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## Lecturers' Perceptions of Podcasts as Effective Learning Media to Improve English Speaking Skill at Universitas Muhammadiyah Mataram

**Edi**

Universitas Muhammadiyah Mataram, Indonesia  
Email: [edi.dompu.80@gmail.com](mailto:edi.dompu.80@gmail.com)

**Nabilla Maharani**

(Corresponding Author)

Universitas Muhammadiyah Mataram, Indonesia  
Email: [nabillaamaharani@gmail.com](mailto:nabillaamaharani@gmail.com)

**Ilham**

Universitas Muhammadiyah Mataram, Indonesia  
Email: [ilham.ummataram@gmail.com](mailto:ilham.ummataram@gmail.com)

**Mohammad Fauzi Bafadal**

Universitas Muhammadiyah Mataram, Indonesia  
Email: [fauzi.bafadal@gmail.com](mailto:fauzi.bafadal@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

*Podcasts are a flexible digital audio-based learning media because they can be accessed online or offline anytime and anywhere, thus supporting independent learning and mobile learning. Podcasts present content in the form of conversations with various topics and language styles, including native speakers' pronunciation and expressions, providing an authentic learning experience. The application of podcasts in the classroom does not escape the role of educators as facilitators. Therefore, this study aims to explore lecturers' perceptions of the use of podcasts as a learning medium in improving English speaking skills, specifically their effectiveness, role, supporting features, as well as challenges and strategies for their use. The research subjects were two lecturers of Listening and Speaking courses at Universitas Muhammadiyah Mataram. Qualitative methods with interviews were used and analyzed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) framework. Results showed lecturers' positive perspectives towards podcasts to help with vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, sentence structure, and colloquial expressions as well as grammar development with lecturer guidance. Flexible features enable self-directed learning with repetition of material as needed. Challenges include limited facilities, differences in students' listening skills, and difficulty maintaining concentration. Lecturers overcome obstacles with additional assignments and interactive activities such as role-playing and making mini podcasts. It is recommended to develop a systematic podcast-based learning guide to improve the effectiveness of speaking skills and grammar comprehension.*

**Keywords:** Podcast; Learning Media; Speaking; Lecturers' Perceptions; Kualitatif Research

### INTRODUCTION

Teaching and learning a foreign language is a challenge in itself, especially because of the structural and cultural differences between the foreign language and the learners' mother tongue (Roussel et al., 2017). In the learning process, various obstacles often arise, both in terms of understanding the material, learning motivation, and media limitations. Therefore, the

role of the teacher is very important in creating an effective learning environment and managing the class well so that student learning outcomes reach an optimal level (Munna & Kalam, 2021; Yunita et al., 2020). One of the efforts that teachers need to make is to find methods and media that can make it easier for students to understand learning materials thoroughly.

One of the important skills in foreign language communication is speaking skills. Speaking ability reflects learners' competence in conveying ideas, thoughts, and feelings orally clearly and effectively (Abidin et al., 2024). This skill includes aspects of pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and the ability to interact in various communication situations. Speaking skills are not only important for academic success, but also for interacting in everyday life in a global society. According to (Brown & Yule, 1983), speaking skill is the ability that is most often used in real life and is the main indicator in assessing a person's communication ability (Novia et al., 2024; Souzandehfar, 2024). Therefore, teachers have a great responsibility to equip students to be able to speak English well, not only in academic environments, but also in real communication contexts.

In responding to these challenges, technological developments have presented various innovative learning media, one of which is podcasts. Podcasts are digital audio media that can be accessed anytime and anywhere, providing high flexibility for students to learn independently (Indahsari, 2020; Nuraini, 2023). As an audio program produced and distributed online, podcasts have a variety of topics that can be tailored to students' interests and ability levels (Abidin et al., 2024; Budiarti & Aina, 2022). Podcasts not only provide additional practice in listening skills, but also contribute to improving speaking skills through exposure to authentic language (Abubakar et al., 2025).

Podcasts have proven to be effective as an engaging and flexible learning medium for both self-directed and classroom learning. Tymoshchuk (2023) asserts that exposure to various accents and speech patterns through podcasts improves learners' comprehension and pronunciation skills. Rzońca (2024) also adds that native speaker-based podcasts provide an authentic language context, which is important in the acquisition of oral communication. Other benefits of podcasts include helping students focus on tasks, enriching vocabulary, and improving overall linguistic competence (Riyani & Sari, 2020; Yazmin et al., 2024).

Similar findings were also revealed by Tantri et al. (2024), who showed that podcasts can improve students' understanding of word pronunciation and sentence structure. In addition, the flexibility of podcasts allows students to learn independently according to their own pace and needs, which has a positive impact on reducing learning stress and increasing independence. The experimental study by Hikmah et al. (2021) even noted a significant improvement in the speaking ability of students using podcasts over traditional methods.

For podcasts to be optimally used in English language learning, several important criteria must be met. Content relevance is a key aspect; a good podcast should be tailored to learners' interests as well as their language proficiency level (Tymoshchuk, 2023). Kassaie et al., (2021) point out that authentic podcasts help students understand language use in real communication situations. Bradlow et al. (2024) also emphasize the importance of exposure to various accents in improving second language (L2) proficiency. In addition, production quality such as audio clarity and systematic content structure also have a significant effect on learning effectiveness (Shahrizal et al., 2022). By fulfilling these criteria, podcasts can be an effective tool in the development of comprehensive English speaking skills.

However, the optimal use of podcasts cannot be separated from the active role of lecturers as learning facilitators. Lecturers have the responsibility of selecting appropriate materials, guiding students' understanding of the content, and creating supporting activities that can overcome challenges such as differences in listening ability, lack of learning facilities, and low student engagement. Although various studies have shown that podcasts are effective in improving English speaking skills, most of these studies still focus on the students' point of

view or learning outcomes from the cognitive aspect. Meanwhile, studies on lecturers' perceptions as those who directly manage the implementation of podcast-based learning are still very limited. In fact, understanding the perceptions of lecturers is very important to optimize the pedagogical use of podcasts in the classroom, including in terms of content selection, activity design, and handling technical and nontechnical challenges (Ifedayo et al., 2021).

Based on the gap, this study aims to explore lecturers' perceptions of the use of podcasts as learning media in improving English speaking skills. In general, this study examines lecturers' views on the effectiveness of podcasts in supporting the speaking learning process, their contribution to the achievement of learning objectives, as well as the features of podcasts that are considered to support students' learning independence. In addition, this study also aims to find out how podcasts can play a role in building students' confidence in speaking English, as well as identifying the challenges faced by lecturers in their implementation and the strategies used to overcome them.

## **METHOD**

The sample in this study are English language education lecturers at Universitas Muhammadiyah Mataram totaling 2 lectures, the sampling technique used was purposive sampling. The samples taken were lecturers of listening and speaking courses who had taught using podcasts. The samples taken were lecturers of listening and speaking subjects teaching using podcasts.

Research using qualitative methods. Qualitative research is an approach that emphasizes an in-depth understanding of social phenomena with descriptive-narrative data presentation (Younas et al., 2023). This method is holistic, flexible, and interpretative, and appreciates and accommodates diverse points of view. Qualitative data analysis is carried out through a process of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing which aims to provide a comprehensive and in-depth picture of the research subject (Waruwu, 2024).

In this study, researchers collected data through interviews to find out the lecturers' perceptions in depth about podcasts. The interviews were conducted directly by recording the sound so that no information was missed. Furthermore, the researcher employed the theoretical frameworks articulated by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014). Subsequent to data collection, the information underwent analysis through the process of data reduction. As articulated by Miles, Huberman, & Saldana (2014), data reduction encompasses selecting, concentrating, simplifying, abstracting, identifying themes and patterns, and eliminating superfluous elements. Data in the form of interview transcripts that bear no relevance to the research inquiry are expunged.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results**

This section discusses lecturers' perceptions of podcasts as learning media to improve English speaking skills. Data were obtained through interviews. Five central themes were set as a guide for the interviews, namely the effectiveness of podcasts, support for achieving learning objectives, the role of podcasts in building students' confidence, features of podcasts that support learning, and challenges in using podcasts. The purpose of this interview was to obtain comprehensive information regarding lecturers' perceptions of podcasts as learning media and how podcasts can support learning in the classroom. There were five questions used in this session, focusing on aspects such as vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, and speaking ability. In general, the lecturers gave positive responses to the use of podcasts as a learning medium. Lecturers' perceptions of podcasts as learning media are summarized in Table 1. Below.

**Table 1. The Summary of Lecturers' Perceptions of Podcasts**

<b>Central Theme</b>	<b>Lecturers' Perceptions</b>
Effectiveness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The effectiveness of podcasts can be achieved if students understand the topic and the audio aligns with the material. Podcasts featuring native speakers help students become more familiar with the language, improving pronunciation, verb usage, and sentence structuring.</li> <li>2. Podcasts are highly effective as they present natural conversations in English, allowing students to learn pronunciation, expressions, and sentence structures that resemble daily conversations.</li> </ol>
Support for Learning Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Podcasts help students learn vocabulary and verbs, encouraging retelling and writing activities. Students can understand sentences without focusing too much on grammar. Materials like advertisements and conversations are effective.</li> <li>2. Podcasts effectively introduce new vocabulary and pronunciation. However, grammar learning is less effective without lecturer guidance, as podcasts often use informal language. Overall, podcasts enhance vocabulary acquisition.</li> </ol>
Podcast Features	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Features like offline access and saving materials support learning. Materials can be accessed according to students' proficiency levels.</li> <li>2. Offline access and recording features promote independent learning, allowing students to revisit content and reinforce their understanding of vocabulary or phrases at their own pace.</li> </ol>
Confidence Building	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Podcasts help students build confidence in public speaking. However, the audio may need to be repeated 5–10 times before students feel ready to respond.</li> <li>2. Podcasts expose students to new expressions, vocabulary, and pronunciation, making them feel prepared and more confident. Additional activities like roleplay or group discussions are needed to fully overcome fear or shyness.</li> </ol>
Challenges	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Challenges include inadequate facilities, such as the lack of an LCD in the language lab, which limits students' ability to watch videos alongside listening. Visual aids are essential for understanding body language and spoken language.</li> <li>2. Challenges include students being passive while listening, finding suitable podcasts, differing listening abilities, and maintaining student focus. Solutions include assigning tasks like summarizing, practicing pronunciation, or creating mini podcasts for active engagement.</li> </ol>

### **Effectiveness**

The first theme is about lecturers' perception of the effectiveness of podcasts as a learning medium. When asked “How effective do you think podcasts are as a learning medium to improve students' English speaking skills?”, both lecturers responded positively to podcasts. The lecturers revealed that the effectiveness of podcasts can be achieved if the topics presented are relevant to the needs of students and the audio used is in accordance with the learning material. In addition, the use of podcasts from native speakers is considered very helpful for students to be more familiar with the English language used in daily conversations. The lecturers' positive responses can be observed in the following excerpts:

“The effectiveness of using podcasts can be achieved if, firstly, students are able to understand the topics presented, and secondly, the audio used is appropriate for the material presented. It is also important to ensure that the topic is relevant to the students' needs. Currently, my main focus is on the students' grasp of the material, how they can improvise their pronunciation, verb usage, and sentence construction so that they can understand the main points of the material. By using podcasts from native speakers, students can more easily understand and become more familiar with the language used by native speakers.” (Lecturer 1 Interview)

“In my opinion, podcasts are a very effective learning media because they present conversations in English with a variety of topics. The language used by speakers in podcasts is generally semi-structured or semi-formal, so it resembles everyday conversational language more than reading texts which tend to be structured. Through podcasts, students can learn about good pronunciation, expressions commonly used in conversation, and understand the sentence structure used naturally in oral communication. Although the sentence structure in conversation is not always as perfect as in writing, the language used is still good and can provide valuable learning. Therefore, I think that podcasts are very effective as a learning medium for students.” (Lecturer 2 Interview)

## **Support for Learning Objectives**

In line with lecturers' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of podcasts as learning media to improve speaking skills, the researcher also explored how lecturers rate the ability of podcasts to support learning objectives, such as introducing students to grammar and vocabulary. When asked "How would you rate the ability of podcasts to support learning objectives, such as introducing students to grammar and vocabulary?". The results can be seen in the following quotes:

"I focus more on vocab and verb, when they get new vocabulary they retell and write, after that how students can understand sentences without paying attention to grammar patterns, only that they explain about words. The meter is like advertising, and conversation" (Lecturer 1 Interview)

"In my opinion, podcasts really support the achievement of learning objectives, such as introducing new vocabulary and how to pronounce correctly. Students who listen to podcasts will immediately hear new vocabulary that they rarely learn in class. However, for learning objectives such as grammar, in my opinion, podcasts are less effective. This is because the process in podcasts is informal, so the sentences used are more of daily conversations, not for formal talks such as in seminars or structured interviews. Therefore, grammar learning requires help or assistance from the lecturer when using podcasts" (Lecturer 2 Interview)

## **Podcast Features**

Furthermore, lecturers' views on the effectiveness of using podcasts in learning are also an important part discussed in this study. When asked "Are the features of podcasts such as the ability to save, offline access, and voice recording helpful in supporting students' learning process?". The results can be seen through the following interview results:

"Yes of course it is very helpful, I usually use teaching materials that I have downloaded, so that later I can access them offline, sometimes I also access them via the internet but still based on the level of student abilities" (Lecturer 1 Interview)

"The podcast feature that can be stored can be accessed online or of course can help in supporting the learning process such as yes, maybe more on independence. So when they after watching it once maybe they want to stabilize again or maximize their mastery of certain words or sentences they can watch it again to learn it again, whether it's the voice recording or the video at the same time, maybe more on the independence of students to learn again there is what I feel the emphasis is. So they can study again or relearn at home while watching the podcast." (Lecturer 2 Interview)

## **Confidence Building**

Furthermore, the researchers also explored the lecturers' views on students' confidence in speaking English. When asked "Do you think podcasts can help students overcome fear or shyness when speaking English? Why or why not?", which can be seen in the following figure:

"Yes, it can help students to be more confident to speak in public, but I have to repeat the audio at least 5 to 10 times before they can give an argument or answer to the topic presented." (Lecturer 1 Interview)

"In my opinion, when students watch podcasts, they will learn new expressions, new vocabulary, pronunciation, and how to form sentences that are pleasing to the ear based on the examples they see from the podcast. I think this is effective enough to increase their courage, because they have learned and feel more prepared. However, to overcome fear, watching a podcast is not enough. I add certain activities after students watch the podcast, such as having conversations with friends, roleplaying with classmates, or activities in small or large groups. God willing, this will go a long way in relieving their fear." (Lecturer 2 Interview)

## **Challenges**

This research not only discusses the benefits of podcasts as learning media, but also discusses the obstacles that lecturers face when teaching using podcasts. When asked "In your opinion, what are the challenges or obstacles that might be faced when using podcasts to improve students' English speaking skills?" the results can be seen from the following responses of the lecturers. The results can be seen from the responses of the lecturers below:

“My challenges when teaching using podcasts is that the language laboratory does not have an adequate LCD, even though listening while watching videos is also important to increase student focus, so that with photos or videos they can understand the body language of what they are listening to. So, the body language and spoken language from what they listen to they can compare or identify what the meaning of native speakers is.” (Lecturer 1 Interview)

“My challenges in using podcasts to improve English speaking skills include students being passive because they only watch or listen to podcasts without doing anything. The difficulty of finding podcasts that match students' abilities and suitable topics is also a challenge, coupled with students' different levels of listening skill so that not all students immediately understand. I also find it difficult to control students' concentration, especially if there are many of them. The solution is that I give additional tasks, such as noting difficult vocabulary or new expressions, practicing word pronunciation, summarizing, or re-explaining the contents of the podcast. In addition, I can create mini podcasts, for example with roleplay where students create a podcast show and discuss certain topics. This requires creativity from the lecturer to ensure that students are not only watching the podcast, but also actively engaged through speaking activities.” (Lecturer 2 Interview)

## **Discussion**

Based on the responses from the lecturers, there are several main reasons that support the effectiveness of using podcasts as learning media to improve speaking skill. Podcasts are considered effective when students can understand topics that are relevant to their needs and the audio material used is in line with the learning objectives (L1). In addition, podcasts help to improve students' linguistic aspects, such as pronunciation, verb usage, and sentence construction skills (L1), which is in line with research by Yazmin et al. (2024), which noted an increase in students' post-test results in the aspects of motivation, pronunciation, and vocabulary. By listening to podcasts from native speakers, students become more familiar with the language and expressions often used in everyday communication, in line with Rzońca's (2024) research, which asserts that native speaker-based resources provide an authentic language context. Furthermore, podcasts allow students to learn English through semi-structured language that is more natural than formal texts, so that they can understand expressions, sentence structures, and pronunciations that are commonly used in everyday conversations (L2). This is reinforced by the research of Tantri et al. (2024), which states that regular exposure to podcasts can significantly improve students' pronunciation and sentence structure.

Based on the lecturers' responses about podcasts to support learning objectives, it can be seen that Podcasts have a significant role in English language learning, especially in vocabulary development and pronunciation. According to L1, the use of podcasts allows students to acquire new vocabulary and practice their skills through activities such as retelling and rewriting without focusing too much on grammar patterns. Furthermore, according to L2, podcasts are also effective for introducing vocabulary that is rarely found in class and helping students understand correct pronunciation, this is in line with research by Sari (2020) which highlights the improvement of students' vocabulary and pronunciation can be improved with the use of Podcasts. However, according to her for grammar learning, podcasts are considered less effective because they are informal and focus more on daily conversations, so they still need guidance from lecturers.

Based on the responses about podcast features, L1 stated that podcasts are a very helpful media in the learning process, especially because of their features that allow materials to be accessed online and offline. Learning materials can be downloaded in advance so as to facilitate access without having to always be connected to the internet. This is in line with the opinion of Abidin et al. (2024), who explained that podcasts are basically radio programs that are produced and distributed online. In addition, Indahsari's (2020) research also shows that podcasts can be utilized as a medium for English exam preparation. Podcasts integrate e-learning elements, such as audio, video, and text files, so they can replace the role of traditional media such as language

labs, compact discs, DVDs, or radio tapes commonly used in language learning. L2 also emphasized that podcasts support students' learning independence, as they allow them to repeat material, either in the form of voice recordings or videos, to deepen their understanding of certain vocabulary or sentences. The ability of students to replay podcasts anytime and anywhere provides flexibility in learning independently, so as to improve mastery of the material more optimally. This finding is in line with research by Budiarti & Aina (2022), which states that podcasts offer a variety of topics that can be selected according to students' interests and ability levels.

Based on the responses of both lecturers about podcast to increase confidence in public speaking, L1 said that podcasts can help students increase their confidence in public speaking, although it takes 5 to 10 repetitions of the audio so that students can provide arguments or responses to the topics discussed, this is in line with research by Nova (2022) which reveals that podcasts motivate students to be more active in practicing speaking, encourage creativity, and improve public speaking skill. Meanwhile, L2 stated that listening to podcasts provides benefits in the form of learning new expressions, vocabulary, pronunciation, and interesting sentence formation, which effectively supports students' speaking courage. This is in line with research by Lestary (2021) which states the effectiveness of podcasts to improve students' speaking skill in the results of his research which show that the use of podcasts can reduce students' anxiety levels and increase their confidence in speaking. However, according to L2, watching podcasts alone is not enough to overcome the fear of speaking. To overcome this, he adds further activities, such as conversations, role-playing, or group activities, which he believes can help students overcome their fear of speaking.

Based on the responses of both lectures about challenges or obstacles faced when teaching using podcasts, the main obstacle faced by L1s when teaching using podcasts is the limited language laboratory facilities, such as the absence of adequate LCDs, so that students cannot optimally listen and watch videos to understand native speakers' body language. The use of videos is considered important to help students identify the meaning conveyed by native speakers through a combination of body language and spoken language. In addition, students tend to be passive because they only watch or listen to podcasts without any further activities. L2 also faces challenges in finding podcasts that suit students' abilities and needs, as well as differences in listening ability levels that make students' understanding uneven. The difficulty of controlling student concentration, especially in large classes, was an additional obstacle. As a solution, L2 gave additional tasks such as noting difficult vocabulary, practicing pronunciation, summarizing, or explaining back the content of the podcast. In addition, he also proposed creative activities such as role-playing or creating mini podcasts, so that students can more actively participate and improve their speaking skill through activities that involve direct interaction. The solution delivered by L2 is in line with the research by (Brown & Yule, 1983) who asserted that Teachers have a great responsibility to prepare students to speak English well, not only for academic purposes in the classroom, but also to face real communication demands outside the school environment.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the perceptions of both lecturers on the research results, it can be concluded that podcasts are a learning media that can improve students' English speaking skills. Both lecturers gave positive responses to the effectiveness of podcasts, especially in helping students master vocabulary, pronunciation, sentence structure, as well as introducing common expressions in daily conversation. In addition, podcasts also play a role in developing grammar skills, although their use requires assistance from lecturers to ensure students understand more complex grammar patterns, especially in formal contexts. With the flexibility of podcast features that

can be accessed online or offline, students have the opportunity to learn independently by repeating the material as needed.

However, there are several challenges faced by lecturers in the implementation of podcasts as learning media. One of the main obstacles is the lack of adequate language laboratory facilities, such as the unavailability of LCD devices to support the integration of podcast videos. In addition, differences in listening ability between students and difficulties in maintaining concentration in class are obstacles that must be overcome. Lecturers also often face difficulties in finding podcasts that suit the needs and ability levels of students. Therefore, creativity is needed from lecturers to overcome these obstacles, for example through additional assignments or interactive learning activities that combine podcasts with activities such as role-playing or making mini podcasts.

For future research, it is suggested to develop a podcast-based learning guide that is integrated with interactive learning activities. This guide can include systematic steps, such as listening activities, pronunciation exercises, vocabulary enrichment, and strengthening grammatical understanding through analyzing podcasts relevant to the learning materials. With this guide, podcasts can be utilized more optimally, not only to improve students' speaking skills, but also to support a deeper understanding of grammar.

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