



THE USE OF ARABIC LANGUAGE PODCASTS TO IMPROVE MAHARAH ISTIMA'

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ABSTRACT

Listening comprehension is an important basic skill in Arabic language learning because it serves as the foundation for mastering other language skills. However, the process of teaching listening comprehension often faces various obstacles, such as a limited supply of authentic audio materials, low motivation to learn, and a lack of variety in teaching methods. This article aims to examine the use of podcasts as a learning medium to improve students' listening skills. This study employs a literature review method by analyzing various scientific sources (including journals, articles, and previous studies) relevant to the use of podcasts in Arabic language learning. The results of the study indicate that podcasts have significant potential to improve listening skills because they provide authentic, flexible, and easily accessible audio materials, and are capable of enhancing students' vocabulary mastery, contextual language comprehension, and learning motivation. However, there are several challenges in their implementation, such as the diversity of Arabic dialects, limited access to technology, and a lack of direct interaction with instructors. Therefore, the use of podcasts needs to be integrated with appropriate learning strategies to achieve optimal results in developing listening skills.

Keywords: Podcasts, Listening Skills, Arabic Language Learning, Learning Media, Literature Review.

INTRODUCTION

Listening skills (mahārah al-istimā') refer to a person's ability to process, understand, and grasp words or sentences spoken by a conversation partner or conveyed through a particular medium. Listening is the primary means by which humans communicate with one another at various stages. It is through listening that a person can become

familiar with mufradāt (vocabulary), sentence structures, and their arrangement.

Listening skills, or maharah istima', are the ability to understand information conveyed orally by native Arabic speakers. As a receptive skill that humans master before speaking, reading, and writing, listening plays a vital role in the language acquisition process. This ability includes understanding variations in accent, intonation, and speaking speed.¹ Fluency in a language is influenced by the intensity of listening practice in the target language, which in turn affects the quality of learners' oral output².

In Arabic language learning, Istima' is the first skill that students must master because listening is the first natural response humans have in understanding language. Istima' is the most important of these four skills, because for someone to be considered proficient in a language, they must first be able to listen. As explained by Rusydi Ahmad Thu'aimah, listening skills (istima') form the foundation for other language skills. Without good listening skills, a learner will struggle to produce speech (kalam), understand and read texts (qira'ah), or write (kitabah), because linguistic input first enters through the ears before being processed into comprehension. In general, it can be said that listening skills are a learner's ability to understand speech or sounds in Arabic accurately and correctly.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a literature review method. A literature review is a research method that involves collecting, examining, analyzing, and synthesizing various sources of literature relevant to the research topic. The data sources in this study consist of scientific journal articles, books, and previous research findings that discuss the use of podcasts in Arabic language learning, particularly in listening skills (maharah istima').

Data collection was conducted through a literature review by searching various sources obtained from national and international journal databases, such as Google Scholar, and other academic sources.

¹ Farid Qomaruddin, Muh Sabilar Rosyad, and Muhammad A'inul Haq, 'تطبيق أسلوب التدريبات', *ANCOLT: International Proceeding on Language Teaching*, 1.1 (2024), 29–48.

² Ibnu Fikri and others, 'Efektivitas Penggunaan Media Podcast Bahasa Arab Dalam Meningkatkan Maharatul Istima', *Al-Zayn: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial & Hukum* e-ISSN 3026-2917 <https://ejournal.yayasanpendidikandzurriyatulquran.id/Index.php/AlZayn> p-ISSN 3026-2925 *Al-Zayn: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial & Hukum* e-ISSN 3026-2917 Volume 4 Number 2, 2026 <https://ejournal.yayasanpendidikandzu>, 4(2) (2026), 1153–64.

The collected data were then analyzed using content analysis, which involves identifying, classifying, and interpreting findings related to the effectiveness of podcasts as a medium for teaching maharah istima'.³

Through this approach, the researcher sought to gain a comprehensive understanding of the benefits, advantages, and challenges of using podcasts in Arabic language learning based on the results of previous studies. The results of the analysis were then presented descriptively to draw conclusions consistent with the research objectives.

DISCUSSION

Challenges in Teaching Listening Comprehension

Despite its fundamental role, the reality of teaching listening comprehension often faces various challenges. Listening practice is frequently viewed as a monotonous and boring activity for students. One of the main challenges is the limited availability of actual and authentic audio learning materials, as many learning processes still rely on conventional recordings or written texts. Furthermore, the heterogeneous backgrounds of students lead to gaps in understanding within a single class. Students also face difficulties in understanding vocabulary and sentence structure when listening to native speakers. Limited class time is another factor that restricts opportunities for in-depth development of listening skills⁴.

The lack of a consistent habit independently listening to Arabic-language content also exacerbates this situation. Meanwhile, the teaching methods used tend to be traditional and do not sufficiently facilitate active student engagement. The absence of a communicative approach and the limited variety of audio-based tasks make the learning process feel monotonous (Nurhayati, Fidri, & Saputra, 2022). Learning strategies that tend to be one-way and lack interaction also fail to fully support the development of listening skills. Traditional methods, such as playing recordings or audio clips and then asking literal questions, do not employ a communicative approach that emphasizes active student participation through communicative tasks.

³ Farid Qomaruddin, 'EFEKTIFITAS TEKNIK TEKSTUAL DAN KONTEKSTUAL DALAM MENINGKATKAN MAHARAH QIRO'AH MAHASISWA UNIVERSITAS KIAI ABDULLAH FAQIH GRESIK', *JALIE; Journal of Applied Linguistics and Islamic Education*, 7.02 (2023), 333–54.

⁴ Delima Afriyanti Resy Mulyani, Siti Nurdinah, "PROBLEMATIKA PEMBELAJARAN ISTIMA' PRODI PENDIDIKAN BAHASA ARAB DI IAI IMAM SYAFII INDONESIA," *Pendas : Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar*, ISSN Cetak : 2477-2143 ISSN Online : 2548-6950 Volume 10 Nomor 03, September 2025 10, no.3. April (2025): 404–12.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is a language teaching approach that emphasizes interaction, social functions, and real-life contexts as both the means and the primary goals of learning. In addition, it emphasizes the importance of repetition and sufficient learning time. There is also a need for innovation and the evaluation of adaptive curricula and teaching methodologies. Theoretically, this approach reinforces the concept of communicative competence proposed by Canale and Swain (1980), which holds that language proficiency is not limited to grammatical aspects but also encompasses sociolinguistic abilities, discourse, and communication strategies. In practice, the implications of this approach underscore the importance of training Arabic language teachers in CLT, providing interactive learning materials, and developing a more practical, competency-based curriculum⁵.

The Use of Podcasts and Their Impact in Learning

Currently, teachers have been innovating by turning to technology-based audiovisual media, such as YouTube videos and Arabic-language films. However, the use of these audiovisual media has its weaknesses in the context of pure listening practice. The presence of dominant images and visuals often serves as a distraction; that is, students tend to “guess” the meaning of the language based on body movements or visual scenes, rather than truly understanding the vocabulary they hear. Furthermore, since audio-visual media sometimes includes subtitles, students tend to “read” the subtitles rather than listen to the content.

As a result, students auditory sensitivity to the sounds of letters, intonation, and Arabic sentence structure becomes underdeveloped because they rely too heavily on visual aids. To overcome this reliance on visual cues, an alternative medium is needed that can fully focus students on the auditory aspect. The auditory aspect of learning refers to methods, media, or learning styles that prioritize the use of the sense of hearing as the primary tool for receiving, processing, and understanding information or learning material. One audio-based medium we can use as a learning tool is the podcast. Podcasts were originally audio recordings intended to deliver information and content that entertains listeners. Podcasts are an excellent approach to strengthening various language

⁵ Afifah Arum Wijayanti Putri ayu astuti, Desi Romandani, 'Pendekatan Komunikatif Dalam Pengajaran Bahasa Arab : Studi Pada Madrasah Aliyah Di Indonesia', *AR-RIYADH : Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Bahasa Arab Volume 1 Nomor 1 Bulan 2025* e-ISSN: XXXX-XXX; p-ISSN: XXXX-XXX, Hal 31-38, 1 (2025).

skills that are essential for becoming competent and comfortable in language acquisition, particularly Arabic⁶.

Podcasts have also been studied in relation to learning strategies. It is argued that there is no single set of learning strategies that leads to successful language learning; rather, learners use various types of learning strategies to become successful language learners. Cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective are three important types of learning strategies used by learners. Ashton-Hay and Brookes (2011) conducted an action research study to investigate the learning strategies students used when working with podcasts they created. They concluded that the use of various types of learning strategies can facilitate language learning.

Language teachers do not have enough time to provide adequate feedback to meet the individual needs of each learner. Language learning does not take place in the classroom. Instead, with podcasts, learning can take place anywhere and anytime. Edirisingha (2007) demonstrated the benefits of using podcasts in a first-year undergraduate module on English and Communication at Kingston University. The findings of that study clearly show that podcasts support students' preparation for assessed work and provide valuable advice on portfolios and presentations. In addition, podcasts help students prepare for workshops and seminars⁷.

Podcasts have become increasingly popular among teenagers and adults alike over the past few years. Unlike traditional radio broadcasts, podcasts are not specifically intended for commercial purposes; most podcasters share their content for free and foster a sense of intimacy with their listeners, although there are also podcasts with commercial objectives. At the very least, the years 2020 through 2021—which most countries around the world spent navigating the pandemic—marked the peak of podcast content production and consumption, or what we might call the golden age of the globalization era. The ease of using podcasts is one reason many people access them, and during that same period, they were also adopted as a learning tool.

From the perspective of educational technology, podcasts can be categorized as audio-based digital learning media that support the process of self-directed learning. Podcasts enable learners to obtain

⁶ Ayu Bella Ni Putu Damayanti, Ni Nyoman Padmadewi, and Luh Putu Artini, *THE EFFECT OF USING PODCAST TECHNOLOGY TO ENHANCE ENGLISH LISTENING COMPREHENSION*, 2024, VII.

⁷ Fairuza Mumtaz and Maman Abdurrahman, 'Pembelajaran Maharah Al-Istima' Menggunakan Media Podcast Pada Aplikasi Spotify', *JURNAL PENDIDIKAN BAHASA*, 12.2 (2022), 41–45 <<https://doi.org/10.37630/jpb.v12i2.1005>>.

continuous language input through authentic and contextual audio exposure. According to the multimedia learning theory proposed by Richard E. Mayer, learning will be more effective when information is presented through channels that align with the cognitive processes of the human mind. In the context of *maharah istima'*, audio media such as podcasts help learners focus their attention on the phonological aspects of language, such as letter pronunciation, sound stress, rhythm, and intonation, without being distracted by visual elements. Therefore, podcasts can serve as an effective means of strengthening auditory processing in Arabic language learning.

Basically, an innovation that has been implemented carries both positive and negative impacts within it, and this includes podcasts. Goldman in Pratiwi et al., 2021, p. 400 revealed that podcasts have made a significant impact on the world of education by providing innovative sources of both academic and non-academic learning materials. The flexibility of time and place offered by podcasts allows students to learn at their own pace and according to their own schedules. Furthermore, podcasts enhance the preparation and readiness of prospective educators to create innovative learning media in the digital era. Time efficiency is one of the key advantages of podcasts, making them quite effective as a substitute for conventional learning activities such as books, printed texts, PDF or Word files, and audio-video learning media that tend to consume considerable storage space⁸.

In addition, the creation of podcasts offers many important language uses for students. By regularly listening to Arabic podcasts, students will experience development in understanding intonation, pronunciation, and Arabic vocabulary. The advantage of using podcasts in learning listening skills is that students can listen to contextual conversations in a natural environment, allowing them to understand the material according to its context through podcasts. Another advantage is that students can improve their language proficiency through podcasts. Since students learn to listen through podcasts at the same time, they may encounter several words they do not understand. Likewise, if students comprehend

⁸ Novi Anisyah and Faisal Hendra, 'METODE PEMBELAJARAN AUDIOLINGUAL DENGAN PODCAST UNTUK MENINGKATKAN KEMAHIRAN MENYIMAK (MAHARAT AL- ISTIMA') PADA MAHASISWA AUDIOLINGUAL LEARNING METHOD WITH PODCASTS TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' (MAHARAT AL-ISTIMA') PROFICIENCY', *Berajah Journal Jurnal Pembelajaran Dan Pengembangan Diri* ISSN (p): 2797-1805 | ISSN (e): 2797-1082, 3.3 (2023), 573–82 <<https://doi.org/10.47353/bj.v3i3.265>>.

listening learning through the context of podcasts, they can expand their vocabulary (*mufrodat*) related to the context being discussed within it.⁹

Students can improve their grammatical structure and focus on a greater variety of sentences. Of course, through podcasts, students do not only learn single words but rather learn within complete sentences with various structures. The variety of topics and podcast formats can also attract students' interest and make the learning process more interactive and enjoyable. Podcasts can cover various formats such as stories, discussions, and question-and-answer sessions, all of which can be tailored to students' interests and needs. This variety not only prevents boredom but also helps students view the Arabic language from multiple perspectives and contexts of use, thereby enriching their overall learning experience.¹⁰

The selection of the appropriate podcast is an important factor in the success of *maharah istima'* learning. Not all Arabic-language podcasts are suitable for the needs of learners, particularly at the beginner to intermediate level. Educators need to consider several aspects, including the level of vocabulary difficulty (*mufrodat*), clarity of pronunciation, speaking pace, and the relevance of the topic to students' learning needs. Podcasts that use standard Arabic (*fusha*) are more recommended compared to colloquial dialect (*ammiyah*) for the early stages of learning, as they help learners build a more standardized linguistic foundation. Furthermore, topics that are closely related to everyday life, such as education, family, culture, and social activities, tend to be more easily comprehended, thereby increasing learning motivation.

However, the use of podcasts as a learning medium also carries negative impacts and presents certain challenges. One of the main challenges is the diversity of dialects in the Arabic language, which can cause confusion for students in distinguishing between standard pronunciation (*fusha*) and everyday pronunciation (*ammiyah*), particularly for those who are still at the beginner level. Therefore, selecting podcasts with standard pronunciation (*fusha*) is crucial so that students can comprehend the material more easily and effectively¹¹.

⁹ Farid Qomaruddin, 'Penerapan Metode Eklektik Untuk Memperoleh Kosakata Bahasa Arab Pada Siswa Kelas 8 MTs Hidayatul Ummah Gresik', *LUGHATI: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab*, 2.01 (2024), 97–109.

¹⁰ Atika Chairul Syamlan and Zuhrotul Mufidah, "Penggunaan Podcast Sebagai Media Alternatif Dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab," *Journal of Practice Learning and Educational Development* 4, no. 4 (2024): 294–299, <https://doi.org/10.58737/jpled.v4i4.315>.

¹¹ Islahul Maula, *Pemanfaatan Podcast Dalam Meningkatkan Keterampilan Menyimak Bahasa Arab (Maharah Al-Istima') Pada Mahasiswa*.

Another challenge is that not all students have adequate access to the devices and internet connection required to listen to podcasts. This technological access gap can become a serious barrier for some students in utilizing podcasts effectively. To solve this challenge, schools need to provide additional resources, such as loaner devices or improved internet access, so that all students have equal opportunities to learn.

The lack of direct interaction with educators can become an obstacle in the learning process. Direct interaction with educators is essential for providing the feedback, clarification, and motivation that students need. To overcome this obstacle, podcasts can be combined with face-to-face sessions or online discussions, where students can interact with educators and their peers, discuss the material they have listened to, and receive further explanation on difficult topics. This combination can provide a balance between the flexibility of independent learning and the need for direct guidance from educators¹².

Strategies for Implementing Podcasts in Arabic Learning.

In order for the use of podcasts in *maharah istima'* learning to run optimally, educators need to implement a systematic learning strategy. The implementation of podcasts can be divided into three main stages, namely pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening. In the pre-listening stage, the teacher provides an introduction to the material, introduces new vocabulary (*mufradat*), and builds the contextual background of the topic to be listened to. The while-listening stage focuses on active listening activities, such as noting down main ideas, identifying key words, or answering simple questions. Meanwhile, the post-listening stage is used to evaluate learners' comprehension through discussions, audio content summaries, or retelling exercises. This staged approach helps learners understand the content of the podcast more thoroughly and systematically.

In Arabic language learning, the use of podcasts as a digital audio medium is becoming increasingly relevant for improving *maharah al-istima'* (listening skills). Podcasts offer access to flexible audio materials that can be played repeatedly, and allow learners to listen to Arabic in a more authentic communicative context. Through podcasts, students not only hear vocabulary in isolation, but also understand language use in real contexts, including intonation, speech rhythm, and pronunciation variations. This makes podcasts one of the effective media for helping learners gradually improve their ability to comprehend spoken Arabic.

¹² Syamlan and Mufidah. Hal.296.

The effectiveness of podcasts in this study can be attributed to their ability to present authentic language experiences. By exposing students to native speakers and contextual dialogues, podcasts provide natural linguistic input that promotes cognitive engagement and practical application. Furthermore, the flexible format of podcasts allows learners to access content at their own convenience, thereby facilitating repeated exposure and practice, which are essential for language retention and proficiency. Interactive elements, such as transcripts and guided exercises, further enhance comprehension and application, thus making podcasts a holistic language learning tool.

The use of podcasts in Arabic language learning also carries implications for teachers' professional competence. Teachers no longer serve solely as deliverers of material, but also as facilitators who are capable of selecting, adapting, and integrating digital media into the learning process. This requires Arabic language teachers to possess sound digital literacy in order to select high-quality audio sources and design interactive learning activities. In the digital era, the ability to utilize learning technology has become one of the indicators of teacher professionalism, as the quality of learning is not only determined by mastery of the subject matter, but also by the ability to select media that aligns with the characteristics of the learners.

This study makes a significant contribution to the field of Arabic language education by introducing podcasts as a versatile medium for developing *maharah istima'* and *maharah kalam*. This study highlights the importance of incorporating culturally relevant content, such as expressions and phrases adapted from prominent figures like Deddy Corbuzier, in order to make learning more comprehensible and engaging. Furthermore, this study addresses areas that have been underexplored in Arabic language education, namely listening and speaking skills, where resources and studies have often focused on reading and writing. This study demonstrates how podcasts can bridge the gap between theoretical learning and practical language use, as well as foster critical thinking and real-life application¹³.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that the integration of podcasts into Arabic language learning is not merely a technological trend, but also a pedagogical innovation that offers real benefits in improving students'

¹³ Moh. Tohiri Habib and others, 'Podcasts as an Innovative Solution for Teaching Arabic: Enhancing Speaking and Listening Skills', *Studi Arab*, 15.2 (2025), 87–105 <<https://doi.org/10.35891/sa.v15i2.5784>>.

listening competence. The findings indicate that podcasts can create a more flexible, student-centered learning environment and support the development of independent learning habits. Therefore, the use of podcasts can serve as a strategic alternative for Arabic educators in adapting teaching practices to the demands of digital-era education. From a practical perspective, the successful implementation of podcasts requires support from both educators and educational institutions. Teachers need to develop digital literacy and pedagogical creativity in selecting and designing podcast-based learning activities, while schools and universities need to provide adequate technological infrastructure. Collaboration between these elements is essential to ensure that podcast-based learning can be implemented effectively and inclusively for all learners.

Future research is recommended to examine the effectiveness of podcast-based learning through empirical approaches, such as experimental or classroom action research methods, in order to measure its direct impact on students' maharah istima'. Further studies may also explore the influence of podcast duration, content type, and dialect variation on listening comprehension outcomes. Such investigations would enrich the academic discourse on digital media integration in Arabic language education and provide more specific guidance for instructional practice.

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