THE EFFECTIVENESS OF USING PODCASTS IN IMPROVING STUDENTS' LISTENING SKILLS

EFEKTIVITAS PENGGUNAAN PODCAST DALAM MENINGKATKAN KETERAMPILAN MENDENGARKAN SISWA

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Article Info	*Abstrak*
	Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menentukan apakah podcast dapat membantu siswa yang sedang belajar Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL) meningkatkan pemahaman mendengarkan mereka. Dari sumber-sumber seperti ScienceDirect, PubMed, Mendeley, dan Google Scholar, tujuh belas artikel relevan yang diterbitkan antara tahun 2020 dan 2025 diperiksa menggunakan metodologi Tinjauan Literatur Sistematis (SLR) yang diawasi oleh PRISMA. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa podcast berbasis audio dan video secara signifikan meningkatkan sejumlah keterampilan mendengarkan, termasuk pengenalan kosakata, kesadaran pengucapan, pemahaman mendengarkan, dan kepercayaan diri pelajar. Skor tes pendengaran siswa meningkat secara signifikan setelah terpapar aktivitas pembelajaran yang didukung podcast, menurut sebagian besar penelitian eksperimental dan kuasi-eksperimental. Di sisi lain, podcast meningkatkan motivasi, keterlibatan aktif, mengurangi kecemasan selama tugas mendengarkan, dan sikap yang lebih positif terhadap lingkungan pembelajaran digital, menurut studi kualitatif. Temuan ini juga menekankan betapa pentingnya mempertimbangkan desain instruksional, penyelarasan tugas, aksesibilitas, dan keaslian materi untuk mengoptimalkan efektivitas integrasi podcast. Podcast memberikan paparan yang fleksibel dan relevan kepada pelajar terhadap penggunaan bahasa dalam situasi sehari-hari, memungkinkan mereka berlatih mendengarkan kapan saja dan dari mana saja, sehingga mendorong kemandirian belajar. Singkatnya, podcast telah terbukti menjadi media yang efektif untuk pengajaran mendengarkan kontemporer. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa guru sebaiknya menggunakan podcast dalam kegiatan pra-, selama-, dan pasca-mendengarkan untuk mendorong pemahaman yang lebih baik dan pembelajaran mandiri di kelas EFL. ***Kata kunci: podcast; keterampilan mendengarkan***

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine whether podcasts can help students who are learning English as a foreign language (EFL) improve their listening comprehension. From sources like ScienceDirect, PubMed, Mendeley, and Google Scholar, seventeen pertinent articles published between 2020 and 2025 were examined using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) methodology supervised by PRISMA. The results show that both audio-only and video-based podcasts greatly improve a number of listening skills, including vocabulary recognition, pronunciation awareness, listening comprehension, and learner confidence. Students' hearing test scores significantly improved after being exposed to podcast-supported learning activities, according to the majority of experimental and quasi-experimental research.Podcasts, on the other hand, promote increased motivation, active involvement, decreased anxiety during listening tasks, and a more positive attitude toward digital learning settings, according to qualitative studies. The findings also

emphasise how crucial it is to take into account instructional design, task alignment, accessibility, and material authenticity in order to optimise the efficacy of podcast integration. Podcasts provide learners with flexible and relevant exposure to language use in everyday situations, enabling them to practice listening at any time and from any location, thereby promoting learning autonomy. In summary, podcasts have been shown to be a successful medium for contemporary listening teaching. This suggests that teachers should use podcasts in pre-, during-, and post-listening activities to encourage greater comprehension and autonomous learning in EFL classrooms.

Keywords: podcast; listening skill

INTRODUCTION

Learning English requires mastery of four key skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among these four skills, listening is the most frequently used basic skill in both the learning process and everyday communication. Through listening, students acquire language input that forms the basis for speaking and understanding the context of communication. However, many students still experience various obstacles in understanding English speech, ranging from the speed of the speaker, diverse accents, to unclear audio quality. These factors often make students feel frustrated and lose motivation, so that listening is considered a boring and difficult activity to master (Ade et al., 2022)

To overcome this challenge, educators have begun introducing various forms of learning media, one of which is podcasts. Podcasts are digital audio or video files that can be accessed flexibly via the internet, anytime and anywhere. The main advantages of podcasts lie in their authentic, varied, and repeatable nature. The pause and replay features allow students to control the pace of learning according to their individual abilities. Thus, podcasts are not only an enjoyable medium but also effective in improving listening skills, as students can practice repeatedly without the pressure of class time (Fachriza & Gontor, 2020).

Furthermore, podcasts play an important role in training listening skills (macroskill listening), especially the ability to guess meaning from context. Listening is not just about catching words, but also includes the ability to understand implied information, the speaker's intentions, and the overall flow of ideas. The audio from podcasts provides a more natural listening experience, enabling students to skillfully use listening strategies such as predicting, inferring, and guessing meaning from context (Harrison et al., 2023). This approach is more relevant than traditional methods that focus only on repeating words without paying attention to the context of meaning (Fachriza & Gontor, 2020).

In addition to audio podcasts, technological developments have brought about video podcasts that combine audio and visual elements. This form of media has proven to be more attractive to students because it provides visual support in the form of images, gestures, facial expressions, and subtitles. The audio-visual combination helps students understand information more comprehensively and makes the learning process more interactive. This is very much in line with the characteristics of the digital generation who are accustomed to learning through visual and multimedia media (Salainti P et al., 2023).

Not only that, but podcasts also provide great opportunities for students to learn independently. They can choose topics that interest them, repeat the material as many times as needed, and practice outside of school hours. This is in line with the goals of modern language

learning, which emphasises independent learning and the continuity of the learning process. In addition, podcasts provide an authentic experience in English through exposure to various accents and new vocabulary that arises naturally in conversation (Ade et al., 2022).

From the teacher's perspective, podcasts make it easier to design listening materials. Teachers can select or adapt various audio or video sources that are available for free on various platforms, then tailor them to the students' ability levels and needs. Thus, podcasts not only support the improvement of students' competencies but also help teachers create more varied, creative, and effective learning (Salainti P et al., 2023).

Overall, the results of these studies indicate that podcasts—both audio and video—are a relevant, modern, and effective learning medium for improving listening skills. Podcasts can overcome various difficulties faced by students, increase learning motivation, and provide a more authentic and enjoyable learning experience (Ade et al., 2022; Fachriza & Gontor, 2020; Salainti P et al., 2023).

Therefore, podcasts are highly suitable as one of the main strategies in teaching listening skills across various levels of education. With their flexible, contextual, and engaging nature, podcasts have proven to enhance listening skills while fostering students' interest in learning in this fast-paced, technology-driven digital age. Research Questions

R1. How effective are podcasts in improving students' listening skills?

R2. What are the benefits and impacts of using podcasts in listening learning?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Importance of Listening Skills

Listening is a fundamental skill that is very important in language acquisition because it is the first gateway for students to receive and process oral input (Wahyuni, 2020). Listening is not just a basic skill, but a core skill in the language learning process, and success in listening is determined not only by how often a person listens to a foreign language, but also by how they are taught to listen effectively(Alisoy, 2022). Through instructional approaches such as strategy-based instruction, listeners are given cognitive and metacognitive strategies to process oral input, so that they not only listen but are also able to actively, deliberately, and reflectively understand, evaluate, and construct meaning from second language utterances.

The listening process is not just about hearing, but involves complex cognitive activities such as selecting important information, organising meaning, and integrating new information with existing knowledge(Askaraliyevna, 2025). In the modern learning perspective, listening skills are closely related to how memory works, especially working memory, which determines the extent to which students can understand spoken messages without experiencing excessive cognitive load. Well-designed audio learning can help students avoid overload so that they are able to build mental models more effectively to achieve deep understanding. This is in line with findings in multimedia processing studies that emphasise the importance of verbal input in constructing meaning optimally (Federmeier, n.d.; Hilman et al., 2024; Juliette & Schneider, 2024)

Listening Skill in Technology-Enhanced Learning

Listening skills in the current digital era have become more effective due to the integration of technology, which has become an important part of the educational process(Procel et al., 2024). Students living in the modern era find it easier to understand material when teachers utilise flexible and interactive digital media, so that learning is no longer limited to face-to-face classes. Listening, as an active process of interpreting and understanding spoken messages, requires focus, motivation, and student engagement, so the use of technology is a solution to improve these skills (Elfiona & Zaim, 2019; Olayiwola et al., 2024). Various technology-based media, such as podcasts, news radio, multimedia, mobile-based media, and mobile-based audiobooks, have been proven to improve students' comprehension, concentration, vocabulary mastery, and communication skills in English as a second language. In addition, technology helps teachers present material more efficiently, attractively, and accessibly, and provides opportunities for students to learn independently both at school and at home(Maulina et al., 2022). Thus, technology plays an important role in overcoming the limitations of traditional media and creating a more creative, enjoyable, and meaningful listening learning experience, thereby significantly improving student learning outcomes in today's listening learning.(Carpio & Santos, 2022; Rivaldo, 2022)

The Use of Podcasts in Teaching Listening

Podcasts are digital recordings published via the internet in audio format, making them accessible flexibly through various digital devices. (Gunelius, n.d.) Podcasts are a modern and practical medium for learning because they are available for free, cover a wide range of topics, and can be downloaded and played anytime as needed. The existence of podcasts in education provides a great opportunity for teachers to provide authentic and varied learning resources, allowing students to gain broader exposure to language.(Basenko & Baskakova, 2021) Podcasts also allow teachers and students to build their own collection of audio materials (listening library) without any restrictions on place and time, and can help increase relevant language exposure for students(Procel et al., 2024; Tadulako et al., 2025). With their flexible and easy-to-use nature, podcasts are a medium that supports a more independent and engaging learning process, in line with current technological developments, making them a suitable modern learning resource for English classes and beyond. (Nisa et al., n.d.)

METHODS

The method used in this study was a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to identify, evaluate, and synthesise studies discussing the use of podcasts in listening learning. This followed the Preferred Items for Systematic Review and Meta-analysis (PRISMA) guidelines in its search strategy (Moher et al., 2009). SLR was chosen because it provides a systematic, transparent, and replicable review process, so that the results are considered stronger and more scientifically accountable. SLR is an approach designed to identify, evaluate, and interpret research results relevant to specific research questions through structured and controlled procedures (Kitchenham, 2004). A number of keywords were determined by the author in accordance with the topic of the systematic literature review.

The keywords used in the search included podcast, listening, listening skills and listening comprehension. The search was conducted in several academic journal databases, including

ScienceDirect, PubMed, Mendeley and Google Scholar. This study covers articles published within the last 5 years, namely from 2020 to 2025, in accordance with the years found in the reference sources. The instruments used in this study were published scientific articles, so there was no direct data collection from participants. Through a rigorous selection process, the articles used met the inclusion and exclusion criteria. This study applied inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure that only relevant, high-quality articles were analysed.

Procedure

The author conducted an initial search using a list of keywords that had been developed. All articles found then went through a gradual selection process according to the PRISMA model: a) Identification, where all articles that appeared according to the keywords collected in the initial search yielded numerous articles related to the use of podcasts in education. b) Screening, where duplicate articles and articles that did not explicitly discuss podcasts were eliminated. c) After that, the eligibility stage was carried out, which involved reading the abstracts and contents of the articles in more depth to ensure their suitability with the research focus, namely the use of podcasts in English language learning, especially listening. d) In the final stage, namely inclusion, only articles that were truly relevant to listening learning were included as final data for analysis.

Study selection criteria

The inclusion criteria for this study included journal articles published between 2020 and 2025 that discussed the use of podcasts in an educational context, related to English language learning, particularly listening skills, and were available in full text. Meanwhile, articles that did not discuss podcasts, were not related to English listening skills, only discussed aspects of motivation or perception without measuring learning outcomes, or were not available in full-text form, were excluded from the analysis.

After the final articles were determined, data analysis was conducted using a thematic approach. Each article was read thoroughly, and the findings were mapped into several main themes, such as how podcasts are used in listening learning, the impact of using podcasts on improving students' listening comprehension, and the pedagogical aspects that contribute to the effectiveness of the media. Through this thematic analysis, the use of podcasts and their level of effectiveness can be identified, resulting in a comprehensive synthesis of the effectiveness of podcasts in listening learning.

Instrument(s)

A data extraction sheet created by researchers to gather and categorise information from every publication that addresses the use of podcasts in English listening learning methodically and in compliance with PRISMA criteria served as the tool for this Systematic Literature Review (SLR) study. The 25 items on this data extraction sheet cover a number of significant factors, including the year of publication, research design, participants' educational attainment, the type and platform of podcast used, podcast implementation procedures, listening skills measured, research instruments used in the primary study, and findings pertaining to improvements in students' listening skills. This instrument has passed an internal review process to guarantee its applicability and clarity prior to usage, and it mixes closed-ended and open-ended items to allow researchers to gain a balance of quantitative and qualitative data. Each article's data extraction process takes about 20 to 30 minutes.

This instrument records the measurement tools used in primary studies, such as listening comprehension tests, quizzes, performance assessments, or student perception questionnaires, even though this study does not directly collect data from respondents. In order to find pertinent publications from 2020 to 2025, academic databases like ScienceDirect, PubMed, Mendeley, and Google Scholar were utilised as supporting tools.
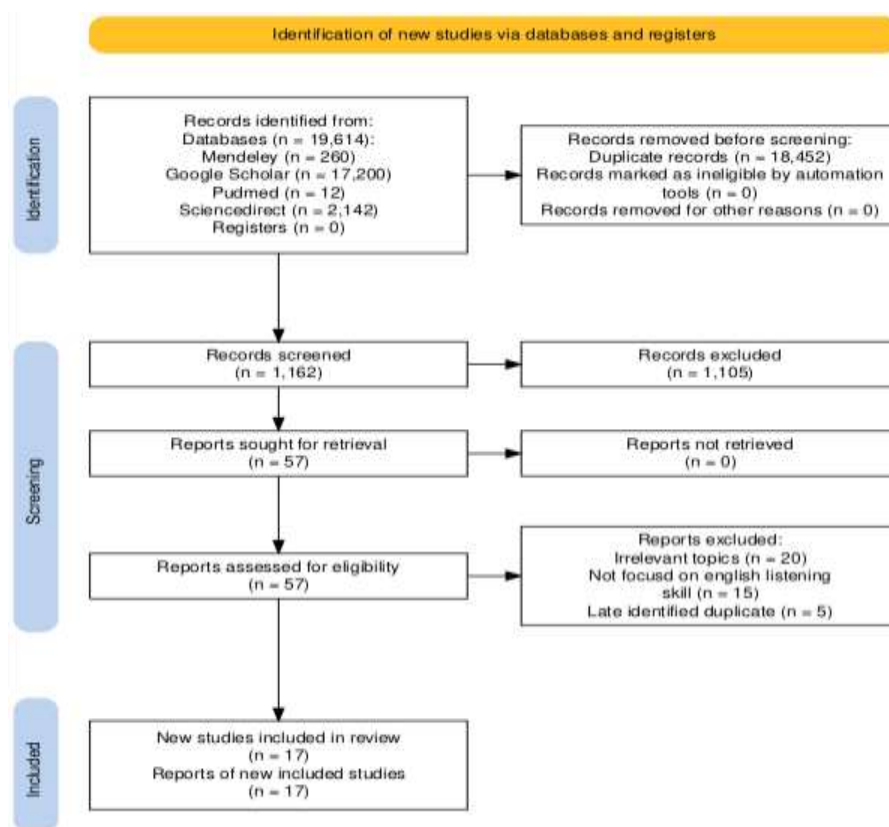

Figure 1. PRISMA Flowchart of the selection process.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

TABLE 1. Summary of Findings of the Selected Final Studies.

No	Authors/Year/ Country	Main Characteristic	Study Design/Measuring	Findings
1	Baecker (2022), Germany	27 third-year pharmacy students; effectiveness of podcasts in learning	Cross-sectional pilot study; questionnaire	Podcasts enhanced motivation, engagement, communication, teamwork, and creativity during learning because students could learn flexibly and interactively. However, they were found less effective for highly complex content and exam preparation, indicating that podcasts are more suitable as supplementary learning materials.
2	Saragih et al. (2022), Indonesia	32 Grade XI students; podcasts in	Qualitative; questionnaire & interview	Podcasts increased students' interest, motivation, and vocabulary understanding. The

		listening activities		replayability feature supported comprehension of difficult parts and strengthened confidence in listening.
3	Harahap (2020), Indonesia	14 university EFL students; perceptions toward podcasts	Case study; questionnaire & interview	Students acknowledged that podcasts provided authentic English input that improved vocabulary mastery and listening comprehension, although unfamiliar accents and rapid speech remained challenges.
4	Husaini et al. (2024), Indonesia	31 vocational high school students; improving listening	One-group pretest–posttest; listening tests	There was a statistically significant improvement in students' listening scores after using podcasts, accompanied by greater enthusiasm and increased self-confidence.
5	Sabrila & Apoko (2022), Indonesia	33 Grade X vocational students	Pre-experimental; listening MCQ tests	Students' scores significantly improved (from 55.15 to 87.03). They were more motivated and active during listening tasks because podcasts were enjoyable and easier to follow.
6	Fitriyani (2021), Indonesia	University EFL learners	Quantitative survey; Likert-scale questionnaire	Students felt that podcasts offered authentic listening exposure, reduced anxiety, and supported independent learning since they could access the audio anytime.
7	Prasetyo et al. (2023), Indonesia	34 university students; perceptions of podcasts	Qualitative case study; questionnaire & interview	Podcasts improved students' ability to understand pronunciation and accents, while also increasing motivation and confidence due to flexible access.
8	Zunaidah et al. (2021), Indonesia	Beginner-level BIPA learners	R&D; expert validation & testing	The developed podcast helped improve vocabulary recognition, pronunciation, and comprehension while reducing listening anxiety.
9	Yoestara & Putri (2018), Indonesia	EFL secondary-level learners (review focus)	Literature review	Podcasts provide authentic listening input that improves retention, confidence, motivation, and self-directed listening skills.
10	Nurhaliza et al. (2023), Indonesia	50 senior high school students; podcast vs song	Quasi-experimental; listening tests	Podcasts were more effective than songs in enhancing listening comprehension,

				vocabulary acquisition, and pronunciation accuracy.
11	Shamburg et al. (2023), USA	Informal podcast listeners	Qualitative interviews	Podcasts enabled informal listening practice that developed vocabulary and speech processing skills beyond classroom settings.
12	Rachmaniputri et al. (2020), Indonesia	25 senior high school students	Case study; questionnaire + observation	Podcasts enhanced participation and reduced anxiety in listening tasks, despite issues with audio clarity and speech rate.
13	Arslan & Çifci (2022), Türkiye	12 A1 foreign language learners	Pretest–posttest quasi-experimental	There was a significant improvement in discriminative listening ability, phonological awareness, and pronunciation recognition.
14	Salainti et al. (2023), Indonesia	40 ninth-grade students	Quasi-experimental; tests + questionnaire	Students' listening achievement increased notably (from 56.50 to 78.50). The visual elements in video podcasts supported comprehension and confidence.
15	Nisa et al. (2022), Indonesia	25 seventh-grade students	Pre-experimental; pretest–posttest	Students showed significant improvement in listening (62.5 → 89.4) and were more eager and comfortable with learning through podcasts.
16	Hasibuan & Male (2022), Indonesia	50 pre-service EFL teachers	Descriptive survey	Podcasts fostered positive attitudes by increasing motivation, vocabulary enrichment, and pronunciation awareness for future teaching competence.
17	Tania & Jein (2022), Indonesia	8 teenage ESL learners	Pre-experimental; pretest–posttest	Combining podcasts with group discussion helped strengthen comprehension and boosted students' confidence during listening comprehension tasks.

A synthesis of findings from seventeen selected studies shows a consistent positive trend in the effectiveness of podcasts as a learning medium for improving students' listening skills. In general, most of the studies in the table show a significant increase in listening scores after the use of podcasts, both in the context of secondary schools and university-level EFL learners. This improvement is particularly evident through pretest–posttest comparisons in experimental and quasi-experimental studies. For example, research conducted showed a significant increase in scores from a range of 55–62 on the pretest to 78–89 on the posttest (Husaini et al., 2024; Nisa et al., n.d.). The results show that podcasts are not only an interesting form of entertainment, but also have the ability to improve listeners' comprehension through exposure to authentic input, adjustable repetition, and—for vodcasts—visual support that facilitates the decoding process.

These findings are in line with a pattern discovered in a study(Salainti P et al., 2023), which indicated that students' average scores increased significantly from 56.50 to 78.50 when they used English-language video podcasts. The nature of podcasts, which offer real speech input, ease of replay, and a mix of audio-visual components that aid students in comprehending the context, also contributed to this improvement, according to Salainti et al. These components are also present in other research in the table, such as (Zunaidah et al., 2021), which highlights how podcasts enhance word recognition and pronunciation while lowering listening anxiety. (Ade et al., 2022)

In addition, podcasts have been shown to improve test scores as well as increase student engagement and motivation. Several studies in the table, such as (Ade et al., 2022; Hasibuan & Male, 2022; Prasetyo et al., 2023), show that students improve their focus, enthusiasm, and positive emotional responses when using podcasts for learning. These results are consistent with findings that indicate podcast use continues to increase student engagement and willingness to listen despite obstacles such as speaking speed or audio quality. One of the main advantages of podcasts as a technology-based learning medium is their affective aspect (Rachmaniputri et al., 2021).

Several studies in the table also show that how podcasts are used in the classroom greatly influences their success. Studies that produced significant findings typically used podcasts extensively, combining pre-listening, during-listening, and post-listening activities, and ensured that the content was relevant to the students' abilities (Silva, 2025). This aligns with the explanation, which states that meaningful learning experiences from podcasts can be achieved when the content provided is authentic, close to students' lives, and combined with reflective activities such as discussions and question-and-answer sessions. Furthermore, Harahap found that, although students enjoy podcasts, some have difficulty understanding accents or fast speech. Therefore, supporting strategies such as transcripts and audio repetition are necessary (Harahap, 2020)

However, not all studies show significant progress. For example, qualitative studies such a (Harahap, 2020) focus more on student perceptions than on statistical evidence of score improvements. In addition, issues such as difficult accents, unstable internet connections, or mismatches between the difficulty level of the material and the students' abilities were found in some studies. These variations in results show that podcasts do not only depend on the media; the material must be appropriate, the material must support instruction, and students must be able to manage verbal comments.

Overall, research indicates that listening to podcasts can enhance students' cognitive (higher scores), affective (motivation and engagement), and linguistic (vocabulary, context understanding, and pronunciation) listening abilities. This is in line with Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning. According to this hypothesis, integrating audio and video—as in video podcasts—improves recall, makes data processing easier, and lessens cognitive load. Podcasts are therefore a valuable tool for modern listening training, particularly in the context of EFL.(Dewi et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION

Podcasts can help students improve their listening skills while learning English as a foreign language (EFL), according to the findings of this systematic literature review (Axrorova, 2025; Setiawan & Wahyuni, 2024). After podcasts were incorporated into learning activities, most of the studies reviewed showed that students' listening comprehension, vocabulary recognition,

pronunciation awareness, and confidence improved. Students were able to process spoken language more deeply and at their own pace thanks to authentic audio input, flexible access, and the opportunity to listen repeatedly. This is in line with the results of (Salainti P et al., 2023), who noted a significant increase in students' listening scores after using English-language video podcasts. It is also consistent with research by (Rachmaniputri et al., 2021), which showed an increase in engagement and a decrease in anxiety during listening tasks.

Overall, evidence shows that instructional design, material suitability, and consistency of implementation greatly influence the quality of podcasts. This is despite some issues, such as technical problems and difficulty understanding fast speech. When podcasts are incorporated at the pre-listening, during listening, and post-listening stages, research typically shows more consistent improvements. Podcasts increase student motivation, facilitate understanding, and support a more engaging listening experience, making them a useful and powerful learning resource. Therefore, podcasts offer a great option for teachers who want to improve listening outcomes and enrich English language learning in modern digital classrooms.(Nypadymka, 2025)

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