

Pre-Service EFL Teachers' Perception of Using Podcasts as a Learning Media to Improve Listening Skills

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Abstract

The podcast is one of the popular tools of technology that can be used to support English language learning, especially in listening skills. Students can access podcasts everywhere and anytime to train their listening skills. Therefore, this study was employed to investigate the pre-service EFL teachers' perception of using podcasts as a learning medium in improving listening skills. The study was conducted on students of the English Language Education Department of Universitas Kristen Indonesia in May 2021. The respondents of this study were 50 students in the 2017-2019 batches. This study collected the quantitative data by distributing a questionnaire that consisted of 30 items. The data obtained were analyzed by using descriptive statistics. The result of this study showed that students hold a positive perception of using Podcasts as a learning medium in improving listening skills. Therefore, podcasts can motivate the students to become better listeners, and more confident when listening to the native speaker in the Podcast. The findings also indicated that it is essential for teachers to use appropriate instruction to achieve the best results. This media will assist both the teacher and the students in the learning process.

Keywords:

Podcasts, learning media, listening skills

INTRODUCTION

The development of science and technology has been bringing up a lot of multimedia technology, and its applications for teaching have provided displaying audio, visual, and animation tools that bring a distinctive color to English teaching and learning. Various experiences and research have shown that multimedia technology plays a positive role in promoting student activities and initiatives in the learning process of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in the classroom. Pardede (2020) stated that ICT has been gradually more important to most educational systems because it increases the range of opportunities to advance teaching and learning inputs, processes, and outcomes. According to Asfar and Zainuddin (2015) the use of media technology in this 21st century has become a necessity to help teachers and students to get the materials anytime, anything, and anywhere easily through various sites.

One form of digital technology that is developing in this millennial generation is Podcast. It is a media that can be used by hearing audio through computers, laptops, and Android phones. Kohar, Salam & Sumarni (2014) described Podcast as an online sound or spoken word digital audio file that can be downloaded and stored free of charge on a mobile phone or MP3 player and produced in the form of regular episodes. This media can record sounds created with scenarios that can make listeners feel carried away from the real situation. Podcast becomes an application that is commonly used to access the information needed in business, industry, and education. People like to listen to podcasts because the content is varied, it is flexible, and it is more enjoyable than visual content. Baehaqi (2014) stated that using podcasts in the language teaching classroom will allow students to take part in the activities offered. So, Podcast can influence the students' learning process and improve the quality of learning outcomes as it helps the learner to improve four language abilities (listening, speaking, writing, and reading). Podcasts help students pay attention to their material and inspire them to learn both bottom-up and top-down listening techniques. Learners could also listen to it everywhere.

Various studies have been conducted on various aspects of Podcast use as a learning media to improve listening skills. Many researchers concentrated on the effectiveness and benefits of using it to improve learners' listening skills, however, only a few researchers focused on the perception of students of the use of Podcast itself. Kavaliauskienė (2008) studied the effectiveness of Podcasts as a tool for

improving listening skills. Ahmed (2016) conducted an experimental study to see the effect of using podcasts on students' listening performance. He found that the experimental group using English Podcasts outperformed the control group in learning listening comprehension. Baehaqi (2014) focused on the discovery of listening techniques using podcasts. Abdulrahman, Basalamah, & Widodo (2018) focused on the impact of podcasts on EFL students' listening comprehension.

Considering the scarcity of studies on students' perception of the use of podcasts in listening performance development, and the fact that students are among the main stakeholders of learning that their perception is one of the most important success factors in any learning strategy implementation, including the use of podcast, the writer was interested to explore Pre-service EFL teachers' perception of using Podcast in listening skills development. Regarding this, this study aims to answer the following question: "What is pre-service EFL teachers' perception of using Podcasts as a learning media in

improving listening skills? The results of this study will hopefully provide insights into students' perception of using Podcasts as a learning medium in improving listening skills.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Learning Media

Learning media refers to all things that could be employed to convey messages or information in the teaching and learning process to stimulate students' attention and interest in learning. To Perdana (2013), learning media are any devices that assist an instructor to transmit knowledge, facts, attitudes, and skills to the learners to additional materials used when using a particular teaching method to make learning easy. Learning media may encourage students to think critically, use their imaginations, and develop their abilities thus giving more creativity and innovative works. Learning media can be used to create real learning conditions. Hanif (2019) stated that when learning media is used properly in the learning process, it becomes a more effective and efficient support tool in attaining the learning objectives.

Marpanaji (2018) classified learning media into six types: (1) text; (2) audio; (3) visual; (4) mention; (5) people and (6) real objects and models. Audio media is the most commonly utilized learning media. Setiawan (2017) stated that audio media is everything that can be heard, such as the sound of people, music, mechanical sounds, noise, and so forth. Audio media can provide an experience contributing to the development of people's minds as well as the expanding of their perspectives and mindsets. Audio media could be used to more effectively convey information, such as in educational media, and presentations, and to encourage curiosity about the new information. Audio-based learning systems will be easily absorbed considering audio has interesting properties that attract the interest of a wide range of people. The employment of audio media is expected to encourage students to listen more actively and to be able to understand the information they hear (Hardiah, 2018).

Listening Skills

Listening is the key to communication. It is an ability that should be learned early in life before other skills such as speaking, reading, and writing (Syofianis, 2015). Some experts stated that listening is an active process through which someone responds effectively to messages. Without the ability to listen well, someone cannot communicate effectively. Hasyuni (2006) stated that listening is a creative skill. It is not only hearing and is not the same as hearing, a process of catching sounds without consciously engaging them. Helgesen (2003) stated that listening is an active, deliberate process to make sense of what we hear. While listening, a person processes and connects what other people say with other information he already knows and understands. In learning, listening skills enable students to have a broad knowledge of language and content.

However, listening is difficult for many students because it covers a complex process and includes many factors. Students can even be frustrated in learning listening because there are no rules in listening teaching as in grammar teaching. To be skillful in listening, students should be active to learn how and what other say by considering the grammar, phonology, and vocabulary to conceive the key points. Students should be able to identify the meaning of the sounds and attempt to understand the meaning of what they hear. In particular, Students need to know the listening competence they most frequently encounter in their academic studies. To develop their listening skills, students should be

able to discriminate sounds, identify main ideas and listen to detailed text and sentences. Listening skills development also requires the practice of receiving and responding to spoken messages.

Podcasts

A podcast is a sound or audio file on the internet that a user can download and store free of charge on the cell phone or MP3 player and produced in the form of regular episodes. The podcast is identified as an innovation for building the listening of students. As an English learning support, Podcast is a possible option and helps teachers to integrate technology into teaching. Permatasari (2013) stated that podcasts are all the rage right now. That is why using podcasts in the learning process enables teachers to alternate their teaching methods and allows students to feel inclusive and supportive of the learning community. Learners can listen to any content that is of interest to them over and over. This media audio could record sounds created with situations that can make listeners get carried away with the reality of the situation. Podcasts encourage students to practice self-directed listening guides at their own pace.

Podcast caters to creating online learning that can be used for a variety of purposes. Online Podcast provides language teachers with a wealth of tools to teach the listening skill. Using podcasts, students can listen to make it easier for them to do their homework. Podcast also provides many interesting features and students can download them for free. Numerous topics are available to listen to in podcasts, including the genres of comedy, music, film, politics, and public figures. Thus, students can adapt and listen to the content interesting to them. Students can also listen to podcasts anytime and anywhere because podcasts transcend the boundaries of space and time. Therefore, Podcast is practical and efficient to be learning resource. It is practical because it can be carried anywhere, can be heard anytime, and only needs a small memory space.

Several previous studies have been conducted on the use of podcasts in language learning. Rosell-Aguilar (2007 as cited in Ramli, 2018) focused on the effects of podcasts on students' language skills and their attitudes and perceptions toward podcast use. They found that podcasts integration with learning improved academic performance, enhanced motivation, and promoted learning. It also improved not only listening but also other language skills and areas like speaking, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. In the same vein, Abdulrahman, Basalama, and Widodo (2018) studied the impact of the podcast on EFL learners' listening comprehension. The results show that students were motivated to learn English by using podcasts as they provided authentic materials, interesting listening

exercises, and meaningful tasks. Permatasari (2013) found that the use of podcasts in English classrooms has influenced the students' English skills as well as students' perceptions. The results indicated that a Podcast can be a medium that encourages language learning.

METHODS

Research Design

This study is qualitative research employing a cross-sectional survey design. As a qualitative study that explores, understands, describes, generates, or discovers phenomena (Pardede, 2018), this study explores the perception of the students of the

English Language Education of Universitas Kristen Indonesia (ELE UKI) of using Podcast as a learning media to listening skill.

Population and Sample

The population of this study was the students of ELE UKI. The participants consisted of 20 students of batch 2017, 13 students from batch 2018, and 17 students of batch 2019. So the samples of this study were 50 students aged 19 to 23-year-old. They are purposively selected by using that they have experienced using podcasts as a learning media in learning listening as the main criterion.

Instruments

The data was collected using a questionnaire adapted from Darwis (2016) and Abdulrahman, Basalamah, & Widodo (2018). The questionnaire includes 30 close-ended items. Statements number 1-9 are related to Students' advantages of using Podcast as a learning media in improving listening skills, statements number 10-20 concern students' perception about the usefulness of using Podcast as a learning media in improving listening skill, statement number 21-25 are related to students' perception about the effectiveness of using Podcast as a learning media in improving listening skill, and statement number 26-30 are related to the difficulties of using Podcast as a learning media in improving listening skill. The questionnaire was tested for reliability using the Cronbach Alpha reliability test. The test result was 0.957 which means it is reliable to use. The participants were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with each statement on a 4-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was online via Google Form.

Data Analysis Technique

The collected data was analyzed by administering descriptive statistics, in which data was analyzed in terms of percentage and mean score.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Advantages of using Podcast as a learning media in improving listening skills

Table 1. *The advantages of using Podcast as learning media to improve listening skills*

No	Statements	SD	D	A	SA	\bar{X}
		F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	
1	I prefer learning listening through Podcast	1 (2.0%)	20 (40.0%)	19 (38.0%)	10 (20.0%)	2.76
2	Podcast is an interesting tool for language learning	1 (2.0%)	12 (24.0%)	25 (50.0%)	12 (24.0%)	2.96
3	Lots of interesting topics are available in the Podcast	2 (4.0%)	12 (24.0%)	26 (52.0%)	10 (20.0%)	2.88
4	With Podcast, I can determine what topics I will listen to learn English	4 (8.0%)	9 (18.0%)	24 (48.0%)	13 (26.0%)	2.92
5	Podcast is very compact and simple to use	3 (6.0%)	10 (20.0%)	23 (46.0%)	14 (28.0%)	2.96

Table 1. (cont.)

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No	Statements	SD	D	A	SA	\bar{X}
		F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	
6	With Podcast, I can choose the content and form that fit my particular lesson	3 (6.0%)	8 (16.0%)	24 (48.0%)	15 (30.0%)	3.02
7	I can download materials and listen to Podcast for homework	3 (6.0%)	7 (14.0%)	27 (54.0%)	13 (26.0%)	3
8	By using Podcast I could learn anywhere	2 (4.0%)	10 (20.0%)	19 (38.0%)	19 (38.0%)	3.1
9	By using Podcast I could learn anytime	1 (2.0%)	13 (26.0%)	18 (36.0%)	18 (36.0%)	3.06
Σ		40	202	410	248	26.66
%		4,4	22,4	45,6	27,6	2.96

The finding revealed that the participant's perception of the advantages of using Podcasts as learning media in improving listening skills is positive. Table 1 shows that a majority (more than 75%) of the participants thought podcasts facilitated them to learn anytime and anywhere, supported them to choose the content and form that fit a particular lesson, and enabled them to download materials and listen to podcasts for homework. Many of them thought Podcast advantageous because it is an interesting tool for language learning, it is very compact and simple to use, and it has lots of interesting topics. The response average means score for this indicator (advantages of using podcast) was 2.96 (out of 4).

The usefulness of Using Podcasts as a Learning Media to Improve Listening Skills

Table 2 shows that the participant's perception of the usefulness of using a podcast as a learning medium to improve listening skills is positive. A majority (80% or more) of the participants agreed and strongly agreed that the native speakers on the Podcast show them clearly how to pronounce words accurately in real communication, Podcast helps them master listening skill and motivate them to learn English, and Podcast has a lot of audio features that attract them to learn English listening. Additionally, more than 75% of them believed podcasts helped increase their listening skills, motivated them to practice listening, developed their ability in learning English, and assisted them to speak more fluently. The response average means score for this indicator (usefulness of using podcast) was 2.96 (out of 4).

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Table 2. *Students' perception about the usefulness of using Podcast as a learning media in improving listening skill*

No	Statements	SD	D	A	SA	\bar{X}
		F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	
10	Podcast contributes positively to my learning experience	2 (4.0%)	10 (20.0%)	26 (52.0%)	12 (24.0%)	2.96
11	Podcast has helped me to develop an ability in learning English	2 (4.0%)	10 (20.0%)	28 (56.0%)	10 (20.0%)	2.92

1

Table 2. (cont.)

No	Statements	SD	D	A	SA	\bar{X}
		F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	
12	Listening to Podcast makes me fluent in English	1 (2.0%)	12 (24.0%)	27 (54.0%)	10 (20.0%)	2.92
13	Since listening to podcasts, I feel like my listening skill have improved	3 (6.0%)	9 (18.0%)	24 (48.0%)	14 (28.0%)	2.98
14	Podcast motivates me to practice my listening skill	2 (4.0%)	9 (18.0%)	29 (58.0%)	10 (20.0%)	2.94
15	I feel pronunciation learning on Podcast is easy to understand	2 (4.0%)	13 (26.0%)	29 (58.0%)	6 (12.0%)	2.78
16	Podcast has a lot of audio features that attract my attention to learn English listening	2 (4.0%)	8 (16.0%)	28 (56.0%)	12 (24.0%)	3
17	The podcast can support me in building self-confidence and make the learning situation enjoyable	2 (4.0%)	10 (20.0%)	25 (50.0%)	13 (26.0%)	2.98
18	The podcast helps me master listening skill and motivate me to learn English	1 (2.0%)	8 (16.0%)	26 (52.0%)	15 (30.0%)	3.1
19	Native speakers on the Podcast show me clearly how to pronounce words accurately in real communication	2 (4.0%)	6 (12.0%)	24 (48.0%)	18 (36.0%)	3,16
20	Since listening to Podcast, I feel like my pronunciation has improved	2 (4.0%)	11 (22.0%)	29 (58.0%)	8 (16.0%)	2.86
Σ		42	212	590	256	32.6
%		3.8	19.3	53.6	23.3	2.96

Effectiveness of Using Podcasts as a Learning Media in Improving Listening Skills

As shown in Table 3, the participant's perception of the effectiveness of using podcasts to improve listening skills is also positive. A majority (80%) of them viewed that Podcast increases the effectiveness of learning listening and Podcast can be a potential choice to assist language learning, especially in listening. Additionally, around three-fourths of them thought The quality of the Podcast is sufficient for them and Podcast is effective in terms of time.

Table 3. Students' perception about the effectiveness of using Podcast as a learning media in improving listening skill

No	Statements	SD	D	A	SA	\bar{X}
		F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	
21	The quality of the Podcast is sufficient for me	2 (4.0%)	9 (18.0%)	28 (56.0%)	11 (22.0%)	2.96
22	The Podcast satisfies my desire to learn English	2 (4.0%)	12 (24.0%)	26 (52.0%)	10 (20.0%)	2.88

23	For me, Podcast can be a potential choice to assist language learning, especially in listening	3 (6.0%)	7 (14.0%)	29 (58.0%)	11 (22.0%)	2.96
24	I feel using Podcast increases the effectiveness of learning listening	3 (6.0%)	8 (16.0%)	25 (50.0%)	14 (28.0%)	3.0
25	Podcast is effective in terms of time	3 (6.0%)	10 (20.0%)	27 (54.0%)	10 (20.0%)	2.88
Σ		26	92	270	112	14.68
%		5,2	18,4	54,0	22,4	2.94

¹ **Difficulties of Using Podcasts as a Learning Media in Improving Listening Skills**

Table 4 shows that the participants' perception of difficulties of using podcasts to improve listening skills is moderate. Half of the participants agreed and strongly agreed with the whole items stating the indicator of difficulties, while the other half strongly disagreed and disagreed with them. This finding indicates that using podcasts to improve listening skills is not easy nor difficult for the participants.

¹
Table 4. The difficulties of using Podcast as a learning media in improving listening skill

No	Statements	SD	D	A	SA	\bar{X}
		F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	
26	I find it difficult to understand what the speaker says	4 (8.0%)	20 (40.0%)	18 (36.0%)	8 (16.0%)	2.4
27	I'm not confident when I listen to Podcast	6 (12.0%)	22 (44.0%)	18 (36.0%)	4 (8.0%)	2.6
28	I find it difficult to use Podcast to practice listening	3 (6.0%)	18 (36.0%)	19 (86.0%)	10 (20.0%)	2.28
29	I feel it is difficult to use Podcast as a mobile learning application	5 (10.0%)	18 (36.0%)	17 (34.0%)	10 (20.0%)	2.36
30	I feel lost when I listen to Podcast	8 (16.0%)	21 (42.0%)	19 (38.0%)	2 (4.0%)	2.7
Σ		26	99	91	34	12.34
%		10,4	39,6	36,4	13,6	2.47

¹ **DISCUSSION**

Advantages of using Podcast as a learning media in improving listening skills¹

The finding showed that the participants' perception of the advantages of using Podcasts as learning media in improving listening skills is positive. A majority of the participants thought using podcasts is advantageous because it facilitated them to learn anytime and anywhere, supported them to choose the content and form that fit a particular lesson, and enabled them to download materials and listen to podcasts for homework. They also thought Podcast an interesting tool for language learning, as it is very compact

and simple to use and has lots of interesting topics. This finding supports Abdulrahman, Basalama, and Widodo's (2018) finding that students were motivated to learn English by using podcasts as they provided authentic materials, interesting listening exercises, and meaningful tasks. It also supports Permatasari's (2013) claim that podcasts can be a medium that encourages language learning.

The usefulness of Using Podcasts as a Learning Media to Improve Listening Skills

The finding indicates that the participants' perception of the usefulness of using a podcast as a learning medium to improve listening skills is positive. A majority of the participants viewed Podcast as useful learning media to improve listening skills because Podcast has a lot of audio features that attract them to learn English listening and the native speakers on the Podcast show them clearly how to pronounce words accurately in real communication. They believed Podcast helps them master listening skill and motivated them to learn English. This finding confirms the study of Chan, et al. (2011) reporting that podcasts motivated students who listened to them. It is also in line with Kohar's (2014) finding that students agreed that podcasts bring benefits for language learners as they increased their self-confidence, enrich vocabulary, lead them to be independent learners, and changed their attitudes towards the English language itself.

Effectiveness of Using Podcasts as a Learning Media in Improving Listening Skills

The finding shows that the participants' perception of the effectiveness of using podcasts to improve listening skills is positive. They viewed that Podcast increases the effectiveness of learning listening and Podcast can be a potential choice to assist language learning, especially in listening. They also thought the quality of the Podcast is sufficient for them and Podcast is effective in terms of time. This finding confirms the study of Rosell-Aguilar (2007 as cited in Ramli, 2018) reporting that podcasts integration with learning improved learners' academic performance, enhanced their motivation, and promoted learning. It also effectively improved not only listening but also other language skills and areas like speaking, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. It also supports Abdulrahman, Basalama, and Widodo's (2018) findings revealing that using podcasts motivated students to learn English because it provided authentic materials, interesting listening exercises, and meaningful tasks.

Difficulties of Using Podcasts as a Learning Media in Improving Listening Skills

The finding shows that the participants' perception of difficulties of using podcasts to improve listening skills is moderate. In other words, they viewed using podcasts for developing listening skills is not easy nor difficult. The greatest contributor to the intricacy of using podcasts is the participants' difficulty in understanding the expressions they were listening to as they were said by native speakers. This cause some of them unconfident to listen to the podcast. To avoid, or at least lessen such difficulties, Constantine (2007) suggested teachers consider two important criteria in selecting podcasts for students: content relevance and transferability. To optimize the benefits of listening to the podcast for students, the content must be relevant to them. The content should not be too difficult nor too easy. A relevant topic will hold the learners' attention and thus boosts their motivation. Transferability concerns the possibility of applying what has learned to other situations whether it is at school or out in the real world. By listening

to a news broadcast with topics that can later be used in daily conversation, for instance, students will be more enthusiastic about learning.

Holistic Perception of each Indicator

Table 5 shows that the participants' perception of using podcasts to improve listening skills is generally positive; the degree of the perception is varied for each of the indicators. Their perception is most positive towards the advantages and usefulness of using podcasts to improve listening skills (\bar{X} = 2.96). It is followed by their perception of the effectiveness (\bar{X} = 2.94). Their perception of the difficulties of using podcasts, however, is moderate (\bar{X} = 2.47). As discussed earlier, some of the participants found using podcasts difficult because they did not meet the criteria of content relevance and transferability.

Table 5. *Holistic Perception of Each Indicator*

No	Indicators	SD	D	A	SA	\bar{X}
		F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	
1	Advantages	40 (4.4%)	202 (22.4%)	410 (45.6%)	248 (27.6%)	2.96
2	Usefulness	42 (3.8%)	212 (19.3%)	590 (53.6%)	256 (23.3%)	2.96
3	Effectiveness	26 (5.2%)	92 (18.4%)	270 (54%)	112 (22.4%)	2.94
4	Difficulties	26 (10.4%)	99 (39.6%)	91 (36.4%)	34 (13.6%)	2.47
Σ		134	605	1361	650	11.33
%		(4.87%)	(22%)	(49.5%)	(23.03%)	2.83

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the data analysis, it can be concluded that the ELE UKI students had a positive perception of using podcasts to improve listening skills. Among the four indicators studied (advantages, usefulness, effectiveness, and difficulties) the aspect of advantages and usefulness are the most positive, followed by effectiveness. The only moderate perception goes to the aspect of difficulties. It seems the participants viewed using podcasts to improve listening skills is not easy nor difficult because the practice of using podcasts they experienced might have not met the criteria of content relevance and transferability.

This study involved only a limited number of participants from a single study program, and the data was collected only using a questionnaire. Thus, further studies are expected to involve a larger number of participants from various schools and the data are collected using a combination of methods (interview, observation, etc.).

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