

## The Influence of Podcasts on Listening Ability: Students' Perspectives

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the effect of using podcasts on students' learning motivation in listening skills. This study uses a qualitative method. Data were collected from eight college-level students who took part in the year-long study via a questionnaire and then observed them to analyze the data. Questionnaires will be distributed via Google form with seven questions that must be filled out by students. From the results of this study it can be concluded that podcasts can be non-formal learning media that motivate students in learning languages, especially in listening skills.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Digital technology is very attached to the millennial generation. Everyone needs a smartphone and the internet to work, find information, news, entertainment, even to study using both. School is no longer the only place for them to learn to study, the learning process can be done anywhere and anytime online.

In language learning, advances in digital technology have revolutionized the approach to English education and learning. Language learners can easily take advantage of their electronic devices to learn English. Podcasts are a new technology in audiovisual resources as one of the media used in language teaching and learning, especially in listening skills inside and outside the classroom. They offer students' voices and recorded listening documents credible and relevant material, so students' listening comprehension capacities can be expanded over time. In particular, they provide opportunities for students to practice listening in a coordinated way on their own, and at their own place which implies extensive listening practice outside of the classroom with podcasts of interesting points that can be downloaded naturally free of charge from pocket podcast sites (Kavaliauskienė & Anusienė, 2009).

For some students think that listening is more interesting than reading. Hasan & Hoon (2012) found in their study that podcasts motivate learners to learn English and improve their language skills, especially listening. For students who do not like to read, listening may prove motivating. This unique listening feature is precisely provided in podcasting i.e. teaching through speech rather than text. Therefore, this study tries to look at the possible influence of

podcasting as a learning medium in motivating students to learn their language and whether various podcast content can improve their listening skills.

## 2. METHOD

This research involved eight students of the Department of English Language Education, University of Subang. A short questionnaire with several questions was conducted via google form and individual semi-structured interviews were also conducted to investigate students' views on the use of Podcat as a new medium for learning listening skills.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Of the eight people who took samples to fill out the questionnaire, 66.7% of students felt that learning language was more effective by listening and the other 33.3% preferred learning by reading.

In the second question which investigates what media students often use to learn language, 50% of students choose to listen to songs to practice their listening skills and the other 50% use podcasts as a learning medium to practice the same skills.

Then in the 3rd diagram 66.7% of students really believe that podcasts can be used as a medium for learning English. 22.2% also feel that podcasts can be a medium of learning even though 11.1% of them feel unsure.

Even so, they all think that podcasts can motivate them in the learning process because of its flexible nature that can be used anytime and anywhere without having to set a learning time. It's not just listening skills that can be improved in listening to the podcast, adding new vocabulary and practicing their pronunciation as well.

"Yes, because we are used to listening to podcasts, we can improve our listening skills. Those who were unfamiliar with certain pronunciations can become used to it because they often listen to podcasts" answered one of the students during an independent interview.

The last question analyzes their opinion about whether they agree or not if the podcast is used as a medium for learning English. Several students agreed with the reasons:

*"Agree. Because podcasts are usually presented with different topics. With that, of course, can add a lot of knowledge in the language. Not a few podcasts are packed with fun but still relaxed. Therefore, it can be an appropriate medium for learning languages too."*

*"Absolutely agree, with podcasts we can pronounce English words more fluently, improve pronunciation, vocab. And you can even increase your confidence to speak English because you often listen to English podcasts."*

*"Agreed, we can focus more on the audio we hear to help improve listening skills."*

The results of the questionnaire and several questions were given through interviews. Students think that podcasts can motivate them to learn English outside of their class. With its flexible nature, it can be used in their free time.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Apart from reading, listening can be another alternative in learning language. The amount of content in various languages is one of the attractions of students in learning. Apart from practicing listening skills and honing pronunciation in foreign language pronunciations, podcasts can also add new vocabulary to listeners. With this little research that has been done, it is proven that podcasts can be used as non-formal learning media for students in their language learning process.

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