THE EFFECTIVENESS OF USING PODCASTS IN IMPROVING STUDENTS' LISTENING SKILL AT SMPN 3 TARERAN

OEY RHEINNE FABBRIELLA WIJAYA, NOLDY PELENKAHU, LIVIANNI LAMBE
Universitas Negeri Manado, Tondano, Indonesia
Correspondence author: febriellawijaya03@gmail.com

Abstract : This research is about the effectiveness of podcasts to improve the listening skills of 8th grade students at SMPN 3 Tareran. The objective of this study is to find out the effectiveness of podcasts in improving students' listening skill at SMPN 3 Tareran. A pre-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design was implemented with 14 students as participants. This research used listening test before and after treatment using podcast media that focused on daily activities. Data were analyzed using a paired samples T-Test on IBM SPSS 30, by contrasting the results of the pre-test and post-test. The mean post-test score (75.0000) was considerably higher than the pre-test score (37.8571), demonstrating that students' listening abilities have significantly improved. The paired sample t-test resulted in a p-value of <0.001, which is under the significance threshold of 0.05, revealed statistically significant difference. Based on these findings, H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted, which confirms that podcasts are a useful resource for enhancing students listening skills by providing accessible and engaging learning materials.

INTRODUCTION

Listening skills take on a fundamental part in language acquisition and are regarded as the cornerstone of effective communication in English language learning. According to Helgesen (2003), listening is an active process that aims to understand the information received, where listeners match the auditory input with the knowledge they already have. In Indonesia, English is an important foreign language to advance science, technology, art, and foster international relations (Rao, 2019).

Despite the fundamental significance of English for language development, many students continue to face major challenges in developing effective listening skills.

Research has proven that listening is the most common form of communication in everyday life and serves as a major foundation in language acquisition (Gold, 1975). In the context of the classroom, it is often unnoticed that listening activities occur more frequently than other language skills, thus listening skills are essential for effective participation in learning activities. However, despite its importance, many students experience difficulties in listening comprehension. The challenge often stems from the lack of exposure to authentic English audio materials and the absence of engaging teaching strategies that are tailored to students' needs.

Podcasts as a relatively new innovation in education, offer a potential solution to address these challenges. Khe Foon Hew (2009) outlines the unique benefits of podcasts in improving listening skills, including the accessibility, engagement and flexibility provided for teachers and students. Research has shown that integrating podcasts into listening activities not only improves comprehension, but also vocabulary, pronunciation, and overall language acquisition (Naseri & Motallebzadeh, 2016). Despite the increasing number of studies supporting the use of podcasts, there is still a gap in understanding their specific impact on Indonesian EFL learners, especially in junior high schools where traditional methods still dominate classroom teaching.

In today's technological era, traditional teaching methods may no longer be effective to engage students or address existing challenges. Therefore, this study seeks to close the gap by investigating the effectiveness of podcasts as an innovative teaching tool to improve students' listening skills at SMPN 3 Tareran. Podcasts with their varied content and accessibility offer potential solutions to the identified challenges by providing authentic materials at different proficiency levels while potentially increasing student engagement through technology integration. This research specifically focuses on podcasts related to daily activities that aim to improve practical listening comprehension in real-life contexts. The results obtain from this

study can be significantly beneficial to the knowledge of technology-enhanced listening learning and provide practical insights for English teachers in similar educational contexts.

RESEARCH METHOD

The effectiveness of podcasts in improving the listening abilities of eighth-grade students at SMPN 3 Tareran was assessed using a one-group pretest-posttest pre-experimental design. The design involved administering a pre-test to measure students' initial listening ability, followed by treatment through podcast-based learning, and concluded with a post-test to evaluate students' improvement. The participants consisted of 14 students from grade 8, including 4 males and 10 females, aged between 12 and 13 years old. This sample was selected based on convenience sampling, as the class was already assigned by the school.

A listening test consisting of 10 multiple-choice questions was the research instrument utilized to gather the data, this test was conducted before and after the intervention. The test items focused on daily routine topics, and the podcast materials used in the intervention were selected based on their relevance to the curriculum and daily language use. The validity of the instrument was measured using Aiken's V formula, and its reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha in IBM SPSS 30 to ensure consistency of the test items.

Data collection was conducted over six meetings. In the first meeting, a pre-test was given to assess students' initial listening skills. Over the next four meetings, students were exposed to podcasts in a structured lesson format, which involved pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening activities. The final meeting involved a post-test, which assessed improvement in students' listening skills. IBM SPSS 30 was used to evaluate pre-test and post-test data. To determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores, a paired sample t-test was employed. In additional, mean scores and gain scores were also calculated to evaluate the level of improvement in students' listening skills.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The effectiveness of podcasts on enhancing students' listening skills was evaluated through pre-test and post-test assessments, followed by statistical analysis of the outcomes. The findings highlighted a substantial improvements in students' listening comprehension abilities after the podcast intervention.

Findings

Table 1. Pre-Test and Post-Test Score

Respondent	Pre-Test Score	Post-Test Score
JL	30	70
RRK	50	80
AIM	40	70
LMR	60	90
AHR	30	80
KK	20	60
VKK	40	70
WDR	50	80
GJT	40	90
DAM	20	70
MFK	30	60
BLM	20	70
MMS	40	80
DDR	60	80

The findings from this research showed a significant improvement in students' listening abilities after they utilized podcasts as a teaching method. As seen from the data in Table 1, all participants' post-test scores were substantially higher compared to the pre-test results, indicating the effectiveness of the podcast intervention.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Pre-test and Post-test Scores

Statistics	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-Test	14	20.00	60.00	37.8571	13.68805
Post-Test	14	60.00	90.00	75.0000	9.40540

Analysis showed substantial improvements in listening performance, with the mean score increasing by 37.14 points (98.11% enhancement). The minimum score improved from 20 to 60, while the maximum score increased from 60 to 90. In particular, the decrease in standard deviation from 13.69 to 9.41 indicates more consistent performance across the student groups after the intervention.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Gain Score

Statistics	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Gain Score	14	20.00	60.00	37.8571	13.68805

Analysis of gain scores using Hake's formula on IBM SPSS 30 showed a mean gain of 0.6010, falling into the "medium" improvement category ($0.3 < g \le 0.7$) based on Hake's categories. This indicates substantial progress in students' listening skills after the podcast intervention.

Table 4. The Paired Samples T-Test

Pair	Mean Difference	Std. Deviation	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-Post	-37.14286	9.94490	-13.975	13	<.001

The paired sample t-test results confirmed the effectiveness of the podcast intervention. The t-test results showed a p-value of <0.001, which was significantly lower than 0.05, indicating that the differences between the pre-test and post-test results are statistically significant. The negative t-value confirmed the substantial increase in the post-test scores, indicating that the alternative hypothesis (H_1) was

accepted and the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected. As a result, the podcast was effective on enhancing students' listening skills.

Discussion

The results of this study show that podcasts significantly improved students' listening skills. The mean post-test score (75.0000) was notably higher compared to the pre-test score (37.8571) represents 98.11% increase in performance, indicating the effectiveness of podcasts as a teaching method. The gain score of 0.6010 falls into the medium category (0.3 < g ≤ 0.7) based on Hake's categories, suggesting a meaningful improvement in listening skills as a result of the podcast intervention. Furthermore, the decrease in standard deviation (from 13.68805 to 9.40540) highlights that the range of student performance narrowed, meaning that the podcast intervention helped level out differences in ability across the group.

The paired samples t-test produced a t-value of -13.975 and a p-value of <0.001, showing that the differences between the pre-test and post-test results are statistically significant. This shows that the improvement in students' listening skills was not due to chance but was a direct result of the podcast-based teaching approach. These findings support the rejection of H_0 (no significant improvement) and the acceptance of H_1 (significant improvement), confirming the effectiveness of podcasts in improving listening skills at SMPN 3 Tareran.

These results align with previous research, such as those conducted by Namazian Dost et al. (2017) and A'yun (2018). Both studies found that the use of podcasts significantly enhanced listening comprehension among EFL learners. Namazian Dost et al. employed a larger sample size and a longer treatment period, while A'yun's study focused on 8th-grade students, similar to the current study. Despite these differences in methodology, all three studies demonstrate that podcasts are a valuable tool in enhancing listening skills.

The implications of this research are very broad for both theory and practice. From a theoretical perspective, this research reinforces the significance of using authentic listening resources, such as podcasts when learning a language. For

educators, integrating podcasts into listening learning provides a flexible and engaging way to address common challenges, such as lack of motivation and limited exposure to authentic English audio. Given these results, it is clear that podcasts are not only effective but also provide a dynamic and accessible resource for improving students' listening skills.

CONCLUSION

This research has shown the significant effectiveness of podcasts in improving students' listening skills in SMPN 3 Tareran. These findings identified a substantial increases in students' listening performance, with the mean score increasing from 37.86 to 75.00, representing an increase of 98.11%. The statistical analysis through paired sample t-test ($p < 0.001$) confirmed that this increase was significant, while the gain score of 0.6010 showed a medium level of improvement according to Hake's categories. Moreover, the reduction in standard deviation from 13.69 to 9.41 indicates that podcast implementation helps create more consistent performance levels across students. These findings have important practical implications for English language teaching. The successful implementation of podcasts in this study and previous studies offer a practical model for teachers who want to integrate digital tools into their listening learning. Teachers can utilize podcasts as a flexible and engaging resource to provide students with an authentic exposure to English audio, so that it can potentially improve their listening comprehension and motivation to learn. Given the accessibility and variety of podcast content available, this teaching approach can be easily adapted in a variety of educational contexts, especially in settings where exposure to authentic English material is limited. Future studies can examine the long-term consequences of podcast implementation and its impact on other language skills, which could contribute to the growing knowledge of technology-enhanced language learning.

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