

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher would like to present the background of the study, formulation of the research, objectives of the research, significance of the research, scope and limitation of the research, and definition of the key terms

A. Background of the Research

As a language used worldwide for academic, English holds a significant position in global communication. Within the Indonesian context, where English functions as a foreign language, vocabulary is widely regarded as one of the most important and fundamental component.¹ Having a good vocabulary base allows learners to comprehend and apply language competently across the four skill areas listening, speaking, reading, and writing.² Otherwise, learners with limited vocabulary often find it difficult to communicate effectively in real situations.. Without a strong vocabulary, students may struggle to use English effectively in different situations. At many senior high schools, MAN 4 Jombang included, something that is consistent obstacle in learning English is the lack of opportunities to encounter genuine English

¹ Shoja and Karimi, "Incidental Academic Vocabulary Learning Through Listening to Expert Interviews."

²Nurhayati and Apriliyanti, *The Correlation of Vocabulary Mastery and Students' Reading Comprehension..*

use beyond classroom hours. Classroom instruction by itself rarely provides sufficient vocabulary breadth or language practice for students to reach a high level of fluency. This highlights the need to find ways for students to learn independently and use resources that help them practice English outside of school.³

Along with the continued growth of digital media, podcasts have emerged as a convenient and flexible medium for both learning and information-seeking. Edison Research reported that a substantial proportion of Americans aged 12 and above had listened to a podcast in the month preceding the survey, a figure that has continued to rise in subsequent years underscoring the growing role of podcasts as a mainstream learning tool.⁴ Globally, podcast audiences have likewise expanded considerably, reflecting a broader shift toward digital audio consumption in everyday learning and entertainment habits. This figure has continued to increase in subsequent years, indicating the growing importance of podcasts as a widely used digital learning medium. Globally, podcast listenership has also shown steady growth, reaching more than 464 million listeners worldwide in 2023 and continuing to increase in the following years. This indicates a strong global shift toward

³ Ramadani et al., "THE CORRELATION BETWEEN STUDENT'S VOCABULARY MASTERY AND READING COMPREHENSION."

⁴ Edison, *The Podcast Consumer 2023*.

digital audio consumption as part of daily learning and entertainment habits.⁵

English-language audio podcasts, in specially, stand out among digital learning resources because students can access them independently outside class hours. Listening has long been recognized as a central component of language acquisition, with studies suggesting that a substantial portion of a person's day is spent listening rather than speaking, reading, or writing. When students listen to English podcasts, they hear real conversations, which helps them understand spoken English better.⁶

Through podcasts, learners are genuinely influenced spoken English, varied accents, and contextually meaningful language use. A number of educational studies have pointed to podcasts as an effective medium for second-language vocabulary development. Mashhadi highlights how podcasts can help make the learning process easier and support better learning in mixed education settings.⁷

The growth of digital technology and the idea of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) have provided new ways to deal with the problem of limited language exposure. One widely used and important tool is English-language audio podcasts. These podcasts can be easily accessed on personal devices, allowing learners to study on their own. Students can choose content that matches their interests and how difficult

⁵ Backlinko Team, *Podcast Statistics You Need to Know*.

⁶ Ramirez, "The Use of Podcasts for Language Learning."

⁷ Mashhadi et al., *The Impact of Podcasts on English Vocabulary Development in a Blended Educational Model*.

they find the material.⁸ Through podcasts, learners can be exposed to authentic language input in a flexible and personalized way. Crucially, how often a learner is exposed to spoken English appears to influence vocabulary growth considerably. Frequent listening exposes learners to new words within authentic contexts, allowing vocabulary to be absorbed somewhat incidentally rather than through deliberate memorization.⁹ As exposure to English audio increases, so too does the possibility that learners will recognize, comprehend, and retain unfamiliar words. In addition, vocabulary learning outcomes, such as test scores, are influenced by how often students interact with English-language listening materials. Therefore, frequency is not merely a habit, but a measurable factor that may significantly influence students' vocabulary mastery.

While numerous studies have confirmed the value of podcasts for vocabulary learning, the most of this research has relied on experimental designs that examine classroom based interventions. Relatively little attention has been paid to how the frequency of independent, out of class podcast listening as an indicator of self-directed learning relates to students' vocabulary outcomes.¹⁰

This study focuses on the frequency with which students listen to English-language audio podcasts outside of class as part of their

⁸ Ani and Sinaga, "The Correlation Between Students' Vocabulary Mastery and Speaking Mastery."

⁹ Wei and Hu, *Incidental Vocabulary Learning Through Reading While Listening in the Chinese EFL Classroom Context: A Longitudinal Study*.

¹⁰ Uma Rubab, *Efficacy of Vocabulary Teaching through Podcasts on Vocabulary Knowledge at the Tertiary Level*.

independent learning. Therefore, this study aims to examine the correlation between the frequency with which students listen to English-language audio podcasts outside of class and their vocabulary proficiency at MAN 4 Jombang using a quantitative correlational approach

The results are expected to provide empirical evidence for educators regarding the importance of encouraging students to engage in independent learning through digital media, particularly English audio podcasts, as part of their language learning process. This led to the formulation of a research study entitled:

“The Correlation Between Students’ Frequency of Listening to English Audio Podcasts and Their Vocabulary Mastery at MAN 4 Jombang “

B. Research Question

Based on the background of the study, which the formulation research problem:

1. What is the frequency of listening to English audio podcasts among students at MAN 4 Jombang?
2. What is the level of vocabulary mastery among students’ at MAN 4 Jombang?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the frequency of listening to english audio podcasts an their vocabulary mastery among students at MAN 4 Jombang?

C. Objective of the study

Based on the research questions above, the objectives of this study are as follows: 1) to identify the frequency of listening to English audio podcasts among students at MAN 4 Jombang; 2) to identify the level of vocabulary mastery among students at MAN 4 Jombang; and 3) to examine and analyze whether there is a significant relationship between the frequency of listening to English audio podcasts and their vocabulary mastery of students at MAN 4 Jombang.

D. Significance of the study

1. Theoretical Use

This study contributes to existing educational theory, especially by enriching scholarly understanding of how podcast listening habits relate to vocabulary development. The empirical findings are also expected to lend support to learning theories which hold that interactive, media based instruction fosters a more engaging classroom environment, encourages active student participation, and ultimately benefits learning outcomes.

2. Practitioner's Use

1. Schools

Providing the school with an overview of the habits of listening to audio podcasts and English vocabulary, so that it can be

taken into consideration in developing innovations in digital technology-based learning at MAN 4 Jombang.

2. Teacher

Teachers Providing input on learning strategies that are more engaging, interactive, and tailored to student characteristics, thereby increasing engagement and improving English language learning outcomes.

3. Students

Providing a more enjoyable and motivating learning experience through audio podcast based learning media, thereby fostering interest and improving understanding of English language learning concepts.

4. Other Researchers

This study can serve as a reference for future research on audio podcast-based learning models or other digital learning innovations aimed at increasing student interest and learning outcomes.

E. Scope and Limitations

b. Scope

This research focuses on determining the correlation between students' frequency of listening to English audio podcasts and their

vocabulary mastery at MAN 4 Jombang in the academic year 2025/2026.

b. Limitation

In this study, the researchers focused on the frequency with which students listened to English-language audio podcasts as the independent variable and students' vocabulary mastery as the dependent variable. This study was also limited to students at MAN 4 Jombang and did not include other factors that might influence vocabulary proficiency, such as reading habits, speaking practice, or classroom instruction.

F. Research hypothesis

Hypothesis is refers to temporary assumption regarding a research problem that must be examined through statistical testing. Therefore, the researcher proposes an alternative hypothesis (H_1) and a null hypothesis (H_0), which are presented as follows:

1. Null Hypothesis (H_0)

There is no significant correlation between the frequency of students' listening to English audio podcasts and their English vocabulary mastery at MAN 4 Jombang.

2. Alternative Hypothesis (H₁)

There is a significant correlation between the frequency of students' listening to English audio podcasts and their English vocabulary mastery at MAN 4 Jombang.

G. Definition of key terms.

Definition of key terms refers to the clarification of essential concepts used in this study to ensure that readers develop a shared and accurate understanding of the terminology applied. Providing these definitions helps prevent ambiguity and supports clear interpretation of the variables examined throughout the research.

1. Correlation

Correlation refers to the relationship between how frequently students listen to English audio podcasts and their vocabulary mastery. It tells us how much the amount of podcast listening is linked to improvements in vocabulary, but it doesn't mean one causes the other.

2. Listening to English Audio Podcasts

Listening to English audio podcasts refers to the frequency with which students listen to English language podcast audio as a form of language learning input in the digital age. Podcasts are digital audio recordings that often contain educational content, real life conversations, and authentic language use. In this study,

listening to English audio podcasts is intended to support students' English learning, particularly vocabulary development. The frequency of listening is measured using a questionnaire with frequency categories such as often, rarely, and never, and the results are presented in the form of scores that reflect students' listening habits.

3. Vocabulary Mastery

Vocabulary mastery refers to students' ability to understand, remember, and appropriately use English words in various contexts. It involves not only recognizing the meaning of words but also understanding their forms, pronunciation, spelling, and grammatical functions within sentences. A student who has good vocabulary mastery is able to use words accurately and effectively in both spoken and written communication.

Furthermore, vocabulary mastery includes both receptive and productive knowledge. Receptive vocabulary refers to the words that students can recognize and understand when they listen or read, while productive vocabulary refers to the words that students can actively use when they speak or write. These two aspects are essential in supporting overall language proficiency.

In addition, vocabulary mastery is closely related to students' ability to comprehend texts and express ideas clearly. A limited vocabulary may hinder students from understanding

messages or conveying their thoughts effectively, while a rich vocabulary allows them to communicate more precisely and confidently. Therefore, vocabulary mastery is considered a fundamental element in learning English, as it contributes significantly to the development of all language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

In this study, vocabulary mastery is defined as students' ability to comprehend and use English vocabulary appropriately in context, which may be developed through language exposure, including listening activities such as English audio podcasts.