



Volume 08  
No. 2, 2022  
page 119-127



**Article History:**

Submitted:

25-11-2021

Accepted:

03-02-2022

Published:

03-02-2022

## USING PODCAST AS A STRATEGY TO IMPROVE EFL STUDENTS' LISTENING SKILL

Rizkina Damayanti<sup>1</sup>, Muhamad Sofian Hadi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>12</sup>Universitas Muhammadiyah Jakarta

[rizkinadamayanti14@gmail.com](mailto:rizkinadamayanti14@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup>

[M\\_Sofianhadi@yahoo.com](mailto:M_Sofianhadi@yahoo.com)<sup>2</sup>

URL: <https://doi.org/10.32682/jeell.v8i2.2150>

DOI: 10.32682/jeell.v8i2.2150

### Abstract

A podcast is an audio file that is possible to download from the internet and can be defined as online audio blogging. The purpose of this study was to find information about the use of podcasts as a strategy to improve EFL students' listening skill. The research method uses a qualitative approach by conducting classroom action research, which was carried out in 2 cycles. Each cycle consists of 4 steps those are planning, action, observation, and reflection. As for the data sources in this study were obtained by test, observation, and interviews. The results of using podcasts as a strategy to improve EFL students' listening skill are shown effectiveness and can help improve their listening skills.

**Keyword:** *Listening skill, podcast, EFL students*

### Abstrak

Podcast adalah file audio yang dapat diunduh dari internet dan dapat didefinisikan sebagai blog audio online. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menemukan informasi tentang penggunaan podcast sebagai strategi untuk meningkatkan keterampilan mendengarkan peserta didik EFL. Metode penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan melakukan penelitian tindakan kelas, yang dilaksanakan dalam 2 siklus. Setiap siklus terdiri dari 4 langkah yaitu perencanaan, tindakan, observasi, dan refleksi. Adapun sumber data dalam penelitian ini

diperoleh dengan tes, observasi, dan wawancara. Hasil penggunaan podcast sebagai strategi untuk meningkatkan keterampilan mendengarkan peserta didik EFL menunjukkan efektivitas dan dapat membantu meningkatkan keterampilan mendengarkan mereka.

**Kata kunci:** Kemampuan mendengarkan, podcast, peserta didik EFL

## Introduction

Nowadays, technology is something that is attached to society. In the 21st century, there was a fast development of technology and most of the students were able to access technological devices. Technology is widely used in human daily life, even in the field of education. There are many researches showed the positive influence of technology on the learning fields. One of them is the study that conducted by Rahimi & Katal (2012) that stated the availability of the technological tools and applications gave a positive influence on the educational purpose. Therefore, by using technology it can increase the probability of success in language learning.

According to Darwis (2016), the use of technology in language learning may vary, for instance, as a medium for teaching and learning the language. Nowadays, many students spend most of their time browsing on the Internet and it is as the impact of the use of technology in education. One of the positive effects is students can find it interesting and fun ways to be able to support their learning process, for example, by connecting to the Internet, they can find a certain learning application through their own mobile phone that can help them in English language learning. In addition, they can obtain learning materials from the Internet and the utilization of technology through the Internet has attracted students' interest in learning.

There are many kinds of applications, web, and other platforms that teacher and students can used as a media on learning process nowadays. In this case, Listening also could be learned by online. The students and the teacher can access any kinds of audio are related to the material on the internet (Fadumiye & Olufunke, 2020).

Listening played an important role in learning English and communication process. Basically, Listening become one of the skills that must be understood and possessed by every student. One way to improve listening skill is through podcast. Podcast is an audio file that is possible to download from the internet, according to Constantine (2007), Podcast was first known in 2004,

and it is defined as an internet audio blogging or internet audio publishing. Nowadays, podcast really popular and there are many kind of podcast that we can find easily on internet such as public podcast, personal podcast, and professional podcast (education or corporate). Podcasts can also be classified by the format content; basic podcast, enhanced podcast and video podcast.

Using podcast is another fun way to extend English language learning besides watching movies or listening to music that uses English as a native language. Yaman (2016) explained that Podcast has provided audio video resources in the form of digital natives that can help students in their language studies so that students have their own option to extend their studies out of the classroom and improve their language skills on their own. In other words, the emerging of the Podcast can be regarded as learning aids for students that can help them to learn autonomously. Furthermore, Podcast as technology becomes one interesting and innovative media to help English learners improve their skills. As stated by Ramli (2018), that there are lots of Podcasts web that students are flexible to adopt and adapt according to their learning needs. They can find their favorite and interesting topic, also relevant and useful information for their learning in every situation.

As it is known that many students still face some problems in learning English as foreign language. To master English skills in a non-English speaking country such as Indonesia, is indeed not easy because we are not exposed to English itself in everyday life. As stated by Bustari, Samad, and Achmad (2017) that in most of the non-native countries, for example, China, Vietnam, and Indonesia, most students may find speaking English at a good level of function is difficult. The difficulties faced by students are not only speaking skills, but also other skills such as *listening, reading and writing*.

Students face several problems in learning a foreign language, especially English. These problems were found in the learning process, while these factors were caused by internal factors and external factors. According to Chairunnisa, Apriliaswati and Rosnija (2017), the internal factors that caused problems for students in the difficulties to learn English are anxiety, demotivation, and low self-esteem. Meanwhile, the external factors are lack of family support and unsupportive school environment. In addition, the use of English for interacting or communication and getting exposure to the English language in society are very rare. The learners only get exposure to the English language in the classroom. After they leave the language classroom, their mother tongue will be dominant in interacting with each other.

As for solving these problems, both teachers and students must find strategies how to learn English in a fun and interesting way that can help improve EFL students' listening skills. Then by using Podcast as a strategy, it can help teachers or students to achieve the goals of the learning process because Podcast has opened up a range of opportunities for language education, especially in improving English as Foreign Language students' listening ability (Alm, 2013). In addition, Deal (2007) defines podcast developments thereby establishing the emergence of a new era in the learning process. Teachers can provide assignments or teaching outside the classroom through this Podcast, while for students, Podcasts are very helpful in giving a deeper understanding of teaching English, the channels provided in the Podcast are vary, the language provided is also diverse. So the use of podcast is revolutionizing the English learning process. It emergencially appears to offer rich sources of materials to use in an EFL context and to assist foreign language instruction in general.

Several studies about podcasts have shown that using podcasts as a strategy is the right choice, because with this students' listening skills can indeed improve. According to Yoestara (2019), the study conducted shows how podcasts influence the listening and speaking performance of EFL students. The results show that podcasts can convey many advantages in teaching listening and speaking to EFL students. Another study from Indahsari (2020) which reviewed 20 articles about podcasts published in 2010-2020 showed that podcasts can improve language skills, especially listening skills. In addition, another study from Sansinadi, Wardhany, & Winarko (2020) showed that students have positive attitudes towards Podcasts as a tool or medium to expand their way of learning English.

This study was conducted with the purpose of describing the use of podcasts as a strategy to improve EFL students' listening skills. This study also expected to help teachers in listening classes and Podcasts are expected to make the learning process fun, comfortable and interesting for students. As for the students are expected to be more comfortable, enjoy and feel happy during listening class.

## Research Methods

This study was conducted to find information about the use of podcasts as a strategy to improve EFL students' listening skill. The subject of this study were 8<sup>th</sup> grade students of SMPN Satu Atap Sukanegara 3 in English subjects. The method that uses in this research is a qualitative approach. The descriptive qualitative approach is used because the data retrieval process is done in the

form of words and language in giving an interpretation to the result, as stated by Swetnam (2009) that this research is concerns with descriptions, qualities and observations. The type of this research is classroom action research, which was carried out in 2 cycles. Each cycle consists of 4 steps they are planning, action, observation, and reflection. As for the data sources in this study were obtained by test, observation, and interviewing an English teacher and some of students at SMPN Satu Atap Sukanegara 3. The data for this study were analyzed based on the experience when using podcasts as a learning strategy to improve listening skills.

## Results and Discussion

Based on information obtained from SMPN Satu Atap Sukanegara 3, online-based learning is a new learning method carried out by students. This is because technology has developed, thus requiring everyone to adapt and adjust to current circumstances. In education, this situation also makes teachers have to be able to adapt and be able to use various ways in the learning process with new strategies. Therefore, to make learning more interesting and fun, English teachers at SMPN Satu Atap Sukanegara 3 use podcasts as a learning strategy, because podcasts are considered as appropriate teaching materials and resources to improve students' listening skills.

Some of the learning processes using podcasts are carried out in the following stages:

1. The teacher instructs the students to download the "LearnEnglish Podcast – Free English Listening" application from the British Council.
2. The teacher provides an explanation of how to use the application. The teacher determines the series to be studied, it's about the Special Day episode of World Kindness Day.
3. Students are asked to pay attention and listen to the series.
4. The teacher gives a test to students, and then students are also asked to respond to the contents of the series according to their respective understandings.

Based on the results obtained from each cycle in this study are as follows:

### 1. Cycle I

The findings obtained during the learning process in cycle I are as follows:

- a. Student responses to teaching and learning activities went well even though there were still some problems and difficulties.
- b. Students have problems on how to use the application that will be used to listen to podcasts.
- c. Some students still find it difficult to catch, understand and explain the material due to lack of vocabulary and feel that the speaker's pronunciation is too fast.

- d. There are many students whose learning outcomes do not meet the criteria, which are below the KKM.

## **2. Cycle II**

The findings obtained in cycle II are as follows:

- a. Conditions when learning runs smoothly and conducive, students have begun to understand the use of applications and test techniques.
- b. Students look more enthusiastic during the learning process.
- c. Students are getting familiar with English vocabulary and pronunciation and they can also understand the content of the material.
- d. Student learning outcomes have increased above the KKM.

### ***Implementation of Using Podcasts as a Strategy to Improve Listening Skills of EFL students***

Based on the results of research in cycle I, the implementation of using podcasts during the learning process is still not optimal. Because there are still obstacles faced by students during the learning process, such as regarding the use of technology, students' listening skills and student grades. This is because students are not accustomed to using technology during the learning process. To overcome this obstacle, the researcher and the teacher worked together to introduce podcasts as an application that can be used during learning, especially to improve students' listening skills. The teacher continues to encourage students by helping explain the use of the application and explain the content of the material. So that students will more understand and the learning process will be better in the next cycle.

Different from the previous cycle, in cycle II students were able to adjust to using the application, knowing new vocabulary, and understanding the content of the material. This can be seen from the activities of students who are no longer confused during the learning process using podcasts, students are already getting familiar with English vocabulary and pronunciation and they can also more understand the content of the material by explaining the results that have been obtained. In addition, student learning outcomes have also increased above the KKM.

The use of podcasts as a strategy in learning can increase student activity in English subjects for 8<sup>th</sup> grade students at SMPN Satu Atap Sukanegara 3. In the first cycle, the activity of students was 67.79%, an increase of 13.48% in the second cycle to 81.27%. The use of podcasts as a learning strategy is also considered effective because it can improve student learning outcomes. This is shown based on the results of the test analysis which is used as a measure to determine the improvement that occurs in the learning outcomes of 8<sup>th</sup> grade of SMPN Satu Atap Sukanegara 3. The test in the first cycle, the percentage of completeness for students was only 25%, increasing from 75% in the second cycle to 100% for the percentage of students' completeness.

As for the results interview, the response of the English teacher and some students regarding the use of podcasts as a strategy to improve students' listening skills are as follows:

According to Mrs. Yayah as an English teacher at SMPN Satu Atap Sukanegara 3 stated that:

*"As a professional teacher the use of appropriate media and learning strategies is a must. This podcast is one of the right strategies to be used as an effective, easy and fun online learning medium in the English learning process. This is also a great way to improve students' English skills which are basically not our mother tongue. By listening to podcasts students' listening and speaking skills are improving, they can also get new information and new vocabulary, besides that their pronunciation is also automatically improved and can distinguish some accents that are often used in English".*

From the results of the interview above, it can be concluded that using podcasts as a learning strategy to improve EFL Students' listening skills is an appropriate strategy, because it is considered effective, easy and fun.

The opinions from some of students regarding the use of podcasts as a strategy to improve listening skills are as follows:

Student 1 stated:

*"I think listening to podcasts is very fun, learning is not boring and podcasts can also help me become more familiar with English. So my listening ability can improve".*

Student 2 stated:

*"Because I often listen to podcasts, so when I learn to use podcasts I enjoy it even though sometimes I still have difficulty if there is a vocabulary I don't know or if the pronunciation is too fast, but this method can help improve my skills, especially listening skills".*

Student 3 stated:

*"I think podcasts are quite interesting, because I can get new vocabulary and can also distinguish some accents in English".*

Student 4 stated:

*"This strategy makes learning easier and more enjoyable which can help improve English language skills, especially listening skills, so that I am able to respond and understand when the speaker is speaking".*

Student 5 stated:

*"Using podcasts is effective because we indirectly learn many things such as listening, speaking, pronunciation and vocabulary. The material taught also becomes more fun and easy to understand".*

From the interview above, it can be found that all students understand the materials. Students feel that podcasts are effective and can be the right medium for learning English, especially to improve listening skills. The students said that they can learn many things through podcast media. However, based on interviews, there were still students who felt that there were difficulties.



Students also stated that podcasts are fun, and can help students practice their listening skills.

### **Discussion**

Based on the results of the cycle, there was an improvement in students' listening skill after using podcasts as a learning strategy. The difference between this research and the previous one is that listening learning is generally done using only audio containing conversations, currently listening learning can be done using a more fun and varied medium, that is a podcasts.

Meanwhile, from the results of observation and analysis, the success of this study was influenced by two factors, both from the teacher factor and the student factor. The teacher factor is the management of the teacher's class and the teacher's explanation. Classroom management is one of the important aspects in the teaching process. Teachers also guide students and explain clearly about the instructions. It makes students easier to understand the material. While the student factors are students' attention, participation and interest. Students' attention to teacher explanations has an influence on their understanding of using podcasts, how to improve listening skills, and improve vocabulary and pronunciation.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the finding and discussion, the conclusion is that the use of podcasts as a strategy to improve EFL Students' listening skill shows effectiveness and it is able to improve their listening skills. Learning using podcast also makes students interested in learning English. The students feel happy and comfortable when learn about listening skill. However, there are still students who find it difficult to understand the podcast because of unknown vocabulary or the intonation and pronunciation that is too fast. Podcasts are proven to be able to help students enjoy the material provided by the teacher during English learning. Podcasts also help students to practice their listening anytime. Based on the results of data analysis and conclusions, the authors provide the following suggestions: It is recommended that teachers use several and different kind of media that are more interesting and fun for students and it is recommended that teachers use podcasts as one of the media used in learning listening skills. Because using podcasts is the right strategy and surely students will be more happy and motivated to improve their listening skills.

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