


Students Perceptions of Podcasts Used for Independent Pronunciation Learning (A Qualitative Study)

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A B S T R A C T

This study aims to explore students' perceptions of using podcasts as a medium for independent pronunciation learning and to identify the factors that support and hinder their use. The research employed a qualitative descriptive design involving English Language Education students at Tadulako University. The participants were selected using purposive and snowball sampling techniques, and data were collected through semi-structured interviews. The findings reveal that students generally have positive perceptions of podcasts for independent pronunciation learning. Podcasts are considered easy to use, flexible, and accessible anytime and anywhere, allowing students to practice pronunciation independently and repeatedly. Students also reported that podcasts help them become more familiar with native speakers' pronunciation, intonation, and accents. However, despite these benefits, several challenges were identified, including the lack of direct practice, limited feedback, and uncertainty about pronunciation accuracy without lecturer guidance. Therefore, while podcasts are effective as a supporting medium for independent pronunciation learning, they should complement, rather than replace, formal classroom instruction. The study suggests that lecturers integrate podcasts into pronunciation teaching while providing guidance and feedback to optimize students' learning outcomes.

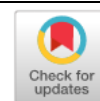
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INTRODUCTION

Currently, many people are using digital technology in education, especially for learning English. By using technology, many students can learn English independently without relying on classroom instruction. Podcasts have become a very popular medium for English learning. Because podcasts focus on audio, they help improve listening skills and pronunciation. Dewi and Ahmad (2021) state that podcasts offer highly flexible access, enabling use anytime and anywhere, and can be a powerful tool to support students independent learning.

Pronunciation is an essential part of English, as mispronouncing words can cause misunderstandings. However, it remains a challenge for students, often due to factors like; a lack of exposure to native speakers, differences in sound systems, and limited classroom learning time. Mellisa et al., (2021) note that limited time and access to learning resources often hinder students from practicing pronunciation effectively. Therefore, using diverse and easily accessible learning media is crucial to enhancing the learning process. Pronunciation includes two aspects: The first aspect is segmental, which involves the production of individual sounds such as vowels and consonants. The second aspect is suprasegmental, such as word stress, intonation, and rhythm. with the growing development of educational technology, many people have used media such as podcasts extensively as a source of authentic input for pronunciation learning. This is because podcasts provide various models of natural pronunciation learning, diverse accents, and real language contexts. Vacacela and Ramirez (2020) found that self-awareness strategies and podcasting in pronunciation learning have a significant impact on tense-relaxed vowel pronunciation, especially in adults.

Podcasts are a highly effective medium because they provide pronunciation models from a variety of speakers and communication contexts. Research shows that students' pronunciation skills and motivation to learn English improve. Dewi & Ahmad (2021) a highly beneficial impact for students from using podcasts is that their pronunciation skills in EFL classes improve. Podcasts enable students to speak like native speakers. Podcasts also increase student motivation in learning pronunciation due to their engaging content. Similarly, Husni Hasibuan (2019) found that students' English pronunciation skills have improved after using podcasts. Furthermore, the research Saifullah (2024) found that students had positive perceptions of using English podcasts to improve pronunciation and considered them a preferred learning medium for this purpose. In addition to improving pronunciation, podcasts also helped students improve their listening and speaking skills, expand their vocabulary, and boost their self-confidence.

Besides benefiting language skills, podcasts can also help students learn independently. Through podcasts, they can learn at their own pace and in a way that suits them. They can choose topics they enjoy, replay sections they don't understand, and study anytime and anywhere, making learning more free and comfortable. Rahmasari et al., (2021) found, that research results found positive perceptions of the use of podcasts in speaking lessons. Students really enjoy using podcasts because they offer a variety of interesting topics to choose from, tailored to their interests and needs.

In today's technologically advanced learning environment, students' perspectives on the use of digital media like podcasts are crucial, especially for pronunciation learning. Students are the ones who directly use these learning tools, so their opinions can indicate how effective, accessible, and convenient they are. Maharani et al., (2025) the research results show positive feedback from students, indicating that podcasts are an effective and engaging learning medium. Podcasts not only improve listening skills but also speaking abilities, such as learning new vocabulary, achieving correct pronunciation, understanding different accents, and increasing confidence in speaking. Podcasts can serve as a good alternative for learning English in college.

While podcasts have great potential to help students learn pronunciation independently, how students actually assess their effectiveness and benefits remains an open question. Not all students are comfortable or accustomed to studying independently, and some may struggle to make optimal use of digital media without guidance from a lecturer. Furthermore, research specifically examining how students in Indonesia, particularly at Tadulako University, use podcasts to practice their pronunciation independently remains scarce.

Although the use of podcasts in English language learning has been extensively researched, most studies focus on developing listening or speaking skills in general, rather than pronunciation specifically. Furthermore, the dominant research approach is quantitative, often using closed-ended questionnaires that do not delve deeply into students subjective experiences. Few studies have explicitly explored how students learn pronunciation independently using podcasts, especially in a local context like Tadulako University.

Based on previous research, several issues remain unclear and require further investigation. First, students perceptions of using podcasts for independent pronunciation learning have not been widely studied, resulting in a lack of in-depth understanding of their experiences and perspectives on their effectiveness. Second, the factors that support and hinder students use of podcasts, which influence their independent learning practices through podcasts, are still limited. Thus, there is a significant research gap, particularly regarding students' perceptions, supporting and inhibiting factors, and independent learning practices through podcasts at Tadulako University. This study seeks to fill this gap by examining students' experiences using podcasts for independent pronunciation learning. Therefore, this study offers novelty by examining students perceptions on independent pronunciation learning using podcasts through a qualitative approach.

This study focuses on Tadulako University students perceptions of independent pronunciation learning using podcasts. Furthermore, this study also examines the factors that

support and hinder the use of podcasts as a medium for independent pronunciation learning. This study covers only English Language Study Program students at Tadulako University who use podcasts for independent pronunciation learning. Other aspects of English learning, such as grammar, vocabulary, and listening comprehension, are not included in the scope of this study. Data collection will be conducted using a qualitative approach, using interviews and observations over the course of one academic semester.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive qualitative research design, to explore and understand Tadulako University students' perceptions of independent pronunciation learning through podcasts, and to identify factors that support and hinder the use of podcasts as a learning medium. Dahal A, (2024) stated qualitative approach allows researchers to gain a deep understanding of students learning experiences directly from their own perspectives. Through this approach, researchers can explore how students assess the effectiveness of podcasts in pronunciation learning, how they utilize them independently, and the supporting and inhibiting factors they encounter during the process.

Through data collection techniques such as semi-structured interviews, this study produced rich and contextual data that not only captures students perceptions but also examines internal and external factors that influence the use of podcasts in independent pronunciation learning. This research design is highly relevant to achieving two main objectives: understanding student perceptions and identifying supporting and inhibiting factors in using podcasts for pronunciation learning

Respondents

The researcher focused on selecting participants who have direct experience in using podcasts to learn pronunciation. The sampling technique used is purposive sampling and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling was chosen because it is very suitable for qualitative research. Ahmad and Wilkins (2024) stated that one of the most frequently used and popular approaches in qualitative research, is purposive sampling. This research also uses snowball sampling because it is very suitable when we already have several participants that we can interview, and then from these participants, we can get information about other participants. Which selects participants based on certain criteria that align with the research needs.

The participant criteria for this study are as follows:

Active students in the English Language Education Study Program at Tadulako University.

At least in the third semester, so they already have experience learning pronunciation.

Students who have ever used or are currently using podcasts as a medium for independent pronunciation learning.

How to recruit participants:

In this study, the researcher employed a combination of purposive and snowball sampling techniques.

First, two students were selected purposively because they were known to actively use podcasts for independent pronunciation learning, thus meeting the inclusion criteria.

After collecting data from these two initial participants, the researcher proceeded with snowball sampling by asking them to recommend other students who shared similar learning habits.

The referred students were then contacted and screened to ensure they matched the criteria before being recruited as additional participants.

This combined sampling approach allowed the researcher to access information-rich participants relevant to the research focus.

Variables

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This study focuses on gaining a deeper understanding of how students interpret the use of podcasts in independent pronunciation learning, as well as the factors that positively and negatively influence their use of this medium.

Procedures

Technique in Collecting Data

To obtain relevant and in-depth data in this study, the researcher used several data collection techniques commonly used in qualitative research, namely:

Semi-Structured Interviews. The main technique in this study was the semi-structured interview. Interviews were conducted directly with participants who had been selected based on certain criteria. The researcher prepared a question guide in advance, but still gave participants space to express opinions or experiences beyond the questions. Interviews were conducted flexibly in Indonesian or English, depending on the participant's comfort. Each interview will be recorded (with the participant's consent) to facilitate data transcription and analysis.

Document. Documentation will be used to supplement interview and observation data. The collected documentation included:

Screenshots of the podcast application used by participants

Notes or reflections on learning from participants (if any)

Photos of activities (if relevant and with participant consent)

collected data in the form of participants' academic grades, specifically, transcript or Study Result Card (KHS) grades related to pronunciation.

Triangulation techniques will be used to increase data validity by comparing and confirming data from several different sources (interviews, and documents).

Data analysis

The data analysis steps included:

Data Transcription. All interview recordings will be completely and thoroughly converted into written text (transcripts). The researcher reread the transcripts to understand the content. This technique adopts the same method as previous research, Whitney et al., (2024) transcription can be conducted to support the research effort and enhance credibility within the research.

Coding. The researcher assigns marks or codes to sections of the text deemed relevant to the research focus, such as student perceptions or factors that support or inhibit podcast use. Elliott, (2018) supports the coding process in qualitative research.

Code Grouping (Categorizing). Similar or identical codes are grouped into broader categories or themes. This research adopts the same method as previous research, Motulsky (2021) conducting member checking is particularly appropriate in certain studies and can enhance the credibility and quality of research.

Drawing Conclusions. This research adopts the same method as previous research, Jellema et al., (2023) support drawing techniques in qualitative research and argue that images play a crucial role in constructing and developing conclusions.

Involves comparing data from various sources and data collection techniques. The researcher also conducted member checking by asking participants for confirmation regarding the interview results to ensure data accuracy.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the interview data analysis, several key themes were identified related to students' perceptions of the use of podcasts in independent pronunciation learning.

Students Perceptions Toward Podcasts as a Medium for Independent Pronunciation Learning

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Based on the results of interviews with participants obtained through snowball sampling, the majority of students expressed positive perceptions of using podcasts as a medium for pronunciation learning. Students viewed podcasts as a flexible and easily accessible medium, thus supporting the independent learning process.

Informant quote:

Student A: "By using podcasts, I can improve my pronunciation in learning English."

Student B: "Using podcasts helps me hear the correct pronunciation of words from native speakers, allowing me to imitate their intonation and pronunciation more accurately."

Student C: "Learning through podcasts allows me to practice pronunciation independently anytime and anywhere without relying on a teacher."

Student D: "Podcasts are an engaging and effective learning medium for improving pronunciation because they combine learning with enjoyable listening activities."

Student E: "The variety of topics and accents in podcasts helps me become more familiar with English pronunciation in real contexts."

The study results show that students at Tadulako University generally have a positive perception of using podcasts for independent pronunciation learning because they are very easy to use and can be accessed anytime. Most students also view podcasts as a useful and effective learning medium for improving their pronunciation skills outside of class.

This is consistent with previous research Buana and Miftachudin (2023) confirmed that the use of podcasts to practice independent speaking skills received a positive response from some students. The results showed that students felt very satisfied and comfortable using podcasts because their effectiveness increased their confidence when speaking. Dimasanti and Inayati (2025) the study found that podcasts helped them increase their vocabulary and pronunciation, as well as improve their English speaking and listening skills. They had a positive perception of the use of podcasts, as they considered them beneficial for learning and improving vocabulary and pronunciation.

Factors Supporting and Hindering Students Use of Podcasts for Independent Pronunciation Learning

Interview results indicate that students experienced pronunciation improvements after using podcasts independently.

Informant quote:

Student A: "I like using podcasts to practice pronunciation because I can listen to or play them anytime and anywhere, so they are very flexible for independent learning."

Student B: "Using podcasts is flexible for me because I can practice pronunciation anytime and anywhere, not just in class."

Student C: "Podcasts can help me improve my pronunciation effectively because I can play and listen to them repeatedly."

Student D: "I really like using podcasts because they are very practical and flexible for independent pronunciation learning."

Student E: "I think podcasts are an effective and practical medium for learning pronunciation because they are easy to use."

This finding podcasts provide flexibility and exposure to authentic English, which are essential for pronunciation learning. By listening to native speakers, students can develop a better understanding of pronunciation. This study aligns with previous research findings Bahri and Halimatussadiah (2024) The results of this study show that podcasts are very effective to use and can help students improve their pronunciation skills. Podcast media can also encourage, increase, and enrich their vocabulary, as well as improve their listening and speaking skills.

As well as the results of the determination from Saifullah (2024) the results are divided into three sections: the use of podcasts in English speaking classes, the benefits of podcasts,

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and the disadvantages of podcasts. Students had a positive attitude toward using podcasts to learn speaking skills, because they are easily accessible, contain quality content, are flexible, and engaging. However, they also acknowledged some challenges, such as the need for guidance when using podcasts and feeling bored while using this digital tool.

Challenges Faced by Students in Using Podcasts for Independent Pronunciation Learning.

Although students had positive perceptions, interviews also revealed several challenges in using podcasts.

Informant quote:

Student A: "Podcasts help me understand how to pronounce words correctly, but I feel like I don't get enough direct practice, so my speaking skills haven't improved much."

Student B: "Although podcasts are easy to use for self-study, I feel like I still need speaking practice."

Student C: "I think using podcasts for learning pronunciation is very good, but I still need guidance or guidance to practice correct pronunciation, so someone can correct me when I make mistakes."

Student D: "Podcasts are quite effective for independent learning, but without direct practice and feedback, I find it a bit difficult."

Student E: "I feel like there needs to be training or supporting materials besides podcasts, because I only listen to them." It's not enough to improve my pronunciation and speaking."

Although podcasts offer various benefits for independent pronunciation learning, the results of this study indicate that students also face several challenges in using them. One of the main challenges expressed by most participants was the lack of direct practice and the need for little supplementary materials and adequate feedback. This finding aligns with previous research that Saifullah (2024) However, it's important to note that while podcasts offer many benefits in language learning, they aren't always suitable for all learners. Some students still need additional support to make podcast use more effective. As well as researchers Oktavia a tal., (2023) However, they also complained about the lack of hands-on practice, suggesting a need for better materials or training to improve their speaking skills.

Based on the findings and discussions, it can be concluded that listening to English podcasts has an impact on improving students' pronunciation skills. It can be said that students' pronunciation has improved significantly compared to before. The findings of this study suggest that students find podcasts to be an easy, flexible, and effective way for independent pronunciation learning. This finding aligns with previous research that revealed that podcasts support independent learning and provide easy access due to their flexibility.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on interviews with English Language Education students at Tadulako University selected through snowball sampling, the findings show that students have a positive perception of using podcasts for independent pronunciation learning. Podcasts are considered easy to use, flexible, and accessible anytime, which helps students improve their pronunciation skills. This finding is consistent with Saifullah (2024), who reported that students had positive attitudes toward podcasts because they are engaging and provide quality content, although some students felt bored and needed guidance. Similarly, Oktavia et al. (2023) found that podcasts increased students' confidence and motivation, but lacked hands-on practice and direct feedback. In line with Saito (2021), the absence of immediate feedback highlights the continued importance of lecturers in correcting pronunciation errors. Therefore, podcasts should be used as a supplementary learning medium that supports classroom instruction rather than replacing formal pronunciation teaching. Students are encouraged to regularly use podcasts as a medium for independent pronunciation learning while combining them with speaking practice and self-reflection. Lecturers are expected to use podcasts as a supporting tool in pronunciation instruction and to provide guidance and feedback on students' pronunciation practice. For future researchers, it is recommended to

apply more varied data collection methods, such as combining interviews with classroom observations, to obtain more comprehensive and in-depth findings.

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