



## Self-Directed Learning through Streaming Platforms on Students' Listening Practices

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### ABSTRACT

In the digital era, streaming platforms have reshaped how students engage with English learning beyond the classroom by providing authentic and easily accessible input. They offer informal learning spaces that foster autonomy and continuous language exposure. This study explores the types of streaming platforms students use, how they practice listening through them, and the reasons behind their preferences. The researchers conducted a qualitative descriptive study involving 50 English major students who completed an online questionnaire and 10 students who participated in semi-structured interviews at a public university in Indonesia. The data were analyzed through several stages, beginning with initial coding to identify patterns and categories, followed by data reduction to refine and simplify the findings, and concluding with drawing conclusions based on the emerging key themes. A thematic analysis approach was used to interpret students' responses regarding their use of streaming platforms and the listening strategies they employed. The results reveal that students primarily rely on YouTube, Netflix, and Spotify, while Disney+ and Amazon Prime are less preferred due to subscription barriers. Participants practiced listening in different ways watching English films or series with or without subtitles, replaying specific scenes, listening to music and podcasts while noting new vocabulary, and reflecting on their comprehension. Their reasons for platform choice also varied: YouTube was valued for free access and flexibility, Netflix for authentic dialogue and cultural exposure, and Spotify for convenience during multitasking. These findings suggest that streaming platforms play a dynamic role not only as learning tools but as spaces where students independently regulate strategies, sustain motivation, and build listening proficiency in meaningful and personalized ways.

*Keywords: self-directed learning, streaming platforms, listening skills*

## Pembelajaran Mandiri melalui Platform Streaming terhadap Praktik Listening Siswa

### ABSTRAK

Di era digital, platform streaming telah mengubah cara mahasiswa mempelajari bahasa Inggris di luar kelas dengan menyediakan materi autentik yang mudah diakses. Platform ini menawarkan ruang belajar informal yang mendorong kemandirian dan paparan bahasa yang berkelanjutan. Penelitian ini menelusuri jenis platform streaming yang digunakan mahasiswa, cara mereka mempraktikkan keterampilan menyimak melalui platform tersebut, serta alasan di balik preferensi mereka. Peneliti menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan melibatkan 50 mahasiswa program studi Bahasa Inggris yang mengisi kuesioner daring dan 10 mahasiswa yang mengikuti wawancara semi-terstruktur di salah satu universitas negeri di Indonesia. Data dianalisis melalui beberapa tahap, mulai dari proses pengkodean awal untuk mengidentifikasi pola dan kategori, reduksi data untuk menyederhanakan temuan, hingga penarikan kesimpulan berdasarkan tema-tema utama yang muncul. Teknik analisis tematik digunakan untuk menafsirkan respons mahasiswa terkait penggunaan platform streaming dan strategi menyimak yang mereka terapkan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa lebih banyak mengandalkan YouTube, Netflix, dan Spotify, sedangkan Disney+ dan Amazon Prime kurang diminati karena kendala biaya langganan. Praktik menyimak dilakukan dengan beragam cara menonton film atau serial berbahasa Inggris dengan atau tanpa subtitle, mengulang bagian tertentu, mendengarkan musik dan podcast sambil mencatat kosakata baru, serta merefleksikan pemahaman mereka. Alasan pemilihan platform juga bervariasi: YouTube dipilih karena gratis dan fleksibel, Netflix karena dialog autentik dan nilai budaya, dan Spotify karena kemudahan digunakan saat melakukan aktivitas lain. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa platform streaming berperan dinamis tidak hanya sebagai alat belajar, tetapi juga sebagai ruang di mana mahasiswa secara mandiri mengatur strategi, mempertahankan motivasi, dan mengembangkan keterampilan menyimak secara bermakna dan personal.

*Kata kunci: pembelajaran mandiri, platform streaming, keterampilan menyimak*

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## INTRODUCTION

The integration of digital technology into education has reshaped how students engage with language learning, particularly in English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts. In recent years, streaming platforms such as YouTube, Netflix, and Spotify have gained immense popularity not only as sources of entertainment but also as informal learning environments. Unlike traditional language classrooms that often rely on structured textbooks and teacher-centered instruction, streaming platforms provide students with opportunities to access authentic audio-visual input at their convenience (Anderson, 2021). This shift has encouraged learners to take more responsibility for their own progress and, consequently, has promoted the concept of self-directed learning in language acquisition.

Listening comprehension is widely recognized as one of the most challenging skills for EFL learners. According to Field (2008), listening requires learners to decode sounds, identify vocabulary, recognize grammatical structures, and interpret meaning in real time, all of which place heavy cognitive demands on non-native speakers. Moreover, exposure to different accents, colloquial expressions, and natural speech rates often creates additional difficulties. Classroom-based instruction alone may not be sufficient to meet these demands, especially when exposure to authentic listening materials is limited. Streaming platforms, however, provide access to a variety of real-world English content, ranging from films and television series to podcasts and music, allowing students to practice listening skills in more natural and engaging contexts (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). Within this context, the concept of self-directed learning (SDL) offers a useful theoretical lens. Knowles (1975) defined SDL as a process in which learners take the initiative, with or without external assistance, in identifying their learning needs, setting goals, locating resources, choosing learning strategies, and evaluating outcomes. In language learning, SDL implies that students are not passive

recipients of knowledge but active participants who control the pace, resources, and strategies of their learning. Streaming platforms align with this concept by enabling students to select content according to their personal interests, to replay segments for better understanding, and to combine listening with additional aids such as subtitles. Previous studies by Holec (1981) and Little (1991) emphasized that learner autonomy, which grows out of SDL, is essential for long-term success in language learning.

Empirical research also supports the use of streaming platforms as tools for enhancing listening comprehension. Suryani and Ratna (2023) found that YouTube videos, when integrated into listening activities, significantly improved comprehension skills because learners could associate auditory input with visual cues. Similarly, Choi (2022) revealed that podcasts improved learners' ability to understand different accents and discourse styles, highlighting the importance of consistent exposure to authentic input. Richards and Schmidt (2019) also pointed out that motivation increases when students engage with real-life materials rather than relying solely on textbook-based listening exercises. Collectively, these studies suggest that streaming platforms play a dual role: they provide accessible resources and simultaneously foster learner motivation, both of which are essential for developing listening proficiency.

Despite these contributions, gaps remain in the literature, particularly in the Indonesian higher education context. While international research has examined the pedagogical value of platforms such as Netflix, YouTube, and Spotify, fewer studies have explored how Indonesian university students specifically use these platforms in self-directed ways to enhance their listening practices. Cultural and infrastructural factors, such as the widespread use of mobile devices and the availability of affordable internet data packages, may influence students' preferences and practices differently compared to learners in other countries. Therefore,



a localized study is needed to provide insights into how Indonesian learners adopt streaming platforms as part of their independent language learning strategies.

Given this background, the present study is guided by several key questions: what types of streaming platforms do students most frequently use in their listening practice, in what ways do they employ these platforms to improve their listening skills, and why do they prefer certain platforms over others? These questions are critical because understanding learners' choices and practices can help educators align teaching strategies with students' real-life engagement with digital media. The objectives of this research are therefore threefold: to identify the streaming platforms most commonly used by students, to describe the strategies they employ when practicing listening through these platforms, and to analyze the reasons underlying their platform preferences. In doing so, the study not only documents current practices but also contributes to the broader discourse on how streaming platforms support self-directed learning in EFL contexts.

The benefits of this study can be considered from both theoretical and practical perspectives. Theoretically, it enriches discussions of self-directed learning by extending the framework to contemporary digital environments. Practically, the findings may assist educators in designing supplementary learning activities that complement students' informal practices, thereby bridging the gap between classroom instruction and out-of-class learning. Moreover, students themselves may gain awareness of more effective ways to maximize streaming platforms as tools for improving listening comprehension.

In summary, the integration of streaming platforms into students' daily lives has opened new possibilities for developing listening skills beyond the classroom. By framing this phenomenon within the concept of self-directed learning, this study seeks to provide empirical evidence on how Indonesian university students use, practice, and justify their choices of streaming platforms for

listening. It is hoped that the results will shed light on the role of digital resources in fostering learner autonomy and enhancing language learning outcomes.

## METHOD

This research employed a descriptive qualitative design to investigate how students use streaming platforms to support their self-directed listening practices. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to capture participants' perspectives in a naturalistic setting and to generate rich, contextualized descriptions of the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2014). The descriptive orientation of the study aimed not to test hypotheses or establish causal relationships but rather to portray patterns of platform use, listening practices, and rationales in students' own terms. Such an approach is considered appropriate in applied linguistics research where the goal is to understand how learners experience and interpret their learning processes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The overall procedure of the research consisted of three stages: preparation, data collection, and analysis. In the preparation stage, the researchers developed research instruments consisting of a structured questionnaire and a semi-structured interview guide. Both instruments were designed to align with the research objectives and were reviewed by two experts in applied linguistics to ensure clarity and content validity. A small pilot study involving five students was conducted to refine the wording of the questions and to confirm their comprehensibility.

During the data collection stage, the questionnaire was distributed online via Google Forms, which provided efficiency and accessibility, allowing respondents to complete it at their convenience. To enrich and triangulate the questionnaire data, semi-structured interviews were subsequently conducted with selected participants. This method was chosen because semi-structured interviews provide both flexibility and focus, allowing researchers to probe participants' responses while still maintaining

consistency across interviews (Dörnyei, 2007). In the analysis stage, the responses from both instruments were transcribed, coded, and categorized, following the principle that themes should emerge inductively from the data rather than being imposed a priori (Patton, 2002).

The study was conducted at a public university in Indonesia during the even semester of the 2025 academic year, specifically from February to April 2025. The choice of this site was based on its diverse student population and its emphasis on English language education, which ensured that participants had sufficient exposure to English materials. The timing was also appropriate because by the second semester of the academic year, students had already completed introductory English courses and were expected to engage more actively in independent learning activities. This provided an ideal context for examining how streaming platforms supplement formal instruction and contribute to students' listening development. The population of the study consisted of English major students at a public university in Indonesia. A purposive sampling technique was used to recruit participants who actively engaged with streaming platforms for English learning. A total of 50 students completed the online questionnaire, and 10 students participated in semi-structured interviews. The selection was based on the diversity of their responses in the questionnaire, ensuring variation in platform preferences, listening strategies, and degrees of engagement in self-directed learning. The sample size was considered adequate for qualitative research, as it provided both sufficient breadth and depth while ensuring data manageability (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006).

Two instruments were used to collect data: a questionnaire and an interview guide. The questionnaire consisted of both closed-ended and open-ended items. The closed-ended questions gathered information on the types of streaming platforms students used and the frequency of their use, while the open-ended questions invited participants to elaborate on their listening practices

and the reasons for choosing particular platforms. The interview guide, meanwhile, was semi-structured and aimed to obtain more detailed information that could not be captured through the questionnaire alone. The guiding questions covered how students integrated streaming into their daily routines, the strategies they employed to enhance listening comprehension, and their evaluations of the strengths and limitations of each platform. Interviews were conducted virtually via video conferencing platforms, lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes, and were audio-recorded with participants' consent. This combination of instruments provided both breadth and depth of data, which is considered essential for triangulation in qualitative research (Dörnyei, 2007).

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of three concurrent activities: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the reduction stage, the raw data from the questionnaires and interviews were transcribed, coded, and organized into categories such as "platform preference," "listening practices," and "reasons for choice." The display stage involved arranging these categories into thematic matrices and tables to facilitate comparison across participants and to identify patterns of similarity and divergence. The final stage involved drawing and verifying conclusions by synthesizing the findings in relation to the research questions and theoretical framework. To strengthen the credibility of the analysis, triangulation was applied by comparing the results from the questionnaires and interviews. Member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary interpretations with selected participants to confirm their accuracy, while peer debriefing with fellow researchers was used to minimize researcher bias and enhance trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Although the study relied primarily on qualitative interpretation, descriptive statistics such as percentages were used to illustrate trends in platform usage.



Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the research process. Participants were informed of the objectives of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Written informed consent was obtained before data collection, and confidentiality was ensured by anonymizing responses and assigning pseudonyms in the reporting of findings. All digital data were securely stored and made accessible only to the research team. Such practices are consistent with ethical guidelines for qualitative research, which emphasize respect for participants' rights and protection of their identities (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

In conclusion, the methodological framework of this study was carefully designed to generate comprehensive and trustworthy insights into students' self-directed use of streaming platforms for listening practices. By combining questionnaires and interviews, and by applying both thematic analysis and descriptive statistics, the research captured the complexity of students' digital learning behaviors while ensuring rigor and validity.

## RESULT

The findings are presented in line with the three research questions: (1) the streaming platforms used by students, (2) the listening practices employed through these platforms, and (3) the reasons for selecting particular platforms.

### 1. Streaming Platforms Used by Students

The questionnaire data revealed that students relied on a variety of streaming platforms to support their English listening activities. The platforms mentioned by participants included YouTube, Netflix, Spotify, Disney+, and Amazon Prime, each offering different types of content and levels of accessibility. YouTube provides open access to an extensive range of videos such as tutorials, vlogs, and language learning materials. Netflix offers authentic movies and series with natural dialogues, while Spotify allows users to

listen to English songs and podcasts. Meanwhile, Disney+ and Amazon Prime are subscription-based services with limited regional availability in Indonesia. The frequency and percentage of how frequently these platforms were used among the 50 respondents:

1) YouTube	46 (92%)
2) Netflix	30 (60%)
3) Spotify	24 (48%)
4) Disney+	8 (16%)
5) Amazon Prime	5 (10%)

The data indicate that YouTube is by far the most widely used platform, with 92% of respondents reporting that they use it regularly for listening. Many students described YouTube as their "default" platform because of its free access, diverse range of content, and easy availability on mobile devices. In contrast, subscription-based services such as Netflix and Spotify were moderately popular, with 60% and 48% of students, respectively, reporting frequent use. Platforms requiring higher subscription costs or with limited regional access, such as Disney+ and Amazon Prime, were used by fewer than one-fifth of respondents.

Interviews confirmed these findings. Several students explained that YouTube is their first choice because it does not require payment and offers an almost limitless range of English-language materials. One participant noted:

*"YouTube is always available on my phone. I can watch tutorials, vlogs, or even short films in English without paying anything."*

Another student contrasted YouTube with Netflix:

*"Netflix is good for series and movies, but I cannot afford to subscribe every month. That is why I only use it when my friends share their account."*

These comments highlight the central role of affordability and accessibility in determining platform choice.

Differences also appeared between students in earlier and later semesters. Freshman and

sophomore students tended to rely more heavily on YouTube for short clips, tutorials, and subtitled videos. Meanwhile, upper-level students reported higher use of Netflix, often motivated by the desire to watch authentic dialogues and culturally rich content. Spotify was also more frequently used by students in advanced semesters, especially those who had already developed strong interest in podcasts.

In summary, the results suggest that while multiple streaming platforms are available, YouTube dominates because of its accessibility and free nature. Netflix and Spotify, though less universal, are important complementary resources for more advanced learners.

### 1. Students' Listening Practices through Streaming Platforms

The data from both the questionnaire and interviews reveal how students practiced their English listening skills through different streaming platforms. Questionnaire responses provided quantitative descriptions of their learning behaviors, while interviews offered deeper explanations of the strategies they used.

Based on the questionnaire data, the mean scores indicated that YouTube was the most actively used platform for listening practice ( $M = 4.52$ ,  $SD = 0.61$ ). Students frequently watched English videos such as short films, tutorials, and vlogs. Many reported turning on English subtitles to identify new vocabulary, replaying specific scenes, and imitating pronunciation to strengthen comprehension.

Netflix followed with a moderate mean score ( $M = 3.84$ ,  $SD = 0.73$ ). Students mainly watched English movies and series to understand authentic dialogues and expressions. They often paused or rewound certain parts, focused on intonation and accent differences, and used subtitles as scaffolding before gradually removing them as their confidence improved.

Spotify also gained a relatively high mean score ( $M = 3.65$ ,  $SD = 0.79$ ). Students used it to

listen to English songs and podcasts, especially while commuting or doing daily routines. Many participants said they searched for song lyrics to check meaning, repeated lines to mimic pronunciation, and took notes of unfamiliar vocabulary for later review.

In contrast, Disney+ ( $M = 2.48$ ,  $SD = 0.85$ ) and Amazon Prime ( $M = 2.31$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ) were used less frequently, mainly due to subscription costs and limited content availability. However, a few students mentioned watching English animations on Disney+ for easier comprehension because of slower speech and clearer articulation.

Interview results supported these findings. Students described combining entertainment with intentional learning for example, watching Netflix films for cultural exposure or listening to Spotify podcasts to adapt to natural conversation speed. This shows that their listening practices were not uniform across platforms but varied depending on content type, learning goals, and accessibility.

### 2. Reasons for Choosing Particular Platforms

The data from both the questionnaire and interviews revealed that students' reasons for choosing streaming platforms varied according to the type of platform and their individual learning habits. Overall, three recurring themes emerged from the responses: accessibility, content quality, and learning flexibility, with motivation intertwined across all categories.

YouTube was the most frequently mentioned platform in both datasets because it provides free access and consumes minimal internet data. Most questionnaire respondents rated its accessibility very high ( $M = 4.68$ ,  $SD = 0.57$ ). Interview participants emphasized that they could open YouTube anytime without payment, making it a practical option for daily listening exposure. Many described it as their "default" platform for learning English through tutorials, short clips, and vlogs. In contrast, Netflix was appreciated for its diverse and authentic content rather than accessibility. Students highlighted the high linguistic value of



its movies and series, which feature natural speech, idiomatic expressions, and varied accents. The mean score for content variety in Netflix was relatively high ( $M = 4.21$ ,  $SD = 0.69$ ). Interview excerpts revealed that learners often chose Netflix to improve comprehension of authentic conversations and cultural contexts. A student explained that watching dramas and documentaries helped them acquire new vocabulary and understand real-life interaction patterns.

Spotify was selected mainly for its flexibility and convenience. Students listened to songs and podcasts while multitasking during commuting, exercising, or doing household chores. The mean rating for flexibility was strong ( $M = 4.10$ ,  $SD = 0.72$ ). They stated that Spotify allowed them to practice listening “anytime and anywhere,” making it easier to maintain consistent exposure to English input without feeling pressured.

Meanwhile, Disney+ and Amazon Prime received lower ratings ( $M = 2.55$ ,  $SD = 0.88$  and  $M = 2.34$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ , respectively), primarily due to subscription costs and regional restrictions. However, a few students mentioned that Disney+ animations provided clearer pronunciation and simpler vocabulary, which were helpful for beginner-level listening practice.

Across all platforms, students expressed that motivation and enjoyment were crucial in sustaining their engagement. Several interviewees said that watching movies or listening to music did not feel like studying but gradually improved their comprehension and vocabulary awareness. This combination of enjoyment, accessibility, and authentic exposure explains why students actively integrated streaming platforms into their self-directed learning routines.

## DISCUSSION

The present study explored how university students in Indonesia use streaming platforms for self-directed listening practices. The results revealed three major themes: (1) the platforms most frequently used by students, (2) the listening

practices students employed, and (3) the reasons behind their choice of platforms. This discussion elaborates on these findings by linking them with theoretical perspectives on self-directed learning and listening comprehension, as well as previous empirical research on digital media in language education.

### 1. Streaming Platforms and Accessibility

The data revealed that YouTube was the most dominant platform, used by 92% of respondents. This finding is not surprising considering the accessibility, free availability, and rich content variety that YouTube offers. Similar results were found in Suryani and Ratna (2023), who argued that YouTube provides authentic, multimodal input that is particularly helpful for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. The widespread use of YouTube aligns with Knowles’s (1975) theory of self-directed learning, in which learners take responsibility for selecting resources according to their needs and circumstances. For many students in Indonesia, financial and technological accessibility makes YouTube the natural first choice.

In contrast, subscription-based platforms such as Netflix (60%) and Spotify (48%) were moderately used. Students in higher semesters were more likely to access these platforms, which suggests a gradual progression towards more advanced and diverse resources. This echoes Holec’s (1981) argument that autonomy develops gradually, as learners gain the skills to manage their own learning process. Advanced learners may be more willing to invest financially in platforms like Netflix or Spotify because they have clearer learning goals and greater appreciation of authentic input.

The limited use of Disney+ and Amazon Prime (16% and 10%, respectively) reflects contextual barriers such as cost and regional availability. In countries with stronger purchasing power, these platforms may play a larger role. For example, Choi

(2022) reported that Korean university students relied heavily on Netflix because of the platform's dominance in their context. By comparison, Indonesian students remain more reliant on free or shared-access platforms, underscoring the impact of socio-economic factors on resource selection.

Interview data supported these trends. One participant noted:

*"YouTube is always available on my phone. I can watch tutorials, vlogs, or even short films in English without paying anything."*

Another contrasted their YouTube usage with Netflix:

*"Netflix is good for series and movies, but I cannot afford to subscribe every month. That is why I only use it when my friends share their account."*

These testimonies illustrate how affordability and convenience drive student choices, while also showing that learners negotiate access creatively, such as by sharing subscriptions.

## 2. Listening Practices and Learning Strategies

Students reported a variety of practices when using streaming platforms. Watching audiovisual content with subtitles was the most common strategy, reported by 76% of respondents. This confirms Vandergrift and Goh's (2012) claim that visual scaffolding aids comprehension, especially for learners at lower proficiency levels. The gradual shift from Indonesian subtitles to English subtitles, and eventually to no subtitles, reflects a developmental trajectory of listening proficiency and resonates with Krashen's (1985) input hypothesis, in which comprehensible input just above the learner's current level promotes acquisition.

Repetition and replay were also widely used (56%). Field (2008) highlighted that listening is an incremental process that benefits from repeated exposure. Students in this study reported replaying difficult sections multiple times until they could decode words or expressions. This practice

demonstrates metacognitive regulation, where learners monitor and adjust their strategies based on perceived comprehension difficulties (Goh, 2008).

Music and podcasts were also significant. Seventy percent of respondents listened to music, while 40% listened to podcasts. Music was primarily associated with motivation and affective engagement, consistent with Oxford's (1990) identification of affective strategies as central to language learning. Students frequently described memorizing lyrics or singing along as a means of improving pronunciation and vocabulary. Podcasts, on the other hand, provided exposure to natural speech and diverse accents, confirming Choi's (2022) findings that podcast listening enhances learners' sensitivity to authentic conversational patterns.

Several student quotes illustrate these practices. One student explained:

*"I usually start with English subtitles, and after watching two or three times, I try without subtitles to test my listening. Sometimes it is difficult, but it helps me a lot."*

Another commented on the motivational aspect of music:

*"When I listen to songs, I always check the lyrics. Then I sing along. It makes me remember the pronunciation better."*

Podcasts were valued by advanced students: *"Podcasts are useful because they are natural. The speakers don't slow down, so I can practice understanding real conversations."*

These findings align with Vandergrift's (2003) model of metacognitive listening strategies, where learners plan (choosing subtitles), monitor (replaying sections), and evaluate (testing comprehension without subtitles). They also highlight how entertainment-oriented practices such as music listening can function as purposeful learning activities.

## 3. Reasons for Platform Choice

The reasons students gave for their platform preferences clustered around accessibility, content



variety, and flexibility. Accessibility was the most frequently mentioned, particularly for YouTube. Students repeatedly emphasized that they could use YouTube for free and on any device. This confirms Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory, which suggests that autonomy in learning is shaped by the removal of barriers that limit choice. When cost is removed as a constraint, learners are freer to explore and take initiative.

Content variety was another strong motivator. Students valued the ability to access diverse topics, genres, and cultural contexts, which provided rich vocabulary exposure and cultural learning opportunities. Netflix was particularly praised for its wide range of authentic films and series. Richards and Schmidt (2019) argue that authentic materials enhance both motivation and linguistic development because they expose learners to real-life discourse beyond textbook dialogues.

Flexibility was also crucial, especially in the case of Spotify and YouTube. Students described using these platforms while commuting, exercising, or doing household chores. This multitasking aspect illustrates Benson's (2011) concept of out-of-class language learning, where technology enables learners to integrate language exposure seamlessly into their daily routines.

Finally, motivation and enjoyment emerged as key themes. Students repeatedly emphasized that streaming platforms made learning "fun" and "less stressful." As one participant put it:

*"When I watch movies, it doesn't feel like studying. But after a while, I realize I understand more English expressions."*

This reflects the importance of intrinsic motivation, as outlined in self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Enjoyment leads to sustained engagement, which is critical for long-term language acquisition. Streaming platforms thus serve a dual role: they are both learning tools and sources of motivation.

#### 4. Strengths of the Study

One major strength of this study is its methodological triangulation. By combining

questionnaire data with semi-structured interviews, the research was able to capture both general trends and in-depth insights. This mixed approach increased the credibility of the findings, as triangulation is widely regarded as a means of enhancing validity in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Another strength is the focus on Indonesian university students. Much prior research on streaming platforms in language learning has been conducted in contexts such as East Asia (Choi, 2022) or Europe (Jones & Carter, 2021). By situating the study in Indonesia, this research contributes new insights into how socio-economic and technological factors influence self-directed learning. The findings highlight the continued importance of free and accessible resources in contexts where subscription-based platforms are less affordable.

#### 5. Limitations of the Study

Despite these strengths, the study has several limitations. The sample size of 50 questionnaire respondents and 10 interview participants, while sufficient for qualitative research (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006), limits the generalizability of the findings. Students from other universities, disciplines, or regions may exhibit different habits and preferences.

The reliance on self-reported data is another limitation. Students may have misremembered their usage habits or exaggerated certain practices. A more objective approach, such as digital tracking of platform usage, could provide richer and more reliable data.

Additionally, the study focused exclusively on listening practices, leaving unexplored how streaming platforms might support other language skills such as speaking, reading, or writing. Future research could adopt a broader scope to examine multimodal benefits.

#### 6. Implications for Practice

The findings carry several pedagogical implications. For teachers, awareness of students'

streaming habits can inform the integration of media into classroom practices. For instance, teachers might design listening tasks around popular YouTube videos or Netflix scenes, thereby aligning academic instruction with students' real-world practices. Such integration could increase engagement and bridge the gap between formal and informal learning.

For learners, the study underscores the value of adopting deliberate strategies such as using English subtitles, replaying segments, and taking notes. These practices transform passive media consumption into active learning. Students should be encouraged to reflect on their strategies and gradually shift towards more challenging listening practices as their proficiency develops.

At the institutional level, universities might consider negotiating group subscriptions to services like Netflix or Spotify for educational use, thereby increasing accessibility for students who cannot afford individual subscriptions. Policymakers should also recognize the growing role of digital platforms in language education and support initiatives that integrate these resources into curricula.

## 7. Conclusion of Discussion

In sum, the discussion demonstrates that Indonesian university students use streaming platforms not merely for entertainment but as strategic tools for self-directed learning. Their choices are shaped by accessibility, variety, and flexibility, while their practices reflect metacognitive regulation and intrinsic motivation. These findings align with theories of learner autonomy and digital learning, while also highlighting the contextual realities of EFL learners in Indonesia.

## CONCLUSION

This study investigated how university students in Indonesia use streaming platforms for self-directed listening practices. Guided by three research questions, the research identified the types of platforms students most frequently used, the

ways in which they practiced listening, and the reasons behind their platform choices.

First, the findings revealed that YouTube is the dominant platform, accessed by almost all participants due to its free availability and vast content variety. Netflix and Spotify were moderately popular, particularly among advanced students who sought authentic dialogues and specialized audio resources. Less commonly used platforms, such as Disney+ and Amazon Prime, were limited by cost and regional accessibility. These results highlight how socio-economic and contextual factors strongly shape learners' resource selection.

Second, students employed a range of listening practices when engaging with streaming platforms. The most common practices were watching audiovisual content with subtitles, listening to music and podcasts, and repeating or replaying difficult sections. Subtitles served as scaffolding, gradually supporting learners from reliance on Indonesian subtitles to English subtitles and eventually to viewing without any subtitles. Music motivated students through enjoyment and memorization of lyrics, while podcasts exposed them to authentic speech and diverse accents. These practices demonstrate that students did not passively consume content; rather, they actively adopted strategies that reflected autonomy and metacognitive awareness.

Third, students' reasons for choosing particular platforms centered on accessibility, content variety, and flexibility. Accessibility, especially the free nature of YouTube, was crucial for most learners. Content variety was valued because it expanded vocabulary and cultural knowledge. Flexibility allowed students to integrate listening into their daily routines, such as during commuting or exercising. Additionally, motivation and enjoyment emerged as underlying factors: students perceived streaming as entertainment but simultaneously recognized its learning benefits.

Overall, the findings confirm that streaming platforms play a significant role in fostering learner



autonomy, as students independently select resources, regulate their strategies, and integrate learning into their daily lives. The study contributes to the growing body of research on informal digital learning by showing how streaming platforms function as both accessible tools and motivational resources for EFL learners in Indonesia.

The research also carries pedagogical implications. Teachers can draw on students' media habits to design classroom activities that connect formal instruction with informal learning practices. Learners are encouraged to use strategies such as subtitles, repetition, and note-taking to maximize the educational value of streaming. Institutions and policymakers may consider improving students' access to subscription-based services, recognizing the growing importance of digital resources in language education.

Despite its contributions, the study is limited by its reliance on self-reported data and its focus on a single skill, listening. Future research could expand the scope to include other language skills, employ larger and more diverse samples, or use digital tracking methods for more objective data. In conclusion, streaming platforms are not merely sources of entertainment; they are powerful tools that, when used strategically, enable students to practice listening autonomously, develop language proficiency, and sustain motivation. By acknowledging and leveraging these practices, educators and institutions can better support the development of self-directed learners in the digital age.

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