
**USING PODCASTS TO IMPROVE LISTENING AND SPEAKING SKILLS:
A LITERATURE REVIEW**

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Abstract

This study reviews previous research on using podcasts to develop English listening and speaking skills. The background emphasizes the need for authentic and flexible learning media in language education. The study aims to analyze how podcasts contribute to improving learners' communicative competence. Using a qualitative literature review method, relevant studies from 2015–2025 were examined. The findings show that podcasts enhance listening comprehension, pronunciation, vocabulary, and speaking fluency through real-life input and repeated exposure. Learners also experience increased motivation and confidence when podcasts are integrated into guided classroom learning. However, limited feedback remains a challenge. In conclusion, podcasts are an effective and accessible tool to support listening and speaking proficiency in English language learning.

Keywords: podcasts, listening, speaking, communicative competence, language learning.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini meninjau berbagai studi sebelumnya mengenai penggunaan podcast untuk mengembangkan keterampilan menyimak dan berbicara dalam bahasa Inggris. Latar belakang penelitian menekankan kebutuhan akan media pembelajaran yang autentik dan fleksibel dalam pendidikan bahasa. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah menganalisis bagaimana podcast berkontribusi terhadap peningkatan kompetensi komunikatif pembelajar. Dengan metode tinjauan pustaka kualitatif, penelitian-penelitian relevan dari tahun 2015–2025 dianalisis. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa podcast meningkatkan pemahaman menyimak, pelafalan, kosakata, dan kelancaran berbicara melalui paparan bahasa nyata dan berulang. Pembelajar juga mengalami peningkatan motivasi dan kepercayaan diri saat podcast diterapkan dalam pembelajaran terarah di kelas. Namun, keterbatasan umpan balik masih menjadi tantangan. Kesimpulannya, podcast merupakan media efektif dan mudah diakses untuk mendukung kemampuan menyimak dan berbicara dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris.

Kata kunci: podcasts, mendengarkan, berbicara, kompetensi komunikatif, pembelajaran bahasa.

A. Introduction

The acquisition of a foreign language remains one of the greatest challenges for learners, particularly in mastering listening and speaking skills. These two skills are the foundation of effective communication and are essential for interaction in real-life contexts. However, learners often struggle to achieve proficiency in both due to limited exposure to authentic materials and the lack of interactive speaking environments. Successful mastery of these skills requires consistent practice, strong motivation, and access to suitable learning media that support real communication experiences.

The rapid development of digital technology has transformed the landscape of language learning. Learners now have access to various online tools that allow them to study beyond classroom boundaries. Among these innovations, podcasts have gained significant attention as flexible, mobile-friendly resources that provide authentic language input. Podcasts, as defined by (Tomé Díez & Richters, 2020), are digital audio files distributed through online syndication systems like RSS, allowing users to download and listen to content anytime and anywhere. This accessibility encourages learners to engage with authentic English speech in natural contexts and enhances their exposure to real communication patterns.

Previous studies have explored the benefits of podcasts in improving listening and speaking skills. For instance, (Ramli & Kurniawan, 2018) found that podcasts expose students to authentic materials, improve vocabulary, and motivate learners through meaningful tasks. Similarly, (NamazianDost et al., 2017) confirmed that podcasts effectively improve listening comprehension among EFL learners. Other studies (NamazianDost et al., 2017); (Riziqien Alfa, 2020); (Prasetya & Nuraeni, 2021) highlighted that podcasts foster learner autonomy and confidence in speaking English.

Despite these promising findings, most previous research has been limited to specific contexts such as classroom-based listening comprehension or the motivational impact of using podcasts. Few studies have comprehensively examined how podcasts simultaneously enhance both listening and speaking skills as integrated communication abilities. Moreover, earlier works often focus on short-term outcomes or specific learner levels, leaving a gap in understanding the long-term and holistic effects of podcast-based learning on communicative competence.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze and synthesize findings from prior research to explore how podcasts contribute to improving foreign language learners' listening and speaking skills. By employing a literature review approach, this paper seeks to fill the existing research gap by consolidating insights across multiple studies and identifying consistent patterns of effectiveness, challenges, and pedagogical implications. This focus is expected to provide educators with practical recommendations for integrating podcast-based learning into language classrooms to strengthen learners' communicative competence in a digital era.

B. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

The literature review section aims to present and analyze previous studies related to the use of podcasts in enhancing English listening and speaking skills. Reviewing existing research provides a theoretical foundation and helps identify patterns, benefits, and challenges reported in prior investigations. By synthesizing relevant literature, this section seeks to highlight how podcasts have been utilized in language learning contexts and to what extent they contribute to the development of learners' communicative competence.

(Saragih et al., 2022) investigated the effectiveness of podcasts in enhancing senior high school students' listening comprehension. The study revealed that students became more motivated and interested when podcasts were integrated into lessons. Podcasts offered authentic materials that supported pronunciation and vocabulary understanding. Teachers were encouraged to use them both inside and outside the classroom. Therefore, the study concluded that podcasts significantly improved listening skills and learning motivation.

(Kavaliauskienė, 2019) examined how podcasts serve as flexible media for developing EFL learners' listening abilities. The researchers found that access to authentic speech through podcasts helped learners understand natural pronunciation and context. The study emphasized that consistent listening exposure leads to better comprehension and retention. Results showed that podcast integration increased students' listening motivation and vocabulary mastery. Hence, the researchers recommended combining podcast learning with traditional classroom methods.

(Ramli & Kurniawan, 2018) explored the use of podcasting as a technological tool to enhance both listening and speaking skills. The findings demonstrated that students who used podcasts showed significant improvement in fluency, confidence, and pronunciation. Podcasts enabled flexible, self-paced learning beyond the classroom and encouraged independent practice.

Teachers benefited from accessible materials that facilitated engaging lessons. Overall, podcasts were proven to bridge digital innovation with communicative language teaching.

(Gönülal, 2020) carried out an extensive listening project using podcasts and vodcasts to improve EFL learners' listening and pronunciation. After a year-long practice, the results showed a notable improvement in comprehension and speaking accuracy. Despite challenges with native-speaker speed, students maintained high motivation and engagement. The flexibility of digital tools supported independent study outside class hours. The study thus confirmed that podcasts and vodcasts effectively develop long-term listening competence.

(Bustari et al., 2017) conducted experimental research at SMA Negeri 11 Banda Aceh on using podcasts to develop students' speaking performance. The comparison between pre-test and post-test indicated a substantial improvement in fluency and pronunciation. Podcasts provided self-learning opportunities that increased confidence and motivation. Students found podcast learning engaging and accessible. Consequently, the study concluded that podcasts are effective supplementary media for teaching speaking.

(Suvarnaphaet & Suvarnaphaet, 2023) analyzed how podcasts can develop students' speaking skills in EFL contexts. The study explained that podcasts provide authentic listening models through dialogues, interviews, and storytelling formats. When properly implemented, podcasts enhance learners' vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency. Teachers act as facilitators, helping students to interpret and practice authentic speech. The study concluded that podcasts effectively improve oral communication skills when used consistently in classroom and extracurricular settings.

(Yoestara & Putri, 2019) explored podcasts as an alternative tool to improve Indonesian EFL students' listening and speaking skills. The authors identified four main benefits: exposure to authentic language, promotion of self-regulated learning, increased learner confidence, and active engagement. Using the TPACK framework, they emphasized the importance of teacher technological competence in integrating podcasts. Results showed that podcasts improved motivation, confidence, and fluency. Thus, podcasts were affirmed as valuable digital media in Indonesian English education.

(Ainun et al., 2023) conducted a quantitative study titled "The Use of Podcasts in Improving Students' Listening Skills at University Level." This study, carried out at Universitas Negeri

Makassar, used a pre-test and post-test design to measure the effect of audio podcasts on students' listening abilities. The findings showed a significant improvement, with the post-test mean score (63.63) higher than the pre-test (51.76). The researchers concluded that audio podcasts effectively enhanced listening comprehension, motivation, and engagement among university students. Podcasts made learning English more enjoyable, accessible, and beneficial for developing listening proficiency.

C. Research Method

This study employed a qualitative literature review method to analyze and synthesize previous research related to the use of podcasts in improving English listening and speaking skills. The purpose of this method is to gather, examine, and interpret findings from various studies to identify consistent trends, pedagogical implications, and challenges in using podcasts for language learning.

The design of this study is a qualitative descriptive literature review. It focuses on summarizing and interpreting existing research findings rather than conducting new empirical research. The review process follows the stages of collecting, selecting, analyzing, and synthesizing relevant literature.

Data were obtained from secondary sources including academic journals, conference proceedings, theses, and online publications. The databases used include Google Scholar, Garuda, DOAJ, ERIC, and Scopus. To maintain relevance, only articles published between 2015 and 2025 were included.

The data collection involved searching for studies using specific keywords such as “podcasts in EFL learning,” “improving listening skills,” “developing speaking skills,” and “digital media in language learning.”

Each selected study was reviewed to extract essential information, including: Research objectives, participants and context, research methods, And findings related to the effects of podcasts on listening and speaking

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, identifying recurring patterns and themes regarding the effectiveness, benefits, and limitations of using podcasts. The synthesis process aimed to highlight common insights and provide a comprehensive overview of podcast integration in language education.

As this study is based entirely on secondary data, no direct involvement of human participants occurred. All cited works are properly acknowledged to uphold academic integrity and avoid plagiarism.

D. Discussion

The findings from the reviewed studies consistently demonstrate that podcasts play a significant role in improving both listening and speaking skills among EFL learners. Across the literature, podcasts are shown to provide learners with authentic exposure to the target language, increase motivation, and enhance communicative competence.

Podcasts function as flexible, accessible, and authentic learning media that support language learning both inside and outside the classroom. Studies by (Saragih et al., 2022) and (Kavaliauskienė, 2019) highlight that podcasts help learners engage with real English speech, improving their ability to recognize pronunciation, rhythm, and intonation. Learners can listen repeatedly, which strengthens listening comprehension and vocabulary retention. Moreover, podcasts promote learner autonomy, allowing students to manage their own learning pace and preferences.

The reviewed studies confirm that podcasts effectively enhance listening comprehension and speaking fluency. (Ramli & Kurniawan, 2018) and (Bustari et al., 2017) found that podcasts provide students with models of authentic pronunciation and natural conversations, which improve their speaking accuracy and confidence. Meanwhile, (Gönülal, 2020) showed that extensive exposure to podcasts and vodcasts leads to long-term improvement in listening comprehension and pronunciation accuracy. These findings emphasize that consistent engagement with podcast materials results in better oral language performance.

Podcasts offer several pedagogical advantages. They create a motivating learning environment, as learners can choose interesting topics relevant to their interests. (Yoestara & Putri, 2019) and (Ainun et al., 2023) reported that students became more enthusiastic, confident, and willing to practice speaking after using podcasts. Furthermore, podcasts are cost-effective and easily accessible, making them a practical tool for both teachers and students in diverse educational contexts.

Despite their benefits, some challenges remain. Learners may face difficulty understanding native-speaker speed, unfamiliar accents, or idiomatic expressions. (Gönülal, 2020) also noted that without teacher guidance, students might struggle to interpret authentic speech correctly. Moreover, limited feedback in podcast-based learning can hinder speaking improvement if not supplemented with interactive activities such as discussions, role plays, or reflections.

For effective implementation, teachers should integrate podcasts into structured learning activities. Guided listening tasks, follow-up discussions, or speaking practices based on podcast content can help reinforce comprehension and fluency. Teachers also need to select appropriate podcast materials based on students' proficiency levels and provide opportunities for reflection and feedback. This ensures that podcasts serve not only as passive listening tools but also as active resources for communicative learning.

E. Conclusion

This literature review concludes that podcasts are highly effective digital tools for improving English listening and speaking skills. Based on the reviewed studies, podcasts provide authentic, flexible, and motivating learning experiences that expose learners to real-life English use. Through repeated listening and imitation of natural speech, students develop better pronunciation, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency.

Podcasts also encourage learner autonomy and confidence, as learners can control their pace, select interesting topics, and practice outside the classroom. Furthermore, podcasts bridge traditional and modern learning approaches by combining digital media with communicative activities.

However, the review also identifies several limitations. The absence of direct feedback, difficulty understanding native accents, and lack of interaction may hinder full speaking improvement if podcasts are used in isolation. Therefore, teachers should integrate podcasts with guided speaking tasks, discussions, and reflective activities to maximize their effectiveness.

In conclusion, podcasts are valuable supplementary media that can enhance learners' communicative competence when applied strategically and consistently. Future researchers are encouraged to explore long-term effects and innovative podcast-based learning models to further develop English language proficiency in digital learning environments.

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