

# Listening Skills Development Through Indian Audio Sources: A Pedagogical and Empirical Review

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**Abstract.** Listening is a basis of language competence that plays a key role in determining communicative competence of learners in general. English listening teaching in the Indian context has special considerations because of language diversity, disparate exposure to English and the unavailability of authentic audio inputs in most of the learning institutions. Nevertheless, there has been a change in present times in the form of Indian audio-based educational platforms as NCERT audio books, DIKSHA, SWAYAM, NPTEL and the radio programs of the British Council extending opportunities to listen structurally and contextually. This paper analyses the importance of Indian audio sources to the development of ELS listeners, and makes a synthesis of the previous theoretical opinion, previous empirical research and pedagogical activities. The analyses of the study are based on a descriptive mixed procedure, perceiving and rate learning improvement, listening effectiveness, and a combination of descriptors based on the audio qualities of the resources in India. They analyze quantitative data in the form of the performance score in the listening of learners and qualitative data in the form of the feedback questionnaires. The findings suggest that long-term use of audio sources in the Indian language enhances the listening comprehension, familiarity with accent, and the confidence in the learners. The results of the study are that inclusion of Indian audio resource in English language learning pedagogy contributes towards improved accessibility, cultural relatability and listening skills, especially in the English as a Second Language.

**Keywords:** Listening skills, Indian audio sources, English language teaching, Indian English, digital learning.

## I. Introduction

Listening is often said to be the most used language skill in real life communication and yet, has been the least taught skill within the English language classroom (Goh, 2000; Vandergrift, 2007). Listening is a very important process, which is used in the language learning process, as it is the main route, through which the learners get the

linguistic information. Nevertheless, teaching and learning in most ESL settings still focuses more on reading and writing than listening and as a result of this, learners are not exposed to natural spoken language. The Indian situation is especially important in this context, given that English is not only a second language but a lingua franca as well, used in communities of different languages. Students are systematically supposed to speak English in academic, professional and online spheres, and as a result, academic success, ability to communicate at the workplace, and even employability requires listening skills to excel.

Despite the importance of listening as a key part of communicative competence, the area of listening instruction in Indian classrooms has historically been given little pedagogical focus (Bose, 2021). Traditional teaching of the English language in India has been mostly text-oriented delivery with little or no inclusion of sound or orally administered teaching. Consequently, learners may not have enough exposure to natural material to listen to, including natural speech, different accents and real life discourse patterns. Such insensitivity to exposure has adverse effects on the processing ability of spoken English especially in practical communicative context by learners. In addition, a high number of learners find it hard to comprehend differences in pronunciation, speech rate, intonation and connected speech, problems that intensify in case learners are presented with materials that are of the native speakers (Hardin, 2012).

The Government of India and educational organizations have made immense attempts to curtail these constraints in the recent years by launching digital- and audio-based learning programs. Organized and curriculum-based audio and video content, which is offered on national platforms like DIKSHA, PM eVidya, SWAYAM, and NPTEL, are used to help learn languages at different levels of education. On the same note, NCERT audio books provide learners with a chance of listening to academic material which covers a close match to the textbook material, which serves to strengthen understanding of the textbook with multimodal stimulus of audio books. Such efforts have brought in access to better listening materials especially among students in isolated and under-privileged learning environments.

Along with government-sponsored sources, international and non-governmental agencies have also worked on the development of listening using audio-related data of contexts. The teachingenglish Radio India and educational podcasts by the British Council

offer realistic sounds of listening that can be attributed to Indian situations, themes, and forms of English. This kind of resources is especially important, as it exposes learners to accents of Indian English, which is hypothesized to have the effect of improving intelligibility and alleviating the feeling of anxiety during listening through augmenting accents familiarity (Harding, 2012). Additionally, podcast related and audio supported learning has also been found to enhance learner autonomy, engagement, and enduring listening practice.

It is against that background that the current study examines the value of Indian audio source in English listening skills acquisition among the ESL learners. The research will help to facilitate the pedagogical importance of indigenous audio material in the classroom learning through theoretical interpretations of listening comprehension and its real classroom use. It aims to prove how the gap between theory and its application to practice could be overcome with the help of culturally relevant and accessible listening materials, eventually leading to more efficient and inclusive learning about listening in the Indian ESL setting.

## **II. Literature Review**

### **Listening Comprehension and Language Learning**

Listening comprehension is a complex thought concept that entails decoding of audio signals, generating meaning and interpretation of the spoken discourse in a particular context (Buck, 2001). When compared to reading, listening happens here and now and offers minimal chances of repetition or revision, being especially challenging to language learners with the latter tongue. Goh (2000) demonstrated that there are constant challenges encountered by learners during listening activities and among them are the difficulties of word boundary recognition, an inability to process new vocabulary and difficulty with fast speech rate. The challenges usually lead to failure in understanding and rising of anxiety related to listening particularly in academic and formal communication.

The study of the second language acquisition has highlighted that listening is not a passive process, but rather an active and tactical process. Another significant concept discussed by Vandergrift and Goh (2012) is the value of metacognition in the development of listening and that learners that consciously plan their listening tasks, monitor

their understanding during listening and evaluate their performance later depict much better performance in listening. Metacognitive awareness can help the learners control their listening plans, pre-empts, and recuperates their losses during comprehension better.

Listening proficiency has also been found to be having a principle role that the other language skills develop. Rost (2011) had argued that listening is the major source of linguistic input that is a direct determinant of speaking ability, pronunciation correctness and development of lexical growth. In the same manner, Nation and Newton (2009) observed that meaningful input both spoken and not allows vocabulary acquisition and helps in the build of communicative competence. Such advantages, however, depend on the continued exposure to comprehensible input that is within the level of the learners as well as their social cultural backgrounds. When listening material is not related to experience or to language realities in the experience of the learners, understanding and interest are likely to go down.

#### **Indian English and Accent Intelligibility**

The use of Indian English as a valid and systematic language of English is a well-known phenomenon conditioned by historic, socio-linguistic, and cultural influences (Kachru, 1983). Instead of being regarded as a cost to the norms of native speakers, Indian English is a nativized version of English, which is efficacious in education, administration, and professional communication throughout India. Sailaja (2009) has stressed that Indian English has its own phonological, lexical, and syntactic characteristics; these aspects are the result of the multilingual atmosphere Indian English has developed.

The studies concerning the accent intelligibility indicate that localized versions of English may greatly boost the listening comprehension provided the familiarity with them exists. Smith (1985) maintained that the main objective of teaching the English language should be intimacy, and not native like pronunciation. In agreement with this, Derwing and Munro (2005) established that it is the familiarity of the listener with an accent that is important in constructive understanding. Exposed learners acquire more knowledge through fluent patterns of accent and have less anxiety in listening.

The recent empirical research also supports the pedagogic importance of using Indian English in the teaching of listening. As Jie et al. (2025) also showed, exposure to the South Asian Englishes enhanced better intelligibility in non-native listeners, especially when the learners were exposed to the varieties on a regular basis. Another similarity mentioned by Harding (2012) is a common first language advantage, by which speakers are usually better understood by the listeners if these accents are of certain similarities in the linguistic background. The results of this study indicate that the use of audio materials with the Indian accent to teach the concept of listening could help to improve the levels of comprehension and the learner confidence to develop as well as be inclusive in an ESL classroom setting.

As a whole, the literature suggests that the instruction of listening is helpful in both contextually-relevant input and strategic pedagogical approach. The fact that the Indian English audio resources are being used is in line with the modern perception of World English and promotes better and learner-focused listening growth.

#### **Digital and Audio-Based Learning in India**

During language teaching and learning, digital platforms have played a major role in India by increasing the availability of learning resources of superior quality and that which is curriculum based. With the fast spread of educational technology, students with different social-economic and geographical backgrounds are now able to access audio-visual forms of materials that can aid language acquisition past the classroom walls. National programmes like DIKSHA and PM eVIDYA were introduced to provide continuity and equity of education by means of provision of structured digitalization contents as national curricula (NCERT, n.d.). Such platforms involve sound lessons, interactive courses, and resources promoted by the teacher that are especially useful in the development of listening comprehension skills.

In the same manner, English communication courses with lectures, discussions, and exams are provided in the context of higher education programs, including NPTEL and SWAYAM. The courses expose learners to long length of academic speech, vocabulary, and speech patterns unique to the discipline; all which are crucial in development of sophisticated listening skills. This is unlike traditional forms of instruction which use textbooks where the learner repeatedly reads and reads the instructions, digital audio

based platforms give the learner a chance to be exposed to audio language several times and they have a chance to revisit to read a paragraph they may not understand.

Technology-mediated instructions on listening have been concerned to argue that the use of audio-based learning environments helps learners to have autonomy and power of engagement. According to Cross (2014), activities involving podcast listening prompted learners to be more responsible in their activities related to listening, which subsequently resulted in the increase of fluency and confidence. On the same note, O'Bryan and Hegelheimer (2007) found out that incorporation of podcasts in the learning process promoted motivation and understanding of the language by offering authentic and adaptive input to the learners. These results indicate the usefulness of digital audio materials in facilitating self-directed and experiential learning.

Indian-based audio materials also improve the pedagogical importance of digital learning, which uses common cultural background, motifs and forms of English. The listening material, like British Council Teaching English Radio India, offers a chance to experience the authentic material depending on the needs of Indian learners (British Council, n.d.). Localization enables the learners to connect learning activities to their life experiences, thereby enabling them to understand and have less cognitive load. Also, the knowledge of Indian English accents facilitates the creation of intelligibility, and instills confidence among learners especially in multilingual classes.

### **Gaps in Existing Research**

Although there is a rich literature of listening activity on the worldwide research and listening technology in language learning, the study of audio specific to the Indian source is minimal in terms of its empirical research. A lot of the literature focuses on theoretical campaigns of listening attentiveness or evaluates the usage of audio resources with dominance of native languages represented by native speakers. Although these studies provide crucial information, they tend to pay little attention to the social linguistic reality of the English use in India and pedagogical potential of the native audio resources.

Additionally, studies on digital listening lack a localized view approach on digital listening tools, often see the technology in a globalized approach without sufficiently delving into the role of localized audio content in the understanding, motivation, and

familiarity of the accent of the learner. The existing gap in the literature is observable because empirical studies to evaluate Indian government-mediated platforms and culturally contextualized audio material in the ESL classrooms in a systematic manner are unavailable. Due to this, the possibility of the Indian audio sources to develop the listening skills has not been exploited.

This gap has been filled by the current study which looks at the pedagogical efficiency of the Indian audio sources in developing listening skills. With its emphasis on the context-independent, culturally relevant, and accessible audio materials, the study would expand the existing body of knowledge on the talking-based language instruction in the Indian ESL setting and address the increasing push to the specificity of the language education.

### III. Methodology

#### Research Design

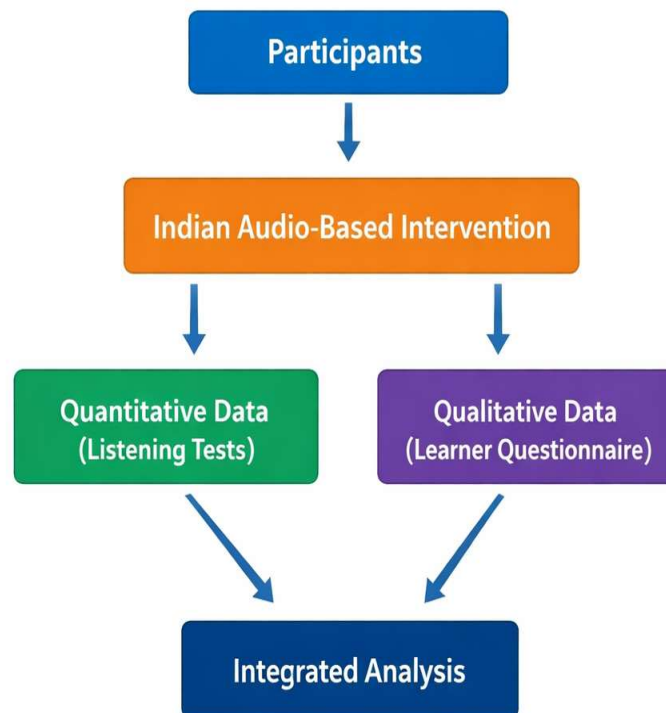


Figure 1 Research Design Framework of the Study

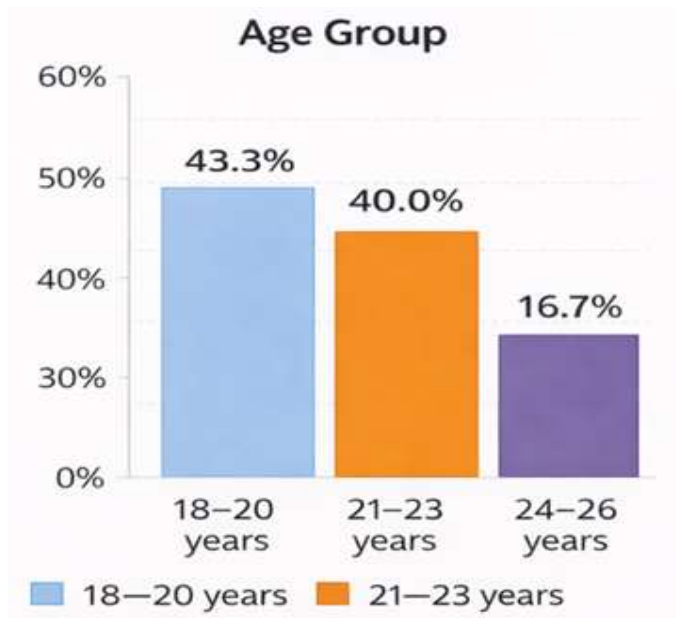
A descriptive mixed-methods research design was used in the current study, which used the quantitative and qualitative methods to discuss the effectiveness of Indian audio sources as a tool of teaching listening skills in English. Mixed-methods research is especially suitable to study on language learning since it can be used to gain a multi-faceted insight into an objective aspect of learners as well as their experience. The quantitative aspect was on the variations in the listening comprehension performance of the learners, and the qualitative aspect was the perspectives and experiences of the learners towards the use of the Indian audio-based resources. The purpose of the study was to present a balanced and holistic view of development of the listening skills by combining these methods.

### Sample

The sample who participated in the study was 120 undergraduate ESL students who were chosen out of three Indian colleges representing different academic streams. The participants were registered in general English or communication skills courses and were found to have middle-level English proficiency, according to the criteria of the institutional placement and the previous academic successes. Attempts were made to bring about relative homogeneity in such aspects as age, educational level, and exposure to teaching English to minimize extraneous factors that might influence the performance in listening. The decision to participate in the study was voluntary and learners were made aware of the aims and procedures to be conducted in the research before receiving information regarding the study.

Table 1 Demographic Profile of the Participants (N = 120)

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	58	48.3
	Female	62	51.7
Age Group	18–20 years	52	43.3
	21–23 years	48	40.0
	24–26 years	20	16.7
Academic Discipline	Arts	40	33.3
	Science	42	35.0
	Commerce	38	31.7
Medium of Instruction (Schooling)	English	66	55.0
	Regional Language	54	45.0
English Proficiency Level	Intermediate	120	100.0



### Instruments

#### Data collection was performed using several research tools.

The initial one was a Listening Comprehension Test, which was done as a pre-test and post-test. The test was used to test the learners in their ability to comprehend spoken English by way of multiple-choice and short-answer questions in terms of the audio passages. These texts enclosed scholarly and everyday communication situations and had characteristics of Indian English pronunciation and discourse.

The second measure was a Learner Perception Questionnaire, which was comprised of Likert-scale questions and open-ended questions. The questionnaire was formulated to collect the perception of the learners on the usefulness, clarity and relevancy of Indian audio sources together with their confidence and motivation on the listening activities. It allowed using open-ended questions to allow learners to describe their experiences and shed light on it qualitatively.

The third tool consisted of audio learning contents, which were based on nationally accepted and pedagogically significant sources, such as the audio books of the NCERT, the modules of DIKSHA, the programs of British Council Teaching English Radio India, and the English communication courses, which were provided via SWAYAM.

These resources were chosen due to the fact that they are curriculum-based, available, and represent the Indian linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

### Procedure

A total duration of eight weeks was used to carry out the study whereby the learners were involved in systematic listening using audio (Indian) sources. Both sessions were based on the three-step model of instructions; pre-listening, during-listening and after-listening, as suggested by Field (2008). Background knowledge and content prediction pre-listening activities attended to the activation of background knowledge and prediction of content. Wh-listening exercises included specific listening tasks including finding out the main points, particularities, and inferences. After listening tasks promoted the reflection, discussion, and clarification of the understanding challenges.

Pre-test was carried out at the commencement of the study and the post-test carried out at the completion of the eight weeks intervention. The perception questionnaire of the learners was administered upon their finishing all the listening sessions. Results after gathering the data in these tools were examined with an aim of ascertaining the validity of Indian audio sources in promoting listening comprehension and involvement of the learner.

Table 1 Distribution of Audio Sources Used

Audio Source	Duration (Weeks)	Purpose
NCERT Audio Books	2	Academic listening
DIKSHA Modules	2	Curriculum-based input
British Council Radio	2	Authentic listening
SWAYAM Lectures	2	Academic discourse

### Data Analysis

The quantitative and qualitative methods that the current research adopted to analyze data collected were in line with the mixed-method research design. Descriptive statistics as the mean scores and standard deviations were used to study the difference in the performance of the learners in addressing the listening comprehension criterion in the pre-test and post-test of the listening evaluation procedure to identify the variation in the listening performance of the learners during the intervention process. These statistical indices gave a clear approximate of general improvement and inconsistency of participants.

The thematic analysis was applied to qualitative data that were gathered using the open-ended questions of the learner perception questionnaire, and the inductive approach was adopted. Assenting to the responses was done meticulously, and coded and categorized to detect recurrent patterns and themes regarding the experiences of the learners concerning Indian audio sources. The thematic analysis has facilitated the researcher to get the perception of the learners about relevancy, familiarity with the accent, confidence, and interest in the listening activities. Quantitative and qualitative results were interconnected, which made it possible to gain a more thoroughly interpreted idea about the efficacy of the Indian audio-based learning to form listening skills (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018).

#### **IV. RESULTS**

The study results will be found under two broad parts; quantitative and qualitative ones, based on listening comprehension test scores and learner feedback respectively. These findings, when combined with others, yield to the support of the efficacy of Indian audio materials to improve listening scores in ESL students.

##### **Quantitative Results: Listening Comprehension Performance**

- The difference between the pre-test and post-test results showed that the listening comprehension of the learners had significantly increased below the eight weeks of the intervention period due to exposure to Indian audio sources.
- The descriptive statistical analysis showed that the mean scores improved in the post-test, which showed that it was the structured listening training by means of Indian audio materials that positively affected the ability of learners to comprehend spoken English.
- The decrease in the-score variance in the post-test also proposes that students perform listening tasks more in the same way, which means that they can better process oral input on a sample-wide level.
- These results are in line with previous studies that indicate the importance of the long and contextually rich listening input to improve the proficiency of listening (Rost, 2011; Nation and Newton, 2009).

- The metacognitive listening theory is also supported by the better scores in the area of listening because it defines the importance of strategic listening practices in comprehension building (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012).

### **Qualitative Results: Learner Perceptions and Experiences**

The qualitative analysis of the open-ended questions answers given by the learners identified three prevailing themes which depict experiences of the learners concerning Indian audio based listening instruction.

#### **Theme 1: Familiarity with Accent Intonation.**

- Most of the learners indicated that when challenged to listen to Indian accents of English they were capable of comprehending spoken English with relative ease.
- The learners reported that the presence of familiarity with the pattern of pronunciation, stress, and intonation lessened the confusion during the listening session.
- This result is consistent with the theory of intelligibility where it is argued that accent familiarity is a key determinant to effective listening comprehension (Smith, 1985; Derwing and Munro, 2005).
- The findings are also aligned with the recent empirical evidence that exposure of non-native listeners to South Asian Englishes enhances intelligibility (Jie et al., 2025).

#### **Theme 2: Decreased Listening Anxiety.**

- Learners Were found to have had a significant decrease in anxiety related to listening which was especially true when listening to academic and instructional audio media.
- Numerous respondents said that they heard familiar accents, which made them fear less broken communication and more eager to tolerate complicated listening tasks.
- Lower levels of anxiety helped learners to pay more attention to the meaning construction and less to the decoding of the pronunciation that facilitates cognitive processing in the listening process.
- This set of results is consistent with the shared-L 1 advantage hypothesis by Harding (2012), which recommends that when the accents are linguistically familiar, listeners should be able to understand them better.

**Theme 3: Increased Interaction with Content that is culturally relevant.**

- Student learners were found to show increased interest, motivation, and engagement in an environment as well as listening materials that were related to the Indian contexts, themes, and real life.
- The participants said that culturally relevant information was useful in their engaging background knowledge, thus enhancing the level of comprehension and retention.
- Such enhanced interaction helps the studying in terms of technology-enhanced and podcast-based listening, which ground their relevance and authenticity in the determinants of learner motivation (Cross, 2014; O’Bryan and Hegelheimer, 2007).

**Summary of Findings**

- Altogether, it can be stated that the Indian audio sources were the practical means of building the listening comprehension of ESL learners.
- The combination of quantitative betterment and qualitative feedback on the learner illuminates the constructive teaching of culturally acquainted and reachable listening materials in Indian ESL environments.

Table 2 Pre-test and Post-test Listening Scores

Test	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Pre-test	56.4	8.2
Post-test	72.9	7.6

Learners reported increased confidence in understanding Indian English accents and academic speech.

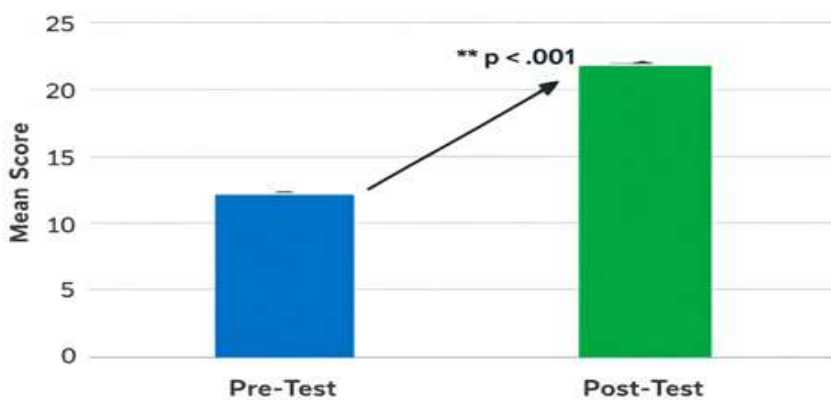


Figure 2 Improvement in Listening Comprehension Scores

## V. Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the current work prove that the sources of Indian audio have a positive and considerable impact on the development of listening skills in ESL students. The fact that the mean listening comprehension scores of the learners have improved, as well as their reported confidence increase show, that the continued exposure to the culturally and linguistically familiar audio materials can enable more successful development of listening skills. This is in line with intelligibility studies that point out that familiarity with accents and discourse structure among the listeners is a key predictor of understanding and causes of a lesser difficulty in processing information (Smith, 1985; Jie et al., 2025). The cognitive load which is applied to decode the accents which are not familiar to learners is less when learners encounter speech reflecting familiar phonological characteristics and contextual allusions and more attention is paid to meaning construction.

Among the most prominent findings of the study is the contribution made by the familiarity of the accent towards aiding the process of listening comprehension. Nativized and systematic Indian English makes the input of the learners more congruent with their language environment (Kachru, 1983; Sailaja, 2009). Learners were able to speed up the processing of the audio material that was subjected to the Indian accent and this was in line with the finding of Derwing and Munro (2005) that Who states that intelligibility is more related to familiarity than to conformity to the norms of native speakers. This observation underscores the suggestion that ESL pedagogy in India is to make a transition beyond adopting a solely native-speaker model and be more inclusive basing itself on World Englishes.

These findings also indicate that the systematic incorporation of Indian sounds materials provides assistance in the enhancement of metacognitive listening tactics. Students who participated in pre-listening, while listening and after listening activities advised having a better understanding of their listening systems such as anticipating what was to be said, keeping track and introspection of challenges that face them in any listening activity. This conforms with the metacognitive model by Vandergrift and Goh (2012) who pointed out that effective listeners are those who have the ability to control the process of listening and this control is done through planning, monitoring, and evaluation. According to the current research, audio input that is familiar with a culture makes

learners effective in applying such strategies as a lesser difficulty encountered by accents makes the learners concentrate more on the strategies of listening.

The other important discovery is related to the engagement and motivation of the learners. Learners also stated that when the time they listened to Indian audio sources, they were more interested and they had better sustained attention than when listening to traditional textbooks. Such digital platforms as DIKSHA and SWAYAM offered convenient and free opportunities to listen, allowing learners to repeat content and listen simultaneously at their own pace. Such a flexibility is essential especially in the Indian learning scenario whereby there is a wide disparity in the exposure of learners to English; the exposure differs per region and per institution. Curriculum-based audio that can be accessed freely solves the problem of access and equity in English language teaching that existed long before it became popular due to its accessibility and quality.



Figure 3 Pedagogical Impact of Indian Audio Sources on Listening Development.

The results are also consistent with the current studies on technology-mediated listening learning that indicate the viability of digital audio materials in enabling learner independence and continuous listening training (Cross, 2014; O'Bryan and Hegelheimer, 2007). Individual ownership of learning was enhanced to the extent that, learners exhibited confidence in dealing with tapes and real spoken English by practicing through Indian audio sources outside the classroom. This is a very independent involvement in the process of listening, which is essential to the development of listening skills, because listening skills would need a broad range of stimulus over a period (Rost, 2011).

## VI. Conclusion

To conclude, this current research paper has established that Indian audio sources are instructionally valuable tools that can be used to build English listening skills in the ESL learners. Their cultural applicability, language familiarity, and availability render them especially fit to the Indian educative environment. Indian audio materials facilitate processing difficulty in accent, and facilitate metacognitive listening (improve understanding, confidence, and interest of learners).

The research paper adds up to the mounting literature promoting contextual and inclusive models of the English language teaching. It indicates that reconceptualizing listening teaching in India is necessary with the realization that Indian English is a valid model of teaching and by exploiting the digital platforms that exist nationwide. Although the study offers good information, prospective studies could look at the longitudinal impacts of continuing exposure to Indian audio sources, the impact of the study in different regions, and the application of experimental designs to further confirm the study results.

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