

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

This study was conducted to examine whether there is a significant difference in listening skills and contextual vocabulary mastery between EFL students who learn using podcasts and those who learn using researcher-made audio-based instruction. Based on the statistical analysis presented in Chapter IV, the following conclusions are drawn in response to the research questions and hypotheses.

Regarding the first research question, the findings suggest that podcast-based instruction was associated with significantly better listening skills compared to conventional researcher-made audio-based instruction within the context of this study. The between-group Mann-Whitney U test revealed that the experimental group's posttest listening scores (Mean Rank = 42.84) were significantly higher than those of the control group (Mean Rank = 29.35), with $U = 390.500$ and $p = .006$. The experimental group achieved a moderate improvement (N-Gain = 36.82%) with a medium between-group effect size ($r = 0.32$), while the control group showed no statistically significant improvement in listening skills (N-Gain = -2.78%). These results suggest that podcast-based instruction may be more effective than conventional instruction for developing students' listening comprehension within this specific educational context, with a moderate practical impact.

Regarding the second research question, the findings suggest that podcast-based instruction was associated with significantly better contextual vocabulary mastery compared to conventional researcher-made audio-based instruction. The between-group Mann-Whitney U test showed that the experimental group's posttest vocabulary scores (Mean Rank = 42.69) were significantly higher than those of the control group (Mean Rank = 30.31), with $U = 425.000$ and $p = .011$. The experimental group showed moderate improvement (N-Gain = 49.14%) with a medium between-group effect size ($r = 0.30$), while the control group showed only minimal improvement (N-Gain = 18.54%). Although both groups showed some

vocabulary gains, with the control group's improvement reaching statistical significance ($p = .012$), the podcast-based instruction yielded considerably greater improvement.

Overall, both alternative hypotheses (H_1) are accepted within the context of this study. The podcast-based instruction employed in this study was associated with statistically significant and practically meaningful improvements in both listening skills and contextual vocabulary mastery compared to researcher-made audio-based instruction, as evidenced by the between-group comparisons. These findings suggest that authentic spoken English podcast exposure may provide EFL students with more effective opportunities for developing listening comprehension and contextual vocabulary mastery of the target vocabulary items assessed in this study than conventional instructional materials, with the effect being particularly pronounced for contextual vocabulary mastery. However, it should be noted that the study employed intact, non-randomly assigned classroom groups, and the experimental and control conditions differed in speaker configuration (dialogue vs. monologue), accent (native vs. non-native), speech rate (natural vs. slower), and discourse format. Therefore, causal claims regarding the superiority of podcast-based instruction should be interpreted with appropriate caution, and the findings are best understood as providing evidence of an association between podcast-based instruction and improved learning outcomes within the specific context of this study.

5.2 Implications

The findings of this study carry several implications for English language teaching practice, curriculum development, and educational technology integration at the secondary school level in Indonesia.

For pedagogical practice, the results suggest that authentic spoken English podcasts can serve as an effective instructional resource for developing listening skills and contextual vocabulary mastery simultaneously. Teachers are recommended to integrate podcast-based instruction activities into their regular instructional routines, particularly when the goal is to expose students to natural spoken English that reflects real-world communicative norms. The significant

improvement in contextual vocabulary mastery observed in the experimental group indicates that podcast-based instruction is particularly effective for helping students acquire vocabulary in meaningful communicative contexts, as opposed to isolated word memorization exercises. Teachers may therefore consider designing listening activities that draw students' attention to target vocabulary items within authentic spoken English contexts, thereby supporting both holistic comprehension and lexical development.

For curriculum design, the findings support the inclusion of authentic spoken English digital audio materials in the official English language curriculum at the senior high school level. The significant between-group differences observed in this study suggest that conventional researcher-made audio recordings, which are commonly used in Indonesian EFL classrooms, may not adequately prepare students for the challenges of understanding natural spoken English. Curriculum developers are recommended to consider supplementing existing materials with curated authentic spoken English podcast episodes that are appropriate for students' proficiency levels and aligned with curriculum objectives. The moderate to large effect sizes observed in this study provide empirical justification for allocating instructional time to podcast-based instruction, which may yield greater learning gains than traditional listening instruction alone.

For educational technology integration, this study contributes to the growing body of evidence supporting the use of accessible digital media in EFL instruction. Podcasts are freely available through various online platforms and can be accessed on personal devices, making them a cost-effective and practical instructional resource for schools with limited budgets. The findings suggest that even a relatively short treatment period of five sessions can produce measurable improvements in student performance, indicating that podcast-based instruction is both feasible and efficient within the constraints of a typical school schedule.

For student learning autonomy, the positive outcomes observed in this study suggest that podcasts can serve as valuable self-directed learning resources outside the classroom. Students who develop familiarity with podcast-based instruction through classroom activities may be more likely to engage with English-language

podcasts independently, thereby extending their exposure to authentic spoken English input beyond formal instructional time. This aligns with broader educational goals of fostering self-regulated learning habits and lifelong language development.

5.3 Limitations

The present study, while providing valuable empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of podcast-based instruction, is subject to several limitations that should be acknowledged when interpreting its findings.

First, the sample size and scope of the study were limited to two intact classes (XI B-1 and XI B-2) at a single senior high school, SMAS Islam Diponegoro. The total number of participants was relatively small, and all students were drawn from the same educational institution with comparable socioeconomic and academic backgrounds. This limits the generalizability of the findings to other learner populations, including students at different grade levels, students in different types of schools (public vs. private, urban vs. rural), and students with different English proficiency levels. Future research with larger and more diverse samples would be necessary to determine whether the observed effects are replicable across broader educational contexts.

Second, the duration of the instructional treatment was limited to five consecutive sessions. While this duration was sufficient to produce statistically significant improvements in both dependent variables, it does not provide information about the long-term retention of learning gains or the sustainability of the instructional effect over an extended period. It remains unclear whether the improvements observed in this study would be maintained over time, or whether continued podcast exposure would be necessary to sustain or further develop students' listening skills and contextual vocabulary mastery. Future research with extended treatment periods and delayed posttest measures would provide valuable insights into the longitudinal effects of podcast-based instruction.

Third, the study did not control for or measure several potentially influential variables that may have affected the outcomes. These include students' prior

exposure to podcasts, their general English proficiency beyond listening and vocabulary, their learning motivation and engagement during the treatment sessions, their use of learning strategies, and their frequency of independent listening practice outside the classroom. The absence of these measures means that the study cannot determine whether the observed effects were moderated by individual differences among learners, or whether certain subgroups of students benefited more or less from the podcast-based instruction.

Fourth, the study focused exclusively on two dependent variables: listening skills and contextual vocabulary mastery. It did not examine the effect of podcast-based instruction on other language skills (speaking, reading, writing), other aspects of vocabulary knowledge (productive use, collocational knowledge), or affective variables such as motivation, self-efficacy, or attitudes toward English language learning. The findings therefore provide a partial picture of the potential instructional benefits of podcast use and do not address whether podcast-based instruction produces broader language development beyond the measured outcomes.

Fifth, the instruments used in this study were developed specifically for the purposes of this investigation and, while validated through expert review and pilot testing, may not capture the full range of students' listening comprehension abilities or contextual vocabulary knowledge. The multiple-choice format of the tests, while appropriate for quantitative analysis, may not reflect students' ability to comprehend and use vocabulary in more naturalistic or productive tasks. Future research employing a wider range of assessment formats, including open-ended tasks, spoken responses, and communicative performance assessments, would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the instructional effects.

Sixth, the control group received researcher-made audio recordings rather than no treatment, which allowed for comparison between two instructional conditions but did not isolate the effect of authentic spoken English podcast exposure against a baseline of no listening instruction. While this design is appropriate for comparing two instructional approaches, it does not reveal whether podcast-based instruction is more effective than no instruction, or whether the

observed improvements in the experimental group represent absolute gains or relative advantages over a less effective alternative.

Seventh, potential bias may have been introduced by the researcher's dual role as both the teacher delivering the instruction and the researcher collecting and analyzing the data. Although every effort was made to maintain consistency and objectivity in the implementation of the treatment and the administration of assessments, the absence of blinding and the involvement of the researcher in all phases of the study may have introduced unintended effects, such as differential teacher enthusiasm or attention toward the experimental group.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings, conclusions, and limitations of this study, the following recommendations are offered for English teachers, curriculum developers, students, and future researchers.

For English teachers, the findings demonstrate that podcast-based instruction is a viable and effective approach to developing students' listening skills and contextual vocabulary mastery. Teachers are recommended to integrate podcast-based instruction systematically into their instructional planning, particularly when aiming to expose students to authentic spoken English that reflects real-world communicative norms. To maximize the effectiveness of such activities, teachers are advised to: (1) select podcast episodes that are appropriate for students' proficiency levels and relevant to their interests and learning needs; (2) design structured pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening activities that direct students' attention to both overall comprehension and specific vocabulary items; (3) provide explicit guidance on how to recognize and interpret vocabulary in natural oral contexts, including attention to connected speech features and contextual cues; and (4) encourage students to engage in repeated listening and independent podcast exploration outside the classroom to reinforce learning and develop self-directed listening habits.

For curriculum developers and policymakers, the significant between-group differences observed in this study provide empirical justification for incorporating

authentic spoken English digital audio materials into the official English language curriculum at the senior high school level. It is recommended that curriculum developers consider supplementing existing researcher-made audio recordings with curated podcast selections that align with curriculum objectives and proficiency levels. Teacher training programs are also advised to include professional development on the effective integration of digital media, including podcasts, into language instruction, as teachers may require guidance on how to select appropriate materials, design effective activities, and assess student learning outcomes in podcast-based instruction.

For students, the positive outcomes observed in this study suggest that regular engagement with English-language podcasts can contribute meaningfully to the development of listening comprehension and vocabulary knowledge. Students are recommended to incorporate podcast listening into their independent study routines, selecting episodes on topics of personal interest to maintain motivation and engagement. The BBC Learning English - Real Easy English podcast, which was used in this study, is freely accessible and offers a diverse range of topics suitable for senior high school learners. Students are also advised to practice active listening strategies, such as taking notes, identifying unfamiliar vocabulary, and replaying challenging sections, to maximize their learning from podcast exposure.

For future researchers, this study suggests several promising directions for further investigation. First, replication studies with larger and more diverse samples are needed to determine whether the observed effects are generalizable to other educational contexts, learner populations, and instructional conditions. Second, longitudinal studies with extended treatment periods and delayed posttest measures would provide valuable insights into the durability and sustainability of learning gains produced by podcast-based instruction. Third, mixed-methods research combining quantitative outcome measures with qualitative data from interviews, observations, and learner diaries would provide a richer understanding of students' learning experiences, challenges, and strategies when engaging with podcast-based instruction. Fourth, future research may investigate the moderating effects of individual difference variables such as prior podcast exposure, learning motivation,

metacognitive awareness, and proficiency level on the effectiveness of podcast-based instruction. Fifth, comparative studies examining different types of podcasts (authentic spoken English vs. pedagogical, topic-based vs. news-based) and different instructional designs (intensive vs. extensive listening, guided vs. independent listening) would contribute to a more nuanced understanding of optimal practices for podcast integration in EFL instruction. Sixth, future research may investigate the effect of podcast-based instruction on other language skills, such as speaking, reading, and writing, as well as on broader learning outcomes such as learner autonomy, self-efficacy, and motivation.