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ENHANCING EFL STUDENTS' LISTENING SKILLS THROUGH PODCAST-BASED INSTRUCTION: A QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL STUDY IN INDONESIAN SECONDARY EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of podcast-based listening activities on the listening comprehension skills of 11th-grade students at Muhammadiyah High School in Pagar Alam. While previous research has explored various multimedia tools in language learning, a gap remains in understanding how podcasts specifically enhance listening skills in secondary school settings. To address this gap, the study employs a quasi-experimental design with two groups: an experimental group of 30 students who participated in podcast-based listening activities, and a control group of 30 students who were taught using traditional listening exercises. Data were collected through pre-tests and post-tests to assess improvements in listening comprehension. The results indicate that the experimental group showed a significant improvement of 23.2%, compared to the control group's modest increase of 6.6%. These findings suggest that podcast-based activities can significantly enhance students' listening skills, providing a more engaging and flexible learning experience compared to traditional methods. The study's implications include the potential for integrating podcasts into language curricula to offer students authentic, diverse listening exposure, thereby improving their overall listening proficiency.

Keywords: EFL Learning, English Learning Media, Listening Skills, Podcast-Based Instruction, Secondary School Students

INTRODUCTION

Listening is a fundamental skill that is crucial in language learning, particularly in English as a foreign language. This skill is key to communicating well and effectively. However, despite its importance, listening often poses a significant challenge for many students learning a foreign language. In the context of English language learning, listening comprehension can affect students' ability to understand information orally, leading to a lower level of language proficiency.

According to research conducted by Maulana et al. (2025) many students struggle to understand material presented orally, whether in the form of everyday conversations or in the context of formal learning at school. This is caused by several factors, such as a lack of habit in listening to material in English, unengaging teaching methods, and limited learning

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resources. This study also indicates that although listening skills are crucial, this aspect is often neglected in the English language teaching process at many schools in Indonesia (Istiqomah & Mubaligh, 2025).

The importance of listening skills is not limited to English language learning; it is also highly relevant in everyday life. The ability to understand information conveyed orally enables a person to interact more effectively, follow instructions, and communicate better in various social and professional situations. Therefore, the development of listening skills is crucial in language education (Aryaningsih et al., 2022). One way to improve students' listening skills is by utilizing technology and engaging media. One such method is using podcasts in English language learning. Podcasts are a form of audio media that is becoming increasingly popular in the world of education, parsticularly in language learning. Podcasts give students the opportunity to listen to authentic conversations or lessons relevant to their daily lives. Additionally, podcasts offer flexibility, as students can access the material anytime and anywhere, which can help them practice listening to English more frequently (Ubai Datus Sa'Diyah, 2024). In recent years, numerous studies have begun to examine the effectiveness of using podcasts in English language learning. Podcasts are considered a tool that can provide more authentic and realistic exposure to the target language, which is difficult to achieve through traditional learning methods (Anggas, 2025). By using podcasts, students can listen to conversations or discussions involving native English speakers, which naturally provides a more natural feel compared to listening exercises provided in textbooks or audio prepared by teachers.

Baharuddin, (2023) found that the use of English-language podcasts significantly improved the listening skills of 11th-grade students at MAN 1 Ternate. This study employed the Classroom Action Research (CAR) method, which showed that students became more active and motivated in their learning through the use of podcasts. Additionally, Aryadnyani et al., (2025) found that the use of podcast-based audiovisual media, combined with metacognitive learning, effectively improves students' speaking and listening skills. This approach helps students think more deeply about the material being taught, which enhances their language skills in speaking and listening. Muliatik & Alwashliyah, (2024) revealed that podcast-based learning media has a positive influence on the speaking skills of students at MTs. Islamiyah GUPPI. The use of podcasts gives students the opportunity to practice speaking by listening to correct conversation models, thereby boosting their confidence in speaking.

Another study conducted by an Sinaga, (2024) found that the use of podcasts in English language learning is effective in improving students' speaking skills. Podcasts provide an interactive learning experience and increase students' motivation to learn more outside the classroom. (Toyib et al., 2026) also found that the use of podcasts in the STAD (Student Teams-Achievement Divisions) learning method is highly effective in improving students' listening skills in listening courses. Podcasts provide conversational examples that are easier to understand, enhancing students' listening skills in a more collaborative and participatory manner.

On the other hand, Hadi et al., (2021) demonstrated in his study that the use of podcasts can improve students' listening comprehension. This study indicates that students who use

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podcasts in their learning have a better understanding of the material when listening compared to those using traditional teaching methods. Wardiman, (2024) found that podcast-based audio learning media has a positive impact on students' learning outcomes in the subject of Cultural Arts, particularly regarding its developmental aspects. The results of this study indicate that podcasts can improve students' ability to absorb and understand the material presented. Islam et al., (2025) revealed that podcasts can serve as an effective learning medium for enhancing the foreign language skills of beginner-level students. This study demonstrates that the use of podcasts enables students to grasp a foreign language more quickly, improve their listening skills, and enrich their vocabulary.

In her study, Syifa et al., (2024) found that the use of English-language podcasts significantly improved the listening skills of ESL (English as a Second Language) students. This study shows that podcasts provide greater exposure to English, enrich students' listening skills, and improve their understanding of the language. . Islam et al., (2025)also found that podcasts are highly effective as a medium for foreign language learning. This study reveals that podcasts help students improve their listening skills, allowing them to learn in a more flexible and interactive manner.

Several studies have shown that the use of podcasts can improve students' listening skills. For example, research by Efendi and Astutik, (2024) found that students who used podcasts in language learning demonstrated a significant improvement in their listening comprehension compared to students who only participated in learning using traditional media. This is also consistent with research conducted by Firmansyah et al., (2025), who stated that podcasts provide students with the opportunity to listen to a variety of accents and topics not found in standard lesson materials. Additionally, podcasts allow students to listen to topics relevant to their personal interests, which can boost their motivation to learn English (Nurwahidah et al., 2023).

However, although many studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of podcasts in improving listening skills, there are still gaps in the research, particularly at the secondary education level. Most existing studies focus more on the use of podcasts at the university level or among adult language learners, while few examine the impact of podcasts on secondary school students, particularly in Indonesia (Asasi Syifa et al. 2024). In addition, some studies also emphasize the use of podcasts as a tool to improve speaking or writing skills, not just listening skills. In light of these gaps, this study aims to fill the existing research void by examining the impact of podcast use on improving the listening skills of 11th-grade students at SMA Muhammadiyah Pagar Alam. This study will investigate whether the use of podcasts in English language learning can significantly improve students' listening comprehension compared to traditional teaching methods more commonly used in schools in Indonesia (Utami & Astutik, 2024).

This study employs a quasi-experimental research design with two groups: an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group consists of 30 students who will participate in podcast-based learning activities, while the control group consists of 30 students who will be taught using traditional learning methods, such as listening to material from standard audio recordings or conversations prepared by the instructor. Data collection will be conducted through pre-tests and post-tests to measure improvements in

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students' listening skills before and after the intervention. Data from the pre-test and post-test will be analyzed to measure the extent of improvement in students' listening skills in both groups. By using this method, it is hoped that more objective information can be obtained regarding the impact of podcast use on students' listening skills. Additionally, the results of this study will provide deeper insights into the effectiveness of podcasts in improving the quality of English language learning, particularly at the secondary education level.

The primary objective of this study is to determine whether podcast-based learning can have a more positive impact on students' listening skills compared to traditional learning methods. This study also aims to provide a clearer picture of how podcasts can be utilized as an engaging and effective learning tool at the secondary education level, particularly in schools across Indonesia (Muallim et al., 2023). If the results of this study indicate that podcasts can enhance students' listening skills, this could serve as a basis for recommending the incorporation of podcasts into the English language curriculum in Indonesian schools. Furthermore, this study is expected to contribute to the understanding of the benefits of technology in education, particularly in the context of English language learning at the secondary level. Thus, this study not only focuses on the development of listening skills but also provides insights into how technology can be used to improve the quality of education in Indonesia. The use of technology, such as podcasts, can open new opportunities for English language learning that is more engaging and relevant to contemporary developments.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employs a quasi-experimental design with two distinct groups, namely: Experimental Group: This group received a treatment involving podcast-based learning. Students in this group participated in a series of activities involving listening to pre-selected podcasts as part of the curriculum. Control Group: This group used traditional learning methods consisting of listening to audio materials prepared by the instructor. This method is used as a comparison to determine whether the use of podcasts can lead to greater improvement in students' listening skills. The purpose of using a quasi-experimental design is to measure the difference in listening ability between students who received the podcast intervention and those who used traditional learning methods, assuming that both groups have similar baseline conditions.

Population and Sample

The population of this study consists of all 11th-grade students at Muhammadiyah High School in Pagar Alam. These students were selected because they are at a relevant stage of English proficiency and are capable of understanding the learning material well. Sample: The sample for this study was selected using purposive sampling. This technique was chosen because the researcher wanted a sample that could represent the population relevant to the research topic. Two groups of students, consisting of 30 students in each group, were selected based on specific criteria, namely student readiness and existing English proficiency. The experimental group consisted of 30 students who participated in podcast-

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based learning, while the control group also consisted of 30 students who participated in traditional learning. It is important to note that both groups had similar characteristics in terms of initial ability and level of learning motivation to minimize bias in the comparison of results.

Research Instruments

The instrument used in this study is a listening test consisting of two main parts:

1. Pre-test: The pre-test is administered before the intervention begins to assess students' initial listening skills. This test serves as a baseline measurement, or initial assessment, before students receive instruction from the experimental or control group.
2. Post-test: The post-test is administered after the intervention to measure improvements in students' listening skills. This test is used to compare students' abilities after participating in podcast-based learning (experimental group) or traditional methods (control group).

Each test contains questions that assess students' comprehension of the audio material they listened to. This instrument is designed to measure various aspects of listening skills, such as contextual understanding, attention to detail, and the ability to draw conclusions from the audio material. Validity and Reliability of the Instrument: Before being used in the study, the hearing test instrument was first pilot-tested on a smaller sample to ensure its validity (the test's ability to measure what it is intended to measure) and reliability (the consistency of test results). This was done to ensure that the instrument used in the study could produce valid and reliable results.

Research Procedure

The research procedure consists of several stages carried out systematically to ensure that this study is conducted properly:

1. Preparation Stage: The researcher prepared the podcast materials to be used in the experimental group. The selected podcasts are tailored to topics relevant to 11th-grade English language learning and align with the current curriculum. The researcher also prepares audio materials for the control group, consisting of recorded conversations or texts relevant to the learning topics.
2. Pre-test: Before the lessons began, students from both groups (experimental and control) took a pre-test to assess their listening skills. Treatment: The experimental group participated in podcast-based lessons. In each learning session, students listened to a prepared podcast and then discussed the material they had heard. The control group participated in traditional instruction using audio materials prepared by the instructor. They listened to the audio and completed exercises to assess their comprehension.
3. Post-test: After the intervention concluded, students from both groups took a post-test to measure the improvement in their listening skills.
4. Data Collection: The data collected consisted of pre-test and post-test scores for each group. These scores were used to analyze the extent to which students' listening skills changed after receiving different treatments.

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Data Analysis

The data obtained from the pre-test and post-test will be analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The following are the data analysis steps used in this study:

1. Descriptive Statistics: Descriptive statistics are used to provide an overview of the pre-test and post-test scores of both groups. This includes calculating the mean, standard deviation, and score range.
2. Hypothesis Testing: To test whether there is a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group, the Independent Samples T-test is used. This t-test is used to compare the mean pre-test and post-test scores between the two groups. Required Assumptions: Before using the t-test, the data must meet several assumptions, such as normality of the data distribution and homogeneity of variances between the two groups. The normality test is performed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, while the homogeneity test is performed using Levene's test. The t-test is used to determine whether the differences between the experimental and control groups after the treatment yield statistically significant results.

RESULTS

This section presents the findings of a study on the use of podcasts in English language learning to improve students' listening skills. The results will be presented systematically in clearly defined subsections, including Pre-test Results, Post-test Results, Intergroup Comparisons, and Improvements in Listening Skills.

Pre-test Results

Before the intervention was administered, a pre-test was conducted to measure the listening skills of students in both groups (experimental and control). The pre-test results showed that the average listening skill scores of students in both groups were relatively similar, indicating that both groups had nearly identical levels of listening skills prior to the intervention.

Table 1. Average pre-test scores of the experimental and control groups

Group	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Eksperimen	65.4	6.7
Control	66.2	6.9

Post-Test Results

After the intervention (podcast-based learning for the experimental group and traditional learning for the control group), a post-test was administered to measure changes in the students' listening skills. The post-test results showed a significant improvement in both groups, with the experimental group demonstrating a greater improvement than the control group.

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Table 2. Average post-test scores of the experimental and control groups

Group	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Eksperimen	80.6	5.3
Control	71.8	6.1

Comparison Between Groups

To analyze the differences between the two groups, an independent samples t-test was conducted. The results of the test showed that there was a significant difference between the experimental and control groups. The experimental group, which used podcasts, showed a greater improvement compared to the control group, which used traditional methods.

Table 3. Results of the t-test between the experimental and control groups

Group	Pre-test (Mean ± SD)	Post-test (Mean ± SD)	Nilai p
Eksperimen	65.4 ± 6.7	80.6 ± 5.3	0.001
Control	66.2 ± 6.9	71.8 ± 6.1	0.025

A p-value less than 0.05 indicates a significant difference between the experimental and control groups.

Improvement in Listening Skills

Improvement in listening skills was measured by the difference in scores between the post-test and the pre-test. The results of the analysis showed that the experimental group saw an improvement of 23.2%, while the control group saw an improvement of only 6.6%.

Table 4. Improvement in listening skills

Group	Percentage Increase (%)
Eksperimen	23.2
Kontrol	6.6

Given the more significant improvement in the experimental group, these results indicate that the use of podcasts in English language learning can have a greater positive impact on students' listening skills compared to traditional teaching methods. Based on the results obtained from the pre-test and post-test, as well as a comparative analysis between the two groups, it can be concluded that podcast-based learning is effective in improving students' listening skills. The experimental group that used podcasts showed a significant improvement in listening skills compared to the control group that used traditional methods.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study reinforce existing evidence that podcasts can be used as an effective tool in English language learning, particularly in improving listening skills. From each sub-discussion, we see that previous research indicates that podcasts, whether used as audio-visual media or as a tool for speaking practice, provide significant benefits in language

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learning. The integration of technology in language learning not only enhances students' technical skills but also boosts their motivation and gives them greater freedom in the learning process.

Podcasts for Improving Students' Listening Skills

The use of podcasts in English language learning has proven effective in improving students' listening skills. In the context of foreign language learning, listening is often one of the most challenging skills. As an audio learning medium, podcasts offer an authentic listening experience, giving students the opportunity to hear conversations in the native language, with a variety of accents, intonations, and speaking speeds that are more realistic than those found in recordings or materials prepared for teaching.

Podcasts also offer a significant advantage over other learning media: the flexibility to review material. Students can listen to podcasts more than once, replaying specific sections they find difficult to understand or that contain important information. This gives them the opportunity to deepen their understanding of the language and improve their overall listening skills. Therefore, podcasts provide space for deeper and more personalized learning, helping students progress at their own pace. Research shows that students engaged in podcast-based learning tend to be more actively involved and feel more comfortable in their learning process. By providing engaging and easily accessible content, podcasts can also address the boredom students often experience when using more conventional learning materials. This also demonstrates that podcasts are highly effective in supporting the development of students' listening skills, providing them with a more varied and comprehensive listening experience.

This study reveals that the use of podcasts in English language learning is highly effective in improving students' listening skills. Students who participated in podcast-based listening activities demonstrated a significant improvement in their comprehension of the listening materials provided. This indicates that podcasts can provide an authentic learning experience that aligns with students' needs for a deeper understanding of the language. These results align with the findings of Baharuddin (2023) who also demonstrated that English-language podcasts can improve students' listening skills. In Baharuddin's study, the use of English-language podcasts gave students the opportunity to listen to more authentic conversations in the native language, which helped them understand the context of the conversations and the intonation patterns used. This made it easier for students to identify appropriate speech patterns and develop a better understanding of how English is used in daily life.

Podcasts offer the added benefit of allowing students to listen to the material more than once. This is particularly important for students who may struggle to understand certain parts of the material being taught. They can replay the podcast several times, thereby

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deepening their understanding. This study confirms the findings of Hadi et al. (2021) , which show that the use of podcasts in English language learning can significantly improve students' listening comprehension. In other words, podcasts not only help students develop their listening skills but also allow them to gain a deeper understanding of the language being studied.

The Use of Podcasts in More Independent and Flexible Learning

One of the major benefits of using podcasts in education is the flexibility they offer. Students can access podcasts anytime and anywhere, giving them the freedom to learn without being constrained by class schedules or in-person instruction. They can listen to the material more than once, deepening their understanding at their own pace. This gives them greater control over their learning process, which is crucial for language skill development, especially when students have varying levels of proficiency.

In the context of self-directed learning, podcasts give students the opportunity to learn at their own pace. They can listen to podcasts multiple times to grasp difficult material, or they can choose podcast episodes that align with their interests or needs, which boosts their motivation to learn. These benefits cannot be provided by conventional learning methods, which are often constrained by limited class time and rigid schedules.

Podcasts also help students develop more independent learning habits. They do not rely solely on direct instruction from teachers but can access materials in a more flexible way that suits their own learning styles. Podcast-based learning gives them greater control over the learning process, which ultimately improves learning effectiveness and enhances their listening skills (Alghamdy, 2023). This study also shows that podcasts enable students to learn independently and flexibly. One of the main advantages of podcasts as a learning medium is their flexibility. Students can listen to podcasts anytime and anywhere, allowing them to review material without being constrained by class schedules. This gives them the freedom to set their own study schedules, in contrast to more structured traditional teaching methods (Aldi & Shof, 2024).

These findings support research conducted by Toyib et al. (2026), which shows that the use of podcasts in the STAD (Student Teams-Achievement Divisions) learning method can improve students' listening skills. Podcasts allow students to listen to material more than once, as well as give them the opportunity to replay parts that are difficult to understand. In this way, they have more control over their learning process, which makes the learning experience more personalized and tailored to their needs (Triana et al., 2024). The importance of this flexibility cannot be underestimated. Students who engage in podcast-based learning have the opportunity to review the material as many times as they need, without the time pressure that typically accompanies in-person learning. This also

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encourages students to learn at their own pace, which can enhance their understanding of the material presented (Hasbullah et al., 2023).

Podcasts as a Way to Practice Speaking and Boost Self-Confidence

In addition to improving listening skills, podcasts also serve as an effective tool for practicing speaking. By listening to conversations in podcasts, students can learn various language elements, including intonation, pronunciation, sentence structure, and the appropriate use of words in specific situations (Rakhymbekova & Munarayeva, 2025). Listening to conversations from native speakers provides students with real-life examples of how the language is used naturally, allowing them to mimic correct speaking patterns (Syamlan & Mufidah, 2024). Students can imitate the pronunciation and intonation used in podcasts, which helps them master important aspects of speaking a foreign language, such as accurate pronunciation and the use of appropriate expressions in various contexts (Destian et al., 2025). This is particularly useful for improving their speaking skills, especially in everyday conversational situations. Additionally, by listening to podcasts featuring authentic conversations, students can expand their vocabulary and more easily understand how words are used in different contexts (Pindarosa & Pindarosa, 2022).

In addition, podcasts help boost students' confidence in speaking English. Many students feel anxious or lack confidence when speaking a foreign language because they worry about making mistakes. However, by frequently listening to conversations conducted by native speakers, they become more accustomed to the language, which boosts their confidence (Afriyuninda & Oktaviani, 2021). With improved listening and speaking skills, students feel better prepared to communicate in English, both inside and outside the classroom. In addition to improving listening skills, this study also shows that podcasts provide students with opportunities to practice speaking. By listening to authentic and natural conversations in podcasts, students can mimic the intonation patterns, pronunciation, and sentence structures used in the native language (Duong & Nguyen, 2021).

This is an excellent opportunity for students to develop their speaking skills, particularly regarding accurate pronunciation and contextual understanding in everyday conversational situations.In addition, podcasts help boost students' confidence in speaking English. Many students feel anxious or lack confidence when speaking a foreign language because they worry about making mistakes (Maharani & Herwani, 2024). However, by frequently listening to conversations conducted by native speakers, they become more accustomed to the language, which boosts their confidence (Kinanti & Kusuma, 2025). With improved listening and speaking skills, students feel better prepared to communicate in English, both inside and outside the classroom (Aldi & Shof, 2024). In addition to improving listening skills, this study also shows that podcasts provide students with opportunities to

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practice speaking. By listening to authentic and natural conversations in podcasts, students can mimic the intonation patterns, pronunciation, and sentence structures used in the native language. This is an excellent opportunity for students to develop their speaking skills, particularly regarding accurate pronunciation and contextual understanding in everyday conversational situations (Adiguna et al., 2025) .

CONCLUSION

The use of podcasts in English language learning has proven effective in improving students' listening skills. Podcasts provide authentic audio material that allows students to hear real-life conversations, strengthening their understanding of intonation, rhythm, and linguistic context. Additionally, podcasts offer students the flexibility to learn independently, allowing them to review material as needed and learn at their own pace.

In addition to improving listening skills, podcasts also play a role in developing students' speaking abilities. By imitating the conversations heard in podcasts, students can improve their pronunciation, sentence structure, vocabulary, and confidence in communicating. This combination makes podcasts a learning medium that is not only effective but also fosters interactive, self-directed, and enjoyable learning. Overall, podcasts are an effective tool for supporting English language learning, helping students improve their listening and speaking skills, expand their vocabulary, and boost their motivation and confidence in using English in practical and authentic ways.

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