
EFFECTIVENESS OF PODCASTS TO IMPROVE STUDENTS LISTENING COMPREHENSION FOR VOCATIONAL STUDENTS

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of podcasts in improving listening skills at Ihsaniyah Vocational High School (SMK) in Tegal City. The research method used in this study was quantitative, with an experimental approach. The research design used a pretest and posttest design with a control group. Data were collected using tests and questionnaires.

The results of the study show that: First, based on the experimental group, the pretest score was 52.78%, and the posttest score was 61.94%. This shows that the posttest score was higher than the pretest score, indicating that the use of audio podcasts had a positive impact on improving the listening skills of 11th grade students at SMK Ihsaniyah. Second, the results based on the control group showed a pretest score of 40.67 and a posttest score of 47.67. This indicates that the use of audio podcasts with scrolling text has a positive effect on the listening skills of grade XI students at SMK Ihsaniyah.

Abstrak

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui efektivitas podcast dalam meningkatkan keterampilan mendengarkan di Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan (SMK) Ihsaniyah, Kota Tegal. Metode penelitian yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah kuantitatif, dengan pendekatan eksperimen. Desain penelitian menggunakan desain pretest dan posttest dengan kelompok kontrol. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan teknik tes dan kuesioner.

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa: Pertama, perhitungan hasil berdasarkan kelompok eksperimen, pada saat pretest sebesar 52,78%, dan pada saat posttest sebesar 61,94%. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa hasil posttest lebih tinggi dari pada hasil pretest, sehingga penggunaan podcast audio memiliki dampak positif dalam meningkatkan keterampilan mendengarkan pada siswa kelas XI di SMK Ihsaniyah. Kedua, perhitungan hasil berdasarkan kelompok kontrol pada saat pretest sebesar 40,67, dan pada saat posttest sebesar 47,67. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa ada efek positif penggunaan podcast audio dengan teks berjalan terhadap kemampuan mendengarkan siswa kelas XI di SMK Ihsaniyah.

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Introduction

In the process of learning English, the ability of students to master the four language skills is an important goal. Therefore, English subjects are directed at developing these skills so that students can communicate in English at a certain level of literacy. In vocational high schools, the English subject is an adaptive subject, which aims to equip students with the ability to communicate using English in the context of communication materials needed for their program of expertise, both oral and written. With language skills, students can develop science, technology, arts, and culture. English subjects prepare students to communicate in everyday situations following global demands, as well as to develop communication skills at a higher level. There are four basic English skills taught in schools, such as listening, speaking, writing, and reading.

Based on the results of interviews with the English teacher at Ihsaniyah Vocational School, Tegal City, it was stated that of the four skills being taught, listening skills are a fairly serious problem. According to the English teacher at Ihsaniyah Vocational School, most students experience difficulties in mastering listening skills. There are several problems found at SMK Ihsaniyah in the context of learning English in listening skills, especially in class XI. For example, listening classes are rarely held, only two or three times a month. It makes students unfamiliar with listening to themselves and also not used to listening to native English speakers. Students also have difficulty interpreting what they hear because of their lack of understanding of English vocabulary in students.

Another problem is that the listening input provided by the teacher is not perfect. The learning process provided by the teacher is still too monotonous, and less varied in developing learning models and learning approaches. Teachers tend to focus on the material in the book, so they have not optimally developed learning based on the competencies to be achieved. The use of media and learning resources used in the learning process is still minimal. Especially in using learning media that can facilitate students in learning. According to Ramainas, two factors cause learning not to run effectively. First, internal factors consist of social and non-social factors, such as teacher qualifications, methods, media, equipment, and evaluation. Second, internal factors consist of physiological and psychological factors, such as intelligence, interests, talents, motivation, perceptions, and ways of learning¹.

To overcome these problems, teachers need to find new strategies for teaching listening skills to help students be more active in the learning process. In this millennial era, the use of technology is one way that can be used as a learning medium. Many media can be used in learning English, especially listening skills. One way is to use podcast media. Podcasts are a source of innovative mobile technology involving digital video and audio broadcasts that can be downloaded and played on mobile devices. The use of mobile devices allows students to study anytime and anywhere, alone or with others, and has the potential

¹ Siti Sholehah, "Pengembangan Multimedia Interaktif Berbasis Pendidikan Karakter Materi Sistem Reproduksi," *Unnes Journal of Biology Education*, 1.1 (2014), 1–8.

to help students at the right point of need and in a way that suits the lifestyle of students who are increasingly mobile and always connected.²

The use of podcasts makes it easy for listeners to choose and listen to the programs they like³. Podcasts are considered an innovation to build students' listening and speaking skills (SZE, 2006)⁴. Podcasts are a form of personalized learning that can be tailored to individual learners' needs and extend learning beyond the classroom. The use of podcasts in language classes allows students to understand the content, improve their proficiency, and improve their listening skills. So, to develop listening comprehension skills, podcasts can be an effective medium. Based on the description above, the researcher wants to know the effectiveness of using podcast media at SMK Ihsaniyah to improve students' listening skills. This study attempts to answer the research questions: (1) How effective is the use of podcasts to improve listening skills? (2) How do students respond to the use of podcasts in improving? *Podcasts in Language Learning*

Podcasts are an example of cutting-edge online media. The use of podcast has completely transformed the process of learning English. Podcasts' portability and availability provide learning opportunities. Podcasts can also serve as reinforcement, increasing learning motivation⁵. Furthermore, the pause and replay options available when listening to podcasts allow students to learn independently. The podcasting literature defines time, location, and pace as dimensions in which learning can be realized flexibly. Learning activities are no longer limited by time and location due to the flexibility of podcasting time⁶.

Learners who have personal mobile devices such as cell phones or personal media players can access learning materials while on the go. Another benefit of podcasting is that it provides bite-sized learning opportunities, allowing learners to use their downtime for productive learning. By downloading podcasts and listening to them repeatedly, students can work at their own pace to achieve the desired learning outcomes. These three dimensions of flexibility also contribute to learner choice and control, two essential components of learner autonomy and independent learning.

Based on the statement above, it can be concluded that podcasts are believed to not only accelerate listening skills but also stimulate other areas of language, such as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and speaking. Podcasts can be an alternative and innovative tool that can be used in language learning.

² Birgit Phillips, "Student-Produced Podcasts in Language Learning – Exploring Student Perceptions of Podcast Activities," *IAFOR Journal of Education*, 5, no. 3 (2017): 157–171.

³ Tryanti Abdulrahman, Nonny Basalama, and Mohammad Rizky Widodo, "The Impact of Podcasts on Efl Students' Listening Comprehension," *International Journal of Language Education*, 2, no. 2 (2018): 23–33.

⁴ Islam NamazianDost, Ghassem Bohloulzadeh, and Rezvan Rahmatollahi, "The Effects of Using Podcast on Listening Comprehension among Iranian Pre-Intermediate EFL Learners," *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 6, no. 6 (2017): 57-70.

⁵ Doris U. Bolliger, Supawan Supanakorn, and Christine Boggs, "Impact of Podcasting on Student Motivation in the Online Learning Environment," *Computers and Education*, 55, no. 2 (2010): 714–722 <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2010.03.004>>.

⁶ Gilly Salmon and others, "How to Create Podcasts for Education," *British Journal of Educational Technology* 40, no. 4 (2008): 40.

Listening Skills: An Expert Perspective

Listening skills are a vital component of effective communication, encompassing not only the act of hearing but also the ability to comprehend, interpret, and respond appropriately to spoken messages. According to experts, listening is a complex psychological and cognitive process that involves attention, interpretation, and response, all of which are essential for successful interpersonal and professional interactions.

Stephen Covey, in his renowned work *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, emphasizes the importance of "empathetic listening," which means listening with the intent to understand rather than simply to reply. Covey argues that many people listen not with the intent to understand, but with the intent to reply, filtering everything they hear through their own paradigms. Empathetic listening, by contrast, requires suspending one's own frame of reference to genuinely grasp the speaker's perspective.⁷

Similarly, researchers Adler and Rodman describe listening as an active process that includes five stages: receiving, attending, understanding, responding, and remembering.⁸ This framework highlights that listening is far from passive; it demands conscious effort and mental engagement. According to them, effective listeners are not merely silent but show attentiveness through verbal and non-verbal feedback, such as nodding or making clarifying comments. In educational psychology, listening is seen as a foundational skill for learning. Brown and Yule note that listening is the primary channel through which language input is received in second-language acquisition.⁹ This underscores that listening is more than a social skill it is a cognitive tool that plays a critical role in acquiring knowledge and mastering language.

Active listening is another concept emphasized in organizational and counseling contexts. Carl Rogers, a pioneer in humanistic psychology, developed the concept of active listening as part of client-centered therapy. He posited that active listening characterized by nonjudgmental engagement, reflection, and validation helps build trust and facilitates open communication.¹⁰ In workplaces, active listening is increasingly recognized as a leadership competency, critical for conflict resolution, team collaboration, and decision-making.

Experts also stress the barriers to effective listening, such as distractions, preconceptions, and emotional reactions. Julian Treasure, a sound expert and TED speaker, outlines common listening pitfalls in his talks and suggests techniques to regain conscious listening, such as cultivating silence and practicing selective attention.¹¹ He asserts that

⁷ Stephen R. Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change*, (New York: Free Press, 1989), 239.

⁸ Ronald B. Adler and George Rodman, *Understanding Human Communication*, 10th ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 123–125.

⁹ Gillian Brown and George Yule, *Teaching the Spoken Language: An Approach Based on the Analysis of Conversational English*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 66.

¹⁰ Carl R. Rogers and Richard E. Farson, *Active Listening*, (Chicago: Industrial Relations Center of the University of Chicago, 1957), 6–10.

¹¹ Julian Treasure, "5 Ways to Listen Better," TED Talk, July 2011, https://www.ted.com/talks/julian_treasure_5_ways_to_listen_better.

modern life with its noise, information overload, and multitasking has made deep listening an endangered skill.

In conclusion, listening skills, according to experts across psychology, communication, and education, involve far more than hearing. They require focused attention, empathetic engagement, and cognitive processing. Developing strong listening skills can improve relationships, enhance learning, and foster better communication across all areas of life.

Podcasts to Improve Listening Comprehension

Podcasts are the best choice that can be used in listening comprehension classes for the following reasons¹². The first reason is that it can make the learner know native English. That is, students can listen to authentic material to improve their conversations. Furthermore, the podcast material is full of real-life speeches based on native speakers' speeches for learners to capture authentic vocabulary with their pronunciation. The second reason for using podcasts is to encourage students to learn to listen outside of language class. Teachers can use podcasts to teach listening because they are very easy to use. Learners can control their learning by selecting their favorite materials to listen to. The last reason is that it can strengthen students' active learning in the listening class. Using podcasts can encourage teachers to create active classes for their students.

Significantly, Roger (2003) claim that technological innovation usually faces public resistance. In other words, any technology is likely to fall into disfavor before it becomes fashionable as a result of a technological "fad".¹³ Despite podcasts' positive impact on language learning and teaching, both teachers and students face several challenges. To use podcasts effectively, teachers and students must first connect to the internet. Despite podcasts' positive impact on language learning and teaching, both teachers and students face several challenges. To use podcasts effectively, teachers and students must first connect to the internet. Teachers must ensure that the education center and students have access to the internet. The second challenge is the complexity of podcast content. Teachers who use podcasts to teach listening skills should select appropriate content and solicit student feedback. As a result, it can be difficult to use podcasts effectively and appropriately.

Method

In this study, the researcher used a quantitative approach where the research data was in the form of numbers and analyzed using statistics. Two groups were used in this study (the experimental group and the control group). The type of research used in this study was experimental research to fulfill the requirements for testing causal relationships.

¹² Marisa Yoestara and Zaiyana Putri, "PODCAST: An Alternative Way to Improve EFL Students' Listening and Speaking Performance," *Englisia Journal* 6, no.1 (2019): 15. <<https://doi.org/10.22373/ej.v6i1.3805>>.

¹³ Afsaneh Saeedakhtar, Rokhsare Haqju, and Afsar Rouhi, "The Impact of Collaborative Listening to Podcasts on High School Learners' Listening Comprehension and Vocabulary Learning," *System*, 101, no. 102588 (2021). <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2021.102588>>.

Experimental method is defined as a research method used to find the effect of certain treatments on others under controlled conditions¹⁴. So experimental research is defined as research used to test the causal relationship of an influence under controlled conditions. The design of this study was true-experimental and used the pretest-posttest group design model. In this study, two groups were randomly selected, namely, the experimental group was given a learning treatment using an audio podcast and the control group was given a learning treatment using an audio podcast with running text.

Quantitative research usually follows a deductive logic: one begins with a theory, formulates hypotheses, and then gathers data to support or refute those hypotheses. The aim is to achieve objectivity, control for bias or confounding variables, and to establish causal or correlational relationships. Another important feature is generalizability: because sampling and measurement aim for reliability and validity, the findings can often be extended to a broader population beyond those immediately observed. This format aligns with testing hypotheses, reporting statistical findings, and situating results in theory.¹⁵

Participant (Subject) Characteristics

The study's population was 66 students from class XI in the odd semester of vocational students in one of private school in Central Java, Indonesia adjusted for inclusion criteria. They were already in a position to adapt to this research and had access to the internet. Their understanding of the significance of improving listening comprehension was undoubtedly a good motivation for this research.

This study involved 33 students representing various majors. In this study, researchers used a probability sampling technique. Probability sampling is a sampling technique that provides equal opportunities for each member of the population to be selected as a member of the sample. In this study, the researcher chose an area sampling technique (cluster) sampling or cluster random sampling. The cluster random sampling technique was taking samples by randomization to groups, not to individual subjects. The reason the researchers used the cluster random sampling technique was that the researchers randomized a large population. So that the population was selected based on the group/class.

Data collection

Data collection collects information from all relevant sources to find answers to research problems, test hypotheses, and evaluate results. The data collection techniques that the researchers used in this study were: First, interviews; in this study, we used unstructured interviews. Data collection techniques by way of interviews were conducted with English teachers. The interview aims to obtain initial information regarding the main problems that exist in schools and to find out the characteristics of students and the level of listening ability

¹⁴ Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif Dan R & D*, (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2016), 8.

¹⁵ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 3rd ed., (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2008).

of class XI students in general. The second test in this study was a test to determine or measure student learning outcomes. The form of the test used in this study was multiple choice, held at predetermined times, namely before learning (pretest) and after learning (posttest).

Data analysis

The results of the analysis are calculated quantitatively. In the process of data analysis, researchers used the IBM SPSS V.24 application to determine information. The independent sample t-test formula was used to analyze the data. The difference in pre-test and post-test scores of students in the experimental class and control class was also determined using an independent sample t-test. Before carrying out the independent sample t-test, the researcher first calculated the normality test and homogeneity test.

Results and analysis

Descriptive Statistics

Data on the results of increasing students' listening comprehension were obtained through pre-test and post-test from both the experimental class and the control class. The following results of the calculation of the pre-test and post-test data for the experimental class and the control class can be seen in Table 1.1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics Results

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Means	std. Deviation
Pre-test Experiment	18	15	90	52.78	23,214
Post-test Experiment	18	35	95	61.94	17,332
Pre-test Control	15	5	70	40.67	17.203
Post-test Control	15	30	65	47.67	10.154
Valid N	33				

From table 1.1 the descriptive statistics above show that there were 18 total samples (N) in the experimental group. In the experimental group, the minimum pre-test score was 15, and the maximum pre-test score was 90. The average pre-test score in the experimental group had an average score of 52.78. After being given treatment using audio podcast media in the learning process, the minimum post-test score for the experimental group was 35, and the maximum was 95. The average post-test value in the experimental group after being

given treatment had an average score of 61.94. In the control group, the number of samples (N) was 15. In the control group, the minimum pre-test score was 5, and the pre-test maximum value was 70. The pre-test average score in the control group had an average score of 40.67. After being given treatment using audio podcast media with running text in the learning process, the minimum post-test score is 30, and the post-test maximum value is 65. The average post-test value in the control group after being given treatment has an average score of 47.67.

Normality Test

The normality test was calculated using the SPSS version 24.0 for the Windows program. The basis for decision-making is if the significance value is > 0.05 then the residual value is normally distributed whereas if the significance value is < 0.05 then the residual value is not normally distributed. Based on the results of the analysis of normality test calculations using the SPSS version 24.0 for the windows program, the results are obtained in Table 1.2.

Table 2. Results of Normality Test Analysis

Class		<i>One-Sample Shapiro-Wilk Test</i>	
		t-table	Sig. (2-tailed)
Experiment	<i>Pretest</i>	0.05	0.547
	<i>Posttest</i>	0.05	0.848
Control	<i>Pretest</i>	0.05	0.444
	<i>Posttest</i>	0.05	0.133

The Sig pretest value (significance) in the experimental class is 0.547, and the posttest value in the experimental class is 0.848, based on the results of normality calculations using the SPSS version 24.0 for Windows program with the number of students for the experimental group $N = 18$ and the control group $N = 15$. So it can be seen that the pretest and posttest significance values in the experimental class are > 0.05 , so it can be concluded that the pretest and posttest residual values in the experimental class are normally distributed. Whereas in the control class, the significance of the pretest value was 0.444, and for the posttest value in the control class, the significance was 0.133. So it can be seen that the pretest and posttest significance values in the control class are > 0.05 , so it can be concluded that the pretest and posttest residual values in the control class are normally distributed.

Homogeneity Test

Homogeneity test is used to test homogeneous data or not based on pretest and posttest data testing in the experimental class and control class. If the data is normally distributed, then the data is analyzed using a homogeneity test. The results of the homogeneity test of the experimental class and the control class can be seen in Table 1.3.

Table 3. Homogeneity Test Results

	<i>Levene Statistics</i>	df1	df2	Sig.
Pre-test	1,517	1	31	.227
Post-test	2,822	1	31	.103

Based on the homogeneity test results in Table 1.3 obtained that the value of Sig. (significance) for the pretest is .227 while the posttest is .103. The significance value of the homogeneity test with SPSS is greater than the 0.05 significance level. From the test results, it can be concluded that the data is pretest and homogeneous.

Independent Sample T-test

After the students' pretest and posttest data are normally distributed and homogeneous, the next step is to test the hypothesis with t-test statistics. The t-test used in this study was an independent sample t-test which was analyzed using SPSS version 24.0 for windows software. Data on the pretest values of the two classes were analyzed using the independent sample t-test average comparison technique to determine whether there were differences in the abilities of the two classes before and after being given treatment.

Table 4. Data Analysis Results Independent Test Sample t-test
Pretest Experiment Class and Control Class

	T	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
<i>Equal variance assumed</i>	1672	31	.105

Data in Table 1.4 the value of Sig can be known (significance) $0.105 > 0.050$, the results of the t-test indicated that there was no difference in ability between the two classes before being given treatment. In other words, the initial state of the two classes is the same.

Data on the posttest values of the two classes were analyzed using the independent sample t-test average comparison technique to determine whether there were differences in the abilities of the two classes after being given treatment. The results of the independent sample t-test of the post-test data of students in the experimental class and control class are presented in Table 1.5.

Table 5. Data Analysis Results Independent Sample t-test
Posttest Experiment Class and Control class

	T	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
<i>Equal variance assumed</i>	2,810	31	.009

Based on the data in Table 1.5 it can be seen that the value of Sig. (significance) = $0.009 < 0.05$ then H_0 is rejected so H_a is accepted. Based on the significance value, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference in improvement between the experimental class and the control class after being given treatment.

The results of the analysis of the questionnaire calculation on each indicator show that the percentage value in the experimental class is included in the interested category, this shows that students are interested in the learning.

Based on the results of research on the effect of podcast media on improving students' listening skills, it was found that there was a positive effect on differences in improving students' listening skills using audio podcast media (experimental group) and audio podcasts with running text (control group). The listening ability of the experimental class students increased from 53 for the average pretest score, to 62 for the average posttest score. The control group also experienced an increase from 41 for the average pretest score, to 48 for the average posttest score. So there is a difference in improving students' listening skills in the experimental class and the control class. The difference in the average results of students in the experimental class and the control class in improving listening skills is caused by different learning processes.

The learning process in the experimental class uses audio podcast media where the teacher presents audio podcasts to provide stimulation by associating letter combinations with sounds to improve students' listening skills. Following the opinion of Ibrahim (2006) who stated that the use of audio can make listeners imagine through patterns according to their experiences¹⁶. Whereas the learning process in the control class uses audio podcast media with running text that interprets the close relationship between hearing and sight. In the podcast learning process using running text, it is easy for students to grasp the material, but students do not focus on capturing the contents of the message. In the control class, listening to podcasts uses the sense of sight (reading text) more in listening to podcasts. So, it can be concluded that the effectiveness of using audio podcast media has a positive effect on improving students' listening skills.

¹⁶ Friska Dwi Yusanika and Imam Suyitno, "Pengaruh Media Audio Dan Audio Visual Terhadap Kemampuan Menyimak Siswa Kelas IV." *Jurnal Pendidikan* 3, no. 2 (2018): 251-258.

Conclusion

The results of this study can be summarized as follows: First, the results of the study show that there is a positive effect of using audio podcasts on improving listening skills in class XI students at SMK Ihsaniyah. This was obtained through the results of pre-test and post-test calculations in the experimental group. The difference in score obtained at the pre-test differs from the difference in score obtained at the post-test, with details of the average gain being 52.78 at the pre-test and 61.94 at the post-test. Second, the results of the study show that there is a positive effect of using audio podcasts with running text on the listening ability of class XI students at SMK Ihsaniyah. This was obtained through the results of pre-test and post-test calculations in the control group. The difference in score obtained at the pre-test is different from the score obtained at the post-test, with details of the average gain being 40.67 at the time of the pre-test and 47.67 at the time of the post-test.

Based on the results of data analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that the effectiveness of using podcasts in improving listening skills has significant results; however, the results of the study show that there are differences in the effect of using audio podcasts and audio podcasts with running text, where classes with audio podcast media treatment have superior results. This can be seen through the results of the Independent Sample T-Test, which proves the value of $t \text{ count} > t \text{ table}$ with a significance level of 5%, namely 0.009. This shows that the effect of using audio podcasts is superior when compared to audio podcasts with running text on improving students' listening skills. In conclusion, this study shows that the effectiveness of using podcast media has a positive effect on improving students' listening skills. This study suggests that the teachers should design the instructional utilizing podcast carefully since they have to consider the students characteristics

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