The Effect of English Podcast on ESL Students Listening Comprehension Skills

by Asasi Syifa

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Abstract. This study aims to evaluate the effect of using English podcasts on the listening comprehension skills of ESL (English as a Second Language) students using a pre-experimental one-group pretest post-test design. The sample consisted of 35 ESL students. The students were given a listening comprehension test before the intervention (pretest) to measure their initial skills. During a four-week period, the students were regularly exposed to English podcasts selected based on difficulty level and relevance to the curriculum. After the intervention period, the same listening comprehension test was administered as a post-test to measure changes in listening skills. The collected data were analyzed using a paired t-test to determine the significance of the difference between pretest and post-test scores. The results showed a significant increase in students' listening comprehension scores after the podcast intervention (p < 0.05). These findings indicate that regular use of English podcasts can improve ESL students' listening comprehension skills. This study suggests that podcasts can be an effective tool in language learning, particularly in enhancing listening skills. The practical implication of this research is to encourage educators to integrate podcasts into their teaching methods. Further research is recommended to address the limitations of this study design and explore other factors that may influence the results.

Keywords: English podcast, listening comprehension, ESL students (English as a Second Language)

INTRODUCTION

English is the most spoken language in the world. the number of sectors that use English as the language of instruction makes this language an important language in all aspects. One of the skills that must be mastered by ESL students is listening. Listening skills are a critical aspect in acquiring holistic language skills, involving understanding words, intonation and sentence structure in the context of daily conversation. As the most widely used language in the world, English is a mandatory subject in Indonesia taught from elementary school to university level.

Listening comprehension can be divided into at least five sequential components, each dependent upon the preceding one. The first is the ability to distinguish all the sounds, intonation patterns, and voice qualities in the second language and to discriminate between them and similar sounds in the native tongue. The second is the perception of an entire message

produced by a speaker. The third is the ability to hold that message in one's auditory memory until it can be processed. Fourth, the listener decodes what the speaker has said. Comprehension of the message, however, is not synonymous with the ability to discuss content in the second language. The fifth and last stage is the ability to use the message and/or store it in the second language (Chastain, n.d.).

With the sophistication of technology in this era, there are many media that can support listening learning to be more effective, one of which is podcasts. The podcast serves as a Web 2.0 tool that can be incorporated into educational settings. It aids students in enhancing their listening abilities, fostering critical thinking, and inspiring them to engage deeply in listening, cultivating an appreciation for this skill. The ease of use of podcast interfaces, their worldwide audience, their simplicity, and the fact that they are usually free all contribute to their success. Because podcast production is so simple, it has been included into the teaching process. Users can subscribe to the podcast platform upon accessing it; occasionally, upgrades require a few quick details. After that, subscribers can download or listen to episodes whenever it's convenient for them, much like on-demand radio. Podcasts can be listened to anywhere and anytime. Users can choose which topics they like, this can help ESL in practicing listening skills because they can hear what they like. The application of podcasts is extensive, and their content can vary. While podcasts typically feature human voices, the inclusion of text is not precluded and is contingent on the podcast owner's preferences. For instance, if a teacher owns the podcast, it may incorporate listening exercises, completion of missing words, sentences, and questions related to the audio recording. This approach allows for the delivery of lectures in both oral and written formats, offering significant advantages to students, particularly in foreign language instruction . Podcasts are an efficient media for practicing listening skills for ESL learners.

Study by Rosell Aguilar stated an educational podcast should have the following characteristics: 1) Include characteristics of the target language and culture. 2) The materials used must be authentic. 3) Your podcast should be long enough and engaging enough. 4) Consider the portability and screen size of your media player .

Podcasting is a portmanteau word derived from iPod and broadcasting and means the diffusion of audio contents via the Internet. A podcast is a series of episodic audio files on a particular theme or topic. Its audio content is a great advantage because it can educate you, inspire you, or entertain you in the background of other activities, like when you are driving or doing your chores. In brief, you can easily download the podcast that interests you and listen

to it anywhere and at any time. There are many advantages to podcasting as an educational tool (Kassaie et al., 2021).

The advantages of podcasts are: 1) learners can benefit from global listening, even if they only listen from three to five minutes a day; 2) students will be exposed to the new language; 3) the intermediate learner has a need for authentic texts and to be exposed to a variety of voices.

In this study, the term "English podcast" refers to online audio recordings made specifically with the intention of teaching and improving English language skills. It focuses on podcasts from the website www.podcastsinenglish.com, which offers a variety of episodes targeted at different English language learners' competency levels. By exposing students to vocabulary, natural speech patterns, and a variety of accents seen in everyday English usage, these podcasts aim to enhance their listening comprehension skills. Transcripts and exercises are usually included with the content to help with understanding and recall.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Even while developing listening comprehension skills might aid language learners in learning a second language, listening comprehension is not a straightforward or easy idea. For students, listening comprehension is a critical skill. According to Vandergrift's research, listening comprehension is an intricate, participatory process that requires listeners to pay attention to every detail, including linguistic structures, sounds, intonation, and social and structural settings (Quoc Tran et al., n.d.).

Gaining intelligible input requires having good listening skills. If there is no input, learning cannot happen. If there is no input, learning cannot happen. According to Buck (2001), listening is a sophisticated process that involves the following abilities: a) processing lengthy samples of naturally occurring spoken language automatically and in real time; b) comprehending the linguistic information that is unquestionably included in the text; and, c) draw any conclusions that are clearly suggested by the passage's content. (page 114).

As the basic and receptive skill, listening is widely defined as the ability to receive accurately and comprehend the messages in the process of communication. Recently, the proliferation of technologies like websites becomes an emerging trend in EFL teaching and learning. An innovative approach to teaching listening skills has emerged due to audio publishing online. It is known as 'podcasting' and has become very popular because it offers language learners extra listening practice both inside and outside of the classroom. Moreover, podcasting as online communication technology is a new way to inspire learning: it provides an exciting way for students and educators to explore and discover educational content. The

term 'podcast' was first coined in 2004, and it means the publishing of audio via the Internet. Audio recording is designed to be downloaded and listened to on a portable MP3 player of any type, or on a personal computer.

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RESEARCH METHOD

The design of this research is a pre-experimental (one group pre-test post-test design) which aims to find out whether there is a significant difference in students' listening comprehension between students at SMA Muhammadiyah 3 Jember. This research conducted by selecting one class to study. The pre-experimental research (one group pre-test post-test design) was carried out collaboratively with English teachers at SMA Muhammadiyah 3 Jember. The action that will be given to the subject is to teach listening comprehension by using an English podcast as a media to improve students' listening comprehension. The design presented in this study is a one group pre-test post-test design, namely research conducted by selecting one class which before being given treatment is first given an initial test (pretest) and after being given treatment is also tested again with the same test questions as the final test (posttest). The diagram of this research design looks as follows:

Pretest   Treatment   Posttest

  01   X   02

X: Providing treatment

O1: Initial test before treatment is given

O2: Final test after treatment.

RESULT OF THE RESEARCH

The data description presents all the data found by the researcher during the study. The research was conducted on April 30, 2024, and the listening comprehension data was collected from an objective multiple-choice test with 35 respondents from class XI-C at SMA Muhammadiyah 3 Jember in the 2023/2024 academic year. This study uses numerical data collected from pretests and posttests. The posttest data indicates whether the treatment led to significant changes, showing the scores after the treatment.

Data Post-Test

The posttest results showed that there was progress among students in the experimental

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	PRETEST	48.7143	35	7.98370	1.34949
	POSTTEST	94.8571	35	8.78549	1.48502

class.

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences							
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2–tailed)
Pair 1	PRETEST – POSTTEST	–46.14286	11.18598	1.89077	–49.98537	–42.30034	–24.404	34	.000

The significance is 0.000, which is lower than the 0.005 level. This means there is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores in the experimental class, indicating that the treatment had an effect. Using podcasts as a medium for listening comprehension positively influenced the students' listening skills.

Hypothesis Test

To determine whether or not the hypothesis is acceptable, hypothesis testing is performed. In order to test the hypothesis, which states that there is a substantial association between podcast media as a listening learning tool and intermediate level ESL students' increased listening comprehension abilities.

Under the presumption that the data is normally distributed, the Paired Sample T-Test is a test used in this analysis to assess the difference between two means from two paired samples. The subject matter of paired samples is the same. Every variable is considered under many conditions.

A significant difference between the beginning and end variables is indicated by a significance value (2-tailed) < 0.05. This indicates that each variable's treatment varies significantly from the others.

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When the starting and end variables have a significance value (2-tailed) >0.05, it indicates that there is no significant difference between them. This suggests that the treatment

differences for each variable are not significantly influenced. The table displays the results of the posttest's paired T-test.

DISCUSSION

According to studies conducted in classes XI–C at SMA Muhammadiyah 3 Jember, podcast media has a major impact on improving listening comprehension abilities. This is predicated on the experimental class's posttest mean score findings. The average value, as determined by the posttest, is 94.8571. This fact unequivocally demonstrates that using English podcasts to teach listening has a major positive effect on students' listening comprehension. Additionally, podcasts are a medium that can pique kids' interest in learning how to listen. According to the writer's initial observations during the meeting, pupils were uninterested in obtaining treatment because they struggled with vocabulary in English and their teachers hardly ever taught listening skills.

Students also believed that podcasts were efficient in terms of time and duration. When provided with audio listening materials during treatment, students are willing to spend three to five minutes listening to any topic. Podcasts can broaden students' vocabulary, inspire creativity, and teach them new material that is hard to get in a traditional classroom (Lee, 2009).

CONCLUSION

The research indicates that using podcasts significantly improves listening comprehension among intermediate-level ESL students, with data showing a significance level of 0.000, lower than the threshold of 0.005. This confirms the positive impact of English podcasts on students' listening skills.

Based on these findings, the writer suggests that English teachers, students, and future researchers incorporate podcasts into ESL learning. Teachers should use relevant podcast content, create structured listening activities, and encourage regular listening outside the classroom. Students should include podcasts in their study routine, choosing content that matches their interests and proficiency level, taking notes, summarizing content, and practicing new vocabulary. Future researchers should explore innovative uses of podcasts in language learning, investigating how different formats, topics, and interactive elements affect engagement and comprehension, and conducting comparative studies to identify the most effective content and activities.to do, answer thegoals, and comment on the findings and provide recommendations and/or implications. Conclusions do not need references and data that are statisticalinnature.

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