

The Use of Podcast to Improve Students' Speaking Achievement at Madrasah Aliyah Aulia Cendekia Palembang

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Abstract

By integrating podcasts into language instruction, educators can create a more engaging, authentic, and accessible environment for practicing speaking skills. The potential of podcasts to improve speaking proficiency lies in their ability to provide consistent auditory input, expand vocabulary, and model accurate pronunciation. This research, therefore, seeks to explore the impact of podcast use on students' speaking achievement at Madrasah Aulia Cendekia. The study aims to provide insights into how podcasts might bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, ultimately fostering a learning experience that better equips students for real-life communication. This study investigated the effectiveness of using podcast media to improve students' speaking achievement at Madrasah Aliyah Aulia Cendekia Palembang. The study utilized a pre-experimental design with a one-group pretest-posttest approach involving 35 students from grade X as participants. For 10 sessions, the students were exposed to podcast-based learning, where they listened to and practiced speaking through various podcast episodes designed to improve their self-introductions, daily routines, hobbies, and personal experiences in English. Data was collected through pre-test and post-test assessments to measure the improvement of students' speaking ability. The results showed a significant improvement in students' speaking achievement, with post-test scores significantly higher than pre-test scores. The findings suggest that podcasts can be an effective tool in improving students' speaking ability by providing engaging and authentic language practice opportunities. The study recommends integrating podcasts into the English curriculum to encourage better speaking ability among students.

Keywords: *English language learning, podcast, pre-experimental design, speaking achievement*

Abstrak

Dengan mengintegrasikan podcast ke dalam pembelajaran bahasa, pendidik dapat menciptakan lingkungan yang lebih menarik, autentik, dan mudah diakses untuk

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melatih keterampilan berbicara. Potensi podcast dalam meningkatkan kemahiran berbicara terletak pada kemampuannya untuk memberikan input auditori yang konsisten, memperluas kosakata, dan menjadi model pelafalan yang akurat. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi dampak penggunaan podcast terhadap pencapaian berbicara siswa di Madrasah Aliyah Aulia Cendekia. Studi ini bertujuan untuk memberikan wawasan tentang bagaimana podcast dapat menjembatani kesenjangan antara pengetahuan teoretis dan penerapan praktis, sehingga menciptakan pengalaman belajar yang lebih membekali siswa dalam komunikasi kehidupan nyata. Penelitian ini menyelidiki efektivitas penggunaan media podcast untuk meningkatkan pencapaian berbicara siswa di Madrasah Aliyah Aulia Cendekia Palembang. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain pra-eksperimen dengan pendekatan satu kelompok pretest-posttest yang melibatkan 35 siswa kelas X sebagai partisipan. Selama 10 sesi, siswa diberikan pembelajaran berbasis podcast, di mana mereka mendengarkan dan melatih berbicara melalui berbagai episode podcast yang dirancang untuk meningkatkan kemampuan memperkenalkan diri, rutinitas harian, hobi, dan pengalaman pribadi dalam bahasa Inggris. Data dikumpulkan melalui tes awal (pre-test) dan tes akhir (post-test) untuk mengukur peningkatan kemampuan berbicara siswa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya peningkatan yang signifikan dalam pencapaian berbicara siswa, dengan skor post-test yang jauh lebih tinggi dibandingkan skor pre-test. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa podcast dapat menjadi alat yang efektif dalam meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara siswa dengan menyediakan kesempatan latihan bahasa yang menarik dan autentik. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan integrasi podcast ke dalam kurikulum bahasa Inggris untuk mendorong peningkatan kemampuan berbicara siswa.

Kata kunci: desain pra-eksperime, podcast, pencapaian berbicara, pembelajaran bahasa Inggris.

Introduction

English is recognized globally as a vital medium for international communication. As one of the most widely spoken languages, mastering English specially speaking has become an essential skill for students in non-native English-speaking countries such as Indonesia. Among the four essential language skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing speaking is considered the most complex and often the most feared by students due to the real-time processing it requires. It involves not only correct pronunciation and fluency but also the ability to construct meaningful responses spontaneously.

In many EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classrooms, speaking activities receive insufficient attention. The teaching of English tends to focus on passive skills like reading and writing, especially in traditional classroom settings. Consequently, many students lack confidence and competence when it comes to expressing themselves verbally in English. This is particularly evident at Madrasah Aliyah Aulia Cendekia Palembang, where preliminary observations revealed that students struggled to communicate fluently, use appropriate vocabulary, and pronounce words correctly during English speaking tasks.

Technological advancement in education has offered promising tools to overcome these challenges. Among them is podcast media, a digital audio platform that offers on-demand, topic-specific content in English. Podcasts offer learners the opportunity to listen to native or fluent speakers, model authentic speech patterns, and build speaking proficiency through mimicry and repetition. Unlike traditional listening materials, podcasts are flexible, portable, and engaging, making them especially suitable for the current generation of students who are already familiar with digital platforms.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the adoption of online and asynchronous tools like podcasts became more prevalent. Even after the return to face-to-face learning, the integration of digital media remains a valuable approach. Podcasts enable students to learn at their own pace, rewind and replay difficult parts, and internalize useful vocabulary and expressions. According to Sidabutar (2021), students involved in podcast-based learning tend to be more independent, motivated, and engaged in developing their language skills.

The significance of speaking ability in both academic and real-life contexts cannot be overstated. Effective speaking enables students to present ideas clearly, participate in discussions, and engage confidently in various social and academic interactions. Therefore, innovative approaches that help foster speaking development are essential.

In Indonesia, especially at the senior high school level, speaking remains a challenging skill to master. Students often struggle with pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary selection, and confidence. These difficulties are exacerbated by traditional teaching methods that emphasize reading and writing over oral practice, leaving limited opportunities for students to actively use English in spoken form.

With the advancement of technology, especially during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, educational methods have evolved. One of the emerging tools in language learning is podcast media. Podcasts offer an innovative way to engage students through auditory learning. They allow learners to access authentic English content, listen to native speakers, and model real-life conversations. Unlike textbooks or scripted audio materials, podcasts provide dynamic, unscripted dialogues that help learners absorb natural speech patterns and improve their speaking competence.

In light of these benefits, this study explores the use of podcast media as a tool to enhance students' speaking English achievement. The research is conducted at Madrasah Aliyah Aulia Cendekia Palembang, where prior observations indicated that students lacked confidence and exposure to speaking English. The study aims to examine whether

implementing podcast-based instruction can lead to measurable improvements in students' speaking skills.

Literature Review

2.1 The Use of Podcasts in Education

Podcasts are digital audio recordings distributed over the internet, allowing learners to listen at their convenience. In education, podcasts are increasingly recognized for their potential to provide engaging, flexible, and authentic learning experiences (Fernandez et al., 2020). They support auditory learning, encourage repeated exposure to content, and promote independent study habits.

In the context of language learning, podcasts provide access to real-life dialogues, native pronunciation, and diverse vocabulary. According to Yoestara and Putri (2019), podcasts improve students' confidence in speaking, support self-paced learning, and foster motivation. Educational podcasts can be used in and out of the classroom to reinforce vocabulary, grammar, and speaking fluency.

2.2 Podcast in Language Learning

In English language teaching, the podcast serves not only as listening material but also as a speaking model. Students can imitate expressions, intonation, and pronunciation from authentic speech. Tarmawan (2021) emphasizes that podcasts allow students to listen to native speakers and practice producing similar speech in a low-pressure setting.

Moreover, podcasts facilitate flexible learning. Students can listen while commuting, at home, or during school breaks, making it a suitable medium for busy learners (Brown & Green, 2020). This accessibility enhances language exposure and reduces language anxiety.

2.3 Speaking Skills in English

Speaking is a productive skill that involves constructing meaning through verbal communication. It requires fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and the ability to organize ideas coherently. According to Richards & Renandya (2020), speaking is not only about uttering words but also about responding appropriately in social and academic contexts.

In the classroom, speaking activities such as dialogues, presentations, and discussions play an essential role in enhancing students' language abilities. However, many EFL classrooms neglect sufficient speaking practice, which leads to low proficiency in oral communication (Cheetham et al., 2022).

2.4 Previous Studies

Several studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of podcasts in improving speaking skills. Anderson & Haim (2020) found that regular exposure to podcasts improved fluency and pronunciation. Martin & Nguyen (2022) showed that students engaged in podcast-based learning were more confident and articulate in English conversations. These findings align with the current study's aim to evaluate podcast integration in a real classroom setting.

Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study applied a quantitative method with a pre-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design. The objective was to measure students' speaking performance before and after the treatment using podcast media.

3.2 Participants

The research was conducted at Madrasah Aliyah Aulia Cendekia Palembang. The sample consisted of 35 students from class X, selected through cluster random sampling.

3.3 Instruments

Data were collected using oral speaking tests, evaluated on five components: fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary, and coherence. Pre- and post-tests were recorded and assessed by two raters using a standardized rubric.

3.4 Procedure

The research was conducted over ten sessions. In each session, students listened to podcast episodes related to specific speaking topics (e.g., self-introduction, hobbies, goals) and completed tasks such as recording responses, performing dialogues, and engaging in peer discussions.

- **Session 1:** Pre-test
- **Sessions 2–10:** Podcast-based instruction and speaking practice
- **Session 11:** Post-test
- **Session 12:** Reflection and evaluation

3.5 Data Analysis

The speaking test scores from pre- and post-tests were analyzed using **paired sample t-tests** to determine statistical significance. Normality tests and effect size calculations (Cohen's d) were also conducted to validate the findings.

Results And Discussion

Results

The main objective of this study was to determine the effectiveness of podcast media in improving students' speaking achievement. The data were collected through pre-test and post-test evaluations. The results were analyzed using paired sample t-tests with support from SPSS 21.

- **Pre-test average score:** 13.17
- **Post-test average score:** 14.29

The increase in the mean score indicates that students' speaking skills improved after the podcast-based intervention. The paired sample t-test produced a significance value (p-value) of 0.016, which is less than 0.05. This indicates a statistically significant improvement in students' speaking achievement.

Furthermore, the effect size measured using Cohen's d was approximately 0.42, indicating a moderate effect. This demonstrates that podcast media had a meaningful impact on students' learning outcomes, especially in speaking skills.

4.2 Discussion

The improvement in students' speaking scores can be attributed to the consistent exposure to authentic English via podcasts. During the ten sessions, students engaged in structured listening and speaking tasks that allowed them to:

- Imitate pronunciation and intonation from native speakers
- Build vocabulary relevant to everyday conversations
- Improve fluency through repetitive practice
- Enhance confidence by recording their speech

These findings are consistent with Anderson & Haim (2020), who reported that podcasts support learners in acquiring pronunciation and fluency through exposure to real-life speech

patterns. Similarly, Martin & Nguyen (2022) emphasized the role of podcasts in reducing speaking anxiety and increasing learners' willingness to communicate.

Moreover, podcasts created an inclusive and flexible learning environment, aligning with Brown & Green's (2020) claim that audio media caters to diverse learning styles and allows learners to access content repeatedly.

The findings also suggest that podcast-based instruction promotes active learning, in contrast to traditional lecture-based approaches. This shift enabled students to participate more in speaking activities, which enhanced their performance.

Conclusion And Suggestions

5.1 Conclusion

This study concludes that podcast media has a positive and statistically significant impact on the speaking achievement of students at Madrasah Aliyah Aulia Cendekia Palembang. The use of podcasts in classroom instruction allowed students to engage with authentic English material, providing them with valuable exposure to native-like pronunciation, natural expressions, and real-life language use. Through consistent practice and repeated listening, students showed marked improvements in several key components of speaking: fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary usage, and coherence.

The findings from the pre-test and post-test scores, supported by the statistical analysis, demonstrate that podcasts can serve as an effective pedagogical tool. Students became more confident, better able to organize their speech, and more willing to participate in English conversations. This transformation reflects the deeper impact of technology-integrated learning, where learners are not only passive recipients of knowledge but also active participants in constructing their language competence.

Moreover, the flexibility and accessibility of podcast media enabled students to learn beyond the classroom. They could listen at their own pace, in a setting of their choice, and as often as needed, which aligns with the principles of autonomous learning. This is particularly beneficial in Indonesia, where exposure to English outside school is often limited. Podcasts effectively bridge that gap by providing on-demand language input.

From a broader pedagogical perspective, this research affirms the importance of integrating technology into English language teaching, especially in the domain of speaking skills, which are traditionally under-emphasized. The results also support the idea that speaking

can be improved not just through direct conversation, but also through indirect input such as listening to fluent speakers, imitating them, and practicing language use in context.

In addition, the study highlights the potential of low-cost and widely available media like podcasts to democratize access to quality English learning materials. Unlike some multimedia tools that require expensive infrastructure, podcasts can be played on simple smartphones and downloaded without ongoing internet access, making them a practical solution for schools with limited resources.

In conclusion, the integration of podcast media into English instruction presents a valuable opportunity for educators to enrich speaking instruction. It allows for more dynamic, student-centered learning and provides meaningful exposure to authentic language. As education continues to evolve in the digital age, adopting such tools will be essential in meeting the linguistic and technological needs of 21st-century learners.

5.2 Suggestions

Based on the findings, the following suggestions are offered:

- **For Teachers:** Incorporate podcast-based activities into speaking lessons to promote active participation, authentic practice, and improved fluency.
- **For Students:** Regularly engage with English-language podcasts outside the classroom to reinforce pronunciation, vocabulary, and listening skills.
- **For Schools:** Provide access to podcast resources and training for teachers to maximize the benefits of audio media in English instruction.
- **For Future Researchers:** Explore the long-term impact of podcast integration on different language skills (e.g., listening, writing) or in comparison with other media types.

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