

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Research

Listening represents one of the fundamental competencies in acquiring a language, since this ability underlies the mastery of other linguistic skills, including speaking, reading, and writing. According to Prastyo et al., (2023) listening skills are the process of capturing the speakers words, understanding the ideas conveyed, and involving interaction between the speaker, listener, and sound. Strong listening ability allows learners to grasp grammatical patterns, intonation, and the contextual meaning embedded in spoken input. Therefore, students with poor listening skills tend to have difficulty developing their speaking and writing skills (Saragih et al., 2022).

In line with this, listening skills not only play a role in understanding spoken English, but are also expected to become the main foundation in building students overall language competence. By engaging in focused and consistent listening exercises, students can gradually familiarize themselves with English sounds, sharpen their awareness of pronunciation and intonation, and expand their vocabulary in a natural manner. As a result, learners are expected to comprehend oral information more accurately, follow classroom instructions with greater effectiveness, and

gain more confidence when taking part in spoken classroom interaction. so that students are not only passive listeners, but also able to develop other language skills more optimally, making the English learning process more meaningful and communicative.

As information technology continues to advance in this digital age, the methods learners use to build and develop their language abilities have shifted considerably. Growing attention is now being directed toward digital media as a tool for teaching English, especially for developing learners listening competence. One type of digital media that is growing rapidly is podcasts. A podcast can be described as a series of recorded audio segments that listeners can access and play whenever and wherever they wish, typically structured as dialogues or discussions (Rime et al., 2022). This medium provides flexible access and allows learners to be exposed to authentic English. The popularity of podcasts as an audio medium is also increasing in Indonesia. According to a national survey conducted by Populix (2025), 53% of Indonesians listen to podcasts two to three times a week. These findings indicate that podcasts have become a regular media consumption habit, including among English learners. For students who have not been exposed to a natural English-speaking environment, podcasts can be a source of authentic, accessible, and

relevant language input in a real-life communication context.

Based on preliminary observation that was conducted on September 2025, the researcher found that there are several problems faced by the student at SMPN 11 Bengkulu Tengah. The first issue concerns the minimal integration of technology in listening instruction, where genuine digital resources like podcasts are seldom utilized during lessons. Consequently, students lack adequate exposure to authentic English input, which is essential for building their listening competence. Second, teachers still apply conventional teaching methods, while digital media is only used as a supplementary tool rather than being fully integrated into the learning process. This condition makes listening to activities less varied and less interesting for students. A third concern is that listening sessions are often monotonous and lack interactivity, contributing to weak student motivation and restricted communication throughout the lesson, with learners tending to remain passive and showing little involvement in class discussions. Fourth, students' listening scores based on teacher assessments remain low and have not achieved the expected learning outcomes, indicating that students' listening skills still need to be improved. This condition highlights the need for more

innovative and engaging learning media, such as English learning podcasts, to improve students' listening skills.

Earlier Research Indicates that employing Podcast as a pedagogical medium may contribute positively to the enhancement of students' listening skill. According to the findings of Sayidaturrahmah et al., (2024) instruction using podcasts contributed meaningfully to enhancing learners' listening proficiency while simultaneously exposing them to new vocabulary and contextually relevant language. Additionally, Bozavlı, (2024) reported that intensive exposure to foreign language podcasts improved upper secondary school students' English listening comprehension. Another study by Munisaxon & Qizi, (2025) also showed that podcasts not only improve listening comprehension but also encourage independent learning by allowing students to set their learning pace and choose content according to their interests. Hasibuan & Male (2022) on the other hand, pointed out that podcasts expose learners to genuine language use along with diverse accents, which in turn supports students' comprehension of real-world communicative contexts.

These conditions have a direct impact on student learning outcomes. Based on teacher assessments, the listening skills of students at SMPN 11 Bengkulu Tengah are still relatively low and have not achieved the expected

learning outcomes, indicating that students still have difficulty understanding spoken English. Therefore, it is necessary to implement more innovative and effective learning media to improve the quality of listening learning. The use of English Podcasts (LEP) is seen as a potential solution because it provides authentic, interesting listening material that is relevant to student's daily lives. Thus, this research is important and urgent to empirically test the effectiveness of English Podcasts (LEP) in toward listening skills of students at SMPN 11 Bengkulu Tengah and to contribute to the development of English language learning in similar schools.

B. Identification of Problems

1. The use of technology in the listening teaching process is still limited, and authentic digital media such as podcasts are rarely used.
2. Teachers still apply conventional teaching methods, with digital media only used as additional support.
3. Listening activities are less interactive and less interesting, resulting in low student motivation and communication.
4. Students' listening scores, based on teacher assessments, remain low and have not achieved the expected learning outcomes.

C. Limitation of research

Building on the discussion above, this research is limited in scope to investigating how LEP can be applied to strengthen the listening ability of seventh-grade students at SMPN 11 Bengkulu Tengah during the 2025-2026 academic year, using episodes drawn specifically from the '8 Minute English' series on the LEP YouTube channel.

D. Research Question

Based on the background above, the researcher formulates the research question as is there a significant impact of English podcast LEP toward students English listening skills of seventh grade at SMPN 11 in Bengkulu Tengah, academic year 2025-2026?

E. Research Objective

In line with the research question above, this study sets out to determine whether the use of English Learning Podcast (LEP) has a significant effect on the English listening skills of seventh-grade students at SMPN 11 Bengkulu Tengah during 2025-2026 academic year.

F. Significances of the research

1. Theoretical benefit

It is hoped this research adds to the theoretical understanding of English language instruction, especially in relation to listening development and the role digital audio tools can play in supporting it. Furthermore, this research can reinforce existing theories regarding the role of

technology-supported learning and multimedia resources in improving the listening skills of EFL students, especially at the lower secondary school level.

2. Practical benefit

a. For Students

This research is expected to help students improve their English listening skills using English Podcast LEP.

b. For Teachers

The results of this research can be used as a reference for English teachers to apply podcasts as an alternative and effective medium in teaching listening skills.

c. For Schools

This research may contribute to the development of more innovative and technology-based English learning strategies at SMPN 11 in Bengkulu Tengah.

d. For Future Researchers

This research can serve as a reference for future studies related to the use of podcasts in enhancing English listening skills.

G. Definition of key terms

1. A podcast refers to an audio episode that listeners can access and play at their convenience, typically structured around a conversation or discussion format (Rime et al., 2022). The distribution of digital audio recordings to consumers through gadgets such as computers or mobile phones is known as a podcast (Bölükbaş & Dinç, 2022).

2. Listening ability can be understood as the act of grasping what is being spoken, comprehending the speakers intended meaning, involving the interplay of speaker, listener, and sound (Prastyo et al., 2023). Which includes the process of identifying, understanding, and interpreting spoken language(Dalia Ahmed Kamal Rabie et al., 2023)
3. Student at junior high school in this study refer to students who are officially enrolled at SMPN 11 Bengkulu Tengah and are aged around 12–15 years. These students are in formal secondary education, where the study of English is required, with a primary focus on developing basic language skills, including listening. In the context of this study, junior high school students at SMPN 11 Bengkulu Tengah academic year 2025-2026 were the research participants who received podcast-based listening instruction, and their listening skills were measured to analyses the impact of English Podcasts (LEP) on their English listening achievement.
4. As explained by Prastyo et al., (2023), listening skills refer to the process of constructing meaning from spoken language by understanding the speaker's ideas. This process depends on the interaction between the speaker, the listener, and the sounds produced during communication(Dalia Ahmed Kamal Rabie et al., 2023).