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The use of podcast to improve speaking competence of EFL learners

Tasnim, Zarin

Independent University, Bangladesh

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**THE USE OF PODCAST TO IMPROVE SPEAKING COMPETENCE OF EFL
LEARNERS**

By
Zarin Tasnim
Student ID:2221689

A thesis submitted to the Department of English and Modern Languages in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts (BA) in English
language Teaching

Department of English and Modern Languages Independent University,
Bangladesh
December,2025

Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my/our own original work while completing degree at Independent University, Bangladesh.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I/We have acknowledged all main sources of help.

Student's Full Name & Signature

Zarin Tasnim
ID:2221689

Approval

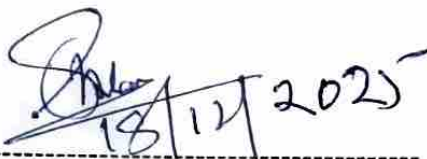
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1. Zarin Tasnim, 2221689

of Autumn, 2025, has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelor of Arts on 18.12.2025

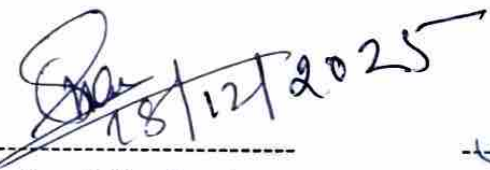
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Ethics Statement

Participants were informed about the study's purpose and took part voluntarily. Their answers and names were kept private and anonymous. By upholding participants' rights and utilizing the data only for scholarly purposes, ethical considerations were preserved.

Abstract

This study investigates the use of podcasts as a tool for improving the speaking competence of Bangladeshi undergraduate EFL learners. Although podcasts are increasingly used in global language-learning contexts, their role in enhancing speaking-related skills in Bangladeshi universities remains underexplored. Using a convergent mixed-methods design, the study collected quantitative data from a Google Form survey completed by 24 undergraduate students and qualitative data from semi-structured interviews with 4 participants. The survey measured learners' perceptions of podcasts in relation to vocabulary development, pronunciation, listening comprehension, speaking confidence and overall enjoyment, while the interviews provided deeper insights into learners' experiences and challenges. The findings indicate that learners hold highly positive perceptions of podcast-based learning. Most participants reported that podcasts support vocabulary learning, improve understanding of different accents and help them follow the main ideas of spoken texts. Students also described increased motivation and greater willingness to speak English after listening to authentic speech samples. Pronunciation improvement and reduced speaking anxiety were also noted, though these varied depending on learners' listening habits and strategies. Qualitative data further revealed that learners commonly replay difficult segments, imitate speakers, and take notes, suggesting that podcasts promote autonomous learning practices. Challenges included fast speech, unfamiliar vocabulary, and occasional technical limitations. Overall, the study concludes that podcasts are an effective supplementary tool for developing speaking competence by enhancing vocabulary acquisition, listening comprehension, pronunciation awareness, and speaking confidence. The findings highlight the potential for integrating podcasts into EFL speaking and listening courses in Bangladesh and suggest the need for further research on classroom-based implementation and long-term skill development.

Keywords: Podcast, Speaking, EFL learners, Students' perception

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List of Acronyms

EFL English as a Foreign Language
ESL English as a Second Language
ZPD Zone of Proximal Development

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Online learning platforms have revolutionized the learning of English language lessons, especially within the last five years. Podcasts are also widely used because the language is genuine, it is spoken, and there is also exposure to various accents. Studies reveal that podcasting enhances vocabulary, pronunciation, listening, and overall speaking competency for English language learners (Hasan & Hoon, 2013). For the learning of the speaking competency of English language learners, podcasting helps because one gets the opportunity to listen once again and get the feel of genuine speech patterns. It is also asserted that using podcasting on a regular basis helps learners better grasp varying speakers and participate actively in class discussions. However, podcasting is not used extensively for learning purposes in Bangladesh, although it can help. Often, Bangladeshi universities recognize that their language learners face significant challenges regarding listening, pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency, mostly because they have less exposure to English conversations. This is because the typical classroom lessons do not provide opportunities for listening, which can make the learners less confident and anxious about communication. Podcasts provide a very easy and flexible listening option, so they could also help. Studies carried out among other Asian countries' EFL learners show that podcasts have the potential to address the limitations of classroom input because they provide steady, controlled exposure of learners to natural English. Podcasts also provide opportunities for imitation of pronunciation and increasing confidence for anxious or lower-level learners. Even though studies regarding the current state of podcasting around the world are increasing, there is a limited number of studies on the perception of Bangladeshi undergraduate students regarding podcasts for speaking skills. With the increasing use of digital learning among the youth of Bangladesh, it is essential that the experience of the students regarding listening and speaking lessons through podcasts is investigated. But recent data also reveal that exposure to real spoken language through podcasts helps language learners better understand conversations and enhance speaking skills (Ramirez, 2024). It is documented that language learners exposed regularly to podcasts feel relaxed communicating with various speakers, and they also respond accordingly with greater confidence during conversations (Almaqrn & Alshabeb, 2017). But the use of podcasts for educational purposes is not common in Bangladeshi educational systems, despite their tremendous benefits. Many Bangladeshi universities admit that their language learners face severe listening, pronunciation, vocabulary and fluency challenges because of a lack of exposure to real English conversations. Through the current educational system, Bangladeshi language learners do not get sufficient natural exposure, and they feel less confident and nervous about English communication. Because of the Listening Option of podcasts, they could be very useful for Bangladeshi learners. Studies among other Research in

Asian EFL environments, show that podcasts help address classroom limitations by giving learners consistent exposure to real-life English speech

(Saifullah, 2024). Besides, podcast learning also helps learners practice their imitations of English pronunciation and feel confident without actually participating in live conversations, which causes them greater anxiety. Because digital learning nowadays is familiar among Bangladeshi youngsters, it is very important to understand the practical experience of language learners using podcast learning. This study will examine how Bangladeshi language learners perceive using podcasts for developing their spoken English skills.

1.2 Problem Statement

Speaking is a problem for a large number of Bangladeshi EFL learners. They also face difficulties in listening to normal speech, fast conversations, and accents. In the classroom, they get minimal opportunities for speaking. This affects the confidence of the learners when it comes to conversations. Studies worldwide claim that podcasts are effective for vocabulary, pronunciation, motivational purposes and listening (Hasan & Hoon, 2013). Recent studies show that podcast-based learning can significantly enhance learners' speaking competence by exposing them to authentic communication and real conversational patterns (Ramirez, 2024). However, at universities in Bangladesh, very little research exists about benefiting college-goers or their perception of using podcasts for speaking. Because of the minimal study, lecturers do not know whether they should add podcasts for lessons concerning listening and speaking. Given the rising importance of speaking competence in academic and professional settings, exploring learners' real experiences with podcasts becomes especially relevant for improving English courses. Because of the minimal study, lecturers do not know whether they should add podcasts for lessons concerning listening and speaking. This paper, therefore, explores the minimal study about Bangladeshi students' perception of using podcasts for speaking.

Table 1: Research Purposes and Questions

Purpose of the Study	Research Questions
1. To explore learners' overall perceptions of podcasts.	1. What are Bangladeshi undergraduate EFL learners' perceptions of using podcasts to improve their speaking competence?
2. To examine how podcasts influence vocabulary, pronunciation, listening comprehension and speaking confidence.	2. How do learners perceive the effects of podcasts on vocabulary, pronunciation, listening comprehension and speaking confidence?
3. To identify challenges learners face when using podcasts for speaking comprehension.	3. What challenges do learners face when using podcasts to improve their speaking competence ?

1.3 Significance of the Study

This particular study is important for several reasons. Firstly, it helps fill the existing gap in the literature on learning through podcasting, specifically for the Bangladeshi higher education setting, which is dominated by the need for speaking skills among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Even though there have been promising results from studies globally, there is a dearth of studies on Bangladeshi undergrads. This particular study will help shed light on the issue through the findings of the learners' attitudes collected through survey and interview analysis. Secondly, the results have several practical implications for teachers and curriculum developers. The participants reported a high level of enjoyment of the podcast; their motivational level increased, their listening comprehension improved, their comprehension of different accents developed, and their vocabulary level raised. This research gives solid confirmation that the podcast can serve as an effective supplementary tool for the development of speaking abilities, especially when there is limited exposure to native speakers of English. Third, the study highlights how podcasts support learner autonomy. Through survey data and interviews, results demonstrate that learners typically replay episodes, echo pronunciation, and choose episodes that suit their comfort level. Such autonomous practices imply that the use of podcasts not only develops language abilities, including pronunciation, but also helps learners become autonomous language learners. Finally, the current study reveals potential challenges that include fast-paced delivery, unfamiliar terms, and sometimes the presence of technology-related obstacles. These challenges, if well identified, will help teachers enhance ways of providing better scaffold support, identify suitable podcast level complexity, and use transcripts and vocabulary assistance. The current study is important because

it provides local, time-relevant empirical findings that help address challenges in EFL learning, facilitate improvements in the curriculum, and provoke new studies on technology-based language learning for Bangladeshi students. Moreover, the study contributes to a clearer understanding of how digital resources can be meaningfully integrated into traditional Bangladeshi classrooms. In addition, it supports students in their increasing preference for flexible, technology-based learning options that reflect their usual media use. Finally, this research provides practical insights for institutions to find low-cost, easily accessible resources for improvement in speaking skills.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

The literature review analyses the previous studies regarding the use of podcast learning for English as a Foreign Language with regard to the comprehension of speakers. It also explores the relevant areas of the topic of this study, which include the theories, the role of podcasting for the improvement of speaking skills, the impact on vocabulary and pronunciation, the attitudes of the learners and their reasons for remaining motivated, and the difficulties of adopting podcast learning. Through the analysis of previous studies, the literature review identifies the benefits of podcast learning, which include the use of authentic language input, enhanced communication skills and greater learner motivation. It also identifies the limitations, including the absence of studies on the use of podcast learning in South Asian or Bangladeshi universities.

2.1 Theoretical Frameworks

This study is grounded in sociocultural theory, input-based theories and communicative competence. Sociocultural theory emphasizes mediated learning through tools; podcasts function as mediational tools that help learners progress by providing repeatable, comprehensible input. Krashen's Input Hypothesis also highlights the role of meaningful, comprehensible input for language development; podcasts supply rich, authentic listening material that supports vocabulary growth and comprehension (Fachriza et al., 2023). Because the input is contextual and engaging, learners are more likely to retain new vocabulary and incorporate it into their speech. Additionally, communicative competence theory explains how exposure to authentic dialogue enhances both receptive and productive communication skills. When learners listen to real conversations and respond through discussion or imitation, they strengthen the strategic and pragmatic components of communication (Shunnar & Altweissi, 2022). Podcasts model natural conversational flow, such as turn-taking, hesitation markers, discourse markers and real-life pronunciation variations. Through repeated exposure to such features, learners become better prepared to participate in real conversations with clarity and confidence.

2.2 Podcasts and Speaking Competence

Recent studies emphasize that podcasts improve speaking competence by providing authentic, varied spoken input. Learners value features such as natural speech, cultural content and conversational exchange, which support comprehension and confidence (Rahmasari et al., 2021). Experimental findings show that podcast-integrated instruction leads to better understanding of spoken details, and improved speaking confidence among EFL learners (Yazmin & Clara, 2024).

Effectiveness, however, is dependent on student involvement and the relevance of podcast material.

2.3 Podcasts, Vocabulary and Pronunciation

Podcasts help learners contextualize new words and provide good examples of how words are pronounced. It is indicated that learners gain new vocabulary when listening and retain it well when the podcast episode's audio is engaging and rich in context (Talavera-Mendoza et al., 2023). For example, studies on pronunciation indicate that exercises such as imitation, shadowing, and podcast segment repetitions allow individuals to enhance their sounds and rhythmic patterns. These improvements take place after consistent exposure, often slow over time (Fouz-González, 2018).

2.4 Learner Perceptions and Motivation

Most learners feel positively about podcast learning. They appreciate the flexibility, portability and realistic content, which encourages these learners and enhances self-directed learning (Mohzana, 2024). Qualitative findings reveal that when the podcasting aligns with learners' interests, learners will replay difficult sections, imitate speakers, and discuss episodes with friends, thus aiding speaking skills (Ramirez, 2024). Nevertheless, if the content is too difficult or there are connectivity issues, the level of motivation will reduce.

2.5 Constraints and Implementation Challenges

The use of podcasts can also be hampered by technical difficulties, the absence of structures, tasks or policies used by schools. According to various studies, challenges posed by poor connectivity, quality of podcast materials and limited teacher training in digital pedagogy could affect podcast learning effectively (Fachriza et al., 2023). In less developed areas, such as Bangladesh, these factors can also hinder the effectiveness of podcast-based learning without the right guidance and infrastructure (Shunnar & Altweissi, 2022).

2.6 Research Gap

Although existing studies show that podcasts can enhance vocabulary development, pronunciation awareness and overall speaking performance among EFL learners, several important gaps remain. Research focusing specifically on the speaking competence of South Asian or Bangladeshi university students is still limited, despite evidence from other Asian contexts that podcasts help learners engage with authentic spoken English and improve communicative skills (Rahmasari et al., 2021). Furthermore, most studies emphasize learner outcomes but rarely address teachers'

preparedness or pedagogical strategies for integrating podcasts effectively into speaking-focused lessons. These gaps indicate the necessity of the present study, which explores Bangladeshi undergraduate learners' perceptions of using podcasts to improve speaking competence, an area that has not been adequately examined in earlier research (Chaves-Yuste & de-la Peña, 2023).

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

This chapter presents the methodology used in this research to explore how podcasts facilitate or affect the speaking skills of Bangladeshi EFL students in their university. This chapter explains how this study was designed, the participants, research design, data collection procedures and data analysis techniques in this research. A convergent design methodology was used in this research that combines both quantitative and qualitative data.

3.1 Context and Participants

The study was conducted at private universities in Bangladesh, where English is taught as a compulsory course for undergraduate students. In this situation, learners frequently struggle with speaking comprehension due to insufficient exposure to actual spoken language outside of the classroom. Podcasts have recently gained popularity among university students as an accessible and flexible learning tool but their effectiveness in improving speaking comprehension in the Bangladeshi EFL context has not been widely researched. Participants were undergraduate EFL learners enrolled in English language courses during the data collection. A total of 24 students completed the Google Form survey. Four students were chosen for semi-structured interviews utilizing purposive sampling to guarantee gender diversity, English language level, and frequency of podcast use. All participants were voluntary and willing to share their experiences with podcast-based learning.

3.2 Research Design

This study adopts a convergent mixed-methods research design to investigate Bangladeshi undergraduate EFL learners' perceptions of using podcasts to improve speaking comprehension. The mixed-methods approach is appropriate because it integrates quantitative data (Google Form survey responses) with qualitative data (semi-structured student interviews), allowing for a comprehensive understanding of learners' experiences. Both types of data were collected during the same phase of the research. Quantitative data help identify general trends regarding learners' podcast use, perceived improvements and challenges, while qualitative data provide deeper insights into individual perceptions, motivations and reflections. Following Creswell and Plano Clark's (2017) model, the two datasets were analyzed separately and later merged to compare, confirm, and enrich findings. This design supports triangulation and strengthens the validity of the study by combining numerical patterns with personal narratives.

3.3 Data Collection Procedures

Data was collected in two stages.

1. Online Survey (Google Form): The Google Form link was shared with undergraduate EFL students through academic messaging groups. Students completed the survey at their convenience. The survey contained closed-ended and open-ended questions.
2. Semi-Structured Interviews: After completing the survey, a smaller group of volunteer students participated in interviews conducted either face-to-face or online. Interviews lasted approximately 10 minutes and explored students' experiences with podcasts in more depth.

3.4 Data Analysis Techniques

The quantitative data obtained from the Google Forms were exported to Microsoft Excel for detailed analysis. Descriptive statistical methods were used to examine this data, helping to understand students' overall perceptions of various concepts. The data were analyzed using frequency and percentage methods, providing a precise understanding of students' reactions. Statistical analysis enabled clear identification of how podcasts were most effective in different areas, as well as areas where students demonstrated a lack of understanding, highlighting the need for further development using podcasts in class. For qualitative data, a systematic analysis of interview responses and open-ended questions was conducted using thematic analysis. Each statement was manually coded and analyzed for relevance to the research aims. This process provided insights into students' satisfaction with podcasts, the development of their communication skills, and the impact on their motivation and attitudes toward English language learning. The study also identified challenges students faced regarding podcasts, including technological issues and comprehension difficulties, leading to recommendations for improving podcast use in class. By combining quantitative and qualitative analyses, this study offers a comprehensive understanding of students' attitudes, perceptions, and experiences with podcasts in the classroom.

3.5 Ethical Consideration

The study followed standard ethical guidelines to ensure the safety, privacy and voluntary participation of all students involved. Participants were clearly informed about the purpose of the study, the types of data collected and how the information would be used. Participation in research was completely voluntary and students were free to withdraw from it anytime with no consequence. Responses were all anonymous or no identifying personal information was included in the analysis or final report. The interview notes were coded and safely stored in order to maintain privacy throughout research. Participants were assured that their information would be used only for academic purposes and would not affect their academic grades or institutional standing in any way.

Chapter 4

Findings and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, data analysis and interpretation from a mixed methods study are provided. It has been attempted in this study to determine the effects of podcast usage on Bangladeshi Undergraduate EFL students' speaking skills. Data was collected by the use of the Google Forms survey, where the data was collected from 24 students, while other data was collected through in-depth interviews conducted on four students. The data collected was quantified through the use of a likert scale, which was analyzed through the use of frequency tables to determine the trends. The data collected from the qualitative interviews was also analyzed thematically to capture learners' experiences and perceptions in greater depth. The findings from both datasets were integrated and interpreted together to allow triangulation and to strengthen the validity of the results. In general, the findings from the combined analysis help create an insight into the perception of podcast-based learning among the learners and form the basis of the discussion and implications of the next chapter.

4.2 Presentation of Findings

The quantitative data were collected via a Google Form survey using 5-point Likert-scale items (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). Tables summarize the response frequencies for each survey item. Overall, the results indicate that most students reported positive attitudes toward using podcasts for English learning. In particular, large majorities of respondents selected “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” on statements related to enjoyment, vocabulary development, listening skills, confidence and pronunciation. The following sections present the detailed results by thematic category.

Table 2: Enjoyment of Podcasts

Item	Response Trend	Estimated % in Agreement
I enjoy using podcasts	Mostly Agree/Strongly Agree	70–80%
Podcasts are interesting.	Mostly Agree/Strongly Agree	75–85%
I look forward to listening to podcasts.	Majority Agree	65–75%
Podcasts make learning English fun	Very high agreement	80–90%

Learners show strong enjoyment and positive attitudes toward podcasts. Enjoyment increases their motivation and likelihood to continue learning.

Table 3: Confidence in Speaking

Item	Response	Estimated % in Agreement
Podcasts help me respond more confidently during English conversations.	Mostly \Slightly Agree	55–65%

Podcasts moderately improve speaking confidence. Students feel somewhat more prepared to respond in English, though the improvement is not extremely great.

Table 4: Understanding Different Accents

Item	Response	Estimated % in Agreement
Podcasts help me understand accents better.	Mostly Agree/Strongly Agree	70–80%
Exposed to different pronunciations	Very high agreement	80–90%
Comfortable with different speakers	Mostly Agree	65–75%
Recognize fast-spoken words.	Moderate–High agreement	60–70%

Students believe podcasts enhance their ability to understand accent variety, pronunciation differences, and fast speech, supporting listening comprehension development.

Table 5: Motivation to Speak

Item	Response	Estimated % in Agreement
Podcasts encourage me to speak.	Mostly Agree/Strongly Agree	75–85%
Inspire me to practice English	Very high agreement	80–90%
Make me active in class	Mostly Agree	65–75%
Make me want to improve daily	Strong agreement	75–85%

Podcasts significantly increase motivation to speak and practice English, contributing to improved speaking fluency.

Table 6: Vocabulary Learning

Students clearly find podcasts effective for vocabulary development, especially because listening input provides a natural context.

Item	Response	Estimated % in Agreement
Podcasts introduce useful words.	Very high agreement	80–90%
Help me remember vocabulary better	Strong agreement	75–85%
Make vocabulary learning enjoyable	High agreement	70–80%
Help me use new vocabulary	Very high agreement	80–90%

Table 7: Repeating Podcast Segments

Item	Response	Estimated % in Agreement
I replay/ repeat difficult segments.	Mixed (2–5)	40–60%

Learners differ in the use of repetition. Some replay challenging sections, while others rely on single-pass listening.

Table 8: Following Main Ideas

Item	Response	Estimated % in Agreement
Podcasts help me follow main ideas in conversations.	Agree	54.2%

Podcasts improve the ability to follow key points and main ideas, supporting functional listening comprehension.

Table 9: Pronunciation Practice

Item	Response	Estimated % in Agreement
I repeat phrases from podcasts	Slightly agree	70–80%
Podcasts improve my accent	High agreement	70–80%
I practice speaking like the speakers	Very high agreement	80–90%
I notice pronunciation improvement	Mostly Agree	65–75%

Students use podcasts for pronunciation imitation, which helps improve accent clarity and speaking fluency

Table 10: Reduced Nervousness

Item	Response	Estimated % in Agreement
Podcasts reduce my speaking nervousness.	Mostly Agree	66.7%

Podcasts help to decrease speaking anxiety to some extent. Learners feel more comfortable than before during communication.

Table 11: Discussions With Classmates

Item	Response	Estimated % in Agreement
I share podcast content with classmates	High agreement	70–80%
I share vocabulary learned from podcasts	Very high agreement	80–90%

I engage in discussions about podcast topics	High agreement	70–80%
I recommend podcasts to classmates	Very high agreement	80–90%

Students actively engage in peer discussions about podcasts, which supports collaborative learning and speaking practice.

4.3 Interpretation of Findings

This section integrates the quantitative results from the survey with qualitative insights from the interviews, using a convergent mixed-methods approach. Quantitative trends were analyzed first and then merged with interview narratives to deepen the interpretation. Four major themes emerged from the triangulated data.

4.3.1 Enjoyment, Engagement, and Motivation (RQ1)

Research Question 1: How do Bangladeshi EFL learners perceive the use of podcasts for improving speaking competence?

The quantitative data show that there is a positive attitude among learners towards podcast-based learning. This is reflected in the fact that approximately 75-85% of learners responded with “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” to questions that reflected enjoyment, interest, and fun associated with podcasts. This shows that podcasts are an engagement and motivation factor for learning. The qualitative data on interviews support this positive engagement and motivation reflected in the quantitative data. The learners think that “podcasts are interesting, relaxed, and natural,” and this directly affected their attitude towards English listening. A learner reflected her satisfaction with podcasts since “she gets to know people’s stories, and finds the “storyline interesting” ,enhancing her enjoyment. Another learner thought that “podcast learning is relaxed and natural.” Yet another thought that “podcasts are easy to understand”. These pieces of qualitative data reveal that learners are not enticed just for fun or external motivation. The ability to find meaningful, different, and significant data is an internal cause of motivation. The triangulated data shows that learners are motivated intrinsically through podcasts, which assist learners in feeling motivated to perform more speaking-related tasks. Thus, RQ1 is significantly answered, showing that podcasts are positive and useful for learners as an enjoyable and motivating speaking development.

4.3.2 Development of Speaking Confidence and Reduction of Anxiety(RQ2)

Research Question 2: How do podcasts influence learners’ speaking confidence and anxiety related to oral communication?

Survey findings indicate that approximately 65–75% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that listening to podcasts helped improve their speaking confidence. Confidence-related items clustered around mean values between 3 and 4, suggesting a noticeable yet gradual improvement rather than an immediate transformation. These quantitative trends are further clarified and supported by the qualitative interview data. Several interviewees reported that exposure to native or fluent speakers through podcasts made them feel more comfortable using English in real-life situations. One participant explained that “listening to native speakers has improved natural speech patterns,” which helped her feel more confident while speaking English. Another interviewee mentioned that podcasts helped her become more comfortable using everyday expressions in conversation. However, not all learners perceived dramatic improvement in confidence. Some participants stated that confidence improvement occurred only “sometimes,” indicating that regular exposure and consistent listening practice are necessary for sustained confidence development. Overall, the triangulated findings demonstrate that podcasts support learners in gradually building speaking confidence and reducing anxiety, enabling a shift from passive listening to more active oral use of English. These findings clearly confirm Research Question 2.

4.3.3 Vocabulary Development, Pronunciation Awareness and Accent Recognition(RQ2)

In relation to Research Question 2, vocabulary-related survey items received some of the highest levels of agreement, with approximately 80% or more of respondents reporting that podcasts helped them encounter new vocabulary, remember words more effectively, and apply them in conversations. These quantitative findings are strongly reinforced by interview responses. Many students reported directly using newly learned vocabulary from podcasts in their daily communication. One participant explained that she learns new words and “uses them while communicating with others,” while another emphasized that vocabulary becomes easier to remember when it is presented with “context, tone, and emotion,” rather than through textbook memorization. Similarly, pronunciation-focused survey items showed strong agreement, with around 70% of learners indicating improved awareness of pronunciation and accents. Interview data further revealed that learners enhanced their pronunciation and intonation by listening attentively to fluent speakers. One participant noted improved accent recognition, explaining that she could now identify accents that she previously struggled to recognize. Taken together, these triangulated findings indicate that podcasts play a significant role in supporting vocabulary retention, pronunciation clarity, and accent awareness, which are essential components of speaking competence. Thus, Research Question 2 is comprehensively addressed through the integration of both quantitative and qualitative data.

4.3.4 Challenges and Self-Directed Learning Strategies(RQ3)

Research Question 3: What challenges do learners face when using podcasts for developing speaking competence?

While overall perceptions were positive, quantitative findings related to repetition and difficulty showed mixed patterns. Survey results indicate that approximately 40-60 percent of the respondents replayed podcasts regularly, although many did so occasionally and a few rarely did so, based on their learning behaviour and autonomy. Interview data further explain this variation. Several learners reported replaying episodes, practicing phrases, or selecting familiar topics to manage difficulty. However, others mentioned challenges such as fast speech, unfamiliar accents, and irregular listening habits. One participant admitted to being “not a regular listener,” which may have limited her improvement. Others noted that motivation was inconsistent, stating that podcasts motivated them only “sometimes”. These findings highlight that although podcasts are beneficial, their effectiveness depends on self-directed learning strategies and consistent engagement, directly addressing RQ3.

4.3.5 Discussions

The findings of this study demonstrate that podcasts positively influence the speaking competence of Bangladeshi EFL learners. The convergence of survey percentages and interview narratives confirms that podcasts enhance enjoyment, motivation, confidence, vocabulary development, pronunciation awareness and accent recognition. These are key components of speaking skills. Regarding RQ1, the high levels of enjoyment and engagement (with over three-quarters of learners reporting positive perceptions) align with existing literature emphasizing the motivational value of authentic and relevant podcast content. Consistent with (Ramirez, 2024), the findings show that podcasts promote learner participation in listening and speaking tasks when the content is meaningful and engaging. In response to RQ2, improvements in speaking confidence, vocabulary acquisition, and pronunciation awareness are supported by both datasets. Learners reported increased comfort with natural speech patterns, which aligns with (Chaves-Yuste & de-la Peña, 2023), who found that exposure to authentic spoken language enhances learners’ confidence and communicative readiness. Vocabulary learning emerged as particularly strong, supporting the view that contextualized input facilitates fluency development (Ramirez, 2024). Additionally, pronunciation-related gains reflect findings that podcast-based listening supports both segmental and suprasegmental development (Fouz-González, 2019). Concerning RQ3, challenges such as fast speech, varied accents, and irregular listening habits mirror findings from other Asian EFL contexts, where podcasts are less effective without instructional guidance (Yazmin & Clara, 2024). However, learners who employed self-regulation strategies benefited more, suggesting that podcasts are most effective when combined with structured pedagogical support. Overall, the discussion confirms that all research questions were adequately answered and that the study successfully fulfills its research purpose by addressing the existing gap through empirical evidence from Bangladeshi undergraduate EFL learners.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

5.1 Conclusion

This study found that podcasts can really help Bangladeshi students learn to speak English better. As digital learning continues to grow, this study highlights the value of podcasts as an accessible and effective tool for enhancing speaking skills in the Bangladeshi EFL context. Surveys and interviews showed they picked up more vocabulary, got better at pronunciation, understood listening better and felt more self-assured when speaking. This backs up recent studies that say using real-life audio helps people learn to communicate in English (Ramirez, 2024). The students said podcasts were fun, easy to use, and sounded like real English, which made them want to learn more, even when they weren't in class. Basically, the study did what it set out to do. It figured out what students thought and showed they mostly liked using podcasts to get better at speaking. Both the numbers and the interviews showed it helped with vocab, pronunciation, listening, and confidence. They also figured out some problems, like fast speech, weird accents, and not listening regularly. Therefore, all three research questions were answered, and the purposes of the study were fulfilled based on the collected data.

5.2 Implications

The findings provide several pedagogical implications. English instructors can use podcasts in speaking and listening classes as a real, meaningful input to reinforce vocabulary learning, pronunciation modelling and fluency-building activities. Other classroom tasks that might help support speaking competence include summarizing episodes, shadowing, repeating phrases or discussing podcast content. Institutions may also offer training for teachers on the effective use of digital tools to ensure that podcasts are implemented in a guided manner with appropriate scaffolding. Teachers may also consider using graded podcasts or recommendations of podcasts for students based on their grades would help eliminate anxiety and encourage participation. The curriculum developers can incorporate podcast activities into speaking tests and lesson designs so that students are consistently using their listening-reading (receptive) and speaking-writing (productive) abilities.

5.3 Limitations

This study has several limitations. The sample size was small and drawn from a limited number of universities, which restricts the generalizability of the findings. Since self-reported data were used, responses may be subject to personal bias or overestimation. The study did not include

performance-based speaking assessments, which could have provided more objective evidence of improvement. Variations in podcast types, listening frequency, and learners' existing proficiency levels may also have influenced the results. Time constraints prevented the inclusion of a larger or more diverse sample. Furthermore, other variables such as how much students were engaged in finding out this information and their access to technology, were not controlled. A short-term action plan may not demonstrate long-term outcomes in speaking abilities.

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Appendices

Section A :Survey Questionnaire

This section contains the questionnaire used to collect quantitative data through a Google Form survey.

The survey was designed to examine Bangladeshi EFL learners' perceptions of using podcasts for developing speaking competence.

1. Do you enjoy listening to podcasts as a way to learn English?(1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Slightly agree 4 = Agree 5=Strongly agree)

- I enjoy using podcasts. (1–5)
- Podcasts are interesting. (1–5)
- I look forward to listening to podcasts. (1–5)
- Podcasts make learning English fun. (1–5)

2. Do podcasts help you respond more confidently during English conversations?

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Slightly agree

4 = Agree

5=Strongly agree

3. Do podcasts help you understand different English accents?

- I can understand various accents better. (1-5)
- Podcasts expose me to different pronunciations. (1–5)
- I feel comfortable listening to different speakers. (1–5)
- Podcasts help me recognize words even when spoken quickly. (1–5)

4. Do you feel motivated to speak English when you listen to podcasts?

- Podcasts encourage me to speak English. (1–5)
- I feel inspired to practice speaking. (1–5)
- Listening to podcasts makes me more active in class. (1–5)
- Podcasts make me want to improve my English daily. (1–5)

5. Do you find it easier to learn new vocabulary from podcasts than from textbooks?

- Podcasts introduce useful words. (1–5)
- I remember vocabulary better from podcasts. (1–5)
- Podcasts make learning new words enjoyable. (1–5)
- Podcasts help me use new words in my speaking. (1–5)

6. Do you often repeat podcast segments to understand better?

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Slightly agree

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly agree

7. Do podcasts help you follow the main ideas of a conversation more easily?

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Slightly agree

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly agree

8. Do you try to imitate the pronunciation you hear in podcasts?

- I repeat phrases I hear. (1–5)

- Podcasts help me improve my accent. (1–5)

- I practice speaking like the speakers. (1–5)

- I notice improvements in my pronunciation over time. (1–5)

9. Do you feel nervous speaking English less often after listening to podcasts?

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Slightly agree

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly agree

10. Do you discuss what you learned from podcasts with your classmates or friends?

- I share interesting content from podcasts. (1–5)

- I talk about new words and phrases I learned. (1–5)

- Podcasts help me engage in English discussions. (1–5)

- I recommend podcasts to my classmates or friends. (1–5)

Section B: (Interview Questions)

This section presents the semi-structured interview questions used to collect qualitative data from selected participants. The interviews aimed to gain deeper insights into learners' experiences, perceptions, and challenges related to using podcasts for improving speaking competence.

1. Can you introduce yourself and tell me what year you are studying in?
2. How often do you listen to English podcasts?
3. What type of podcasts do you enjoy the most? (e.g., storytelling, interviews, educational)
4. How have podcasts affected your confidence in speaking English?
5. Do you enjoy learning English through podcasts? Why or why not?
6. Do podcasts motivate you to practice speaking more?
7. Have podcasts helped you understand different accents or improve pronunciation? How?
8. Do podcasts help you learn and remember new vocabulary better than textbooks?
9. Overall, how would you describe your experience of learning English through podcasts?



**THE USE OF PODCAST TO IMPROVE SPEAKING COMPETENCE OF EFL
LEARNERS**

By
Zarin Tasnim
Student ID:2221689

A thesis submitted to the Department of English and Modern Languages in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts (BA) in English
language Teaching

Department of English and Modern Languages Independent University,
Bangladesh
December,2025

Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my/our own original work while completing degree at Independent University, Bangladesh.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I/We have acknowledged all main sources of help.

Student's Full Name & Signature

Zarin Tasnim
ID:2221689

Approval

The thesis/project titled “The Use of Podcasts to Improve Speaking competence of EFL Learners” submitted by

1. Zarin Tasnim, 2221689

of Autumn, 2025, has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelor of Arts on 18.12.2025

Evaluation Committee:

Supervision Panel

Academic Supervisor

Panel Members

Panel Member 1

Panel Member 2

Panel Member 3

Office Use

Head of the Department

Director, gsrir

Labrarian, IUB

Ethics Statement

Participants were informed about the study's purpose and took part voluntarily. Their answers and names were kept private and anonymous. By upholding participants' rights and utilizing the data only for scholarly purposes, ethical considerations were preserved.

Abstract

This study investigates the use of podcasts as a tool for improving the speaking competence of Bangladeshi undergraduate EFL learners. Although podcasts are increasingly used in global language-learning contexts, their role in enhancing speaking-related skills in Bangladeshi universities remains underexplored. Using a convergent mixed-methods design, the study collected quantitative data from a Google Form survey completed by 24 undergraduate students and qualitative data from semi-structured interviews with 4 participants. The survey measured learners' perceptions of podcasts in relation to vocabulary development, pronunciation, listening comprehension, speaking confidence and overall enjoyment, while the interviews provided deeper insights into learners' experiences and challenges. The findings indicate that learners hold highly positive perceptions of podcast-based learning. Most participants reported that podcasts support vocabulary learning, improve understanding of different accents and help them follow the main ideas of spoken texts. Students also described increased motivation and greater willingness to speak English after listening to authentic speech samples. Pronunciation improvement and reduced speaking anxiety were also noted, though these varied depending on learners' listening habits and strategies. Qualitative data further revealed that learners commonly replay difficult segments, imitate speakers, and take notes, suggesting that podcasts promote autonomous learning practices. Challenges included fast speech, unfamiliar vocabulary, and occasional technical limitations. Overall, the study concludes that podcasts are an effective supplementary tool for developing speaking competence by enhancing vocabulary acquisition, listening comprehension, pronunciation awareness, and speaking confidence. The findings highlight the potential for integrating podcasts into EFL speaking and listening courses in Bangladesh and suggest the need for further research on classroom-based implementation and long-term skill development.

Keywords: Podcast, Speaking, EFL learners, Students' perception

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List of Acronyms

EFL English as a Foreign Language
ESL English as a Second Language
ZPD Zone of Proximal Development

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Online learning platforms have revolutionized the learning of English language lessons, especially within the last five years. Podcasts are also widely used because the language is genuine, it is spoken, and there is also exposure to various accents. Studies reveal that podcasting enhances vocabulary, pronunciation, listening, and overall speaking competency for English language learners (Hasan & Hoon, 2013). For the learning of the speaking competency of English language learners, podcasting helps because one gets the opportunity to listen once again and get the feel of genuine speech patterns. It is also asserted that using podcasting on a regular basis helps learners better grasp varying speakers and participate actively in class discussions. However, podcasting is not used extensively for learning purposes in Bangladesh, although it can help. Often, Bangladeshi universities recognize that their language learners face significant challenges regarding listening, pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency, mostly because they have less exposure to English conversations. This is because the typical classroom lessons do not provide opportunities for listening, which can make the learners less confident and anxious about communication. Podcasts provide a very easy and flexible listening option, so they could also help. Studies carried out among other Asian countries' EFL learners show that podcasts have the potential to address the limitations of classroom input because they provide steady, controlled exposure of learners to natural English. Podcasts also provide opportunities for imitation of pronunciation and increasing confidence for anxious or lower-level learners. Even though studies regarding the current state of podcasting around the world are increasing, there is a limited number of studies on the perception of Bangladeshi undergraduate students regarding podcasts for speaking skills. With the increasing use of digital learning among the youth of Bangladesh, it is essential that the experience of the students regarding listening and speaking lessons through podcasts is investigated. But recent data also reveal that exposure to real spoken language through podcasts helps language learners better understand conversations and enhance speaking skills (Ramirez, 2024). It is documented that language learners exposed regularly to podcasts feel relaxed communicating with various speakers, and they also respond accordingly with greater confidence during conversations (Almaqrn & Alshabeb, 2017). But the use of podcasts for educational purposes is not common in Bangladeshi educational systems, despite their tremendous benefits. Many Bangladeshi universities admit that their language learners face severe listening, pronunciation, vocabulary and fluency challenges because of a lack of exposure to real English conversations. Through the current educational system, Bangladeshi language learners do not get sufficient natural exposure, and they feel less confident and nervous about English communication. Because of the Listening Option of podcasts, they could be very useful for Bangladeshi learners. Studies among other Research in

Asian EFL environments, show that podcasts help address classroom limitations by giving learners consistent exposure to real-life English speech

(Saifullah, 2024). Besides, podcast learning also helps learners practice their imitations of English pronunciation and feel confident without actually participating in live conversations, which causes them greater anxiety. Because digital learning nowadays is familiar among Bangladeshi youngsters, it is very important to understand the practical experience of language learners using podcast learning. This study will examine how Bangladeshi language learners perceive using podcasts for developing their spoken English skills.

1.2 Problem Statement

Speaking is a problem for a large number of Bangladeshi EFL learners. They also face difficulties in listening to normal speech, fast conversations, and accents. In the classroom, they get minimal opportunities for speaking. This affects the confidence of the learners when it comes to conversations. Studies worldwide claim that podcasts are effective for vocabulary, pronunciation, motivational purposes and listening (Hasan & Hoon, 2013). Recent studies show that podcast-based learning can significantly enhance learners' speaking competence by exposing them to authentic communication and real conversational patterns (Ramirez, 2024). However, at universities in Bangladesh, very little research exists about benefiting college-goers or their perception of using podcasts for speaking. Because of the minimal study, lecturers do not know whether they should add podcasts for lessons concerning listening and speaking. Given the rising importance of speaking competence in academic and professional settings, exploring learners' real experiences with podcasts becomes especially relevant for improving English courses. Because of the minimal study, lecturers do not know whether they should add podcasts for lessons concerning listening and speaking. This paper, therefore, explores the minimal study about Bangladeshi students' perception of using podcasts for speaking.

Table 1: Research Purposes and Questions

Purpose of the Study	Research Questions
1. To explore learners' overall perceptions of podcasts.	1. What are Bangladeshi undergraduate EFL learners' perceptions of using podcasts to improve their speaking competence?
2. To examine how podcasts influence vocabulary, pronunciation, listening comprehension and speaking confidence.	2. How do learners perceive the effects of podcasts on vocabulary, pronunciation, listening comprehension and speaking confidence?
3. To identify challenges learners face when using podcasts for speaking comprehension.	3. What challenges do learners face when using podcasts to improve their speaking competence ?

1.3 Significance of the Study

This particular study is important for several reasons. Firstly, it helps fill the existing gap in the literature on learning through podcasting, specifically for the Bangladeshi higher education setting, which is dominated by the need for speaking skills among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Even though there have been promising results from studies globally, there is a dearth of studies on Bangladeshi undergrads. This particular study will help shed light on the issue through the findings of the learners' attitudes collected through survey and interview analysis. Secondly, the results have several practical implications for teachers and curriculum developers. The participants reported a high level of enjoyment of the podcast; their motivational level increased, their listening comprehension improved, their comprehension of different accents developed, and their vocabulary level raised. This research gives solid confirmation that the podcast can serve as an effective supplementary tool for the development of speaking abilities, especially when there is limited exposure to native speakers of English. Third, the study highlights how podcasts support learner autonomy. Through survey data and interviews, results demonstrate that learners typically replay episodes, echo pronunciation, and choose episodes that suit their comfort level. Such autonomous practices imply that the use of podcasts not only develops language abilities, including pronunciation, but also helps learners become autonomous language learners. Finally, the current study reveals potential challenges that include fast-paced delivery, unfamiliar terms, and sometimes the presence of technology-related obstacles. These challenges, if well identified, will help teachers enhance ways of providing better scaffold support, identify suitable podcast level complexity, and use transcripts and vocabulary assistance. The current study is important because

it provides local, time-relevant empirical findings that help address challenges in EFL learning, facilitate improvements in the curriculum, and provoke new studies on technology-based language learning for Bangladeshi students. Moreover, the study contributes to a clearer understanding of how digital resources can be meaningfully integrated into traditional Bangladeshi classrooms. In addition, it supports students in their increasing preference for flexible, technology-based learning options that reflect their usual media use. Finally, this research provides practical insights for institutions to find low-cost, easily accessible resources for improvement in speaking skills.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

The literature review analyses the previous studies regarding the use of podcast learning for English as a Foreign Language with regard to the comprehension of speakers. It also explores the relevant areas of the topic of this study, which include the theories, the role of podcasting for the improvement of speaking skills, the impact on vocabulary and pronunciation, the attitudes of the learners and their reasons for remaining motivated, and the difficulties of adopting podcast learning. Through the analysis of previous studies, the literature review identifies the benefits of podcast learning, which include the use of authentic language input, enhanced communication skills and greater learner motivation. It also identifies the limitations, including the absence of studies on the use of podcast learning in South Asian or Bangladeshi universities.

2.1 Theoretical Frameworks

This study is grounded in sociocultural theory, input-based theories and communicative competence. Sociocultural theory emphasizes mediated learning through tools; podcasts function as mediational tools that help learners progress by providing repeatable, comprehensible input. Krashen's Input Hypothesis also highlights the role of meaningful, comprehensible input for language development; podcasts supply rich, authentic listening material that supports vocabulary growth and comprehension (Fachriza et al., 2023). Because the input is contextual and engaging, learners are more likely to retain new vocabulary and incorporate it into their speech. Additionally, communicative competence theory explains how exposure to authentic dialogue enhances both receptive and productive communication skills. When learners listen to real conversations and respond through discussion or imitation, they strengthen the strategic and pragmatic components of communication (Shunnar & Altweissi, 2022). Podcasts model natural conversational flow, such as turn-taking, hesitation markers, discourse markers and real-life pronunciation variations. Through repeated exposure to such features, learners become better prepared to participate in real conversations with clarity and confidence.

2.2 Podcasts and Speaking Competence

Recent studies emphasize that podcasts improve speaking competence by providing authentic, varied spoken input. Learners value features such as natural speech, cultural content and conversational exchange, which support comprehension and confidence (Rahmasari et al., 2021). Experimental findings show that podcast-integrated instruction leads to better understanding of spoken details, and improved speaking confidence among EFL learners (Yazmin & Clara, 2024).

Effectiveness, however, is dependent on student involvement and the relevance of podcast material.

2.3 Podcasts, Vocabulary and Pronunciation

Podcasts help learners contextualize new words and provide good examples of how words are pronounced. It is indicated that learners gain new vocabulary when listening and retain it well when the podcast episode's audio is engaging and rich in context (Talavera-Mendoza et al., 2023). For example, studies on pronunciation indicate that exercises such as imitation, shadowing, and podcast segment repetitions allow individuals to enhance their sounds and rhythmic patterns. These improvements take place after consistent exposure, often slow over time (Fouz-González, 2018).

2.4 Learner Perceptions and Motivation

Most learners feel positively about podcast learning. They appreciate the flexibility, portability and realistic content, which encourages these learners and enhances self-directed learning (Mohzana, 2024). Qualitative findings reveal that when the podcasting aligns with learners' interests, learners will replay difficult sections, imitate speakers, and discuss episodes with friends, thus aiding speaking skills (Ramirez, 2024). Nevertheless, if the content is too difficult or there are connectivity issues, the level of motivation will reduce.

2.5 Constraints and Implementation Challenges

The use of podcasts can also be hampered by technical difficulties, the absence of structures, tasks or policies used by schools. According to various studies, challenges posed by poor connectivity, quality of podcast materials and limited teacher training in digital pedagogy could affect podcast learning effectively (Fachriza et al., 2023). In less developed areas, such as Bangladesh, these factors can also hinder the effectiveness of podcast-based learning without the right guidance and infrastructure (Shunnar & Altweissi, 2022).

2.6 Research Gap

Although existing studies show that podcasts can enhance vocabulary development, pronunciation awareness and overall speaking performance among EFL learners, several important gaps remain. Research focusing specifically on the speaking competence of South Asian or Bangladeshi university students is still limited, despite evidence from other Asian contexts that podcasts help learners engage with authentic spoken English and improve communicative skills (Rahmasari et al., 2021). Furthermore, most studies emphasize learner outcomes but rarely address teachers'

preparedness or pedagogical strategies for integrating podcasts effectively into speaking-focused lessons. These gaps indicate the necessity of the present study, which explores Bangladeshi undergraduate learners' perceptions of using podcasts to improve speaking competence, an area that has not been adequately examined in earlier research (Chaves-Yuste & de-la Peña, 2023).

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

This chapter presents the methodology used in this research to explore how podcasts facilitate or affect the speaking skills of Bangladeshi EFL students in their university. This chapter explains how this study was designed, the participants, research design, data collection procedures and data analysis techniques in this research. A convergent design methodology was used in this research that combines both quantitative and qualitative data.

3.1 Context and Participants

The study was conducted at private universities in Bangladesh, where English is taught as a compulsory course for undergraduate students. In this situation, learners frequently struggle with speaking comprehension due to insufficient exposure to actual spoken language outside of the classroom. Podcasts have recently gained popularity among university students as an accessible and flexible learning tool but their effectiveness in improving speaking comprehension in the Bangladeshi EFL context has not been widely researched. Participants were undergraduate EFL learners enrolled in English language courses during the data collection. A total of 24 students completed the Google Form survey. Four students were chosen for semi-structured interviews utilizing purposive sampling to guarantee gender diversity, English language level, and frequency of podcast use. All participants were voluntary and willing to share their experiences with podcast-based learning.

3.2 Research Design

This study adopts a convergent mixed-methods research design to investigate Bangladeshi undergraduate EFL learners' perceptions of using podcasts to improve speaking comprehension. The mixed-methods approach is appropriate because it integrates quantitative data (Google Form survey responses) with qualitative data (semi-structured student interviews), allowing for a comprehensive understanding of learners' experiences. Both types of data were collected during the same phase of the research. Quantitative data help identify general trends regarding learners' podcast use, perceived improvements and challenges, while qualitative data provide deeper insights into individual perceptions, motivations and reflections. Following Creswell and Plano Clark's (2017) model, the two datasets were analyzed separately and later merged to compare, confirm, and enrich findings. This design supports triangulation and strengthens the validity of the study by combining numerical patterns with personal narratives.

3.3 Data Collection Procedures

Data was collected in two stages.

1. Online Survey (Google Form): The Google Form link was shared with undergraduate EFL students through academic messaging groups. Students completed the survey at their convenience. The survey contained closed-ended and open-ended questions.
2. Semi-Structured Interviews: After completing the survey, a smaller group of volunteer students participated in interviews conducted either face-to-face or online. Interviews lasted approximately 10 minutes and explored students' experiences with podcasts in more depth.

3.4 Data Analysis Techniques

The quantitative data obtained from the Google Forms were exported to Microsoft Excel for detailed analysis. Descriptive statistical methods were used to examine this data, helping to understand students' overall perceptions of various concepts. The data were analyzed using frequency and percentage methods, providing a precise understanding of students' reactions. Statistical analysis enabled clear identification of how podcasts were most effective in different areas, as well as areas where students demonstrated a lack of understanding, highlighting the need for further development using podcasts in class. For qualitative data, a systematic analysis of interview responses and open-ended questions was conducted using thematic analysis. Each statement was manually coded and analyzed for relevance to the research aims. This process provided insights into students' satisfaction with podcasts, the development of their communication skills, and the impact on their motivation and attitudes toward English language learning. The study also identified challenges students faced regarding podcasts, including technological issues and comprehension difficulties, leading to recommendations for improving podcast use in class. By combining quantitative and qualitative analyses, this study offers a comprehensive understanding of students' attitudes, perceptions, and experiences with podcasts in the classroom.

3.5 Ethical Consideration

The study followed standard ethical guidelines to ensure the safety, privacy and voluntary participation of all students involved. Participants were clearly informed about the purpose of the study, the types of data collected and how the information would be used. Participation in research was completely voluntary and students were free to withdraw from it anytime with no consequence. Responses were all anonymous or no identifying personal information was included in the analysis or final report. The interview notes were coded and safely stored in order to maintain privacy throughout research. Participants were assured that their information would be used only for academic purposes and would not affect their academic grades or institutional standing in any way.

Chapter 4

Findings and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, data analysis and interpretation from a mixed methods study are provided. It has been attempted in this study to determine the effects of podcast usage on Bangladeshi Undergraduate EFL students' speaking skills. Data was collected by the use of the Google Forms survey, where the data was collected from 24 students, while other data was collected through in-depth interviews conducted on four students. The data collected was quantified through the use of a likert scale, which was analyzed through the use of frequency tables to determine the trends. The data collected from the qualitative interviews was also analyzed thematically to capture learners' experiences and perceptions in greater depth. The findings from both datasets were integrated and interpreted together to allow triangulation and to strengthen the validity of the results. In general, the findings from the combined analysis help create an insight into the perception of podcast-based learning among the learners and form the basis of the discussion and implications of the next chapter.

4.2 Presentation of Findings

The quantitative data were collected via a Google Form survey using 5-point Likert-scale items (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). Tables summarize the response frequencies for each survey item. Overall, the results indicate that most students reported positive attitudes toward using podcasts for English learning. In particular, large majorities of respondents selected “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” on statements related to enjoyment, vocabulary development, listening skills, confidence and pronunciation. The following sections present the detailed results by thematic category.

Table 2: Enjoyment of Podcasts

Item	Response Trend	Estimated % in Agreement
I enjoy using podcasts	Mostly Agree/Strongly Agree	70–80%
Podcasts are interesting.	Mostly Agree/Strongly Agree	75–85%
I look forward to listening to podcasts.	Majority Agree	65–75%
Podcasts make learning English fun	Very high agreement	80–90%

Learners show strong enjoyment and positive attitudes toward podcasts. Enjoyment increases their motivation and likelihood to continue learning.

Table 3: Confidence in Speaking

Item	Response	Estimated % in Agreement
Podcasts help me respond more confidently during English conversations.	Mostly \Slightly Agree	55–65%

Podcasts moderately improve speaking confidence. Students feel somewhat more prepared to respond in English, though the improvement is not extremely great.

Table 4: Understanding Different Accents

Item	Response	Estimated % in Agreement
Podcasts help me understand accents better.	Mostly Agree/Strongly Agree	70–80%
Exposed to different pronunciations	Very high agreement	80–90%
Comfortable with different speakers	Mostly Agree	65–75%
Recognize fast-spoken words.	Moderate–High agreement	60–70%

Students believe podcasts enhance their ability to understand accent variety, pronunciation differences, and fast speech, supporting listening comprehension development.

Table 5: Motivation to Speak

Item	Response	Estimated % in Agreement
Podcasts encourage me to speak.	Mostly Agree/Strongly Agree	75–85%
Inspire me to practice English	Very high agreement	80–90%
Make me active in class	Mostly Agree	65–75%
Make me want to improve daily	Strong agreement	75–85%

Podcasts significantly increase motivation to speak and practice English, contributing to improved speaking fluency.

Table 6: Vocabulary Learning

Students clearly find podcasts effective for vocabulary development, especially because listening input provides a natural context.

Item	Response	Estimated % in Agreement
Podcasts introduce useful words.	Very high agreement	80–90%
Help me remember vocabulary better	Strong agreement	75–85%
Make vocabulary learning enjoyable	High agreement	70–80%
Help me use new vocabulary	Very high agreement	80–90%

Table 7: Repeating Podcast Segments

Item	Response	Estimated % in Agreement
I replay/ repeat difficult segments.	Mixed (2–5)	40–60%

Learners differ in the use of repetition. Some replay challenging sections, while others rely on single-pass listening.

Table 8: Following Main Ideas

Item	Response	Estimated % in Agreement
Podcasts help me follow main ideas in conversations.	Agree	54.2%

Podcasts improve the ability to follow key points and main ideas, supporting functional listening comprehension.

Table 9: Pronunciation Practice

Item	Response	Estimated % in Agreement
I repeat phrases from podcasts	Slightly agree	70–80%
Podcasts improve my accent	High agreement	70–80%
I practice speaking like the speakers	Very high agreement	80–90%
I notice pronunciation improvement	Mostly Agree	65–75%

Students use podcasts for pronunciation imitation, which helps improve accent clarity and speaking fluency

Table 10: Reduced Nervousness

Item	Response	Estimated % in Agreement
Podcasts reduce my speaking nervousness.	Mostly Agree	66.7%

Podcasts help to decrease speaking anxiety to some extent. Learners feel more comfortable than before during communication.

Table 11: Discussions With Classmates

Item	Response	Estimated % in Agreement
I share podcast content with classmates	High agreement	70–80%
I share vocabulary learned from podcasts	Very high agreement	80–90%

I engage in discussions about podcast topics	High agreement	70–80%
I recommend podcasts to classmates	Very high agreement	80–90%

Students actively engage in peer discussions about podcasts, which supports collaborative learning and speaking practice.

4.3 Interpretation of Findings

This section integrates the quantitative results from the survey with qualitative insights from the interviews, using a convergent mixed-methods approach. Quantitative trends were analyzed first and then merged with interview narratives to deepen the interpretation. Four major themes emerged from the triangulated data.

4.3.1 Enjoyment, Engagement, and Motivation (RQ1)

Research Question 1: How do Bangladeshi EFL learners perceive the use of podcasts for improving speaking competence?

The quantitative data show that there is a positive attitude among learners towards podcast-based learning. This is reflected in the fact that approximately 75-85% of learners responded with “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” to questions that reflected enjoyment, interest, and fun associated with podcasts. This shows that podcasts are an engagement and motivation factor for learning. The qualitative data on interviews support this positive engagement and motivation reflected in the quantitative data. The learners think that “podcasts are interesting, relaxed, and natural,” and this directly affected their attitude towards English listening. A learner reflected her satisfaction with podcasts since “she gets to know people’s stories, and finds the “storyline interesting” ,enhancing her enjoyment. Another learner thought that “podcast learning is relaxed and natural.” Yet another thought that “podcasts are easy to understand”. These pieces of qualitative data reveal that learners are not enticed just for fun or external motivation. The ability to find meaningful, different, and significant data is an internal cause of motivation. The triangulated data shows that learners are motivated intrinsically through podcasts, which assist learners in feeling motivated to perform more speaking-related tasks. Thus, RQ1 is significantly answered, showing that podcasts are positive and useful for learners as an enjoyable and motivating speaking development.

4.3.2 Development of Speaking Confidence and Reduction of Anxiety(RQ2)

Research Question 2: How do podcasts influence learners’ speaking confidence and anxiety related to oral communication?

Survey findings indicate that approximately 65–75% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that listening to podcasts helped improve their speaking confidence. Confidence-related items clustered around mean values between 3 and 4, suggesting a noticeable yet gradual improvement rather than an immediate transformation. These quantitative trends are further clarified and supported by the qualitative interview data. Several interviewees reported that exposure to native or fluent speakers through podcasts made them feel more comfortable using English in real-life situations. One participant explained that “listening to native speakers has improved natural speech patterns,” which helped her feel more confident while speaking English. Another interviewee mentioned that podcasts helped her become more comfortable using everyday expressions in conversation. However, not all learners perceived dramatic improvement in confidence. Some participants stated that confidence improvement occurred only “sometimes,” indicating that regular exposure and consistent listening practice are necessary for sustained confidence development. Overall, the triangulated findings demonstrate that podcasts support learners in gradually building speaking confidence and reducing anxiety, enabling a shift from passive listening to more active oral use of English. These findings clearly confirm Research Question 2.

4.3.3 Vocabulary Development, Pronunciation Awareness and Accent Recognition(RQ2)

In relation to Research Question 2, vocabulary-related survey items received some of the highest levels of agreement, with approximately 80% or more of respondents reporting that podcasts helped them encounter new vocabulary, remember words more effectively, and apply them in conversations. These quantitative findings are strongly reinforced by interview responses. Many students reported directly using newly learned vocabulary from podcasts in their daily communication. One participant explained that she learns new words and “uses them while communicating with others,” while another emphasized that vocabulary becomes easier to remember when it is presented with “context, tone, and emotion,” rather than through textbook memorization. Similarly, pronunciation-focused survey items showed strong agreement, with around 70% of learners indicating improved awareness of pronunciation and accents. Interview data further revealed that learners enhanced their pronunciation and intonation by listening attentively to fluent speakers. One participant noted improved accent recognition, explaining that she could now identify accents that she previously struggled to recognize. Taken together, these triangulated findings indicate that podcasts play a significant role in supporting vocabulary retention, pronunciation clarity, and accent awareness, which are essential components of speaking competence. Thus, Research Question 2 is comprehensively addressed through the integration of both quantitative and qualitative data.

4.3.4 Challenges and Self-Directed Learning Strategies(RQ3)

Research Question 3: What challenges do learners face when using podcasts for developing speaking competence?

While overall perceptions were positive, quantitative findings related to repetition and difficulty showed mixed patterns. Survey results indicate that approximately 40-60 percent of the respondents replayed podcasts regularly, although many did so occasionally and a few rarely did so, based on their learning behaviour and autonomy. Interview data further explain this variation. Several learners reported replaying episodes, practicing phrases, or selecting familiar topics to manage difficulty. However, others mentioned challenges such as fast speech, unfamiliar accents, and irregular listening habits. One participant admitted to being “not a regular listener,” which may have limited her improvement. Others noted that motivation was inconsistent, stating that podcasts motivated them only “sometimes”. These findings highlight that although podcasts are beneficial, their effectiveness depends on self-directed learning strategies and consistent engagement, directly addressing RQ3.

4.3.5 Discussions

The findings of this study demonstrate that podcasts positively influence the speaking competence of Bangladeshi EFL learners. The convergence of survey percentages and interview narratives confirms that podcasts enhance enjoyment, motivation, confidence, vocabulary development, pronunciation awareness and accent recognition. These are key components of speaking skills. Regarding RQ1, the high levels of enjoyment and engagement (with over three-quarters of learners reporting positive perceptions) align with existing literature emphasizing the motivational value of authentic and relevant podcast content. Consistent with (Ramirez, 2024), the findings show that podcasts promote learner participation in listening and speaking tasks when the content is meaningful and engaging. In response to RQ2, improvements in speaking confidence, vocabulary acquisition, and pronunciation awareness are supported by both datasets. Learners reported increased comfort with natural speech patterns, which aligns with (Chaves-Yuste & de-la Peña, 2023), who found that exposure to authentic spoken language enhances learners’ confidence and communicative readiness. Vocabulary learning emerged as particularly strong, supporting the view that contextualized input facilitates fluency development (Ramirez, 2024). Additionally, pronunciation-related gains reflect findings that podcast-based listening supports both segmental and suprasegmental development (Fouz-González, 2019). Concerning RQ3, challenges such as fast speech, varied accents, and irregular listening habits mirror findings from other Asian EFL contexts, where podcasts are less effective without instructional guidance (Yazmin & Clara, 2024). However, learners who employed self-regulation strategies benefited more, suggesting that podcasts are most effective when combined with structured pedagogical support. Overall, the discussion confirms that all research questions were adequately answered and that the study successfully fulfills its research purpose by addressing the existing gap through empirical evidence from Bangladeshi undergraduate EFL learners.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

5.1 Conclusion

This study found that podcasts can really help Bangladeshi students learn to speak English better. As digital learning continues to grow, this study highlights the value of podcasts as an accessible and effective tool for enhancing speaking skills in the Bangladeshi EFL context. Surveys and interviews showed they picked up more vocabulary, got better at pronunciation, understood listening better and felt more self-assured when speaking. This backs up recent studies that say using real-life audio helps people learn to communicate in English (Ramirez, 2024). The students said podcasts were fun, easy to use, and sounded like real English, which made them want to learn more, even when they weren't in class. Basically, the study did what it set out to do. It figured out what students thought and showed they mostly liked using podcasts to get better at speaking. Both the numbers and the interviews showed it helped with vocab, pronunciation, listening, and confidence. They also figured out some problems, like fast speech, weird accents, and not listening regularly. Therefore, all three research questions were answered, and the purposes of the study were fulfilled based on the collected data.

5.2 Implications

The findings provide several pedagogical implications. English instructors can use podcasts in speaking and listening classes as a real, meaningful input to reinforce vocabulary learning, pronunciation modelling and fluency-building activities. Other classroom tasks that might help support speaking competence include summarizing episodes, shadowing, repeating phrases or discussing podcast content. Institutions may also offer training for teachers on the effective use of digital tools to ensure that podcasts are implemented in a guided manner with appropriate scaffolding. Teachers may also consider using graded podcasts or recommendations of podcasts for students based on their grades would help eliminate anxiety and encourage participation. The curriculum developers can incorporate podcast activities into speaking tests and lesson designs so that students are consistently using their listening-reading (receptive) and speaking-writing (productive) abilities.

5.3 Limitations

This study has several limitations. The sample size was small and drawn from a limited number of universities, which restricts the generalizability of the findings. Since self-reported data were used, responses may be subject to personal bias or overestimation. The study did not include

performance-based speaking assessments, which could have provided more objective evidence of improvement. Variations in podcast types, listening frequency, and learners' existing proficiency levels may also have influenced the results. Time constraints prevented the inclusion of a larger or more diverse sample. Furthermore, other variables such as how much students were engaged in finding out this information and their access to technology, were not controlled. A short-term action plan may not demonstrate long-term outcomes in speaking abilities.

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Appendices

Section A :Survey Questionnaire

This section contains the questionnaire used to collect quantitative data through a Google Form survey.

The survey was designed to examine Bangladeshi EFL learners' perceptions of using podcasts for developing speaking competence.

1. Do you enjoy listening to podcasts as a way to learn English?(1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Slightly agree 4 = Agree 5=Strongly agree)

- I enjoy using podcasts. (1–5)
- Podcasts are interesting. (1–5)
- I look forward to listening to podcasts. (1–5)
- Podcasts make learning English fun. (1–5)

2. Do podcasts help you respond more confidently during English conversations?

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Slightly agree

4 = Agree

5=Strongly agree

3. Do podcasts help you understand different English accents?

- I can understand various accents better. (1-5)
- Podcasts expose me to different pronunciations. (1–5)
- I feel comfortable listening to different speakers. (1–5)
- Podcasts help me recognize words even when spoken quickly. (1–5)

4. Do you feel motivated to speak English when you listen to podcasts?

- Podcasts encourage me to speak English. (1–5)
- I feel inspired to practice speaking. (1–5)
- Listening to podcasts makes me more active in class. (1–5)
- Podcasts make me want to improve my English daily. (1–5)

5. Do you find it easier to learn new vocabulary from podcasts than from textbooks?

- Podcasts introduce useful words. (1–5)
- I remember vocabulary better from podcasts. (1–5)
- Podcasts make learning new words enjoyable. (1–5)
- Podcasts help me use new words in my speaking. (1–5)

6. Do you often repeat podcast segments to understand better?

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Slightly agree

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly agree

7. Do podcasts help you follow the main ideas of a conversation more easily?

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Slightly agree

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly agree

8. Do you try to imitate the pronunciation you hear in podcasts?

- I repeat phrases I hear. (1–5)

- Podcasts help me improve my accent. (1–5)

- I practice speaking like the speakers. (1–5)

- I notice improvements in my pronunciation over time. (1–5)

9. Do you feel nervous speaking English less often after listening to podcasts?

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Slightly agree

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly agree

10. Do you discuss what you learned from podcasts with your classmates or friends?

- I share interesting content from podcasts. (1–5)

- I talk about new words and phrases I learned. (1–5)

- Podcasts help me engage in English discussions. (1–5)

- I recommend podcasts to my classmates or friends. (1–5)

Section B: (Interview Questions)

This section presents the semi-structured interview questions used to collect qualitative data from selected participants. The interviews aimed to gain deeper insights into learners' experiences, perceptions, and challenges related to using podcasts for improving speaking competence.

1. Can you introduce yourself and tell me what year you are studying in?
2. How often do you listen to English podcasts?
3. What type of podcasts do you enjoy the most? (e.g., storytelling, interviews, educational)
4. How have podcasts affected your confidence in speaking English?
5. Do you enjoy learning English through podcasts? Why or why not?
6. Do podcasts motivate you to practice speaking more?
7. Have podcasts helped you understand different accents or improve pronunciation? How?
8. Do podcasts help you learn and remember new vocabulary better than textbooks?
9. Overall, how would you describe your experience of learning English through podcasts?