CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Indonesia has a huge development in the use of the internet. According to datareportal.com in 2022, the total of internet users in Indonesia was 204.7 million people or equivalent to 73.7 percent of the total population at the beginning of 2022. One of the primary reasons why internet users use the internet is related to education and study. Moreover, based on the "We Are Social" report, there are 35.6% of internet users in Indonesia listening to Podcasts every week. That percentage is the second highest in the world. This massive number of Podcasts listeners is an interesting topic to be analyzed, especially in the context of media that many people use to improve their English listening skills.

Listening is the first and basic skill in a new language that students must learn. Moreover, listening plays a significant role in learning. Speaking, reading, and writing skills normally proceed to listen (Deveci, 2018). By having good listening skills, students can produce language like speaking and writing by the vocabulary they get from listening. Moreover, listening skill is a receptive skill that language learning beginners receive new words from what they have heard or listened to (Hendrawaty, 2019). According to Richard and Renandya (2002), for most people, being able to claim knowledge of a foreign language means being able to speak and listen to that language.

However, the classroom has very little time to practice listening skills. On the other hand, successful listening skills are acquired over time and with lots of practice (Nor, 2014). Therefore, students are required to practice their listening skills independently. Learning listening can be done in the classroom or in the laboratory and simply using gadgets and internet quota. One of the media that can be used to improve students' listening skills is Podcasts.

Podcasts is a digital audio file that can be downloaded from the internet, available on a computer and mobile device, usually in series, automatically received by subscribers (Marcu, 2019). It can be useful to support English language learning, specifically listening skill. Through Podcasts students can explore material in

English and bring beneficial things to their life. Students can listen to Podcasts based on their interest in main topics such as education, lifestyle, politics, etc. Most smartphones, including iPhones and Android phones, will come equipped with a media player, which allows you to subscribe to Podcasts and stream or download Podcasts episodes. Some Podcasts directories have advanced customization functions, like multiple playlists, sleep timers, smart playlists, and suggestions for new shows based on your interests. Students can access Podcasts through many platforms such as Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Spotify, Stitcher, Overcast, Podcasts Addict, and YouTube.

This research aims to determine students' perceptions of using Podcasts as an effective way of improving their listening skills. The selection of the participants was based on the phenomena that occurred in the researcher's environment. There were many English education students listening to English Podcasts in their daily life. They listen to Podcasts based on their interest in main topics such as education, lifestyle, politics, etc. The average time they spend listening to Podcasts every day is around 1-2 hours per day.

The participants are selected by purposive random sampling. The selected participants are three students. The number of participants was decided based on the need for answering research questions. It is done by choosing informants by including criteria that are assured to provide the desired number of informants (Patton, 2002). The criteria for informants are English Education students who actively listen to English Podcasts for at least three months and has A score in both Intensive and Extensive Listening course in the 3rd and 4th semester proved by academic score transcripts. This research is qualitative research with a descriptive case study method. The purpose of this research is to consider whether Podcasts can improve students' listening abilities or not.

Previous studies conducted by researchers in high school level show that Podcasts was attractive in the teaching and learning English as a foreign language listening comprehension. Research on the benefits of using Podcasts in language learning, specifically to assist students in listening and speaking skills have shown improvements in students' performance. (Stanley, 2006; O'Bryan & Hegelheimer,

2007; Rosell-Aguilar, 2007; Lord, 2008; Knight, 2010; Ashraf, Noroozi & Salami, 2011; Istanto, 2011; Hasan & Hoon, 2012, 2013; AlFadda & Al-Qasim, 2013). In addition, some other studies also found that the student's motivation and positive attitude toward language learning increased when Podcasts was used to support the learning process (O'Bryan & Hegelheimer, 2007; Rosell-Aguilar, 2007; Ducate & Lomicka, 2009; Ashraf et al., 2011; Hasan & Hoon 2012; Al-Fadda & Al-Qasim, 2013). Moreover, an experimental study with Iranian EFL students also revealed that the students who used Podcasts had higher listening comprehension scores and higher learning motivation, compared to those who did not (Shiri, 2015). Shiri (2015) further explained the interview result in which the students considered Podcasts an important learning tool to support their listening and speaking performance. These previous research results support the use of Podcasts in language learning.

Although previous studies show that Podcasts is an effective tool for learning English, most of them are conducted in middle school level and do not focus on the effect of listening skills. So, the researcher would like to obtain English students' perception with high score listening courses report along with their experience using Podcasts to learn English, particularly in this case to improve listening skills. Further research still needs to be done since many possibilities in the integration of Podcasts in language learning in a different context. Thus, to fill the gaps, this research intends to gain the finding from different participants that are students at the university level, and the research will use different method that is a qualitatively descriptive case study.

1.2 Formulation of the Problem

Based on the problem of the background above, the formulation of the problem in this research is "What are students' perceptions to the effectiveness of the use of Podcasts to improve their listening skills?"

1.3 Operational Definitions

To avoid misunderstanding the terms set out in this research, the researcher defines the term related to this research as follow:

1.	University students' perceptions of listening skills	Refers to University students' ability to perceive an opinion about the use of Podcasts to improve their ability to understand and interpret the meaning of conversation as the result of learning English independently. It is also relevant to effective listening skills and learning listening skills.
2	Podcasts	One of the technologies used by university students to improve a listening skill can be accessed from YouTube and Spotify. It consisted of audio, sometimes a combination of audio and video or audio and image. It is accessible to be downloaded from the internet, so that it can be freely used anywhere and anytime through a mobile device.
3	Listening skills	One of the four English skills is considered fundamental to understanding and speaking a language. This skill is defined as more than just hearing and interpreting the meaning of a conversation.

1.4 Aim of the Research

The purpose of this study is to find out students' perception to the effectiveness of the use of Podcasts to improve their listening skills.

1.5 Significances of the Study

1.5.1 Theoretical Use	**:**	This research will broaden the contribution of Podcasts to teaching English, particularly listening skills.
1.5.2 Practical Use	**:**	This study will provide university students with an alternative model that applies Podcasts to facilitate English listening in their autonomous learning process. It also can be alternative media for lecturers in teaching listening. Then, it also can be used as a reference for those who want to conduct further studies related to the use of Podcasts.
1.5.3 Empirical Use	**:**	This study will provide empirical insights into university students' experience in learning English through Podcasts.