

## THE TED TALK APPROACH: EFL STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF ITS IMPACT ON LISTENING COMPREHENSION

**Ika Kana Trisnawati**

Universitas Muhammadiyah Aceh  
[ika.kana@unmuha.ac.id](mailto:ika.kana@unmuha.ac.id)

**Sarair Sarair**

Universitas Muhammadiyah Aceh  
[sarair@unmuha.ac.id](mailto:sarair@unmuha.ac.id)

**Adilla Nafaisha**

Universitas Muhammadiyah Aceh  
[adilla12n@gmail.com](mailto:adilla12n@gmail.com)

**Ayuna Netta**

Universitas Muhammadiyah Aceh  
[ayuna.netta@unmuha.ac.id](mailto:ayuna.netta@unmuha.ac.id)

**Hijjatul Qamariah**

School of Education, University of Szeged, Hungary  
[hijjatul.qamariah@edu.u-szeged.hu](mailto:hijjatul.qamariah@edu.u-szeged.hu)

### Abstract

This study examined the effectiveness of TED Talks as a learning tool to enhance listening comprehension among senior English Education majors in Indonesia. The objective was to identify whether TED Talks videos helped enhance the listening proficiency of this particular student group. A mixed-methods research study was employed in order to accomplish the aforementioned objective. Students of the English Education departments in semesters six and eight constituted the target population. A voluntary sample of 30 students was selected for participation. Data were gathered through interviews and questionnaires. Quantitative data from the questionnaire were calculated using IBM SPSS 25, and interview data were examined using thematic analysis. Quantitative data showed mean scores ranging from 2.34 to 3.67, categorized as 'moderate.' This indicated the general agreement among respondents that TED Talks videos contributed towards an improvement in listening skills. This represented a favorable perspective on the usefulness of the application; however, the 'moderate' categorization signaled a need for a deeper investigation into the practical application and optimization of TED Talks. Further, qualitative interview data provided a richer context, complementing the quantitative findings.

**Keywords:** English Education, Listening Skills, TED Talks.

### INTRODUCTION

Listening is fundamental as it is one of the English as a foreign language (EFL) skills that learners need to master. For EFL learners, language acquisition essentially takes root in understanding the meaning of the sounds they listen to. Listening constitutes the hub of

effective communication, as it involves a complex cognitive process that requires understanding and interpreting messages.<sup>1</sup> Harmer emphasizes the importance of developing listening skills in language learners. He suggests that students can enhance their listening abilities through both extensive and intensive listening practices, which provide valuable language input and improve comprehension.<sup>2</sup> Listening proficiency also demands, in addition to the skills for recognizing, predicting, and interpreting, the development of working memory and language competency.<sup>3</sup> Listening comprehension is an interactive process wherein listeners actively engage with one another to construct meaning.<sup>4</sup> According to Field, listening typically occurs through three stages: *decoding*, which converts the acoustic-phonetic signal into recognizable words; *parsing*, which organizes these words into a syntactic structure; and *meaning construction*, which enriches and integrates the interpreted structure with earlier discourse to build overall comprehension.<sup>5</sup> Further, Kim and Pilcher summarize that listening comprehension is a multidimensional construct that involves several interrelated components, namely: phonological processing (decoding sounds), vocabulary and syntactic knowledge (understanding words and grammar), higher-order skills (e.g., inference and integration), as well as cognitive resources (e.g., working memory and background knowledge), all of which interact to enable learners to construct meaning effectively from spoken language.<sup>6</sup>

Based on these descriptions, listening comprehension can be significantly facilitated through the use of audio-visual media, which provides contextual cues and visual support. Audio-visual media enable students to connect auditory and visual information, allowing them to learn about spoken language more holistically.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, video listening practice can help enhance comprehension and foster improved learning abilities, especially in the context of contemporary language learning, where technology has become an inseparable part in everyday life.

In the current 21st century, technology has revolutionized language learning. TED, an acronym for Technology, Entertainment, and Design, is a significant force in the alternative media landscape. TED Talks videos are a valuable resource for learning, comprising

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<sup>1</sup> "Characteristics of Effective Listening," Chicago Center for Teaching and Learning | the University of Chicago, accessed February 15, 2025, <https://teaching.uchicago.edu/node/48>.

<sup>2</sup> Jeremy Harmer, *The Practice of English Language Teaching* (Pearson Education ESL, 2008).

<sup>3</sup> Mohamed Amin Mekheimer, "Working memory as a predictor of reading and listening comprehension in EFL college students: A reinvestigation," *Australian Journal of Applied Linguistics* 7, no. 3 (2024): 15; Miki Satori, "Effects of Working Memory on L2 Linguistic Knowledge and L2 Listening Comprehension," *Applied Psycholinguistics* 42, no. 5 (2021): 1313. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0142716421000345>

<sup>4</sup> Larry Vandergrift and Christine Goh, *Teaching and Learning Second Language Listening: Metacognition in Action* (Routledge, 2012).

<sup>5</sup> John Field, "Into the Mind of the Academic Listener," *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 10, no. 2 (2011): 102-112.

<sup>6</sup> Young-Suk Grace Kim, and Heather Pilcher, "What is Listening Comprehension and What Does It Take to Improve Listening Comprehension?," In *Handbook of Interventions in Learning Disabilities*, ed. R. Schiff and M. Joshi (New York: Springer, 2016), 159-173.

<sup>7</sup> Hesti Risqiyanti and Achmad Fathoni, "The Application of Audio-Visual Media in Optimizing the Learning Outcomes of Grade III Students in Thematic Learning at Muhammadiyah PK Kottabarat Elementary School in Surakarta," *JURNAL ILMIAH DIDAKTIKA: Media Ilmiah Pendidikan dan Pengajaran* 24, no. 2 (2024): 104-105.

motivational presentations on various subjects delivered by international speakers.<sup>8</sup> The official TED Talks website makes these presentations, typically less than 18 minutes in duration, and downloadable transcripts accessible.<sup>9</sup> TED Talks cover an assortment of topics from technology, arts, and entertainment to politics and social issues. TED is a nonprofit organization that brings together and selects global conferences, providing a platform for the dissemination of fresh ideas beyond traditional media channels.<sup>10</sup> Its worldwide fame comes from TED Talks, short and influential presentations by a varied group of professionals and inspirational figures. These presenters, like world leaders, activists, and researchers, provide new and stimulating content that triggers cultural and mental activity.<sup>11</sup> Gallo names the ‘TED generation,’ which is characterized by its ability to deliver effective, age-appropriate presentations.<sup>12</sup> In their initial focus on specific domains, TED Talks have expanded to encompass an extremely broad range of subjects.<sup>13</sup> The TED Talks initiative aims to create a public forum for diverse perspectives and voices. Such concise yet captivating lectures accommodate current attention span requirements. Each talk includes accompanying transcriptions to serve as an educational resource.<sup>14</sup>

Several studies have explored the potential of TED Talks to improve listening comprehension. Humeniuk et al.’s study<sup>15</sup> investigated the impact of TED Talks on listening comprehension and speaking skills of Ukrainian university students in ESP classes during the 2020/21 academic year, including remote learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In a Moodle-based online course, 100 students (50 from agrarian engineering and 50 from electrical engineering) were assigned to experimental and control groups. Pre- and post-tests assessed learning outcomes, with statistically significant improvements in listening and speaking for the experimental group, who used TED Talks. Questionnaires revealed a very favorable student perception of TED Talks as an effective learning tool, particularly for the experimental group. Izzah et al.<sup>16</sup> employed a qualitative approach and questionnaires to investigate South Tangerang, Banten, students’ perceptions of using TED Talk videos for listening skill development. Their research revealed overwhelmingly positive feedback, with thirty

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<sup>8</sup> Azadeh Yektaeikarin Mohammad, “Understanding of TED as an Alternative Media,” (Master thesis, Khazar University), 2013, ProQuest (31312744), 5.

<sup>9</sup> Lidiyatul Izzah, Muhamad Sofian Hadi, and Mutia Salma Rosa, “Student’s perception of TED TALK video to improve listening skill,” *Jurnal Studi Guru Dan Pembelajaran* 3, no. 3 (2020): 519.

<sup>10</sup> Katie Terrell Hanna and Ivy Wigmore, “TED Talk,” WhatIs, April 19, 2022, <https://www.techtarget.com/whatis/definition/TED-talk>

<sup>11</sup> Azadeh Yektaeikarin, “Understanding of TED as an Alternative Media,” 5-6.

<sup>12</sup> Carmine Gallo, *Talk Like TED: The 9 Public-Speaking Secrets of the World’s Top Minds* (Pan Macmillan, 2014).

<sup>13</sup> Chris Anderson, *TED Talks: The Official TED Guide to Public Speaking: Tips and Tricks for Giving Unforgettable Speeches and Presentations* (Hachette UK, 2016).

<sup>14</sup> Yingxia Li, Ying Gao, and Dongyu Zhang, “To Speak Like a TED Speaker--A Case Study of TED Motivated English Public Speaking Study in EFL Teaching,” *Higher Education Studies* 6, no. 1 (2016): 53-59.

<sup>15</sup> Iryna Humeniuk, Oksana Kuntso, Nadiia Popel, and Yuliia Voloshchuk, “Mastering listening comprehension at ESP classes using TED TALKS,” *Advanced Education* (2021): 27-34.

<sup>16</sup> Lidiyatul Izzah, Muhamad Sofian Hadi, and Mutia Salma Rosa. “Student’s Perception of TED TALK,” 518.

respondents affirming TED Talks as a valuable tool. Furthermore, Alfia<sup>17</sup> assessed the effectiveness of TED Talks in enhancing listening comprehension among second-semester English students at IAIN Palopo. Utilizing pre- and post-tests, the study demonstrated a significant improvement in listening comprehension, which can be attributed to TED Talks.

Given that the potential of TED Talks has been recognized, this study examined their effectiveness as a learning tool to enhance listening comprehension among Indonesian EFL learners. The current study is of great importance, as it raises awareness about the value of TED Talks for both teachers and students. More precisely, the findings are expected to promote understanding of the role of technology in language instruction and the use of authentic listening materials. However, while prior studies have sought to explore the impact of TED Talks on listening skills, there is a significant research gap regarding the particular attitudes and experiences of Indonesian English Education majors in this regard. In addition, the current body of research lacks a thorough mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative insights into students' subjective assessments of TED Talks as a learning tool within the Indonesian educational environment with quantitative data on listening ability improvement. Thus, this study aims to address the gap by providing an in-depth examination of how these students perceive TED Talks as a means to enhance their listening comprehension. In light of the aforementioned background, this study posed the following questions:

- How do students perceive the use of TED Talks in developing their listening abilities?
- What obstacles do students experience when employing TED Talks for listening skill development?

## RESEARCH METHODS

Employing a mixed-methods research design, this study combined quantitative and qualitative approaches. In this study, “the investigator collects and analyzes data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or a program of inquiry.”<sup>18</sup> The researchers investigated how participants experienced using TED Talks for English listening development. This involved gathering insights into their opinions on the usage of TED Talks and the challenges they encountered when applying them. As this study utilized a mixed-methods research approach, it aimed to gain both breadth and depth of insight<sup>19</sup> to provide complementarity rather than generalizability of findings.

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<sup>17</sup> Nur Alfia, “The Effectiveness of Using the TED Talk App to Improve Student's Listening Comprehension at the English Department of IAIN Palopo,” (Bachelor thesis, Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN Palopo), 2022).

<sup>18</sup> Abbas Tashakkori and John W. Creswell, “The new era of mixed methods,” *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* 1, no. 1 (2007): 4.

<sup>19</sup> Nataliya V. Ivankova and John W. Creswell. “Mixed Methods.” In *Qualitative Research in Applied Linguistics: A Practical Introduction*, ed. J. Heigham and R. A. Croker (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 136.

The population for this study was students majoring in an English Education department in Indonesia. Using voluntary sampling, the study recruited 30 EFL learners from 20 universities located across Aceh, Medan, Lampung, Jakarta, Kalimantan, and Yogyakarta. The study applied the following criteria for participant selection: a) Enrollment in an English Education major, b) Current enrollment in the 6th or 8th semester, and c) Experience using or watching TED Talk videos for more than 6 months. The decision to select 6<sup>th</sup>- or 8th-semester English Education majors was based on the assumption that the students had already received systematic training in English language skills and were expected to have stronger listening competence than non-English majors. Therefore, they were well-suited to evaluate the use of TED Talks in their learning properly. In addition, requiring at least six months of prior experience with TED Talks helped assure that the participants were already familiar with the platform and could share useful observations rather than initial impressions.

The study, however, has limitations. The sample size of 30 participants was relatively small; therefore, the findings may not be statistically generalizable to a wider population. Nonetheless, they provide useful contextual and explanatory insights. The voluntary sampling approach was chosen for its practicality and feasibility in accessing a diverse group of students across various regions of Indonesia. This geographical distribution broadened the representation of opinions, making the study manageable within the available resources.

The study employed two data collection tools: a questionnaire, which drew upon questions from Wu<sup>20</sup>, and an interview guide. The interview guide used follow-up questions to explore participants' questionnaire responses about the benefits, drawbacks, and obstacles of using TED Talks in listening development. The interviews were carried out with six participants who were willing to participate. The data from the interview were analyzed using thematic analysis, a method that involves identifying, examining, and presenting recurring patterns, or themes, within a dataset. This provides a detailed and organized description of the qualitative data.<sup>21</sup> The interview participants were labeled S1 to S6 for analysis. In addition, the questionnaire results were calculated using SPSS Version 25. The quantitative data analysis consisted of validity testing, reliability testing, and descriptive statistics. The data were categorized based on questionnaire statements.

## RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the data collected from questionnaires and interviews, which serve as the basis for the study's findings. The data are organized into categories derived from questionnaire responses and recurring interview themes. The statistical procedures and participant characteristics relevant to the quantitative analysis are described as follows. The quantitative data were tested for validity and reliability in order to guarantee instrument

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<sup>20</sup> Chia-Pei Wu, "Implementing TED Talks as Authentic Videos to Improve Taiwanese Students' Listening Comprehension in English Language Learning," *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ) Special Issue on CALL 6* (2020): 24-37.

<sup>21</sup> Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology," *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3, no. 2 (2006): 79.

accuracy and consistency. Validity was examined through item-total correlations compared with the critical  $r$ -value, whilst reliability was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha ( $\alpha$ ). Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were then applied to figure out the distribution of responses across the identified variables.

**Table 1.** Respondents’ Demographics

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	18	60
	Female	12	40
Semester	6	9	30
	8	21	70
Frequency of TED Talks usage	Sometimes	3	10
	1 time a month	3	10
	Once a month	1	3.3
	Once a week	7	23.3
	Twice a month	8	26.7
	Everyday	8	26.7
Age	20 – 21 years	13	43.3
	22 – 23 years	14	46.7
	24 – 25 years	3	10

Table 1 of the demographics displays that the gender composition of participants was predominantly male, with 60% identifying as male and 40% identifying as female. Participants in the 8th semester outnumbered those in the 6th semester, at 70% to 30%, respectively. The application of TED Talks varied greatly among participants. A high percentage stated they used TED Talks twice a month or daily (26.7% each), while a lesser percentage used them less frequently, such as once a month (3.3%) or occasionally (10%). The age distribution was relatively concentrated, with the greatest numbers within the 20-21 (43.3%) and 22-23 (46.7%) year age ranges, and a lesser proportion of respondents between 24-25 years (10%). The modal age range of respondents was 22-23 years.

**Table 2.** Results of Validity Testing

Item No.	$r_{\text{count}}$	$r_{\text{table}}$	Description
1	0.552	0.361	Valid
2	0.534		Valid
3	0.491		Valid
4	0.643		Valid

5	0.495	Valid
6	0.670	Valid
7	0.363	Valid
8	0.411	Valid
9	0.769	Valid
10	0.447	Valid
11	0.486	Valid
12	0.656	Valid
13	0.381	Valid
14	0.498	Valid
15	0.433	Valid
16	0.469	Valid
17	0.469	Valid

A *validity analysis* was conducted on a 17-item questionnaire administered to 30 students. Item-total correlations ( $r$ -values) were calculated to assess the contribution of each item to the overall score of the questionnaire. An item was considered valid if its  $r$ -value was positive and exceeded the critical  $r$ -value ( $r_{table}$ ) of 0.361, which was determined from the  $r$ -table for a sample size of 30. Items with  $r$ -values less than or equal to 0.361 were deemed invalid. The analysis, performed using SPSS version 25, revealed that all 17 items demonstrated valid results, indicating that each item made a significant contribution to the overall measurement of the intended construct.

The *reliability analysis* of the questionnaire was assessed to determine its consistency and dependability.<sup>22</sup> The one-shot method was utilized for this study, where respondents were only asked once using the questionnaire in an attempt to measure internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) was used to calculate the correlation between responses on each item, with a value of 0.6 and higher indicating reliable constructs or variables.<sup>23</sup> Using the SPSS software version 25, the reliability test yielded a Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) of 0.727. This signifies a high internal consistency and, hence, the reliability of the questionnaire.

To facilitate the interpretation, the questionnaire responses of the respondents were divided into three ranges: low (1.00-2.33), moderate (2.34-3.67), and high (3.68-5.01).<sup>24</sup> *Descriptive statistical analysis*, including the mean and standard deviation, was used to describe the pattern of responses. Afterward, the resulting mean values for each statement were categorized into three groups (low, moderate, or high) to provide a clear and interpretable overview of the results.

<sup>22</sup> Gail M. Sullivan, "A Primer on the Validity of Assessment Instruments," *Journal of Graduate Medical Education* 3, no. 2 (2011): 119.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 119.

<sup>24</sup> Hussain Alkharusi, "A Descriptive Analysis and Interpretation of Data from Likert Scales in Educational and Psychological Research," *Indian Journal of Psychology and Education* 12, no. 2 (2022): 16.

**Table 3.** Perceived Use of TED Talks

Item No.	Statement	N	M	SD	Interpretation
<i>Perceived Value and Engagement</i>					
1	I think TED talk content is appropriate to listen to	30	3.53	0.507	Moderate
2	I think TED Talk content is very interesting	30	3.37	0.490	Moderate
6	I enjoy listening to TED Talks videos	30	3.37	0.490	Moderate
8	I think the speakers of TED Talks deliver the messages well	30	3.33	0.547	Moderate
9	TED Talk can improve my listening comprehension ability	30	3.43	0.504	Moderate
10	I can improve my vocabulary after watching TED Talk videos	30	3.37	0.556	Moderate
16	I can build my confidence in listening to English speakers with TED Talk videos	30	3.33	0.547	Moderate
<i>Comprehension and Accessibility</i>					
3	I can easily find TED Talk content	30	3.47	0.571	Moderate
4	I can analyze the contents of TED Talk videos	30	3.17	0.648	Moderate
5	I can understand most of the content in TED Talk videos	30	3.27	0.583	Moderate
12	The duration of TED Talk videos is enough for me to listen to the speakers	30	3.23	0.430	Moderate
13	Using subtitles on the TED Talk is useful for me to understand the content/topics	30	3.57	0.504	Moderate
14	The speed of the speakers in the TED Talk video influences me to understand the content/topics	30	3.27	0.785	Moderate
17	I can find TED Talk videos easily in YouTube by just typing keywords of the content	30	3.53	0.507	Moderate
<i>Challenges and Personal Factors</i>					
7	I have difficulty listening to explanations of TED Talk videos in different accents	30	2.80	1.064	Moderate
11	I have trouble remembering academic sentences in TED Talk videos	30	2.77	1.073	Moderate
15	I choose to watch the TED Talk videos based on the background of the speakers	30	2.97	0.999	Moderate
Valid N (listwise)		30			

The results in Table 3 indicate that all 30 respondents provided valid data for each variable. Statements 1 through 17, with mean scores ranging from 2.34 to 3.67, fall within the moderate category, suggesting respondents generally agreed with the questionnaire statements. The moderate scores indicate that although the students found TED Talks useful in helping them develop their listening skills, their agreement was not very strong, which may be attributed to several reasons. The students acknowledged that TED Talks were easy to access and interesting, but they also encountered some challenges, such as the fast-paced nature of the speeches, complex topics, and academic vocabulary, which made understanding the talks more difficult. Thus, the moderate results suggest that students recognized the benefits of TED Talks, but they remained cautious due to the challenges they encountered when using them in English learning.

For the interview results, several themes emerged based on the respondents' answers to the questions in the interview. The themes are as follows:

**a. The advantages of using TED Talks in enhancing listening skills**

**1. Accessibility and Convenience**

The results of the interviews show that Indonesian EFL learners consider TED Talks to be highly accessible and convenient for learning, as stated by S1: *"Using a TED Talk is easy to understand, especially because it is in video format and subtitles are also available."* Aside from this, S5 pinpointed the benefit of cost-free access, stating that: *"Videos on TED Talks are free; you don't have to pay, and it is also easy to access from YouTube or by downloading the application."*

The responses here reveal that Indonesian EFL learners perceive TED Talks as practical because they are free, easily accessible, and come with supporting features such as subtitles. This finding suggests that the accessibility and convenient features of TED Talks make them an attractive option for EFL learners seeking to develop their listening skills.

**2. Engagement and Enjoyment**

Another advantage pointed out by the students is the engaging and enjoyable nature of TED Talks. S2 mentioned that: *"I'm fond of TED Talks because they're short and engaging, which is great for someone like me."* This comment is in line with S3, who appreciated varied speaking styles: *"The TED Talks have been my favorite because of the interesting style of their speakers. There are various styles to each speaker, which is interesting."*

Moreover, S4 supported this notion due to the suitability of video length: *"But when I watch the TED Talk, I don't get bored with the length of the video, which is very suitable."* These reflections suggest that TED Talks have been successful in capturing the interest of EFL learners through their short, dynamic format and engaging delivery, which helps maintain their motivation in listening practice.

**b. The disadvantages of using TED Talks in enhancing listening skills**

**1. Internet Dependency**

On the other hand, the results of the interviews also reveal some disadvantages of using TED Talks. One of the drawbacks pointed out by the students is internet dependency, as

described by S1: *“To watch videos on TED Talks, you need internet access, so if you don’t have internet, you can’t watch them.”* This statement was similar to those of S2, who noted that: *“The drawback is that you have to use the internet to watch.”*

This disadvantage was elaborated further by S6, who stressed that downloading videos also required internet: *“The drawback is sad because you have to use the internet; if you don’t have internet, you can’t watch it. Even though the video application can be downloaded, downloading requires the internet too.”* These comments signify that despite the usefulness of TED Talks, the reliance on stable internet access poses a hindrance for EFL students in areas with poor connectivity.

## **2. Difficulty with Speaker Pace:**

The students also stated another disadvantage of TED Talks, which concerns the fast-paced pace of the presenters. In this case, S3 admitted that: *“...the same if the speaker speaks fast, I tend to get confused.”* This situation also occurred with S4, who explained, *“If the speaker speaks fast, I tend to get confused, and sometimes I don’t know what he’s saying.”*

The students’ responses indicate that they face a common challenge in listening comprehension due to the rapid delivery of speech in English since TED Talks feature authentic speech that includes natural pacing, varied accents, and occasional use of informal expressions. This makes it difficult for learners who are not yet confident in processing English at natural speeds to comprehend meaning in real-time. These learners are still developing their listening fluency, and this situation can lead to missed information, reduced understanding, and even frustration.

## **c. Challenges in using TED Talks to enhance listening skills**

### **1. Difficulty with Complex Content:**

The students, through the interviews, also reported a challenge when listening to TED Talks, namely, difficulty in understanding the complexity of TED Talk topics. Here, S1 confessed that: *“Sometimes the discussion is too difficult to understand.”* The same issue was conveyed by S2, who emphasized that: *“Sometimes the talk is too difficult to understand because it’s profound, so in the end you don’t understand.”*

These responses suggest that, although TED Talks offer authentic and engaging content, the topics can sometimes be overwhelming for EFL learners who are still developing their English proficiency. Many talks discuss abstract ideas, world issues, or subjects such as science, technology, and psychology, all of which require learners to have good English skills and also sufficient background knowledge to understand them fully.

### **2. Challenges with Academic Language:**

Aside from the complexity of the content, the formal and academic vocabulary used in TED Talks was another common issue, as noted by S3, who stated that *“The language they [talks] use is too scientific.”* This concern was also supported by S4, who said that: *“The language they [talk] use is sometimes too academic; if you don’t know the words, you won’t understand the discussion.”*

The students’ answers here illustrate that the advanced language level of TED Talks often becomes a barrier for Indonesian learners, particularly if it involves specialized, technical,

or discipline-specific terms. TED Talks frequently invite expert speakers who use terminology from fields such as medicine, economics, or engineering. Therefore, for learners without sufficient vocabulary knowledge, this can lead to difficulties in following the main arguments and may reduce overall comprehension.

To address the research questions of this study on students' perceptions of using TED Talks and the obstacles in employing TED Talks for listening skill development, the findings reveal that EFL students overwhelmingly viewed TED Talks as convenient and accessible, with all statements falling under the moderate interpretation category. In terms of perceived value and engagement, the students consistently showed a positive attitude towards TED Talks. Mean scores ranged from 3.33 to 3.53, indicating agreement that TED Talk content is appropriate, interesting, and aids in improved listening comprehension and vocabulary development. This finding is in line with those in Nguyen and Boers, who found that TED Talks can be an effective tool for vocabulary uptake, especially when combined with interactive learning strategies, such as a summarization task.<sup>25</sup> Additionally, having subtitles was highly valued, with the highest mean score of 3.57, indicating a significant positive impact on comprehension. This finding corroborates those in Perez et al.'s meta-analysis study, in which captions of videos had a significant effect on both listening comprehension and vocabulary acquisition.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, the students considered the TED Talks readily available, particularly through YouTube, and viewed the video lengths as adequate.

Although the general positive sentiment was described, the students were aware of some difficulties. Difficulty with different accents and remembering academic sentences were the ones mentioned, with mean scores of 2.80 and 2.77, respectively. These lower means accompanied higher standard deviations (above 1.0), indicating a larger range of experience and potential challenges in these categories. Furthermore, while the students believed they could understand the subject matter in general, interpreting it proved to be somewhat challenging, as indicated by a mean of 3.17. There was also a reportedly significant impact of speech rate on understanding, with a moderately high standard deviation of 0.785, suggesting differing experiences. These findings are in line with those in Astika and Kurniawan's study, which identified some of the problems students encountered while listening to TED Talks, including unfamiliar accents, rapid speech rates, and unknown words.<sup>27</sup> These factors might make understanding the TED Talks' contents even harder, even though students feel that they know the topics in general. In addition, personal interest, such as choosing TED Talks based on speaker backgrounds, was also encountered, with a mean of 2.97. This finding is similar to those of Wu's study, wherein the students reported that their selection of TED Talks was driven by topic interest and that speaker backgrounds facilitated connections to their existing

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<sup>25</sup> Chi-Duc Nguyen and Frank Boers, "The Effect of Content Retelling on Vocabulary Uptake from a TED Talk," *TESOL Quarterly* 53, no. 1 (2019): 19.

<sup>26</sup> Maribel Montero Perez, Wim Van Den Noortgate, and Piet Desmet, "Captioned Video for L2 Listening and Vocabulary Learning: a Meta-Analysis," *System* 41, no. 3 (2013): 720-739.

<sup>27</sup> Gusti Astika and Ardiyarso Kurniawan, "The Challenges of Using TED Talks as Authentic Resources of Academic Listening for EFL University Students," *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 9, no. 3 (2019): 589.

knowledge.<sup>28</sup> These findings suggest that while TED Talks offer significant benefits for developing listening skills, individual challenges in incorporating linguistic complexity and personal preferences need to be considered. The consistent ‘moderate’ rating across all categories, however, suggests an overall positive experience with challenges, but not a highly negative one.

The interview results also indicated a highly positive perception of TED Talks as a way to enhance listening skills. The students mentioned the convenience and ease of TED Talks, noting that they are available for free on websites like YouTube and through downloadable applications. The video mode, along with features such as subtitles, was found to be particularly helpful for understanding the content. Furthermore, the engaging and entertaining nature of TED Talks was also emphasized. The students appreciated the concise length of videos and the diverse, engaging speaking styles, which captured their attention and facilitated effective learning. These findings highlight the practical advantages of TED Talks, which make them a convenient and engaging instructional tool for learners.

Despite the perceived benefits, the students also cited several challenges that accompanied the use of TED Talks. One of the key challenges was the dependence on internet connectivity, which was a disadvantage for those who lacked consistent connectivity. Another challenge was the pace of speakers, which posed a problem for some respondents, as fast delivery led to confusion and comprehension issues. Outside these practical limitations, some students also expressed challenges with the intricacy of TED Talk subject matter and terminology drawn from the scientific or academic realms. The depth of discussions and specialized jargon can easily hinder comprehension, underscoring the need for students to have a baseline of linguistic proficiency in fully benefit from TED Talks. These findings suggest that while TED Talks provide valuable learning opportunities, consideration should be given to accessibility, speaker pace, and the linguistic demands of the content.

This study, while providing valuable insights about EFL students’ opinions towards TED Talks, is not without limitations. Firstly, the findings may lack generalizability due to the specific sample size and learning context, as well as the absence of a clear level specification for the EFL students. Secondly, the reliance on self-reported data from questionnaires and interviews introduces potential bias, as the students’ perceptions may not accurately reflect their actual listening comprehension gains. The frequent “moderate” ratings further limit the depth of the findings, potentially indicating a lack of in-depth understanding or a reluctance to express strong opinions. Moreover, the study focused primarily on perceptions, lacking direct quantitative measures of listening comprehension improvement. The variability of TED Talks used by students, without a controlled selection, could have influenced the results. To address these limitations, future studies should employ larger and more diverse samples, incorporate quantitative comprehension assessments, control for TED Talk variability, and investigate particular challenges in depth using qualitative methods. Investigating effective teaching practices, conducting longitudinal studies, and focusing on specific linguistic elements are

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<sup>28</sup> Chia-Pei Wu, “Implementing TED Talks,” 34.

further recommended to gain a more thorough understanding and improve the pedagogical use of TED Talks in EFL contexts.

## CONCLUSION

This study examined the effectiveness of TED Talks as a learning tool for improving listening comprehension among senior English Education majors in Indonesia. Findings have indicated that EFL learners perceive TED Talks as an engaging and readily available listening practice resource, as witnessed by repeated moderate agreement ratings and positive interview comments. Ease of access, engaging content, and helpful options, such as subtitles, were highly appreciated, aligning with previous research on vocabulary acquisition and comprehension. However, some challenges, including speaker accents, speech rate, academic vocabulary, and internet connection, were also present, as other studies have found. These challenges, while not highly negative, indicate the necessity for teachers to consider and address learner differences and language needs in incorporating TED Talks into EFL classes. Therefore, although TED Talks can be a valuable pedagogical tool, their successful use relies on weighing their inherent benefits against a considerate awareness of the probable challenges faced by EFL students.

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