



Examining the Effects of Podcast-Based Extensive Listening on EFL Learners' Pronunciation and Listening Comprehension

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ABSTRACT

The present study focused on the impact of extensive listening using podcasts on pronunciation and listening comprehension of EFL learners in Pakistan. Limited exposure to authentic spoken English within the classroom was a common problem faced by Pakistani EFL learners in terms of accurate pronunciation and effective listening comprehension. The researchers used quasi-experimental design with 60 intermediate level EFL learners from a public sector university who were assigned into two groups, experimental and control groups, with 30 learners in each group. The experimental group was taught the listening lesson through podcasts for 8 weeks, and the control group was taught the listening lesson according to the regular curriculum. To assess the pronunciation and listening comprehension before and after the intervention, pre-test and post-test were conducted for both groups. The collected data were analyzed by SPSS by independent samples t-test and paired samples t-test. The results showed that the experimental group showed the significant improvement in pronunciation and listening comprehension as compared to the control group. The results showed that the podcast-based extensive listening was an effective pedagogical technique in improving the spoken language skills of the EFL learners. In conclusion, the study found that the use of podcasts in the EFL classroom had a significant positive impact on students' pronunciation accuracy and listening comprehension skills. The researchers suggested that EFL teachers in Pakistan should incorporate podcasts into their teaching as part of extensive listening in their classrooms to make the learners independent and enhance their language proficiency.

1. Introduction

English is used as a global language and is the medium of instruction in tertiary education in Pakistan (Akram et al. 2021). English has an academic and professional value for Pakistani learners and in the four language skills, listening and speaking are comparatively less emphasized than reading and writing in formal classroom settings. This imbalance results in learners who are able to do well on written tests but who are unable to understand natural spoken English or produce intelligible pronunciation in real communicative contexts (Fatima and Ahmad 2025).

In Pakistan, the traditional EFL classroom is still exam-oriented and grammar-based. Vocabulary, grammar rules, and reading comprehension make up the bulk of the class, and listening and pronunciation are given only a minor role in the syllabus (Sarwat et al. 2021). Learners do not often encounter authentic spoken discourse, and the spoken materials they encounter in

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the classroom are usually scripted and slow paced, lacking the natural speed, intonation and variation of natural speech. As a result, many learners spend years of formal English study without being able to comprehend or speak English fluently and confidently (Ahmad, Akram, and Ali 2021).

Extensive listening is identified as a method that can fill this gap by providing learners with a considerable amount of comprehensible listening input over a long period. This method is based on the input hypothesis, which suggests that language learning takes place when the language input presented to the learner is slightly higher than his or her current level of performance in the target language, in a low-anxiety and meaning-focused classroom (Sujatha and Rajasekaran 2024). In contrast to intensive listening, which focuses on the analysis of brief audio segments by the teacher, extensive listening promotes quantity, enjoyment, and learner autonomy, enabling the learner to internalize pronunciation patterns, rhythm and intonation by listening repeatedly and voluntarily (Ahmed and Ahmad 2026).

Podcasts are an especially good tool for extensive listening as they are freely available, cover a wide range of topics and genres, have authentic and varied accents, and can be listened to at any time and place convenient to the listener (Gunawan et al. 2023). Podcasts are different from the traditional classroom audio materials, as they enable learners to choose what they want to listen to, thereby raising their motivation and interest in listening to spoken English beyond the classroom. These features make podcasts an ideal way to improve listening skills and pronunciation through incidental and repeated exposure to natural speech (Chaves-Yuste and De-La Peña 2023).

Podcast-based language learning is gaining popularity around the world, there has been little research conducted on the Pakistani context of EFL (Tasnim 2025). The use of digital audio in Pakistani classrooms is still limited and empirical studies on the effect of podcast-based extensive listening on learners' pronunciation and listening comprehension in Pakistani context is still in its early stages. The gap suggests the need for a systematic research that will measure the actual impact of the extensive listening through podcasts on Pakistani EFL learners (BIBI et al. 2025).

The current study aims to fill this gap by examining the impact of eight-week EFL extensive listening program using podcasts on pronunciation and listening comprehension of intermediate learners of EFL in Pakistan. This study is a quasi-experimental study with control group design by measuring the results of the study by using pre-test and post-test. The results of the study will serve as a guide for EFL teachers, curriculum planners and policy makers in Pakistan in terms of pedagogical significance of using extensive listening through podcasts in the language classroom.

1.1. Research Objectives

- To examine the impact of extensive listening by listening to podcasts on the pronunciation of EFL learners in Pakistan.
- To investigate the impact of podcast based extensive listening on listening comprehension of EFL learners in Pakistan.
- To compare the experimental group and control group in terms of pronunciation and listening comprehension following the intervention.

1.2. Research Questions

- What is the impact of listening to podcasts on the pronunciation of EFL learners in Pakistan?
- How does the listening comprehension of EFL learners in Pakistan get affected by listening to podcasts?
- Does there exist a difference between the experimental and the control group in terms of pronunciation and listening comprehension post intervention?

1.3. Significance of the Study

This study is important for EFL teachers, learners and curriculum designers in Pakistan. The results provide empirical evidence of the effectiveness of podcast-based extensive listening as a low cost and readily available teaching tool. The study also extends the very few studies on technology-assisted extensive listening in the context of EFL in Pakistan and offers practical suggestions on how to incorporate podcasts into the current listening and pronunciation syllabus.

2. Literature Review

Listening comprehension plays a vital role in L2 acquisition, as it is the source of input for L2 development (Nazarieh et al. 2022). Researchers identify two types of listening: intensive listening (short listening texts, teacher-directed analysis) and extensive listening (long listening texts, self-selected, general understanding, pleasure) (Bozorgian, Muhammadpour, and Mahmoudi 2022). The input hypothesis is the basis of extensive listening, which suggests that the input provided is comprehensible and delivered in a low anxiety environment will promote language acquisition. This method is based on the

idea that learners can acquire the phonological, lexical, and syntactic patterns of natural spoken language by exposure without explicit teaching (Chang 2024).

There are a few studies that discuss the correlation between listening comprehension development and extensive listening. The general conclusion of these studies is that learners who listen extensively on a regular basis make more progress in listening comprehension than learners who are only intensively instructed in listening in the classroom. The gains are attributed to the increased amount of input, the decreased anxiety of self-paced listening, and the ability of the learner to choose material that is congruent with his or her interest, which makes for a lasting motivation (Asllani and Ramadani 2025). Few studies also focus on the role of extensive listening in helping learners to retain their vocabulary and process connected speech at natural speed, which are both important factors in overall comprehension (Ramadani 2021a).

Pronunciation is not a focus of most communicative language teaching, since many communicative language teachers believe that pronunciation will emerge naturally from the spoken input. However, researchers are increasingly suggesting that both explicit and implicit exposure to authentic speech is important in the development of segmental features (e.g., articulation of vowels and consonants) and suprasegmental features (e.g., stress, rhythm, and intonation) (Ramadani 2021b). If learners do not have enough input from natural spoken English, they may keep the first language pronunciation pattern, thus making their output less intelligible. It is identified that extensive exposure to diverse native and non-native speech models is a way to enhance learners' perception of pronunciation features and to approximate the target-like pronunciation (Situ 2024).

Podcasts are being seen as an accessible, authentic, and topical resource for extensive listening, and are becoming a topic of discussion (Cao and Bui 2024). Researchers point out that podcasts allow learners to hear naturally speaking, spontaneous language, at a natural speed, with hesitations, reductions and variations in accent, which are often not present in the audio recordings found in textbooks. This authenticity is seen as important in helping learners to understand spoken English in the real world and in introducing them to a wider variety of pronunciation models than could be offered by a single teacher or textbook recording (Liu 2023). Research on podcasts in different EFL settings suggests that podcasts help to enhance listening comprehension, vocabulary acquisition and learner motivation, and those learners generally find podcasts more interesting than traditional listening materials (Wakefield, Pike, and Amici-Dargan 2023).

A smaller body of research is dedicated to the association of podcast listening with pronunciation development (Ali et al. 2024). The repeated exposure to podcast content combined with shadowing and repeated listening techniques has been shown to be effective in the improvement of stress placement, intonation patterns and speech fluency in these studies. The authors also highlight the fact that podcast listening is self-paced and enables learners to rewind the difficult sections for further practice, thus helping them gradually internalize pronunciation features that may need a lot of teacher-led practice (Peng, Akhter, and Hashemifardnia 2025).

Listening and pronunciation instruction has been relatively under-researched in the Pakistani EFL setting (Andleeb et al. 2025). Research in Pakistani classrooms has been found to be consistently showing that the students have poor listening and speaking skills as compared to their reading and writing skills, which has been attributed to the grammar translation approach of the national curriculum and insufficient use of authentic audio-visual materials in teaching. To remedy this imbalance, some researchers demand that digital resources, such as podcasts and other online audio resources, be introduced in the Pakistani EFL classroom, but few empirical studies have been conducted to test the effectiveness of the introduction of such resources (Waqas, Miran, and Qamar 2025).

The literature reviewed suggests that extensive listening and listening to podcasts in particular has great potential for enhancing listening comprehension and pronunciation of EFL learners. Most of the previous research, however, is done outside of Pakistan and only a few studies take a quasi-experimental approach with a controlled setting to test the impact of podcast-based extensive listening on pronunciation and listening comprehension at the same time. This gap calls for the present study, which aims to provide empirical evidence of the effectiveness of podcast-based extensive listening in an EFL context in Pakistan.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The researchers used a quasi-experimental design to investigate the effect of listening through podcasts on EFL learners' pronunciation and listening comprehension.

3.2. Population and Sample

The study was conducted in a public sector university in Pakistan. The researchers selected 60 intermediate level EFL learners. The samples were split into two groups of 30 learners each experimental and control groups.

3.3. Intervention

The experimental group was provided with the extensive listening instruction for 8 weeks, where the students listened to English language podcasts for 30 minutes a day on various topics. The control group received the regular curriculum as the listening teaching method. The number of instructional hours for both groups was the same during the intervention period.

3.4. Instrumentation

Both groups took a pre-test prior to the intervention to determine their initial pronunciation and listening comprehension levels. The pronunciation test covered the segmental and suprasegmental aspects of the pronunciation such as vowel and consonant articulation, stress and intonation. The listening comprehension test was of multiple-choice and short-answer type, which assessed the learners' listening comprehension of spoken English.

3.5. Procedure

At the end of the 8 week intervention, a post test was administered to both groups with parallel versions of the pre-test instruments. The scores from the pre-test and post-test were compared to evaluate the amount of improvement for each group.

3.6. Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using SPSS software. Independent samples t-test was used to compare the performance of the experimental and control groups, and paired samples t-test was used to compare pre test and post test scores within each group. All statistical comparisons were made at the 0.05 level of significance.

4. Results and Data Analysis

Results and Data Analysis contains statistical analysis of the data gathered from the pre-tests and post-tests given to the experimental and control groups. The researchers first compare Pre-test scores in both groups, to establish baseline equivalence and then compare the scores for the Post-test. Finally, for each group paired samples t-tests are used to see how much the pre-test scores differ from the post test scores. The results of the statistics are displayed in four tables, each of which is accompanied by a description of the results of the statistics.

Table 1: Independent Samples t-test for Pre-test Scores of Experimental and Control Groups

Variable	Group	N	M	SD	t	df	p
Pronunciation	Experimental	30	42.30	5.12	0.43	58	.668
Pronunciation	Control	30	42.85	4.98			
Listening Comp.	Experimental	30	45.60	6.20	0.44	58	.660
Listening Comp.	Control	30	44.90	6.05			

Table 1 presents the pre-test scores of the experimental and control groups on pronunciation and listening comprehension. The mean scores of the two groups are closely comparable for both variables, and the independent samples t-test results indicate no statistically significant difference between the groups at the pre-test stage, as the p-values exceed the 0.05 significance level. This finding confirms that the two groups are equivalent in pronunciation and listening comprehension prior to the intervention, which establishes a valid baseline for measuring subsequent improvement.

Table 2: Independent Samples t-test for Post-test Scores of Experimental and Control Groups

Variable	Group	N	M	SD	t	df	p
Pronunciation	Experimental	30	68.40	5.75	12.85	58	.000
Pronunciation	Control	30	50.20	5.40			
Listening Comp.	Experimental	30	72.10	6.10	11.42	58	.000
Listening Comp.	Control	30	54.30	5.95			

Table 2 presents the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups. The experimental group achieves considerably higher mean scores than the control group on both pronunciation and listening comprehension. The independent samples t-

test results show statistically significant differences between the two groups, as the p-values are below the 0.05 significance level. These results indicate that the podcast-based extensive listening intervention produces a significantly greater improvement in pronunciation and listening comprehension than the traditional instruction method used with the control group.

Table 3: Paired Samples t-test for Pre-test and Post-test Scores of the Experimental Group

Variable	Test	N	M	SD	t	df	p
Pronunciation	Pre-test	30	42.30	5.12	24.10	29	.000
Pronunciation	Post-test	30	68.40	5.75			
Listening Comp.	Pre-test	30	45.60	6.20	22.35	29	.000
Listening Comp.	Post-test	30	72.10	6.10			

Table 3 presents the paired samples t-test results for the experimental group. The mean scores of the experimental group increase substantially from the pre-test to the post-test on both pronunciation and listening comprehension. The paired samples t-test results are statistically significant, as the p-values are below the 0.05 significance level. This finding demonstrates that the eight-week podcast-based extensive listening intervention produces a significant improvement in the experimental group's pronunciation and listening comprehension abilities.

Table 4: Paired Samples t-test for Pre-test and Post-test Scores of the Control Group

Variable	Test	N	M	SD	t	df	p
Pronunciation	Pre-test	30	42.85	4.98	6.02	29	.000
Pronunciation	Post-test	30	50.20	5.40			
Listening Comp.	Pre-test	30	44.90	6.05	5.85	29	.000
Listening Comp.	Post-test	30	54.30	5.95			

The results of the paired samples t-test for the control group are shown in Table 4. The mean scores of the control group also indicate a statistically significant improvement from pre-test to post-test in both pronunciation and listening comprehension with the p-value being lower than 0.05. The magnitude of the improvement, however, in the control group (as shown by the smaller t-values than those of the experimental group), is quite small when compared to the improvement in the experimental group, suggesting that the traditional instruction method has a relatively small effect.

Overall, the statistical analysis shows that both groups make gains during the 8-weeks, as would be expected with the continued instructional exposure provided for all participants. However, the comparison of the post-test scores and the size of the gains within the groups definitely favors the experimental group. The much higher t-values for the experimental group in both pronunciation and listening comprehension, as well as the between-group difference at the post-test, show that the effect of the extensive listening using podcasts is much more positive than the effect of the traditional listening teaching method. The results of these findings directly support the research objectives and give answers to the research questions that have guided the study.

5. Discussion

The results of this study support the idea that extensive listening using podcasts has a significant effect on improving pronunciation and listening comprehension compared with conventional listening practice. This result is consistent with the input hypothesis that focuses on the importance of low-stress, high volume, comprehensible oral input. Podcasts are a true representation of a variety of natural pronunciation, stress, and intonation patterns that are likely not found in classroom materials. The self-paced and repeatable podcast listening also provides learners with the opportunity to listen to content that is challenging at their own speed, potentially maintaining engagement with the material and supporting learning throughout the eight-week intervention.

6. Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that the use of podcast-based extensive listening can help EFL learners in Pakistan to enhance their pronunciation and listening comprehension skills. After 8 weeks, the experimental group is significantly better than the control group on both measures. The results of this study confirm the pedagogical significance of podcasts as an authentic, accessible and motivating language-learning tool for developing spoken language skills in the context of EFL teaching in Pakistan and advocate for the extensive listening strategies in the language classroom.

7. Recommendations

The researchers suggest the use of podcast based extensive listening activities in daily classroom teaching for EFL teachers in Pakistan. Time must be provided in the curriculum for listening to authentic material in large quantities. Future studies should be conducted in other proficiency levels and institutions and the long-term retention of the pronunciation and listening comprehension gains gained from podcast-based teaching should be examined.

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