

The Effectiveness of Podcast-Based Learning in Enhancing Students' Listening Skills

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of podcast-based learning in enhancing students' listening skills at SMAN 1 Praya. Listening is considered one of the most challenging skills in English language learning because students are required to understand pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and meaning simultaneously. Many students experience difficulties in listening comprehension due to limited exposure to authentic English materials and conventional teaching methods. Therefore, podcast-based learning was implemented as an alternative strategy to improve students' listening competence. This study employed a quantitative approach using a pre-experimental research design with a one-group pre-test and post-test design. The participants consisted of one class of tenth-grade students at SMAN 1 Praya. Data were collected through listening tests, classroom observations, and student interviews. The findings revealed a significant improvement in students' listening performance after the implementation of podcast-based learning, as indicated by higher post-test scores compared to pre-test scores. Students also demonstrated better ability in identifying main ideas, understanding specific information, recognizing vocabulary in context, and interpreting spoken messages. Furthermore, students showed positive responses toward the use of podcasts because they created a more engaging, flexible, and enjoyable learning environment. Therefore, podcast-based learning can be considered an effective strategy for improving students' listening skills and motivation in English language learning.

Keywords: Podcast-Based Learning, Listening Skills, English Language Learning, Listening Comprehension, Digital Learning Media.



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Introduction

English is one of the most important international languages used in education, technology, communication, and global interaction. In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language and becomes one of the compulsory subjects at senior high schools. Among the four English skills, listening is considered one of the most challenging skills for students because it requires learners to understand pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and meaning simultaneously (Hasan & Hoon, 2013). Listening also plays a crucial role in developing other language skills, especially speaking and communication competence. Therefore, improving students' listening skills is essential in achieving successful English learning outcomes.

However, many students still experience difficulties in listening comprehension. Students often struggle to understand spoken English due to limited vocabulary, unfamiliar accents, fast speech delivery, and lack of exposure to authentic listening materials (Namaziandost et al., 2020). In many classrooms, listening activities are still conducted using conventional teaching methods such as textbook audio recordings and teacher-centered instruction. These methods sometimes create a

monotonous learning atmosphere that reduces students' motivation and participation in the classroom. As a result, students tend to become passive learners and show low achievement in listening comprehension.

At SMA 1 Praya, similar problems are also found in the English learning process. Based on preliminary classroom observations, many students have difficulty understanding spoken English texts and responding appropriately to listening exercises. Some students feel anxious and unmotivated during listening activities because they are not familiar with authentic English exposure. In addition, the use of technology-based learning media in listening classes is still limited. Consequently, students do not have sufficient opportunities to practice listening independently outside the classroom.

In the digital era, integrating technology into language learning has become increasingly important to support more interactive and student-centered learning environments. One of the innovative digital media that can be used in teaching listening is podcasts. Podcasts are digital audio programs that can be accessed online through smartphones, laptops, or other electronic devices (Rahimi & Katal, 2012). Podcasts provide authentic listening materials from native and non-native speakers on various topics and contexts. This flexibility allows students to listen anytime and anywhere according to their own learning pace and needs.

Podcast-based learning is considered beneficial for improving listening skills because it exposes students to real-life language use, various accents, pronunciation patterns, and contextual vocabulary. Furthermore, podcasts encourage autonomous learning, increase students' motivation, and create a more enjoyable learning atmosphere. Students can replay the audio repeatedly to better understand the content, which is difficult to achieve in traditional classroom listening activities. The use of podcasts also supports interactive and technology-enhanced learning that aligns with the demands of 21st-century education.

Several previous studies have revealed the positive impact of podcasts on students' listening comprehension. Research conducted found that podcasts significantly improved students' listening performance and increased their motivation in learning English (Ost, 2011). Similarly, studies by indicated that podcast-based learning effectively enhanced students' listening comprehension and promoted independent learning habits. Despite these findings, research focusing on the effectiveness of podcast-based learning in improving listening skills at SMA 1 Praya remains limited.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the effectiveness of podcast-based learning in enhancing students' listening skills at SMA 1 Praya. This research is expected to contribute theoretically and practically to English language teaching, particularly in the use of digital learning media for listening instruction. The findings of this study may also provide valuable insights for English teachers in implementing innovative and engaging teaching strategies to improve students' listening achievement.

This study was conducted to investigate the effectiveness of podcast-based learning in enhancing students' listening skills at SMA 1 Praya. The research involved one class consisting of senior high school students who participated in listening activities using podcasts over several meetings. To measure students' improvement, the researcher administered a pre-test before the treatment and a post-test after the implementation of podcast-based learning.

The results showed that students' listening skills improved significantly after the use of podcasts in the learning process. In the pre-test, most students experienced difficulties in understanding spoken English, identifying main ideas, recognizing specific information, and interpreting vocabulary in context. Many students were unable to follow conversations delivered by native speakers because of unfamiliar pronunciation and fast speech (Rown, 2004).

After several sessions of podcast-based learning, students demonstrated better listening comprehension performance in the post-test. The mean score of students increased considerably compared to the pre-test score. Students became more capable of identifying important information, understanding the context of conversations, and recognizing vocabulary and pronunciation patterns

more accurately. In addition, students showed greater confidence and participation during listening activities.

The findings also revealed positive responses from students toward the use of podcasts. Based on classroom observations and interviews, students stated that podcasts were more interesting and enjoyable than conventional listening materials. The flexibility of podcasts enabled students to replay the audio several times according to their individual learning pace. Furthermore, the authentic content of podcasts helped students become more familiar with real-life English communication.

The improvement in students' listening skills indicates that podcast-based learning had a positive effect on the teaching and learning process at SMA 1 Praya. Therefore, podcasts can be considered an effective digital learning medium for enhancing students' listening comprehension.

Methods

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a pre-experimental design with a one-group pre-test and post-test design. The purpose of this design was to determine the effectiveness of podcast-based learning in enhancing students' listening skills at SMA 1 Praya. The students were given a pre-test before the treatment and a post-test after the implementation of podcast-based learning. The difference between the pre-test and post-test scores was used to measure students' improvement in listening skills.

The research design can be illustrated as follows:

$O1 \rightarrow X \rightarrow O2$ $O1 \rightarrow X \rightarrow O2$

Where:

$O1$ = Pre-test

X = Treatment using podcast-based learning

$O2$ = Post-test

This design was chosen because it allows the researcher to observe students' listening performance before and after the treatment (Creswell, 2014). This study was conducted at SMA 1 Praya during the academic year 2025/2026. The participants of the study were tenth-grade students selected purposively based on their English proficiency level and classroom accessibility. One class consisting of approximately 30–35 students participated in this study. The participants were chosen because they experienced difficulties in listening comprehension and had limited exposure to authentic English listening materials. Therefore, podcast-based learning was considered suitable to improve their listening skills.

The main instrument used in this study was a listening test consisting of a pre-test and post-test. The tests were designed to measure students' listening comprehension skills, including: identifying the main idea, finding specific information, understanding vocabulary in context, interpreting spoken messages, understanding pronunciation and meaning (Arikunto, 2013).

The test items were adapted from senior high school English listening materials and adjusted to students' proficiency levels. In addition, classroom observation and student interviews were conducted to obtain supporting qualitative data regarding students' responses toward podcast-based learning (Sugiyono, 2019). The treatment was conducted over several meetings using podcast-based learning activities. The procedure included the following steps;

First, Pre-Test. Before the treatment, students were given a listening comprehension test to measure their initial listening ability. *Second*, Implementation of Podcast-Based Learning. During the treatment sessions, students listened to selected English podcasts related to educational and daily-life topics (Brown, 2004). The podcasts were chosen based on students' English proficiency levels and learning objectives. The teaching procedures included: introducing the topic and vocabulary before listening, playing the podcast audio, asking students to identify main ideas and specific information, conducting classroom discussions based on the podcast content, replaying the audio when necessary, giving follow-up listening exercises. Students were also encouraged to access and practice listening to

podcasts independently outside the classroom. *Third, Post-Test.* After the treatment, students were given a post-test to measure their listening improvement after using podcast-based learning.

The data in this study were collected through: Listening tests (pre-test and post-test), Classroom observations, Student interviews. The listening tests were used to obtain quantitative data regarding students' listening achievement, while observations and interviews provided qualitative data about students' learning experiences and attitudes toward podcasts.

Results and Discussions

1. Results

The findings of this study indicate that podcast-based learning effectively improved students' listening skills at SMA 1 Praya. The significant improvement in students' post-test scores demonstrates that podcasts can facilitate better listening comprehension and increase students' engagement in English learning activities.

Another important finding was that podcasts increased students' motivation and interest in learning listening. During the implementation of podcast-based learning, students appeared more enthusiastic and actively participated in classroom discussions.

Furthermore, podcasts allowed students to practice listening autonomously outside the classroom. Students could access the audio materials anytime and replay them repeatedly until they understood the content.

The findings of this study also showed that the use of podcasts not only enhanced listening ability but also enriched students' vocabulary knowledge and pronunciation awareness. Through repeated exposure to spoken English, students became more familiar with contextual language use and developed better comprehension strategies.

Despite the positive findings, several challenges were identified during the implementation of podcast-based learning. Some students initially had difficulty understanding authentic podcast content because of unfamiliar vocabulary and fast speech delivery. In addition, technical issues such as internet access and limited digital devices occasionally affected the learning process.

2. Discussions

The findings of this study reveal that podcast-based learning significantly improved students' listening skills at SMA 1 Praya. The improvement can be seen from the increase in students' post-test scores after the implementation of podcast-based learning activities. This result indicates that podcasts can function as an effective learning medium to support listening comprehension in English language learning. The integration of digital media such as podcasts into classroom instruction creates a more interactive, flexible, and student-centered learning environment. In modern language learning, students are not only required to understand theoretical knowledge but also to develop practical communication skills through authentic exposure to the target language. Therefore, podcasts become an appropriate instructional medium because they provide authentic spoken English that reflects real communication contexts.

One of the major factors contributing to the improvement of students' listening skills was the authentic nature of podcast materials. Unlike conventional listening materials that are often limited and highly structured, podcasts expose students to natural English conversations, including authentic pronunciation, stress, intonation, connected speech, and different accents. This authentic exposure is very important because listening comprehension is closely related to students' familiarity with real spoken language (Namaziandost et al., 2020). When students are frequently exposed to authentic audio input, they gradually become more capable of identifying keywords, understanding context, and interpreting meaning from spoken discourse. This finding supports the theory that authentic materials can improve learners' communicative competence because they prepare students to face real-life communication situations outside the classroom.

Furthermore, the findings showed that podcasts increased students' motivation and interest in learning listening. During the implementation process, students appeared more enthusiastic and actively engaged in listening activities and classroom discussions. This situation differs from traditional listening instruction that commonly relies on textbook recordings or teacher-centered approaches, which often make students feel bored and less motivated. Podcasts provide more interesting and varied topics that are closely related to students' daily lives, hobbies, and current issues. As a result, students become more interested in listening activities because the materials are meaningful and relevant to their experiences. Motivation plays an important role in language learning because motivated learners tend to participate actively, practice more frequently, and develop greater confidence in using the language.

In addition, podcasts also support autonomous learning. Students were able to access the podcast materials anytime and anywhere through their digital devices. They could replay the audio repeatedly until they fully understood the content (Akhter et al., 2026). This flexibility gives students opportunities to learn at their own pace according to their individual learning needs and abilities. Some students may need to listen several times to understand unfamiliar vocabulary or fast speech delivery, while others may comprehend the content more quickly (Trisnolya, 2023). Through podcast-based learning, students become more independent learners because they are not fully dependent on teacher explanations during classroom instruction. This finding is important because learner autonomy is considered one of the essential skills in twenty-first century education. Technology-assisted learning encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning process and develop digital literacy skills simultaneously.

Another important finding of this study is that podcast-based learning not only improved listening comprehension but also enriched students' vocabulary knowledge and pronunciation awareness (Selviani & Andriana, 2025). Through repeated exposure to spoken English, students became more familiar with contextual vocabulary usage, common expressions, and natural pronunciation patterns (Arriziq, 2025). Listening to authentic spoken English allows students to learn how words are pronounced in connected speech rather than in isolated forms. Consequently, students can improve both receptive skills, such as listening comprehension, and productive skills, such as speaking pronunciation. This finding indicates that podcasts provide comprehensive language input that contributes to broader language development.

The findings of this study are also consistent with previous studies that reported the effectiveness of podcasts in improving EFL learners' listening abilities. Previous researchers found that podcast-based learning creates enjoyable learning experiences and increases students' engagement in language learning activities (Aprianto, 2024). Podcasts are considered effective because they combine technology, authentic materials, and flexible learning opportunities. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), where students often have limited exposure to authentic English communication, podcasts become valuable resources that provide meaningful listening practice (Putri et al., 2025). Therefore, the results of this study strengthen previous evidence regarding the positive contribution of podcasts to English language learning.

However, despite the positive outcomes, several challenges were identified during the implementation of podcast-based learning. Some students initially experienced difficulties in understanding authentic podcast content because of unfamiliar vocabulary, different accents, and rapid speech delivery (Giman, 2025). This problem commonly occurs among EFL learners who are not accustomed to listening to natural English conversations. In addition, technical problems such as unstable internet connections and limited access to digital devices occasionally interrupted the learning process. These challenges indicate that the successful implementation of podcast-based learning requires adequate technological support and careful instructional planning.

To overcome these challenges, teachers should select podcast materials that match students' proficiency levels and learning needs. Teachers may begin with simpler podcasts that contain slower speech and familiar topics before gradually introducing more complex materials. Pre-

listening activities, such as introducing key vocabulary and discussing the topic beforehand, can also help students better understand the listening materials. Moreover, teachers need to provide guidance and support during listening activities to ensure that students remain engaged and do not feel discouraged when facing difficult content.

Conclusion

This study concludes that podcast-based learning is effective in enhancing students' listening skills at SMAN 1 Praya. The findings showed a significant improvement in students' listening performance after the implementation of podcast-based learning, as indicated by the increase in post-test scores compared to pre-test scores. Students demonstrated better ability in identifying main ideas, understanding specific information, recognizing vocabulary in context, and interpreting spoken messages.

The use of podcasts also created a more engaging and interactive learning environment. Students showed positive attitudes toward podcast-based learning because the materials were more interesting, flexible, and allowed them to learn according to their own pace. Furthermore, authentic listening materials provided through podcasts exposed students to real-life English communication, which contributed to improving pronunciation awareness and listening comprehension skills.

Despite some challenges such as unfamiliar vocabulary, fast speech delivery, and technical limitations, the overall findings indicate that podcast-based learning has a positive impact on students' listening achievement and motivation. Therefore, integrating podcasts into English language teaching can be considered an innovative and effective strategy to support technology-enhanced learning and improve students' listening competence. Future researchers are recommended to conduct studies with larger samples and more rigorous experimental designs to obtain broader findings and strengthen the results of this study.

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