

A literature review: Improving students listening skills through digital audiobook in EFL classroom

Intan Sofiana¹, Feisal Aziez^{2*}

¹The Department of English Language Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto, Indonesia

²The Department of English Language Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto, Indonesia

¹ sofaintanna@gmail.com ² feiaziez@gmail.com

*Corresponding author

ARTICLE INFO

Article history

Received 16 February 2022

Revised 22 June 2022

Accepted 8 August 2022

Keywords

Digital Audiobooks

Listening

English

EFL classroom

ABSTRACT

The development of technology influences many aspects nowadays, especially in education. Teachers have started using technology as a medium for their teaching materials. The use of technology in the EFL classroom has become the new way to improve students' comprehension. One of them is using digital audiobooks to improve students listening skills. Listening becomes one of the most challenging skills in learning a foreign language. Many students still lack of exposure to English listening materials. In addition, English words are pronounced differently from how they are written. As a result, students do not understand what the speakers say when they listen to native speakers. Digital audiobooks help students understand what the speakers say since it contains an illustration of the context. Therefore, this literature review focuses on the use of digital audiobooks to improve students listening skills. It aims to discuss the benefits of using digital audiobooks to improve students listening skills in EFL classrooms. Since this is a literature review, the methodology that was used is literature method. This study finds that audiobooks can improve students' listening skills. In addition it also enhance students' critical thinking while listening to the audio.

This is an open access article under the [CC-BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license.



How to cite: Sofiana, I. & Aziez, F. (2022). A literature review: Improving students listening skills through digital audiobook in EFL classroom. *IUCEE Proceeding 2022*, 1(1), p. 1-6

1. Introduction

Learning a language includes more than just the structure of the language, it is also about how the learners may use it in daily communication. As a result, language teaching must be integrated. There are four skills that should be taught in English language teaching. They are listening, writing, speaking, and reading. Since English is a foreign language for the students, teaching listening becomes a challenging part for the English teacher in the EFL classroom. Furthermore, there is a distinction between how words are pronounced and written in English.

Listening is one of receptive skills in a language, since the learners receive input when listening, such as vocabulary and pronunciation instead of producing a language. In addition, the input from listening can be a fundamental thing in learning a target language. According to Assiddiqhi and Rosa (2021) listening comprehension may be described as the ability to understand what is being spoken. Therefore, listening is essential in oral communication. It is in line with what Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011) stated that listening is an important part of the communication process.

Despite the significance of listening comprehension, many students have problems to learn listening. According to the previous study, the majority of EFL students are still unable to comprehend listening well (Darti & Asmawati, 2017). They still have a limited vocabulary, poor



grammatical competence, an accent, pronunciation, lack of concentration, speed of speech, anxiety, noise, inability to apply listening strategy, bad quality of recording, etc. In addition, the content material influences students' listening comprehension. Therefore, teaching strategy plays an important role in improving students listening skills. Unfortunately, Lestari et al (2021) stated that English teachers still find difficulties in teaching listening. One of them is the lack of teaching media, material and methodology.

The first difficulty in teaching listening by English teachers is the lack of media. Teaching media is items (book, picture, or map) or equipment (DVD or computer) that a teacher uses to support teaching and learning process (Lestari et al., 2021). Teaching media plays a significant role in teaching listening to make the students more interested in learning listening. However, English teachers who lack teaching media still use the same listening tools over and over again without considering new equipment. It is important to examine the use of new learning media in the classroom in order to meet different needs of students (Kartal & Simsek, 2019).

Besides the media, listening material is a problem that is faced by teachers in teaching listening. The teacher had problems finding relevant material for teaching listening comprehension since various sources in the school that the teacher needed are not available (Lestari et al., 2021). In addition, Adnan (2013) mentioned that English books do not provide resources for teaching listening, but they do have materials for teaching other comprehensions. He also added that preparing listening material is more complicated than other skills since teaching listening requires appropriate media in terms of audio or audio visual. Moreover, appropriate material is essential to improve students listening comprehension. As a result, listening material should be authentic in order to engage students' attention in the classroom.

The last challenge in teaching listening is determining the best methodology for teaching listening comprehension. One of the factors that influence the success of teaching and learning English as a foreign language is teaching methodology. It is in line with what was said by Orakbayevna et al., (2021) that the methodology in teaching a foreign language is an underlying term that is used to refer to a number of different ways of approaching the goal of learning the target language. Furthermore, the use of proper teaching methodology and strategy in the classroom will have an impact on the students' outcomes (Lestari et al., 2021). However, according to previous study, English teachers still find difficulty in choosing teaching strategies that can motivate students to learn and enhance their listening comprehension.

Based on all those problems in teaching listening, English teachers have to find a new effective strategy for teaching listening comprehension. In order to improve students listening comprehension, teachers should implement different strategies in EFL classroom such as using authentic material and technology (Rubin, 1995, as cited in Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011). Authentic material is needed in language learning to engage students' participation and motivate them in the learning process since authentic material contains familiar and relevant topics with students' experience. Natural and spontaneous spoken language materials in audio- and audio-visual formats can be used to create authentic materials for teaching listening (Adnan, 2013).

Besides authentic material, technology can be used as a teaching media for teaching listening. According to Ahmadi (2018), technology plays an important role in increasing student activities and has a significant impact on teachers' teaching methods. In this modern era, technology provides a lot of resources for improving language teaching strategy. In teaching listening, most teachers usually utilize technology such as computers, for playing the audio material. This type of teaching does not provide visual information. Regardless of the language, it will be difficult for some students who have visual learning style to process the information. As a result, the teaching and learning process does not engage students attention well in the EFL classroom.

To overcome that problem, audiobooks can be used as a teaching media to improve students listening comprehension. Audiobook is a book or a story that is read by a narrator using the best recording technology (Fajry et al., 2016). There are many advantages of using audiobooks for teaching listening in EFL classroom. Audiobooks can improve learning experience for the students. In addition, Fajry et al (2016) stated that audiobooks help students to develop their listening comprehension, critical thinking and vocabulary mastery at the same time. He also added that it can engage students' attention during teaching and learning process since audiobooks offer a story that

can be an authentic material in EFL classroom. Furthermore, nowadays audiobooks are easily access (Kartal & Simsek, 2017).

Although audiobooks provide many benefits for teaching listening in EFL classrooms, there is still little study on the use of audiobooks to improve students listening comprehension. Most studies focused on the use of audiobooks to enhance reading comprehension. Therefore, this literature review study aims to review the effect of audiobooks on students listening comprehension in EFL classrooms based on the previous studies on this particular topic.

2. Method

This study is a literature review study. According to Snyder (2019) A literature review is a research method of synthesizing research results in order to provide evidence on a conceptual and to identify areas in which further study is required. She also added that this is an important part in developing theoretical frameworks and constructing conceptual models. Furthermore, Lin (2009) stated that literature research methodology is to read through, analyze, and sort literatures. Therefore, the data findings of this study were collected from the previous study by summarizing and synthesizing the findings. In addition, since this study is a literature review study some previous studies were used as the research instrument. There are several previous studies that will be compared in this literature review study. Those study used were published started from 2016 until 2021.

3. Findings

Some studies on the use of audiobooks to improve listening comprehension have been conducted. Fajry et al., (2016) conducted a study on the use of audiobooks for teaching listening skills. The participants of this study were second grade high school students. Type of audiobook that was used in this study was narrative audiobooks. Fajry et al., (2016) stated that the distinction between an audiobook and other types of listening materials is that an audiobook has a strong story and can hold the interest of the listener. In addition, audiobooks also provide academic vocabulary for students. Based on this study, the researcher found that audiobooks can enhance students listening comprehension after conducting pre-post listening tests. There are some aspects of listening that were analyzed in this study such as topic, detailed information, vocabulary and characteristics. In the pre-test most students achieved 40 which is much lower than minimum completion criteria for English subject. However, after the audiobook was implemented as the teaching medium, students listening score increased. The post test result showed that most students achieved 70 with 90 as the highest score.

Another study on the use of audiobooks for teaching listening was conducted by Kartal and Simsek (2017). The difference between this study and the previous one is the study level of participants. The participants of this study were first-year university students. The researcher believes that a different and modern media for teaching listening comprehension is necessary since some English teachers prefer to use the same media and material. On the other hand, implementing a variety of strategies in teaching listening, including new media is essential. Besides identifying the effect of audiobooks on EFL students listening comprehension, this study also aims to find students perception on the use of audiobooks in listening class. The participants of this study were divided into two groups, which are control group and experimental group. The study shows that the post-test score of the experimental group is significantly higher than the control group.

In addition, the students said that they enhanced their reading and listening comprehension by listening to audiobooks. The students found that audiobooks increase their listening comprehension and motivate them to read and listen to the story. Furthermore, it is an enjoyable medium to be used in learning listening. Despite the advantages of using audiobooks for learning listening, there are some drawbacks as well. Based on students perception, some of them found that audiobooks are boring and too long to be listened to. In addition, they do not like the story that was played by the teacher.

Mohammed (Mohamed2018) also conducted a study on the use of audiobooks for developing students' listening comprehension. The participant of this study was Saudi EFL preparatory year students. The students did not obtain an adequate listening material that can improve their listening

comperhension. As a result, that affects their listening skills. in this study, there were two groups of study named control group and experimental group. Both groups did pre test and post test. Before conducting the pre test the students in both groups have the same level of listening proficiency. The researcher used one audiobook entitled “Half Past Seven Stories”. Since this study was experimental study, there are three stages that done by the researcher. They are the pre listening stage, while listening stage and the post listening stage.

In pre listening stage, the participants in the experimental groups were introduced with the topic of the topic and give some stimulations. On the other hand, in the while listening stage, the participants were asked to listen individually and discussed some questions in a small group consisting of 4 students. Whereas in the post listening stage, the researcher checked their answer to assess their comprehension as well. Furthermore, the students were required to write a summary about the topic they have listened.

Based on that study, the researcher found that the mean score of experimental group increased significantly after using audiobooks. The mean score of pre test was 10.59 while the mean score of post test was 23.32. It can be seen that, the participants’ listening skills increaed after learning listening with audiobooks.

Another study that focuses on the use of audiobooks to enhance students’ listening skills was carried out by Al-Jafr (2021). The difference between this study and others is that the type of audiobooks. This study focused on the use of mobile audiobooks. The participant of this study was EFL college students. There are also several stages that were done to teach listening skills using mobile audiobooks. In the pre listening stage, the pre questions related to theme, setting, plot, charachter, tone are provided. Whereas in the while listening stage the participants were asked to take a note and summarize the story. Furthermore, the summarize was posted in online forum to be commented and diccussed with other participants. In addition, in the post listening, the researcher gave feedback to students’ works.

This study found that mobile audiobooks are effective to improve the participants’ listening comprehension. Furthermore, according to the result of questionnaire, students had positive attitudes towards the use of mobile audiobooks to learn listening. The participants also stated that learning listening with mobile audiobooks was fun. It also helped them to acquire cognitive and metacognitive listening comprehension skills.

4. Discussion

The results of those studies showed that audiobooks can be an effective media to improve students’ listening skills. the score of listening assessment increased after using audiobooks to learn listening. According to Chang (2011), reading while listening audibooks can enhance students’ lissening skills. it happens since audiobooks do not only provide the audio but also the text and visualization of the story. As a result it will help students to understand the story easily. It proves that audiobooks could be the imperative materials that should be used by students in an EFL classroom (Rosa & Assiddiqhi, 2021). In addition, audiobooks also will be useful for the students who have visual learning style since they will not only listen to the audio. Furthermore, audiobooks provides many topics that can be selected based on students’ language proficiency and level of study. Therefore, it can be used by the teacher as an authentic material. According to Tallakina (2011), authentic material is one of the important aspect to build listening comperhension. Furthermore, it can engage students’ attention in EFL classroom.

Listening comprehension does not only require the understanding of the topic but also critical thinking. Academic skills are related to critical thinking, particulary in higher level of study (Talakina, 2011). The students need to analyze the information that they listen to. As the findings of the study, audiobooks also enhance students’ critical thinking since it provides a story. By listening to the story, students need to analyze the plot, tone, character and etc. Hence, they can improve their critical thinking through listening to audiobooks. Despite the effects of using audiobooks, the studies also found that most students have positive attitude towards the use of audiobook in listening classroom. They enjoy listening to the story and find it interesting way to learn listening. The students feel more relax listening to the audio since it has visualization. As a result, it influences their concentration to understand the story. In addition, audiobooks also give input easily for the students since they can read the text and obtain new vocabulary and

pronunciation at the same time. It will be beneficial for the students because the lack of understanding the language input is the difficulty in learning listening comprehension (Rosa & Assiddiqhi, 2021).

In conclusion, audiobooks can be a useful medium for improving students' listening abilities. It happens because listening to audiobooks allows the students to read while listening to the audio which can help them improve their listening abilities. Audiobooks include a wide range of topics that may be chosen according to students' language skill and level of study. As a result, it has the potential to engage students' attention in an EFL classroom. On the other hand, learning listening through audiobooks enhances students' critical thinking as well. Students are required to analyze the character, plot and setting based on the story they listen to. Furthermore, it also allows students to obtain the language inputs easily while listening. Those inputs are vocabulary building and pronunciation of the word.

5. Conclusion

Based on several studies that have been discussed, it can be concluded that audiobooks can improve students' listening skills. The literature review showed that students' scores increased significantly in posttests after using audiobooks in EFL classrooms. There are many benefits of using audiobooks such as giving a vocabulary input easily, authentic material and enhance students' critical thinking. Furthermore, the students have a positive attitude to learn listening using audiobooks. They find it a fun and interesting way to improve their listening proficiency. In addition, audiobooks can be implemented as an effective media for teaching listening in any level of study, such as high school or university level. However, the teacher should consider their level of study in choosing the audiobooks. The type of audiobooks should be convenient for students' level of comprehension. Therefore, the teacher still needs to create authentic material using audiobooks in order to achieve teaching and learning goals in the EFL classroom. Since this is a literature review study, it is recommended for further research to conduct a study on the use of audiobooks to improve students' listening skills, especially using specific types of audiobooks. Furthermore, the use of audiobooks to improve another language skill also can be carried out, such as the implementation of audiobooks to enhance students' pronunciation.

REFERENCES

- Adnan, A. (2013). *The use of authentic materials in teaching listening at senior high school*.
- Ahmadi, M. R. (2018). The Use of Technology in Language Learning. *International Journal of Research in English Education*, 3(2).
- Al-Jarf, R. (2021). Mobile audiobooks, listening comprehension and efl college students cite this paper mobile audiobooks, listening comprehension and efl college students corresponding author. *international journal of research -granthaalayah*.
<https://doi.org/10.7821/granthaalayah.v9.i4.2021.3868>
- Assiddiqhi, A., & Rosa, R. N. (2021). Audiobooks Implementation in an EFL Listening Classroom. *Journal of English Language Teaching*, 10(10), 96—104.
<https://doi.org/10.24036/jelt.v10i1.111477>
- Chang, C.-S. (2011). The Effect of Reading While Listening to Audiobooks: Listening Fluency and Vocabulary Gain. *Asian Journal of English Language Teaching*, 21, 43–64.
- Darti, & Asmawati, A. (2017). *Analyzing students difficulties toward listening comprehension*.
- Erzad, A. M. (2020). Exploring english listening problems among efl students at iain kodus. *Edulingua: Jurnal Linguistik Terapan Dan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris*, 7(1).
<https://doi.org/10.34001/edulingua.v7i1.1166>
- Gilakjani, A. P., & Ahmadi, M. R. (2011). A study of factors affecting efl learners english listening comprehension and the strategies for improvement. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 2(5). <https://doi.org/10.4304/jltr.2.5.977-988>

-
- Kartal, G., & Simsek, H. (2017). The effects of audiobooks on efl students listening comprehension. *The Reading Matrix: An International Online Journal*, 17(1).
- Lestari, P. A., Kurniasari, R., & Riznanda, W. A. (2021). Analysing teachers difficulties in teaching listening comprehension. *Jadila: Journal of Development and Innovation in Language and Literature Education*, 1(4), 500—517.
<https://doi.org/10.52690/jadila.v1i4.160>
- Lin, G. (2009). Higher Education Research Methodology-Literature Method. *International Education Studies*, 2(4). <https://doi.org/10.5539/ies.v2n4p179>
- Mohamed, M. M. K. (2018). Using Audiobooks for Developing Listening Comprehension among Saudi EFL Preparatory Year Students. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 9(1), 64. <https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.0901.08>
- Orakbayevna, K. D., Normuminovich, M., & Muxiddinovna, M. Z. (2021). English language teaching methodology for non-native speakers. *Linguistics and Culture Review*, 5(S3), 1721—1725. <https://doi.org/10.21744/lingcure.v5ns3.1991>
- Snyder, H. (2019). Literature review as a research methodology: An overview and guidelines. *Journal of Business Research*, 104(104), 333—339. Science direct.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.07.039>
- Talalakina, E. (2011). *Audiobook in Advanced ESL Classroom: Developing Critical Listening*.