

## ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore students' perceptions of the initial use of English podcasts in learning listening. Employing a descriptive qualitative research design, the study was conducted in one class of secondary-level students. Data were collected through questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and classroom observations. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns in students' responses and experiences. The findings reveal that students generally have positive perceptions toward the use of English podcasts. Podcasts were perceived as engaging, enjoyable, and motivating, contributing to increased student interest and participation in listening activities. Additionally, students reported that podcasts helped them improve their listening comprehension, particularly in recognizing pronunciation and becoming familiar with authentic spoken English. The novelty of podcasts also played a significant role in enhancing students' curiosity and enthusiasm during the learning process. However, some challenges were identified, including difficulties in understanding fast speech and unfamiliar vocabulary.

Overall, this study suggests that podcasts are an effective and relevant digital learning medium for listening instruction in EFL contexts. The integration of podcasts, when supported by appropriate instructional strategies, can enhance students' engagement and listening experience.

**Keywords:** *English podcasts; listening skills; students' perceptions; EFL learning*