IMPROVING LISTENING SKILL THROUGH PODCASTS: THE STUDENTS' PERCEPTION

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Abstract

Students' limited understanding of classroom lessons or materials can hinder their English language development. Additionally, in Indonesia, students rarely have opportunities to practice English, and teachers often do not use effective methods or real-life resources for teaching listening. However, with recent technological advancements, English is increasingly becoming the second language of choice, as it is widely used in all technology-related fields. This research purposed to reveal the students' perception to use podcasts in the classroom. A descriptive quantitative approach was used and a questionnaire was administered to thirty students of SMAN 2 Binjai participating in the questionnaire in order to fully investigate their points of view. The research result revealed that students' perspectives regarding the accessibility and novelty of podcasts. The majority (90%) expressed agreement with the implementation of podcasts at class. Similarly, 86.67% agreed with the ease of using podcasts anytime and anywhere. The use of podcasts demonstrated a positive impact on students' listening skills. These findings underscored the students' perception in utilizing podcasts effectively. Students believed that podcasts could improve their listening and speaking skills. Students expressed that using podcasts was enjoyable because it allowed them to enhance their skills while also learning about topics that interested them. However, challenges in effectively using podcasts in the classroom emerged, highlighting the need for further exploration of optimal implementation strategies.

Keywords: Podcasts, Listening Skills

1. Introduction

Listening is considered as one of difficult skill to master in learning English. Anxiety, trouble understanding unfamiliar words, focus problems, slurred audio pronunciation, and trouble recalling what was said in the audio are the most common problems that students encounter in listening lessons. Students must therefore take the initiative to locate extra resources and media to help them practice listening on their own. Maybe practicing by themselves may help them feel less anxious, which will allow them to unwind and concentrate more on listening (Diora & Rosa, 2020).

This unpleasant circumstance has undoubtedly played a significant role in the low level of listening proficiency among Indonesian students. Students' limited comprehension of the lessons or materials in the classroom might also be an obstacle to their English language development (Efrizah et al., 2024; Fadly et al., 2023). Similarly, in the Indonesian environment, students are seldom given the chance to practice their English, and teachers are not committed to using proper methods and real resources when teaching listening (Abdulrahman et al., 2018). However, with the rapid advancement of technology in recent

years, English appears to be able to overtake Indonesian as the second language of choice, as English is already used as an introduction in all fields pertaining to technology. English phrases are already widely used worldwide, including in the fields of commerce, education, technology, and other fields (Losi & Nasution, 2022).

One technological tool that can help kids with speaking, listening, and vocabulary development is the podcast. kids can also utilize podcasts to practice pronouncing words correctly. According to (Chowdhury & Haque, 2019), podcasts are audio files that may be downloaded and uploaded via the internet using a laptop or smartphone. A podcast is a broadcast that consists of the hosts' voice recordings. Users can listen to talks or conversations between guests and hosts about a specific topic through the recordings. Podcasts are a popular trend right now in Indonesia. According to (Zellatifanny, 2020), there is a current trend in content distribution that is moving away from video-based content, such as that available on Youtube, and toward audio-based content, such as podcasts. Because the conversations on podcasts are more casual and engaging, many users participate in them. Additionally, consumers do not have to listen to every episode, allowing them to selectively select their favorite episodes (such as the themes they despise). Podcasts are less constrained than traditional radio programs. According to Aditya (2018) there are three primary platforms that are commonly used in Indonesia for podcast listening: Spotify, Soundcloud, and Google Podcasts.

A podcast is one of the media products of technology advancements that makes language learning more convenient. Podcasts are occasionally used in the teaching and learning activities of many educators worldwide. Podcasts have gotten better over the past few years. Users of podcasts are still becoming more and more common. With a total of 35.6% of global podcast users, Indonesia ranks second in the globe in 2021. The age group of 15 to 24 years old has the largest user base. The usage of podcasts as a teaching tool has now reached the field of education. This is demonstrated by the 10.6% usage of podcasts in the sector of education (Gusfira & Putri, 2022).

Regarding how frequently it is used, how podcasts may be used in EFL classrooms and how all foreign language learners can profit from them, even at the beginner level, by listening to them for just six minutes a day. Additionally, a study by Edirisingha et al. (2007) found that podcasts are effective in helping students get ready for graded work by offering valuable guidance on presentations and portfolios. Podcasts also improve students' listening skills.

For the reasons outlined above, using podcasts in a language classroom helps students learn the material, become more proficient, and develop their listening comprehension skills. Regretfully, there hasn't been much research on podcast best practices and their efficacy while educating high school students in Indonesian contexts until this study. This study was conducted in an attempt to determine whether podcasts can affect high school students' listening comprehension as well as to investigate students' perceptions of the use of podcasts in listening classrooms. The study was motivated by the benefits and usefulness of podcasts as teaching resources, which have been discussed above and have been empirically verified by several experts.

2. Literature Review

A podcast is a cutting-edge kind of mobile technology that includes of digital audio and video series that can be downloaded and played on mobile devices. "Pod" and "Broadcast" are the two technologies from which the term "Podcast" originated. Podcasts make it easy for users to select and enjoy their favorite content. Podcasts are online audio publications that can be downloaded to a portable device, like a laptop, smartphone, or tablet. Additionally, podcasts differ from regular audio files in terms of content and have special features. The audio material is a reliable source of information that all listeners can utilize (Abdulrahman et al., 2018).

Barnes et al. (2020) examined podcasts. Researchers define podcasts as digital audio programs available online that can be easily accessed on PCs or cellphones through online subscription services. Because of its repeatability, ease of use, and convenience (using them while traveling or working out, for example), podcasts were highly valued by medical students when it came to asynchronous medical education.

Podcasts were more helpful to some learners than standard didactic lectures. Podcast production can be a helpful tool to supplement residents' and medical students' education, and it is a resource that will always be available given the growing demands of social distancing and the necessity for a platform for remote medical education (Priyatmojo & Suprapti, 2022).

Early in 2005, the first podcasts were released. Podcasts are undoubtedly appealing, simple to obtain, and help students become more motivated to learn. The podcast, which is an audio or video file uploaded to the internet, has become popular among academics and offers a wide range of educational resources. A podcast is an audio or video clip that has been recorded and uploaded to a website for users to freely download and listen to at a later time. Teachers of languages now have a wealth of resources at their disposal thanks to podcasts. A podcast is comparable to a public library in that it provides listeners with access to necessary materials and resources directly on their devices. It is available for free download without requiring payment or registration for users. When students have questions, they can select from a variety of available conversation topics.

On the internet, there are various kinds of podcasts. According to the content format, there are now three categories of podcasts that are generated and frequently used: audio, enhanced, and video. Among podcasts, audio is the most widely used and user-friendly. It just needs a little amount of storage space and simply has audio. Most of the time, it is in MP3 format, which is compatible with all MP3 devices (Harahap, 2020).

Research has examined the benefits of using podcasts to help students learn languages, with a focus on improving their speaking and listening abilities. The findings indicate that students' performance in these areas has increased. Furthermore, other research discovered that using podcasts to enhance language learning improved students' motivation and positive attitudes toward the process. Additionally, compared to students who did not use podcasts, those who did had higher listening comprehension scores and higher learning motivation, according to an experimental study conducted with Iranian EFL students. According to the students' responses during the interview, podcasts are a valuable educational resource that can help them improve their speaking and listening skills. It is clear from these earlier research findings that podcasts are beneficial for language learning. Thus, we first discussed four key arguments in this article as to why podcasts could enhance the speaking and listening skills of Indonesian secondary school students (Yoestara & Putri, 2019).

3. Research Method

The research challenge was addressed in the current study by using a case study design. A descriptive quantitative approach was used, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques, to provide a thorough grasp of the subject (DİNÇER, 2018). Surveys were used to collect quantitative data, with a focus on how students felt about using podcasts for language learning. This method made it possible to gather numerical data for statistical analysis, which gave researchers important new information about the general trends and patterns of students' viewpoints. The first tool used to gather data was a questionnaire given out to the students. By using this method, researchers were able to display the quantitative survey results and triangulate the data. Researchers hope to gain a full knowledge of students' opinions about podcast-based language learning by using this all-encompassing method.

The survey instrument used in this study was initially based on a questionnaire that was developed based on earlier research. The author of this case study made adjustments to the questionnaire to make it more suited, and the original version had 13 questions. The updated version now has 17 questions. These changes were made with the intention of better aligning the questionnaire with the particular goals and circumstances of the current investigation. In addition, the interview questions were thoughtfully crafted to elicit the teachers' perspectives on the value of podcasts in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction. Three distinct kinds of questions were given to thirty students of SMAN 2 Binjai participating in the questionnaire in order to fully investigate their points of view.

A Likert scale questionnaire was carefully created to ascertain students' opinions regarding the use of podcasts. A thorough collection of 15 statements were included in this questionnaire, which was designed

to assess many aspects of podcast usage, such as enjoyment, utility, and perceived influence on language learning. On a preset scale, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree," participants were asked to rate each statement to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed. A variety of paper-based questionnaires were used in the data gathering process to give participants several ways to voice their opinions. The main analytical tool used to successfully compile and present the data was descriptive statistics. With this statistical method, percentages were determined for every response type, and the data were arranged in a table manner to be easy to understand presentation. The purpose of the study was to investigate and explore the general perspectives of the involved students on the use of podcasts in their language learning process. This study aimed to offer important insights into the general reception and impact of podcasts in the context of language instruction by methodically evaluating the collected data and illuminating students' opinions (Sotlikova, 2023).

4. Results and Discussion

Following data collection, the researcher examined the responses of 30 students utilizing the Likert scale, which presented five response options: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. The scoring system assigned values of 5 for strongly agree, 4 for agree, 3 for neutral, 2 for disagree, and 1 for strongly disagree (Fitriani et al., 2023).

Table 1. The Result of Students' Questionnaire

No.	Questions	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	I like podcast.	70%	30%	0%	0%	0%
2	I enjoy listening to podcast.	46.67%	43.33%	10%	0%	0%
3	Podcast is easy to use.	66.67%	6.67%	10%	0%	16.67%
4	The content of podcast is suitable for me.	80%	10%	10%	0%	0%
5	I can improve my listening skills.	83.33%	13.33%	0%	0%	3.33%
6	I want podcast to be implemented in the classroom.	90%	0%	10%	0%	0%
7	I know how to use podcast.	77%	10%	0%	0%	13.33%
8	I will continue listening to podcast for English learning.	90%	10%	0%	0%	0%
9	Using podcast is fun.	80%	20%	0%	0%	0%
10	I can investigate my skills by using podcast.	60%	33.33%	0%	0%	6.67%
11	Using podcast is possible everywhere and everytime.	86.67%	13.33%	0%	0%	0%
12	By listening to podcast, I can communicate in English better than before.	83.33%	13.33%	3.33	0%	0%
13	It is easy to play the podcast audio files.	83.33%	16.67%	0%	0%	0%
14	Podcasts can facilitate my speaking skills	70%	23.33%	6.67%	0%	0%
15	I will recommend the other students to learn English by using podcast.	83.33%	16.67%	0%	0%	0%

Adapted from Sengang et al. (2022) and Sotlikova (2023)

Analysis of the responses unveiled that a majority of participants, constituting 90% as the highest percentage to show strongly agree, showed a big intention towards podcasts. Among them, 43.33% of

students answered agree option, showed that they enjoyed listening to podcast. This suggested a clear preference for podcasts among students. Further exploration into students' engagement with podcasts revealed that they expressed fun and suitable in listening podcast to them. Within this group, 16.67% strongly disagreed that podcast was easy to use. These results reinforce the favorable disposition towards podcasts since it was found that just some of students disagreed that podcast was easy to use. Additionally, participants were surveyed on their views regarding podcast with 86.67% endorsing its utilization. Notably, 83.33% strongly agreed, indicating a positive perception among students. They assumed that podcast could impact their speaking skills better than before.

The analysis presented in Table 1 showed light on students' perspectives regarding the accessibility and novelty of podcasts. The majority (90%) expressed agreement with the implementation of podcasts at class. Similarly, 86.67% agreed with the ease of using podcasts anytime and anywhere. These findings underscored the students' perception in utilizing podcasts effectively.
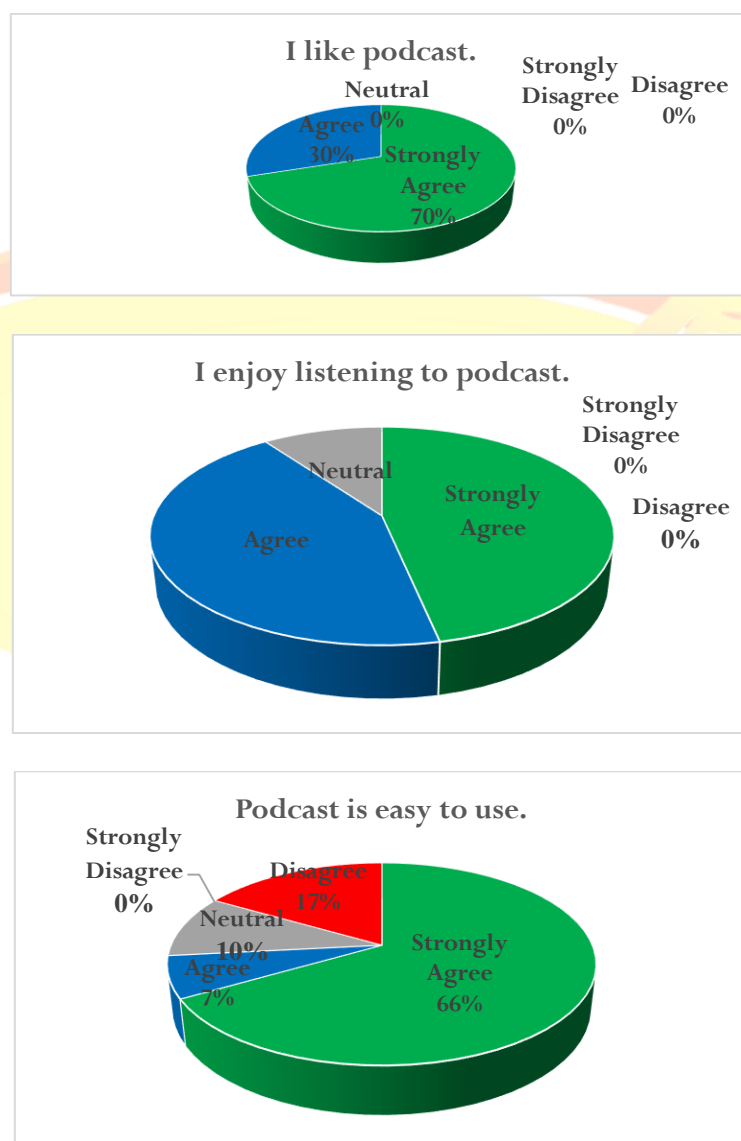
Figure 1. The Students' Perception to Use Podcasts

The findings in this research were in line with (Tarmawan et al., 2021; Sansinadi et al., 2020) who agreed that the findings of this study suggested that students generally have a positive view of using podcasts in the classroom. They see podcasts as an effective tool that provides creative and innovative content with minimal effort. Additionally, using podcasts can encourage them to learn English.

5. Conclusions

Based on a survey-based research project, this article demonstrates that combining educational podcasting with broad pedagogical approaches can enhance students' listening skills. Over four weeks, students engaged in learning about listening skills and collaboratively creating podcasts. They showed a strong interest in podcasts. This podcast assignment effectively fostered their listening skills, as evidenced by two key findings. First, students reported positive feelings about learning through podcasts. Second, they were motivated and showed improvement in their skills after completing the project. We hope this initiative inspires other educators to undertake similar projects and are keen to see if similar trends are observed in different contexts.

Acknowledgements

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