MOBILE AUDIO-PODCAST CONSUMPTION AND LISTENING COMPREHENSION SKILLS IN PRE-SERVICE TEACHER

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Abstract
This study investigated the relationship between mobile audio-podcast utilization and listening comprehension among 30 pre-service English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers from a private university in East Jakarta. Data was collected through a 10-item Likert scale questionnaire assessing podcast utilization frequency and perceived benefits, complemented by participants' final test scores from their "Academic Listening and Speaking" course. While the quantitative analysis revealed a weak positive correlation (r=0.20), indicating no statistically significant relationship between mobile audio-podcast use and listening comprehension improvement, participants consistently perceived podcasts as helpful, interesting, and enjoyable for practicing their listening skills. These findings suggest that despite the lack of a strong direct statistical link to measured comprehension gains in this correlational design, mobile audio-podcasts hold significant motivational value and user-friendliness. They can effectively foster learner autonomy and provide authentic English exposure, making them valuable supplementary tools for pre-service teacher education programs, though further experimental research is recommended to explore their specific impact on listening skill development.

Keywords: Audio-Podcast; Listening comprehension; EFL; Pre-service teacher

INTRODUCTION

In our interconnected world, English proficiency is more critical than ever, especially for aspiring educators who will guide the next generation of learners. Within the complex array of language skills, listening comprehension is a cornerstone, enabling effective communication and serving as a gateway to acquiring other linguistic competencies. However, developing robust listening skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context presents unique challenges, often limited by exposure to authentic language outside the classroom. This challenge is particularly pertinent for pre-service teachers, who not only need to master these skills for their own proficiency but also to effectively teach them to their future students (Wijirahayu, 2024).

The development of digital technology has opened new avenues for language learning, offering readily accessible and diverse resources. Among these, mobile podcasts have gained significant traction, providing an on-demand source of authentic spoken English across a vast range of topics. Their portability and flexibility allow learners to engage with the language outside traditional classroom settings, potentially bridging the gap between formal instruction and real-world language use. While anecdotal evidence and a growing body of general research suggest the benefits of technology-enhanced language learning, the specific impact of mobile podcast utilization on the listening comprehension of pre-service EFL teachers remains an area for targeted investigation. Indeed, numerous studies have explored the use of podcasts in EFL contexts, ranging from their effect on listening skills in high school students (Nurdiana, 2024) and intermediate learners (Bakhsh & Gilakjani, 2021) to pre-service teachers' perceptions of podcasts as a learning medium (Hasibuan & Male, 2022; Deda, 2023; Pratiwi, Inderawati, & Silvhiany, 2024) and even

their impact on pronunciation (Kafes & Caner, 2020) or their use in content creation (Eskimen, 2023).

The relationship between how frequently and effectively pre-service teachers use mobile podcasts and their measured listening comprehension levels is crucial for informing pedagogical practices in higher education. Such insights can help university programs integrate these modern tools more strategically into teacher training curricula, preparing future educators with both the personal proficiency and the instructional strategies necessary to leverage digital resources for their students. This quantitative correlational study therefore aims to systematically investigate this relationship, seeking to provide empirical evidence on the extent to which mobile podcast utilization correlates with the listening comprehension skills of pre-service EFL teachers.

In globalized world, English has become international language across education, business, science, and technology. Most academic communities, in particular, rely heavily on English for communication and scholarship. Despite its pervasive importance, EFL learning often remains confined to traditional classroom settings, offering students limited opportunities to engage with the language authentically beyond the classroom walls. This highlights a critical need to implement student-centered approaches that provide more contextualized language learning experiences. Furthermore, strong English proficiency, particularly in reading and writing, grants students worldwide invaluable access to a vast array of information and research databases, as many prominent academic journals and publications are exclusively published in English (Harmer, 2014).

While the integration of technology into language education is a well-established field, and numerous studies have explored the general benefits and perceived effects of podcasts on various language skills, the specific focus and methodological approach of this research offer a significant contribution to the existing body of literature. Many studies investigate the effects of podcast interventions within controlled experimental settings on general student populations (e.g., Nurdiana, 2024; Bakhsh & Gilakjani, 2021). In contrast, this study uniquely examines the correlation between self-reported mobile podcast utilization patterns and actual listening comprehension levels specifically among pre-service EFL teachers. By targeting this crucial demographic, whose own language learning habits directly inform their future pedagogical approaches (e.g., Hasibuan & Male, 2022; Deda, 2023), and by exploring their organic, real-world engagement with mobile podcasts rather than just a formal intervention, this research provides timely and distinct insights. This emphasis on the correlational relationship within a pivotal cohort differentiates the current work, offering valuable empirical evidence for both language teacher education programs and the broader field of technology-enhanced language learning.

METHOD

This correlational study utilized a Google Form for data collection. The primary instrument was a 10-item closed-ended questionnaire designed to measure participants' mobile audio-podcast utilization frequency and their perceived benefits from using podcasts for language learning, assessed through a Likert scale. To further gauge listening comprehension levels, participants' final test scores from their "Academic Listening and Speaking" course were also incorporated.

The study included 30 pre-service English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers from a private university in East Jakarta. All participants had previously completed the "Academic Listening and Speaking" course.

For data analysis, descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were employed to summarize the characteristics of the data. Furthermore, inferential statistics, specifically the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient, were used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between mobile podcast utilization and listening comprehension. The findings will be presented using tables, diagrams, and bar charts to illustrate the final correlation scores.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results and discussion are presented in a section consisting of several paragraphs. This section is the most dominant part of the whole article, which is 60%. To facilitate understanding and reading, the results of the research are described first, followed by the discussion section. Results and discussion subtitles are presented separately.

Result

The study included 30 pre-service English teachers from a private university in East Jakarta. These participants were all English education majors who had completed an "Academic Listening and Speaking" class; their final test scores from this course were incorporated as a measure of their listening comprehension.
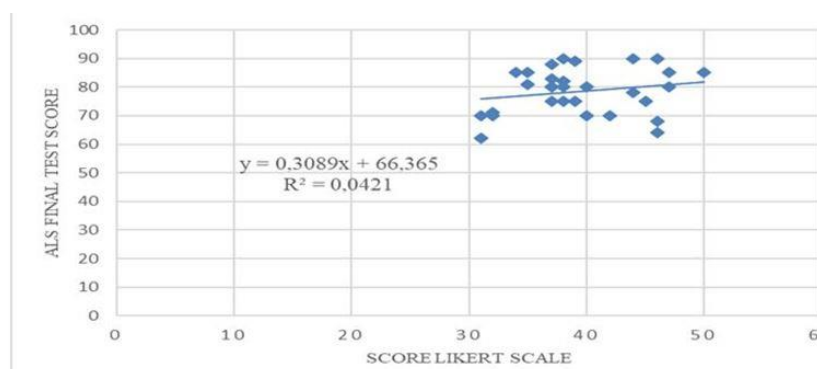

Figure 1. Correlation between podcast perception and listening comprehension score

The quantitative analysis revealed a weak positive correlation between mobile podcast utilization and listening comprehension, with a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient of $r=0.20$. This indicates a negligible association, suggesting no statistically significant relationship between using mobile podcasts and an improvement in listening comprehension among the participants.

However, despite this lack of a strong statistical correlation, participants consistently **p**erceived mobile podcasts as helpful for understanding and practicing their listening skills. All participants reported that using mobile podcasts was both engaging and enjoyable.

Discussion

The primary finding of this quantitative correlational study indicates a weak positive correlation ($r=0.20$) between mobile podcast utilization and listening comprehension among pre-service English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers. This suggests that, within the scope of this research, there is no statistically significant relationship between how much participants used mobile podcasts and their measurable improvement in listening comprehension as indicated by their academic course final test scores. This outcome might appear counterintuitive given the widely acknowledged potential of digital tools in language learning.

The importance of strong English proficiency, particularly listening skills, extends beyond general EFL learners to pre-service teachers. A robust foundation in English during the pre-college stage and throughout university is crucial for successful higher education academic achievement (Maesaro & Wijirahayu, 2025). Students with weaker English proficiency may face significant hurdles in their advanced studies, especially given that many leading universities and institutions stipulate high levels of English language proficiency. This highlights a potential gap in current educational approaches, where the care and adequate studies dedicated to developing foundational

English skills in this crucial pre-service cohort might be overlooked. Recognizing this gap, the current study aims to address a fundamental skill in English language learning—listening comprehension—by exploring the role of podcasts as a tool to support future educators.
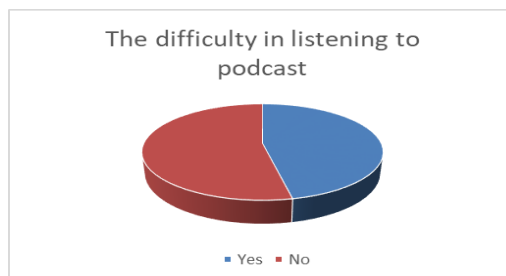

Figure 2. Respondent's difficulty in listening to audio-podcast

Listening, a complex cognitive process encompassing attention, perception, memory, and problem-solving, poses significant challenges for EFL learners. These difficulties often arise from limited access to authentic linguistic input and the psychological frustration of encountering incomprehensible conversations (Figure 2). This aligns with Krashen's (1992) seminal hypothesis that "comprehensible input"—language slightly beyond a learner's current knowledge—is essential for language acquisition. Therefore, to genuinely enhance learners' listening ability, educators must critically analyse these challenges and implement effective strategies to help students overcome them. This is particularly crucial given that listening, despite being the most frequently used receptive skill, is often underestimated and ignored in EFL contexts, partly because productive skills like speaking and writing are more visible and easily assessed (Wijirahayu et al., 2019).

Reconciling Statistical Results with Participant Perceptions

However, it is crucial to interpret this statistical finding alongside the qualitative insights gathered from the participants. Despite the negligible statistical correlation, all participants consistently perceived mobile podcasts as helpful for understanding and practicing their listening skills, describing the experience as both interesting and enjoyable. This apparent discrepancy between the objective measurement and subjective perception warrants further consideration.

Numerous studies have explored the positive influence of mobile learning and podcasts on language skills. For instance, Rahimi and Soleymani (2015) found an impact of mobile learning on both listening anxiety and comprehension, while Mirza Suzani (2021) and Bangkhadara (2019) specifically noted the positive effects of podcasting on listening comprehension and even motivation among EFL university students. Similarly, Saeedakhtar, Haqju, and Rouhi (2021) highlighted the impact of collaborative podcast listening on comprehension, and Yazmin and Clara (2024) explored the effects of podcasts on EFL college students with low proficiency.

The weak statistical correlation in the current study, compared to the "effects" or "impacts" found in these studies, could be influenced by several factors. Firstly, the "utilization" measured by the questionnaire might not fully capture the depth or quality of engagement with podcasts. Passive listening, for instance, may differ significantly from active, strategic listening (e.g., note-taking, repeated segment listening) in its impact on comprehension. Secondly, the final test score from the "Academic Listening and Speaking" course, while a valid measure of overall listening proficiency, might not be sensitive enough to detect subtle improvements specifically attributable to mobile podcast use, especially if the podcast content or listening strategies employed by students were not directly aligned with the test's demands. Other confounding variables, such as individual learning styles, motivation levels, or prior language learning experiences, could also play a significant role in mediating the relationship between podcast use and comprehension. The strong positive perceptions

of participants in this study, however, resonate with the motivational and engagement benefits identified in much of the existing literature.

Discussion on Utilization Patterns and Perceptions

Beyond the primary finding of a weak statistical correlation, this study also aimed to describe the reported frequency and pattern of mobile podcast utilization for language learning and explore the perceptions of pre-service EFL teachers regarding the usefulness of mobile podcasts for developing their listening comprehension The data collected through the 10-item Likert scale questionnaire provided insights into how frequently and in what manner these pre-service teachers engaged with mobile podcasts. While specific numerical details on frequency (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly usage) would be derived from your descriptive statistics, the overall finding indicated a noticeable level of engagement within the participant group. This aligns with trends observed in the broader EFL context, where mobile learning tools are increasingly integrated into students' routines (e.g., Bangkhadara, 2019; Yazmin & Clara, 2024). The patterns likely reflect individual autonomy in choosing when and where to listen, a key characteristic of informal online learning environments that podcasts facilitate (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Respondents' reason of listening podcast

Crucially, the study revealed highly positive perceptions regarding the usefulness of mobile podcasts for developing listening comprehension. All participants consistently reported that using mobile podcasts was helpful for understanding and practicing their listening skills, and they found the activity to be both interesting and enjoyable. This strong positive sentiment resonates with findings from other studies on EFL learners' attitudes towards podcasts (e.g., Mirza Suzani, 2021; Hasibuan & Male, 2022; Bhaskara, 2024). These studies often highlight factors such as accessibility, authenticity of materials, flexibility, and the engaging nature of audio content as reasons for positive student perceptions. The enjoyment reported by your participants suggests that mobile podcasts contribute significantly to motivation, which is an important affective factor in language learning, as noted by Rahimi and Soleymani (2015) in relation to mobile learning and anxiety.

While the positive perceptions did not translate into a statistically significant correlation with an objective measure of listening comprehension in this particular correlational study (Figure 1), the consistently favourable subjective experience is highly significant for pedagogical implications. It suggests that even if the direct causal link to test-score improvement wasn't isolated in this design, podcasts successfully create a conducive and motivating environment for self-directed listening practice. Future research could delve deeper into *how* these positive perceptions influence actual learning behaviours and the specific strategies learners employ when they find content "interesting and enjoyable."

Podcasts as a Tool for Listening Comprehension

In contemporary education, integrating technology has become essential for effectively delivering learning materials, particularly to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. Technology facilitates accessible and engaging learning experiences, enhancing the overall effectiveness of teaching and learning processes (Wijirahayu et. al, 2024). Any material resource that supports teachers and students in achieving educational success can be considered a teaching tool. These tools are instructional aids that promote active learning and improve performance within educational settings. Furthermore, engaging multiple senses through technological integration can lead to more efficient and impactful learning.
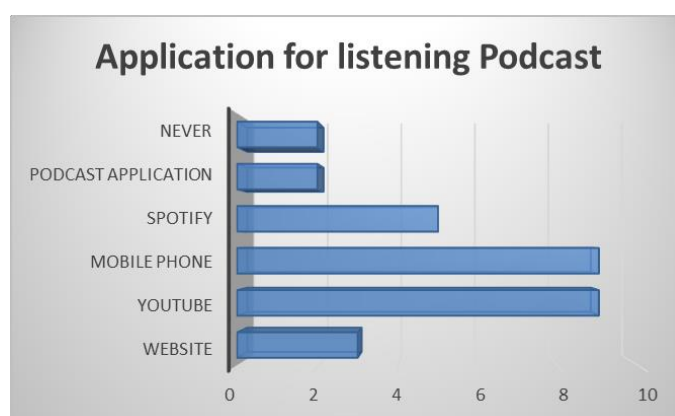

Figure 4. Platform application used by the respondents

Among various educational technologies, podcasts have emerged as a highly effective tool for enhancing listening skills and are widely adopted in higher education. Podcasts are particularly beneficial for EFL students, who require extensive exposure to spoken language to construct new knowledge through repeated listening. Their format allows students to listen repeatedly, and the ability to playback or pause episodes provides crucial control over the learning process when comprehension falters (Figure 4). By engaging with diverse listening texts and revisiting them as needed, EFL students gain more opportunities to acquire and internalize the target language. Given its potential to enhance EFL students' listening comprehension (Wijirahayu, 2024), this study employs mobile podcasts as a central learning tool, grounded in theoretical frameworks such as constructivism, informal online learning, and existing podcasting and language studies.

Implications and Future Directions

The overwhelmingly positive perception of mobile podcasts among pre-service teachers highlights their high motivational value and user-friendliness as supplementary learning tools. Even if a direct, strong statistical link to measured improvement on a specific test was not found in this correlational study, the fact that these future educators find podcasts engaging and helpful for practice is a valuable insight. This suggests that mobile podcasts can effectively foster learner autonomy and provide authentic exposure to English, contributing to a supportive linguistic environment, even if their impact on standardized test scores is not immediately apparent in a correlational design. Indeed, many studies have highlighted the positive impact of podcast use on various aspects of listening comprehension (e.g., Partiwi, 2022; Fardavoodi, Ismaili, & Morteza, 2020; Hadi, Izzah, & Maesari, 2021), and even specific skills like inferential listening (Ibrahim, Abd Allah, & Elsadek Attia, 2023), often correlating with increased motivation (Bozavli, 2024).

For pre-service teacher education programs, these findings imply that while mobile podcasts may not serve as a sole determinant of listening comprehension improvement, their role in

enhancing student engagement and motivation should not be underestimated. Their perceived helpfulness underscores their potential as a valuable component in language learning curricula. Future research could benefit from a mixed-methods approach that integrates more direct measures of active podcast engagement, experimental designs with pre- and post-tests directly aligned with specific podcast interventions (similar to the methodologies employed in some of the cited studies), and a deeper qualitative exploration of the strategies learners employ while using podcasts. Investigating the long-term effects of sustained mobile podcast utilization and exploring specific genres or types of podcasts most beneficial for particular listening sub-skills could also provide richer insights.

CONCLUSION

This quantitative correlational study investigated the relationship between mobile audio-podcast utilization and listening comprehension among 30 pre-service English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers. While the statistical analysis revealed a weak positive correlation ($r=0.20$), indicating no statistically significant relationship between the frequency of mobile podcast use and an improvement in listening comprehension, the findings also highlighted a crucial qualitative aspect: participants overwhelmingly perceived mobile podcasts as helpful, interesting, and enjoyable for practicing their listening skills.

This divergence between objective statistical measures and subjective perceptions is a key takeaway. While mobile audio-podcasts may not solely account for significant gains in formal listening comprehension test scores in a correlational design, their high motivational value and user-friendliness are undeniable. For pre-service teacher education programs, this implies that mobile podcasts are valuable supplementary learning tools that can foster learner autonomy and provide authentic English exposure, ultimately enhancing student engagement and motivation. Future research should explore more nuanced measures of podcast engagement and employ experimental designs to fully understand their impact on specific listening skills and long-term language acquisition.

Mobile audio-podcast technology is widely recognized for its potential efficacy in enhancing overall English language proficiency, particularly in listening comprehension. In line with this, the present study's findings confirmed that students hold a positive attitude towards using audio-podcasts, perceiving them as helpful, engaging, and enjoyable. Moreover, in this study, pre-service EFL teachers reported feeling more stimulated and active when utilizing this technology. It is noteworthy that the pre-service teacher's role plays a crucial part in achieving desired learning outcomes. To maximize effectiveness, teachers must carefully focus on the pedagogical design of audio-podcasts and thoughtfully consider the educational level of their students.

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