

## ***The Impact Of Using BBC 6 Minute English Podcast On Students' Listening Comprehension***

### **Dampak Penggunaan Podcast BBC 6 Minute English Terhadap Kemampuan Menyimak Siswa**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

*In the context of English language learning, listening remains one of the most challenging skills for students to master. Many learners struggle to understand authentic spoken English because classroom listening activities often rely on monotonous, monologue-based audio materials. To address this issue, this research examines the effect of the BBC 6 Minute English podcast on students' listening comprehension at SMAN 1 Cikande. This study employed a quasi-experimental design with a pretest–posttest control group involving 76 eleventh-grade students divided into experimental and control classes. Data was collected through pretests and posttests and analyzed using SPSS version 26 with an independent samples t-test and effect size calculation. The results showed a significant difference between the two groups, with the experimental class showing higher improvement (pretest mean = 66.34, posttest mean = 84.11) compared to the control class (pretest mean = 69.95, posttest mean = 73.50). The significance value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ) indicated a positive effect of podcast-based instruction, while the effect size (Cohen's  $d = 1.03$ ) demonstrated a large impact. These findings suggest that integrating the BBC 6 Minute English podcast into classroom engage with authentic English materials.*

**Keywords:** BBC 6 Minute English, Listening Comprehension, Podcast, English Learning, Quasi-Experimental.

#### **ABSTRAK**

Dalam konteks pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, keterampilan menyimak masih menjadi salah satu kemampuan yang paling menantang untuk dikuasai oleh siswa. Banyak peserta didik mengalami kesulitan memahami bahasa Inggris autentik karena kegiatan menyimak di kelas umumnya masih menggunakan audio monolog yang monoton. Untuk mengatasi hal tersebut, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji pengaruh penggunaan podcast BBC 6 Minute English terhadap kemampuan menyimak siswa di SMAN 1 Cikande. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kuasi-eksperimen dengan desain pretest–posttest control group yang melibatkan 76 siswa kelas XI yang dibagi ke dalam kelas eksperimen dan kelas kontrol. Data dikumpulkan melalui tes awal dan tes akhir, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan SPSS versi 26 dengan uji independent samples t-test serta perhitungan effect size. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya perbedaan yang signifikan antara kedua kelompok, dengan peningkatan lebih tinggi pada kelas eksperimen (rata-rata pretest = 66,34; posttest = 84,11) dibandingkan kelas kontrol (rata-rata pretest = 69,95; posttest = 73,50). Nilai signifikansi sebesar 0,000 ( $p < 0,05$ ) menunjukkan adanya pengaruh positif dari penggunaan podcast, sedangkan effect size (Cohen's  $d = 1,03$ ) menunjukkan kategori pengaruh yang besar. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa integrasi podcast BBC 6 Minute English dalam pembelajaran mampu meningkatkan kemampuan menyimak dan motivasi siswa dalam memahami bahasa Inggris autentik.

**Kata Kunci:** Podcast BBC 6 Minute English, Kemampuan Mendengarkan, Podcast, Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris, Kuasi-Eksperimen.

## 1. Introduction

Listening comprehension remains one of the most challenging skills in English language acquisition, especially for students in Indonesian high schools. Studies have shown that limited exposure to authentic spoken English, insufficient integration of digital learning media, and a lack of teacher training contribute significantly to low listening performance among EFL learners (Baharuddin, 2016; Zein, Sukyadi, Hamied, & Lengkanawati, 2020). In many classrooms, English instruction continues to rely heavily on scripted dialogues and monologue-based recordings that do not represent the natural rhythm, pronunciation, and interactional features of real-life communication. As a result, students often struggle to understand authentic English input in natural contexts.

Listening plays a central role in the overall process of language acquisition. It serves as the foundation for developing other skills, such as speaking, reading, and writing, since it exposes learners to vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and intonation in meaningful communication (Amelhay & Sakale, 2024; Putri, 2024). However, traditional listening materials often fail to engage students in active comprehension, leading to passive reception rather than meaningful processing. To address this issue, educators and researchers have increasingly explored digital technologies as a means of promoting autonomous and contextual listening experiences (Gunawan, 2023; Samudro, 2025).

Among these technologies, podcasts have emerged as a practical and effective tool for language learning. Podcasts provide learners with authentic, topic-based listening experiences that can be accessed flexibly and repeatedly. Recent studies show that the use of podcasts enhances learners' motivation and exposure to genuine speech patterns, while offering opportunities for individualized learning (Abdulrahman, Basalama, & Widodo, 2018; Pratiwi, Bunau, & Wardah, 2024). Furthermore, sustained exposure to authentic audio materials such as podcasts strengthens learners' ability to comprehend natural spoken English across various accents and speech rates (Dimasanti & Inayati, 2025). These characteristics make podcasts particularly valuable for developing listening comprehension in EFL contexts.

One of the most widely used educational podcasts is *BBC 6 Minute English*, produced by BBC Learning English. Each episode presents short discussions on various contemporary topics, lasting approximately six minutes, and features conversational English delivered at an accessible pace. The concise duration and structured format make it ideal for classroom integration, especially in environments where exposure to authentic English is limited. By engaging with the podcast, learners encounter natural pronunciation, idiomatic expressions, and everyday vocabulary in a meaningful context.

Listening in this research is framed as an active, metacognitive process in which learners attend to, infer from, and monitor spoken input to construct meaning (Daskalovska, Hadzi-Nikolova, & Alogjozovska, 2023). Within this perspective, authentic audio such as podcasts provides comprehensible, context-rich input that supports cognitive engagement and sustained listening development in formal instruction (Gonulal, 2022). While the historical foundation for comprehensible input derives from the Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1985), contemporary approaches have extended their relevance to technology-mediated environments that provide learners with short, topic-based exposure to authentic communication. Guided by these frameworks, this study examines the effect of the *BBC 6 Minute English* podcast on students' listening comprehension. Specifically, it aims to determine whether podcast-based instruction produces a significant improvement in listening comprehension compared with monologue-based audio. The results are expected to offer empirical support for integrating authentic digital media into English language teaching and contribute to the ongoing discourse on effective listening pedagogy in the Indonesian EFL context.

## 2. Methodology

This research employed a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design using a pre-test and post-test control group. This design was appropriate for classroom-based educational research where individual randomization was not possible, enabling a controlled comparison between two intact groups. The study examined the effect of the BBC 6 Minute English podcast on students' listening comprehension at SMAN 1 Cikande during the 2024–2025 academic year. The quasi-experimental design facilitated the observation of causal relationships between variables while maintaining ecological validity in natural classroom settings (Creswell, 2014). The research relied on primary quantitative data in the form of students' test scores obtained before and after treatment.

The population consisted of 192 students from seven 11th-grade classes (XI A–XI G) at SMAN 1 Cikande. Using cluster random sampling, two intact classes were selected through a random draw using a digital spinner. Class XI F was assigned as the experimental group and Class XI A as the control group, with a total of 38 students participating. The sampling method ensured representative participation while maintaining the natural classroom structure (Singarimbun & Effendi, 2012; Sugiyono, 2013). Both groups were taught by the same teacher to maintain instructional consistency.

The study involved two primary variables: the independent variable, the use of *BBC 6 Minute English* podcasts as a learning medium, and the dependent variable, students' listening comprehension performance. The independent variable was operationalized as the integration of authentic podcast episodes into classroom instruction over two sessions, featuring activities such as focused listening, vocabulary review, and comprehension exercises. The dependent variable, listening comprehension, was defined as students' ability to understand spoken English by identifying main ideas, recognizing specific details, making simple inferences, and interpreting vocabulary in context, guided by the concept of comprehensible and authentic input that supports cognitive engagement in language learning (Gunawan et al., 2023; Sihite et al., 2024).

Data was collected using a listening comprehension test developed specifically for this study. The instrument initially consisted of 60 multiple-choice items designed to align with the senior high school English curriculum and the CEFR B1–B2 level descriptors. A try-out test involving 38 students from a non-sample class was conducted to determine validity and reliability. Item validity was analyzed through the Pearson product–moment correlation, which resulted in 39 valid items meeting the  $r_{table}$  criterion at  $\alpha = .05$ . Reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha yielded coefficients between 0.801 and 0.835, indicating high internal consistency (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2015). For operational testing, 15 valid items were selected for both the pre-test and post-test.

Data collection was conducted in three main phases. First, a pre-test was administered simultaneously to both groups to establish baseline listening comprehension levels. Second, during the treatment phase, the experimental group received instruction using *BBC 6 Minute English* podcasts integrated into two classroom sessions, while the control group was taught using conventional monologue-based audio materials. Both classes studied similar topics for approximately 45 minutes per session under identical classroom conditions. Finally, a post-test with the same format and difficulty level as the pre-test was administered to measure improvement. The instrument was identical in structure and administration procedure, ensuring comparability of results.

All test responses were scored objectively, and the data were entered into SPSS version 26 for statistical analysis. Prior to hypothesis testing, assumption checks were conducted to ensure data suitability for parametric testing. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test confirmed data normality, while Levene's test verified homogeneity of variances at the significance level of 0.05 (Sugiyono, 2013; Usmani, 2020). The main hypothesis was tested using an independent samples t-test to compare post-test means between the experimental and control groups. The analysis

yielded a significance value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ , indicating a significant difference favoring the experimental group. Additionally, the effect size (Cohen's  $d = 1.03$ ) demonstrated a large effect, suggesting that the *BBC 6 Minute English* podcast had a substantial positive impact on students' listening comprehension (Cohen, 2013).

### 3. Literature Review

#### Listening Comprehension

Listening comprehension is one of the fundamental skills in second-language acquisition and a crucial aspect of communicative competence. It involves perceiving, processing, and interpreting spoken language in real time. Learners must decode sounds, recognise words, understand grammatical structures, and use context to infer meaning (Goh & Taib, 2019). Listening is not a passive activity but an active cognitive process where learners construct meaning through both bottom-up decoding and top-down prediction (Darmayanti Manurung, 2025). Through repeated exposure to spoken input, learners acquire new vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammatical patterns that support overall language proficiency (Rahimi & Abedini, 2020). In this study, listening comprehension refers to the ability to identify main ideas, recognise specific details, make inferences, and interpret vocabulary in context within spoken English.

Listening also contributes to the development of other language skills such as speaking, reading, and writing. Exposure to authentic input allows learners to internalise natural rhythm, stress, and intonation patterns (Rost, 2015). It also familiarises them with sentence structures and discourse organisation that facilitate reading comprehension and writing fluency (Graham & Santos, 2015). However, listening remains a difficult skill for many EFL learners because of factors such as limited vocabulary, unfamiliar accents, and fast speech rate (Hardiyanto et al. 2021). These problems are especially common among Indonesian students who have limited opportunities to hear English in authentic contexts (Saraswati et al. 2024). Therefore, providing authentic audio input is essential to help learners improve their listening comprehension.

#### Podcasts as Authentic Learning Media

Podcasts are digital audio files published in episodic form that can be streamed or downloaded, allowing learners to access them flexibly for language exposure and practice (Namaziandost, Neisi, & Ahmadi, 2021). In language education, podcasts have emerged as an effective medium for delivering authentic listening materials that provide learners with exposure to natural and context-rich speech (Alfian & Nurchaerani, 2024). They present real models of communication that enhance listening comprehension and foster vocabulary development through repeated engagement with spoken input (Gunawan et al. 2023). Moreover, podcasts enable learners to control playback functions such as pausing, replaying, and adjusting listening speed, which promotes self-paced and autonomous learning (Dimasanti et al. 2025).

Several studies have demonstrated the positive impact of podcasts on EFL learners' listening performance. (Hasan & Hoon, 2013) reported that podcast-based learning familiarizes learners with authentic features of spoken language such as intonation, reduced forms, and connected speech. Similarly, (Abdulrahman et al., 2018) found that students taught using podcasts performed better in listening comprehension than those who used conventional materials. These findings confirm that podcasts help learners process authentic speech effectively and improve their overall understanding of spoken English.

Podcasts also increase learners' motivation and autonomy. Since they can be accessed anytime and anywhere, students are able to practice listening beyond the classroom and engage with English in authentic settings (Abdulrahman et al., 2018; Pratiwi et al., 2024). The flexibility of podcasts allows them to be integrated into daily routines while maintaining high learner engagement and sustained exposure to target-language input (Namaziandost, Neisi, & Ahmadi,

2021). Moreover, podcasts offer a wide variety of real-world topics that promote not only linguistic competence but also pragmatic and intercultural awareness (Alfian & Nurchaerani, 2024). Therefore, as an authentic and autonomous learning medium, podcasts serve as an effective tool to enhance listening comprehension in EFL contexts.

**BBC 6 Minute English Podcast**

The *BBC 6 Minute English* podcast is an educational program produced by BBC Learning English that features short, topic-based conversations using clear, natural English (“BBC Learning English - 6 Minute English,” n.d.). Each episode lasts approximately six minutes and covers a variety of topics such as science, culture, and lifestyle. Its brief and structured format provides manageable input that encourages learners to focus and comprehend effectively without cognitive overload. The series embodies the principle of providing comprehensible, authentic input that facilitates incremental language acquisition and sustained engagement (Rahman, Basalama, & Widodo, 2018).

The *BBC 6 Minute English* podcast offers contextualised listening practice that helps learners develop comprehension of real spoken English. It exposes them to natural accents, speech rates, and lexical variations in meaningful contexts (Gonulal, 2020; Dimasanti & Inayati, 2025). Empirical evidence from Nurislami et al. (2024) showed that consistent use of *BBC 6 Minute English* improved students’ vocabulary recognition and ability to understand authentic speech in EFL classrooms. However, some challenges remain for lower-proficiency learners, including the natural pace and absence of visual support. These can be mitigated by incorporating pre-listening scaffolds, transcripts, and guided comprehension activities that help students process spoken input more effectively (Pratiwi et al., 2024).

Overall, research indicates that authentic audio materials such as *BBC 6 Minute English* can substantially enhance learners’ listening comprehension by providing realistic, topic-driven exposure to English in use. Its concise duration, pedagogical focus, and contextual relevance make it an accessible medium for classroom integration. Consequently, this study investigates the effect of *BBC 6 Minute English* podcasts on students’ listening comprehension in comparison with conventional monologue-based listening materials

**4. Result and discussion**

This study aimed to investigate the effect of using the *BBC 6 Minute English* podcast on students’ listening comprehension among eleventh-grade students of SMAN 1 Cikande. The data were collected through a listening comprehension test administered before (pre-test) and after (post-test) the treatment for both the experimental and control groups. The analysis included normality and homogeneity tests, an independent samples t-test, and an effect size calculation using SPSS version 26.

**4.1 Descriptive Statistics**

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the pre-test and post-test scores from both groups.

**Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Pre-test and Post-test Scores**

| Grup                          | N  | Minimum | Maximum | Mean  | Std. Deviation |
|-------------------------------|----|---------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Pre-test Experimental Class   | 38 | 37      | 100     | 66.43 | 16.562         |
| Post-test Expereimental Class | 38 | 60      | 100     | 84.11 | 10.462         |
| Pre-test Control Class        | 38 | 13      | 100     | 69.95 | 20.493         |
| Post-test Control Class       | 38 | 53      | 93      | 73.50 | 10.107         |

As shown in Table 1, the mean post-test score of the experimental group ( $M = 84.11$ ) was higher than that of the control group ( $M = 73.50$ ). This indicates that students taught through the *BBC 6 Minute English* podcast achieved greater improvement in their listening comprehension than those taught using conventional monologue-based audio materials. The mean difference of 17.77 points in the experimental group, compared to 3.55 points in the control group, demonstrates a substantial learning gain attributed to the podcast-based instruction.

#### 4.2 Assumption Tests

Before conducting the t-test, assumption checks were performed to ensure the validity of parametric analysis. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test results indicated that the pre-test and post-test data of both groups were normally distributed ( $p > .05$ ). The homogeneity test using Levene’s statistics also showed significance values of .343 for the pre-test and .632 for the post-test ( $p > .05$ ), indicating equal variances between groups. Therefore, the data met the assumptions required for the independent samples t-test.

#### 4.3 Independent Sample t-Test and Effect Size

The difference in post-test results between the experimental and control groups was analyzed using an independent samples t-test. The results are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. Independent Samples t-Test Results (Post-test Scores)**

| Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances          | T     | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------|----|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| F = 0.231, Sig = 0.623 (Equal variances assumed) | 4.494 | 74 | .000            | 10.605          | 2.360                 |

The significance value ( $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ) indicates a statistically significant difference in post-test scores between the two groups. Thus, the use of the *BBC 6 Minute English* podcast had a positive and significant effect on students’ listening comprehension.

#### 4.4 Effect Size Calculation

To determine the magnitude of this difference, the effect size was calculated using Cohen’s  $d$  as follows:

$$\text{Cohen's } d = (M_1 - M_2) / SD_{\text{pooled}}$$

Where:

$M_1 = 84.11$  (mean of experimental group post-test)

$M_2 = 73.50$  (mean of control group post-test)

$$SD_{\text{pooled}} = \sqrt{[(SD_1^2 + SD_2^2) / 2]}$$

Computation:

$$SD_{\text{pooled}} = \sqrt{[(10.462^2 + 10.107^2) / 2]}$$

$$SD_{\text{pooled}} = \sqrt{[(109.47 + 102.15) / 2]}$$

$$SD_{\text{pooled}} = \sqrt{(211.62 / 2)} = \sqrt{105.81} = 10.29$$

Therefore,

$$d = (84.11 - 73.50) / 10.29 = 1.03.$$

Based on Cohen (1988),  $d = 1.03$  represents a large effect size, indicating that the treatment had a strong and meaningful effect on improving students’ listening comprehension.

## 5. Discussion

The results confirmed that the *BBC 6 Minute English* podcast significantly improved students’ listening comprehension. This finding supports the principle that language acquisition is facilitated when learners receive comprehensible and contextualized input slightly above their

current proficiency level (Krashen, 1985). The podcast's authentic and topic-based design offers meaningful linguistic exposure that encourages progressive development of listening ability through repeated engagement with natural discourse.

These findings are consistent with recent research reporting that podcast-based instruction enhances listening performance and learner motivation in EFL contexts (Namaziandost et al., 2021; Rahman et al., 2018; Nurislami et al., 2024). The flexibility of podcasts allows students to control their listening experience by replaying sections, adjusting playback speed, and engaging autonomously with authentic materials. Such learner-centered engagement supports self-regulated learning and contributes to improved comprehension outcomes (Dimasanti & Inayati, 2025).

Furthermore, this research reinforces the view that listening is an active, metacognitive process in which learners combine bottom-up decoding and top-down inferencing to construct meaning from input (Goh & Taib, 2019). Exposure to authentic spoken texts through short, structured podcast episodes enhances both processes by providing realistic communicative contexts that stimulate strategic listening and reflection.

Overall, the statistical results and theoretical interpretations demonstrate that the use of the BBC 6 Minute English podcast has a significant and positive effect on students' listening comprehension. The large effect size (Cohen's  $d = 1.03$ ) indicates a strong pedagogical impact and supports the integration of authentic and accessible listening materials into classroom instruction, particularly in EFL environments where opportunities for natural English exposure remain limited.

## 6. Conclusion

The findings of this research demonstrate that the use of the BBC 6 Minute English podcast significantly improves students' listening comprehension at the senior high school level. Statistical analysis confirmed a significant difference between the experimental and control groups, indicating that students who received podcast-based instruction achieved higher listening comprehension scores. This result supports the notion that authentic and comprehensible input, when presented in structured and meaningful contexts, facilitates language acquisition and strengthens learners' listening ability.

From a pedagogical perspective, this study provides evidence that integrating digital media such as educational podcasts can enhance students' motivation, engagement, and autonomy in learning English. The authentic exposure to natural speech patterns, accents, and real-life topics helps learners develop both bottom-up decoding and top-down inferencing skills required for effective listening comprehension. For teachers, podcasts can serve as accessible and flexible tools to create interactive and contextual listening lessons that align with curriculum objectives.

Theoretically, these findings reinforce the relevance of comprehensible input theory in the era of digital learning by showing that authentic materials remain essential in fostering meaningful language development. Practically, schools are encouraged to incorporate podcasts as supplementary listening resources to bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world communication.

Future research may explore podcast-based instruction across different proficiency levels or language skills or combine it with interactive technologies such as mobile learning applications to further enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.

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