

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical and empirical foundation of the study. It discusses listening comprehension in English learning, students' listening problems, podcasts as digital learning media, podcast-based listening instruction, the main theory of the study, previous studies, theoretical framework, and research hypotheses. The purpose of this chapter is to show why podcasts are relevant to the improvement of students' listening comprehension and how the study is theoretically and methodologically justified.

2.2 Listening Comprehension in English Learning

Listening comprehension is the process of receiving, recognizing, interpreting, and responding to spoken language. In English learning, listening is categorized as a receptive skill because students receive language input through sound. However, listening is not passive. Students must actively process pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, context, and speaker intention. A student who has good listening comprehension can understand the general message, identify important details, follow instructions, and infer meaning from spoken English.

Listening comprehension has an important role in English classes because it supports other language skills. Students need listening input before they can produce spoken language accurately. When students frequently listen to English, they become more familiar with pronunciation, intonation, rhythm, and common expressions. This exposure can also help students develop vocabulary and grammar awareness. Therefore, improving listening comprehension is not only useful for listening tests but also for broader English communicative competence.

In classroom practice, listening comprehension can be developed through systematic stages. The pre-listening stage prepares students by activating prior knowledge, introducing keywords, and predicting the content. The while-listening stage trains students to identify main ideas, details, and specific information. The post-

listening stage allows students to summarize, discuss, answer questions, or reflect on what they heard. These stages are important because they help students listen with purpose rather than merely hearing audio without direction.

2.3 Students' Problems in Listening Comprehension

Students often face several problems when listening to English. The first problem is limited vocabulary. When students do not know key words in the audio, they may fail to understand the whole message. The second problem is pronunciation and accent. English words may sound different from their written form, especially when speakers use connected speech, contractions, reductions, or natural speed. The third problem is lack of concentration. Listening requires continuous attention, and students may lose the next information when they are still thinking about the previous sentence.

Another problem is limited exposure to authentic spoken English. Many EFL students only hear English during classroom activities. As a result, they may not be familiar with different voices, topics, and speaking styles. Monotonous listening materials can also reduce motivation. When students feel that listening activities are difficult and boring, they may not practice listening independently. These problems show that listening instruction requires media that can provide varied input, repeated exposure, and interesting content.

2.4 Podcast as Digital Learning Media

A podcast is a digital audio program that can be accessed through the internet. Podcasts usually consist of episodes and may discuss education, daily life, culture, stories, interviews, news, or entertainment. In English learning, podcasts can be used as listening materials because they provide spoken English in an accessible format. Students can listen to podcasts through smartphones, laptops, or other devices, making the medium suitable for both classroom and independent learning.

Podcasts have several advantages as learning media. First, podcasts are flexible because students can listen anytime and anywhere. Second, podcasts are repeatable; students can pause and replay the audio until they understand the content. Third, podcasts provide varied topics that can be selected according to students' interests and

curriculum themes. Fourth, podcasts can expose students to different accents, speech rates, and communicative contexts. These advantages make podcasts useful for improving listening comprehension, especially when the teacher designs clear learning tasks around the podcast.

However, the use of podcasts also requires careful selection. The teacher should choose podcast episodes that match the students' proficiency level, age, vocabulary, and learning objectives. Audio that is too long or too difficult may frustrate students. Therefore, podcast-based listening instruction should start with short and understandable materials. Teachers may provide vocabulary support, guiding questions, and comprehension tasks to help students process the content effectively.

2.5 Podcast-Based Listening Instruction

Podcast-based listening instruction refers to the use of podcast audio as the main listening material in English classes. The instruction can be organized into three stages. In the pre-listening stage, the teacher introduces the topic, asks students to predict the content, explains key vocabulary, and prepares students for the audio. This stage reduces anxiety and gives students a purpose for listening. In the while-listening stage, students listen to the podcast and complete tasks such as identifying the topic, choosing correct answers, completing missing information, or noting key points. In the post-listening stage, students discuss answers, summarize the audio, retell the content, or connect the topic with their own experience.

Podcast-based instruction can improve listening comprehension because it combines exposure, repetition, and meaningful tasks. Exposure helps students become familiar with spoken English. Repetition allows students to notice sounds and words that they missed in the first listening. Meaningful tasks require students to process information actively. When these elements are combined, podcasts can become an effective medium for listening practice rather than simply an audio file played in class.

The effectiveness of podcasts depends on how they are implemented. Teachers need to prepare suitable materials, provide clear instructions, control the duration, and evaluate students' comprehension. Students should not only listen but also demonstrate

understanding through test items, summaries, discussions, or other activities. In this study, podcast use is treated as an instructional intervention. The students in the experimental group receive podcast-based listening activities, while the control group follows conventional listening exercises. The comparison of results is used to determine the effectiveness of the podcast intervention.

2.6 Main Theory of the Study

The main theory of this study is input-based listening learning. This theory assumes that language learning develops when students receive sufficient, understandable, and meaningful language input. In the context of this research, podcasts function as listening input. When students listen to podcast episodes that are suitable for their level, they receive spoken English that can support vocabulary recognition, pronunciation awareness, and comprehension development. The learning effect becomes stronger when students are given repeated opportunities to listen and when the listening input is followed by comprehension tasks.

This study also uses the theory of bottom-up and top-down listening processes. Bottom-up processing refers to understanding spoken language by recognizing smaller language units such as sounds, syllables, words, phrases, and sentences. In podcast listening, students use bottom-up processing when they identify keywords, recognize pronunciation, and understand details. Top-down processing refers to understanding spoken language by using prior knowledge, context, topic familiarity, and prediction. Students use top-down processing when they guess the topic from the title, predict content from keywords, or infer meaning from context.

Podcast-based listening instruction can integrate both processes. For example, before listening, students can predict the topic and discuss related vocabulary. This supports top-down processing. During listening, students can identify specific words, details, and expressions. This supports bottom-up processing. After listening, students can summarize the message and discuss the meaning. This integration makes podcasts relevant to the improvement of listening comprehension because students do not only hear audio but also process it strategically.

2.7 Previous Studies

Several recent studies support the use of podcasts in English listening instruction. Nisa, Izzah, and Hadi (2022) investigated the use of podcasts to improve students' listening comprehension. Their study used a quantitative quasi-experimental design with pre-test and post-test instruments. The result showed that students' listening scores improved after the use of podcasts, indicating that podcasts can be effective media for teaching listening.

Partiwi (2022) examined the use of podcasts for listening comprehension during online learning. The study reported that podcasts were accessible and suitable for listening activities. Students also considered podcasts helpful because they could support independent listening practice. This finding is relevant to the present study because it shows that podcasts are not only instructional media but also flexible learning resources.

Delgadillo and Illera (2024) explored the effects of using podcasts on EFL college students with low English proficiency. Their mixed-method study found improvement in post-test results and positive effects on motivation and vocabulary acquisition. Although their participants were college students, the findings support the assumption that podcasts can provide useful input for learners who need more listening exposure.

Ningrum and Panggabean (2025) conducted a systematic literature review on using podcasts to develop listening comprehension among EFL university students. Their review found that podcasts provide authentic and varied listening materials, flexible access, and opportunities for metacognitive strategies. This study supports the theoretical foundation that podcasts can transform listening instruction by making input more accessible and relevant.

Based on the previous studies, there is strong support for using podcasts in EFL listening learning. However, the present study focuses specifically on the effectiveness of podcasts in improving students' listening comprehension in English classes at SMPN Pangarengan 1 Sampang. This local context is important because students' needs, proficiency levels, and classroom conditions may differ from previous studies.

Therefore, this study attempts to provide empirical evidence in a junior high school context.

2.8 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this research explains the relationship between podcasts and students' listening comprehension. The independent variable is the use of podcasts as learning media. The dependent variable is students' listening comprehension. Podcast-based learning provides students with spoken English input that can be listened to repeatedly. Through guided activities, students process the input using bottom-up and top-down strategies. As a result, students are expected to improve their ability to understand main ideas, details, vocabulary, and speaker meaning.

The framework can be described as follows:

Podcast-based listening instruction -> repeated and meaningful spoken English input -
> bottom-up and top-down processing -> improvement of students' listening comprehension.

In this framework, the teacher plays an important role in selecting appropriate podcasts and designing listening tasks. Students are expected to become active listeners who predict, identify, infer, and evaluate spoken information. The effectiveness of the intervention is measured through pre-test and post-test listening comprehension scores.

2.9 Research Hypotheses

Based on the theoretical review and previous studies, the hypotheses of this research are formulated as follows:

- a. H0: There is no significant effect of using podcasts on students' listening comprehension in English classes.
- b. H1: There is a significant effect of using podcasts on students' listening comprehension in English classes.