

Students' Voice on Learning Speaking through Podcasts in the EFL University Classroom

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Abstract. Podcasts have recently been used as a teaching tool, including in English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) classrooms. While some research suggests that podcasts can improve students' oral English skills, studies on how students perceive the use of podcasts to learn, the challenges they face, and how they use them remain limited, particularly in the Indonesian context. A qualitative case study approach was used, selecting four (4) university students learning English as a foreign language as research subjects. Data were collected through interviews. Following thematic analysis (TA), the results indicate that the use of podcast media effectively supports improvements in students' speaking skills. Moreover, students demonstrated increased activeness and confidence in their speaking practice. Although some students also experienced difficulties with podcasts due to limited vocabulary and unstable internet connections, using podcasts to teach and learn speaking is recommended in language classrooms, as students can access podcast content online 24 hours a day. They engage with video and audio materials, which encourages them to practice speaking by sharing ideas, engaging in conversations, and delivering monologues. These speaking practices can be conducted both inside and outside the classroom, including through video and audio recordings. Podcasts represent a medium that integrates internet connectivity and technology, with which both students and teachers in the current era have become familiar and comfortable as part of their new lifestyle. Furthermore, podcasts are among the most authentic sources of real-life language from native speakers. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers incorporate podcasts into language teaching across a broader range of contexts.

Keywords: English as a Foreign Language (EFL), speaking, podcast, university students

1. INTRODUCTION

Before 2020, the use of online learning in Indonesia remained relatively limited and unfamiliar. Most instructional activities followed conventional face-to-face classroom practices, and the adoption of online learning remained limited in the Indonesian educational context (Syaifudin, 2021). This situation changed dramatically following the emergence of COVID-19 in early 2020, which became a global pandemic that lasted nearly two years. This exceptional crisis compelled teachers and students from diverse backgrounds and experiences to adapt by implementing appropriate strategies delivered online via technological tools and internet access. Consequently, a substantial number of educators and learners began adopting e-learning platforms, including Learning Management Systems (LMS), video communication tools, and audio-based applications (Irfan et al., 2020).

Many teachers and students, however, lack the computer literacy to operate these common technological tools creatively and innovatively during online instruction. Several obstacles to the effective implementation of online learning have been identified (Mailizar et al., 2020). In other words, some of them are not yet fully prepared for online learning. Therefore, teachers often use classroom materials and simply adapt them for online teaching. This indicates a lack of innovation in creating interesting and successful online courses (Syaifudin, 2021). He also points out that during the pandemic, teachers mostly assigned more homework for students to complete after class hours. These problems negatively impact students' online learning experiences. Many students report feeling immense pressure in online classrooms, especially when teachers assign large amounts of homework. Furthermore, students often find learning activities monotonous and boring, with repetitive, unchanging material, such as assignments that involve simply copying textbook content into Microsoft Word or a PowerPoint presentation, which decreases motivation. On the other hand, online learning is also considered expensive; when courses are conducted entirely via video conferencing platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, and Skype, they consume significant network bandwidth, which can reduce the overall efficiency of online education (Syaifudin, 2021). Therefore, supplying teachers with a variety of online teaching tools and emphasizing responsiveness to student feedback are necessary.

To address this situation, teachers need clear guidance on how to use information and communication technologies (ICT) in their teaching. Support can be obtained through training workshops and hands-on ICT teaching experiences. New online learning methods focus on making courses more interesting and fun for students. With the increasing use of ICT, research shows that teachers can adopt more creative and innovative methods for teaching languages, including English, especially in EFL contexts (Darwis, 2016; Istanto & Indrianti, 2011). Computer-assisted language learning is one

way to support ICT integration further. At this point, CALL is considered one approach to support ICT integration further.

The effective integration of CALL has developed through three primary phases in language education. During the 1970s and 1980s, the structural approach prioritized repetitive practice and drills. The communicative approach, prevalent in the 1980s and 1990s, emphasized task-based activities that fostered communication through CALL resources. The integrative approach, emerging in the 21st century, focuses on authentic conversation, primarily within English for Specific Purposes (ESP) contexts. Chambers and Bax (2006) observe that CALL is now integrated into course syllabi to support instructional delivery. Consequently, instructional materials can be distributed via both synchronous and asynchronous formats (Zhao & Jiao, 2012). CALL encompasses material design, technological incorporation, the provision of real-world content, and instructional planning (Bustari et al., 2017). Instructional resources must align with defined language objectives, and empirical studies indicate that live interaction is the most effective method for improving speaking proficiency (Wang, 2004).

Speaking skills refer to the ability to express thoughts, opinions, and intentions through spoken language (Bustari et al., 2017). Shiamaa (2006) describes speaking as an interactive process in which individuals create, process, and receive messages to facilitate social and practical communication. Nunan (2003) argues that speaking is a productive skill that uses organized spoken vocabulary to express meaning. Speaking comprises multiple elements, including vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, accuracy, and grammar (Duong, 2014). Vocabulary refers to the meaning and usage of individual words (Bustari, 2017). Accuracy refers to the correct and well-structured use of language (Kusnierek, 2015). Grammar consists of a set of rules that determine language form and vocabulary combinations. To summarize, these concepts highlight the relevance of efficient communication.

Although CALL demonstrates considerable potential, most English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, continue to face major challenges in spoken English expression (Bustari et al., 2017). According to Warschauer (2004), CALL offers students an effective means of engaging with the global community, thereby supporting the development of speaking skills. Within this system, podcasts have arisen as extra resources for improving speaking skills in English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms. A podcast is a collection of media files, such as audio and video recordings, created and distributed online for downloading and viewing (Dogruer et al., 2011). These files can be stored on various devices, including computers, laptops, and mobile phones, which facilitates convenient access to audio and video content at any time and location. Beyond serving as a medium for distributing media, podcasts function as technological tools that deliver language-learning materials through recorded content (Kukulska-Hulme & Shield, 2007).

A growing body of research indicates that implementing podcasts positively influences speaking instruction. For example, Sze (2006) demonstrated that uniting podcasting with radio drama in ELT classes considerably enhanced students' listening and speaking skills, corroborating

earlier findings (Stanley, 2006). Similarly, Fitria and Petrus (2015) reported that podcasts effectively improved students' speaking performance. Hamzaoglu and Koçoğlu (2016) further confirmed that the use of podcasts at a high school in Istanbul, Turkey, led to improved speaking performance and reduced speaking anxiety among students. Bustari et al. (2017) also observed improvements in students' speaking skills following a podcast-based intervention, as measured by pre- and post-tests. Despite these positive outcomes, research examining students' perceptions, challenges, and practices related to podcast use in speaking instruction remains limited, primarily within the Indonesian context. Most existing studies have focused on the effectiveness of podcast-based instruction for specific speaking skills, often overlooking learners' subjective experiences.

To address this empirical gap, the present study makes a distinct contribution by moving beyond merely measuring podcast effectiveness. It offers a contextualized, learner-centered investigation into how Indonesian EFL students experience podcast-integrated speaking instruction. By documenting students' perceptions, identifying specific pedagogical challenges, and mapping their learning activities, this research supplements the existing literature, which primarily relies on pre- and post-test measures of effectiveness. The study intends to provide EFL practitioners with evidence regarding the influence of implementation conditions on speaking improvement. Accordingly, the research considers the following question: (RQ1) What are students' perceptions of learning to speak through podcasts? (RQ2) What challenges do students face in learning to speak through podcasts? (RQ3) What activities do students engage in when learning to speak through podcasts?

2. METHOD

This study adopted a qualitative approach within a case study design. This design was particularly suitable for our research objectives, as it focused on exploring specific educational instances and allowed us to articulate coherent ideas and principles clearly (Cohen et al., 2007). Furthermore, this approach permitted us to evaluate various activities and processes and conduct in-depth analyses of events. Specifically, we used this procedure to investigate students' perceptions, challenges, and experiences in learning to speak through podcasts.

The participants consisted of four EFL students from non-English departments of an Indonesian university. Non-English department students were selected because they had diverse English-language backgrounds and were required to challenge themselves to complete the program successfully. Stake (2006) suggested selecting a purposive sample of cases suited to the study to ensure both depth and diversity in the analysis. Their selection was based on several criteria, such as the range of English proficiency levels, the degree of activeness or passiveness in learning activities, their responsibility in accessing and submitting both individual and group podcast assignments given by the teacher, and their willingness to participate in the study. All participants were assigned pseudonyms to ensure anonymity and provided

informed consent before data collection. The final participants consisted of two females and two males, with their demographic and academic backgrounds described in Table 1.

Table 1. List of participants

Pseudonym	Gender	English Proficiency	Engagement Profile	Assignment Consistency
Dini	Female	High	Active	Consistent
Fatika	Female	Moderate	Active	Inconsistent
Alex	Male	Low	Passive	Inconsistent
Mahfud	Male	High	Active	Consistent

This study used semi-structured interviews to collect primary data and explore students' perceptions, challenges, and activities related to learning speaking skills through podcasts. Interviews were conducted in Indonesian to produce deeper responses and create a comfortable environment for respondents. This format ensured uniformity through a series of open-ended questions aligned with the three research questions, while also providing greater opportunity for attentive exploration of unexpected or emerging topics.

The researchers then analyzed the data using Thematic Analysis (TA) following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework, with an analytical process consisting of five sequential steps. All interview recordings were transcribed verbatim and reviewed repeatedly to guarantee full understanding and to document initial impressions. Initial coding was conducted line-by-line using a hybrid deductive-inductive approach, applying codes derived from the research questions (such as perceptions, challenges, and activities) while also promoting the emergence of new codes (such as comparison with peers and time management). These codes were organized into candidate themes, which were iteratively reviewed against the full dataset to ensure internal coherence along with external distinctiveness. All research instruments were validated by expert judgment prior to data collection. Credibility was enhanced through methodological triangulation, which cross-checked interview themes and prioritized only those that consistently converged. Finally, trustworthiness was established through member checking with participants and other researchers, as well as through discussions with two senior lecturers in qualitative research and English language teaching, who independently assessed the coding scheme, thematic structure, and alignment of data quotations; their feedback was then integrated to improve the final analytical scheme.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Students' Perception towards Learning Speaking through Podcast

To address the first research question concerning students' perceptions of learning speaking through podcasts, three questions were asked: 1. How do you think about speaking English after using a podcast in your class? 2. Do you think podcasts can help you improve your English speaking? 3. Do you think podcasts can encourage you to speak more? The interview data revealed that all participants perceived podcast-based instruction as a positive learning medium. Furthermore, their perceptions are grouped into two interconnected dimensions: (1) Vocabulary Enrichment and Fluency Development, and (2) comprehensive tools versus self-regulatory learning.

3.1.1 Vocabulary Enrichment and Fluency Development

When asked about their speaking improvement, all participants reported benefits from engagement with the podcast-based instruction, even though the degree of improvement varied across cohorts. The most positive changes occurred in vocabulary knowledge and speaking habits. Alex appeared to be optimistic about his speaking improvement, as he said:

"I think my English language is getting better. In the beginning, I was not used to speaking English; now it has become a habit. I used to know a limited vocabulary; now my vocabulary is starting to increase"

Alex's response revealed a significant change in his learning behavior. He highlighted two areas for improvement: the frequency of English use and vocabulary expansion. In fact, the development from *"was not used to"* to *"become a habit"* indicates a gradual normalization of speaking English through consistent engagement with podcast-based instruction and exposure to natural English use.

This result supports Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis, which states that language is acquired when comprehensible Input just beyond students' current level is received. Podcasts provide this Input by exposing students to authentic, contextual, and natural speech. This finding also echoes the findings of Tasnim (2025) and Saxiyeva (2025), who reported that students' fluency and vocabulary improved after listening to podcasts.

Fatika described similar perceptions, but she also emphasized the social dimension. Podcasts' learning instruction requires her to regularly speak with her peers, thus helping her improve her *"public speaking"*. In this sense, podcasts can influence not only English skills but also general communication skills. This finding supports Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (1978), which argues that learning is fundamentally a social process. Indeed, podcast activity creates a social context in which students practice interactional skills with their peers, helping them develop communication strategies. This peer interaction embodies the concept of the "zone of proximal development (ZPD)," where students can learn more effectively through collaboration than through learning alone.

Unlike Alex and Fatika, Dini described her progress in speaking ability as a *"little"* increase. This finding shows a range of improvement from

Alex's pronounced progress to Dini's modest change. This indicates that the rate of learning success depends on individual prior proficiency, aptitude, and learning strategies. This outcome aligns with Tasnim's (2025) study, which reported that improvements in pronunciation and reductions in speaking anxiety varied with learners' listening habits and strategies. He suggests that the effectiveness of podcasts relies on learners' active and consistent engagement. Based on this explanation, podcasts can help students improve their speaking skills, but they are not a one-size-fits-all solution.

Furthermore, Mahfud reported a distinct perspective that presented a critical nuance to the discussion, as he said:

"Maybe because it was online, my way of speaking still seems not to have changed, but with podcasts, the vocabulary I know has increased."

From his statement, two noteworthy aspects for discussion emerged: his speaking skills remained unchanged, but his vocabulary has developed. In other words, his vocabulary growth did not correspond to improvements in speaking fluency. This case exemplifies the distinction between declarative knowledge and proceduralization, as articulated in DeKeyser's Skill Acquisition Theory (2007). SAT posits that language learning progresses through three stages: first, learners acquire declarative knowledge (i.e., factual knowledge about language, such as vocabulary and grammar); second, this knowledge becomes proceduralized through frequent practice; and third, it reaches automatization, enabling fluent, effortless speech. Mahfud's experience illustrates that possessing and understanding an extensive vocabulary alone does not guarantee fluency without sufficient speaking practice. This finding suggests that although podcasts effectively build vocabulary, additional practice is necessary to turn this into fluent speech.

3.1.2 Comprehensive tools versus self-regulated learning

Regarding whether podcasts can encourage participants to speak and help them improve their speaking skills, the respondents' answers were divided. In contrast, two participants supported this notion; the other two offered a differing perspective. Alex validated podcasts for teaching *"correct pronunciation"* and creating a situation to *"practice speaking more*, while Fatika reported that podcasts assisted her not only in speaking but also in *"grammar"* and in building confidence to speak *"in public."*

This perspective validates the Integrated Skills Approach, which argues that language skills are interconnected, thus suggesting a holistic approach as the best for language learning and teaching. Podcasts allow learners to access lexical resources, grammatical structures, pronunciation, and authentic discourse patterns. Thus, they enable students to enhance their listening skills, linguistic capacity, and communication strategies. Fatika's experience illustrates these holistic benefits.

Mahfud and Dini, however, reported different yet intriguing perspectives, as noted.

"In my opinion, for diligent people, it is definitely very

helpful in improving speaking. However, for those who are a little lazy, the effect is not too big, because the guidance is online, so it still makes children negligent or lazy."

This response is noteworthy as it adds a critical insight into the existing accounts. Unlike Alex and Fatika, who primarily attributed their speaking progress to the podcast's intrinsic features, Mahfud explicitly situated learning success in the learner's personal character. His mentioning of 'diligent' and 'lazy' students highlights how intrinsic motivation dictates outcomes. He further pointed out that the online learning environment poses a challenge, as the absence of a teacher's physical presence reduces student participation and discipline.

Dini also shared a similar perception, reflecting that her progress was not significant because of her low intrinsic motivation, as she said:

"..... I think someone's difficulty in improving (their English) is because there is no compulsion (motivation) from themselves. For example, I only do or read when I am told. But when I am not, I do not do or read it. So, because of myself, I am still lacking in English, and I could even be said to be 'ZERO' (beginner level).

The perceptions of Mahfud and Dini reiterate Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), which emphasizes that the efficacy of learning media such as podcasts cannot be realized without students' intrinsic motivation. Further, their argument on the online environment reflects *virtual social loafing* (Alnuaimi et al, 2010), which highlights that the absence of a teacher's physical presence makes the online space anonymous. Psychologically, people tend to increase their loafing (lower their effort) when they feel unsupervised or not directly observed by teachers. This absence of social control requires students to have a high capacity for self-regulated learning (Zimmerman, 2000) to avoid procrastination. This outcome implies that the effectiveness of podcast-based learning depends on the interaction among the medium, the learner's motivation, and instructional design.

3.2 Challenges in Learning to Speak through Podcasts

The participants possessed some concerns regarding podcast-based speaking instruction. The interview data revealed that participants perceived two challenges, namely vocabulary and internet connectivity.

Vocabulary was considered a primary issue by all participants, although their articulation of this difficulty varied. Alex specifically described that a limited vocabulary for everyday conversation hindered his comprehension of the podcast content, as he said:

*".....I have not yet mastered many vocabulary words commonly used in daily life, so
Sometimes I cannot fully understand the meaning of an English video, audio, or paragraph."*

This finding confirms the results of Tasnim's (2025) study, which identified unfamiliar vocabulary as one of the challenges faced by students in podcast-based learning, and aligns with Khan et al.'s (2018) study, which reported that vocabulary was the main reason for the slow progress of students' speaking competency. Although the later study was conducted in a face-to-face learning environment, the results show consistency in the vocabulary problem. This phenomenon can be explained through Levelt's (1989) Speech Production Model. It asserts that speech production is fundamentally lexically driven. When students encounter unfamiliar words, their mental lexicon fails to retrieve needed linguistic information instantly. Consequently, this constraint during the formulation stages forces learners to redirect their cognitive energy to find the words they need, which slows their speaking fluency.

The participants of this study also found the internet connection to be another challenge. This infrastructure-related problem hinders students from accessing podcast content and doing learning activities, as noted by Fatika:

"The challenge that I found when using podcasts is when there are signal problems or difficult connection disruptions, so I cannot use the podcast."

Dini also reported encountering similar issues, particularly when practicing speaking using the platform's recording feature. She explicitly described this issue:

"Sometimes, when I practice my speaking on the platform by recording, the microphone tool doesn't work well. It is, of course, because the internet connection is unstable."

While Fatika's struggle was primarily accessing the podcast content, Dini's challenge was completing the speaking tasks themselves, specifically the recording function. Both instances demonstrate that unstable internet connectivity can manifest in multiple ways, either preventing access to content or disrupting the production of speaking output.

This outcome is similar to the study by Hersulastuti, Haryono, & Setiyadi (2025), which found technical problems, such as internet connectivity, to be one of the challenges in learning with podcasts. Although the study focuses on listening skills, the findings indicate that an internet connection is a fundamental constraint in online-based instruction. It recommends well-designed instructional preparation that considers teachers' internet connectivity before conducting online instruction

3.3 Students' Activities in Learning Speaking through Podcast

Student learning activities followed a structured procedural sequence rather than relying on spontaneous verbal interactions. These routines were repeated consistently across all nine sessions, indicating a stable pattern of engagement. The main focus was the progression from multimodal receptive Input to required asynchronous output.

3.3.1 Multimodal Receptive Scaffolding

Prior to the speaking session, students participate in a preparation phase in which they process English through multiple modalities simultaneously using the university's English Discoveries (ED) platform and additional media. Fatika described her routine:

"Habits of listening, speaking, watching, and listening to English conversation videos between two or more people, and listening to English audio such as advertisements or promotions."

Both video and audio formats helped students with their assignments, but participants did not compare how each format affected their speaking skills. Because the materials were always available on laptops and phones, students could watch and listen whenever they wanted, rather than only during class.

Students saw these materials as resources they could return to, not as live events. Fatika noticed that students often repeated and engaged with the videos and audio on their own, showing that these materials worked more like archives than broadcasts. Being able to use the materials at their own pace helped students fill in vocabulary gaps. For example, if a student missed a word the first time, they could replay that part, which is not possible in a live conversation. Some students, like Alex, could not use this feature because of internet problems, even though it was meant to be available when the technology worked. Learner autonomy theory (Holec, 1981; Benson, 2001) says that having control over pace and repetition is important. In this case, that control mostly helped students with vocabulary gaps rather than with reviewing what they already understood. Since students did not directly compare video and audio, it is still unclear which format helped them understand better.

3.3.2 Guided Practice and Pronunciation Drilling

Synchronous class time is allocated for students to apply previously learned material rather than to present new concepts. Students answer teacher-posed questions designed to connect media content with their personal experiences. Subsequently, they practice vocabulary and pronunciation and recognize key phrases from instructional videos. Fatika described this phase:

"The command to record audio when pronouncing English sentences in ED assignments, and also the command to pronounce English vocabulary correctly."

They used a platform microphone device to record themselves repeating single words or sentences, then listened back to monitor and correct their pronunciation.

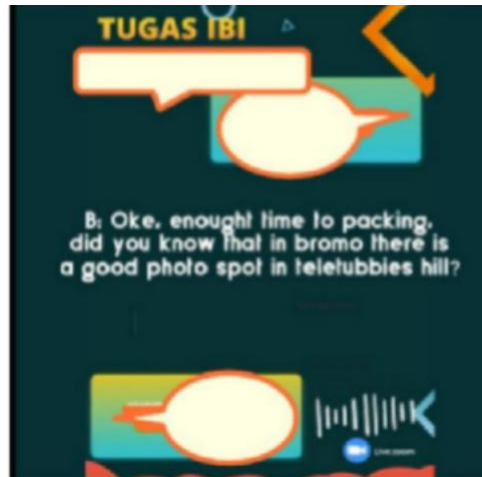


Figure 1. The students' podcast screenshots (conversation)

The omission of new material in these class sessions is as significant as the content included. The instructional sequence, which first emphasizes building meaning and then practicing target forms independently, corresponds to skill acquisition theory's distinction between communicative and controlled practice (DeKeyser, 2007). The discussion phase emphasizes meaning, whereas the practice phase focuses on repeating the same phonological target. When students record and listen to their own pronunciation, this process illustrates proceduralisation in its most direct form. Nevertheless, whether such repetition facilitates spontaneous speech is unclear, and the practice activity itself does not address this question.

3.3.3 Mandatory Asynchronous Output and Peer Review

During the final phase, the students did not speak to anyone face-to-face. Alex explained that the cycle was *"...mostly listening to the audio and answering in the voice section"* (Interview, Alex). Following an input-discussion-production approach, they made individual podcasts about "special people" or paired up to record conversations about "going out."

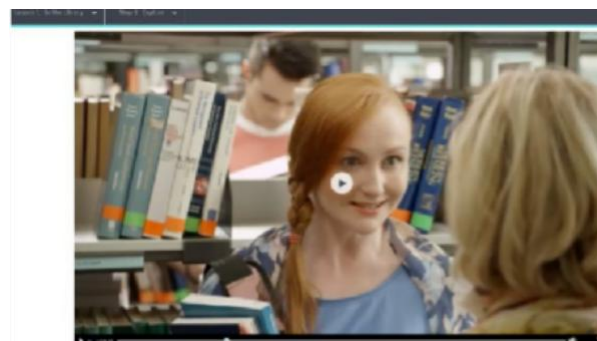


Figure 2. Video about "going out" taken from the ED platform

These recordings are uploaded to Google Classroom, allowing students to participate in an asynchronous peer-review cycle. Students watch,

listen, and provide comments or questions outside of class time. These peer recordings subsequently serve as audio material for the following session and form the foundation for in-class discussion. This approach facilitates pre-planned responses, guided practice, and asynchronous peer communication; however, it does not foster spontaneous interaction.

This setup addresses what Krashen's (1982) affective filter hypothesis identifies as a primary barrier to language output: the presence of a live reviewer. Nevertheless, it differs from the principles of communicative language teaching, which emphasize speaking in authentic, real-life contexts. A recorded monologue that can be revised until the creator is satisfied constitutes a rehearsed and edited performance rather than a spontaneous exchange. Producing content individually, delivering it asynchronously, and receiving delayed peer feedback do not adequately prepare learners for the demands of live conversation, for example, rapid turn-taking, resolving misunderstandings, or responding to surprising remarks.

This method is more restricted than conventional definitions of "speaking practice." It stresses controlled, repeated production of pre-planned content. According to DeKeyser's (2007) framework, controlled practice is a step toward communicative competence but is not a substitute for it. Therefore, the assertion that podcasts constitute speaking practice demands clarification. While this type of practice may enhance students' fluency in structured, independent production, it is still unclear whether such fluency transfers to unscripted speaking under time constraints.

From the perspective of task authenticity, podcasts have been recognized as a key resource for supporting speaking development. Podcasts provide teachers with an accessible means of incorporating authentic materials into language instruction, exposing learners to naturally occurring spoken English produced by native or proficient speakers for real communicative purposes (Alfa, 2020). As authentic language models, podcasts help learners improve their speaking skills by providing examples of pronunciation, intonation, and natural language use in context. Because podcasts can be integrated into both classroom and out-of-class learning, they enable learners to engage with authentic spoken English while supporting teachers in facilitating meaningful speaking practice. Furthermore, podcasts are among the most authentic sources of real-life spoken language, exposing learners to natural discourse, varied accents, and genuine communicative interactions that are often absent from textbook-based materials. Students also perceive podcasts as useful, enjoyable, and flexible authentic materials that support language learning beyond the classroom, reinforcing their value for independent learning and authentic language exposure (Cao & Bui, 2023). Therefore, the pedagogical value of podcasts lies not only in their technological accessibility but also in their capacity to provide authentic linguistic input that can inform and enrich learners' speaking development (Alfa, 2020; Cao & Bui, 2023).

4. CONCLUSION

This study explored the perceptions, challenges, and activities of four Indonesian university students learning EFL through podcast-based instruction. The use of podcasts provided a reliable source of comprehensible Input, which helped expand students' vocabulary and reduce speaking anxiety. However, turning that Input into noticeable speaking improvement depended largely on the learners' ability to transform it into spoken output and their capacity to remain engaged without external motivation—a condition that not all participants met.

Two major barriers emerged from the study: vocabulary limitations and unstable internet connectivity. Those obstacles operated at different stages of the instructional process rather than as a singular challenge. The activities were structured consistently, including self-paced multimodal Input, guided drilling, and privately recorded asynchronous output. This approach assisted in alleviating performance anxiety but primarily trained students in controlled and rehearsed speech rather than encouraging spontaneous conversation.

Overall, the evidence shows that while podcasts are an effective means of language learning, they alone are not sufficient to improve speaking skills. An effective implementation of this method demands targeted vocabulary instruction, accountability measures to support students who are less self-regulated, and opportunities for live speaking practice. It is important to note that this study is limited to four participants from a single department at one university and was based solely on interview data; therefore, the findings should be interpreted as a specific case rather than a broad conclusion. Subsequent studies might examine whether explicit vocabulary preparation helps address the comprehension bottleneck identified in this study.

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