



Exploring the Relationship between Podcast Engagement and Selective Listening Skills among EFL Learners

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026 - 06 - 01 Revised: 2026 06-18 Accepted: 2026 06-30 Keywords: Podcast engagement, selective listening, EFL learners, listening skills DOI: 10.24256/ideasv14i1.10208 Corresponding Author: Siti Ananda Zalzabila Mudjarab sitianandazalzabilah@gmail. com English Education Study Program, Universitas Negeri Makassar	<i>This study explores the relationship between podcast engagement and selective listening abilities in EFL learners. Although podcasts have become increasingly popular in language learning, limited research has examined the relationship between learners' engagement with podcasts and their selective listening abilities, particularly among EFL students in Indonesian universities. This study addresses this gap by investigating the relationship between podcast engagement, encompassing behavioral, cognitive, and emotional dimensions, and learners' selective listening abilities. The findings provide practical implications for EFL educators, highlighting the importance of integrating podcast-based activities into language instruction to foster active listening and enhance information-processing skills. The study employed a quantitative correlational design and included 30 English Education students from UIN Alauddin Makassar. Data collection involved administering a Selective Listening Test alongside a Podcast Engagement Questionnaire. The analysis using Pearson correlation demonstrated a robust and statistically significant relationship between podcast engagement and selective listening skills ($r = 0.890$; $p < 0.01$). The results suggest that increased interaction with podcasts correlates with an enhanced capacity to discern essential information and understand spoken content proficiently. The findings indicate that podcasts function as a valuable authentic learning tool for improving listening skills, especially in the area of selective listening. It is advisable for upcoming studies to incorporate larger sample sizes and mixed-method strategies to enhance the comprehension of learners' engagement patterns.</i>

1. Introduction

Language is a tool that humans use to communicate. Language is used in everyday life to create interactions with other people, in the form of sound symbols, so that they can express their thoughts, ideas, feelings, and intentions to others. There are various languages in the world, one of which is English. English is an international language and one of the most widely used languages in the world, spanning various fields such as education, business, politics, and entertainment. English has four skills that are very important in learning, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Thi, 2021). Listening is considered the most important for effective communication because we listen most of the time in everyday communication, and it helps listeners get information that can be understood (Putra & Dianti, 2022).

Many English education students still experience difficulties in understanding spoken English. Students have difficulty understanding what the speaker is saying because they are not used to practicing listening skills and do not yet know which media are effective to use to improve their listening skills. Listening is one of the most challenging skills for EFL learners, particularly when it comes to selective listening (Rmelah & Pornwiriyaakit, 2023). Selective listening is the act of listening in which a person only focuses on certain parts of the information being conveyed, while ignoring or filtering out other parts (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019). For this instance, using technological media is a potential option (Taha & Abdulrahman, 2023). By integrating technology into the educational process, educators may teach more effectively, and students can learn more simply (Saragih et al., 2022). 'Podcasts' are one technological medium that can be utilized to enhance the educational process (Hasibuan & Male, 2022).

The words "iPod" and "broadcasting" are combined to form the phrase "podcasting." (Syahabuddin & Rizqa, 2021). Podcast is a digital audio broadcast consisting of episodes focused on a specific topic. Podcast can be listened to for free via various platforms, such as Spotify or YouTube. Listening podcasts can help learners become more focused and attentive, especially those who are more easily distracted. According to Azmee (2022), using podcast as a learning medium is very significant to help students enhance their listening skill and to make them more familiar with various accents. This demonstrates how the digital technologies at our disposal can improve the development of specific language skills.

Learning begins with student engagement, which leads to knowledge acquisition and understanding. The quality of the student experience is significantly impacted by the concept of student engagement, which is a multifaceted and dynamic concept (Koca & Karadag, 2025). Student engagement refers to the behaviors of students who indicate a greater interest in the university than their friends do. Student engagement is defined as the time, energy, and resources that students devote to activities designed to increase learning (Vu, 2023).

Podcast engagement refers to the level of involvement, attention, and active participation of students when listening to podcasts as a learning medium. Engagement consists of three main dimensions: behavioral, cognitive, and affective engagement. Behavioral engagement is the actions and behaviors people take during learning, which may support or hinder learning. This conveys the presence of general "on-task behavior." This entails effort and persistence, along with paying attention, asking questions, seeking help that enables one to accomplish the task at hand, and not disrupting instruction.

It is the observable act of students being involved in learning (Nazamud-din et al., 2020). Cognitive engagement can be defined as "mental effort and thinking strategies." This can include using learning strategies and persisting through challenges. It conveys deep (rather than surface-level) processing of information whereby students gain a critical or higher-order understanding of the subject matter and solve challenging problems.

Cognitively engaged students often go beyond the requirements because they enjoy being challenged (Nazamud-din et al., 2020). Affective engagement is sometimes called "emotional engagement." This dimension of learner engagement deals with people's emotional responses to learning. The greater the student's interest level, enjoyment, positive attitude, the positive value held, curiosity, and a sense of belonging (and the less the anxiety, sadness, stress, and boredom), the greater the affective engagement. Based on current research and understanding, we don't know how the three types of engagement interact, and we are not certain which antecedents are linked to which types" (Nazamud-din et al., 2020).

Selective listening is the act of listening in which a person only focuses on certain parts of the information being conveyed, while ignoring or filtering out other parts (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019). This skill is essential in academic, professional, and real-life communication, where listeners must identify relevant facts, keywords, or target information efficiently.

According to Richards (2008), selective listening is a top-down and bottom-up processing strategy that involves filtering information according to the needs or objectives of the task. In other words, selective listening demands pupils to concentrate on specific information, such as people's names, numbers, instructions, or major ideas, while fillers, repetition, and supporting details can be overlooked.

This capacity is intimately linked to cognitive functions like attention management, working memory, and schema activation. Selective listening is becoming more important in the digital age as kids are exposed to a variety of audio sources such as podcasts, YouTube, and app-based listening materials. Thus, selective listening is both a skill for comprehending information and a learning strategy that promotes students to become active, attentive, and strategic listeners.

The connection between podcast engagement and selective listening skills in EFL learners can be analyzed through the role of podcasts as a source of

authentic input characterized by linguistic diversity. Active engagement with podcasts by students, whether through frequent listening, attentive listening, or efforts to comprehend the content, exposes them to various language features, including intonation, word stress, keywords, and information structure. This exposure enables the development of skills necessary for filtering essential information from supplementary details, which is fundamental to selective listening. Increased frequency and quality of student engagement with podcasts enhances their capacity to identify main ideas, capture significant details, and disregard irrelevant information.

While previous studies have demonstrated that podcasts can improve listening comprehension and increase learners' exposure to authentic language input, most research has primarily focused on general listening achievement, listening comprehension, or inferential listening skills rather than selective listening. Furthermore, existing studies tend to examine the effectiveness of podcasts as instructional tools, paying limited attention to the role of learners' engagement with podcasts in influencing listening outcomes. As student engagement is increasingly recognized as a multidimensional construct encompassing behavioral, cognitive, and affective dimensions, the relationship between these dimensions of engagement and selective listening performance remains underexplored in EFL contexts. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by investigating the relationship between podcast engagement and selective listening skills among EFL learners.

Based on the theoretical framework and previous empirical findings, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

H1: A notable positive correlation exists between podcast engagement and selective listening abilities in EFL learners.

H0: There is no notable connection between podcast engagement and selective listening abilities in EFL learners.

2. Method

This study employed a quantitative correlational research design to examine the relationship between podcast engagement and selective listening skills among EFL learners. A correlational approach was chosen because the study aimed to determine whether and to what extent variations in learners' podcast engagement are associated with their selective listening performance, without manipulating any variables. The participants of this research will be 30 undergraduate students from the English Education Department, Tarbiyah and Teacher Training Faculty, UIN Alauddin Makassar (UINAM), who will be enrolled in the Listening course. This study employed two primary instruments to collect quantitative data: a Selective Listening Test and a Podcast Engagement Questionnaire. Both instruments were designed to measure the variables of interest accurately and were validated prior to data collection.

a. Participants and Sampling

Participants were chosen through convenience sampling as they were easily reachable and registered in the Listening course at the time of data collection. The sample included 30 undergraduate students from the English Education Department at UIN Alauddin Makassar. Despite the sample size being somewhat limited, it was viewed as sufficient for initial correlational analysis and exploratory examination of the variables' relationship.

b. Instruments

The Podcast Engagement Questionnaire was created using the multidimensional engagement framework suggested by Fredricks et al. (2004), which includes behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement aspects. The survey utilized a five-point Likert scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Example statements contained "I often listen to English podcasts beyond class" (behavioral engagement), "I make an effort to deeply analyze and comprehend the podcast content" (cognitive engagement), and "I find pleasure in listening to English podcasts" (affective engagement). The Selective Listening Test involved listening segments accompanied by questions that asked students to pinpoint essential information, specific details, keywords, and main concepts while ignoring nonessential information. The assessment was created following the selective listening evaluation principles outlined by Brown and Abeywickrama (2019).

c. Validity and Reliability

Before the main study, the tools were evaluated by experts in English language education to confirm content validity. A preliminary administration was carried out to confirm the clarity and suitability of the items. The reliability of internal consistency was assessed with Cronbach's Alpha, where values exceeding .70 are deemed acceptable for educational research purposes.

d. Ethical Considerations

Ethical aspects were taken into account during the entire study. Participants were made aware of the research's objective and took part willingly. Consent was secured prior to data gathering, and the confidentiality of participants' identities and answers was upheld. Participants were guaranteed that the gathered information would be utilized exclusively for research purposes.

3. Result

The table below displays the analysis's findings:

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics			
		Mean	Std. Deviation
Podcast Engagement		83.8000	16.29131
Selective Listening Skills		59.50	12.272
	N	30	30

Descriptive statistics for the two study variables are presented in Table 1. According to the results, the average podcast engagement score was 83.80 (SD = 16.29), indicating that participants were generally engaged with podcast-based learning activities. Selective Listening, on the other hand, scored a mean of 59.50 (SD = 12.27). This indicates that they performed moderately well in finding and extracting relevant information from spoken texts. These descriptive findings provide a preliminary overview of the data and suggest that students who actively engage with podcasts may have a greater opportunity to improve their selective listening skills. However, the standard deviation values indicate that there was variation in student engagement with podcasts and listening performance.

Descriptive statistics indicate that participants generally reported substantial engagement with the podcast material and achieved satisfactory scores on the selective listening test. To further examine whether these two variables were related, a Pearson Product-Moment Correlation analysis was conducted.

Table 2. Correlation between Podcast Engagement and Selective Listening Skills

Correlations		Podcast Engagemen t	Selective Listening Test
Podcast Engagement	Pearson Correlation	1	.890**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	30	30
Selective Listening Test	Pearson Correlation	.890**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	30	30

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

This study's findings indicate a strong and statistically significant correlation between podcast engagement and selective listening skills in EFL learners. The correlation coefficient ($r = .890$, $p < .01$) demonstrates a strong relationship between increased learner engagement with podcast materials and enhanced performance in selective listening tasks.

In addition to relationships, three dimensions of podcast engagement can influence selective listening performance. Affective engagement indicates learner interest and satisfaction, while cognitive engagement indicates learner mental effort and strategic processing. Podcast frequency and persistence are also indicated by behavioral engagement. Future studies are recommended to investigate the predictive power of each dimension of engagement.

4. Discussion

This finding is consistent with earlier research highlighting the educational benefits of digital audio input in improving learners' listening comprehension and attentional control. A plausible explanation for this strong correlation is that podcasts provide authentic, diverse, and naturally paced input, thereby exposing learners to real-life language usage. This exposure likely enhances learners' capacity to filter pertinent information, identify key details, and disregard irrelevant cues, skills essential to selective listening. Regular interaction with diverse auditory resources can improve learners' cognitive processing, encompassing sustained attention, bottom-up decoding, and top-down prediction abilities.

a. Link to Listening Theory

The results can also be understood through listening comprehension theory, especially the interplay between bottom-up and top-down processing. Selective listening involves learners interpreting linguistic cues while also drawing on prior knowledge to recognize pertinent information. Regular interaction with podcasts might enhance both processes by providing learners with genuine language input and promoting active meaning-making. As a result, students enhance their ability to recognize essential information and sift through unnecessary details while engaging in listening activities.

b. Link to Engagement Theory

According to engagement theory, the study's substantial association lends credence to the idea that engagement is a multifaceted concept that has a big impact on learning outcomes. Behavioral engagement supports continuous practice, cognitive engagement enables deeper information processing, and affective engagement boosts motivation and persistence. When combined, these factors could help EFL students perform better when it comes to selective listening.

c. Comparison with Previous Studies

The current results are in line with other research showing that using podcasts improves listening comprehension and listening skills. For instance, Rahman et al. discovered that EFL learners' listening comprehension was greatly enhanced by podcast-based learning, and more recent research has emphasized the function of podcasts in fostering learner autonomy and authentic input. The new study builds on earlier research by showing a substantial correlation between selective listening performance and both the use of podcasts and the degree of learner engagement with them.

Deeper involvement may also be facilitated by the flexible and self-directed nature of podcast learning. Replaying episodes, modifying listening pace, and selecting subjects that interest them can all help learners become more motivated and have a good impact on their listening progress. Previous research has demonstrated that this autonomy increases learner investment and metacognitive awareness, which facilitates more effective listening techniques. The robust correlation found in this study also suggests that podcasts could be a useful addition to conventional EFL listening training. Podcasts, in contrast to planned classroom audio, offer impromptu speech, a variety of accents, and natural prosody that push students to improve their selective listening abilities. These qualities may increase learners' ability to interpret complex auditory data in authentic circumstances.

Nevertheless, although the association is robust, it does not indicate causation. Additional characteristics, such learners' previous listening proficiency, motivation, or experience with digital media, may also affect the association. The sample size, while sufficient, may restrict generalizability; thus, future study should incorporate bigger and more diverse populations. Furthermore, qualitative data may provide profound insights into learner interactions with podcasts and identify which engagement behaviors most significantly foster selective listening development.

The analysis of findings indicates that including podcast-based resources into EFL listening curriculum can substantially enhance learners' selective listening skills. The findings advocate for educators to implement podcast engagement tactics, including guided listening activities, selected listening exercises, and reflective listening journals, to optimize learners' hearing improvements in modern language-learning contexts.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the sample size was relatively small and drawn from a single institution, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Second, podcast engagement was measured using self-report questionnaires, which may be susceptible to social desirability bias and subjective interpretation. Third, the correlational design does not permit causal conclusions regarding the effect of podcast engagement on selective listening skills. Future research involving larger samples, multiple institutions, and mixed-method

approaches would provide a more comprehensive understanding of this relationship.

5. Conclusion

This study investigated the correlation between podcast engagement and selective listening skills in EFL learners, demonstrating a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between the two variables. The findings indicate that students who engage more frequently and actively with podcast content typically perform better in selective listening tasks.

This study examined the association between podcast engagement and selective listening skills among EFL students, revealing a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between the two variables. Research indicates that students who actively and consistently interact with podcast content do better in selective listening tasks. This indicates that podcasts, as a source of genuine and varied auditory input, can assist learners in identifying essential information, eliminating extraneous details, and processing spoken language more effectively.

The study emphasizes how podcasts can be used as an additional teaching tool for EFL listening training. Podcasts' adaptability, genuineness, and accessibility may boost students' motivation, focus, and metacognitive awareness, all of which enhance listening skills. The study admits its limitations, including the limited sample size and the lack of qualitative data, despite the encouraging results. Therefore, it is advised that future studies use mixed-method approaches and bigger participant groups to examine the ways in which various engagement patterns affect the development of selective listening. Overall, the results are in favor of incorporating podcast-based exercises into English learning settings to help EFL students develop more efficient and interesting listening habits.

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