

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the background of the study, including Research Questions, Research Purposes, Research Significance, Research Scope, Conceptual Framework, and a Review of Previous Studies.

A. Background

Listening is a fundamental aspect of learning, particularly in language education. It does not merely serve as a means of receiving information but also facilitates a deeper comprehension of the messages conveyed. Listening is a cognitive process that involves understanding, interpreting, and evaluating verbal messages (Goh and Vandergrift, 2018). Lynch (2021) emphasizes that listening is an active skill that requires simultaneous information processing, making it a crucial foundation in language acquisition. At the primary school level, listening skills help learners recognize sounds, rhythm, and intonation in a language, forming the basis for the development of other language competencies. Therefore, this skill requires focused attention within educational curricula.

As a foundational pillar, listening significantly contributes to the development of other language skills, including reading, speaking, and writing. Asserts that listening lies at the heart of language acquisition as it provides essential linguistic input (Rost, 2020). Notes that listening aids learners not only in understanding explicit information but also in becoming familiar with the cultural patterns and social contexts embedded in language use (Richards, 2019). Effective listening enables learners to internalize vocabulary, grammar, and appropriate communicative patterns. This understanding supports speaking skills through pronunciation imitation, while also enhancing reading and writing abilities by providing clearer ideas and structures.

However, teaching listening skills at the primary level often encounters challenges, particularly in selecting media that can effectively capture and retain students' attention. In this context, podcasts emerge as a promising alternative to enhance student engagement in listening activities. Podcasts, as digital media, offer versatile and user-friendly access to instructional content, allowing learners to

engage with materials at their own pace and convenience, with the option to revisit audio segments as needed (Damayanti, 2022). This feature is especially relevant for children, who typically have shorter attention spans. Furthermore, podcasts provide authentic and diverse content that can be tailored to students' interests and proficiency levels. Emphasize the importance of delivering meaningful and contextually relevant listening experiences to facilitate language acquisition (Nation and Newton, 2020). Podcasts align with this approach by exposing students to language used in real-life contexts. Moreover, the diverse linguistic backgrounds of students can be accommodated through inclusive and relevant podcast content. Thus, integrating podcasts into listening instruction not only addresses student engagement challenges but also enables a more personalized, context-based learning approach.

In the context of English for Young Learners (EYL), podcasts offer an engaging and effective way to improve oral language comprehension naturally. Regular exposure to age- and level-appropriate podcasts helps children become familiar with English intonation, pronunciation, and vocabulary in a relaxed, non-threatening environment. Podcasts support flexible, contextual learning, where students can enjoy stories, songs, or everyday conversations that reinforce their understanding without relying on textbooks. This approach aligns with the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (Mayer, 2020), which posits that students learn more effectively when information is presented through both auditory and visual channels. Additionally, it resonates with the principles of the Young Learners' Language Acquisition Theory (Pinter, 2017), which underscores the importance of authentic and meaningful input in a supportive learning environment. With appropriate integration, podcasts can foster students' confidence in understanding spoken English and enhance their motivation to learn.

A preliminary observation conducted at the university-affiliated primary school revealed several conditions that justified the need for this study. Although the school is known for its strong digital infrastructure and its commitment to integrating technology into English instruction, the use of podcasts in listening lessons has not yet been implemented systematically. The initial classroom visits showed that teachers occasionally introduced podcast materials; however, the integration was inconsistent, not aligned with structured listening stages, and often limited to supplementary activities rather than integrated into a planned

instructional sequence. Some students struggled to maintain focus during audio-based tasks, while others benefited from authentic input but required more scaffolding to support comprehension. These findings suggested a gap between the school's technological potential and the pedagogical practices enacted in the classroom. The preliminary observation, therefore, highlighted the need to investigate how teachers actually use podcasts in listening instruction and the challenges they encounter, providing a strong rationale for conducting this research in the selected school.

Podcasts designed for young learners offer rich, engaging, and age-appropriate listening materials that support English learning in ways that are both motivating and comprehensible. Two exemplary channels are *Storynory* and *Circle Round*. *Storynory* features classic fairy tales and original stories narrated in simple, clear language, making it accessible to children and ideal for classroom listening (Purba et al., 2023). *Circle Round*, produced by WBUR, adapts folktales from around the world into child-friendly narratives that expose young learners to multicultural content and natural speech patterns. Evidence from Smart Learning Environments suggests that podcast integration can significantly enhance listening comprehension and motivation (Chaves-Yuste & de-la Peña, 2023).

In line with technological advancements, digital developments have opened up new opportunities to enhance education, including instruction in listening skills. Technology facilitates more interactive and flexible teaching methods, such as through the use of podcasts (Warschauer and Liaw, 2021). Podcasts offer accessible audio sources, allowing students to learn at any time and from anywhere. With a variety of themes and accents, podcasts broaden learners' exposure to the target language and its accompanying cultures. Observe that exposure to various accents through podcasts also helps students grasp the global diversity of language use, positioning podcasts as a relevant tool for teaching listening skills (Jones and Berry, 2022).

Nevertheless, implementing podcasts in instruction is not without challenges. Teachers often face technical constraints, such as limited devices and internet connectivity, as well as varying levels of digital literacy. Point out that despite increased technological availability, many teachers have yet to utilize it effectively (Selwyn and Facer, 2021). Beyond technical issues, pedagogical challenges also persist, including aligning podcast content with the curriculum, student age, and

diverse learning needs. Emphasize the importance of integrating pedagogy, technology, and content to ensure the effectiveness of podcast-based learning in classrooms (Mishra and Koehler, 2020). Consequently, teachers must possess a balance of pedagogical and technological skills to transform digital tools into meaningful learning experiences.

Previous studies have examined the use of podcasts in language learning, but few have explored the challenges from the teacher's perspective, particularly at the primary education level. For instance, Andriawan et al. (2024) focused on the effectiveness of podcasts in enhancing listening skills among secondary school students. Delgadillo et al. (2024) examined the impact of podcasts on listening comprehension among low-proficiency EFL learners in higher education. These studies found that podcasts are effective in improving listening strategies through flexibility and authenticity, but they also noted the need for structured guidance. Similarly, Andini and Burhanuddin (2021) discussed the experiences of adult learners in acquiring English independently via podcasts. While these studies offer valuable insights, the role of teachers in integrating podcasts into classroom instruction remains underexplored.

This study aims to address that gap by investigating the challenges faced by teachers in using podcasts to teach listening skills at the primary school level. Employing a qualitative case study approach at a Private Primary School in Bandung, Indonesia, the research identifies technological, pedagogical, and operational barriers. It offers new insights into the implementation of podcasts in classrooms. At a Private Primary School in Bandung, Indonesia, podcast use remains suboptimal, indicating that its application has not been consistent, structured, or fully integrated into the learning process. Some teachers lack access or adequate skills to manage podcast content effectively; usage tends to be incidental rather than part of a planned instructional strategy. Additionally, the absence of curriculum guidelines supporting the use of digital media such as podcasts, along with limitations in devices and internet access, further constrain its optimal use. These findings aim to assist teachers in overcoming these obstacles and improving the quality of listening instruction in primary education.

This research is significant in bridging the gap between the potential of technologies like podcasts and their practical application in education. Although podcasts have proven effective in enhancing listening skills, technical and

pedagogical barriers often hinder their implementation. By offering data-driven and relevant solutions, this study aims to create a more inclusive, interactive, and meaningful learning experience for primary school students.

B. Research Questions

Based on the above description, this research aims to address the following two questions:

1. What strategies do teachers use when using podcasts to teach listening skills to English for Young Learners (EYL)?
2. What challenges do teachers face in using podcasts to teach listening skills to English for Young Learners (EYL)?

C. Research Purposes

Based on the above questions, this research aims to achieve two objectives outlined below.

1. To know teachers' strategies when using podcasts as a medium for teaching listening skills to English for Young Learners (EYL).
2. To identify the challenges faced by teachers in implementing podcasts for listening instruction within the context of English for Young Learners (EYL).

D. Research Significances

The results of this research are expected to offer practical advantages as outlined below:

1. Theoretical Significances

This study is theoretically significant as it contributes to the growing body of literature on the use of technology, particularly podcasts, in teaching listening skills. It offers valuable insights into the application of audio-based media in language learning at the primary education level, deepening understanding of teachers' perceptions and experiences as they navigate the challenges of implementing such technology. As a result, this research provides a foundation for future studies exploring educational technology innovations, specifically to develop practical, relevant teaching strategies that improve the learning of young English learners.

2. Practical Significances

This research contributes significantly to numerous disciplines of study, enriching knowledge and comprehension:

a. For Teachers

This study provides practical insights for teachers on optimizing the use of podcasts as a medium for teaching listening skills. Additionally, it helps teachers anticipate potential challenges and provides practical recommendations to address them, thereby enhancing the quality of instruction and improving student learning outcomes.

b. For Future Researchers and Readers

This study serves as a valuable resource for researchers and readers interested in exploring the integration of technology in language learning further. The findings from this research can provide a foundation for more in-depth future studies, whether within similar contexts or on a broader scale.

E. Research Scope

This study was conducted at a private Islamic primary school in Bandung, Indonesia, and involved two English teachers of sixth grade as participants. The research exclusively focuses on the teachers' strategies and challenges in integrating podcasts as media for teaching listening skills to young learners. The scope of the study does not include measuring the impact of podcasts on students' achievement or exploring learners' perspectives. Instead, it focuses on how teachers plan, select, implement, and adapt podcasts within their classroom practices, as well as the obstacles they encounter in this process.

F. Conceptual Framework

This study is designed to explore the strategies and challenges faced by teachers in using podcasts for teaching listening skills at a private primary school in Bandung, Indonesia, addressing these challenges from technical, pedagogical, and operational dimensions. Grounded in the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) model, this framework emphasizes the integration of teaching strategies, technological tools, and the specific needs of primary school students to foster a supportive learning environment. The rapid advancement of educational technology has transformed the interaction between students and learning materials, providing access to diverse resources and enabling more interactive and compelling learning experiences. Modern tools, such as learning applications, online platforms, and audio-visual media, enrich language education by offering authentic materials like native dialogues and cultural content to enhance

language mastery (Selwyn, 2021). However, challenges such as infrastructure limitations and varying teacher technical skills (Mishra & Koehler, 2020) underscore the importance of combining technology with practical pedagogical approaches to maximize its benefits and optimize the use of podcasts in primary education.

Listening skills are fundamental in language acquisition, serving as the foundation for developing speaking, reading, and writing abilities. Through listening, learners receive essential linguistic input that helps them internalize structures, vocabulary, and communicative patterns. According to Flowerdew and Miller (2021), listening is an active process involving the integration of new auditory information into a broader communicative context. This process is generally approached through two primary strategies: bottom-up, which emphasizes decoding sounds, words, and grammar; and top-down, which draws on learners' background knowledge, context, and expectations. Explicit instruction in listening strategies has been shown to enhance comprehension of spoken language (Graham and Santos, 2022). In line with this, Chen and Chung (2018) found that students using podcasts as a learning medium showed measurable improvement in their listening speed and accuracy. However, the primary education context still faces obstacles such as limited student attention spans and insufficiently engaging materials (Wilson, 2018), which call for more adaptive and interactive solutions.

To gain a deeper understanding of these processes, it is essential to differentiate between hearing and listening. Hearing refers to the passive awareness of sounds, while listening is an active and continuous process involving perception, interpretation, assimilation, association, and reaction (Henning, 1966). Listening represents the foundational step in language learning, requiring students to interpret and associate sounds to comprehend the main ideas and respond appropriately. Listening entails both macro and micro skills. Macro skills involve listening for specific information, grasping the gist or general idea, and following instructions or directions. Micro skills, on the other hand, focus on interpreting intonation patterns, recognizing structural functions (e.g., interrogatives as requests, imperatives like "sit down!"), identifying sentence constituents (e.g., subject, verb, object), and recognizing discourse markers (e.g., "Well," "Oh," "another thing is") (Hughes, 1991:134).

Podcasts have emerged as a relevant technology-enhanced medium for

supporting listening skill development, particularly in language education. Recent studies have shown that integrating podcasts significantly enhances students' listening comprehension compared to traditional instructional methods (Saputra et al., 2023). By offering authentic input featuring natural speech patterns, intonation, and varied linguistic structures, podcasts expose learners to real-life communication contexts, thereby enhancing their receptive language skills. This aligns with Mayer's (2021) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, which emphasizes that meaningful and structured audiovisual content fosters more effective information processing. Moreover, podcasts support differentiated instruction by allowing students to control playback speed and timing, thus promoting learner autonomy and sustained engagement.

Advancements in artificial intelligence have further transformed podcasts into adaptive learning tools tailored to individual learners' needs. The PAIGE (Personalized Audio Instruction for Guided Education) project demonstrated that students who accessed personalized podcast content adapted to their learning styles and interests achieved higher academic outcomes and reported increased intrinsic motivation (Martínez and Liu, 2024). This finding aligns with the principles of contemporary digital pedagogy, which advocate for integrating technology to create relevant, flexible, and learner-centered educational experiences (Zhao and Xu, 2021). In primary education, where addressing diverse learning preferences and maintaining student engagement remain key challenges, podcasts offer a practical and transformative instructional strategy for teachers striving to meet the demands of 21st-century learning.

In conclusion, technology, particularly podcasts, presents significant opportunities for enhancing listening skills in language learning. Despite challenges such as limited infrastructure and varying teacher technical skills, the potential of podcasts to provide authentic materials, flexibility, and contextual learning makes them a valuable tool in the digital era. When effectively utilized, podcasts not only help students develop listening skills but also offer a more engaging, relevant, and tailored learning experience, aligning with the needs of modern education.

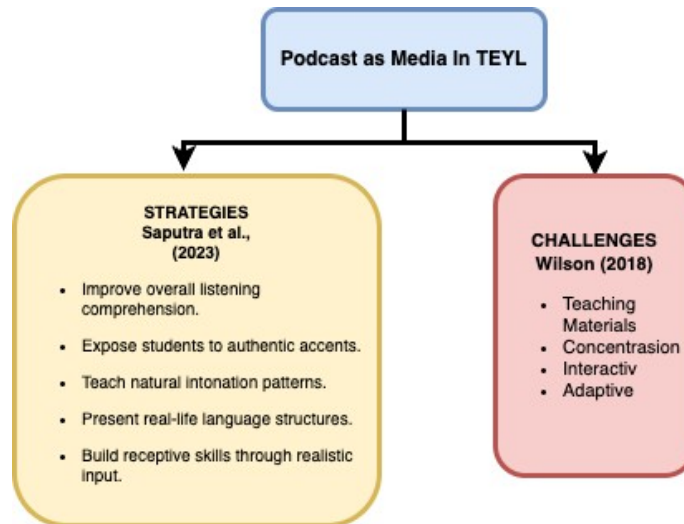


Figure 1.1 Conceptual framework of podcast use in TEYL

To address these challenges and opportunities, this study explores the strategies used by English teachers to integrate podcasts into listening lessons for young learners and the difficulties they face during this process. Although podcasts have become popular as authentic and motivating language learning tools, most research has focused on adult learners or higher education settings, offering limited evidence on their use in EYL. Given the growing need for innovative digital tools in primary education and the importance of equipping children with both language skills and digital literacy, this study is both timely and significant. By examining teachers' perspectives, it aims to provide valuable insights into the practical and pedagogical implications of incorporating podcasts into EYL classrooms.

G. Previous Study

Recent research on podcasts in language learning has highlighted their potential to enhance listening skills and language proficiency. Studies have explored their effectiveness, learner attitudes, and use in self-directed learning. However, most focus on student outcomes, leaving gaps in understanding the challenges teachers face when integrating podcasts into formal education. This section reviews key studies to identify contributions and gaps addressed by the current research. The first previous study, conducted by Andriawan et al. (2024), titled "*The Effectiveness of Podcast-Based Learning Media for 9th Grade Students of SMP N 5 Jepara,*" explored the use of podcasts as a tool to enhance listening skills among secondary school students. This quasi-experimental study measured the effectiveness of podcasts using pre- and post-tests, revealing a significant

improvement in students' listening scores after the intervention. The findings highlighted the potential of podcasts to improve vocabulary acquisition and listening comprehension. However, the study predominantly employed a quantitative approach, emphasizing student outcomes without delving into the challenges educators face in integrating podcasts into teaching practices, particularly at the elementary school level.

The second previous study, conducted by Delgadillo and Illera (2024), focused on the effects of using podcasts to enhance listening comprehension among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) college students with low English proficiency. The research aimed to evaluate students' attitudes toward podcasts, their motivation, and the impact of podcasts on their listening skills. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study combined quantitative data from pre- and post-tests and questionnaires with qualitative insights from semi-structured interviews. The participants were 50 non-mandatory English Level 1 university students from various academic backgrounds in Colombia. The researchers identified a key issue: although listening comprehension is recognized as necessary in language acquisition, students with limited English proficiency often struggle with this skill, and traditional classroom methods may not adequately address their needs. This gap prompted the exploration of podcasts as a flexible, engaging, and authentic tool to support language development.

The third study, by Andini and Burhanuddin (2021), titled *Indonesian and Thai EFL Learners' Extensive Listening through Podcasts: A Self-Directed English Learning*, investigated the self-directed learning experiences of two adult learners from Indonesia and Thailand using extensive listening through podcasts. Using a narrative approach, the study explored learners' motivations, learning processes, and perceived benefits. The findings revealed that podcasts helped improve vocabulary, accent recognition, fluency, and comprehension of natural conversations. However, this study focused more on students' independent learning. It did not address the role or the challenges teachers face in integrating podcasts as a teaching medium in formal classroom environments. Therefore, this research fills the empirical and contextual gap by focusing on teachers' perspectives within a primary school environment.

Although previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of podcasts in improving students' listening skills, a notable gap remains in exploring teachers'

perspectives, particularly at the primary education level. The study by Andriawan et al. (2024) focused on enhancing listening outcomes among junior high school students through a quasi-experimental approach but did not address teachers' experiences in implementing podcasts. Similarly, Delgadillo and Illera (2024) examined the impact of podcasts on motivation and listening comprehension among low-proficiency EFL university students using a mixed-methods design; however, the role of teachers in this process was not explored. Meanwhile, Andini and Burhanuddin (2021) investigated the self-directed use of podcasts by two adult EFL learners in informal settings, offering little insight into the challenges of using podcasts in formal classroom environments. Addressing this gap, the current study explores EYL teachers' strategies and Challenges in Using Podcasts to Teach Listening Skills: a Case study of 6th Grade at SD Lab School, UPI Cibiru. Focuses on the perceptions of two primary school teachers. Using a qualitative case study approach with data collected through interviews, observations, and questionnaires, the current study aims to provide a deeper understanding of how teachers experience and navigate the integration of podcasts into their listening instruction practices.

