



THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ENGLISH PODCASTS AND SONGS IN IMPROVING LISTENING SKILL OF INFORMATICS STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Listening is one of the essential skills required by university students, including those majoring in Informatics, who must comprehend English-based learning resources such as documentation, tutorials, and technical discussions. This study aims to examine the effectiveness of English podcasts and English songs as alternative media to improve students' listening comprehension. The research employed a quasi-experimental design involving 60 first-year Informatics students divided into an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group was exposed to English podcasts and songs for four weeks, while the control group used conventional listening materials from textbooks. Pre-test and post-test instruments were administered to measure performance changes. The findings revealed a significant improvement in the experimental group compared to the control group ($p < 0.05$), indicating that the integration of digital audio materials enhances vocabulary recognition, comprehension speed, and overall listening skill. This study suggests that educators incorporate podcasts and songs as complementary learning media in English instruction for Informatics students.

Keywords: *listening skill, podcasts, songs, digital media, Informatics students*

ABSTRAK

Keterampilan menyimak merupakan komponen penting dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, terutama bagi mahasiswa Informatika yang sering berinteraksi dengan sumber belajar berbahasa Inggris seperti dokumentasi teknologi, video tutorial, dan diskusi teknis daring. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji efektivitas penggunaan podcast dan lagu berbahasa Inggris dalam meningkatkan kemampuan listening mahasiswa Informatika. Penelitian menggunakan desain kuasi-eksperimen dengan pre-test dan post-test yang melibatkan 60 mahasiswa tahun pertama, yang dibagi ke dalam kelompok eksperimen dan kelompok kontrol. Kelompok eksperimen memperoleh pembelajaran listening menggunakan podcast dan lagu, sedangkan kelompok kontrol menggunakan materi audio konvensional dari buku ajar. Hasil analisis statistik menunjukkan adanya peningkatan signifikan pada kemampuan menyimak kelompok eksperimen dibandingkan kelompok kontrol ($p < 0.05$). Mahasiswa yang belajar melalui podcast dan lagu menunjukkan peningkatan pemahaman, kecepatan menangkap informasi, serta penguasaan kosakata. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa media podcast dan lagu efektif digunakan sebagai alternatif pembelajaran listening dan direkomendasikan untuk diintegrasikan dalam pengajaran bahasa Inggris di program studi Informatika.

Kata kunci: *kemampuan menyimak, podcast, lagu, media digital, mahasiswa Informatika*

INTRODUCTION

Listening comprehension is a fundamental component of English language acquisition that plays a vital role in academic success, particularly for Computer Science (Informatics) students. In today's digital era, these students routinely interact with English-based instructional



materials such as video tutorials, programming documentation, conference lectures, and developer podcasts. However, the reality reveals a significant challenge at the early stages of higher education that is often overlooked in the general curriculum. Based on initial observation data of first-year students, approximately 65% of students still experience substantial difficulty in understanding direct spoken English without the aid of supporting text. This figure reflects a serious competency gap, where professional demands require high audio literacy, yet students' actual abilities remain limited to textual comprehension alone. The primary constraints include limited exposure to authentic language input, minimal technical vocabulary, and the challenging pace of native speakers. This situation is highly contradictory to the expected profile of Computer Science graduates who must compete in a global workplace demanding agile and adaptive oral communication skills.

In-depth observations conducted during classroom learning sessions show that students tend to have a very high dependency on written transcripts. Many feel extremely anxious and lose focus when they must listen to audio without the immediate support of accompanying written text. This indicates a weakness in real-time information processing skills, where students frequently fall behind in capturing main points because they are too preoccupied with every single word spoken (Cunff et al., 2024; Poland & Kałdonek-Crnjaković, 2021; Strom et al., 2023). This inability to process rapid information flows creates psychological barriers such as decreased self-confidence, which impacts active participation during class discussions. Furthermore, learning resources that rely solely on formal textbooks are often considered unengaging and fail to spark student motivation outside of formal lecture hours. There is an urgent need to provide learning materials that are more accessible and capable of increasing exposure to authentic English input. Providing media relevant to their interests will significantly help in reducing such anxiety while building natural listening habits without a constant reliance on supporting text (Al-Shamsi et al., 2020; Hameed et al., 2025; Husnawati et al., 2024; Ross & Stückler, 2025).

Advancements in educational technology have introduced various digital learning media, where the use of English podcasts and songs has begun to receive significant attention in modern pedagogical research. Podcasts offer numerous advantages such as authentic oral discourse, diversity of accents, natural intonation, and real-world topics highly relevant to the professional interests of current Computer Science students. This medium allows students to become accustomed to native speakers' styles in a relaxed yet information-rich technical context. On the other hand, the use of English songs provides repetitive linguistic patterns, rhythm, and melody that effectively facilitate vocabulary retention and pronunciation awareness (Inzhagi et al., 2025; Nie et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2023). Through the affective engagement offered by music, students can learn in a much more relaxed state, optimizing material absorption compared to traditional instructional audio. Previous studies suggest that the integration of such digital media can dramatically improve students' listening comprehension; however, empirical research focusing specifically on Informatics students in Indonesia remains limited, necessitating a systematic study to prove the effectiveness of these media (Astri et al., 2024; Fitria, 2021; Yuyun & Simamora, 2021).

To bridge this gap, the researcher—who also serves as the course lecturer—implemented an experimental-based intervention during classroom listening sessions. In this study, students were divided into different instructional conditions to compare the effectiveness of the applied methods in a controlled manner. The first group was provided with traditional audio materials sourced from standard textbooks, while the other group received instruction using a curated selection of English podcasts and songs integrated into classroom activities.



This direct experiment allowed the researcher to observe student behavior deeply, measure academic performance improvements through periodic evaluations, and assess how digital audio media affects their listening comprehension in an authentic learning environment. Through this experimental approach, the data obtained is not merely theoretical but reflects the real dynamics occurring within the Computer Science classroom. This provides a solid foundation for lecturers to determine the learning strategies most responsive to the constraints faced by students in mastering professional English listening skills.

Given the increasing relevance of digital resources in both English language learning and the discipline of Computer Science, it is essential to investigate whether the use of podcasts and songs can serve as effective alternative tools. The novelty of this research lies in the systematic effort to align digital audio content with the specific characteristics of Informatics students who demand efficiency and technical relevance. This study aims to empirically test the extent to which these media contribute to improving listening skills among Indonesian students. The proposed innovation includes the development of more flexible learning scenarios, where students can access these materials independently via their own devices without being restricted to the classroom. The results of this study are expected to provide practical references for educators to transition from conventional audio materials to more dynamic learning sources aligned with today's student digital ecosystem. By strengthening listening skills, students are expected to not only succeed academically but also be prepared for oral communication challenges in the highly competitive global technology industry of the future.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quasi-experimental design using a pre-test and post-test control group to investigate the effectiveness of English podcasts and songs in improving the listening skills of Informatics students. The quasi-experimental approach was chosen because the researcher, acting as the course lecturer, conducted the intervention within naturally existing classroom groups, making random individual assignment impractical. Two intact classes of first-year Informatics students were selected, with one designated as the experimental group receiving instruction via English podcasts and songs, and the other as the control group receiving conventional textbook-based audio instruction. The study was conducted over a period of four weeks with two sessions per week, allowing the researcher to measure the degree of improvement and compare learning outcomes between both groups within a controlled academic environment.

The population of this study consisted of all first-year Informatics students enrolled in the English Listening course at a private university in Indonesia. Using cluster sampling, a total of 60 students were selected and divided equally into the experimental and control groups ($n=30$ each). Both groups demonstrated similar English proficiency levels based on initial placement tests, ensuring a comparable baseline. Data collection utilized both quantitative and qualitative instruments. A researcher-designed listening comprehension test, consisting of multiple-choice items, short-answer questions, and vocabulary recognition tasks, was administered as both a pre-test and post-test. Additionally, qualitative data were gathered through an observation checklist to monitor student engagement and participation during lessons. The validity of the test was established through expert judgment, while reliability was confirmed via a pilot test using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding a high coefficient of 0.82.

Data analysis was conducted using both descriptive and inferential statistics to evaluate the impact of the intervention. Descriptive statistics, including mean scores and standard deviations, were used to summarize student performance before and after the treatment.



Inferential analysis involved two primary tests: a Paired Sample t-test to determine significant improvements within each group from pre-test to post-test, and an Independent Sample t-test to compare the post-test scores between the experimental and control groups. A significance level of $p < 0.05$ was set to determine statistical significance. This rigorous analytical approach allowed the researcher to draw valid conclusions regarding the effectiveness of integrating digital audio media into the English listening curriculum for Informatics students.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

This chapter presents the findings of the classroom-based experimental study conducted to examine the effectiveness of English podcasts and songs in improving the listening skills of Informatics students. The results include descriptive statistics of the pre-test and post-test scores, comparative analyses between the experimental and control groups, and the interpretation of these findings in relation to existing literature. Qualitative observations and student reflections are also incorporated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the learning process.

Pre-test and post-test scores were analyzed to determine improvements within each group. The descriptive statistics for both groups are presented in the following tables.

Experimental Group Scores

Table 1. Experimental Group Scores

Test	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Std. Dev
Pre-Test	62.4	50	74	6.82
Post-Test	82.7	70	94	5.91

Based on the descriptive statistics presented in Table 1, there was a significant increase in academic achievement in the experimental group after receiving special treatment. The average student score increased sharply by 20.3 points, moving from an initial score of 62.4 in the pre-test to 82.7 in the post-test. This improvement in learning quality was also reflected in the shift in the score range, where the minimum score rose from 50 to 70, and the maximum score reached 94 from the previous 74. The decrease in the standard deviation from 6.82 to 5.91 in the final results also indicated that the distribution of student abilities became more even after the implementation of podcasts and songs.

Control Group Scores

Table 2. Control Group Scores

Test	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Std. Dev
Pre-Test	63.1	52	75	6.51
Post-Test	72.2	60	85	5.88

Referring to the data presented in Table 2, the control group also showed a trend of improving learning outcomes, but with a more moderate intensity compared to the experimental group. The average student score increased by 9.1 points, moving from an initial score of 63.1 to 72.2 in the final evaluation. Changes in extreme scores were also observed, with the lower limit of the score increasing from 52 to 60 and the upper limit from 75 to 85. Although there was progress, evidenced by a decrease in the standard deviation to 5.88, this achievement confirms that conventional learning has a positive impact, but not as progressive as the method applied to the experimental group in boosting students' overall listening competence.

Comparative Analysis

The results of the comparative statistical test show strong empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of the applied learning method. Based on the Paired Sample t-test analysis,



both groups experienced significant improvement with a p-value below 0.001, but the experimental group recorded a much higher t-value of 12.84 compared to the control group at 6.02. Furthermore, the Independent Sample t-test analysis confirmed this superiority with a t-value of 5.47 and a significance of p less than 0.001. These data conclude that there is a real difference between the two methods, where the experimental group was statistically proven to be far superior in improving listening skills compared to the control group, validating the effectiveness of using English podcasts and songs.

Discussion

Statistical analysis of the academic achievements of Informatics students provides strong empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of technology-based audio media in language learning. The highly significant surge in average scores within the experimental group—reaching an increase of more than twenty points—confirms that interventions through podcasts and English songs have a transformative impact compared to conventional methods. This change is visible not only in the rise of cumulative scores but also in the equalization of student abilities, marked by a consistent decrease in standard deviation. This phenomenon indicates that the method is capable of bridging the competency gap among students, elevating the performance of those previously at the lower level toward a more competitive mastery. In contrast, while the control group showed positive progress, the intensity of their improvement tended to be moderate and not nearly as progressive as that of the experimental group. The disparity in t-test statistical results between the two groups further validates that exposure to authentic and rhythmic audio materials provides a superior cognitive stimulus in enhancing students' listening skills compared to standard textbook materials, which often lack dynamic challenges (Muzekki & Januar, 2026; Ridwan et al., 2024; Widiyanto et al., 2025).

The superior performance of the experimental group can be attributed to the intrinsic characteristics of the teaching materials used—namely podcasts and songs—which offer a richer and more authentic dimension of language learning. Podcasts provide exposure to spoken English in real-time with natural variations in intonation and accents, elements rarely found in traditional textbook audio recordings. The linguistic complexity found in podcast conversations trains students to process information quickly and accurately, mimicking real-world communication scenarios. On the other hand, the integration of songs introduces elements of vocabulary repetition and phonological patterns that strengthen long-term memory retention through rhythm and melody. The synergy between the informative content of podcasts and the musical elements of songs creates a learning environment that stimulates multiple cognitive channels simultaneously. These findings align with previous literature stating that digital audio media not only improves comprehensive understanding but also encourages learner autonomy in exploring the target language beyond the confines of the formal classroom, making the acquisition process more natural and deeply embedded (Azhar et al., 2026; DHUHA & ASTUTIK, 2025; Djerah, 2024).

The contextual relevance of the materials to the academic background of Informatics students serves as a key factor in the success of this intervention. Selecting podcast episodes that discuss specific topics such as cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and digital culture proved to increase students' cognitive engagement because the material resonates directly with their interests and future professional needs. Exposure to technical vocabulary and industrial communication styles in audio format helps them bridge the gap between language theory and practical application in the workforce. Beyond the cognitive aspect, this approach also successfully addresses the affective domain of learning. Using songs as a transition or interlude effectively reduces listening anxiety, which is often a major hurdle in foreign language learning.



A more relaxed and enjoyable learning atmosphere significantly lowers the affective filter, making students more open and receptive to language input (Inada, 2023; Luo, 2024; Putinatr & Kiattikomol, 2022). This positive psychological state allows the internalization of the language to occur without pressure, shifting students' perceptions of English listening from a daunting task into an enjoyable experience relevant to their career aspirations (Isnata, 2025; Muzekki & Januar, 2026).

A comparative analysis of the control group highlights the limitations of conventional learning methods that rely solely on textbook audio materials. Although a moderate score increase occurred, this achievement did not match the leap in performance experienced by the experimental group. Traditional listening materials are often scripted, rigid, and overly predictable, failing to represent the true dynamics of English in the real world. The absence of accent variations, unnatural speech rates, and irrelevant topics causes attention levels and learning motivation to remain stagnant. Students in this group did not receive adequate cognitive challenges to develop advanced listening strategies; instead, they remained focused on basic comprehension exercises. This reinforces the view that relying solely on fabricated materials is insufficient to prepare students for the complexities of global communication (Ardiansyah & Permana, 2026; Pradheepa et al., 2025; Raman et al., 2024). Without elements of authenticity and novelty, the learning process becomes mechanical and loses its appeal, ultimately limiting the students' maximum potential in developing adaptive and functional listening competencies for their academic and professional needs (Prahesti et al., 2026; Rukmana et al., 2023; Wibawa & Sumarwan, 2024).

Qualitative findings sourced from student reflections and classroom observations further strengthen the validity of this study's quantitative results. Students reported a positive emotional transformation, where the feeling of being intimidated by spoken English gradually disappeared, replaced by growing self-confidence. They felt a significant improvement in mastering new vocabulary acquired through repeated exposure to podcast content and song lyrics. More than just a grade improvement, a paradigm shift occurred from passive to active learning, where students showed high enthusiasm and a willingness to participate in class discussions. The students' strong preference for authentic materials, which they deemed "more real," indicates that they value learning that prepares them for actual workplace challenges. Overall, the integration of podcasts and songs has proven to be not just a teaching aid, but an effective catalyst in enhancing linguistic competence, intrinsic motivation, and the professional readiness of Informatics students, offering a promising pedagogical model for the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) curriculum.

CONCLUSION

This classroom-based experimental study investigated the effectiveness of English podcasts and songs in improving the listening skills of Informatics students. Based on the quantitative and qualitative findings, several conclusions can be drawn. First, the integration of English podcasts and songs significantly enhanced students' listening comprehension. The experimental group, which received instruction using podcasts and songs, demonstrated substantially higher improvement compared to the control group that used traditional textbook-based listening materials. Statistical analyses confirmed that the difference in post-test performance between the two groups was significant ($p < 0.05$), indicating that digital audio media are more effective in supporting listening development. Second, the use of podcasts and songs increased student engagement, motivation, and confidence during listening activities. Classroom observations and student reflections revealed positive emotional responses, greater



focus, and heightened interest. The authentic nature of podcasts exposed students to real-life speech patterns, while songs contributed rhythm, repetition, and memorability that supported vocabulary acquisition and listening fluency.

Third, the materials used—especially technology-related podcast episodes—aligned well with the academic context of Informatics students. This relevance improved learners' comprehension of technical vocabulary and familiarized them with communication styles common in technological fields. Thus, the use of domain-related audio resources contributed not only to general listening skills but also to discipline-specific language exposure. Overall, the findings suggest that English podcasts and songs are effective, engaging, and pedagogically valuable media for enhancing the listening skills of Informatics students. These tools can serve as powerful alternatives or supplements to conventional listening materials in higher education English instruction.

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