USING PODCAST TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' LISTENING SKILL IN LEARNING ENGLISH

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Abstract

This research is about increasing students' listening skill ability by using podcast as one of material sources taken from internet. The objective of this study is to describe the improvement of students' listening ability using podcast in their learning. This research is an Action Research which is supported by planning, action, observation and reflection in two cycles. The participants are the students of English regular class at the second semester of Faculty of Economics and Business University of Muhammadiyah Jakarta. The data collection technique uses quantitative and qualitative data. The qualitative data are obtained from the result of observation, interview, and questionnaire done by teacher and collaborator teacher. Meanwhile, the quantitative data are taken from pre-test and post-test. The result is then analyzed using descriptive statistics to know the difference of scores before and after the implementation of podcast. The result shows that podcast can improve students' listening skill and it is an effective tool to be applied to listening classes to encourage students' interest in listening activity. It can be seen from the average of result of their pre-test, post-test I dan post-test II that significantly increased. In addition, the result of observation shows that students' interest and enthusiasm during learning activity improved significantly.

Keywords: listening skill, podcast

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Introduction

Learning English is urgent to do in this modern era. In this century, the world becomes more accessible, sharable and familiar for all people around the world. They can connect to others easily only by the phone in their hand. Through social media, podcast, or

121

online magazine, everyone can get any information they need globally. Since science and technology are always progressing, big changes happen to people's life. The need of information is increasing and we can find it easily on internet. We can enrich our knowledge about business, medical, politics, economy, education through internet. To access them, we have to understand English since it is all in English because English has been accepted as the only global language among thousands of speakers of different languages in the world. English is used for communication both written and spoken. In order to build international relationship in science, technology, business, education, travel, tourism, and so on, English is very needed to master by everyone. As English plays a dominant role in almost all the fields today, there is an urgency to learn its role as a global language. Mastering English helps us communicate effectively with people from all over the world, makes travelling a lot easier and allows us to learn more about different cultures. Besides, having good skills of English will improve and widen job opportunities with good salary, increase the level of self-confidence, and improve our communication skill.

In Indonesia, English becomes a must-learnt subject from elementary school to university. This information can be found on the website of kemendikbud.go.id. Nevertheless, many English learners have difficulties in learning it. English is often considered as a difficult subject for various reasons such as the complicated grammar rules or difficult pronunciation. Many students have difficulties in mastering the four skills of English; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These difficulties are caused by some reasons such as having low confidence to speak, being afraid of making mistake, not having a speaking partner, lacking of vocabulary, etc. These problems are not only faced by lower level students but also higher level students like university students. Whereas, the process of English learning is started from listening, speaking, reading and the last is writing. We can speak or express ideas after listening. According to Song (2008) listening in English is an active skill which requires listeners to deal with a variety of complicated things, such as interpreting sounds, stress or intonation.

Listening is a receptive skill that learners should sense and attend, understand and interpret, remember and respond the information that they hear as a process to learn. Wallace (2004) wrote that listening skill is very important skill because this skill may human acquire perception, knowledge, information and success in communicating with others. Through listening we can interpret the meaning of utterances. Listening is also part of communication and through listening we can share our opinions with other people. Listening is the most frequently used language skill because people communicate every day. Brown (2001) stated that listening is the major component in language teaching and learning because learners do more listening than speaking in the classroom. It means that listening is important skill which needs to be mastered in a language learning. Hasan (2000) in Hamouda (2013) stated that listening comprehension provides the right conditions for language acquisition and the development of other language skills. Therefore, listening is a skill that supports the success of other skills in

the language learning acquisition because we can write correctly when we listen and get information correctly.

However, listening skill is not a simple learning process. When someone can listen, it means she or he can understand and differentiate sounds, vocabulary or grammar. They can interprete intonation or meaning, consider many things at the same time, and adjust to the social cultural context from utterances that are listened (Vandergrift, 2012). Therefore, it is important to use effective media and method in teaching listening skill in order to make students listen and comprehend the conversation well. According to Vernon S. Gerlach (1980), media can be any person, material or event that establishes condition in which enable the learner to acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes. In this case, the teacher, textbooks, workbooks, audio, videos, podcasts, online courses and the school environment are media. Choosing appropriate media to solve the students' problems in listening is important since it can motivate students and improve their listening skill. In this era, modern and interesting media can be taken from internet in a form of any sources such as video, audio, podcast, youtube, pictures, article, etc. The most popular media on internet today is podcast which is a digital medium consisting of audio or video episodes that relate to a specific theme or daily topics discussed by some podcasters. So, listen to English podcast continually will help students understand native speaker better.

According to online Oxford dictionary (2024), podcast is a digital audio file made available on the internet for downloading to a computer or mobile device, typically available as a series, new installments of which can be received by subscribers automatically. In the Cambridge Dictionary (2024), podcast is defined as a radio programme that is stored in a digital form that we can download from the internet and play on a computer or on a mobile phone. While online Collin dictionary (2024) defines podcast as an audio file similar to a radio broadcast that can be listened to on a website or apps on your phone, computer, etc. From these definitions we can make a conclusion that podcast is a program made in a digital format and is available for download over the internet. For example, series of digital audio programs that users or subscribers can download to a personal device to listen anytime and anywhere.

Today, digital technology is preferred by most people as the first go-to source of knowledge and learning (Merzifonluoğlu & Gonulal, 2018). In light of this trend, language learning has changed into a more flexible and cost-effective format without being limited to a physical space or time (Kukulska-Hulme, 2009). Furthermore, mobile technologies such as smartphones, tablets, smart TV and widespread availability of materials on Internet greatly give benefits to students if they can use them wisely. From these opinions, one appropriate method that can be used in the classroom especially for teaching listening skill is the implementation of podcasting and vodcasting technology (Abdous, Camarena & Facer, 2009). This method can both embrace mobile technology and combine flexible and extensive learning so it can maximize students' ability. Podcast is an audio file that is distributed over the Internet through subscription. Podcast is usually in the format of an MP3

and can be played on any digital device, such as laptops, tablets, smart TV and smartphones. Podcast is automatically delivered to subscribers and they can listen to them whenever and wherever they want (Shelly & Frydenberg, 2010). While Vodcast is the podcast with video content instead of audio only (Dupugne, Milette & Grinfeder, 2009). For this reason, vodcast is also known as a video podcast. There are some benefits of using podcast in the classroom such as helping students to build listening/vocabulary/comprehension skill, engaging students with high quality content, allowing students to learn from other sources, and increasing students' interest about English, etc.

Some reasons why this research uses podcast as a media of improving students' listening skills are that it can give students an exposure to an authentic language spoken by native speakers with various topics or different accents and dialects and help students improve their pronunciation and speaking skill by hearing repeatedly correct pronunciations, stress or intonations. Furthermore, actively listen to podcast can also improve students' comprehension skill because they must understand the main idea, infer meaning from context, and follow a logical flow of information. They are able to identify key points of the topics, recognize the details, and draw conclusion.

Based on some problems mentioned above, this research is urgent to conduct to respond some educational issues which focuses on applying English podcast as a teaching listening aid to help students make improvement in listening skill. This study is carried out at University of Muhammadiyah Jakarta with the title "Using Podcast to Improve Students' Listening skill in Learning English". Based on a previous survey done by the researcher, they have the same problems in listening skill. Most of them have difficulties in listening native speakers because they have limited vocabulary, low concentration, poor learning sources and equipment, less exercise, etc. While previous studies have been conducted recently to know the effectiveness of podcast in improving students' listening skill, one of them is the research done by Khairiah Syahabuddin et. Al. (2021) which found that podcasts help students to improve their listening skills. It was proven by the improvement of the mean score of students' pre-test and post-test (36.3 to 63.3). Overall, this study suggests that developing English listening skills can be boosted with Podcasts. It is potential to help learners in improving their listening comprehension. The students who learned using podcast got a better achievement than those who did not. What makes this research different from previous studies is that this research uses recent topics or updated information to attract and to arise students' interest in listening the podcast. Besides, research using podcast as a media of teaching listening in university level is not that many. So, it can be used as a model for future studies.

The purpose of this study is to describe the improvement of students' listening ability using podcast in their learning activity. Through this research, the researcher hopes that it can be beneficial for both language learners and other researchers to enrich their knowledge about improving students' listening skill using podcast. The research about it is urgently done

and expected to contribute some ideas, concepts, and information in the field of education in Indonesia especially for Language learning.

Research Methods

Design

There are some methods of conducting research which will guide and help researchers to collect and analyze the data. In this case, the writer uses qualitative descriptive method and uses Classroom Action Research (CAR) as the design of this study. According to Kemmis and Mc. Taggart (1988), Classroom Action Research is a deliberate, solution-oriented investigation which is group or personally conducted and occurs through a dynamic and complementary process. The characteristic of this method is spiralling cycles of problems identification, systematic data collection, reflection, analysis, data driven action taken, and finally problem redefinition. The steps of action research based on Kemmis and Taggart involve four essential steps that form a spiral cycle: Plan, Act, Observe, and Reflect. The main purpose of action research is to help teachers improve their teaching. Their research design illustration could be as follows:
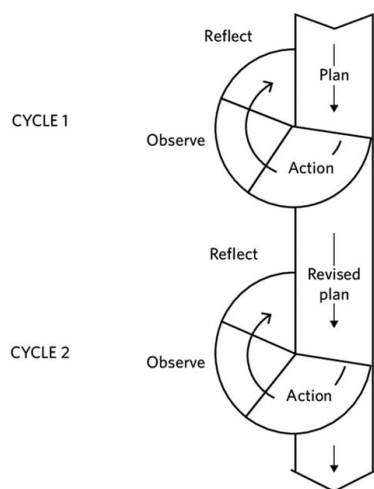
While Bogdan & Biklen (1992) explain that action research is a systematic collection of information that is designed to bring about social change. In addition, Cameron-Jones (1983) defines action research as a research conducted by practitioners to improve their professional practice and understand it better. In accordance with that Allwright and Bailey (1991) mention that it is a research centers on the classroom, and simply tries to investigate what actually happens in the classroom. It treats classroom interaction as the only object of investigation. Based on these definitions, it can be concluded that classroom action research (CAR) is a reflective process that teachers use to improve the teaching practices. The term practitioners used to refer to teachers who practice and act in classroom. The action and

the practice are done by teachers in their own classrooms or issues on how teachers respond to learners' errors, how interaction occurs in classrooms, the teachers and learners feelings during or after the lessons, and so on. It is a cyclical process in which educators examine their own practice systematically and carefully using the techniques of research. Researchers design a research question, collect data, analyze what they have learned, and write about their findings. Observations, interviews, surveys and journals are typical data methods that they use to investigate their questions.The goal of this research is to find out what works best in the classroom so that teachers can improve student learning and remedy problems in specific situations.

In this research, the researcher employs collaborative action research design in which the researcher and the collaborative teacher work together in designing the lesson plan, implementing the action, observing the action and making reflection. The procedure of the research will be done in two cycles. First, the researcher does some preparation in planning stage such as developing a lesson plan, preparing the materials or media of learning (English podcast), planning to give a task and evaluation, preparing observation instrument such as observation checklist. Second, the researcher carefully implements the plans in the action stage. In this stage, the activity is divided into three sections; pre listening activity, main listening activity, and post listening activity. Third, observation is needed for the next stage. This activity helps the researcher know the condition or development in the class before and after the plan implementation by making field notes. Observation activity can be carried out by providing observation sheets like questionnaire or in others ways according to the required data and taking video or pictures as the evidence in order to be investigated further in data processing. The last stage is reflection where the researcher evaluates the changes during the research. Building on the reflection result, the successful steps will be continued to the next cycle. While the successless steps will be investigated and searched for solution.

Participants

The object is really important in research since it is the source containing data that will be investigated by the researcher. The object of this research is the sample of the population. According to Arikunto (2013), population is the whole of subject of research. The population in this research is all English regular classes at the second semester of Faculty of Economics and Business University of Muhammadiyah Jakarta and the researcher chooses one class which consists of 42 students as the sample of this research. Arikunto (2013), said that sample is a part of population from the result of research data. Good sample is a sample that represents the result data of general population. If the subject of the research less than 100, then all subjects should be taken as research subject. However, if it is more than that, it can be taken about 10-15% or 20-25% as sample.

Data Collection

Data can be defined as a set of raw information or facts in the form of symbols, numbers, words, or images, which are obtained through the process of observing or searching to certain sources. Data of this study are collected through operational technique. It means that the data obtained from the field, they are from the students and the teacher. The researcher takes the data from the results of observation, interviews with the English teacher and students, and the results of listening tests using podcast in pre-test and post-test. Therefore, the instruments used in this research are test (pre-test and post-test by giving and audio/video conversation and list of questions like filling the blanks, multiple choice, etc), interview, observation and documentation. Furthermore, the researcher collects the data in the form of quantitative and qualitative data. The qualitative data can be obtained from observation or interview with students and teacher before and after podcast implementation. While quantitative data can be taken from the score result of pre-test and post-test.

Data analysis

To find out whether there is a positive and significant increase in the use of podcast to improve students' listening, the researcher analyses the data by taking the average of pre-test and post-test. The researcher gives tests in the initial and final cycles to determine students learning outcomes after the action. The average is calculated by applying the following formula proposed by Arikunto (2007):

$$X = \frac{\Sigma x}{\Sigma n}$$

Note :
X = The average score.
Σx = Total of the student's score
Σn = Total of the students that follow the test.

Indicators of success are taken from the process and results of classroom action research. It is considered to be successful if 70% of students score more than 75 (KKM) and 70% of students are active in the learning process. Furthermore, the positive improvement is also described from the result of observation and interview with students and teacher.

Results and Discussion

Results

The findings of this study have two kinds of data. They are quantitative and qualitative data that are analyzed descriptively. Qualitative data is obtained from the questionaire or interview, whereas the quantitative data is obtained from the result of pre-test and post-test. The quantitative data below was obtained from the three tests; pre-test, post-test 1 and 2.

Table 1
The Students' Score in Pre-Test and Cycle I (post-test I) and Cycle II (post-test II)

NO	NAME	PRE-TEST	POST-TEST 1	POST-TEST 2
1	MH	35	45	65
2	JFH	35	75	75
3	MNA	75	75	80
4	AD	40	50	75
5	SAE	40	60	75
6	HPN	40	75	75
7	AP	35	60	65
8	SR	65	65	70
9	AS	75	75	80
10	CAM	30	60	60
11	MR	50	75	80
12	MS	50	75	80
13	SNI	50	60	75
14	SA	75	85	90
15	AH	30	75	90
16	SA	25	35	60
17	AH	40	45	75
18	MN	50	55	75
19	RHJ	55	75	95
20	WA	50	55	75
21	MN	50	75	95
22	SA	40	45	75
23	R	95	95	100
24	AT	25	50	75
25	TS	40	60	80
26	MY	40	55	65
27	LI	30	45	65
28	JV	40	75	90
29	GP	50	75	95
30	KQ	45	75	90
31	CA	40	40	65
32	ZL	35	55	80
33	RDA	40	55	75
34	AU	40	55	80
35	AM	50	40	75
36	BS	30	75	75
37	ER	25	30	65
38	GZ	75	80	90

39	RA	40	55	80
40	SS	75	65	90
41	AM	60	75	95
42	AS	75	80	95
	Total (X)	1985	2595	3310
	Mean (X)	47.26	61.78	78.80

The data above shows the students' scores before and after podcast implementation in a listening activity. The pre-test scores were obtained before the podcast, range from 25 to 95 and with a total of 1,985 and an average score of 47.26. These indicate that many students had limited understanding of the learning material before using podcast as a learning tool. After the podcast implementation, the scores of post-test 1 increased significantly, ranging from 30 to 95, with a total of 2,595 and an average of 61.78. This shows us a positive improvement in students' comprehension and learning outcomes. Furthermore, the scores continued to increase in post-test 2, with a range of 60 to 100, a total of 3,310, and an average of 78.80. This final increase suggests that continuous exposure of podcast could enhance students' understanding of the material. The final data above shows the positive impact of the podcast-based learning method because most of the students demonstrated consistent progress in pre-test and post-test.

Table 2
The comparison of the students' score in three listening tests

Name of test	Pre-test	Post-test 1	Post-test 2
Lowest score	25	30	60
Highest score	95	95	100
$\bar{x}$	47.26	61.78	78.80
N	42	42	42

The table above shows the comparison of students' scores in pre-test and post-test. The tests were conducted to evaluate students' listening comprehension before and after the implementation of podcasts as a learning tool. Before implementing podcast, students' listening comprehension was low. It can be seen from the average score of pre-test. It was 47,26 which is still below the minimum mastery criteria (KKM 75). In addition, the lowest score was 25 which means some students struggled hard with the listening activity. While one student achieved score 95 which means the majority students performed below the standard.

After the podcast implementation, students' listening skill showed better improvement in cycle 1. The average score increased into 61,78 which means a good progress. The lowest score also increased from 25-30 which means that even the weakest students showed some progress. The table

showed that the highest score remained the same at 95 which means the best students maintained their top level. Although there was improvement, some students were still trying to meet the standard and it can be used for reflection to make adjustment in the next cycle through post test 2. After making adjustment based on the reflection of the first cycle, the students' average score increased significantly to 78,80 which means above the standard. The lowest score also increased to 60 which indicates the weakest students had significant progress too. Additionally, the highest score increased to 100 which showed perfect comprehension. Overall, the result showed that podcast gave a strong positive impact on students' listening skill.

Table 3
The Percentage of Students Who Got Score Over 75

Listening test	Percentage
Pre-test	16%
Post-test 1	38%
Post-test 2	78%

Based on the table above, students' scores showed a significant improvement. In the pre-test, only 16% or 7 students got score above 75 which means the majority of students struggled with listening comprehension. In post-test 1, the percentage increased to 38% or 16 students got score above 75 which indicated that the use of podcast had a positive impact on students' listening skill. Furthermore, there was a very significant increase in post-test 2 with 78% or 33 students got score above **75**. This significant improvement highlights the effectiveness of podcasts in increasing students' listening skill.

Furthermore, the findings of the qualitative data in this research are collected before and after the podcast implementation emerged from students' and teacher's observations, interview and documentation. Before applying podcast, many students said that listening exercises are boring and difficult to follow, especially with traditional audio materials that were often monotonous with scripted dialogues which did not reflect real-life conversations. "We were sleepy during the class because the recordings in the textbook were too robotic so we could not stay focused" some of the students stated. It is because the teacher only played the audio and gave an instruction and exercise without clear discussion related to the topic. In addition, many students struggled to understand spoken English especially when native speakers talked fast with unfamiliar vocabulary.

They often missed key points and had difficulties keeping up with the conversations. They said "When we listened to the first audio, we only understand a few words". Furthermore, students felt anxious and frustated when trying to understand native speaker before podcast implementation.

They did not have confidence about their ability. It can be seen from their expression. On the other hand, students' response and experience were more positive when podcast was implemented. They became more accustomed to natural speech patterns because the topics in the podcast were casual and reflect to daily topics. They said it was much more easier to learn how to focus on key words or meaning prediction. They also showed higher level of interest and enjoyment. A student said "I really enjoyed the podcast. It talked about things I like, such as movies or music, so I wanted to listen more". So, the variety of topics, voices, and real-life conversations made listening practice more enjoyable. In addition, students became more comfortable with different accents and speeds of speech after consistent exposure to podcasts. Some even noticed improvement in their speaking skill because they unconciously learned new vocabulary and pronunciation. Some said, "I used to struggle with pronunciation, but after listening to podcasts, I learned how to say words naturally".

Discussion

Based on the table 1 above, it can be seen that there is an improvement between pre-test and post-test. The result of pre-test is still below the KKM (75) with the average score 47.26. It is indicating that the students' proficiency in listening is still low and under the defined success standart. Many students showed significant difficulties in understanding spoken content of listening audio and reflected in the low scores. Following pre-test, the post-test 1 was conducted to evaluate the impact of the pre-test. The table shows an increased average score to 61.78 which indicates students' improvement in listening comprehension. It means that the initial implementation of podcasts contributed positively to the students eventhough some students still struggled to reach the standart score. With this reason, the researcher made an adjustment based on the reflections from the first cycle that the next cycle needed to be implemented. In post test 2, the students' average score rose significantly to 78.80 which is above the KKM. The majority of students scored 75 or above with several achieving scores between 90 – 100, confirming the effectiveness of podcast used to improve students' listening skill. The increase in average scores of all tests clearly demonstrates a positive and significant improvement in students' listening skill.

In addition to quantitative data, qualitative data findings contribute to the success of this research. The data were collected through observation, interview and documentation to provide a more comprehensive teaching and learning process. The researcher used observations sheets, field notes, and documentation. Observations were conducted during each cycle to monitor classroom atmosphere, student participation and behavior, and the

effectiveness of podcast implementation. In the first cycle, observations revealed some weaknesses such as students' difficulty in understanding the audio and answering the questions but these findings informed the researcher to make an adjustment in the next cycle. In the second cycle, observations showed significant improvements in students' participation and ability to respond the tasks, and the teacher could deliver the material well, manage the class well and use the time effectively.

The next findings are the data from the interview. The interviews were conducted with teacher and students to gather opinions and feedback on their experiences before and after the podcast-based activity. Initially their listening lesson was monotonous with almost the same method in each meeting such as listening to a short dialogue and answer multiple choice questions, but then the teacher noted that the students were more engaged and motivated during listening activity when podcast was applied in their class. There was also an improvement between the first and the second cycle of this research.

The teacher noticed that students' vocabulary was improving because they learnt many new vocabularies and looked up the meaning in dictionary to understand them. The podcast was also shared to the students in order to encourage them to practise listening outside the classroom. The students also found that podcast was more challenging and helped them understand more easily by its natural English exposure. They can understand the podcast not only from the vocabulary but also from the tone and pronunciation during the conversation. Some students felt more confident in understanding native speakers.

The findings of the study on using podcasts to improve students' listening skills in learning English align with previous research that emphasizes the effectiveness of audio-based learning tools. The results indicate that students exposed to podcasts demonstrate notable improvements in their listening comprehension, which supports the argument that podcasts serve as an engaging and effective medium for language acquisition.

These findings are consistent with the study by Hasan and Hoon (2013), which found that using podcasts as supplementary learning materials significantly improved students' listening abilities. Their research highlighted that students who regularly listened to podcasts developed better listening strategies, such as predicting content, identifying key ideas, and recognizing different accents and speech patterns. Similarly, Rosell-Aguilar (2007) emphasized that podcasts provide authentic language input, which helps learners become accustomed to natural speech, making them more comfortable with real-world English communication.

Additionally, the study aligns with findings from Yeh (2013), who explored the role of digital audio resources in language learning and concluded that listening to podcasts fosters autonomous learning. This supports the current study's conclusion that podcasts encourage students to take control of their learning by allowing them to practice listening skills outside the classroom at their own pace.

Conclusion

The researcher made some conclusions of this research based on the result of observation, interview, and tests. The implementation of podcast to the listening activity in the classroom can improve students' skill. It is proven by both quantitative and qualitative findings such as the students' increasing score from pre-test to post-test in two cycles and the positive progress during observation. The average score increased consistently from 47.26 to 78.80. Furthermore, observations showed notable improvement in students' participation, engagement, and task response during the research cycle. Interviews further noted that podcast was more engaging and effective than traditional methods because it provides students with natural English exposure through tone, pronunciation, and new vocabulary which boosted their confidence and comprehension. Finally, the findings confirm that podcast is a recommended media to use in the classroom to improve students' listening skill.

Despite these positive findings, this research has some limitations. It was done with a limited time and specific group of students so the results of the study might not apply to a larger group of people because of certain limitations. In addition, factors such as students' learning style and habit were not deeply examined which could influence the result. It is suggested that future researches explore the long-term effect of podcast used in the classroom and find out its effectiveness applied on different level and educational setting.

Based on the findings mentioned previously, it is recommended that teachers apply podcast in their listening activity to enhance students engagement and comprehension. Furthermore, encouraging students to listen to podcasts outside the classroom as part of their independent learning can help their listening skill progress. Overall, this study highlights the potential of podcasts as an effective media in improving students' listening skill.

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