



An Exploration of Indonesian University Students' Perception of the Use of Podcast for Learning of English as a Foreign Language

Una exploración de la percepción de los estudiantes universitarios indonesios sobre el uso de podcast para aprender inglés como lengua extranjera

NINGSIH, Sri Kusuma [1](#); ULFA, Nisrina [2](#); MULYONO, Herri [3](#)

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ABSTRACT:

This study intends to explore English as a foreign language (EFL) university students' perception of the use of podcasts in English language learning, among different genders and majors. Two hundred and five (n=205) EFL students from several universities in Indonesia (both private and public) participated in this study. An online questionnaire was administered to the participants; the collected data were then evaluated using a descriptive statistics technique and independent sample t-test. The results showed that differences in students' majors were reflected in the confidence subscale ($t(203) = 2.192, p = 0.029 < 0.05$), and it can be concluded that the students' major may affect their perception of the use of podcasts in English language learning. Likewise, English-major students had a significantly more positive perception than non-English students.

Keywords: students' perception, podcast, motivation, English as a foreign language (EFL) learning

RESUMEN:

Este estudio pretende explorar la percepción de los estudiantes universitarios de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL) sobre el uso de podcasts en el aprendizaje del idioma inglés, entre diferentes géneros y especialidades. Doscientos cinco (n = 205) estudiantes de EFL de varias universidades de Indonesia (tanto privadas como públicas) participaron en este estudio. Se administró un cuestionario en línea a los participantes; Los datos recopilados se evaluaron utilizando una técnica estadística descriptiva y una prueba t de muestra independiente. Los resultados mostraron que las diferencias en las especialidades de los estudiantes se reflejaron en la subescala de confianza ($t(203) = 2.192, p = 0.029 < 0.05$), y se puede concluir que la especialidad de los estudiantes puede afectar su percepción del uso de podcasts en el aprendizaje del idioma inglés. Del mismo modo, los estudiantes de inglés mayor tuvieron una percepción significativamente más positiva que los estudiantes que no hablan inglés.

Palabras clave: percepción de los estudiantes, podcast, motivación, aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL)

1. Introduction

Podcasts have become increasingly popular for more than a decade, as a learning resource that has potential for use in teaching and learning technology, especially in mobile learning (Rosell-aguilar, 2015). Podcast – an online digital audio or video platform that enable users to create and share the audio or video content to others (Phillips, 2017) provides students with opportunities to independently search for and discover motivational educational material (Al Qasim & Al Fadda, 2013). Podcast is also regarded as a one way instructor from which students are enabled to transmit information and course content by recording lessons, providing preparatory materials for the next class, or providing audio feedback (Phillips, 2017). Podcast also facilitates home-based learning as it allows students' self-access to learning materials from their portable player when on the move, or a computer (Cross, 2014).

In higher education settings, the adoption of podcast in learning a foreign language is accounted for its value to enhance students' vocabulary, improve their listening and speaking abilities, and expand their language comprehension, by utilizing their mobile phone whenever and wherever they need to (Davoudi & Rezaei, 2016). Several studies have been done to provide evidences of such values. Thomas and Toland (2015) for example explore students' perception of integrating podcasting blogs in a second language learning classroom. The findings of the study revealed that students expressed positive opinions on their use in support of lectures by third-party podcasting blogs, for the supply of digital audio content in a content-based EFL system. Kelly and Klein (2016) examine the adoption of podcast in learning Chinese. In the study, a total of 35 learners enrolled in the basic Chinese course level, at a populous university in the south-eastern United States. The study collected data through a quasi-experimental method, which separated the students into two classes, the experimental and control class. The findings show that listening to grammar podcasts not only supported students in enriching their speaking skills, but also boosted their self-esteem.

In addition, Abdulrahman et al. (2018) reported that the integration of innovation in EFL classrooms helps students to obtain remote language, as well as to extend their motivation and certainty. It also empowers students to understand substance, to improve their capability, and to move forward in their listening comprehension. The study also concluded that the integration of Podcasts in the English classroom had impacted students' English abilities, along with their thoughts towards it. Besides records on students' English abilities, some insightful research uncovered understudies' and teachers' views on the utilization of Podcasts in English dialect teaching. Also, Abdulrahman et al. (2018) indicated that students' excitement in utilizing podcasts as learning materials was evidenced by their efforts to download podcasts regularly, tuning in to them frequently as for tuning in home and excitement. Several experts also sum up that some podcasts increase students' motivation because they convey unique and curious notions. However, little is known how the integration of Podcast in foreign language classroom is perceived by the students in Indonesian universities. Thus, the present study is aimed to examine students' perceptions among EFL university students in Indonesia, and particularly aims to address the following research questions: 1. What are EFL university students' perceptions of the use of podcasts? 2. How do EFL university students' perceptions differ according to their gender and major (i.e. English and non-English majors)?

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

The current study was a survey, aiming to explore EFL university students' perception of the use of podcasts in English language learning. The choice of survey was to allow the researchers to gather facts and analyse the relationship between one set of facts and another, and drawing quantified conclusions which if possible are generalizable (Bell & Waters, 2014). Particularly, the study design for the current study was developed in reference to a study of Asoodar et al. (2016) study, with exceptions that it involved a limited number of participants in the classroom learning.

2.2. Settings and Participants

This study was conducted with two hundred and five EFL university students from English and non-English majors. Many of the participants were females (N=148, 72.2%) with some males (N=57, 27.8%). Table 1 below presents the demography of the participants.

Table 1
Demographic Data

	Demographics	Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Female	148	72.2%
	Male	57	27.8%
Age	18-20	84	41.0%
	21-23	110	53.7%
	>24	11	5.4%
University	Private University	103	50.2%
	Public University	102	49.8%
Major	English major	69	33.7%
	Non-English major	136	66.3%

2.3. Data Collection and Analysis

The data were collected using Asoodar et al.'s (2016) a five-point Likert scale questionnaire which had been adapted to fit the purpose of the current study. The questionnaire comprised of 36 items classified into four sub-scales: attention (12 items), relevance (9 items), confidence (9 items) and satisfaction (6 items). The questionnaire was originally written in English. To help the participants comprehend each of the question items in the questionnaire, the instruments were translated in the native Bahasa Indonesia.

The questionnaire was developed and distributed online using Google Form to ease distribution and to target more participants complete it (Ningsih et al. 2018). The online questionnaire link was posted in several social media platforms, Line, WhatsApp, Telegram, Facebook and Twitter. Consents were obtained from the participants prior to the data collection. After one-month period, the questionnaire was closed, having obtained 209 participants. The data were screened for missing values and duplications. From screening, it was found that two records were incomplete and two were listed as duplicates. These four records were then omitted, and the remaining 205 records were evaluated using descriptive statistics and independent t-test calculations.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. EFL Students' Perception of the Use of Podcast

This section will present the overall results, with a particular focus on students' perceptions in general, and any differences between perceptions based on gender and major. The results acquired from students' responses provide a summary of the questionnaires in general, divided into four subscales (see Table 2).

Table 2
Descriptive statistics based
on the four subscales

Subscale	Mean	SD
Attention	47.04	5.739
Relevance	34.93	4.354

Confidence	33.49	4.355
Satisfaction	23.61	2.938

For items on the attention subscale, the descriptive statistics (see Table 3) show that students agreed that podcasts stimulate their attention, in item A02 ($M=4.35$, $SD=0.715$); that the podcasts are a fun and interesting tool in English language learning, for item A05 ($M=4.20$, $SD=0.705$); and the podcasts' content stimulated their interest, in item A12 ($M=4.15$, $SD=0.772$). In this aspect, the present study has quite a similar result to Asoodar et al.'s (2014) research, in that participants perceived podcasts as something appealing and entertaining to enjoy, in the attention subscale.

Table 3
Descriptive statistics for all items
in the attention subscale

No	Item	Code	Mean	SD
2	There was something interesting about the podcasts that got my attention	A01	4.06	0.708
8	The podcasts are attention-grabbing	A02	4.35	0.715
11	The quality of the podcasts helped to hold my attention	A03	4.03	0.720
12	The material in the podcasts is so concrete that it was easy to keep my attention on them <i>R</i>	A04	3.72	0.827
15	The podcasts are fun and interesting <i>R</i>	A05	4.20	0.705
17	The way the information is arranged in the podcasts helped keep my attention	A06	3.86	0.774
20	The podcasts included information that stimulated my curiosity	A07	4.01	0.671
22	The amount of repetition of the material in the podcasts caused me to become captivated sometimes <i>R</i>	A08	3.53	0.860
24	I learned some things from podcasts that were surprising or unexpected	A09	3.80	0.742
28	The podcast-making task helped keep my attention on the lessons	A10	3.60	0.855
29	The presentation style of the podcasts is easy <i>R</i>	A11	3.72	0.740
31	The podcast that we needed to make had a compelling content <i>R</i>	A12	4.15	0.772

Note: R = Reverse survey item

Table 4
Descriptive statistics for all items
in the relevance subscale

No	Item	Code	Mean	SD

6	It is clear to me how the content in the podcasts is related to the course	R01	3.64	0.796
9	There were stories or examples in the podcasts that showed me how this material could be important to some people	R02	4.09	0.654
10	Completing the lessons successfully after using the podcasts was important to me	R03	3.87	0.803
16	The content in the podcasts is relevant to my interests	R04	3.80	0.780
18	There are explanations or examples of how people use the material in the podcasts	R05	3.99	0.686
23	The content and style of presentation in the podcast convey the impression that the content is worth knowing	R06	3.94	0.687
26	The content in the podcasts was relevant to my needs because I already knew most of it <i>R</i>	R07	3.61	0.788
30	I could relate the content of the podcasts to things I have seen, done, or thought about in my own life	R08	3.83	0.694
33	The content in the podcasts is useful to me	R09	4.15	0.708

Note: R = Reverse survey item

The descriptive statistics for the items in the relevance subscale are reported in Table 4. Most of the students believed that the content of podcasts was useful, in item R09 ($M=4.15$, $SD=0.708$), and the students indicated that podcasts' material could be relevant and important stories or examples for some people, in item R02 ($M=4.09$, $SD=0.654$).

For the items in the confidence subscale, the descriptive statistics are presented in Table 5. Most students were very content with the podcasts' information provided, as it was easy to choose and remember the crucial points, in item C04 ($M=4.08$, $SD=0.713$); and the students also were impressed that the podcast lessons were easy when they first listened to them, in item C01 ($M=3.99$, $SD=0.700$). On the other hand, for item C06 ($M=2.98$, $SD=0.899$), the students did not agree that the material of the podcasts was too easy; and they were quite confident about giving a lecture on the podcasts' material after they had been using it from a while, in item C07 ($M=3.10$, $SD=0.960$). This finding is in line with the similar results of Asoodar et al. (2014), whose participants did not find it hard to understand the information available in the podcasts, while they reported a lack of confidence in implementing the podcasts' instruction materials.

Table 5
Descriptive statistics for all items
in the confidence subscale

No	Item	Code	Mean	SD
1	When I first listened to the podcasts, I had the impression that the lessons would be easy for me	C01	3.99	0.700
3	The material in the podcasts was easier to understand than I would like it to be <i>R</i>	C02	3.78	0.738
4	After using the podcasts, I felt confident that I knew what I was supposed to learn from the lessons	C03	3.96	0.772

7	Many of the podcasts had so much information that it was easy to pick out and remember the important points <i>R</i>	C04	4.08	0.713
13	As I used the podcasts, I was confident that I could learn the content	C05	3.88	0.738
19	The material of the podcasts was too easy <i>R</i>	C06	2.98	0.899
25	After using the podcasts for a while, I was confident that I would be able to give a lecture on the material	C07	3.10	0.960
34	I could really understand a lot from the material in the podcasts <i>R</i>	C08	3.90	0.703
35	The good organization of the content in the podcasts helped me be confident that I would learn the material	C09	3.82	0.699

Note: R = Reverse survey item

The descriptive statistics for the items in the satisfaction subscale (Table 6) are also displayed. Most students were fairly satisfied that the podcasts had a well-designed layout, in item S07 ($M=4.27$, $SD=0.793$); and they also enjoyed the podcasts that aroused their curiosity about a particular topic, by item S02 ($M=4.20$, $SD=0.682$).

Table 6
Descriptive statistics for all items
in the satisfaction subscale

No	Item	Code	Mean	SD
5	Completing the exercises in the lessons after using the podcasts gave me a satisfying feeling of accomplishment	S01	3.69	0.833
14	I enjoyed the podcasts so much that I would like to know more about this topic	S02	4.20	0.682
21	I really enjoyed studying the material in the podcasts	S03	3.86	0.782
27	The feedback from my instructor helped me feel rewarded for my efforts in using the podcast	S05	3.57	0.841
32	It felt good to successfully use podcasts	S06	4.02	0.731
36	It was a pleasure to use such well-designed podcasts	S07	4.27	0.793

3.2. Differences in EFL Students' Demographics and Their Perception of the Podcast Usage

The null hypothesis related to the research question is: there are no significant differences in the four elements which measure students' perceptions based on gender, regarding the use of podcasts in English language learning. To examine the differences and identify whether they were significant, an independent sample t-test was applied (Tables 7-8). The result shows a non-significant difference between females and males, for the factors of attention $t(203) = 0.196$, $p = 0.845 > 0.05$, relevance $t(203) = 0.172$, $p = 0.863 > 0.05$, confidence $t(203) = -0.033$, $p = 0.974 > 0.05$ and satisfaction $t(203) = 0.358$, $p = 0.721 > 0.05$. Therefore, the first null hypothesis stating that students' perception of the use of podcasts does not affect the four factors based on gender is rejected. On average, females had a stronger perception of the attention, relevance and

satisfaction factors than males: (M=47.09, SD=5.917; M=46.91, SD=5.299), (M=34.96, SD=4.529; M=34.84, SD=3.900), and (M=23.66, SD=3.085; M=23.49, SD=2.536) respectively. However, males perceived more confidence than females (M=33.57, SD=3.785; M=33.49, SD=4.568). A previous study (Asoodar et al., 2014) found different results, that males were more interested in the use of podcasts, and found them to be more supportive than females did.

Table 7
Group statistics for
t-test based on gender

Group Statistics					
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Attention	Female	148	47.09	5.917	.486
	Male	57	46.91	5.299	.702
Relevance	Female	148	34.96	4.529	.372
	Male	57	34.84	3.900	.517
Confidence	Female	148	33.49	4.568	.375
	Male	57	33.51	3.785	.501
Satisfaction	Female	148	23.66	3.085	.254
	Male	57	23.49	2.536	.336

Table 8
Independent samples t-test illustrating
differences between females and males

Independent Samples Test			
Attention	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Equal variances assumed	.196	203	.845
Equal variances not assumed	.206	112.777	.837
Relevance			
Equal variances assumed	.172	203	.863
Equal variances not assumed	.184	117.253	.854
Confidence			
Equal variances assumed	-.033	203	.974
Equal variances not assumed	-.036	121.837	.972
Satisfaction			

Equal variances assumed	.358	203	.721
Equal variances not assumed	.390	122.826	.697

Table 9
Group statistics for
t-test based on major

Group Statistics					
	Major	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Attention	English Major	69	47.99	5.925	.713
	Non-English Major	136	46.56	5.604	.481
Relevance	English Major	69	35.74	4.578	.551
	Non-English Major	136	34.51	4.193	.360
Confidence	English Major	69	34.42	4.663	.561
	Non-English Major	136	33.02	4.128	.354
Satisfaction	English Major	69	24.16	3.137	.378
	Non-English Major	136	23.33	2.802	.240

Table 10
Independent samples t-test illustrating divergences
between English major and non-English major

Independent Samples Test			
Attention	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Equal variances assumed	1.689	203	.093
Equal variances not assumed	1.659	130.225	.100
Relevance			
Equal variances assumed	1.915	203	.057
Equal variances not assumed	1.861	126.650	.065
Confidence			
Equal variances assumed	2.192	203	.029
Equal variances not assumed	2.107	123.031	.037
Satisfaction			

Equal variances assumed	1.921	203	.056
Equal variances not assumed	1.851	123.965	.067

As can be seen in Table 9 the null hypothesis related to the research question is: there is a significant difference in the four elements which measure students' perceptions of the use of podcasts in English language learning, based on major. Hence, another independent sample t-test was applied, to test whether they were significant or not. One factor was found where there was a significant difference: confidence $t(203) = 2.192, p = 0.029 < 0.05$. However, there were no significant differences for the factors of attention $t(203) = 1.621, p = 0.107 > 0.05$, relevance $t(203) = 1.915, p = 0.057 > 0.05$ and satisfaction $t(203) = 2.008, p = 0.046 < 0.05$. Thus, it can be concluded that students' major may affect their perception of the use of podcasts in English language learning.

Finally, the group statistics based on major are shown in Table 10. On average, English students had a stronger perception of the attention, relevance, confidence and satisfaction factors than non-English students: (M=47.99, SD=5.925; M=46.56, SD=5.604), (M=35.74, SD= 4.578; M=34.51, SD= 4.193), (M=34.42, SD=4.663; M=33.02, SD=4.128) and (M=24.16, SD=3.137; M=23.33, SD=2.802) respectively.

In summary, the findings of this study indicate that the participants were mostly intrigued by the use of podcasts in English language learning. The highest mean score was achieved by the attention subscale (M = 47.04). This could imply that the podcast files were supportive in expanding and stimulating the students' attention. The satisfaction subscales received the lowest mean (M = 23.61); this was probably related to the quality of the podcast rather than to the content distributed in the podcasts. However, the relevant subscale was moderately high (M = 34.93). Similarly, in the earlier study by Asoodar et al. (2014), the students were generally satisfied with the podcast contents that gave them benefits. Moreover, students even revealed that the podcasts helped to make their minds more correlated and explorative towards the contents of the podcast. This view is supported by Rahimi and Katal (2012), who examined the role of metacognitive approaches and podcast utilization in EFL classrooms; they found that podcasting was compelling, and was linked to metacognitive listening approaches.

The findings of this research also show that gender differences had no effect on the attention, relevance, confidence and satisfaction subscales. Females reported profoundly better performance on the attention, relevance and satisfaction subscales; whereas males outperformed females in the confidence rate. Thomas and Toland (2015) suggested that overall, the students agreed that by using podcasts as audio files, face-to-face instruction could be improved, and learning opportunities enhanced, with a positive impact. However, the results contradict the study by Lazzari (2009), who found that podcasts do not have a positive impact on students' learning outcomes.

Furthermore, the present study also demonstrated that differences in students' major affected the confidence subscale; and it can be concluded that the students' major may affect their perception of the use of podcasts in English language learning. Likewise, English students noted much greater effects than non-English students in the attention, pertinence, confidence, and satisfaction subscales.

4. Conclusions

The present study investigated EFL university students' perception of the use of podcasts in English language learning, according to their gender and major. The results of this study show the benefits that using podcasts can give students in learning English. It examined the significance of using the audio technology of podcasts as a language learning tool, which assisted them to improve their English. Moreover, it was also found that there were no significant differences based on gender. However, students' different majors affected the confidence subscale: English students had a higher perception of their satisfaction, and even outperformed non-English majors in the attention, relevance, confidence and satisfaction subscales. Thus, it is recommended that EFL students and teachers utilize podcasts for developing English language learning in academia.

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1. University of Muhammadiyah Prof. DR. HAMKA, Jakarta, Indonesia
 2. University of Muhammadiyah Prof. DR. HAMKA, Jakarta, Indonesia
 3. University of Muhammadiyah Prof. DR. HAMKA, Jakarta, Indonesia. Email: hmulyono@uhamka.ac.id
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