

EFL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF USING YOUTUBE IN AN ACADEMIC LISTENING CLASS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to explore EFL students' perceptions about using YouTube in an EFL listening class to confirm the benefits of using YouTube in enhancing EFL students' listening ability, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic. Using descriptive qualitative research method, the data were collected through semi-structured interviews with five university students. The results of this research indicate that YouTube visuals help students to understand better, YouTube features help students to do note-taking, and YouTube helps students to improve listening skills. YouTube needs a good internet connection, YouTube has various content, and YouTube unsubtitled videos are students' perceptions toward the use of YouTube in their online academic listening classes. This study is expected to give some practical ideas about how YouTube can be used in an EFL listening class to support EFL students in improving their listening skills. This research can give opportunities for further research to explore more about how YouTube affects students' goals in other listening classes, what other platforms students might use in their listening classes, and how much these platforms have contributed to the students' listening skill improvements.

Keywords: *EFL Students' Perceptions, Online Listening Class, Youtube.*

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INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 is a popular natural phenomenon that has been happening all over the world. This pandemic has impacted individual and community activities, such as those in the education system (Marinoni et al., 2020; Nartiningrum & Nugroho, 2020). Due to the spread of COVID-19, almost all teaching-learning activities in English as a Foreign Language (henceforth called EFL) classes are conducted online (Moorhouse, 2020; Nartiningrum & Nugroho, 2020; Susilowati, 2020).

One of the learning activities at the university level in the Indonesian context affected by this pandemic is listening activities (Nurkhamidah, 2021; Susilowati, 2020). Across the literature, listening is considered one of the most difficult skills for EFL learners (Pratama & Widianingsih, 2020; Poeryono et al., 2021; Shafwati et al., 2021). Students will likely experience more challenges in the COVID-19 situation when they do their listening activities, such as in the Academic Listening class in the English Language Education Program at Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana, Salatiga (henceforth called PBI-UKSW). Because of the online

class, the students feel more frustrated since they cannot be guided and monitored directly by their lecturers in learning listening activities. Moreover, in the academic listening class, students need to practice a lot (Yuyun & Simamora, 2021) and understand listening materials presented in the form of academic conversations, lectures, and English proficiency tests. To master the listening skill, EFL students need superior proficiency to grasp texts and obtain vocabulary, stress, pronunciation, and intonation (Saputra, 2018). They assume that it becomes more complex when the listening activities require them to practice listening alone without help from lecturers. Moreover, many of them find it difficult to learn to listen to audio which makes them bored easily (Rizkan et al., 2019; Rorimpandey, 2019).

In that situation, the YouTube platform is one popular and attractive teaching medium, especially in English language teaching. It is a video-based platform that provides authentic materials for students (Saputra, 2018). YouTube is often used in an Academic Listening class at PBI-UKSW because it can motivate the students by attracting students interest in learning activities. (Pratama & Widianingsih, 2020; Qomariyah et al., 2021; Saputra, 2018) and encourage students to improve their listening ability (Silviyanti, 2014; Yuyun & Simamora, 2021). Besides, it gives a lot of opportunities for students to practice their listening skills based on their needs. YouTube videos can support students' listening comprehension and encourage students to improve their interest in learning (Yuyun & Simamora, 2021).

Considering the challenging situations that students may overcome in the academic listening class during this pandemic and the benefits of using YouTube to support teaching and learning activities, the researcher is interested to answer the following research question: *What are academic listening students' perceptions about YouTube for their EFL listening skills?*

This study contributes to giving some practical ideas for EFL teachers regarding the use of YouTube in an EFL listening class to improve EFL students' academic listening skills. Besides, the research can be a reference for the students to maximize the potential of YouTube in their listening class to improve their listening ability.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definitions of Perceptions

In this study, perception is the process of how a person understands and gives meaning to an object or a stimulus that uses his/her senses so that the person can express his/her opinion, responses, and views of objects that he/she observes which will later affect individual behavior (Triyono & Febriani, 2018). Someone can respond to the information by involving their personal five senses to know, understand, and realize something as well (Gracella & Nur, 2020; Simanjuntak et al., 2021). Moreover, based on Soraya (2018), perception is a process of giving meaning that occurs to each individual in daily life when a person receives a stimulus in the form of information about an event, object, or others coming from the surrounding environment. Barber and Legge (2017) stated that perception is about receiving, selecting, acquiring, transforming, and organizing the information which is delivered through the human senses, and it can be around vision, hearing, smell, taste, and touch.

Definitions of YouTube

Previous studies reported the definitions of YouTube. YouTube is a platform where people can watch and upload videos for free and it only requires an internet connection (Balakrishnan et al., 2017; Roodt et al., 2017). According to Rorimpandey (2019), YouTube is defined as a website that provides various videos ranging from video clips to movies, also videos made by YouTube users themselves. Rorimpandey also stated that YouTube videos have recorded moving pictures accompanied by sounds that are selected to be used as learning media. Additionally, YouTube is considered a Web 2.0 site that provides a collection of information (Nuraini, 2019) in all fields of knowledge that can be accessed effortlessly (Heriyanto, 2015) and allows people to upload videos, watch and comment on them (Silviyanti, 2014). Besides, YouTube has features that can support students in the learning process such as search, play and pause, subtitle, playback speed, playlist, subscription, comment, like and dislike (Putri et al., 2020). In support of this, Alqahtani (2014) stated that "YouTube is a rich source of cultural authentic materials that can motivate students to interact in an educational capacity with popular cultures through English language videos" (p.12). He also mentioned that YouTube has a huge potential in EFL classrooms and its authentic videos can help students to learn and practice the language as it is used by English native speakers. Furthermore, Alqahtani (2014) claimed that YouTube can support students to develop their learning autonomy levels since it encouraged them to explore English language videos inside and outside the classroom.

Students' Perceptions of Using YouTube in EFL Listening Classes

Previous studies reported students' perceptions of using YouTube in EFL listening classes. Using YouTube in the classroom can help students to improve their listening ability (Chien et al., 2020; Fadhillah et al., 2021; Manurung, 2020; Mostajeran & Tabatabaei, 2019). According to Pratama et al. (2020), students believe that YouTube can raise their language ability and aspects, particularly listening skills which they prefer to watch videos that are made by native speakers. In addition, students claimed that they felt more attracted to and encouraged to learn listening skills by using YouTube as a learning medium during the learning process in the classroom (Al Jawad & Mansour, 2021; Qomariyah et al., 2021; Souha, 2019).

Besides enhancing and motivating students' listening comprehension, YouTube also helps EFL students to enrich their vocabulary (Damronglaohapan & Stevenson, 2013; Listiani et al., 2021; Saputra & Fatimah, 2018). Moreover, according to Nofrika (2019), using YouTube in the classroom can facilitate learners practice basic English skills. Likewise, Al Jawad and Mansour (2021) stated that YouTube could assist learners to see and listen to the language used in daily communication, expand EFL learners' cultural understanding of the target language, and can be used as a means to enhance discussion in EFL class.

Furthermore, YouTube can function as a motivator for learners who want to enhance their language skills by learning more about things they can freely access online by visiting the website or installing the application on their gadget (Rahman et al., 2022). Also, Chien et al. (2020) stated that YouTube can be deemed as a window that gives people the opportunity to see the world from a different perspective and expand someone's horizons. Based on Yuyun and Simamora (2021), YouTube affects learners positively in learning to listen and it helps learners

to learn the actual language in the classroom. The researchers mentioned previously had observed some students who assumed that YouTube could raise students' motivation and focus more on the listening sessions because they can watch videos during practicing listening which does not make them bored. Also, YouTube can increase college students' involvement and participation in the classroom and learning strategies (Heriyanto, 2015).

In addition, some researchers found that one of the features provided by YouTube that can help students to understand the materials or speakers is the subtitle or caption feature (Listiani et al., 2021; Putri et al., 2020). Based on Khoiroh's (2021) study, the subtitle feature is beneficial for students to know the spelling and help them to improve their vocabulary and pronunciation by reading the subtitle from the video. Furthermore, Fadhillah et al. (2021) claimed that if the students find it difficult to comprehend the YouTube videos' content, they can turn the subtitles on so that they can obtain the language.

There is plenty of research that has been carried out globally to investigate students' perceptions toward using YouTube in listening classes. In Indonesia, for instance, Poeryono et al. (2021) conducted a study that investigated the students' motivation to learn listening by using YouTube. The researchers employed a case study by means of a questionnaire and interviews to collect data on 8 students from the University of Singaperbangsa Karawang. The findings of the study revealed that students agreed to use YouTube in learning listening because it has valuable materials for them, provides an understanding of their language, is attractive, enhances their listening skills, and they also feel motivated to learn listening by using YouTube.

Another relevant study was undertaken by Medoukali (2015) in the EFL context in Algeria. The study aims to examine the impact of YouTube on developing students' listening abilities. The researcher used a qualitative method with a questionnaire to obtain the data required. The sample of this research was 50 participants from the sophomore students of English language at the University of Mohamed Kheider in Biskra. The results of this research showed that the students seemed very interested in using YouTube videos in the classroom in order to improve their listening comprehension.

However, since YouTube is an internet-based platform, Jones and Cuthrell (2011) found that accessing YouTube needs a strong internet connection and limited bandwidth since the video quality depends on the network load. Moreover, Zhou et al. (2020) stated that the limitation of internet connection could affect the quality of YouTube videos which possibly can prevent the learning process. This study is in line with the study conducted by Putri et al. (2020) in the Indonesian context. The aim of the study is to determine the EFL students' perceptions and the strengths and weaknesses of self-regulated learning using YouTube. The researcher applied the qualitative method with a descriptive study using questionnaires and interviews. The participants were four undergraduate students from a university in Indonesia who were majoring in English education. One

of the findings is some students were distracted when the YouTube videos suddenly stopped because of the unstable internet connection which sometimes made them find a place with a better connection or free Wi-Fi.

To sum up, all of the previous studies reviewed above reconfirmed the benefits of using YouTube in EFL listening classes. The findings of those studies

will help the researcher to gain a better understanding of how YouTube affects EFL students' listening ability and see if the research participants of this study have similar perceptions to those reported by the previous studies.

RESEARCH METHOD .

Context of the Study

This descriptive qualitative research collected data from the sophomore students of an Academic Listening course at PBI-UKSW in the academic year 2020-202. The academic listening course was designed in order to guide the students to be able to master listening skills for academic purposes, such as academic conversations, lectures, and English proficiency tests (Ani, 2018; Timotius, 2020). To try to help the students to train their listening ability for the academic listening course, the lecturers provided additional materials taken from YouTube. Therefore, when this course was ongoing, students had their own perceptions of the use of YouTube in learning academic listening.

Research Participants

The participants in this study were five EFL students from Academic Listening classes at PBI-UKSW. Ary et al. (2010) stated that the qualitative method uses small samples. More specifically, the researcher employed criterion sampling (see Ary et al., 2010) as she established the criteria and included the cases that cover the criteria. According to Moser and Korstjens (2018), "the most prominent criterion is the participant's experience with the phenomenon under study" (p.11). Criteria for selecting the research participants in this study were students who had taken the academic listening course during the COVID-19 pandemic era and had experienced using YouTube in their listening class at PBI-UKSW in the academic year 2020-2021. The identity of the participants was not linked in the interview sessions and remained confidential.

Data Collection Instruments

In order to collect the data, the research employed semi-structured. According to Stucky (2013), "in a semi-structured interview, the researcher sets the outline for the topics covered, but the interviewee's responses determine the way in which the interview is directed" (p. 57). Stucky believed that this type of interview could give clear instructions to interviewers and could give reliable and comparable qualitative data.

The semi-structured interview brought advantages to this study. The semi-structured interview provided opportunities for both interviewer and interviewee to have an in-depth understanding of the topic, and it permitted the researcher to guide the interview freely based on the interviewee's answers (Oun & Bach, 2014). Additionally, Ani (2018) claimed that semi-structured interviews could give flexibility for the researcher to add follow-up questions for some answers given during the interview session. In this study, the interview questions were adapted from Kaddour and Laloui (2020); Gracella and Nur (2020). The questions are as follows:

Table 1. List of Interview Questions

No.	Interview Questions	Adapted/generated from
1.	Have you taken an academic listening class?	

2.	Was the class that you took already in the pandemic situation?	
3.	In your opinion, how is your listening class?	
4.	What is your opinion about using YouTube in your learning process?	Kaddour and Laloui (2020)
4.1	What benefits do you receive after learning English using a YouTube application?	Gracella and Nur (2020)
4.2	What are the challenges after learning English using a YouTube application?	

Data Collection Procedures

In collecting the data, the researcher used semi-structured interviews in Bahasa Indonesia in order to make the interview session clearer. First, the researcher developed questions (see Table 1) for the interview sessions. Second, the researcher conducted the pilot test with three PBI-UKSW students who have taken Academic Listening courses during the COVID-19 pandemic using the same questions. Then, the researcher reviewed and analyzed the data from the pilot test to finalize the questions for the semi-structured interviews. Moreover, the researcher asked permission from five participants to conduct the interviews via Zoom meeting. Finally, the researcher analyzed the data that had been collected.

Data Analysis Procedures

Thematic analysis was applied in this research study in order to analyze the interview data. Thematic analysis is the method of analyzing data by emerging themes from the data and is not imposed by the researcher (Dawson, 2009). "Thematic analyses move beyond counting explicit words or phrases and focus on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas within the data, that is, themes" (Guest et al., 2012, p. 9). In data analysis procedures, there were several steps the researcher needed to accomplish. First, the researcher transcribed the interview data after acquiring the data needed to help the researcher find the information easier. Second, after transcribing the data, the researcher reread the transcription to analyze the data. Last, the researcher concluded the analysis findings at the end of the study.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Finding

This study aimed to answer the following research question: *What are academic listening students' perceptions about YouTube for their EFL listening skills?* The researcher revealed six themes as the answers to the research question as provided in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Finding

Attributions	Number	Percentage
YouTube visuals help students to understand better	5	20,8%
YouTube features help students to do note-taking	5	20,8%

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YouTube helps students to improve their listening skills	5	20,8%
YouTube needs good connection	4	16,6%
YouTube has various contents	3	12,5%
YouTube has unsubtitled videos	2	8,3%
Total Number	24	100%

Theme 1: YouTube visuals help students to understand the listening materials better

Five participants seemed interested since YouTube videos could help them to grasp the material better. It was because there were visuals they could watch, which would not make them bored when listening to the materials.

Excerpt 1

“Several materials in note-taking activities were taken from TED Talks on YouTube. With visuals, I could watch the facial expression and the pronunciation of the speakers, which could help me to understand what the speaker was saying.”
(S5/interview/translated by the researcher)

Excerpt 2

“Watching YouTube videos in the listening class was not boring since we could watch the expression and the body gesture of the speaker so it could help me to understand what the speaker was saying.”
(S1/interview/translated by the researcher)

The other three participants also mentioned similar information to S5's and

Theme 2: YouTube features help students to do note-taking

The academic listening lecturers provided some materials taken from YouTube in order to make the learning process easier. The students found that this online platform had some features that could help them to do note-taking while listening to the listening materials, as some students mentioned in the interview:

Excerpt 3

“In the note-taking activity, when the speaker was speaking too fast, I could turn the caption on, and sometimes I decreased the speed so that I could try to comprehend the speech.”
(S2/interview/translated by the researcher)

Excerpt 4

“On YouTube, the speed of the video could be set. Usually, I slowed down the speed to try to understand what the speaker was saying.”
(S3/interview/translated by the researcher)

Excerpt 5

“I could adjust the speed of the video. Especially when the speaker was talking too fast, I would slow down the speed.”
(S4/interview/translated by the researcher)

Theme 3: YouTube might help students to improve their listening skills

After learning through YouTube, participants found that their listening skills improved, as evidenced by the interviewees below:

Excerpt 6

“In this listening class, the lecturer usually provided the materials with an American and British accent. Then, learning through YouTube could help me get some world English accents I had not known before. Also, in the academic listening activities, I got a lot of new vocabulary that I knew from the subtitle of the YouTube videos. So I could say that my listening skill improved.”

(S1/interview/translated by the researcher)

Excerpt 7

“Surely the vocabulary also increased because there were many new words from the listening materials. Moreover, my listening skills improved such as could understand other English accents.”

(S4/interview/translated by the researcher)

Theme 4: YouTube needs a good internet connection

Even though some participants seemed comfortable using YouTube as their learning media, YouTube needs to be fully connected to the Internet connection.

Excerpt 8

“Internet connection was very influential when I was using YouTube because the signal in my area was not very good, so I was concerned about the connection since YouTube must be connected to the internet when the academic listening class was running.”

(S4/interview/translated by the researcher)

Excerpt 9

“Buffering could distress me when I watch a video because of the poor internet connection. Also, YouTube needed a lot of quotas, so it would be inconvenient if we did not have them.”

(S1/interview/translated by the researcher)

Excerpt 10

“When I took the academic listening class, I was in Kalimantan, where the internet connection was often in trouble, so it could interfere with me when I was listening to the material.”

(S5/interview/translated by the researcher)

Theme 5: YouTube has various EFL listening contents

It is well-known that YouTube has a variety of content in every field. In the academic listening class, the lecturer provided materials taken from YouTube to make the listening activity more interesting.

Excerpt 11

“Using YouTube as the learning material was exciting because there was various content that could make the learning more interesting, and we could find other videos that were similar to the materials given by the lecturer.”

(S1/interview/translated by the researcher)

Excerpt 12

“There was a lot of content on YouTube that made the material reference become wider.”

(S4/interview/translated by the researcher)

Theme 6: YouTube has unsubtitled videos

Some participants found an obstacle when watching the video from YouTube. They claimed that there were several videos that did not have subtitles, which confused them in understanding the materials.

Excerpt 13

"I had an experience in this listening class. The lecturer provided material from YouTube with no subtitles, which sometimes confused me in understanding what the speaker was saying."

(S2/interview/translated by the researcher)

Excerpt 14

"The subtitles that were not well-timed or even no subtitles could make me confused when I was doing the note-taking."

(S5/interview/translated by the researcher)

Discussion

The findings show that students have their own perceptions about using YouTube in the academic listening class they took during the COVID-19 pandemic situation. The researcher found the pluses and minuses of using YouTube in an academic listening class since YouTube was one of the online learning resources that had been used in the class during the pandemic era. Based on the interview data, the students seemed to have positive beliefs about using YouTube as their learning media in this listening class. The pluses of using YouTube in this class are YouTube visuals help students to understand better, YouTube features help students to do note-taking, YouTube helps students to improve listening skills, and YouTube has various content.

The first finding, YouTube visuals help students to understand better, is in line with Yuyun and Simamora (2021) YouTube could raise students' motivation and focus more on the listening sessions because they can watch videos during practicing listening which does not make them bored. This finding is also consistent with Pratama's (2010) study about students preferring to watch videos that are made by native speakers which can help them understand better. Moreover, to do the note-taking, the students must understand what the speaker is saying therefore, this finding is in consonance with Fadhillah et al. (2021) that stated if the students find it difficult to comprehend the YouTube videos' content, they can turn the subtitles on so that they can obtain the language. Furthermore, YouTube can help students to improve their listening skills is in agreement with Manurung (2020) that using YouTube can help students to improve their listening skills. The finding about YouTube having various content is similar to Rorimpandey's (2019) study which stated that YouTube provides various videos ranging from video clips to movies, also videos made by YouTube users themselves.

Apart from the positive perceptions above, the researcher found that YouTube had limitations for some students when they used this media in their learning process. First, YouTube needs a stable internet connection to make the learning process go smoothly. This finding is in accordance with Jones and Cuthrell's (2011) study that YouTube needs a strong internet connection and the video quality depends on the network load. Second, the researcher found that some students sometimes found that some YouTube videos did not have any subtitles which made them confused when listening to the material. This finding is in a different manner from Listiani et al. (2021) and Putri et al. (2020) which reported

that the subtitle feature of YouTube can help students to understand the material better.

These findings showed that using YouTube in an Academic Listening class might benefit students since they must take this class independently since it was conducted online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Apart from the benefits mentioned above, the researcher also found that using YouTube might have drawbacks that could distract students in the learning process.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The study came up with the following conclusions. There are pluses and minuses of using YouTube as the learning media in an academic listening class. The pluses are first, YouTube visuals can help them understand the material better. Second, YouTube features can help students to do note-taking. Third, YouTube helps students to improve their listening skills. Fourth, YouTube has various content that does not make students bored. However, there are some minuses such as YouTube needing a good internet connection to make the listening activity runs smoothly and some YouTube videos do not provide subtitle which made the students feel confused when they are trying to understand the material.

Based on the study conclusion, the researcher would like to suggest some recommendations, especially for the academic listening class. First, since this class only used two learning management systems such as Schoology and YouTube, it may be better if the lecturers can make YouTube channels to interact with the students by posting videos and commenting on them which is considered as a good method for both students and lecturers (Medoukali, 2015). Moreover, if the materials taken from YouTube do not have subtitles, the lecturers can implement the videos in the classroom to explain what the materials are about (Souha, 2019). Similarly, to cope with internet connection problems which can distract the learning process, the lecturers can provide laboratories for students to practice their listening comprehension (Medoukali, 2015). Furthermore, the lecturers can make different kinds of activities instead of the traditional method to increase the EFL students' motivation, engagement, and interest (Souha, 2019).

The limitations of this study should be acknowledged. The research findings are affected since the samples of this research were only a small number of participants. Additionally, the researcher had limited the data collection procedures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the researcher conducted the semi-structured interview sessions online via Zoom Meetings. Also, the participants were not asked to list about what other platforms they used in their listening class. As a result, the researcher could not tell if other platforms could contribute to the student's listening skills improvements. Furthermore, the researcher did not ask the participants about the effects of YouTube on their goals in their academic listening classes. This research can give opportunities for further research to explore more about how YouTube affects students' goals in other listening classes, what other platforms students might use in their listening classes, and how much these platforms have contributed to the students' listening skill improvements.

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