

THE USE OF ARABIC PODCASTS INTEGRATED WITH MOTIVATION TO LEARN IN IMPROVING STUDENTS' ARABIC SPEAKING SKILLS

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Abstract

The advancement of digital technology has transformed language learning media, with podcasts emerging as an alternative platform to enhance speaking skills. This study investigates the use of Arabic podcasts integrated with strong motivation to learn in improving students' Arabic speaking skills (maharah al-kalam). The study applies a qualitative case study approach. Data were gathered through open-ended questionnaires and in-depth interviews with students actively engaging with Arabic-language podcast content. The data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, including data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that podcasts significantly support the development of speaking fluency, vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation accuracy, and learner confidence in oral communication. Exposure to authentic and contextual input through podcasts facilitates meaningful learning experiences while promoting flexible and independent learning strategies. These outcomes reinforce the theoretical relevance of Communicative Language Teaching and Second Language Acquisition frameworks within Arabic language instruction supported by digital audio media. Importantly, this study addresses a gap in Arabic language pedagogy, as previous research has largely concentrated on EFL or younger learners, leaving higher education contexts underexplored. By situating Arabic podcasts within a university setting, the study provides empirical evidence for their role as an innovative alternative to enhance speaking proficiency. The study further recommends that educators incorporate podcasts into classroom practices, curriculum design, and independent learning activities to optimize student engagement and outcomes. It also opens pedagogical opportunities for integrating podcasts as an instructional strategy in higher education and calls for further research on their long-term impact on other language competencies.

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INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization and rapid technological advancement, language learning is increasingly shaped by the use of digital media. Platforms such as podcasts have emerged as promising alternatives to overcome temporal and spatial limitations in language instruction. For instance, English language learners have utilized podcasts to improve their speaking and

listening skills by accessing authentic audio materials and repeated input beyond the confines of traditional classrooms (Ramirez, 2024, Hasan & Hoon, 2013). In the context of Arabic language learning, prior research has indicated that integrating podcast-based media can significantly enhance both maharah al-istima' (listening) and kalam (speaking) skills through consistent exposure to native speakers and natural linguistic structures (Wahyuni et al., 2023).

Despite their potential, there remains a research gap in the context of Arabic language students at the university level, such as at Hasanuddin University. Most studies to date have focused on English language learning at the primary and secondary school levels (Chaves-Yuste & de-la Peña, 2023, Krista Winata et al., 2024). While some experimental and quantitative studies have been conducted in contexts such as Saudi Arabia and Indonesia, few have adopted a qualitative approach that delves into learners' perceptions and experiences at the university level (Mohammed Al-Mohawes, 2023, Mohzana, 2024). This gap is significant, as higher education environments offer distinct learning dynamics, including intrinsic motivation, academic discourse, and unique patterns of social interaction.

This study is anchored in the theoretical frameworks of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Second Language Acquisition (SLA), and the Language Skills Theory. CLT emphasizes the use of language in meaningful communicative contexts and the ability to engage in dialogue actively. SLA highlights the importance of repeated, meaningful input for second language acquisition, and podcasts offer a contextually rich, authentic medium that fosters natural speech development (Ramirez, 2024, Yazmin & Clara, 2023). The core theoretical foundations of this study are the Language Skills Theory, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and the Second Language Acquisition (SLA) framework. The Language Skills Theory emphasizes the development of speaking skills through the integration of authentic listening input and active speaking practices. CLT promotes the use of language in meaningful, socially and academically relevant communicative contexts. SLA supports the notion that meaningful, repeated input plays a critical role in improving speaking proficiency, and podcasts are uniquely suited to provide such input in contextualized and authentic ways (Chaves-Yuste & de-la Peña, 2023).

Previous research has investigated the impact of podcasts on enhancing speaking skills, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. A study conducted in an Indonesian senior high school revealed that students perceived podcasts as engaging and beneficial for vocabulary enrichment, pronunciation, and boosting speaking confidence (Rahmasari et al., 2021). Similarly, a qualitative descriptive study in Pasuruan found that YouTube-based podcasts offered authentic exposure and supported independent practice, improving students' speaking fluency across various proficiency levels (Ramadani et al., 2024). A quasi-experimental study in Surabaya also reported significant improvements in speaking performance after podcast integration, highlighting increased vocabulary and positive learner perceptions of flexibility and autonomy (Claudea & Bella, 2022).

Another qualitative study in Aceh confirmed that podcasts enhanced pronunciation, vocabulary acquisition, and learner confidence, despite challenges such as unfamiliar vocabulary and the absence of subtitles (Bahri & Halimatussadiah, 2024). There is a study conducted (Ida Alinda Fathonah et al., 2024) that previously investigated Arabic podcasts, with findings indicating that positive user feedback highlighted the clarity of the material delivered, supported by concrete examples and relevant practice activities. However, the gap identified in this study emphasizes the need for further development in integrating Arabic language skills to enhance the overall effectiveness of learning.

While these studies provide valuable insights, they primarily focus on EFL learners or younger students, leaving a critical gap in understanding how podcasts may support Arabic language learners in higher education. Existing research does not adequately capture the unique challenges of Arabic as a foreign language nor the specific academic demands faced

by university students in Indonesia. By addressing this gap, the present study highlights the novelty of examining Arabic podcasts within a higher education context, particularly through qualitative inquiry that foregrounds students' lived experiences. Therefore, this study seeks to answer the research question: How do Arabic podcasts contribute to enhancing speaking skills among university students of Arabic in Indonesia?

This article positions itself as a timely response to the aforementioned gap by focusing specifically on Arabic language learners at the tertiary level and adopting a qualitative case study approach. Its key contribution lies in providing empirical insights into how Arabic podcasts influence students' speaking development (*maharah al-kalam*) from their perspectives, based on open ended questionnaires and in depth interviews. This sets it apart from previous studies focused primarily on younger learners and English language contexts (Yoestara & Putri, 2019).

Theoretical and methodological trends in past studies reveal a predominance of experimental and quantitative approaches, often focusing on learner autonomy and exposure to listening input through podcasts (Koçak, 2021). On the other hand, more recent qualitative studies such as that emphasize learners' perceptions and strategies for improving speaking skills via podcasting (Khabibatul Lutfa & Fransiskus, 2024). This conceptual synthesis underpins the methodological direction of the present study: Arabic podcasts serve as meaningful and consistent sources of authentic input (SLA), foster real life speaking practice (CLT), and expand learners' vocabulary and verbal proficiency (Language Skills Theory). The study investigates how university students engage with podcasts as a language learning tool through the lens of these theoretical frameworks and analyzes their experiences qualitatively to understand the impact on their speaking competencies.

The primary objective is to qualitatively investigate the extent to which podcasts support the enhancement of students' speaking abilities (*maharah al-kalam*) based on data collected through questionnaires and in-depth interviews. This approach aligns with the qualitative case study methodology outlined in the research design. The study offers several academic contributions. First, it provides empirical evidence from an Indonesian university context, which remains underrepresented compared to international settings. Second, it enriches the discourse on podcast implementation for the development of Arabic speaking skills based on student perspectives. Third, it unveils qualitative insights into learners' motivations, challenges, and strategies when engaging with podcasts' dimensions that have been largely overlooked in prior Arabic language podcasting research (Lubis & Nasution, 2021). This study addresses the research question: How does the use of Arabic language podcasts integrated with motivation to learn in improving students' Arabic speaking skills?

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative case study approach to explore the use of Arabic podcasts in enhancing Arabic speaking skills among students in the Arabic Language Program at Hasanuddin University. The decision to use a case study design was based on its ability to provide an in-depth understanding of contemporary phenomena within their real-life context. A case study approach is particularly suitable for examining complex educational settings where the boundaries between the context (university environment) and the phenomenon (use of Arabic podcasts) are not easily separated. This approach allows for a comprehensive examination of how students engage with the podcasts and how these interactions influence their speaking skills, taking into account the unique dynamics of the specific educational setting. The case study approach is particularly advantageous because it allows for the exploration of the phenomenon in a holistic manner, capturing the intricacies and subtleties of the students' learning experiences. It also provides the flexibility to incorporate various forms of data, such as interviews, observations, and content analysis of

the podcasts, which are critical for triangulating findings and ensuring a deeper understanding of the subject. However, the design also has its limitations.

One potential limitation is the lack of generalizability of the findings, as the study is confined to a single program at one university. To address this limitation, the study focuses on providing a rich, contextualized account of the phenomenon within this specific setting, which can offer insights into similar contexts. Additionally, there is a risk of researcher bias in interpreting qualitative data. To mitigate this, multiple data sources were used, and thematic analysis was conducted with a focus on maintaining objectivity and transparency. By triangulating data from different sources and carefully reviewing the coding process, the study aims to minimize biases and enhance the credibility of the findings.

Participants

This study involved 50 respondents from the Arabic Literature Program at Hasanuddin University, consisting of 18 males and 32 females within the age range of 18–20 years. In terms of educational background, 32 respondents graduated from general senior high schools (SMA) with no prior formal exposure to the Arabic language, while the remaining 18 respondents graduated from Islamic senior high schools (MA) or Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), where they were generally more intensively exposed to Arabic in their previous learning experiences.

Regarding language proficiency, the respondents demonstrated a wide variation in their levels of competence. A total of 32 respondents were at the basic level, indicating that they were still in the early stages of Arabic acquisition. Meanwhile, 12 respondents were at the intermediate level, reflecting a greater ability to comprehend and use Arabic in both academic and everyday communication contexts. Furthermore, 6 respondents were at the advanced level, signifying a relatively higher mastery of the language that enabled them to use Arabic fluently in both oral and written forms. This variation in proficiency levels illustrates the diversity of linguistic competence among the respondents, which serves as an important foundation for analyzing their perceptions and experiences regarding the use of Arabic podcasts as a learning medium.

Instruments

The data collected were qualitative primary data, sourced from open-ended questionnaires and in depth semi structured interviews conducted with student participants. No quantitative data or literature-based sources were used as primary data for analysis; any reference to prior literature was solely intended to support contextual framing. Data collection techniques involved the use of open-ended questionnaires, designed to capture students' perceptions of podcast usage, followed by in depth interviews based on a semi-structured interview guide to explore further their learning experiences, motivations, and reflections on podcasts as language learning tools (Naz et al., 2022). The questionnaires were administered initially to obtain broad insights, and a selection of respondents was then invited for interviews based on criteria such as frequency and consistency in podcast use.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman qualitative data analysis model, which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This approach allowed for the identification of key themes, patterns of perception, and interrelated variables shaping students' experiences with Arabic podcasts and development of maharah al-kalam. All interview responses were transcribed verbatim and subjected to open coding, from which thematic categories were derived. However, the primary analysis remained grounded in manual interpretation of the transcripts.

To ensure internal validity, the study incorporated triangulation of data sources (questionnaires and interviews), systematic application of the interview guide, and structured

thematic analysis using the Miles and Huberman framework, an established method in qualitative case study research (Lopez et al., 2021). This methodological design ensured that the findings authentically represented how Arabic podcast use influences students' speaking skills within their real-world academic context.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Research Findings

The analysis of open-ended questionnaires completed by students at Hasanuddin University revealed four primary thematic categories concerning their perceptions of Arabic podcast use: content quality, impact on speaking skills, accessibility, and learning motivation. Each theme was derived from response distributions across multiple Likert-scale questions and further supported by participants' descriptive comments.

Content Quality

Students generally rated the content of Arabic podcasts positively, particularly in terms of topic relevance and speaker expertise. Out of 51 respondents, 29 (comprising "Strongly Agree" and "Agree") affirmed that the topics discussed were relevant to their Arabic learning needs, while 26 believed the podcasts featured competent speakers. However, comprehension of content delivery received a more moderate response, with a large proportion 27 students remaining neutral. This suggests that while the podcasts are considered credible and relevant, some students may encounter challenges related to linguistic complexity or delivery pace.

Impact on Speaking Proficiency

The majority of students reported that Arabic podcasts helped them improve their speaking-related competencies. A total of 39 students agreed that listening to podcasts enhanced their vocabulary acquisition, and 35 students perceived improvement in pronunciation. Nonetheless, confidence gains appeared more varied, with 25 students affirming that podcasts boosted their speaking confidence while 21 remained neutral. Additionally, only 28 students responded affirmatively to prompts about the effectiveness of recommended speaking exercises, indicating the need for more interactive or structured speaking practice.

Accessibility and Usability

Most students expressed satisfaction with the technical accessibility of the podcasts. Forty-eight respondents found Arabic podcasts easy to access through various digital platforms, and 45 indicated that they did not face technical difficulties during usage. However, satisfaction levels were slightly lower regarding episode duration and interface usability, with 22 and 26 students respectively choosing the "Neutral" option, signaling room for improvement in these aspects of user experience.

Interest and Motivation Toward Arabic Learning

Arabic podcasts appear to have a motivational impact on students' engagement with Arabic learning. Thirty-five students agreed that listening to the content inspired them to study Arabic more deeply, while 33 noted increased motivation to communicate in Arabic. Furthermore, 35 students reported being encouraged to explore additional learning resources independently, and 24 felt that podcast content helped them define more transparent and more measurable language learning goals.

Based on the research findings, the use of podcasts in Arabic language learning has a significant impact on improving students' speaking skills, particularly as highlighted in the second point, Impact on Speaking Proficiency. This demonstrates that podcasts can serve not only as supplementary materials but also as an effective instructional strategy that directly

contributes to measurable language outcomes. The results also highlight a significant contribution in offering an alternative method for enhancing Arabic speaking skills, which has not previously been implemented at Hasanuddin University, particularly within the Arabic Literature Program. In this regard, podcasts provide learners with greater flexibility, accessibility, and autonomy, making them highly relevant for integration into modern higher education curricula. These findings underscore the potential of podcasts not only as supplementary tools but also as innovative approaches that can be integrated into formal learning settings.

Discussion

This study explores the use of Arabic podcasts in enhancing the speaking skills (maharah al-kalam) of students at Hasanuddin University. The findings from the study indicate that the majority of students perceived the use of Arabic podcasts as beneficial for improving various aspects of their speaking abilities, including fluency, vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, and self-confidence (Shiri, 2015; Mustiah et al., 2024). These results are in line with the study's objectives, which aimed to explore the role of podcasts in enhancing students' speaking skills. The data show that podcasts have a clear impact on improving students' confidence in speaking and their ability to engage with the Arabic language in meaningful ways, which contributes to a more positive learning experience.

The interpretation of these findings can be framed through established language learning theories, specifically the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Second Language Acquisition (SLA), and the Language Skills Theory. The CLT framework emphasizes the importance of interaction in language learning, highlighting the need for learners to practice real-life communication. Arabic podcasts offer learners the opportunity to engage with authentic input in a contextualized manner, which is a critical aspect of CLT (Ida et al., 2024; Mustiah et al., 2024). By listening to podcasts, students are exposed to real-world language use, which supports their comprehension and vocabulary acquisition, both of which are essential components of language proficiency. Furthermore, the consistent exposure to spoken Arabic through podcasts supports the SLA principle of comprehensible input, which posits that learners acquire language more effectively when they are exposed to language that is just beyond their current proficiency level but still understandable. This aligns with the observed improvement in students' fluency, vocabulary, and confidence in speaking.

In addition, podcasts offer students a non-threatening, self-directed learning environment where they can listen and learn at their own pace (Mubaligh et al., 2023; Alsabbagh et al., 2019). This autonomy fosters greater motivation and engagement with the learning material. Given that the students in this study were highly motivated to learn, the self-paced nature of podcast-based learning provided them with an opportunity to practice Arabic speaking skills without feeling pressured. This highlights the role of intrinsic motivation in enhancing language acquisition, as students are more likely to engage deeply with material that aligns with their interests and learning preferences (Aljanaideh et al., 2021; Ahmid & Abdullah, 2020). Moreover, podcasts allow students to focus on listening comprehension, a critical precursor to speaking. As students listen to native speakers, they are able to imitate pronunciation, intonation, and sentence structure, which is an essential part of improving speaking skills.

These findings are consistent with previous research in the field of language learning, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. Lopez et al. (2021) found that the use of podcasts significantly improved vocabulary, pronunciation, and speaking motivation among students in an Indonesian secondary school classroom. Similarly, Bahri and Halimatussadiyah (2024) found that podcasts enhanced pronunciation and self-confidence among university students, even though some challenges, such as unfamiliar vocabulary and the lack of subtitles, emerged. Khabibatul Lutfa and Fransiskus (2024) also reported that

podcasts fostered speaking development by supporting lexical acquisition and improving listening focus. This alignment with previous studies suggests that podcasts can be an effective tool for improving language skills across different contexts, not just in the study of English but also in Arabic language learning.

However, some discrepancies emerged in the findings that warrant further discussion. A notable portion of the students expressed neutral feelings regarding the impact of podcasts on pronunciation and confidence-building. These neutral responses suggest that not all students engaged equally with the podcasts, and some may not have found the podcasts as beneficial as others. This variation in student engagement could be attributed to several factors, including differences in individual motivation, prior exposure to Arabic, or varying levels of digital literacy. These discrepancies are consistent with critiques raised in previous studies, which have pointed out that podcasts, as a one-way medium, may not stimulate active interaction or provide the opportunities for speaking practice necessary for fluency development (Hamdayani & Sapitri, 2025). While podcasts can provide valuable exposure to spoken Arabic, they do not facilitate interactive speaking practice, which is essential for building true speaking proficiency. This limitation suggests that podcasts should be used in conjunction with other interactive activities, such as discussions or role-plays, to maximize their effectiveness in improving speaking skills.

Despite these limitations, this study contributes to the field in several important ways. First, it provides empirical evidence from a university-level Arabic language context in Indonesia, which remains relatively underrepresented in the literature compared to research in EFL contexts. Most studies on the use of podcasts in language learning have focused on English, with fewer studies exploring their impact on Arabic language acquisition. By focusing on Arabic podcasts, this study fills a gap in the literature and provides valuable insights into the potential benefits of podcast-based learning for Arabic learners (Ahmid, 2020). Second, this study contributes to our understanding of student perceptions of podcast integration in Arabic language learning, a topic that has been less explored in the existing literature. By examining how students perceive and engage with podcasts, the study offers a deeper understanding of the factors that influence the effectiveness of this learning tool. Third, this study demonstrates the relevance of CLT and SLA in explaining how students engage with audio-based input. The findings suggest that students can independently engage with podcasts to enhance their speaking skills and that this informal language acquisition can lead to improved language proficiency over time.

However, several limitations must be acknowledged. As noted earlier, the study's qualitative design does not provide quantitative measurements of improvement in speaking skills, which limits the ability to generalize the findings to a broader population. Additionally, the one-way nature of podcast delivery presents inherent limitations, as it does not allow for interactive speaking practice. This highlights the need for complementary activities that can stimulate active speaking practice (Al Sabbagh et al., 2019). Furthermore, the study did not account for individual differences in learner motivation, exposure to Arabic, or digital literacy, all of which could influence the effectiveness of podcast-based learning. Future research could explore these variables in greater depth to better understand how they impact the effectiveness of podcasts in improving speaking skills.

In addition to these limitations, it is important to consider the broader social and cultural context in which this study was conducted. The improvement of Arabic speaking skills is not only determined by learning strategies and the availability of learning media but also by the surrounding cultural and social factors. Generation Z students, who are the focus of this study, tend to favor modern media and learning resources, particularly those involving social media platforms. This cultural shift towards digital learning environments has significant implications for the use of podcasts in language learning. Digital technology, including

podcasts, is an ideal medium for students who are accustomed to consuming content in a digital format. As such, podcasts provide a relevant and effective tool for supporting students' mastery of speaking skills, particularly when they align with the characteristics of the current generation's media consumption habits. The integration of podcasts into the curriculum allows students to engage with the language in a way that resonates with their preferences, which enhances motivation and engagement.

The findings of this study have both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, the study contributes to our understanding of how podcasts can support language acquisition in the context of SLA and CLT. By providing students with authentic language input and fostering self-directed learning, podcasts align with the principles of both theories and offer a valuable tool for language learners. Practically, the study suggests that podcasts can be an effective supplement to traditional language learning methods, provided that they are used in conjunction with interactive speaking activities. The study also highlights the importance of considering learner motivation, engagement, and digital literacy when implementing podcast-based learning in the classroom.

This study offers valuable insights into the role of Arabic podcasts in enhancing speaking skills among university students. The findings suggest that podcasts can improve fluency, vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, and self-confidence, particularly when combined with a strong motivation to learn. However, the limitations of the one-way nature of podcasts and varying levels of learner engagement should be addressed through the inclusion of complementary interactive activities. The study contributes to the growing body of research on podcast-based language learning, particularly in the context of Arabic, and provides practical recommendations for educators seeking to integrate podcasts into their teaching methods.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the use of Arabic podcasts as a learning medium, emphasizing their role in supporting students' speaking skill development through authentic exposure and independent practice. Students reported improvements in vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, and confidence, with varying effects across different levels of language proficiency. Based on the research findings, the use of podcasts in Arabic language learning has a significant impact on improving students' speaking skills, particularly as highlighted in the second point, Impact on Speaking Proficiency. This demonstrates that podcasts can serve not only as supplementary materials but also as an effective instructional strategy that directly contributes to measurable language outcomes.

The results also highlight a significant contribution in offering an alternative method for enhancing Arabic speaking skills, which has not previously been implemented at Hasanuddin University, particularly within the Arabic Literature Program. The significance of this improvement in Arabic speaking proficiency is also influenced by cultural factors of Generation Z, who tend to prefer modern learning media and resources, particularly those that utilize social media platforms. In this regard, podcasts provide learners with greater flexibility, accessibility, and autonomy, making them highly relevant for integration into modern higher education curricula.

The conclusion of this study is that the use of Arabic podcasts contributes to enhancing speaking skills among university students of Arabic, although it has not yet fully addressed all the needs of Arabic language learning. Nevertheless, it plays a substantial role in improving students' Arabic speaking proficiency. This conclusion is consistent with the study's objectives and research question, reinforcing the pedagogical value of digital media in Arabic instruction. Furthermore, the study implies the need for curricular-level integration of podcasts to maximize their educational potential. Finally, while the study offers important insights, it acknowledges limitations such as the focus on a single program and reliance on

self-reported data; future research could expand the sample, employ mixed-methods designs, and examine long-term impacts across other language skills to strengthen the findings. These insights underscore the potential of podcasts not only as supplementary tools but also as innovative approaches that can be systematically embedded into formal learning settings.

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This study was conducted without any external research funding. All aspects of the research, including data collection, analysis, and report writing, were carried out independently by the researcher using personal resources. The lack of research funding did not hinder the study's objectives, as it relied on available resources and a cost-effective approach to gather and analyze data.

INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

Participation in this study is voluntary. By agreeing to take part, participants confirm they understand the study's purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits. They also acknowledge that their identity will remain confidential, and the information they provide will only be used for research purposes.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data in this study cannot be shared publicly to protect participants' privacy and confidentiality. This follows ethical guidelines and data protection rules. However, researchers or others interested in the data can request access for validation or further analysis.

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