IMPROVING STUDENTS' LISTENING SKILL USING PODCASTS

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to discover the use of podcasts in improving students' listening skills. The quantitative technique was used in this research. The data were obtained from the pre-experimental technique. This research was conducted to find out the information about the improvement of students' listening skills on using podcasts. This study involved 15 students in the fourth semester in the Department of English Language Education of Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh. The sample was chosen by using purposive sampling with certain criteria: sixth semester students in the Department of English Language Education of Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, and the students who have passed Basic Listening subject, Intermediate Listening subject, and Advanced Listening subject. However, the students faced difficulties in comprehending audio at the first meeting. After giving a treatment by using podcasts, the finding revealed 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.

Keywords: Listening Skill, Podcast

1. INTRODUCTION

Listening is a complex interactive process of which the learners interpret what they know and what they hear and then apply linguistic knowledge in the understanding of the message. From a schematic point of view, it involves the connection between the information and the experience they are currently acquiring. The role of listening skills is to make a connection with the learning process. Brown (2004) pointed out that listening is a vital skill in acquisition. Therefore, students can not underestimate it, especially in an academic context because they are required to increase their competence in language learning with lots of listening practices.

Listening is a skill that many students feel difficult to master. Azmi (2014) pointed out the several difficulties that students face in the Listening Process. First, the quality of the recorded materials is essential. It can affect students in comprehending the audio. Second, cultural differences can give a significant effect on the students' understanding. If listening requires entirely different cultural materials, then it will be more difficult for the learners to comprehend the message. The third is the dialect. Foreign languages, both native and non-native, can cause a significant listening issue. The fourth is the unfamiliar vocabulary. It gives the time length for listeners because they have a while to consider the vocabulary that they listen to. Lastly, the speed of speech and speakers' conversation becomes a significant problem for listeners because they cannot control how speakers speak.

The development of media attracts students to use computers and the internet as well as their MP3 (Moving Picture Expert Group Layer-3) players and other digital media and devices for entertainment. As a result, students' attention and abilities in these media turn them to have educational benefits from the press. However, one possible solution is by using a Podcast Application. Podcasting is a combination of two words: Pod means iPod, the name of the famous MP3 (Moving Picture Expert Group Layer-3) player, and broadcasting. The rapid development in podcasting has been recognized as Language learning as the field to get help from it. Deal (2007) defines that podcasts provide content in video or audio files as a series of episodes with a broad and common theme called a "feed" that allows listeners to subscribe to the series and receive new episodes automatically. Thus, podcast technology is available, providing a desirable choice to give students additional interactive learning opportunities as it is easy to use and inexpensive.

Podcasts provide a large amount of authentic input and teaching materials that have different approaches to language learning behind them (depending on the content provider). In line with Adams (2006), podcast is a new medium that provides information and entertainment. Still, soon educators find the huge potential for teaching and learning. Language learning has been identified as one of the disciplines likely to benefit from developments in podcasting. Furthermore, podcasts can be instantly downloaded, copied, shared, and even edited, granting learners more control over their competence and possession of their learning.

Therefore, multimedia has been created to teach listening skills. It is essential to choose appropriate media to enhance students' listening skills. This research is concerned with improving listening skills and investigating the use of podcasts on students at the Department of English Language Education of Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh in the second year of 2019/2020 with a different background with previous research. This study was conducted under the title *The Use of Podcast to Improve Students' Listening Skill (A study at the Department of English Language Education of Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh).*

Listening Skill

There are four important skills learned: speaking, listening, writing, and reading. Supported by Aydogan (2014), these four language skills are sometimes called the "macro-skills". It is often in contrast to the "micro-skills", which are grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and spelling. Mode of communication is divided into oral and written forms, and direct communication to receive and produce the message. Listening is the receptive skill within the oral mode while reading is the receptive skill in the written mode. On the other hand, writing and speaking are productive skills. Writing is producing in written mode while speaking is producing in oral mode (Harmer, 2007).

Listening is thought to be fancily regarded as a complex, interactive process during which listeners are involved in an exceedingly dynamic construction of meaning. It has to be mastered by foreign language learners because they tend to alter words into thought to make meaning from the passage. Rost (2002) describes listening as a process of hearing what the speaker says (receptive orientation); constructing and reflecting meaning (constructive orientation); negotiating meaning with the speaker and reacting (collaborative orientation); and generating meaning through interaction, creativity, and empathy (transformative orientation). Successful listening can also be checked out in terms of the strategies the listener uses when listening. Strategies can be taught because of the ways during which learner approaches and manages a task, and listeners will be taught effective ways of approaching and managing their listening. These activities involve the listeners to be active in the process of listening.

Technology in Education

Technology has a huge potential to change the present teaching methods. It does not include only machines (computer hardware) and instruments, but it also involves structured relations with other humans, devices, and the environment (Isman, 2012). When learners learn with technology, it helps them improve their cognitive skills of higher intelligence. Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011) supported the view that technology offers teaching tools and provides a learning experience to the world of learners. Through using technology, many authentic materials can be delivered to learners, and they can be motivated to learn the language. Learners realize the subject with enthusiasm and develop their knowledge, providing unlimited resources to language learners. Learners can learn when technology is employed within the process of learning through using an application. The technology-enhanced teaching environment is more practical than a lecture-based class. It can be concluded that using technology in teaching is incredibly essential in drawing learners' attention towards English language learning.

Using Multimedia to Learn Listening

Media comes from of the Latin word *medium*, meaning *between*. The word refers to anything which carries information from source to receiver. In general, it is a way of communication. Media is additionally considered as an instructional system of this teaching-learning process (Farhati, 2011). It is issued to facilitate the teacher to realize the goal of the teaching-learning process. Therefore, the teacher can select the media from the standard ones up to the modern ones. In doing this study, the researchers use a podcast as the media in providing materials to improve the students' achievement in listening.

Podcast

A podcast is an audio file that is possible to download from the internet. The podcast was first known in 2004. It is defined as online audio blogging or internet audio publishing. The term "podcasting" is a blend of the words "iPod" and "broadcasting" (O'Bryan and Hegelheimer, 2008). This term is no longer related only to iPod but refers to any software and hardware combination that allows automatic downloading of audio files for listening at the user's convenience. Thus, the audio recording is intended to be downloaded and listened to a portable mp3 (Moving Picture Expert Group Layer-3) player or on a computer.

Podcasts are delivered online automatically via a website, so it is different from other audios. Podcasts utilize voice, which is the most influential tool that relates to the audience very quickly. It revolutionizes the English learning process, which provides students flexibility when and where to learn at their desired learning pace and path. Thus, the podcast is a series of sound files that consist of educational information in a comprehensive manner to make the user an advanced learner.

2. METHOD

The approach which is employed during this study is quantitative research. It has the aim to find out the improvement of students' listening skills using a podcast as the media. The researchers used a kind of experimental research in this study. According to Arikunto (2013), experimental research is a study to know whether it is an effect or not to the subject, that is given a treatment. From the statement, it can be assumed that experimental research is a procedure of quantitative research in which the researcher determines whether an activity or material makes a different result for participants. Students were asked several questions before the

research was engaged. The students in the class were given a pre-test at the beginning and a post-test in the last meeting.

Population and Sample

A population is the total of all individuals who have specific characteristics and are the researcher's interest. Creswell (2008) stated that a population is a group of individuals who have the same characteristic. This study was conducted in the Department of English Language Education of Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, which involves students in 2018/2019 as the participant. They are taking Listening for academic purpose subject in the fourth semester. It is the highest level of learning listening. Therefore, they are appropriate to become the population in this research. The total population is 221 students. They are divided into eight classes. Each class consists of 34 students.

Meanwhile, The sample is a part of the population itself and has the characteristic to investigate. Arikunto (2013) distinguishes samples based on the number of population, namely between for a population that is less than 100 and those more than 100. He states that if the subject is less than 100, it is better to take all, and then the research is population research. Furthermore, if the number of subjects is large, it can be taken between 10-15% or 20-25% or more depending on the ability of the researcher to be seen from time, energy and funds, the narrow area of observation of each subject, and the risk borne by the researcher.

This quantitative study was conducted at the Department of English Language Education of Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh. The researcher used purposive sampling. The sample was selected by taking a subject that is not based on the area's level, but it is chosen based on a specific purpose (Siregar, 2014). Furthermore, the purposive sampling technique is used to find suitable participants for this research. Based on this technique used, 15 participants were chosen from the population as the sample using several criteria for the research participants, such as;

1. The sixth semester-students in the Department of English Language Education of Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh

2. The students who have passed Basic Listening subject, Intermediate Listening subject, and Advanced Listening subject

Data Collection Procedures

In gaining data needed in this research, the researcher conducted some appropriate techniques: pre-experimental class and test.

Pre-experimental class

The researchers need a pre-experimental class to apply to listen by using the podcast. The class used by the researcher is one class only. The researchers intend to collect the data during the ongoing pre-experimental clas, including the investigation on how podcasts improve students listening skills. This pre-experimental class consists of 15 students. The researcher teaches the students for four meetings with 2x40 minutes allocated time for each meeting. Considering the pandemic's recent situation, the meeting runs through a zoom meeting application. Based on the allocated time, the researchers give a pre-test in the first meeting, provides treatment in the second meeting, and in the third meeting, and the researchers give them a post-test at the last meeting.

In this study, the podcast application that the researcher used is Podcast Go. Podcast Go is an app the researcher implemented and used as the primary tool of the treatment period. The students were provided with an Education topic. The rationale behind choosing the TED Talks episode was that they were appropriate for the

learners' proficiency levels. The contents focused upon education within a total of four episodes during the four meetings. Each of the episodes took fifteen minutes or less. Moreover, the length of the episodes was not too long. The audio recording was enjoyable, of average speed, and in good quality.
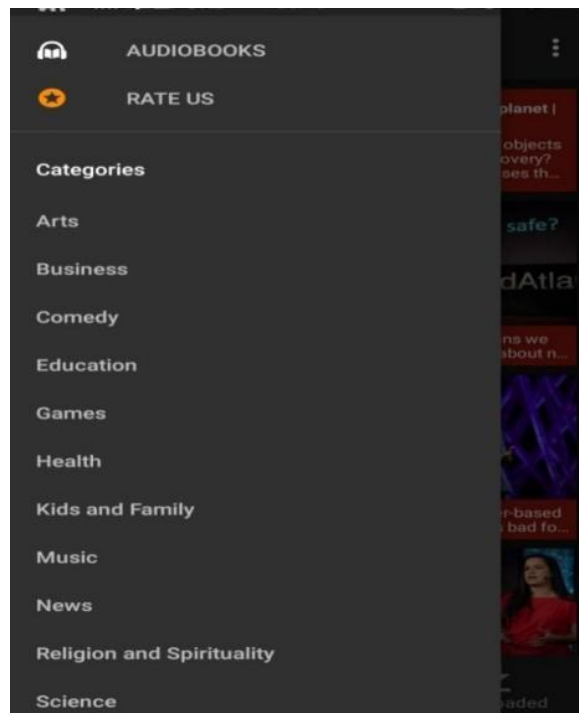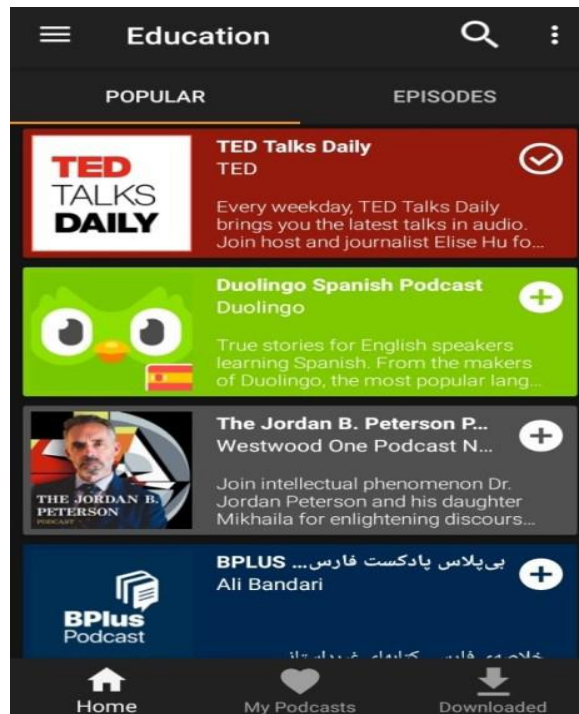

Figure 1 A number of audio types

Figure 2 A number of education types of audio

Test

The researcher used a test to measure students' abilities before and after the teaching-learning process, it is intended to find out whether the podcast improves students' listening skills. Arikunto (2013) argued that a test

consists of questions or exercises used to measure the skills, knowledge, intelligence, ability, or talent processed by individuals or groups. The test was shared trough Google form. The pre-test is given before the teaching-learning process, while the post-test is provided at the last meeting. The result of the pre-test and post-test were then collected and compared.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data was analyzed using quantitative analysis. The Podcast was administered to measure the improvement of their listening from the pre-test and post-test. In other words, the data analysis was conducted to construe data from the pre-test and post-test. Mean is used to find out the average of the whole sample (Arikunto, 2013). Therefore, in analyzing the test score, the researcher calculates the mean of students' scores using statistical formula (Sudjana, 2002).

$$X = \frac{\sum fixi}{\sum fi}$$

X   : Mean (average score)

Fi   : Frequency

Xi   : Middle score of interval class

FiXi   : The amount of multiplication between the frequencies and the middle scores of interval class

Before calculating the mean, the data should be distributed in the frequency distribution list. The following steps are used in creating the frequency distribution list:

1. The range of data

    The range of data is the lowest score subtracted by the highest score. The formula is: R = H − L

    R   : Range

    H   : The highest score

    L   : The lowest score

2. Number of interval class

    In determining the number of the interval, the following formula is used;

    I = 1 + 3.3 log n

    I   : The amount of interval class

    n   : The amount of sample

3. The length of sample

    In determining the length of interval class, the following formula is used:

    $$P = \frac{R}{I}$$

    P   : Length of interval

    R   : The range of score

    I   : Interval

4. Table Distribution of test

    After finding the range of data, number of interval classes, length of interval, the data is served in the distribution table as follow:

Table 1 Distribution Table (Sudjana, 2002)

Interval Class	F	X	Fx

F   : Frequency

X   : Middle score of interval class

FX   : The amount of multiplication of frequency and deviation range

The purpose of the mean calculation is to know the average score of students and compare the average score of pre-test and post-test.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

After carrying out the pre-test, the researcher analyzed the data by using a statistical calculation. The analysis was used to find out whether there was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results after the treatment was given. The result of both pre-test and post-test are below:

Table 2 the Students' Scores of Listening Pre-test and Post-test

No	Initials' Name	Pre-Test	Post-Test
1	AR	30	70
2	ASJ	30	60
3	DL	20	50
4	FAN	30	50
5	FWR	30	60
6	FZ	40	70
7	KAN	30	60
8	LS	50	60
9	NZ	30	60
10	PAR	30	70
11	SN	40	60
12	SP	20	70
13	SS	40	70
14	UZA	60	80
15	WY	50	60
Total	15	530	950

The next step was to arrange the score from the lowest up to the highest score.

Pre-test

20	20	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	40

40	40	50	50	60

Post-test

50	50	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	70

70	70	70	70	80

1. *Pretest*

Based on the pretest, the pretest's highest score was 60, and the lowest score was 40. To determine the range score, the formula was:

R=H-L

R= 60-20

R= 40

The next step was to identify the amount of interval class by using the formula below.

K= 1+ (3.3) log n

K= 1+ (3.3) log 15

K= 1+ (3.3) 1.18

K= 1+3.894

K= 4.894 (chosen 5)

After finding the amount of the interval class, the length of the interval class was found out by using:

P=R/K

P= 40/4.894

P= 8.17

The last step was to substitute the scores into the frequency distribution table as follow:

Table 3 the Frequency Distribution Table of Student's Pre-test Score

No	Interval Class	Fi	Xi	Fixi
1	20-27	2	23.5	47
2	28-35	7	31.5	220.5
3	36-43	3	39.5	118.5
4	44-51	2	47.5	95
5	52-59	0	55.5	0
6	60-67	1	63.5	63.5
		Σfi=15	**Σxi = 261**	**Σfixi = 544.5**

Fi   = Frequency

Xi   = Middle Score of Interval Class

fixi   = The Amount of The Multiplication between Frequency and Middle Interval

The mean score of pretests was found out by using the formula

$X= \frac{\sum fixi}{\sum fi}$

$X= \frac{544.5}{15}$

X= 36.3

The mean of pretest was 36.3

2. *Post-test*

After calculating the students' pre-test scores, the researchers continued to analyze the students' post-test scores. To analyze the post-test score, the researchers used the same formula as in the pre-test. From the arranged data before, it shows that the highest score of the post-test was 80, and the lowest score was 50. So the range was:

R=H-L

R= 80-50

R= 30

The next step was to identify the amount of interval class by using the formula below.

K= 1+ (3.3) log n

K= 1+ (3.3) log 15

K= 1+ (3.3) 1.18

K= 1+3.894

K= 4.894 (chosen 5)

After finding the amount of the interval class, the length of the interval class was found out by using:

P=R/K

P= 30/4.894

P= 6.12

The last step was to substitute the scores into the frequency distribution table as follows:

Table 4 the Frequency Distribution Table of Student's Post-test Score

No	Interval Class	Fi	Xi	Fixi
1	50-55	2	52.5	105
2	56-61	7	58.5	409.5
3	62-67	0	64.5	0
4	68-73	5	70.5	352.5
5	74-79	0	76.5	0
6	80-85	1	82.5	82.5
		Σfi=15	**Σxi = 405**	**Σfixi = 949.5**

Fi   = Frequency

Xi   = Middle Score of Interval Class

fixi   = The Amount of The Multiplication between Frequency and Middle Interval

The mean score of the pretest was found out by using the formula

$X = \frac{\sum fixi}{\sum fi}$

$X = \frac{949.5}{15}$

X= 63.3

The mean of post-test was 63.3

This study examined the use of podcasts to improve students' listening skills. The researcher successfully collected the data using experimental teaching and test as instruments. The students faced difficulty in comprehending the information from the audio at the first meeting by receiving the pre-test score of 36.3. Then, the researcher gave the treatment for several meetings to the students by listening to podcasts to solve students' difficulties in listening. In line with Smith (2002), as cited in Naning and Hayati (2011), there are eight problems in listening such as (1) problem in hearing sound and phonemes in English, (2) problem in stress and intonation, (3) trying to understand everything, (4) inability to predict what is going to be said, (5) colloquial language and fast speech, (6) the pace of listening that can cause fatigue, (7) different accent, (8) receptive system that helps them to grasp contextual and environmental clues.

Based on the data from students' pre-test and post-test, it showed that the students' score from the mean of the pre-test was 36.3, and the mean of the post-test was 63.3. Therefore, it could be inferred that before

treatment, the students' score was lower than after treatment. The score of the students after the treatment was improved more than before the treatment. Hence, the post-test score in this research showed the improvement of the student after treatment. It was in line with the statement stated by Stanley (2013) that claims that podcast audio can be the appropriate media in teaching listening and improving listening skills. It could be concluded that the podcast to improve in learning English listening improved students' listening skills.

4. CONCLUSION

In accordance with the research finding and data analysis in the previous sections, several conclusions can be made. Firstly, there was an improvement of students' listening skills that was evidenced by comparing between mean's score of pre-test and post-test which were from 36.3 to 63.3. The increase of both mean scores was gained after the researchers gave the treatment for several meetings to the students. It can be inferred that all participants have good experience in learning listening by using podcast, podcast provides proper materials to practice listening. All participants recommend lecturers to use podcast in learning process whether it is face-to-face learning classroom or online class. Thus, they can practice consistently to improve their listening skill.

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