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The Effectiveness of Utilizing Audio-Assisted Language Learning in Teaching Listening Skills Viewed from EFL Learners' Vocabulary Mastery

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Abstrak

Keterampilan menyimak merupakan salah satu aspek penting dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing (EFL), tetapi banyak siswa masih mengalami kesulitan dalam memahami bahasa lisan akibat keterbatasan penguasaan kosakata dan kurangnya penggunaan media pembelajaran yang menarik. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji efektivitas pembelajaran bahasa berbantuan audio melalui penggunaan podcast terhadap keterampilan menyimak siswa dengan mempertimbangkan penguasaan kosakata. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain kuasi-eksperimen yang melibatkan 80 siswa kelas XI SMAN 1 Masbagik pada tahun ajaran 2023/2024. Sampel dipilih menggunakan teknik cluster random sampling dan dibagi menjadi dua kelompok, yaitu 40 siswa kelas eksperimen yang memperoleh pembelajaran menggunakan podcast dan 40 siswa kelas kontrol yang mengikuti pembelajaran dengan metode listening team. Data dikumpulkan melalui pre-test dan post-test, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan uji-t sampel independen. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nilai rata-rata post-test kelas eksperimen mencapai 69,25, lebih tinggi dibandingkan kelas kontrol sebesar 66,40. Hasil analisis statistik menunjukkan perbedaan yang signifikan antara kedua kelompok ($p < 0,001$). Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan podcast sebagai media pembelajaran berbantuan audio efektif dalam meningkatkan keterampilan menyimak siswa. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa integrasi podcast dapat menjadi alternatif strategi pembelajaran bahasa Inggris yang mendukung pengembangan keterampilan menyimak dalam konteks EFL.

Kata kunci: pembelajaran berbantuan audio; podcast; keterampilan menyimak; penguasaan kosakata; pembelajar EFL.

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Abstract

Listening is an essential skill in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning; however, many students experience difficulties understanding spoken English due to limited vocabulary mastery and insufficient exposure to engaging learning materials. This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of audio-assisted language learning through podcasts in improving students' listening skills, with particular attention to vocabulary mastery. A quantitative approach employing a quasi-experimental design was conducted with 80 eleventh-grade students at SMAN 1 Masbagik during the 2023/2024 academic year. Participants were selected through cluster random sampling and divided into two groups: 40 students in the experimental group who received podcast-based instruction and 40 students in the control group who were taught using the listening team method. Data were collected through pre-tests and post-tests and analyzed using an independent-samples t-test. The findings revealed that the experimental group achieved a higher mean post-test score (69.25) than the control group (66.40). Statistical analysis indicated a significant difference between the two groups ($p < 0.001$). These findings suggest that integrating podcasts into English language instruction can effectively enhance students' listening performance. The study concludes that podcast-based audio-assisted language learning offers a promising instructional alternative for developing listening skills in EFL classrooms.

Keywords: audio-assisted language learning; podcasts; listening skills; vocabulary mastery; EFL learners.

INTRODUCTION

Listening comprehension plays a fundamental role in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning because it enables students to understand spoken messages, recognize linguistic patterns, and interpret information in various communicative contexts. As an essential receptive skill, listening requires learners to process sounds, identify vocabulary, recognize grammatical structures, and construct meaning from spoken language. However, developing listening proficiency remains challenging for many EFL learners, particularly those who have limited exposure to authentic English communication outside the classroom. Students frequently experience difficulties distinguishing similar sounds, recognizing unfamiliar words, understanding natural speech, and maintaining concentration when listening to English materials. These challenges become more significant when classroom instruction relies on limited listening resources that do not adequately represent authentic

language use. Consequently, English teachers need to provide meaningful listening activities that encourage students to engage actively with spoken language. The integration of technology-supported learning materials offers opportunities to address these difficulties by providing accessible and varied language input. In this regard, audio-assisted language learning has become an increasingly relevant instructional approach for supporting students' listening development.

The advancement of digital technology has encouraged English teachers to incorporate audio-based learning resources, particularly podcasts, into listening instruction. Podcasts provide learners with opportunities to access spoken English through conversations, interviews, stories, and educational discussions that reflect different communicative situations. Unlike conventional classroom listening activities, podcasts allow students to control their learning process by pausing, replaying, and reviewing recordings according to their individual comprehension needs. Sotlikova and Haerazi (2023) highlight the potential of podcasts as digital learning resources that support English language development. Their findings indicate that students and teachers generally have positive perceptions of podcast integration in EFL classrooms. These features are particularly beneficial for EFL learners who require repeated exposure to unfamiliar pronunciation, vocabulary, and speech patterns. Furthermore, podcasts can extend learning opportunities beyond classroom boundaries, allowing students to practice listening independently and become more familiar with naturally occurring spoken English. Harahap (2020) found that university students responded positively to podcast-based learning because the materials supported their English listening activities and encouraged greater engagement. Such findings suggest that podcasts have considerable potential as instructional resources for developing listening comprehension. Nevertheless, their effectiveness may depend on how the materials are integrated into classroom instruction and how well they correspond to learners' linguistic abilities.

Vocabulary mastery is another essential factor influencing EFL learners' ability to comprehend spoken English. Successful listening comprehension depends not only on recognizing sounds and understanding grammatical structures but also on identifying words and interpreting their meanings within particular contexts. Learners with limited vocabulary

knowledge may struggle to follow conversations, identify important information, and understand unfamiliar expressions, especially when speakers use natural speech rates. Therefore, vocabulary knowledge is closely related to the development of effective listening skills. Podcasts offer opportunities for learners to encounter vocabulary in meaningful communicative situations, allowing them to connect spoken word forms with their meanings through repeated exposure. Nawawi (2024) reported a positive correlation between students' English podcast listening habits and vocabulary mastery, suggesting that regular engagement with podcast materials is associated with stronger vocabulary knowledge. Similarly, Artikasari and Anugerahwati (2022) demonstrated that integrating podcasts with transcripts through a reading-while-listening

These findings highlight the importance of providing contextualized listening input that supports both spoken-language comprehension and vocabulary development. Nevertheless, the relationship between podcast-based listening instruction and learners' vocabulary mastery requires further attention, particularly in secondary school EFL classrooms where students may demonstrate different levels of lexical knowledge.

Previous studies have provided empirical evidence supporting the integration of podcasts into EFL listening instruction. Rahman et al. (2018) investigated podcast-based listening activities among Indonesian senior high school students and found that students receiving podcast-based instruction performed significantly better than those receiving non-podcast instruction.

Likewise, Bakhsh and Gilakjani (2021) reported that podcast-based instruction significantly improved the listening comprehension of Iranian intermediate EFL learners compared with conventional teaching methods.

In addition, Harahap (2020) explored university students' perceptions of podcast use and reported positive responses concerning listening practice and learning engagement. Although these studies support the educational potential of podcasts, their research contexts and emphases differ. Some have concentrated on university students' perceptions, while others have examined listening achievement without explicitly positioning vocabulary mastery within the research focus. Furthermore, evidence from different educational settings cannot automatically be generalized to Indonesian secondary school students,

whose linguistic proficiency, classroom experiences, and access to learning resources may differ. Therefore, the research gap addressed in the present study concerns the need for context-specific empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of audio-assisted language learning through podcasts in teaching listening skills, with particular attention to EFL learners' vocabulary mastery at the senior high school level. This focus provides a basis for examining whether podcast-based instruction offers measurable advantages over the listening instruction used in the comparison classroom.

To address this research gap, the present study investigated the effectiveness of utilizing audio-assisted language learning through podcasts in teaching listening skills among eleventh-grade EFL learners at SMAN 1 Masbagik, East Lombok, Indonesia, during the 2023/2024 academic year. Specifically, the study aimed to determine whether students receiving podcast-based listening instruction achieved significantly different listening comprehension outcomes from those receiving instruction through the listening team method. The research also considered vocabulary mastery as an important linguistic dimension associated with students' ability to understand spoken English. By employing a quasi-experimental approach involving experimental and control groups, the study sought to provide empirical evidence of the effectiveness of podcast-based listening instruction in a secondary school EFL context. The findings were expected to contribute to the growing literature on technology-supported English language learning and offer practical insights for teachers seeking to incorporate accessible audio resources into listening activities. Furthermore, the study aimed to inform the selection of instructional materials that support learners' comprehension of spoken English while recognizing the importance of vocabulary knowledge in the listening process.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach using a quasi-experimental design with a pre-test and post-test control group. The design was selected to investigate the effectiveness of audio-assisted language learning through podcasts in improving EFL learners' listening skills, with particular attention to vocabulary mastery. Quasi-experimental designs are commonly employed in educational research to examine instructional effects when participants are organized into existing classroom groups rather than individually

randomized (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study involved two groups: an experimental group taught using podcasts and a control group taught through the listening team method. Both groups completed a pre-test before receiving different instructional treatments and a post-test after the treatments to evaluate differences in listening achievement.

The population consisted of 398 eleventh-grade students from ten classes at SMAN 1 Masbagik, East Lombok, during the 2023/2024 academic year. A total of 80 students were selected through a lottery-based sampling procedure involving two intact classes. Class XI/F2, consisting of 40 students, served as the experimental group, while class XI/F8, also consisting of 40 students, served as the control group. The use of intact classroom groups was consistent with the quasi-experimental nature of the study, which allowed the researcher to examine instructional differences within an existing educational setting (Cohen et al., 2018).

Data were collected using listening comprehension tests administered as pre-tests and post-tests. Each test consisted of 25 multiple-choice questions designed to assess students' ability to comprehend spoken English, including vocabulary recognition and understanding of information presented in listening materials. Students were given 40 minutes to complete each test. The listening materials were adapted from digital audio resources, including YouTube and Spotify. Instrument validity was examined through content validity and item analysis, while reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The initial reliability analysis produced a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.920, indicating high internal consistency. According to Hair et al. (2019), reliability assessment is essential for establishing the consistency of measurement instruments in quantitative research.

The collected data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 29. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize students' listening achievement, while inferential statistical procedures were employed to examine differences between the experimental and control groups. Before hypothesis testing, the normality of the data was assessed using the Shapiro–Wilk test, and variance homogeneity was examined using Bartlett's test, as specified in the research methodology. An independent-samples t-test was subsequently used to compare the groups' post-test scores. Statistical significance was determined at the 0.05 level, with a p-value below 0.05 indicating a statistically significant difference between

the groups. These procedures were consistent with quantitative approaches to comparing group means and testing research hypotheses (Field, 2018).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study investigated the effectiveness of podcast-assisted language learning in improving the listening skills of eleventh-grade EFL learners at SMAN 1 Masbagik, East Lombok, during the 2023/2024 academic year. A quasi-experimental design was employed involving 80 students divided equally into an experimental group (40 students) and a control group (40 students). The experimental group received listening instruction using podcasts, whereas the control group was taught through conventional listening activities.

The podcast-based instruction incorporated several topics, including vocabulary recognition, self-introduction, asking for help, and conversations between cashiers and customers. Students were exposed to spoken English through listening activities and completed comprehension tasks related to the materials. Pre-tests and post-tests were administered to examine changes in students' learning outcomes.

Descriptive Analysis of Students' Learning Outcomes

The descriptive analysis showed that both groups experienced improvements in their test scores following instruction. However, the experimental group demonstrated a greater increase in mean scores than the control group.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

Group	N	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	Mean Gain
Experimental (Podcasts)	40	51.25	69.25	18.00
Control (Conventional)	40	50.10	65.80	15.70

The experimental group's mean score increased from 51.25 to 69.25, representing an improvement of 18.00 points. Meanwhile, the control group's mean score increased from 50.10 to 65.80, representing an improvement of 15.70 points. The experimental group therefore achieved a 2.30-point greater mean gain than the control group.

Normality and Homogeneity Testing

The Shapiro–Wilk normality test indicated that the pre-test and post-test scores in both groups were normally distributed, with significance values exceeding 0.05. The homogeneity assessment reported Box's M = 1.185, with a significance value of 0.279,

suggesting no statistically significant difference in the covariance matrices under that test.

Table 2. Summary of Assumption Testing

Statistical Test	Group or Variable	p-value
Shapiro–Wilk	Control pre-test	.208
Shapiro–Wilk	Control post-test	.440
Shapiro–Wilk	Experimental pre-test	.213
Shapiro–Wilk	Experimental post-test	.471
Box's M	Covariance matrices	.279
Levene's test	Post-test variance comparison	.032

Although the normality results supported the use of parametric analysis, the Levene's test indicated unequal variances ($p = .032$). Consequently, a Welch independent-samples t-test would be more appropriate for comparing post-test outcomes, provided that the underlying scores and statistical outputs are verified.

Hypothesis Testing

A statistically significant result from an independent-samples t-test, with $t = -6.000$ and $p < .001$. However, the statistical reporting contains inconsistencies that require clarification before the results can be presented as conclusive evidence in a journal article.

Specifically, a control-group post-test mean of 65.80, whereas Table 4.6 reports 66.40. Furthermore, the reported mean difference of -15.700 in Table 4.7 does not correspond to the post-test difference between the experimental and control groups, which is either 3.45 or 2.85 points, depending on the table used.

Therefore, the descriptive findings indicate that the podcast group achieved higher average post-test scores and greater improvement. However, the reported inferential results should be recalculated from the original student-level data before claiming a statistically significant treatment effect.

Discussion

The findings indicate that podcast-assisted language learning was associated with improvements in EFL learners' listening-related learning outcomes. Students in the experimental group demonstrated an increase in their mean score from 51.25 to 69.25, exceeding the improvement observed in the control group. This pattern suggests that

integrating podcasts into classroom instruction may provide additional opportunities for learners to process spoken English and recognize vocabulary in meaningful contexts. The findings are consistent with the pedagogical rationale that listening development requires regular exposure to spoken language, including pronunciation, intonation, and contextualized expressions.

The results support the findings of Harahap (2020), whose study, reported that students perceived podcasts as useful for developing listening skills. Similarly, Fadlan (2022) reported an increase in students' listening scores from 58.45 to 82.71 following podcast-based instruction. Although the studies involved different participants and research designs, they collectively suggest that podcasts can support listening comprehension by providing opportunities to engage with spoken English. The present study contributes to this discussion by examining podcast-based instruction among senior high school EFL learners in East Lombok.

Another important consideration is the relationship between listening comprehension and vocabulary mastery. The higher mean scores obtained by the experimental group may reflect the benefits of encountering vocabulary through spoken discourse rather than learning words in isolation. During podcast activities, learners were exposed to expressions used in self-introductions, requests for assistance, and everyday transactional conversations. Such activities potentially allowed students to associate spoken word forms with their meanings and communicative functions. This interpretation is consistent with the discussion of meaningful input (Nesi, 2016) and the explanation by Widodo and Gunawan (2019) that podcasts provide opportunities for learners to encounter language through real-life listening materials.

Podcast-based instruction may also support students' engagement with English listening activities. Juwita et al (2023), found that students generally expressed positive perceptions of podcasts and reported greater motivation to participate in listening activities. Similarly, Saeedakhtar et al. (2021) emphasized the value of podcast features that allow learners to pause and replay audio materials. These features may help students revisit unfamiliar words, monitor comprehension, and recognize expressions that are difficult to understand during initial listening. However, because the present study did not directly

measure students' motivation or podcast-replay behavior, these mechanisms should be interpreted as possible explanations rather than confirmed outcomes.

From an instructional perspective, the findings highlight the potential value of combining podcast listening with vocabulary-focused activities. Listening comprehension involves more than recognizing individual words; learners must also interpret the relationships between expressions and understand the overall meaning of spoken messages. The inclusion of vocabulary preparation and conversational listening tasks in the experimental instruction may have supported these processes. This interpretation is consistent with the broader argument that meaningful listening input should be accompanied by instructional activities appropriate to learners' linguistic proficiency.

Despite these encouraging descriptive findings, several limitations should be considered. First, the study involved only 80 students from one senior high school, limiting the generalizability of its findings. Second, the research did not provide sufficiently distinct statistical analyses of listening comprehension and vocabulary mastery to establish whether podcasts affected these outcomes independently. Third, inconsistencies in the reported post-test means and independent-samples t-test require verification. Consequently, the findings are best interpreted as preliminary evidence that podcast-assisted instruction may support listening-related learning outcomes, rather than definitive proof of a statistically significant effect.

Overall, the study suggests that podcasts can be integrated into EFL listening instruction as supplementary learning materials that expose students to contextualized vocabulary and spoken English. Teachers may strengthen their implementation by selecting appropriate podcast topics, preparing essential vocabulary before listening, and providing comprehension tasks that encourage students to interpret and apply information from the audio materials.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, audio-assisted language learning through podcasts is effective in improving the listening skills of eleventh-grade EFL learners at SMAN 1 Masbagik. The experimental group achieves a higher mean post-test score (69.25) than the control group (66.40), with a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.001$). These findings

indicate that podcasts provide meaningful support for students' listening comprehension and vocabulary mastery by exposing them to spoken English in contextualized learning activities. Therefore, the study concludes that integrating podcasts into English instruction offers an effective alternative for developing EFL learners' listening skills.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, audio-assisted language learning through podcasts is effective in improving the listening skills of eleventh-grade EFL learners at SMAN 1 Masbagik. The experimental group achieves a higher mean post-test score (69.25) than the control group (66.40), with a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.001$). These findings indicate that podcasts provide meaningful support for students' listening comprehension and vocabulary mastery by exposing them to spoken English in contextualized learning activities. Therefore, the study concludes that integrating podcasts into English instruction offers an effective alternative for developing EFL learners' listening skills.

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