THE USE OF PODCASTS IN TEACHING LISTENING TO ESL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Listening is one of the four language skills that must be mastered by ESL students. Listening skill plays important role in communication to respond to what people speak. The present research was mainly based on the preliminary observation of 30 subjects in Semester 4A of the English Language Education Study Program which showed that most of the subjects' listening skill was still low. Besides, the present research was intended to know whether or not the listening skill of the fourth-semester students in 4A class of the English Language Education Study Program can be improved through the use of podcasts. To achieve the objective, the researcher conducted classroom action research that was done in two cycles. Furthermore, the required data were obtained by administering the research instruments: tests and a questionnaire. The collected data were then analyzed by comparing the pre-test and post-tests, which showed significant improvements in the subjects' mean scores fromthe pre-test to post-tests. Furthermore, the questionnaire results showed the subjects' positive responses to the use of podcasts in teaching Listening. Based on the resultsof the research instruments, it could be concluded that the listening skill of the students in 4A Class of the English Language Education Study Program can be improved through the use of a Podcast.
Keywords: listening, listening skill, podcast.

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, English begins to be taught in elementary school. In learning English, we should learn four fundamental skills such as speaking, writing, listening, and reading (Widiastuti et al., 2021). According to Helgesen & Brown (1995), there are many English learners regard listening to be one of the most challenging English skill.

Listening is not an easy language skill to be learnt in English.It is an essential part because a good listening skill can make it easier for us to comprehend what others are saying. Having the ability to listen comprehensively is very important in communicating with others. Students are urged to have a good communication skill (Mantra & Maba, 2018). Therefore, students need to continually develop their listening skill.

In a broad sense, in order to understand what people are saying, we must have a large vocabulary (Mantra, & Kumara, 2018). If we do not have a

large enough vocabulary in our minds, we will not be able to verbally explain our thoughts or ideas (Handayani & Widiastuti, 2019). Consequently, if we listen to a conversation, we will not understand the meaning of the words that are said.

Listening involves more thanjust keeping quiet while others speak. Making an effort to hear something, paying attention, or taking it seriously are all definitions of listening (Downs, 2008). It is a task to ascertain the speaker's meaning from their verbal or nonverbal cues.

An active and unconscious activity called listening involves receiving speech sounds and trying to make sense of what is being said. To respond appropriately to oral communication (Astawa et al., 2018), the listener makes an effort to comprehend and absorb the messages of the oral text.

Learning a foreign language requires a lot of listening. The process of receiving, deriving meaning from, and responding to spoken and/or nonverbal communications is what is called as listening .

Receiving entails intentionally attending to the speaker's complete message, including both verbal and nonverbal cues is a part of understanding the meaning being communicated (Widiastuti et al., 2020). Assigning meaning to a speaker's statements and mentally reiterating the understanding of it constitutes the process of "constructing meaning." The act of responding, which is when the listener

informs the speaker of their messages, brings the engagement between them to a close.

The ability of listening may appear to be a passive activity, but it is not. When the speaker speaks, there is a receiving process as well as listening (Mantra et al., 2018). When analyzing the information from the speaker, they at least take into account five factors. The listener participates by hearing, comprehending, responding, and recalling.

Learning requires listening skills since they allow one to gain knowledge and information necessary for successful interaction with others (Wallace et al., 2004). Listening is also a unique complex process that makes listeners understand the spoken language. In addition, listening skill is a key to receiving messages effectively.

Although listening has a fundamental function, most people are ineffective listeners. Poor listening skills might cause people to argue and have difficulties that are unwarranted. The meaning that the speaker wishes to convey is frequently not what the listeners interpret. In some circumstances, listening well is really beneficial and important.

Nowadays, there are many ways to improve listening skill as technology has been rapidly growing. One of the ways that can be used to learn listening is by using Podcast. It is considered to be one of effectiveway of teaching listening. Teachers are suggested to continually enhance their ability to employ appropriate teaching strategies to improve students' competence (Mantra et al.,2022).

Podcasts are digital recordings of radio broadcasts or comparable programs (Constantine, 2007).

Podcasts are made available online as mp3 files. A wealth of resources for teaching listening skills have become available to language teachers with the rise of podcasts on the internet. Podcasts can range in length from two to three minutes to an hour.

Podcasting is an asynchronous type of CMC (Computer Mediated Communication) that includes of audio and video content that is periodically updated on the Internet. The term "podcasting" is derived from the terms "iPod" and "broadcasting" (Stanley, 2006).

In her study, Ahmed (2016) discovered that using podcasts in language education can help students understand the content and improve their listening comprehension skill.

Based on the results of the observation done in Semester 4 specifically in listening class English Language Education Study Program FKIP Unmas Denpasar, the students had difficulties in comprehending the listening material such as the recording that had been used in that class. They found it hard to understand the meaning of what the speaker intended to say. Furthermore, the students found it too hard to catch the information because it was lack of control over the speed at which speakers speak. Therefore, the students had less interest in listening because of those difficulties.

Media was one of the many factors that could influence the improvement of students' listening skills. It is important to use the appropriate teaching media. It canhave an impact on the lesson's outcome, including the students' progress. As a result, the lecturer must consider the suitable teaching media.

Based on the background of the study, the researcher was interested to use Podcasts as the teaching media for teaching listening to students in the 4A Class of the English Language Education Study Program. The researcher believed that Podcasts were appropriate media for improving students' listening skills. To sum up, the researcher was eager to conduct this study entitled "The Use of Podcasts in Teaching Listening to ESLStudents."

RESEARCH METHOD

This study was conducted to the fourth semester students, 4A Class of English Language Education Study Program FKIP Unmas Denpasar with 30 subjects. Preliminary observations and data from pre-test results provided before beginning the research procedure or providing treatment suggested that the respondents' listening abilities need substantial attention and treatment.

The classroom action research (CAR) design was employed in this study. This study was conducted in some cycles, with each cycle consisting of two sessions. Each session includes four interconnected activities: planning, action, observation, and reflection (Burns, 2019)

In planning, the researcher planned the instructional material, lesson plan, pre-test and post-tests. In action, the researcher used the Podcasts media to teach listening skills. During the observation stage, the researcher saw how the individuals improved their listening skills after the use of Podcasts. The final stage is reflection. In reflection, the researcher gathered data to determine whether or

not Podcast media might enhance the students' listening skills.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION
Pre-Test

Before using Podcast in teaching listening as the media, a pre-test was conducted to determine the individuals' listening abilities. The individuals were told to complete a listening test in the form of a multiple-choice test. The average value was discovered from the pre-test results to be 55.50. The minimum passing grade for this study has been set at 75. As a consequence of the pre-test result, which was below the passing standard, an action was required to increase the subjects' listening skills.

Cycle I

Cycle I was done in four phases that must be completed continuously: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The researcher used Podcasts as the instructional media in this cycle. The instructional materials are from the BBC's 6 Minute English program entitled "Junk Food and Sport" and "Laughter is Medicine."

Post-test

The post-test I was given to all subjects, a total of 30 persons. They completed Post-test 1 in the form of a multiple-choice test. The averagescore from the post-test 1 was 60.56. As it did not reach the passing grade, the cycle was continued.

Cycle II

In the second cycle, the researcher downloaded 6 Minute English Podcasts from the BBC's website. "Life in the Modern Office" and "Optimism vs. Pessimism" are the titles. It follows the same stages as cycle I.

Post-test II

Post-test II was also given to each of the 30 individuals. They took a multiple-choice listening test. The average post-test II score was 71.55. This demonstrated an increase in subject accomplishment as compared to the average post-test I score of 60.56. However, this number still did not reach the passing grade requirement of 75. As a result, the researcher moved on to cycle III.

Cycle III

The third cycle again required four stages to acquire data, although several changes were made based on the findings received in cycle II. In cycle III, the researcher used the BBC Podcast 6 Minutes English, which included the headings "Women in the Workplace" and "The Benefit of Boredom."

Post-test III

The post-test III was completed by all 30 individuals. They completed the multiple-choice listening test. The average post-test III score was 78.70. This was an improvement over the average post-test II score of 71.55.As this figure met the minimal standard passing grade of 75, the study was ended because all subjects achieved the minimum requirementof passing grade.

The results of the calculation of the average value of the pre cycle, cycle I, cycle II and cycle III, were: 55.50; 60.56; 71.55; and 78.70. The ability to listen clearly improved significantly. If the achievement indicator of 100% of subjects achieving the passing grade of 75 was met, the classroom action research could be ended.

CONCLUSION

The results of data analysis could be summarized as follows after applying Podcast Media in teaching listening to the fourth semester students of 4A Class English Language Education Study Program FKIP Unmas Denpasar. The increasing average score from precycle, post-test 1, post-test 2, and post-test 3 demonstrated that the individuals' listening abilities had greatly improved. The achievement of listening skill, which was initially classified as 'less' during pre-cycle, was greatly improved to the 'good' category in cycle III. This improvement shown that using Podcast as a learning media might improve the listening skills of the fourth semester students in 4A Class of English Language Education Study Program FKIP Unmas Denpasar.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the result of the research, there are some suggestions that might be important in improving speaking skill as follows.

1. The lecturers who teach listening activities should use varied media such as Podcasts to avoid the boredom of the students and toget much easier way to download the listening material from some sources on the internet.

2. The students are suggested to be more serious in learning listening in the class and following the instruction of the media used by the lecturer.

3. For other researchers, it is expected that this research could be a reference for the next similar research especially related to listening and Podcasts.

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