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Effects of Spotify Audiobook Integration on Vocabulary Acquisition Among Indonesian Senior High School Students

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Abstract

The issue of low reading skills among Indonesian high school students remains a recurring problem, often caused by conventional teaching methods and limited materials to develop vocabulary. This study aims to examine the effectiveness of the digital audio platform, Spotify, in supporting vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension. A Quasi-Experimental design with a Quantitative Descriptive approach was employed, involving 60 tenth-grade students (aged 15–16) from high schools and vocational schools in Sidoarjo and Surabaya, selected through cluster random sampling from schools with "A" accreditation. Participants were divided into an Experimental group (n=30), which received treatment through Spotify Audiobooks, and a Control group (n=30), which relied on conventional learning methods. The intervention lasted four weeks with regular exposure to English audiobooks. Results of the descriptive analysis revealed that the Experimental group's mean score increased from 73.33 (pretest) to 83.17 (post-test), while the Control group's score rose from 60.50 to 69.67. The Independent T-test indicated a significant difference ($p < 0.05$), thereby rejecting the null hypothesis. These findings demonstrate that Spotify Audiobooks are more effective in enhancing vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension, consistent with Piaget's constructivist theory, which emphasizes knowledge construction through multimodal interaction. Thus, Spotify Audiobooks can be considered a promising supplementary medium in language learning.

Keywords: Spotify Audiobook; Vocabulary Acquisitions; Students' Reading Achievements.

Reading is one of the fundamental skills among the four basic competencies in English learning besides of Speaking, Listening and Writing Simanjutak (2024). The primary reason is that through reading activities students can receive the main information Melani (2018). Therefore, the reading process requires sequential and systematic procedures to produce learning progress in accordance with proper stages Munif et al. (2025). Good reading skills enable students to comprehend texts, acquire new knowledge, and expand their vocabulary, which is important for effective communication (Andanty et al. 2024; Syahidin, 2020).

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), reading ability is closely related to vocabulary mastery. Students are required to recognize and understand words in a text in order to construct meaning from it. Students with limited vocabulary knowledge often experience difficulties in comprehending

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the context of the texts they read. This situation influenced by several factors such as insufficient background knowledge, low interest and motivation in reading, and limits use of appropriate learning models or media Putri & Priyanti (2023) Furthermore, this low performance reflects deeper challenges including monotonous teaching methods, frequent use of Bahasa Indonesia in English classes, and a rigid curriculum that restricts student engagement and comprehension (Oktaviana et al., 2020; Rahayu et al., 2024). Consequently, efforts to strengthen vocabulary mastery through effective reading practices remain a primary concern in the EFL learning context. This issue is supported by the condition of reading literacy in Indonesia, particularly in learning English as a foreign language, which remains relatively low. According to the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2022 conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Indonesia ranked 67th out of 81 participating countries in reading literacy, indicating that many students still struggle to effectively understand and interpret written texts. One critical factor behind poor reading performance is limited vocabulary mastery. A rich vocabulary enables students to understand sentence structures, derive meaning from texts, and communicate effectively Astika (2016). Without sufficient vocabulary, students encounter difficulties interacting with texts, resulting in decreased motivation and weak reading comprehension. Therefore, it is important to explore innovative ways to make reading activities more engaging and supportive of students' vocabulary enrichment.

Along with the growth of technology in the digital era, traditional approaches to teaching reading have shifted toward digital approaches. Various reading sources have transformed into diverse formats such as websites, e-books, e-journals, emails, instant messages, blogs, and others Obaidullah & Rahman (2018). Meanwhile, changes in students' characteristics have also encouraged educators to reflect on their roles in developing innovative learning approaches, in line with the growing awareness of 21st-century competencies, particularly technological literacy in the modern world Korkmaz & Öz (2021). Digital learning environments provide opportunities for learners to interact with language input through other skills such as listening, speaking, writing, and even collaborative skills (Khoirunnisaa et al., 2025). One digital medium that has gained increasing attention in recent years is Audiobooks. According to Sugiharto and Susanto (2024) cited in Hamsidar et al. (2025), Audiobooks expose learners to authentic pronunciation, intonation, and language use in understanding the content of a story. Audiobooks can be utilized as an alternative medium for foreign language learning, particularly in English language instruction, as they enable students to more easily comprehend and retain a foreign language through the integration of written text and auditory input in the form of spoken word pronunciation Rizkia et al. (2024).

Previous studies have consistently reported that audiobooks and audio-visual media contribute positively to reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and motivation among EFL students. Research conducted by (Rahman & Hajar, 2020), entitled "The Effect of Audiobook on Reading Comprehension of the Eleventh Grade Students of SMA Negeri 2 Buru," showed that students' comprehension improved with audiobook-assisted instruction compared to conventional text-based teaching. Similarly, a study by Shanti (2021), entitled "Pemanfaatan Media Audio Visual Untuk Pemerolehan Belajar Retensi Teks Naratif Dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris," found that the use of audio-visual media increased engagement and learning outcomes by activating multiple sensory channels. These findings indicate that multimodal input plays an important role in supporting language learning, particularly in reading skills.

In Kress's (2005) study, as cited in

Nabhan & Hidayat (2018), a multimodal approach is defined as an approach that attends to all culturally shaped semiotic resources such as images, gestures, layout, written text, and spoken language that are available for the construction of meaning. This perspective emphasises that meaning-making is not confined to linguistic elements alone, but is formed through the interaction of multiple representational resources. Furthermore, Nabhan and Rahmat assert that multimodality may be identified through the diverse uses and combinations of various modes. In other words, multimodality is reflected in the integration and orchestration of different semiotic modes that collectively contribute to the process of meaning construction.

In the Indonesian EFL context, empirical research examining audiobook-based learning remains limited, particularly at the senior high school level. Although Indonesia continues to face challenges in reading literacy and vocabulary mastery, as indicated by international assessments such as PISA, only a few studies have investigated how digital media aligned with students' everyday technological habits can be effectively integrated into English language teaching. Moreover, existing research rarely focuses on vocabulary acquisition as the primary outcome, even though vocabulary plays a crucial role in reading comprehension and overall language proficiency.

Generation Z or Gen Z is known as a society of learners who grow and develop alongside digital technology, resulting in a strong tendency to use internet-based media in their daily activities, including learning Hastini et al. (2020). These characteristics require educators to utilize digital platforms familiar to them as learning tools. In the educational context, a comprehensive understanding of the characteristics of each generation is a crucial aspect in formulating and determining effective and relevant learning strategies for students Urba et al. (2024). Urba further explains that the use of digital media as a learning tool is considered capable of improving the effectiveness of the learning process because it accelerates learning while helping students understand the material delivered by the teacher more optimally.

One digital audio platform, Spotify, has become a popular music streaming service among teenagers Amanda (2022). The writer found that in addition to being used for listening to music and podcasts, Spotify also provides a wide variety of playlists. Some of these Spotify audiobook playlists offer transcripts that can facilitate vocabulary learning. However, empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of Spotify Audiobook Playlists as a learning medium in EFL classrooms are rare.

Thus, there is a clear research gap in examining the effectiveness of Spotify audiobook-based learning for vocabulary acquisition among Indonesian senior high school students. Addressing this gap is essential to provide empirical support for integrating familiar digital platforms into EFL teaching and to extend existing research on audiobook assisted learning in authentic educational contexts. In addition, this study is grounded in Cognitive Load Theory in learning and Piaget's Constructivist Theory, which state that learners actively construct knowledge through interaction with stimuli and prior cognitive structures. Therefore, research on the impact of integrating Spotify Audiobooks on vocabulary mastery among Indonesian senior high school students refers to the following research question: "Does the Use of Spotify Audiobook Significantly Improve Senior High School Students' Vocabulary Acquisition Compared to Conventional Reading Activities?

Method

This study employed a Quasi-Experimental design with a non-equivalent control group and utilized pretest and post-test measurements to examine students' vocabulary achievement before and after the implementation of Spotify Audiobooks. This design was selected to allow the researchers to

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administer the treatment in a real classroom setting without altering the existing class structure or reassigning students, making it more appropriate for this study.

The participants in this study were tenth-grade students from a senior high school and a vocational high school in Surabaya and Sidoarjo. Cluster random sampling was applied to select intact classes based on comparable institutional characteristics, including "A" level school accreditation and the geographical proximity of the two schools. This method was chosen to minimize interschool confounding variables such as differences in teaching quality and instructional practices between the two schools.

A total of 60 students participated in the experimental and control groups. To control potential confounding factors, both groups received instruction with the same duration and learning objectives, and a pretest was administered to assess baseline vocabulary ability. To ensure initial equivalence, a pilot study was conducted to determine the prior abilities of both groups, thereby strengthening the validity of the effect of Spotify Audiobooks on students' vocabulary enrichment.

The primary instrument used in this study was a vocabulary test designed to measure students' cognitive understanding of English vocabulary. The instrument consisted of two types of items: Multiple Choice questions and fill-in-the-blank questions. These formats were chosen to assess both receptive and productive aspects of vocabulary knowledge. The same instrument used for both the pretest and post-test. To minimize test familiarity effects, the order of the items adjusted during post-test activities. Students could complete the pretest and post-test that had been distributed through Google Forms on their personal accounts.

Prior to the main data collection, a pilot study was conducted to evaluate the quality of the research instrument. According to Hertzog (2008), the sample size used in a pilot study is approximately 10% of the intended sample. This test was carried out in a senior high school in Surabaya, where the researcher distributed the test through Google Forms that could be accessed on each student's device.

After collecting the pilot study data, the researcher then measured the validity and reliability of the test items used. Suggesting by Sugiyono (2016)valid data collection requires the use of proper tools or instruments.

Item validity was examined using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Items were considered valid if the correlation coefficient exceeded the critical value (r-count > r-table) and the significance level was below 0.05. Invalid items were revised or removed before the final instrument was administered. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. An alpha coefficient greater than 0.60 considered acceptable, indicating internal consistency of the instrument. The results of the pilot study demonstrated that the final set of items met both validity and reliability criteria. Therefore, the instrument was deemed suitable for measuring students' vocabulary achievement in the main study.

Items	(r^{table})	Correlation Results	sig (r^{count})	Disc.
Q1	0,444	0,662	0,001	VALID
Q2	0,444	0.261	0,266	INVALID
Q3	0,444	0,263	0,263	INVALID
Q4	0,444	0,123	0,604	INVALID
Q5	0,444	0,669	0,001	VALID
Q6	0,444	0,737	0,000	VALID
Q7	0,444	0,182	0,442	INVALID
Q8	0,444	0,410	0,073	VALID
Q9	0,444	0,727	0,000	VALID
Q10	0,444	0,737	0,000	VALID
Q11	0,444	0,279	0,233	INVALID
Q12	0,444	-0,055	0,818	INVALID
Q13	0,444	0,596	0,006	VALID
Q14	0,444	0,024	0,921	INVALID
Q15	0,444	-	-	INVALID

Table 1. Correlation Table Results (Multiple Choices)

This study's pilot test involved 15 items presented in a Multiple Choices and Fill-in-the Blank format. This question was distributed

using Google Forms to be answered by the students. Afterward, the data was processed to obtain the validity of each item question used for the pilot study. The writer used the code "Q" (Question) to indicate the question items. The instruments validity correlation on Multiple Choices question results can be seen in Table 1.

The writer also used the code "A1-E2"to indicate the question items. The instruments validity correlation on Fill-in-the Blank question results can be seen in Table 2 below:

Items	(r^{table})	Correlation Results	sig (r^{count})	Disc.
A1	0,444	0,649	0,002	VALID
B1	0,444	0,722	0,000	VALID
C1	0,444	0,600	0,005	VALID
D1	0,444	0,709	0,000	VALID
E1	0,444	0,535	0,015	VALID
A2	0,444	0,775	0,000	VALID
B2	0,444	0,552	0,012	VALID
C2	0,444	0,045	0,851	INVALID
D2	0,444	0,834	0,000	VALID
E2	0,444	0,680	0,001	VALID

Table 2. Correlation Table Result (Fill-in-the Blank)

From the statement on the table above the item has been revised, and the invalid items have been revalidated. Therefore, the results of the appropriate question items are obtained Reliability refers to the consistency of a measurement instrument in producing stable results over time. In this study, reliability was measured using Cronbach's Alpha, which, according to Sanaky et al. (2021) indicates the quality and dependability of a research instrument; a coefficient above 0.600 is generally considered acceptable. The preliminary test, conducted with 20 students using validated multiple-choice and essay items, allow a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.810 for the fill-in-the blank test model based on 10 valid items. Since 0.810 exceeds 0.600, the instrument was considered reliable and met the required reliability criteria. This can be seen in the reliability test results table 3 below:

Reliability Statistics			
Multiple Choice		Fill-in-the blank	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.810	10	.865	7

Table 3. Reliability Test Cronbach's Alpha result

Data for this research were gathered from student' vocabulary assessments through pretest and post-test. A descriptive data analysis was performed to identify changes in average vocabulary scores before and after the pretest and the implementation of the Spotify Audiobooks playlist treatment. This analytical description highlights the frequency distribution of vocabulary improvements among Senior High School students.

The data analysis technique used comparative analysis, which compares two or more group conditions. The statistical data used in the research included the Data Normality Test and the Independent sample t-test. The data analysis was carried our using SPSS 26.

Result & Discussion

The researcher used SPSS version 26 to process and obtain statistical values such as the mean, average, and highest pretest scores in both the experimental and control groups. The findings are presented in Table 4:

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
pretest_experiment	30	50	90	73.33	10.114
pretest_control	30	40	85	60.50	12.412
Valid N (listwise)	30				

Table 4 Descriptive Statistics on Experimental and Control Class (Pretest)

The data indicates that the experimental class has a pretest average of 73.33, while the control class's pretest value is 60.50. The variation in pretest outcomes between the experimental and control groups is 12.83.

The normality test used to find out the variable data that has been used is normally distributed or not. In this study, the normality data design used the Shapiro-Wilk function. This function used because the research sample

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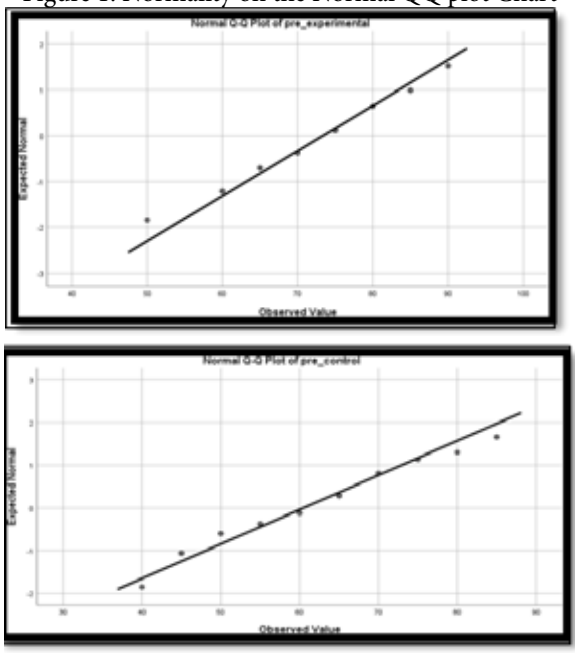
used is less than 100 participants. The Shapiro-Wilk calculation was calculated using SPSS ver. 26. If the data is normally distributed, the sig. value is > 0.05, and if the data is not normal, the sig value is < 0.05.

The summary indicates that the data utilized in the preliminary test, or pretest, matches to a normal distribution, as determined by the Shapiro-Wilk test. The significant value for the experimental class is 0.226, which is greater than 0.05 (0.226 > 0.05), and the significance value for the control class is 0.110 also exceeding 0.05 (0.110 > 0.05). Thus, it can be inferred that the pretest data from both the experimental and control groups exhibit a normal distribution pattern. Figure 1 presents the Normality Q-Q Plot chart for the preliminary test (pretest) of both the experimental and control classes.

Figure 1. Normality on the Normal QQ plot Chart



The Normal Q-Q Plot in Figure 1 indicate that the distribution of the circular points is generally clustered to the right of the line, with only a few points deviations from it. A lover distance of points from the line indicates a higher normality of the data Akhtar, (2018). The analysis indicates that the distribution of pretest scores in the experimental and control groups aligns with a normal pattern.

As the results of the earlier normality test confirmed that both groups' pretest data were normally distributed, the subsequent analysis involved conducting an independent samples t- test on their initial scores. The objective is to determine whether a significant difference exists in the pretest outcomes of the two classes. Using the statistical hypothesis (H0: $\mu1 \leq \mu2$, Ha: $\mu1 > \mu2$), with $\alpha = 0.05$, where H0 suggests that there is no difference in the average student learning outcomes following the use of Spotify Audiobook media on student reading achievement, and Ha states that there is a difference in the average student learning outcomes after using Spotify Audiobook media on student reading achievement.

The test was conducted using SPSS version 26, with the findings provided in the Table 5 below:

Group Class	Mean	t^{table} sig. 5% (df=30)	t^{count}	P value/ Sig. (2-tailed)
Experimental	73.33	1.697	4.390	0.000
Control	60.50			0.000

Table 5. Independent Sample T-test Experimental and Control Class Pretest

According to Table 4.3, the results of the pretest independent sample t-test for the experimental and control groups indicate an average pretest score (df = 30) are 2.923. The p-value/significance (2-tailed) for both classes is 0.000. The value of tcount = 4.390 from ttable = 1.679.

If the p-value = 0.000 exceeds $\alpha = 0.05$, then H0: $\mu1 \leq \mu2$ is rejected, while Ha: $\mu1 > \mu2$ is allowed. And the tcount > ttable = 4.390 > 1.679 means to rejected H0 and accepted Ha. The pretest results in reading achievement between the experimental and control groups imply that the use of Spotify Audiobook media contributed to differences in students' average learning outcomes.

Based on table 6, the mean post-test score for the experimental class is 83.17, compared to 69.67 for the control class, reflecting a 13.5-point gap in their performance.

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
osttest_experiment	30	65	95	83.17	8.251
osttest_control	30	55	90	69.67	9.463
alid N (listwise)	30				

Table 6 Descriptive Statistic of Experimental and Control Class Post-test

The normality of the post-test scores in both the experimental and control groups was evaluated to determine if the data followed a normal distribution. This was done using the Shapiro-Wilk test via SPSS version 26, adopting a 0.05 level of significance, as was done in the pretest analysis.

The summary indicates that the data utilized in the final test, or post-test, matches to a normal distribution, as determined by the Shapiro-Wilk test. The significance value obtained for the experimental group is 0.072, which exceeds the threshold of 0.05 (0.072 > 0.05), while the control group also shows a significance value of 0.125, besides above 0.05 (0.125 > 0.05). Thus, it can be inferred that the post-test data from both the experimental and control groups follow a normal distribution. Figure 2 presents the Normal Q-Q Plot graphic for the final test (post-test) of both the experimental and control classes.

Figure 2. Normality on the Normal QQ plot Chart

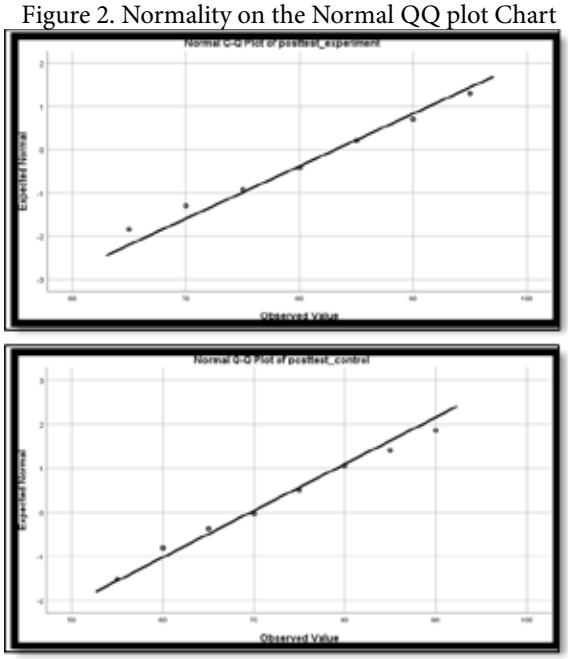


Figure 2 indicates that the Normal QQ Plot analysis for both groups indicate an encouraging trend. This is signified by a point that departs to the right, forecasting favourable outcomes on the final test results (post-test) in both the experimental and control groups of this study.

In order to compare the two variable values in this study, Following the confirmation of normal distribution in the data through the normality test, the subsequent analysis was carried out. An Independent t-test was employed to examine the differences in the average scores between two separate variable groups. Data will be considered significant if tcount exceeds ttable at the 5% significance level and the p-value is less than 0.05. This study used an independent t-test to compare the post-test learning scores of the experimental and control classes. The Independent t-test was conducted using SPSS version 26 (refer to the attached page for the SPSS output).

Group Class	Mean	t^{table} sig. 5% (df=30)	t^{count}	P value/ Sig. (2-tailed)
Experimental	83.17	1.697	5.890	0.000
Control	69.67			0.000

Table 7. Independent Sample T-test Experimental and Control Class Pretest

The summary of the independent t-test results indicates that the experimental class has an average score of 83.17, whereas the control class has an average score of 69.67. The tcount is 5.890, with a significance (2-tailed) of 0.000, while the ttable value at 5% significance is 1.697. Consequently, it can be concluded that the value of tcount exceeds ttable (5.890 > 1.697) with a significance level below 0.05 (p = 0.000 < 0.05). Consequently, H0 is rejected and Ha is accepted indicating a difference in the results between the experimental and control classes.

The findings indicate that the experimental group utilising Spotify Audiobooks achieved a significantly greater increase in vocabulary compared with the

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control group (mean post-test score 83.17 versus 69.67). This difference of 13.5 points suggests that audiobook-based instruction provides additional benefits beyond those of traditional teaching approaches. This phenomenon may be interpreted through several theoretical frameworks.

In line with these results, this study also refers upon Intrinsic Cognitive Load Theory. According to Yohanes (2016), as cited in Zarkasyi et al. (2024), intrinsic cognitive load refers to the mental effort imposed when individuals engage with tasks or information that are inherently complex. This perspective suggests that learners benefit when knowledge is presented in formats that minimise unnecessary cognitive strain. In conventional reading instruction, students are required simultaneously to decode meaning and interpret contextual cues, with the entire process relying predominantly on a single visual channel, thereby increasing the risk of cognitive overload. Spotify Audiobooks integrate audio narration with optional transcripts, offering multimodal input that distribute cognitive processing across auditory and visual channels in accordance with the principle of dual channel processing. Such an approach facilitates more effective contextual vocabulary processing than reading alone.

Another theoretical framework supports this study is Constructivist Theory, adapted from J. Piaget. Constructivist learning theory posits that learners are considered to have learned when they actively construct their own understanding of the world by gathering and interpreting information in relation to their prior experiences Suryana et al. (2022) Learning is therefore not merely the passive reception of information from teachers, but an active process in which students process, interpret, and connect new knowledge with existing cognitive structures. Within the context of this study, Spotify Audiobooks enable learners to actively develop vocabulary knowledge through contextual exposure. For example, when students encounter unfamiliar vocabulary in a narrative or accompanying transcript, they do not simply memorise the term: rather, they integrate new information into their existing cognitive frameworks. This process promotes active vocabulary acquisition rather than passive memorisation. As an illustration, when learners encounter a word such as "exhaustion" in a story describing a character running for an extended period, they may initially assimilate it into an existing schema of "tiredness". Through repeated contextual cues, tone of voice, surrounding sentences, and emotional expression, they progressively refine and accommodate their understanding of the concept as representing a more intense level of fatigue. This demonstrates that meaning is constructed progressively through contextual interpretation and reinforced auditory input, in accordance with constructivist principles.

Despite these promising findings, several limitations must be acknowledged. Access to Spotify Premium subscriptions may restrict the generalisability of the results, as not all students are able to maintain continuous access. The availability of transcripts varies across audiobook titles, which may limit the potential multimodal advantage. Furthermore, the study was conducted with students from Surabaya and Sidoarjo, thereby limiting the representativeness of the sample.

Although normality testing and independent t-test analysis indicated significant differences between groups, the experimental class demonstrated a higher mean pre-test score (73.33 versus 60.50). This suggests that pre-existing differences in English proficiency, socio-economic background, or access to technology may have influenced the outcomes. To enhance the validity of future studies, these characteristics should be more rigorously controlled, for example by matching participants across schools or by employing statistical procedures such as ANCOVA to account for baseline differences.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that using Spotify Audiobooks significantly improves student vocabulary and reading proficiency, especially among tenth-grade learners. The Independent Sample T-test demonstrated a significant difference between the experimental and control groups, with an average score disparity of 13.5 points, hence validating the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (Ha). However, there are several restrictions must be addressed. The availability of transcripts in Spotify Audiobooks remains limited, potentially affecting learners who depend on multimodal information. The brief length of the intervention and variances in school environments may have impacted the findings, with potential confounding factors such as socioeconomic disparities or teacher- related differences not being completely accounted for. These constraints indicate that caution is required when extending the results.

In practice, teachers can integrate audiobooks as an additional tool to enrich vocabulary learning, provided they receive training to align the material with curriculum objectives and institutional support for digital access, while encouraging student participation inside and outside the classroom. Future research should examine the long-term impact of audiobook use, compare different platforms, and analyse their effectiveness at various proficiency levels, as well as clarify the mechanisms behind their benefits, whether from auditory input, transcript availability, technological uniqueness, or a combination of these factors.

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