Research Article

Students' Perception on Utilization of Technology in Listening Learning

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A B S T R A C T

The learning process in listening practice is only limited to one type of text. Students have difficulty adapting to various types of audio material. Learning focuses more on speaking and writing skills than listening. As a result, students are less trained in active listening. A deep understanding of these issues helps to develop more effective learning strategies and supports students in overcoming these obstacles. Technological developments in education have influenced students' learning styles. This research aims to describe how students perceive the utilization of technology, specifically podcasts, to enhance their listening skills. The research employed a qualitative research method, specifically a case study, to gather data through questionnaires and interviews. The participants were EFL learners focusing on Listening for Professional Purposes, with 40 students completing the questionnaires and 10 representative students being interviewed. Findings reveal that students had a favorable response to utilizing podcasts as a means of enhancing their listening skills. They appreciated the simplicity, flexibility, engagement, and enjoyment of employing podcasts as media of learning. Findings from this research help lecturer develop curriculum and learning materials that better suit with students' preferences and needs. This research allowed for the creation of more interesting and technology-relevant materials that are more acceptable to students.

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INTRODUCTION

The integration of technology in classrooms has become increasingly prevalent in recent years, intending to personalize learning and prepare students for the digital world. Through technology, students can take ownership of their learning, and become problem-solvers, critical thinkers, collaborators, and creators. One essential skill that should be mastered in language learning is listening. This refers to one of the primary abilities that are taught when learning a language and it is one of the two proficiencies utilized in oral communication (Andrade, 2006). Listening is an active process that involves combining the information received with other familiar knowledge (egelsen, Brown, & Nunan, 2007). Moreover, the skill of listening plays a crucial role in successful communication. The inability to listen attentively often leads to the misinterpretation of messages, which ultimately results in communication breakdowns. Therefore, utilizing technology to enhance listening skills is crucial in language learning.

Technology has great potential to transform modern teaching methods by providing teaching tools and offering learning experiences to students (Larsen-Freeman &

Anderson, 2013). Technology encompasses not just physical machines and equipment, but also the interconnected relationships between individuals, devices, and their surroundings (Işman, 2012). Employing technology in language learning can aid in enhancing students' cognitive abilities, as well as providing them with genuine and engaging materials that can motivate them to acquire the language. Students can also take advantage of technology in the learning process by using several learning applications, and effective learning environments can be created by providing students with appropriate learning apps and tools that will facilitate their understanding and participation in classroom interaction (Isma, Abdullah, & Baharuddin, 2022). It means a learning environment that incorporates technology requires more active involvement from students compared to traditional lecture-based learning. Thus, integrating technology in English language classrooms is crucial in capturing students' attention and maintaining their interest in learning.

The literature highlights certain challenges when integrating technology into English listening classrooms. Saputra and Noor (2013) observed that students encountered difficulties in discerning monologue events when engaging in audiovisual-based listening activities. This was attributed to students being more engrossed in visual aspects, such as watching movies, rather than actively listening to the audio content. Another investigation by Sholihah, Permadi, Umamah, & Malang (2018) pointed out that students faced limitations in internet access when utilizing Edmodo for blended learning, especially during portfolio-based extensive listening tasks. This implies that students often require reliable internet connectivity and a strong signal to support their learning. Additionally, Anggraeni and Indriani (2018) reported instances of internet connectivity issues while students attempted to access TED-ED videos, particularly in locations with unreliable internet infrastructure. Nurdiawati (2019) further revealed student frustration with YouTube animated movies, mainly due to the rapid speech of characters, which hindered their listening comprehension during the learning process. Furthermore, Syamsuddin and Jimi (2019) found that students struggled to fully grasp teacher instructions when blended learning and extensive listening techniques were employed. To address these challenges and develop effective IT-based supplementary listening materials, students expressed the need for more diverse listening resources to enhance their familiarity with English words. In summary, various impediments arise in the technology-enhanced listening learning process, depending on the type of media employed, as evidenced by the research findings mentioned above.

Based on the observations in an EFL class at one of the state universities in Sulawesi, there were several issues where students tend to rely entirely on their instructors to provide materials and guidance in learning listening skills. Students lack a strong internal motivation to develop their listening skills. According to Sudewi (2021) EFL students often face various challenges when it comes to listening. Maulina, Ignacio, Bersabe, Serrano, Carpio, & Santos, (2022) conducted research centered on evaluating the effectiveness of technology-driven media in enhancing listening skills. They argued that engaging with English through technological means had the capacity to enhance the acquisition of the English language. Their study highlighted five specific digital media platforms for enhancing listening skills through technology, which included mobile-based media, multimedia technology, radio news, podcast apps, and mobile-based audiobooks.

The intersection of digital technology and education has recently become a significant area of interest. Many individuals are actively exploring effective approaches to improve their teaching and learning experiences by utilizing digital technology. Technology has introduced a range of applications designed to assist both students and educators. Music platforms and podcasts, in particular, provide valuable resources for enhancing students' English proficiency. A study conducted by Salainti & Pratiwi (2021), they observed that students who actively embrace digital technology, particularly through music platforms and podcasts, demonstrate superior listening skills compared to their peers who do not. This research highlights the potential of digital music platforms and podcasts to enhance students' listening abilities.

Podcasts are a recent technology product that has impacted the way learners learn. A podcast is an audio recording that is available for downloading or streaming through the internet by using a mobile device or computer. It is usually available as a series, where subscribers can receive new episodes automatically. Podcasting is used to provide information and entertainment, but teachers see great potential in using podcasts in the teaching and learning process. Podcasts use voice, which is a compelling instrument to connect with the audience quickly. Podcasts change the English learning process and give students the flexibility to study when and where they want, at their own pace, and in their preferred manner. So, podcasts can be a collection of audio files that contain comprehensive educational content aimed at transforming the listener into an advanced learner.

According to Sloan (2005), podcasting is a creative online broadcasting method that allows the distribution of digital audio to mobile devices. Additionally, Gromik (2021) suggests that podcasts offer language learners access to authentic materials in real-world situations, regardless of

their location. This means that podcasts can provide students with realistic listening materials that are beneficial for language learning. Podcasts can serve as educational resources, providing users with audio, video, PDFs, and notes that can be downloaded through RSS technology onto a computer or mobile device. However, before utilizing podcasts, both teachers and students must comprehend the content to effectively use them (Faramarzi & Bagheri, 2015). For language learning, podcasts provide learners with access to authentic resources and can aid them in enhancing their listening abilities.

In higher education, students can access podcasts independently. Based on their performance in listening classes, it was observed that most students achieved standard scores. This indicates that perception plays a crucial role in determining the efficacy of employing podcasts for instructional purposes in classes focused on listening. To gain further insight into this case, researchers conducted a study aimed at determine the perceptions of students towards the utilization of technology, specifically podcasts to support their listening activities. By determine student perceptions of the use of technology in this way, researchers can determine how effective this method is for teaching and learning. It is essential to understand the effect of incorporating podcasts in listening classes to evaluate the results of teaching and learning. By evaluating student perceptions, researchers can determine the potential of podcasts to enhance listening activities and provide a more engaging and effective learning experience. The purpose of this research was to explore students' views, attitudes, and perceptions of the use of technology in teaching listening. This will help in understanding how students view technology as a learning tool. To provide educators and education policy makers with insight into how technology can be used more effectively in teaching listening. This can help in designing relevant curricula and appropriate learning tools. The results of the research can be used by educators, schools and educational institutions to make better decisions regarding the use of technology in teaching listening. This research can contribute to the educational literature by filling existing knowledge gaps in the area of students' perceptions of technology in listening learning.

METHOD

This research was qualitative research conducted in September 2022. This research used a case study design. Ary, Jacobs, Sorenson, & Walker (2010) stated that a case study research method concentrates on a singular entity, generates a comprehensive depiction, is based on actual circumstances, employs various data collection approaches, and furnishes a detailed, all-encompassing depiction of the situation.This study involved third-semester students from the English department at one of the state universities in Sulawesi who were learning listening for professional purposes during the academic year 2022/2023. The selection of participants was based on their active enrollment in the class. Data collection techniques in this research were field research, namely collecting data through field research using questionnaires and interviews as instruments. A questionnaire and interview instrument was used to assess students' perception. The close-ended questionnaire utilized in this study was adapted from prior research conducted by (Li, 2010). Within the questionnaire, 12 questions are included. While to obtain a long and detailed answer, the researchers used interviews. The interview focused on three areas. There were attitudes, beliefs, and feeling. The data analysis techniques in this research started with data analysis including determining research, compiling temporary findings based on collected data, making plans for subsequent data collection, setting data collection targets. Next was data reduction. In this process the researcher selects the data to be coded which is discarded and which is retrieved. Then next was the presentation of the data. In this process the researcher presents a set of structured information and draws conclusions and takes action. Presentation of data that has been obtained from the field related to all research problems is then selected according to what is needed, then grouped and then given problem boundaries. Then the last thing was data verification. In this process, what is done is to draw conclusions and re-examine the repetition of data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research analysis reveals that the questionnaire results indicate the following information:
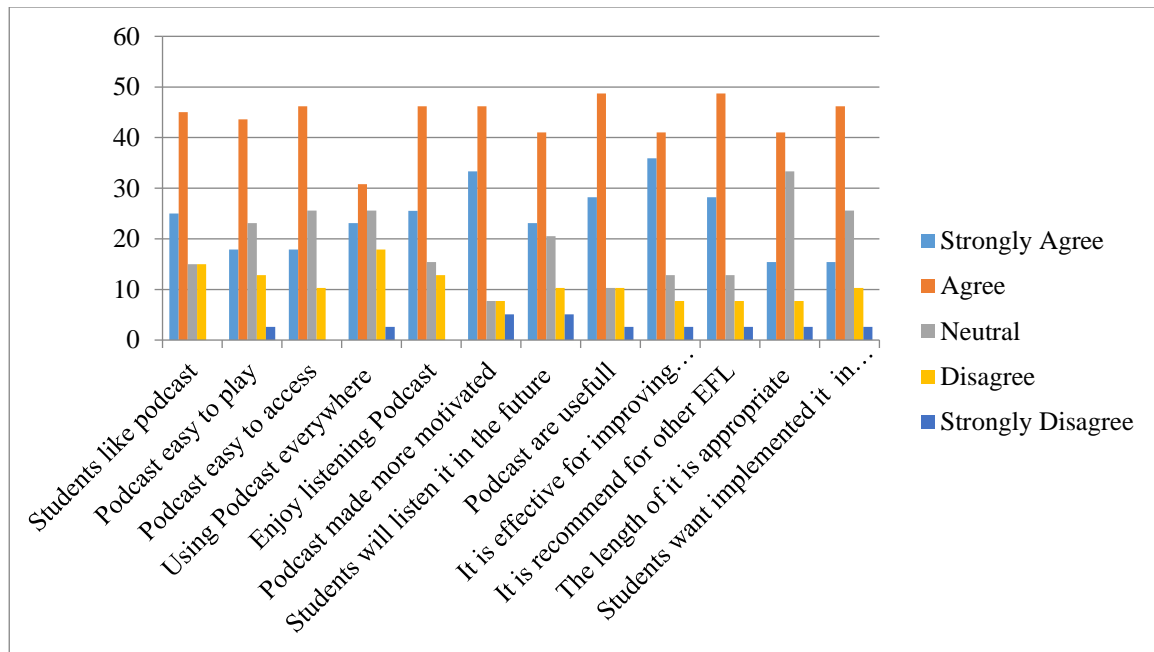
Graphic 1. Questionnaire Statistics

The first statement pertains to the students' attitudes towards using podcasts, where 45% of students responded that they enjoy listening to podcasts, while 25% strongly agree. The second statement concerns the convenience of playback of podcast audio files, with 43.6% of students agreeing and 17.9% strongly agreeing that it was easy to play podcasts. The third statement examines the convenience of accessing podcast audio files, with 46.2% of students agreeing and 17.9% strongly agreeing.

The fourth statement discusses the flexibility of using podcasts, with 40.8% of students agreeing and 23.1% strongly agreeing that they could use podcasts anytime and anywhere. In the fifth statement, 46.2% of participants agreed that they enjoyed listening to the podcast, with 25.6% strongly agreeing. The sixth statement assessed whether podcasts can motivate students to learn English, with 46.2% of students agreeing that podcasts motivate them in learning English.

The seventh statement concerns students' intentions to listen to the podcast again, with 41% of students agreeing that they would be happy to listen to the podcast, and 23.1% strongly agreeing. The eighth statement evaluates the usefulness of podcasts for language learning, with 48.7% of students agreeing and 28.2% strongly agreeing that podcasts can be an effective tool for learning a language. In the ninth statement, 41% of students agree that podcasts are effective in improving their listening skills, while 41% of students agree that podcasts are effective in improving their comprehension skills.

The tenth statement indicates that 46.2% of students welcomed the podcast, and 17.9% stated that they very welcomed the podcast. Furthermore, 48.7% of students suggested that learning English through podcasts is a worthwhile recommendation to their friends. The following statement focused on students' opinions regarding the length and content of the podcast, with 41% agreeing that the podcast's duration was appropriate for their needs, and 48.5% of students agreeing that the contents of the podcast were appropriate for their needs. Finally, the last statement showed that 46.2% of students agree that podcasts should be used in teaching listening. Overall, the data suggests that students hold a favorable perception when it comes to utilizing podcasts as a tool for learning English, with a majority finding it easy to access and play podcasts, and many acknowledge the usefulness and effectiveness of podcasts to improve their language skills.

This section is the result of a qualitative analysis related to what informants think when learning to listen using podcasts. The initial question pertains to the emotions and attitudes of the students toward utilizing podcasts. From the interview results it is known that using podcasts as learning media is very fun for informants and they can learn anywhere.

"Yes, I think for myself that more like watch and listen something than reading can make me focus and enjoy the content, it's more interesting and it's simple to do. I can learn with podcasts anywhere"

One of the informants said that learning to use podcasts would be fun or not depending on the topic of the podcast material. This means that students enjoy using podcasts with flexibility and at any time.

> *"Sometimes it's fun but sometimes it's not because of their topic"*

There were other informants, who were recently to know about podcasts. When they needed to do listening lessons. Previously they never accessed the platform that provided podcasts.

The next question concerns podcast listening flexibility. Students can learn English whenever and wherever they want. Here are student comments about the versatility of podcasts for learning English. Students enjoyed learning English with podcasts in their spare time while doing other activities like working or cooking.It means students are happy when they study listening.

> *"Yeah, we can listen whenever we want, we can listen anywhere. When I work or cook I can listen to the podcast while doing my activity.*

It can be concluded that students prefer to learn English with podcasts because of their flexibility, where learners take control and can learn at their convenience.

The students found that after listening to the podcast, their listening improved. The students said that after listening to the podcast, they were able to pronounce difficult words and even had many new vocabularies that they previously had almost inaudible.

> *"Yes, by listening to podcasts repeatedly, of course, we can find out new vocabulary and of course, we can also learn how to pronounce words correctly.*

It means students need listening material to increase their listening skills.

There were students' opinions about podcasts bringing benefits for the language learner. From the interview, it can be indicated that all students realized that podcasts are an effective resource for acquiring language skills.

> *"Yes, because from the podcast we learn to listen, we can also learn to say a word correctly with clear articulation"*

It means, students got the new vocabulary from the listening section. Students recognize that electronic devices can be utilized for practical purposes rather than just entertainment.

The next question is about students feel after using podcasts in listening activity. Students get motivated, get interested, improve their pronunciation, improve their accents, and improve their vocabulary.

> *"When I saw a podcaster or broadcaster on YouTube, I think it's cool, Iwanna be like them. I try to improve my vocabulary and pronunciation, how I can pronounce my English like them. Of course, listening to podcasts will have a positive impact such as motivation to be able to further improve pronunciation, accent, and vocabulary. The role of podcasts in learning is to enrich learning specifically for listening. Podcasts can provide benefits for both lecturers and students, such as improving listening and comprehension skills. If used properly, podcasts can be a powerful and positive learning medium"*

It means the student got a stimulus from a native speaker. This indicates that listening to podcasts can improve students' pronunciation, and they are interested in listening to native speakers when using podcasts in their language learning.

On the other side, students faced the problem regarding the accent of the native speaker and the fast of speech as well.

> *"Yes, when I listen to the podcast I have some difficulties when listening, because sometimes the podcasts that I listen to, the dialogue is too fast and I also find some new vocabulary, so it makes it difficult for me to understand the podcast that I listened to because it wasn't clear enough."*

> *"Yes, sometimes there are some difficulties such as the accent used, speaking too fast so that listeners have difficulty understanding what is being said, and also having difficulty recognizing the words spoken"*

It means half of the students are more confused about hearing native speakers than one. The students find it hard to understand the vocabulary when listening to the podcast section.

The data analysis findings in this research have revealed that a majority of the participants valued the simplicity, flexibility, enjoyability, accessibility, engagement, and satisfaction derived from utilizing podcasts as a learning media. According to the data presented above, students hold the belief that their listening abilities can be improved by using podcasts and encouraging them to learn English while also increasing their vocabulary. Most students believe that podcasts are beneficial for improving listening skills and offer flexibility as they can be accessed anytime and anywhere. Listening to podcasts can enhance focus and sensitivity, which is useful for learning new vocabulary. According to Bolliger, Supanakorn, and Boggs (2010), the

integration of podcasts into online learning can also be a source of motivation for students.

However, students reported difficulties in understanding podcasts, particularly with accents and unfamiliar words, and issues with native speakers' speaking pace, especially with British accents, and occasionally with slang terms that were unfamiliar. It was in line with Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016), most of the challenges were related to information processing, English proficiency, materials, and medium. The findings indicate that podcasts have a significant effect on students' listening skills. The survey results indicate that listening to podcasts has a favorable impact, as it is an enjoyable tool to use and has increased students' motivation to learn English.

CONCLUSION

The study's conclusions were drawn from the positive responses received from students regarding the use of podcasts for improving their listening skills. They agreed that podcasts are an effective tool for learning to listen due to their ease of use, flexibility, engagement, and enjoyment. Furthermore, podcasts can be accessed at any time and from any location, increasing students' motivation to learn English. The study particularly found that podcasts are beneficial for listening practice and for encouraging students to listen to native English speakers. It was supported by Li (2010) stated that students expressed their enthusiasm for continuing to develop their listening skills through podcasts. From the findings of this research where students feel that technology improves their listening learning experience, this indicates the need for the integration of technology in listening teaching methods in educational environments. This can also provide encouragement to students to take the initiative in utilizing this technology in their learning process. From the findings above, the author recommends that teachers and lecturer consider using various technological tools and platforms such as podcasts to make listening material more interesting and interactive. An important recommendation is to carry out continuous evaluation of the effectiveness of the use of technology in listening learning. This could involve regular surveys of students to measure how technology is impacting their ability to listen and understand material.

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