

Utilizing Academic English Podcast Channel in Teaching Listening Skill for Higher Students' Level

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: 21 July 2026	Listening comprehension is a major challenge for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, particularly in standardized proficiency tests such as the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). This study aimed to investigate the implementation of the "TOEFL with Andrea" Podcast Channel to improve university students' listening skills in TOEFL Listening Part C. The study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) using the Kemmis and McTaggart cycle, consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection. The participants were 15 sixth-semester students of the English Education Department at IAIN Sultan Amai Gorontalo. The research was conducted in two cycles, and data were collected through listening tests and classroom observations. The findings demonstrated a progressive improvement in students' listening performance. The mean score increased from 41.86 in the pre-test to 64.26 in the post-test of Cycle 1 and further increased to 78.13 in Cycle 2. In terms of achievement, none of the students reached the minimum mastery criterion (KKM) of 70 in the pre-test. In Cycle 1, 5 students (33.3%) achieved the criterion, whereas 12 students (80%) achieved it in Cycle 2. The 80% mastery level met the predetermined success criterion, leading the researcher to terminate the action after the second cycle. The findings suggest that the "TOEFL with Andrea" Podcast Channel can serve as an effective supplementary medium for TOEFL Listening Part C instruction. Its integration with systematic teaching procedures and reflective improvement provided students with repeated exposure to spoken English and opportunities to develop listening comprehension, vocabulary recognition, concentration, and familiarity with TOEFL listening tasks. The study highlights the potential of podcast-based learning as a flexible and accessible approach to technology-assisted TOEFL listening instruction.
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1. Introduction

Listening comprehension is a fundamental component of second and foreign language learning because it requires learners to process spoken language in real time by recognizing linguistic forms, constructing meaning, and responding to information. L2 listening is influenced by cognitive, metacognitive, and affective factors, including vocabulary, syntactic knowledge, listening strategies, self-efficacy, anxiety, and motivation (Mahdian Rad & Baleghizadeh, 2025; Zhang & Xu, 2024). For EFL learners, listening can be particularly challenging because spoken input may involve rapid speech, unfamiliar accents, vocabulary, pronunciation patterns, and discourse structures. Indonesian EFL learners have reported difficulties related to speech rate, accent variation, lengthy texts, vocabulary limitations, concentration, and processing demands (Ramadhianti & Somba, 2022; Hardiyanto et al., 2021).

These challenges become more significant in standardized English proficiency tests such as the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), which requires learners to identify main ideas, supporting information, speaker purposes, relationships between ideas, and specific details in spoken texts. Indonesian university students experience difficulties in TOEFL listening due to listening content, physical environment, speech characteristics, and limited practice (Aprino et al., 2022; Rina & Tiarina, 2021). Metacognitive awareness is also important because learners who can plan, monitor, and evaluate their listening processes are better able to manage comprehension difficulties (Lee, 2024; Mahdavy & Mousavi Namavar, 2023). Self-efficacy, anxiety, and motivation further influence how learners approach listening tasks and process spoken input (Zhang & Xu, 2024). Therefore, listening instruction should provide repeated exposure, strategic processing, and opportunities for independent practice.

Digital technology offers opportunities to address these challenges by providing flexible access to spoken English beyond the classroom. Computer- and mobile-assisted learning can support listening through transcripts, subtitles, repetition, and playback controls. A recent meta-analysis found that computer-based help options can facilitate L2 listening comprehension, although their effectiveness depends on learner proficiency, task characteristics, and the type of support provided (Li, 2025). One promising digital medium is podcasting, which provides accessible audio content and exposure to authentic or semi-authentic speech, different accents, vocabulary, speech rates, and communicative contexts. Its asynchronous nature also allows learners to replay difficult sections and learn according to their individual schedules (Andini & Burhanuddin, 2022).

Previous studies provide empirical evidence of the benefits of podcasts for listening development. Podcast-based instruction has been found to significantly improve listening comprehension compared with traditional instruction (Bakhsh & Gilakjani, 2021), while podcast supplementation has also improved students' ability to identify meaning in spoken language (Kucharová et al., 2024). Podcasts may additionally support vocabulary enrichment, recognition of speech rates and accents, pronunciation development, and understanding of natural dialogue (Andini & Burhanuddin, 2022). Indonesian EFL learners have reported positive perceptions of podcasts because of their accessibility, flexibility, opportunities for repeated listening, and support for independent learning (Isaadah, 2023; Andayani et al., 2024). Podcasts have also been perceived as engaging and useful for listening comprehension (Gunawan et al., 2023; Isaadah, 2023). Furthermore, podcast-based learning can be combined with subtitles or transcripts to provide additional comprehension support (Andayani et al., 2024).

The pedagogical effectiveness of podcasting is supported by experimental research. Efendi and Astutik (2024) reported improved listening skills among vocational high school students, while Sulistina et al. (2024) found improvements in English listening comprehension through podcast-based learning. At the university level, Gunawan et al. (2023) found that students considered podcasts and TED Talks useful for extensive listening, while Andini and

Burhanuddin (2022) demonstrated the potential of self-directed podcast listening among young adult EFL learners. In addition, Yu and Wen (2025), through an analysis of 8,862 podcast transcripts, showed that general-audience English podcasts require substantial lexical knowledge and expose learners to diverse vocabulary and discourse patterns relevant to authentic communication.

Despite these findings, several gaps remain. Existing research has largely examined general listening comprehension, school-level learners, general EFL populations, or learners' perceptions, while fewer studies have specifically investigated university students preparing for TOEFL listening tasks. Research focusing on podcasts and standardized English proficiency tests, particularly academic lecture-type materials and specific TOEFL listening sections, is also limited. This gap is important because TOEFL listening requires learners to process dense spoken information under time constraints while applying concentration, vocabulary recognition, prediction, note-taking, and comprehension strategies (Mahdavy & Mousavi Namavar, 2023; Lee, 2024).

The present study addresses this gap by examining the use of the "TOEFL with Andrea" podcast as a learning medium for improving Indonesian university students' listening comprehension, particularly in TOEFL Listening Section C. Unlike general English podcasts, the selected podcast is oriented toward TOEFL preparation and is therefore potentially relevant to the linguistic and academic demands of the test. Regular exposure to its materials may help learners become more familiar with spoken English, academic vocabulary, speech rate, pronunciation, and the organization of spoken information while providing opportunities for repeated and independent practice.

Accordingly, this study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of implementing the "TOEFL with Andrea" podcast in improving students' listening skills in TOEFL Listening Section C. The study is expected to contribute empirical evidence to technology-assisted listening instruction and provide practical implications for English lecturers and students seeking flexible, accessible, and learner-centered approaches to TOEFL listening preparation.

2. Method

This study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) to investigate the implementation of the TOEFL with Andrea Podcast Channel in teaching TOEFL listening skills, particularly Part C. CAR is appropriate because it enables teachers and researchers to identify classroom learning problems, implement instructional actions, observe their effects, and reflect on the results to improve subsequent teaching practices (Burns, 2019; Viswanathan, 2022). Recent research has demonstrated the applicability of action research in English language teaching, including listening instruction, because its cyclical process allows researchers to systematically evaluate instructional interventions and respond to students' learning needs (Liu, 2024; Clark & Terrett, 2024). In this study, the researcher used the Kemmis and McTaggart action research cycle, consisting of four interconnected stages: (1) planning, (2) action, (3) observation, and (4) reflection.

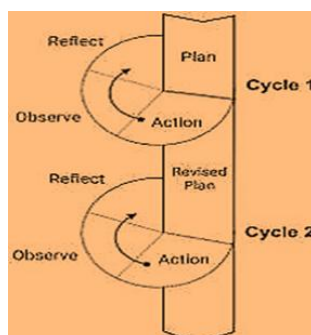


Figure 1. Kemmis and McTaggart Classroom Action Research Cycle

The planning stage involved identifying students' difficulties in TOEFL listening Part C, preparing podcast-based learning materials and lesson plans, and developing research instruments. The action stage involved implementing the TOEFL with Andrea Podcast Channel in listening activities, while the observation stage focused on documenting students' participation, responses, and learning performance.

The reflection stage involved analyzing the results of the implemented action, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and determining the improvements required for the subsequent cycle. The cyclical procedure was applied because repeated cycles allow teachers to refine instructional strategies based on classroom evidence and students' responses (Ridwan & Athena, 2023; Parianson et al., 2023). Therefore, if the learning objectives were not achieved in the first cycle, the findings from the observation and reflection stages were used as the basis for planning the next cycle. Through this process, the study examined not only whether the TOEFL with Andrea Podcast Channel could improve students' listening skills in TOEFL Part C but also how the instructional strategy could be continuously adjusted to meet students' learning needs (Saraswati & Al Hakim, 2025).

3. Results

This study found that the implementation process of the podcast "TOEFL with Andrea" can improve students' listening skills. It could be seen by the differences pre-test score result and post-test score result cycle 1.

Table 1. The Result of Pre-test

Students' Range Score Test	Number of Students
20-35	3
36-50	8
51-69	4
70-85	0
86-100	0

The data on the table 1, collected from the pre-test results and showed the mean of pre-test score is 41.86 out of 15 students, none of the students passed the minimum completeness criteria (KKM 70), and the lowest potential score was 20. As a result, it can be concluded that 6th semester students' improving student's TOEFL listening skill part (c) is still quite low.

Table 2. The Result of post-test Cycle 1

Students' Range Score Test	Number of Students
20-35	0
36-50	3
51-69	7
70-85	5
86-100	0

However, the result of post-test 1, it shows the differences score from 15 students is 64, 26 the lowest score is 44 and the highest score is 84. The presentation of students' completeness in cycle one post-test is 33, 3% only 5 from 15 students who passed the minimum completeness criteria (KKM 70). As a result, it can be concluded that 6th semester students get improvement listening skill part (c) on TOEFL but still low and cannot said success because the presentation of students' completeness in cycle one post-test is 33,3% that result is not more than 80% which the standard of successful in this study and have to move to cycle two.

Table 3. The Result of Score post-test Cycle 2

Students' Range Score Test	Number of Students
20-35	0
36-50	0
51-69	3
70-85	11
86-100	1

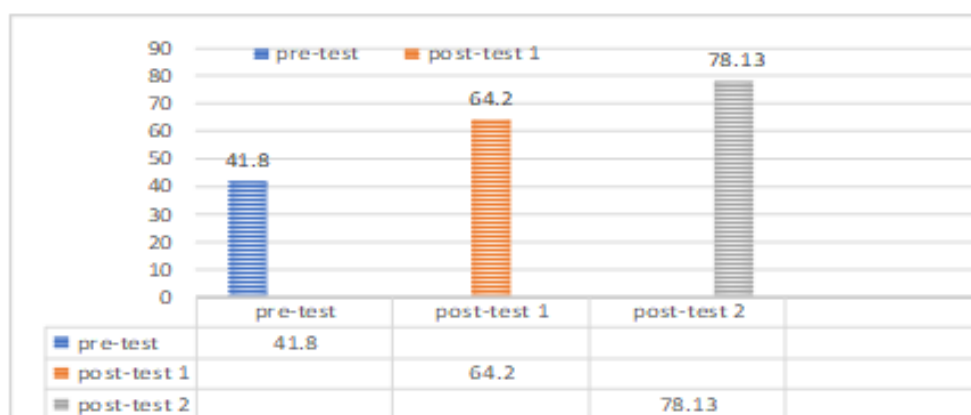
Furthermore, the data above collected from the results of post-test cycle 2 has a mean score is 78,13 out of 15 students, 12 from 15 students passed the minimum completeness criteria (KKM 70), the lowest score was 68 and the highest score is 92 the presentation of students' completeness in cycle one post-test is 80% which the standard of successful in this study. As a result, from the result of this cycle, the researcher stopped this study and would not continue to the next cycle.

The implementation of the Podcast "TOEFL with Andrea" in teaching TOEFL listening at part C has been proven to be able to effectively overcome the challenges faced by students of the English Education Department in IAIN Sultan Amai Gorontalo. In particular, it showed that there are significant differences in learning outcomes. An illustration of the differences can be seen in the table below:

Table 4. The Improvement Student' Learning Outcome

Implementation	Categories			
	The lowest score	The high score	Complete	Uncompleted
pre-test	20	60	0%	100%
post-test cycle 1	44	84	33,3%	66,7%
post-test cycle 2	68	92	80%	20%

The result from all calculating above, the graphic means of students' score percentage, from student learning outcomes in pre-test, post-test cycle 1, and post-test cycle 2 there was an increase, it could be seen from the graphic below:

**Figure 2. The Mean of Percentage Students' Score in the Pre-test, Post-test cycle 1, & Post-test cycle 2**

4. Discussion

Based on the results of the study, a significant improvement was observed in students' listening skills in Part C of the TOEFL test through the implementation of podcast-based instruction using "TOEFL with Andrea" across two instructional cycles. At the outset of the study, the average pre-test score of the 15 participating students was 41.86, which clearly

indicated that none of them had achieved the Minimum Mastery Criteria (KKM) set at 70. The lowest individual score recorded was 20, reflecting the students' limited comprehension of the content and structure typical of TOEFL Listening Part C.

Following the implementation of the first cycle, the mean post-test score increased to 64.26, representing an improvement of approximately 33.3%. However, only 5 out of 15 students (33.3%) were able to reach or surpass the KKM threshold. The limited success in this cycle was presumed to stem from the suboptimal execution of instructional procedures by both the teacher and students. Observational data further supported this, revealing that the majority of students continued to struggle with understanding and responding to the TOEFL Listening Part C questions effectively. This suggested that the learning process was not yet running efficiently and required further refinement.

In response to the underwhelming outcomes of the first cycle, the second cycle was initiated with adjustments aimed at improving the effectiveness of the teaching process. While the podcast "TOEFL with Andrea" on Spotify continued to serve as the core instructional medium, enhancements were made to the lesson plan execution and the implementation of pedagogical procedures. These refinements led to a substantial increase in student performance. The average post-test score rose to 78.13, with individual scores ranging from a minimum of 68 to a maximum of 92. Notably, 12 out of the 15 students (80%) met or exceeded the KKM benchmark, marking a remarkable 80% improvement compared to the pre-test phase.

This notable progress underscores the critical role played by the effective implementation of teaching strategies, as well as the active engagement of both the teacher and the students throughout the instructional process. The results demonstrate that integrating podcast media—particularly TOEFL with Andrea—can significantly enhance students' ability to comprehend and respond to the complex monologues and lectures featured in TOEFL Listening Part C.

Moreover, the use of authentic listening materials such as academic-themed podcasts contributed to greater familiarity with the test format, vocabulary, and discourse structures commonly found in the TOEFL Listening section. Students not only improved their test-taking strategies but also developed better note-taking techniques, concentration skills, and listening stamina—factors that are essential for success in high-stakes language assessments.

The positive outcome of the second cycle also indicates the importance of adaptive teaching, where continuous evaluation and responsiveness to student needs can lead to more effective learning experiences. By revising the instructional approach and ensuring full adherence to the planned procedures, the teacher was able to create a more structured and supportive learning environment. This not only improved student comprehension but also increased their confidence and motivation in approaching listening tasks.

5. Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of the "TOEFL with Andrea" Podcast Channel improved the TOEFL listening skills of sixth-semester students, particularly in Listening Part C. The improvement was demonstrated through the students' learning outcomes across the three assessment stages. The mean score increased from 41.86 in the pre-test to 64.26 in the post-test of Cycle 1 and further increased to 78.13 in Cycle 2. In terms of mastery, none of the students achieved the minimum mastery criterion (KKM) of 70 in the pre-test, while 5 of 15 students (33.3%) achieved the criterion in Cycle 1. After instructional improvements were implemented in Cycle 2, 12 of 15 students (80%) achieved the KKM, meeting the predetermined success criterion of the study.

The results also demonstrate the importance of the cyclical nature of Classroom Action Research. The reflection conducted after Cycle 1 provided a basis for improving the instructional procedures in Cycle 2, which resulted in better student learning outcomes. Thus,

the effectiveness of the podcast was supported not only by the use of digital listening material but also by the continuous adjustment of teaching strategies based on students' learning needs and classroom observations.

In conclusion,, the "TOEFL with Andrea" Podcast Channel can be considered a useful and accessible medium for supporting TOEFL Listening Part C instruction. Its use provides students with opportunities for repeated exposure to spoken English and supports practice with vocabulary, pronunciation, speech rate, and discourse comprehension. Therefore, the podcast can be incorporated as an alternative supplementary medium in TOEFL listening instruction, particularly when combined with systematic teaching procedures, classroom observation, and reflective improvement.

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Conflict of Interest

None.

Authors' Contribution

Ince Muh. Ruhuddin Mu'agil: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

Enni Akhmad: Methodology, Formal analysis, Supervision, Validation, Writing – review & editing.

Titin Suhartini Kaaba: Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Resources, Writing – review & editing.

All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Statement of the Use of AI

AI tools were used only for language editing and improving the linguistic quality of the manuscript. AI tools were not used for data analysis, data interpretation, methodological decisions, or the formulation of research findings and conclusions. All analytical processes, interpretations, and academic judgments were conducted by the authors.

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