

Students' Motivation in Listening Podcast

Amara Azmi Addinda Khanza¹,
Dodi Mulyadi²
Universitas Muhammadiyah Semarang,
Semarang, Indonesia
dodi@unimus.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Listening is one of the hardest skills for students to learn in English classes that take place in the classroom. Students often don't get to use the real English language because there aren't enough different and real listening options. Podcasts are a flexible and engaging choice, as they utilize real language in real-life situations. This study investigates students' perceptions and attitudes toward using podcasts in the English classroom. We interviewed 30 students in the fourth and sixth semesters of the English Education Study Program at the University of Muhammadiyah Semarang, employing a descriptive qualitative research method. We did this by having them fill out a Google Form. The results show that students believe podcasts can help them stay motivated, learn more authentic English, and learn independently. Students liked how easy it was to find and listen to podcasts about things that mattered to them. There were still problems, such as not being able to get online and not knowing how to utilize podcast sites. According to the study, people can learn English better when they listen to podcasts that have well-organized activities and carefully chosen information.

Keywords: Students' Motivation, Listening, Podcast

INTRODUCTION

Listening is one of the four essential language skills that students must master when learning English, alongside speaking, reading, and writing. Among these, listening is often perceived as the most difficult skill to develop, especially in classroom environments where exposure to authentic language is limited. (Díez & Richters, 2020). Traditional English

listening materials used in classrooms are frequently scripted, artificial, and lacking the spontaneity of real-life communication. As a result, students may struggle to comprehend natural speech patterns, various accents, colloquial expressions, and the fast pace of native speakers. According (Fayzullayeva, 2023), Effective communication requires good listening skills, and developing these skills is essential in today's fast-paced world.

In recent years, the integration of technology into language learning has opened up new opportunities to enhance listening skills through more engaging and authentic materials. One such medium is the podcast. Podcasts are digital audio recordings, typically delivered in a series format, that cover a wide range of topics—from news and storytelling to education and entertainment. Because podcasts utilize natural and real-world language, they provide learners with exposure to authentic English that is rarely found in textbooks or traditional listening exercises. This level of accessibility encourages autonomous learning, encouraging students to take responsibility for their language development. Students can choose podcasts based on their interests, which helps increase their motivation and engagement with the material. (Alzamil, 2021).

In recent years, the integration of technology in language learning has opened up new opportunities to improve listening skills through more engaging and authentic materials. One such medium is podcasts. Podcasts are digital audio recordings, usually presented in a series format, that cover a wide range of topics—from news and storytelling to education and entertainment. Because podcasts use natural, real-world language, they give learners exposure to authentic English that is rarely found in textbooks or traditional listening exercises. In addition, podcasts offer flexibility and convenience, allowing students to listen anytime and anywhere, whether while traveling, exercising, or at their leisure. This level of accessibility promotes autonomous learning, encouraging students to take responsibility for their language development. Students can choose podcasts based on their interests, which helps to increase their motivation and engagement with the material. (Meyer, 2020)

Moreover, podcasts offer flexibility and convenience, allowing students to listen anytime and anywhere, whether during their commute, while exercising, or in their free time. This level of accessibility promotes autonomous learning, encouraging students to take responsibility for their language development. Students can choose podcasts based on their interests, which helps increase their motivation and engagement with the material. (Chuang & Wang, 2015).

Given the growing use of podcasts in educational contexts, it is important to understand how students perceive this medium and whether it truly contributes to their motivation in learning English, particularly in strengthening their listening skills. This study focuses on exploring the perceptions and motivations of students in the English Education Study Program at the University of Muhammadiyah Semarang regarding the use

of podcasts in their English listening practice. Through this research, we aim to identify how podcasts influence students' enthusiasm for learning, their exposure to authentic English, and their capacity for independent learning.

METHOD

This study involved 30 fourth and sixth-semester students from the English Education Study Program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Semarang. The participants were purposively selected because they were considered to have relevant experience in English language learning and were likely to be familiar with or interested in using digital learning resources such as podcasts. Students in this semester were considered to have sufficient English language skills to understand and interact with podcast content, as well as being able to reflect on their learning experiences. Inclusion criteria in this study included active students who were willing to volunteer as participants.

Data was collected through a Google Form specifically designed according to the research objectives. The use of Google Forms was chosen because it is practical to be distributed online, makes data collection easier, and guarantees the confidentiality of participants' identities so that they are expected to answer honestly. This form contains a combination of closed-ended questions with a Likert scale and open-ended questions. The questions were designed to explore students' views on the benefits, ease of access, and challenges in using podcasts as a learning medium.

A Likert scale was used to measure the level of agreement with statements relating to learning motivation, exposure to authentic language, independence in learning, and podcast effectiveness. Meanwhile, open-ended questions provided space for students to share their experiences and views in more depth. Before being used in the main study, the instrument was pretested on a small group of students outside the main participants to ensure the clarity of content and validity of the questions.

After obtaining official permission from the university and the study program, the Google Form link was distributed to students who fit the participant criteria. Before filling out the form, students were informed about the purpose of the study as well as their right to voluntarily participate without coercion. Filling is done independently within a certain period of time that has been determined. The collected data were automatically stored in a spreadsheet and were ready for further analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study investigated students' motivation and perceptions in using podcasts to improve their English listening skills. Based on the responses of 30 students from the fourth and sixth semesters of the English Education Study

Program at the University of Muhammadiyah Semarang, several significant themes emerged. The following discussion presents the findings based on student responses to a series of structured statements regarding their podcast learning experiences.

Table 1:
 Students' Response in Listening Podcast

Items	Response Option					Total
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	
1. Listening to podcasts increases my motivation to learn English	2	22	4	0	2	30
2. Podcasts help me understand how English is used in real-life situations	4	16	8	0	2	30
3. It is easy for me to find podcasts on topics that interest me	3	15	8	1	4	30
4. I feel more independent in learning English after listening to podcasts	2	16	8	0	4	30
5. I prefer using podcasts in English classes rather than traditional listening materials	1	14	10	2	3	30

6. Listening to podcasts improves my English listening skills	2	17	11	0	0	30
7. Podcasts make learning English more enjoyable and engaging	2	13	15	0	0	30
8. I believe podcasts are an effective tool for learning English.	3	20	5	0	2	30

Increased Learning Motivation

One of the most significant findings of this study is that the majority of students (80%) agreed or strongly agreed that listening to podcasts increased their motivation in learning English. (Lin, 2017) Also found that digital learning can have a better positive effect on learning motivation than traditional methods. This result is highly consistent with previous studies showing that interesting and relevant content can substantially increase learner motivation. (Díez & Richters, 2020). Students reported that podcasts offered a variety of topics that suited their interests, making the learning experience more enjoyable and less monotonous compared to traditional classroom materials. The flexibility of podcasts, which allows students to interact with the language whenever and wherever it is convenient for them, fundamentally encourages more sustainable learning habits. This is in line with the theory of intrinsic motivation, where learning activities are carried out due to internal interest and satisfaction, not due to external coercion. When students feel they have control over what and how they learn, their motivation tends to increase significantly.

These findings are aligned with (Aimah, 2020.) A study that demonstrated that mobile learning applications significantly improved EFL learners' listening comprehension. Just like podcasts, mobile-based platforms offer authentic listening input and flexible access, which contribute to enhanced student motivation and independent learning habits.

Exposure to Authentic Language

About two-thirds of respondents (66.7%) stated that the podcasts helped them understand how English is used in real situations. In contrast to classroom

audio materials that are generally scripted and structured, podcasts provide authentic language input, including various accents, speaking rates, slang usage, and idiomatic expressions. Such exposure is crucial in developing listening skills relevant for real-world communication. (Lee & Gupta, 2020) The students noted that listening to natural English conversations through podcasts made them more familiar with pronunciation variations and vocabulary usage rarely found in textbook-based exercises. This reinforces the view that to truly master a language, learners need to be exposed to the form of language as used by native speakers in everyday life. In this context, podcasts become an effective means to bridge the limitations of simplified learning materials.

Accessibility and Content Variety

The results showed that 60% of students found it easy to find podcasts with topics they are interested in. This finding indicates that podcasts are an accessible and flexible learning medium, as they can be tailored to each individual's needs. Students appreciate the diversity of podcast options available, which allows them to choose content that suits their hobbies, academic interests, or career aspirations. This ability to customize learning material is one of the main advantages of podcasts. When the material feels personally relevant, the level of engagement and motivation to learn tends to increase.

Nevertheless, a small number of students admitted to experiencing obstacles, mainly related to unstable internet access and a lack of knowledge on how to use the podcast platform. These barriers reduce their potential to optimally utilize podcasts as a learning resource. This finding highlights the importance of more adequate technical support and digital literacy. Although internet penetration in Indonesia continues to increase, stable and affordable access is still a challenge in some regions. Therefore, educators need to consider this condition by providing learning alternatives or technical guidance for students who face digital infrastructure limitations.

Learner Independence

60% students stated that the habit of listening to podcasts regularly has helped them become more independent in learning English. This activity is flexible and autonomous, allowing learners to adjust the pace of learning, choose material that suits their ability level, and repeat certain parts according to personal needs. (Ahmadi, 2018) This kind of self-learning is considered an important element in effective language learning as it encourages responsibility and self-confidence in learners. (Gilmore, 2007). In addition, the ability to incorporate podcast listening activities into daily routines provides continuous exposure to English outside the classroom. This encourages students to take an active role in their learning process - a key characteristic of adaptive and sustainable language learning in the modern era. The concept of independent learning is also further discussed by various researchers who define it as an individual's ability to take initiative and responsibility for their learning process (Meyer, 2020).

Preference for Podcasts Versus Traditional Materials

When asked to compare their preference between podcasts and traditional listening materials, students gave quite diverse responses. About half of them preferred podcasts, while the rest were neutral or still preferred conventional learning resources. This difference is likely influenced by the convenience offered by the textbook format of listening exercises, which usually has a clear structure, specific learning objectives, and additional support such as transcripts and comprehension questions. On the other hand, the more spontaneous and non-scripted format of podcasts can feel challenging, even confusing to some students, especially those at lower proficiency levels or who are not familiar with authentic listening activities. These findings suggest that podcasts should be positioned as a complement to, not a replacement for, traditional learning materials. In addition, the use of podcasts as learning media needs to be accompanied by adequate pedagogical guidance so that students can adjust gradually and still feel supported during the learning process.

Impact on Listening Skills and Engagement

The results showed that podcasts made a positive contribution to improving students' listening skills. As many as 63% of respondents stated that their ability to understand spoken material in English had improved after using podcasts. In addition, half of the participants revealed that the use of podcasts made the learning process more fun and interesting. This finding reinforces the view that context-rich authentic materials can increase students' interest and engagement, which are important factors in the language acquisition process (Reinders & Cho, 2018). By presenting content in the form of stories, interviews, and discussions, podcasts not only train listening skills but also encourage critical thinking and increase cultural awareness. The learning experience becomes more immersive and interactive, encouraging students to engage more deeply with the material they listen to.

Perceived Effectiveness of Podcasts as a Learning Tool

The majority of students (76.7%) considered that podcasts are an effective medium to support English language learning. This finding reflects a general positive attitude towards the utilization of digital technology in the context of language education. Podcasts are considered capable of presenting authentic language exposure, which is often difficult to find in traditional learning materials. Another advantage lies in their high accessibility and flexibility of use, which allows students to learn anytime and anywhere according to their needs. These characteristics are in line with modern language learning approaches that emphasize the importance of independent learning, active engagement, and interaction with real language (Jones, 2016). The students' positive attitude towards podcasts also shows that they are open to innovation in the learning process (Dueraseh et al., 2021; Mulyadi et al., 2021). Thus, podcasts not only act as an additional resource but also have the potential to be integrated more

strategically into the curriculum as part of efforts to increase the effectiveness and relevance of language learning in the digital era (Rime, 2022).

Challenges and Limitations

Despite the many benefits offered, the study also highlighted a number of challenges that hinder the maximum utilization of podcasts in English language learning. Some students reported technical obstacles, such as unstable internet access and limited knowledge in using podcast platforms. This shows that the digital divide is still a relevant issue, even among university students. In addition, the absence of clear guidelines or learning structures when using podcasts independently can have a negative impact, especially for students who have low motivation or are developing language skills. Therefore, the role of educators is crucial in crafting a framework that supports the use of podcasts, for example, through the provision of pre-listening tasks, the introduction of key vocabulary, as well as follow-up activities that aid comprehension and strengthen retention.

On the other hand, it is important to realize that this study has a number of limitations. The relatively small sample size - consisting of 30 students from one university - limits the generalizability of the findings to a wider population. As such, the findings cannot definitively explain the cause-and-effect relationship between podcast use and improved listening skills.

However, when asked about preference, only half of the students indicated that they preferred using podcasts over traditional listening materials. This mixed response may stem from students' comfort with conventional, more structured materials or difficulty adapting to the less predictable format of podcasts (Mcgarr, 2009).

In terms of skill development and engagement, 63% of the students believed that podcasts improved their listening skills, and 50% found podcast-based learning to be more enjoyable and engaging. These findings suggest that podcasts not only facilitate language acquisition but also enhance the learning experience by making it more interactive and motivating. A significant majority (76.7%) agreed that podcasts are an effective tool for learning English, reinforcing their potential as a valuable supplementary resource in language education.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that podcasts serve as a valuable and effective resource for improving English listening skills among university students. The findings indicate that a majority of the participants experienced enhanced motivation to learn English, increased exposure to authentic and natural language use, and greater independence in managing their learning process through podcast listening. The flexibility and accessibility of podcasts allow learners to engage with English content

anytime and anywhere, which supports autonomous learning and helps sustain interest over time.

Moreover, podcasts offer diverse topics that cater to individual interests, making language learning more relevant and personalized. This aspect is crucial in maintaining learner engagement and fostering a positive attitude towards continuous language practice outside the classroom environment. Despite these advantages, several challenges were identified. Limited internet connectivity and lack of familiarity with podcast platforms remain significant barriers for some students, potentially hindering their full participation and benefit from this learning tool (Lestariningsih et al., 2022). Additionally, without appropriate instructional support and structured activities, some learners may struggle to maximize the educational potential of podcasts.

Therefore, it is recommended that educators thoughtfully integrate podcasts into the English curriculum by providing clear guidance, scaffolded listening tasks, and supplementary materials to aid comprehension and reinforce learning. By doing so, podcasts can become a more inclusive and effective tool that accommodates varying learner needs and proficiency levels. Future research is encouraged to explore innovative strategies to overcome technical and pedagogical challenges, as well as to investigate the long-term effects of podcast use on learners' overall language proficiency and academic achievement. Expanding research to include diverse learner populations and settings will further enrich understanding of the role podcasts can play in modern language education.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors would like to express their deepest gratitude to all the students of the English Education Study Program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Semarang who participated in this research. Their openness and thoughtful responses made this study possible and meaningful. We also extend our sincere appreciation to the faculty members and administrative staff of the English Education Department for their continuous support and assistance during the data collection and research process. Their cooperation greatly facilitated the smooth implementation of this study.

REFERENCES

- Ahmadi, Dr. M. R. (2018). The use of technology in English language learning: A literature review. *International Journal of Research in English Education*, 3(2), 115–125. <https://doi.org/10.29252/ijree.3.2.115>
- Aimah, S. (n.d.). *Boosting EFL learners' listening comprehension through a developed mobile learning application: Effectiveness and practicality*.
- Alzamil, J. (2021). Listening skills: Important but difficult to learn. *Arab World English Journal*, 12(3), 366–374. <https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol12no3.25>
- Chuang, L.-L., & Wang, C. (2015). Listening enhancement: Converting input into intake. *American Journal of Educational Research*, 3(9), 1091–1097. <https://doi.org/10.12691/education-3-9-5>
- Díez, M. T., & Richters, M. A. (2020). Podcasting as a tool to develop speaking skills in the foreign language classroom. In *The EUROCALL Review* (Vol. 28, Issue 1). <http://campus6.podomatic.com>
- Dueraseh, S., Mulyadi, D., & Wijayatiningsih, T. D. (2021). Analyzing foreign language listening anxiety and online English proficiency test of undergraduate students. *4th English Language and Literature International Conference (ELLiC) Proceedings Vol. 4, 4*, 167–174. www.googleform.com
- Gilmore, A. (2007). Authentic materials and authenticity in foreign language learning. *Language Teaching*, 40(2), 97–118. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444807004144>
- Jones, S. A. (2016). Writing learning outcomes for English language lessons in multilingual schools. *TESOL Journal*, 7(2), 469–493. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.255>
- Lee, G. L., & Gupta, A. (2020). Raising children to speak their heritage language in the USA: Roles of Korean parents. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 11(4), 521–531. <https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1104.01>

- Lestariningsih, E. D., Wijayatiningsih, T. D. *, & Khasanah, D. R. A. U. (2022). Developing online learning media using task based language teaching and android video on writing action research proposal. *Language Circle: Journal of Language and Literature*, 16(2), 285–295. <http://journal.unnes.ac.id>
- Lin, M. H., Chen, H. C., & Liu, K. S. (2017). A study of the effects of digital learning on learning motivation and learning outcome. *Eurasia Journal of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education*, 13(7), 3553–3564. <https://doi.org/10.12973/eurasia.2017.00744a>
- McGarr, O. (2009). A review of podcasting in higher education: Its influence on the traditional lecture. In *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology* (Vol. 25, Issue 3).
- Meyer, B., Haywood, N., Sachdev, D., & Faraday, S. (n.d.). *What is independent learning and what are the benefits for students? How is independent learning viewed by teachers?*
- Mulyadi, D., Wijayatiningsih, T. D., Swaran Singh, C. K., & Prastikawati, E. F. (2021). Effects of technology enhanced task-based language teaching on learners' listening comprehension and speaking performance. *International Journal of Instruction*, 14(3), 717–736. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2021.14342a>
- Reinders, H., & Cho, M. (2002.). *Extensive Listening Practice and Input Enhancement Using Mobile Phones: Encouraging Out-of-class Learning with Mobile Phones*. <http://audible.com>
- Rime, J., Pike, C., & Collins, T. (2022). What is a podcast? Considering innovations in podcasting through the six-tensions framework. *Convergence*, 28(5), 1260–1282. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13548565221104444>