED Talk videos for listening comprehension, primarily regarding the understanding of fast-paced speech and unfamiliar vocabulary encountered in these videos. S1 and S3 reported difficulty in understanding native speakers due to the use of complex vocabulary and rapid speech: *"Sometimes the speakers talk too fast, and I can't catch all the words, especially when they use advanced vocabulary"* (S1.P1. Line: 17-19); *"I struggle when they speak quickly. I feel like I need to pause the video multiple times"* (S3. P1. Line: 24-26). Additionally, S2 experienced difficulties with audio clarity and unstable internet connections, which further impeded comprehension: *"If the audio isn't clear or my internet is slow, I get frustrated because I miss parts of the talk"* (S2.P1.Line: 18-20). These problems have also been identified by researchers as common challenges associated with using TED Talk videos as a media tool for enhancing listening skills (Astika & Kurniawan, 2019). Despite these challenges, participants employed various strategies to overcome them, including active engagement with the content, note-taking, and seeking summaries for better comprehension. Similarly, research by Brown (2023) highlights that students who used subtitles, transcript reading, and repeated listening strategies were better able to grasp complex vocabulary and improve their comprehension of TED Talks.

For further research, future researchers could explore methods to mitigate the challenges identified in this study, such as strategies to enhance comprehension of fast-paced speech and improve accessibility for students with limited internet connectivity. Additionally, studies comparing TED Talks with other digital learning resources could provide insights into their relative effectiveness in enhancing listening skills. Educators

are encouraged to incorporate TED Talk videos into their curriculum while integrating supportive tools like subtitles, transcripts, and guided exercises to maximize learning outcomes. Universities should consider offering structured listening programs that utilize TED Talks, enabling students to develop their listening skills in a scaffolded and supportive environment. Additionally, teachers should be trained to guide students in effectively utilizing TED Talks, ensuring they employ active listening strategies to overcome comprehension difficulties and enhance engagement with the content.

CONCLUSION

This study examined undergraduate students' perceptions of using TED Talks videos to enhance their listening comprehension skills, emphasizing both the advantages and challenges associated with this learning tool. The findings indicate that TED Talks videos contribute positively to students' listening comprehension by expanding vocabulary, exposing them to diverse topics, and increasing motivation. However, challenges such as fast speech, unfamiliar vocabulary, and technical issues were also identified. Despite these difficulties, students developed strategies like active listening, note-taking, and summarization to enhance their comprehension.

The insights from this study suggest that TED Talk videos can be an effective resource in English language learning, particularly for listening comprehension. However, to maximize their benefits, educators should provide guidance on strategies for overcoming common challenges, such as scaffolding difficult vocabulary and integrating TED Talks with interactive learning activities. Future research could explore a larger sample size or compare TED Talks with other audiovisual learning tools to further evaluate their effectiveness. Integrating TED Talks into formal language instruction, along with teacher training on their pedagogical use, could further enhance students' learning experiences and listening proficiency.

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