

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

English is a compulsory subject for all students at school and university level. In the context of English language learning, listening is considered as an ability that must be possessed by someone to learn the language. According to Nation & Newton (2009) listening is the first stage of language development in language acquisition, so it can be said that listening is a natural precursor to speaking. Listening is considered to be an important skill. According to Brown (2004) in everyday contexts, we listen more than we speak. Although it is as important as speaking, writing, and reading, however, listening is used to acquire knowledge about the language, while the other three are used to learn the language (Norawati, 2021). Therefore, to practice listening skills, usually someone will use media to help improve their abilities, such as the use of technology media.

Learning requires proper practice, and traditional lessons are considered to have location and time constraints, where there is a possibility that students do not have time to get adequate help from educator in class (Wu et al., 2023). In reality, students encounter several challenges in the learning process, one of which is the limited exposure to authentic listening materials in the classroom (Rachmaniputri et al., 2021). This can be caused because listening is considered as big challenge for students, because they often face difficulties in listening, namely the lack of use of English in everyday life, the material listened to has accents, idioms, and vocabulary that is not common (Indahsari, 2020).

In response to this challenge, effective learning media is needed to support listening learning. Kirkie et al., (2023) stated that good learning is basically inseparable from the use of media. Learning media that can be used to learn listening is media in the form of audio-based technology, one of which is podcast. Podcasts are media files whose data is published via the internet and played on computers or smartphones, such as iPods or other digital audio players (Jham et al., 2008).

Currently, the phenomenon of using podcasts is very popular among students and has grown rapidly in the field of education, for example in the UK there are approximately twenty schools including universities that use this technology (Jham et al., 2008). Podcasts can now be easily accessed, because they are widely available on various internet platforms such as Spotify, iTunes, Juice, and others. Initially, podcasts were only in the form of audio files, but nowadays there are many podcasts available in the form of video files (Vodcast) which can be accessed through internet platforms, for example YouTube. Thus, podcast and vodcast are considered as learning media that provide examples of real English conversations by native speakers, so that EFL can increase listening comprehension (Gonulal, 2022).

According to Kohar & Salam (2008) podcasts can be accessed whenever and wherever students want to listen and practice their listening skills, thus making learning more interesting and fun. In the line with Gusfira & Putri (2022) students can practice listening independently through podcasts, because practicing by themselves may help them feel less anxious, which will allow them to unwind and concentrate more on listening. In addition, when the students using podcast as self-

learning medium, students can also get the freedom to explore certain topics according to their desires and interests. In the line with Buana & Miftachudin (2021) listening to podcasts will help evaluate language learning in autonomous learning and find mistakes or missed aspects. Self-learning is basically a process of learning, practicing and gathering information independently, without the supervision of a teacher or a particular institution (Hussein, 2020).

Based on the phenomenon that occurred at one of the universities in Jambi, especially students of the English department study program, it was found that some students used podcast as self-learning medium, especially for learning listening. In this case, students felt that they were not too free to learn listening through podcasts in the classroom due to limited access. However, when they use podcasts as self-learning, they feel freer and can adjust to their learning pace, so they can focus more on learning listening. This shows that podcasts have the opportunity to be used as self-learning media for learning listening. Podcasts can be accessed independently by students to help them practice listening skill. The role of podcasts in supporting self-learning is strengthened by the fact that there are a large number of students in secondary schools in Indonesia (OECD, 2012), as the time allocated for learning English in class is very limited, making it possible for students to do learning independently (Yoestara & Putri, 2019).

Currently, despite the increasingly popular use of podcasts, research that explores experiences in using podcasts for listening skills mostly only focuses on discussing general effectiveness or perceptions. Therefore, this research was conducted to answer the benefits and challenges of listening learning in the digital era, by utilizing podcast media. This is important because understanding students'

experiences in this study can help teachers to design more effective learning strategies, as well as provide new insights for students about how digital media podcasts support independent learning. Through students' experiences, researcher can find out what are the benefits and challenges experienced by students while using Podcasts in listening skills. Thus, this research is expected to contribute to the development of innovative English learning methods in accordance with the development and utilization of current technology. This research used qualitative approach and were conducted at one of universities in Jambi on English Language Education students, entitled “Exploring Students' Experiences in Using English Podcast as Self-learning Medium for Listening Skills.”

1.2 Research Questions:

Based on the background, the researcher formulates the research questions as follows:

1. What are the benefits experienced by students in using English podcasts as self-learning for listening skills?
2. What are the challenges faced by students in using English podcast as self-learning for listening skills?

1.3 Research Purpose:

Based on research question above, this research aims to explore the benefits and challenges experienced by students in using English podcasts as self-learning medium for their listening skills.

1.4 Research Limitation

The limitations of this study focus on the experiences of students of the English Education study program at one of the universities in Jambi, in using podcasts including the benefits of using podcasts and the challenges experienced by students. This study used purposive sampling which aims to limit the generalization of the research results because the sample is selected based on certain criteria, namely students who listen to Podcasts outside of class or in independent learning for listening skills.

1.5 Research Significance

The significance of the research are as follows:

1. for students, this research explores students' experiences regarding the use of English podcasts as self- learning that affects their listening skills. With that, this research encourages students to adapt in their independent learning process, and integrate the effective use of podcast technology;

2. for educators, the findings offer new insights into how podcast technology can be effectively integrated as a medium and teaching strategy for English language learning;
3. for other researchers, this research provides specific information about how students experience using podcasts, and their experience of learning independently by utilizing podcast technology. That way, this research can inspire or as a reference for new research related to the experience of using podcasts in different contexts.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

1. Students' Experiences

Students' Experiences is defined as the process of students experiencing and applying learning based on their experiences (Kolb, 2014). In the context of this research, students' experiences include the benefits and challenges experienced by students while using podcasts as a self-learning medium in listening skills. Through students' experiences, researchers can find out the benefits and challenges according to the experience of using podcasts.

2. Self-learning

Self-learning is a process where students organize their learning materials to achieve progress in accordance with their personal abilities and desires (Hussein, 2020). In the process of self-learning, students can choose and use learning media according to their wishes, such as utilizing

technological media. In this study, self-learning is described as using podcasts independently or outside the classroom.

3. Podcast

According to Wong et al. (2011) podcasts are files in the form of audio and video recordings that can be published via the web with Rapid Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds. In this era, podcasts have developed not only in the form of MP3, but can also be found in the form of MP4 where both of these forms can be found on applications such as Spotify which provides podcasts and MP3 form and YouTube in MP4 form.

4. Listening

According to Lynch & Mendelsohn (2010) listening is the recognition of the sounds spoken by the speaker, including the perception of intonation, information patterns, interpretation of the relevance of what is being said to the topic being discussed. Listening can be trained by listening to a podcast that contains conversations about various topics.