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EXPLORING PODCASTS IN EDUCATION: A BIBLIOMETRIC REVIEW ON LISTENING SKILL DEVELOPMENT

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ABOUT ARTICLE

Abstract: Listening is a vital skill for communication and language learning. It enhances understanding, interaction, and assessing information. Podcasts, with their accessibility and flexibility, improve listening comprehension by exposing learners to authentic language and diverse accents. They promote autonomy, motivation, and engagement, making them valuable in modern, self-paced, and resource-limited educational contexts. This study aims to comprehensively understand podcasts' transformative potential in education, with implications for their integration into future teaching practices and technologies. This bibliometric review analyzed 68 podcast-based listening skills development publications from 2006 to 2024 using the Web of Science database. This review highlights podcasts as a growing educational tool for enhancing L2 listening skills. While podcasts complement traditional methods, their accessibility benefits resource-limited learners.

Introduction

Listening is a natural and fundamental skill everyone develops, starting before birth. The primary purpose of listening is to connect with others, to understand and be understood(*Buch*, 2010). It is the foundation of good communication, and active listening encourages interaction, promotes understanding, and helps gather more information. Listening plays a vital role in communication, accounting for 45% of our language competence, followed by speaking at 30%, reading at 15%, and writing at 10%. Listening is the most critical skill for language learners due to its substantial role in effective communication(Gilman & Moody, 1984). Some researchers view listening as a problem-solving process, characterizing it as a developmental skill that entails deciphering the meanings of spoken words (Feyten, 1991). Listening effectively is crucial for language acquisition, as it allows learners to absorb and engage with linguistic input, thereby fostering the development of other language-related abilities. Purdy and Borisoff define listening as "an active and dynamic process involving attention, perception, interpretation, memory, and response to the verbal and nonverbal needs, concerns, and information communicated by others" while Nunan called it a "Cinderella skill" as others L2 researchers had not given them the same attention as reading, writing, and speaking strategies(Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). However, technology integration into education has changed traditional teaching and learning approaches, offering innovative educational tools that cater to diverse learner needs. One such tool is podcasting, a medium that has gained traction recently for its potential to enhance listening skills and facilitate self-paced, flexible learning. Podcasts, characterized by their portability and accessibility, allow learners to engage with authentic language use, diverse accents, and real-world speech patterns, making them a valuable resource in language education. They effectively develop listening comprehension, a fundamental skill in language acquisition, particularly in contexts where traditional teaching resources may be limited (Davydenko, 2021). Moreover, podcasts often integrate multimodal resources such as transcripts, videos, and online tasks, creating comprehensive learning environments that address diverse learning styles and preferences(Hew, 2009). Beyond traditional classroom settings, podcasts have emerged as a democratizing force in education, offering cost-effective solutions for learners in resource-limited or remote areas.

Materials and Methods

This review involved searching for publications on world knowledge through research conducted using the widely utilized bibliographic online database Web of Science. The search covered the period from 2006 to 2024, focusing on podcasts for enhancing listening

skills across various countries. The analysis was conducted in October 2024. A total of 68 publications were selected for further examination regarding developing listening skills. The analysis utilized CSV files, Microsoft Excel 2021, RIS, VOS viewer, and Map chart for data processing and visualization. In the search process, relevant data were organized into a spreadsheet, incorporating keywords such as "listening," "podcast," and all articles published in English.

Results

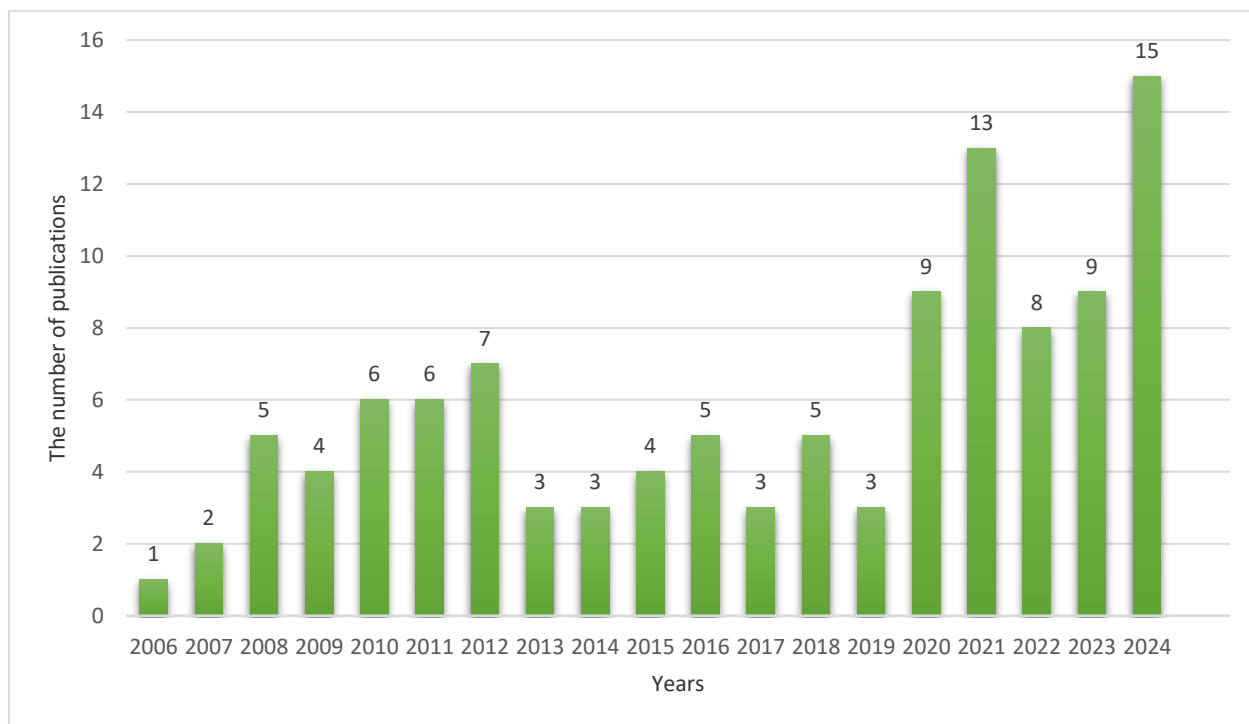*3.1 Trend of publications on teaching listening skills.*

Figure 1. Annual production of articles on teaching listening skills from 2006-2024.

The bar chart presents data on the number of papers published annually from 2006 to 2024**.** Noticeably, the trend starts with low figures, with 1 to 2 papers published between 2006 and 2007. A steady rise follows, peaking at 7 papers in 2012. However, from 2013 to 2019, the numbers fluctuate between 3 and 5 papers annually. From 2020 onwards, a significant increase is observed, starting with nine papers in 2020 and reaching the peak with 15 papers in 2024, the highest in the whole period.

3.2 Top countries with the number of publications

The map gives data on the publications of the ten most productive countries teaching listening skills between 2006 and 2024. The USA dominated with 36 publications, followed by Canada with 13 and Australia and England with 6. Iran leads with 5 publications, whereas the other five countries, Indonesia, Ireland, Norway, Russia, and Ukraine, published 4 articles.
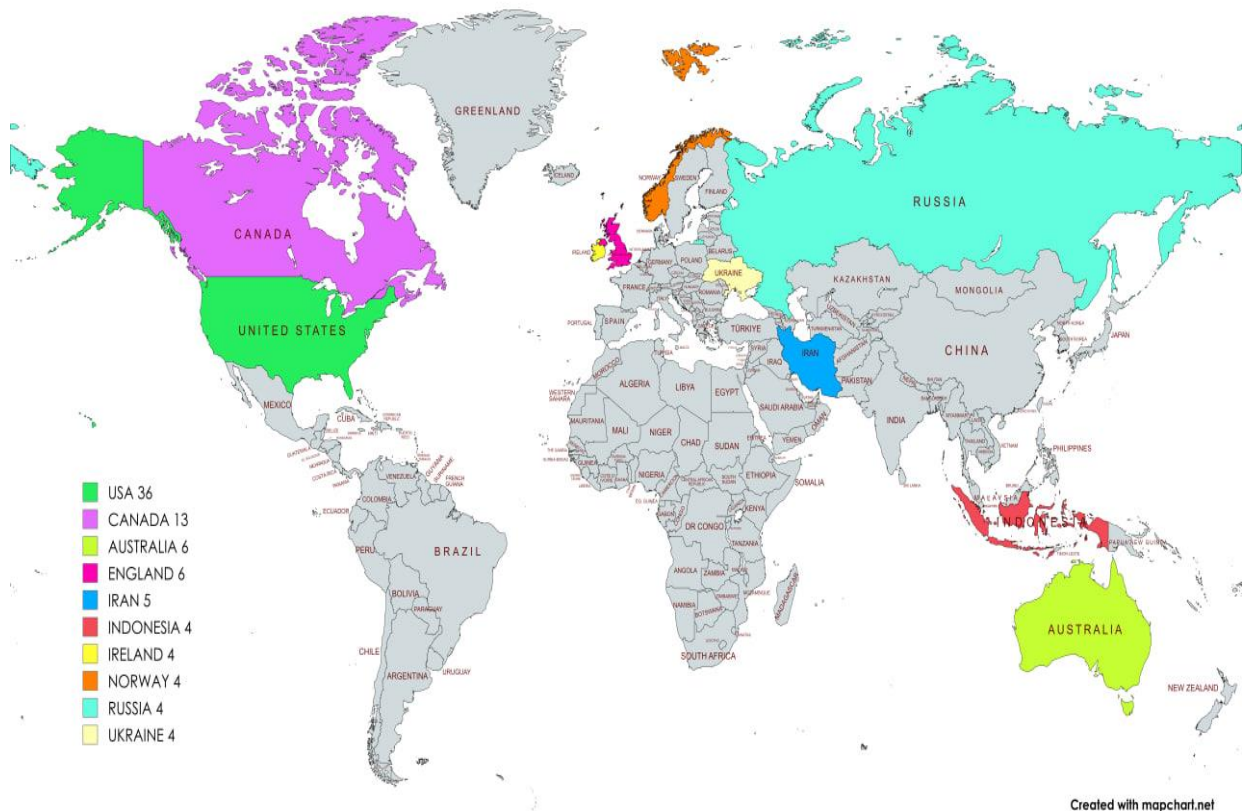
Figure 2. List of top countries on researching listening skills with podcasts
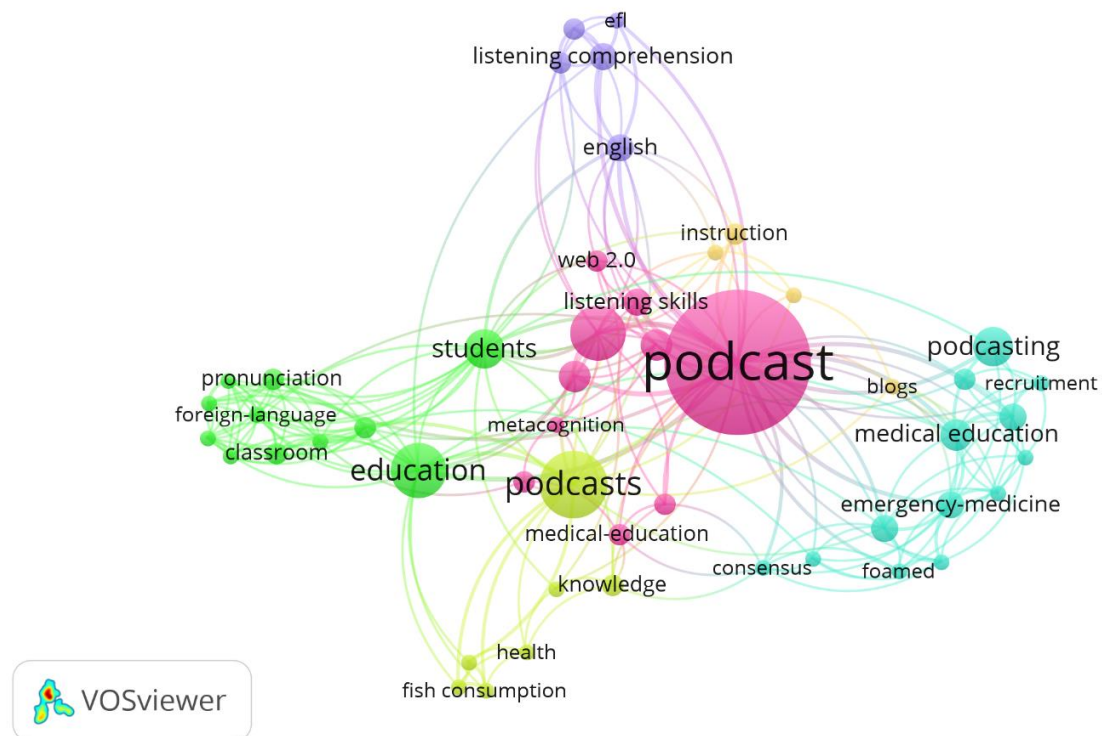

Figure 3. Network map of top keywords based on the total link strength.

The keyword analysis yielded a total of 296 keywords. After excluding general keywords with a low relevance score and those with low occurrence, 50 items were finally

identified. Each resulting keyword is represented as a node based on the total link strength, creating a network map of all keywords. Fig.3 shows the network map of the top 50 authors' keyword co-occurrence. The side of each node reflects the keyword's degree of importance. There are 50 items distributed over 6 clusters. The total link strength is 296, with 231 links.
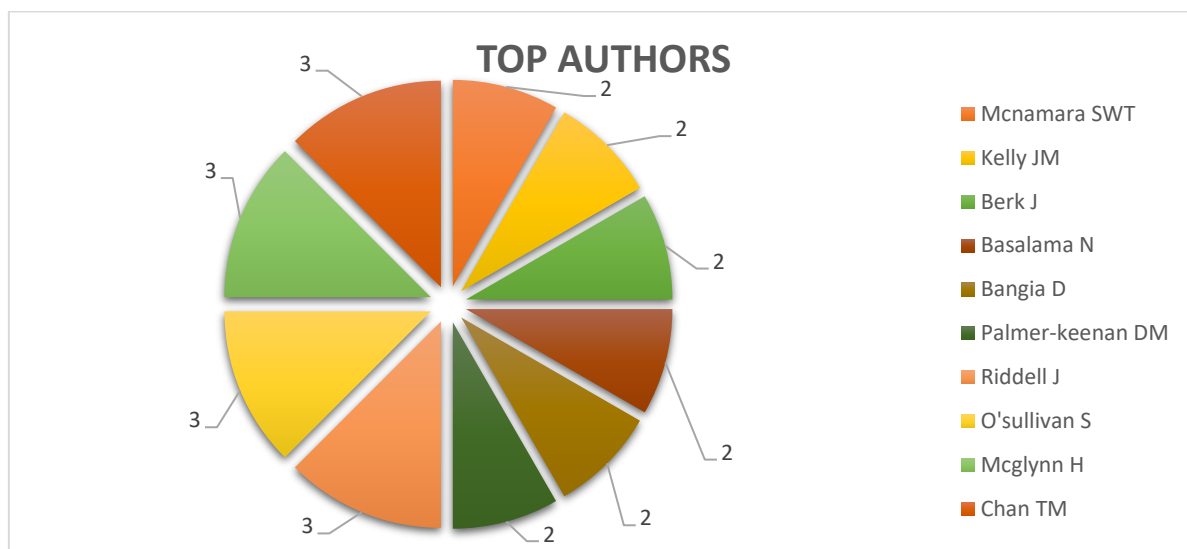

Figure 4. Top authors publishing papers on listening skills development

The pie chart shows the frequency of contributions made by important writers in a bibliometric analysis. Each section represents an author, and the number following the segment indicates their contributions. Chan TM, MCglynn H, O'sullivan S contribute with 3 papers. This data graphically represents the distribution of these scholars' research contributions.

Discussion

This bibliometric analysis examines a comprehensive overview of the evolution and current state of research on using podcasts to enhance listening skills across different educational contexts and countries. The integration of podcasts into language education has become effective in recent years, as highlighted by the bibliometric trends analyzed in this study. Research consistently underscores the value of podcasts in enhancing listening comprehension, a fundamental skill in language acquisition(Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). Listening is a topic that is relevant to all human beings(Buck, 2001). No spoken language without listening is interconnected with numerous areas of inquiry and development. Listening is often defined using metaphors like "catching" information or "negotiating" outcomes and aligns with four orientations: receptive, constructive, collaborative, and transformative. It remains a dynamic, context-dependent process influenced by communication goals and societal expectations (Rost, 2011). It can be observed that over the past decade, the use of podcasts for developing listening skills has undergone measurable

changes. Due to fast-paced technological advancements, podcasts have evolved into a valuable educational tool. Podcasts are widely recognized for their effectiveness in developing listening skills by exposing learners to authentic speech patterns, accents, and real-world contextualized language use(Davydenko, 2021). Studies frequently highlight the role of podcasts in improving learner motivation and engagement. Podcasts provide learners with interactive and self-paced opportunities, fostering autonomy. Additionally, podcasts often integrate with multimodal learning resources such as transcripts, videos, and online tasks, promoting a comprehensive language development approach.

Conclusion

This bibliometric review has analyzed the evolution and significance of podcasts as an educational tool for enhancing L2 listening skills in language education. By exposing learners to authentic speech patterns, diverse accents, and real-world contextual language, podcasts have proven to be a valuable resource for language acquisition. Their accessibility and flexibility benefit learners in resource-limited environments, reinforcing their potential to learn foreign languages globally. In conclusion, podcasts have emerged as an innovative and adaptable educational tool, bridging gaps in traditional language instruction and fostering inclusive learning. As technological advancements continue, podcasts are well-positioned to play an increasingly crucial role in global education, making learning more accessible, personalized, and culturally responsive.

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