

Investigating The Impacts Of English Podcasts On Students Listening Skills

ABSTRAK - Podcast berbahasa Inggris adalah media audio digital yang memberikan paparan otentik terhadap bahasa Inggris dan mendukung pengembangan keterampilan mendengarkan. Studi ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki persepsi siswa tentang podcast berbahasa Inggris, manfaat yang diperoleh, dan harapan terkait penggunaan podcast dalam pembelajaran mendengarkan. Pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif digunakan, dengan data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur yang melibatkan sepuluh mahasiswa dari Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh yang memiliki pengalaman menggunakan podcast dalam kegiatan mendengarkan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa umumnya memiliki persepsi positif terhadap podcast berbahasa Inggris, menggambarkannya sebagai media pembelajaran yang menarik, menyenangkan, dan efektif. Manfaat yang dilaporkan meliputi peningkatan kesadaran pengucapan, pemahaman mendengarkan yang lebih baik, perluasan kosakata, peningkatan motivasi untuk belajar mandiri, dan keakraban yang lebih besar dengan berbagai aksen bahasa Inggris yang digunakan dalam komunikasi internasional. Mahasiswa juga mengharapkan podcast lebih sering diintegrasikan ke dalam kelas mendengarkan dengan materi yang sesuai dengan tingkat kemampuan mereka. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa podcast merupakan alat yang berharga untuk meningkatkan pengajaran mendengarkan dan hasil pembelajaran.

ABSTRACT-English podcasts are digital audio media that provide authentic exposure to the English language and support the development of listening skills. This study aimed to investigate students' perceptions on English podcasts, the benefits gained, and the expectations regarding podcast use in listening learning. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed, with data collected through semi-structured interviews involving ten students from the English Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh who had experience using podcasts in listening activities. The findings revealed that students generally held positive perceptions on English podcasts, describing them as interesting, enjoyable, and effective learning media. The reported benefits included improved pronunciation awareness, better listening comprehension, expanded vocabulary, increased motivation for independent learning, and greater familiarity with various English accents used in international communication. Students also expected podcasts to be integrated more frequently into listening classes with materials suited to their proficiency levels. These findings suggest that podcasts are valuable tools for enhancing listening instruction and learning outcomes.

Syamsul Bahri ¹⁾
Shally Ashriani Zahra²⁾
Lukmanul Hakim³⁾

¹⁻³⁾ Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry
Banda Aceh

^{*1}Corresponding email:
syamsul.bahri@ar-raniry.ac.id

Article History

Submitted: 00 Month 2026

Revised: 00 Month 2026

Accepted: 00 Month 2026

Published: 00 Month 2026

Kata Kunci

Podcast-Based Learning, Listening Comprehension, English Education Students, Digital Media, Language Learning

JEL Classification

A13, G21, L20, etc

INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, English has emerged as a dominant international language used extensively in education, communication, and cross-cultural collaboration. Among the four language skills, listening plays a fundamental role because it serves as the basis for developing speaking, reading, and writing abilities. Effective listening comprehension enables learners to understand instructional materials, engage in conversations, and participate successfully in real-life communication. Nevertheless, listening is often regarded as one of the most difficult language skills to acquire. Many learners encounter challenges in understanding naturally spoken English due to factors such as unfamiliar vocabulary, different accents, and rapid speech delivery. These difficulties are frequently intensified by traditional listening materials, which tend to be scripted and lack authentic communicative contexts. Consequently, students may find it difficult to transfer classroom listening practice to real-world situations.

Vandergrift (2002) defines listening as an active and complex process in which listeners interpret spoken messages by connecting incoming information with their prior knowledge. Similarly, Helgesen, cited in Nunan (2003), emphasizes that listening involves more than simply hearing sounds; it requires learners to integrate new information with what they already know. Therefore, meaningful language learning requires varied and contextual listening experiences that reflect authentic language use. In the Indonesian EFL context, listening is particularly important because it helps students comprehend teachers' explanations and respond appropriately to spoken input. However, the development of listening skills is often hindered by limited classroom practice, insufficient exposure to authentic materials, and low levels of learner autonomy and motivation (Renandya & Farrell, 2011).

Recent advancements in digital technology have introduced various innovative tools that support language learning, including podcasts. Podcasts are online audio programs that can be accessed conveniently through digital devices such as smartphones and computers. English-language podcasts provide authentic listening experiences by presenting real conversations from native speakers on diverse topics and in different speaking styles. As a result, learners gain exposure to natural pronunciation, intonation patterns, and a variety of English accents while enjoying flexible and self-paced learning opportunities (Hasan & Hoon, 2013). Previous studies have demonstrated that podcasts can contribute positively to language learning by enhancing listening comprehension, expanding vocabulary knowledge, and increasing learners' confidence in using English (Pourhosein Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). Based on these findings, the present study explores the perceptions of English Education students at UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh regarding the use of English podcasts for improving listening skills, focusing on the benefits, challenges, and learning strategies associated with podcast use.

Listening is a receptive language skill involving the ability to receive, process, and understand spoken messages. According to Brown (2001), listening is an active process of constructing meaning from spoken input, while Rost (2011) describes it as a complex activity requiring both linguistic and cognitive abilities. Listening plays a fundamental role in language learning because it supports the development of other skills, particularly speaking and reading. Krashen's (1982) Input Hypothesis emphasizes that exposure to comprehensible spoken input is essential for second language acquisition.

Listening skills can be divided into micro and macro skills. Micro listening skills focus on recognizing sounds, vocabulary, pronunciation, intonation, and grammatical structures through bottom-up processing (Brown, 2001). In contrast, macro listening skills involve understanding main ideas, speaker intentions, and contextual meaning through top-down processing (Richards, 2008; Rost, 2011). Effective listening also requires noticing and restructuring language input to enhance language development.

Podcasts are digital audio resources that provide authentic language exposure and flexible learning opportunities. They allow learners to access real-life conversations, diverse accents, natural pronunciation, and contextual vocabulary anytime and anywhere (Rosell-Aguilar, 2007; McGarr, 2009). Research suggests that podcasts can effectively support listening development by offering meaningful and authentic language input

METHODS

This research adopted a descriptive qualitative approach to investigate students' perceptions and experiences regarding the use of English podcasts as a tool for enhancing listening skills. The qualitative method was considered appropriate because it emphasizes exploring participants' views, opinions, and lived experiences rather than focusing on numerical measurements or statistical outcomes.

The study involved ten students from the English Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, representing the 3rd to 8th semesters. Participants were chosen using purposive sampling, ensuring that all selected students had prior experience using English podcasts for self-directed language learning.

Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews conducted via online voice communication platforms. The interviews focused on participants' podcast usage habits, learning experiences, perceived advantages, challenges encountered, and strategies employed to improve listening comprehension. The collected data were analyzed using the model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Thematic analysis was then applied to identify recurring patterns and major themes emerging from the participants' responses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Interviews were conducted online using WhatsApp voice notes. The Researcher asked ten main questions designed to explore in depth the students' experiences, challenges, and the impact of using Podcasts on their listening skills. The results were categorized and analyzed based on each question as summarized in table below:

1. Table of Thematic Analysis

Raw Data	Codes	Theme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “learning through podcasts is not boring like reading books... I can listen while lying down or before sleeping.” (S1) - “My lecturer suggested listening to podcasts... it ped me understand natural pronunciation.” (S2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flexible learning, Enjoyable, Relaxed learning - Authentic speech 	Students’ Initial Interest & Motivation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “I was curious after seeing my friend listening to podcasts while doing assignments.” (S3) - “I usually listen 3–4 times a week before sleeping... it feels calm.” (S1) - “I listen while jogging... 30-minute podcast while exercising.” (S10) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Peer influence, Curiosity - Consistency, Quiet environment - Multitasking, Morning learning 	Listening Habits & Frequency
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “I listen when walking to campus—only 10 minutes but effective.” (S6) - “I like motivational and educational podcasts... two benefits at once.” (S1) - “I like funny stories... relaxed conversations.” (S6) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Micro-learning moments - Self-improvement, Academic support - Light content, Low stress 	Preferred Podcast Types

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “I prefer native speaker interviews.” (S7) - “I can now understand intonation and catch main ideas more easily.” (S3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Natural language, Pronunciation exposure - Improved comprehension, Intonation awareness - Increased processing speed 	<p>Impact on Listening Skills</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “I understand main ideas more quickly now.” (S2) - “The speaker talks too fast... I must replay several times.” (S1) - “British/Australian accents confuse me.” (S6) - “I lose focus when podcasts are too long.” (S10) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fast speech - Accent unfamiliarity - Limited attention span 	<p>Difficulties in Listening</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “I reduce the speed to 0.8x... and take vocabulary notes.” (S7) - “I listen twice—first 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adjust speed, Vocabulary noting - Repetition, Transcript use 	<p>Strategies to Overcome Difficulties</p>
<p>without stopping, then with transcript.” (S2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intrinsic interest - Research support 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “I choose topics I like so I stay motivated.” (S3) - “I pause and write down unfamiliar words.” (S1) - “I repeat the same episode several times.” (S10) - “I listen while reading the transcript.” (S3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pause-note strategy - Repetition - Multi-modal listening 	<p>Strategies to Improve Understanding</p>

- “I use podcasts before listening exams to train my ears.” (S6)	- Exam preparation	Use of Podcasts Outside Classroom
- “I play podcasts while completing assignments.” (S7)	- Support academic tasks	
- “Podcasts help with my thesis on intercultural communication.” (S2)	- Research support	
- “Podcasts are more effective because I can control the learning.” (S1)	- Autonomy, Independent learning	Comparison with Traditional Listening Classes
- “Traditional classes teach theory... podcasts give natural exposure.” (S10)	- Structure vs. authenticity	
- “Podcast language is more natural than classroom audio.” (S3)	- Authentic speech	
- “Start with simple topics first so you don’t feel overwhelmed.” (S7)	- Start easy	Students’ Suggestions
- “Don’t worry if you don’t understand everything—just listen consistently.” (S6)	- Consistency	
- “Combine podcasts with note-taking or discussion.” (S2)	- Integrated learning	

Based on the thematic table above, it can be seen that students’ perceptions of using podcasts in listening learning cover various aspects, ranging from interest and motivation, usage habits, types of podcasts chosen, and their impact on listening skills, to the strategies used to overcome difficulties. These themes indicate that podcasts function not only as a form of

entertainment but also as a flexible and authentic learning medium that supports the independent development of listening skills

The results indicate that students generally have favorable attitudes toward the use of English podcasts as a learning resource. Their positive perceptions stem from the flexibility, accessibility, and authentic language exposure that podcasts offer. Many participants reported incorporating podcast listening into their daily routines, such as while commuting, exercising, or before going to sleep, which made listening practice more engaging and convenient.

In addition, students showed a preference for educational, motivational, and native-speaker podcasts because these materials supported both language development and personal growth. The findings suggest that the use of podcast can enhance various aspects of listening ability, including pronunciation awareness, intonation recognition, vocabulary acquisition, and comprehension of main ideas. Continuous exposure to authentic spoken English can be also increased the students' confidence in understanding natural communication.

However, several challenges were identified, including rapid speech, unfamiliar vocabulary, and difficulties in understanding different English accents. To address these issues, students employed a range of learning strategies, such as adjusting playback speed, replaying recordings, taking notes on new vocabulary, and utilizing transcripts. In comparison with conventional listening instruction, podcasts were perceived as more beneficial due to their authentic content, learning flexibility, and ability to promote independent learning

CONCLUSION

This study found that English Education students at UIN Ar-Raniry, Banda Aceh generally had positive perceptions of English podcasts as a tool for improving listening skills. Students appreciated podcasts for their flexibility, accessibility, and authentic language exposure, which made listening practice more engaging and convenient. The findings showed that podcasts helped enhance pronunciation, intonation, vocabulary, and overall listening comprehension while increasing students' confidence in understanding natural spoken English. Although learners faced challenges such as fast speech, unfamiliar vocabulary, and different accents, they were able to overcome these difficulties through strategies such as replaying audio, adjusting playback speed, taking notes, and using transcripts. Overall, English podcasts proved to be a valuable supplementary resource for developing listening skills in EFL learning. Therefore, their integration into listening instruction is recommended to provide authentic language input and encourage independent learning..

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Brown, H. D. (2001). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy* (2nd ed.). Longman.
- Hasan, M. M., & Hoon, T. B. (2013). Podcast applications in language learning: A review of recent studies. *English Language Teaching*, 6(2), 128–135.
- Nunan, D. (Ed.), *Practical English language teaching* (pp. 24–46).
- Krashen, S. D. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Pergamon Press.
- McGarr, O. (2009). A review of podcasting in higher education: Its influence on the traditional lecture. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, 25(3), 309–321.

- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Pourhosein Gilakjani, A., & Sabouri, N. B. (2016). Learners' listening comprehension difficulties in English language learning: A literature review. *English Language Teaching*, 9(6), 123–133.
- Renandya, W. A., & Farrell, T. S. C. (2011). 'Teacher, the tape is too fast!' Extensive listening in ELT. *ELT Journal*, 65(1), 52–59.
- Richards, J. C. (2008). *Teaching listening and speaking: From theory to practice*. Cambridge University Press.
- Rosell-Aguilar, F. (2007). Top of the pods—In search of a podcasting “podagogy” for language learning. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 20(5), 471–481.
- Rost, M. (2011). *Teaching and researching listening* (2nd ed.). Pearson Education.
- G, L. (2002). It was nice to see that our predictions were right: Developing metacognition in L2 listening comprehension. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 58(4), 555–575.