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The Effectiveness of Using British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Podcasts as a Media in Teaching English Listening Comprehension of 8th-Grade Students in Junior High School

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Abstract: Listening comprehension remains challenging for junior high school learners of English because classroom exposure to authentic spoken language is often limited. Recent studies support podcast-based listening, but empirical evidence focusing specifically on British Broadcasting Corporation podcasts in small junior high school classes and using a single-group design remains limited. This study examined students' listening performance before and after podcast-based instruction and assessed the magnitude of improvement. A quantitative pre-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design involved 19 eighth-grade students at MTs Miftahurridho Sembir, Wonosobo. A 20-item multiple-choice listening test was administered before and after instruction using selected British Broadcasting Corporation Learning English podcast materials. Data were analyzed through descriptive statistics, the Shapiro-Wilk test, a paired-samples t test, and normalized gain. The mean score increased from 56.11 to 81.89, with a statistically significant paired difference, $t(18) = 28.545$, $p < .001$. The mean normalized gain was 0.6144, or 61.44%, indicating moderate improvement. The study's novelty lies in examining contemporary authentic broadcast content in an underrepresented eighth-grade context. Given the absence of a control group, the findings demonstrate within-group improvement rather than causal superiority over other listening media.

Keywords: BBC Podcast, Authentic Listening Materials, Listening Comprehension, Junior High School, Pre-Experimental Design

INTRODUCTION

Listening comprehension is a central component of language learning because learners must process spoken input in real time while identifying meaning, vocabulary, pronunciation, and contextual cues. At the secondary level, teachers continue to report barriers related to limited technological support, insufficient listening practice, and learners' difficulty processing naturally spoken English (Panthee, 2024). These challenges make the choice of listening materials important. Recent research on instructional material adaptation also emphasizes that

materials should match learners' needs and provide meaningful, varied learning experiences rather than functioning as static content detached from actual language use (Hanifa et al., 2024).

Authentic listening materials provide access to language produced for real communicative purposes. Their value lies in exposing learners to naturally occurring pronunciation, speech rate, vocabulary, discourse patterns, and cultural contexts. Evidence from secondary English as a foreign language classrooms shows that authentic materials can support listening comprehension when they are carefully selected and pedagogically scaffolded (Wulandari et al., 2025). Similar findings indicate that authentic learning materials can strengthen students' interest and engagement with listening tasks, although their difficulty must be managed according to learner level (Husnawati et al., 2024; Pylypyshyna & Palamarchuk, 2024). A recent review further cautions that authentic input can increase cognitive load when background knowledge, accent, or speech rate exceeds learners' readiness, so teachers must balance authenticity with accessibility (Alamri, 2025).

Digital listening resources and podcasts offer a practical way to provide authentic input because audio can be replayed, accessed repeatedly, and integrated with classroom or independent learning. Studies of online listening applications show that learners use features such as replay, feedback, transcripts, and flexible access to support self-directed listening practice (Huong & Bui, 2024). Mobile-assisted blended listening has also been associated with better listening performance and stronger learner autonomy when compared with conventional instruction (Pyo & Lee, 2025). Reviews of podcast use in English language teaching similarly identify authentic input, flexibility, and learner engagement as recurring pedagogical advantages (Hulliyany et al., 2024), while student-perception research reports that podcasts are generally viewed as useful for improving listening proficiency (Mohammed & Khadawardi, 2024).

Recent empirical studies provide further evidence that podcast-supported instruction can improve listening scores. Syifa et al. (2024) reported significant pretest-posttest improvement after regular English podcast exposure, and Sayidaturrahmah et al. (2024) found moderate normalized gains among senior high school students learning through podcasts. In a more rigorous junior high school study, Agustini et al. (2026) found higher listening gains in a podcast-based experimental group than in a control group and also reported stronger motivation and engagement. These findings indicate that podcast-based listening is promising across educational levels, but outcomes depend on the specific podcast source, learner age, task design, and research design.

British Broadcasting Corporation Learning English provides contemporary audio and audiovisual materials produced around everyday topics, news, pronunciation, vocabulary, and communicative language use. Recent studies have examined this resource in several contexts. Anggrayni et al. (2024) reported improved listening performance after using the British Broadcasting Corporation Learning English website in senior high school. Nurislami et al. (2024) also documented improvement through British Broadcasting Corporation Learning English media in a classroom action research setting. Herlisma et al. (2024) found positive teacher implementation and student perceptions when British Broadcasting Corporation Learning English YouTube content was used as authentic listening material, while Witjaksana & Daulay (2025) reported stronger listening outcomes for a senior high school experimental group using the British Broadcasting Corporation Learning English application. These studies strengthen the empirical rationale for using the platform, but most recent British Broadcasting Corporation-focused studies have been conducted at senior high school or vocational levels rather than in eighth-grade junior high school classes.

The present study was conducted at MTs Miftahurridho Sembir, Kalibawang, Wonosobo, where the eighth-grade class had limited opportunities to engage with contemporary authentic English listening materials. The instructional problem was not simply a lack of audio. Students had to cope with speech rate, pronunciation, intonation, unfamiliar

vocabulary, and the need to process meaning without relying on written text. Podcast materials were therefore selected as an alternative to conventional, largely static listening resources. A 20-item listening test was used to examine whether students' scores changed after instruction with selected British Broadcasting Corporation Learning English podcast materials.

The research gap lies in the still limited recent evidence on British Broadcasting Corporation podcast-based listening specifically for eighth-grade junior high school learners, particularly in a small intact class where a comparison group is not available. The novelty of this study is therefore contextual and pedagogical rather than technological: it evaluates contemporary authentic British Broadcasting Corporation broadcast content in an underrepresented eighth-grade setting and reports both statistical change and normalized learning gain. Unlike studies that rely mainly on learner perceptions or use older textbook-style listening input, this study focuses on measured listening performance before and after exposure to current authentic broadcast material. Accordingly, the study addresses the following research questions:

- How do the eighth-grade students' listening comprehension scores differ before and after instruction using British Broadcasting Corporation podcasts?
- Is the change in listening comprehension statistically significant and educationally meaningful based on the normalized gain?

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative pre-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design. The same group of students completed a listening pretest, received instruction using selected British Broadcasting Corporation Learning English podcast materials, and completed a listening posttest. A one-group design was chosen because the school had one intact eighth-grade class available for the study, consisting of 19 students, so random allocation and the creation of a separate comparison class were not feasible. This design can identify within-group change across the two measurements, but it cannot rule out alternative explanations to the same extent as a randomized or quasi-experimental design with a control group.

The study was conducted at MTs Miftahurridho Sembir, Kalibawang District, Wonosobo Regency, Central Java, during the 2025/2026 academic year. The research activities were carried out from January to May 2026. The study population and sample were the same intact eighth-grade class, comprising 19 students. All students in the class were included in the analysis.

The primary data collection instrument was a listening comprehension test consisting of 20 multiple-choice items with four answer options. The test was administered before the instructional treatment as the pretest and after the treatment as the posttest. During the treatment phase, the students received listening instruction using selected British Broadcasting Corporation Learning English podcast materials that presented contemporary spoken English. No questionnaire, interview, observation checklist, or document-analysis instrument was included in the outcome analysis because the study's reported quantitative findings were derived from the listening test scores.

Data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics 25. Descriptive statistics included the number of participants, minimum and maximum scores, means, and standard deviations. Because the sample consisted of 19 students, the Shapiro-Wilk test was used to assess the normality of the pretest and posttest score distributions. A paired-samples *t* test was then used to examine the mean difference between the two measurements. The paired-samples correlation was reported as supplementary information about the association between pretest and posttest scores. In addition, normalized gain was calculated at the student level to describe the magnitude of learning improvement relative to the available score range. Statistical significance was evaluated at the 0.05 level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The results are presented in the same sequence as the research questions. All descriptive reporting uses the 0-100 score scale presented in the statistical output to ensure consistency across the narrative and tables.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Pretest and Posttest Scores

Measure	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Pretest	19	40	68	56.11	8.339
Posttest	19	60	96	81.89	10.697

Source: Research data (2026)

As shown in Table 1, the pretest mean was 56.11 (SD = 8.339), whereas the posttest mean was 81.89 (SD = 10.697). The mean increase was therefore 25.78 points on the 0-100 scale. The lowest score increased from 40 to 60, and the highest score increased from 68 to 96. These descriptive results answer the first research question by showing a substantial upward shift in listening performance after the instructional period.

Table 2. Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test

Measure	W	df	p
Pretest	0.948	19	0.364
Posttest	0.926	19	0.144

Source: Research data (2026)

Table 2 shows that the Shapiro-Wilk significance values for both measurements exceeded .05. The pretest distribution had $p = .364$ and the posttest distribution had $p = .144$, indicating no evidence of marked non-normality in either score distribution. A homogeneity test was not required because the analysis compared two measurements from the same participants rather than two independent groups.

Table 3. Paired-Samples Statistics

Measure	Mean	N	SD	SE Mean
Pretest	56.11	19	8.339	1.913
Posttest	81.89	19	10.697	2.454

Source: Research data (2026)

The paired descriptive statistics in Table 3 confirm that all 19 students contributed data to both measurements. The difference between the two means is consistent with the descriptive summary in Table 1 and provides the basis for the paired inferential test.

Table 4. Paired-Samples Correlation

Pair	N	Correlation	p
Pretest and posttest	19	0.944	< 0.001

Source: Research data (2026)

Table 4 shows a strong positive correlation between pretest and posttest scores, $r = .944$, $p < .001$. Students who scored relatively higher before the treatment also tended to score relatively higher afterward. This correlation does not test treatment effectiveness; it only describes the consistency of students' relative performance across the two measurement occasions.

Table 5. Paired-Samples t Test

Comparison	Mean Difference	SD	SE	95% CI	t (df)	p
Posttest - Pretest	25.789	3.938	0.903	23.891 to 27.688	28.545 (18)	< 0.001

Source: Research data (2026)

The paired-samples t test in Table 5 indicates that the posttest-pretest difference was statistically significant, $t(18) = 28.545$, $p < .001$. The 95% confidence interval for the mean increase ranged from 23.891 to 27.688 points. Thus, the second research question is supported statistically: the observed increase was unlikely to be explained by sampling variation alone within this group.

Table 6. Normalized Gain

Measure	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Normalized gain	19	0.33	0.89	0.6144	0.16976
Normalized gain (%)	19	33.33	88.89	61.4399	16.97580

Source: Research data (2026)

Table 6 shows a mean normalized gain of 0.6144, equivalent to 61.44%. This represents a moderate level of improvement and indicates that the students achieved a meaningful proportion of the possible score increase. The gain statistic complements the significance test by describing the learning improvement relative to the available improvement range.

Discussion

The central finding is that the eighth-grade students achieved markedly higher listening scores after instruction using British Broadcasting Corporation podcasts. The increase from a mean of 56.11 to 81.89 was not only statistically significant but was also accompanied by a moderate normalized gain. This pattern is consistent with recent pretest-posttest podcast research. Syifa et al. (2024) reported significant improvement after repeated podcast exposure, and Sayidaturrahmah et al. (2024) likewise found that podcast-supported listening produced meaningful normalized gains. At the junior high school level, Agustini et al. (2026) found that students receiving podcast-based instruction achieved stronger listening gains than a control group. The current results therefore fit a broader recent pattern in which structured podcast use is associated with improved listening performance.

The moderate normalized gain is also important because it prevents the results from being interpreted as complete mastery. Authentic spoken input can simultaneously support learning and create difficulty. Isaadah & Rizal (2024) found that learners valued podcast authenticity and flexibility but still reported problems with speech speed and comprehension. Alamri (2025) similarly notes that authentic listening materials can increase cognitive demands when accent, cultural knowledge, or linguistic complexity exceeds learner readiness. Shamsi & Bozorgian (2024) show that multimedia listening becomes more manageable when learners receive strategic and metacognitive support. For eighth-grade learners, these findings imply that authentic British Broadcasting Corporation materials should be selected by level and accompanied by scaffolding rather than simply played as unmediated audio.

The present findings are particularly relevant to recent British Broadcasting Corporation Learning English research. Anggrayni et al. (2024) documented improvement in senior high school listening after the platform was integrated into classroom action research. Nurislami et al. (2024) also reported rising listening scores across instructional cycles using British Broadcasting Corporation Learning English. Herlisma et al. (2024) showed that teachers and vocational high school students regarded British Broadcasting Corporation Learning English content as useful authentic material, while Witjaksana & Daulay (2025) reported stronger post-instruction listening performance in a quasi-experimental senior high school setting. The

current study extends that line of evidence to an eighth-grade class, where recent British Broadcasting Corporation-specific evidence remains comparatively limited.

One plausible pedagogical explanation is the combination of authentic input and repeatable digital access. Online listening tools allow learners to encounter natural pronunciation and discourse while also giving teachers or learners opportunities to replay difficult segments and revisit content. Huong & Bui (2024) found that digital listening applications supported self-directed practice through features that make listening more manageable, while Pyo & Lee (2025) reported gains in both listening and learner autonomy under mobile-assisted blended instruction. Mahmudah (2024) also emphasizes that podcast materials are more useful when paired with deliberately designed listening tasks rather than treated as entertainment alone. However, the current study measured listening test performance only. It did not collect motivation, autonomy, perception, or strategy data, so these mechanisms should be understood as evidence-based interpretations rather than variables directly demonstrated by this dataset.

The findings also reinforce the importance of matching authentic materials to the instructional context. Wulandari et al. (2025) found that authentic materials improved secondary students' listening comprehension when compared with conventional materials, and Pylypyshyna & Palamarchuk (2024) similarly reported benefits from authentic listening-viewing materials. Husnawati et al. (2024) linked authentic materials with positive motivational and listening-related outcomes, while Hanifa et al. (2024) emphasize that instructional materials require adaptation to learners' level, needs, and classroom realities. In this study, contemporary British Broadcasting Corporation content offered a contrast to static textbook-oriented listening materials, but its effectiveness still depended on how the teacher selected and mediated the audio for the class.

The statistical result must nevertheless be interpreted within the design. A paired-samples *t* test establishes a reliable difference between two measurements in the same group, but a one-group pretest-posttest design cannot demonstrate that the podcast intervention alone caused the entire improvement. Testing familiarity, maturation, teacher support, or other instructional experiences may also have contributed. This is why the conclusion is framed as significant within-group improvement after British Broadcasting Corporation podcast instruction rather than causal superiority over another method. The absence of a control group is therefore not a minor technical detail; it is the main boundary on the strength of the claim.

The novelty of this study lies in its specific intersection of learner level, authentic media source, and measured outcome. Recent podcast research includes junior high school learners, and recent British Broadcasting Corporation Learning English research demonstrates value at upper secondary levels, but comparatively little recent work focuses on British Broadcasting Corporation podcast-based listening with eighth-grade learners in a small intact Indonesian class. By reporting corrected 0-100 descriptive scores, a paired statistical test, and normalized gain, this study provides empirical evidence that contemporary authentic British Broadcasting Corporation content can be integrated into this context with substantial within-group improvement. Its contribution is therefore a context-sensitive extension of authentic podcast pedagogy, not a claim that British Broadcasting Corporation podcasts are universally superior to all other listening media.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The study answers both research questions. The eighth-grade students showed markedly higher listening comprehension after instruction using British Broadcasting Corporation podcasts, moving from a lower pre-instruction average to a substantially higher post-instruction average. The paired analysis confirmed that the change was statistically significant, while the normalized gain indicated a moderate level of improvement. These findings support the

practical use of contemporary authentic podcast material for listening instruction in this class. However, because the study used one intact group without a comparison group or random assignment, the results should be interpreted as within-group improvement associated with the instructional period rather than proof that British Broadcasting Corporation podcasts are causally superior to other listening approaches.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, the sample was small and drawn from only one eighth-grade class at one school, which restricts generalization to other student populations. Second, the one-group pretest-posttest design did not include a control group, so alternative explanations for score improvement cannot be fully excluded. Third, the study relied on a listening test as the outcome measure and did not collect validated data on motivation, engagement, learning strategies, or students' perceptions. Fourth, the study examined performance over a relatively short instructional period and therefore cannot determine whether the gains were retained over time.

Recommendations

English teachers may use British Broadcasting Corporation Learning English podcasts as supplementary authentic listening material, but selection should be matched to learners' proficiency and supported by pre-listening vocabulary work, focused listening questions, controlled replay, and post-listening comprehension activities. Future research should use larger and more diverse samples, include a comparison group where feasible, and report delayed posttests to assess retention. Quasi-experimental or randomized designs would provide stronger evidence about comparative effectiveness. Future studies may also measure motivation, learner autonomy, and listening strategies with validated instruments so that the mechanisms behind score improvement can be examined directly.

Author Contributions

All three authors contributed to the conceptualization of the study, interpretation of the findings, manuscript preparation, scholarly revision, and approval of the final version. The first author conducted the primary data collection and initial quantitative analysis, while the second and third authors contributed to methodological refinement, interpretation, and critical revision of the manuscript.

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