

The Use of Podcast to Improve Students' Listening and Speaking Skills for EFL Learners

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Abstract

This study attempted to investigate the podcast use in developing students' English skills, *listening and speaking*. Technology has produced prominent contribution on education in this information age. It is well known as Edu technology. Podcast is one of interactive media applied to support learning process in the classroom in developing listening and speaking skills. This study reviewed some previous research and designed teaching instruction using Podcast. The result of observation found that the potential achievement in using technology affect both students and teachers. Students moderately engage themselves to sharpen their English achievement; listening and speaking with technology experiences. They obtained various instruction and interesting learning atmosphere. Besides that, teacher was also challenged to have an ability to integrate technology tool (such as *Podcast*) to perform creative instruction in classroom setting. Podcast provided tremendous topics and activities which make both teachers and students enrich their knowledge and develop their English skills in educational purposes.

Keywords: Edu technology, Podcast, Listening and Speaking Skills

INTRODUCTION

Computer, Communication, and Multimedia have developed rapidly and recently changed the Classrooms into Smart rooms in the 21st century. The challenge for teachers is required to be *Techno-Teachers*. Nowadays teachers face a big challenge to create a dynamic atmosphere and bring world in the classroom activities. Technological phase of learning is needed as part of English learning styles to change the traditional language rules (Rajval & Devi, 2011). The learners of English have been growing since the demand of globalization so the need to present new effective and efficient instructional methods is the priority in education. ELLs can be successful to be naturally proficient English speakers because of teaching method and media used in classroom activities. However, highly interactive and demand speedy access to new knowledge and connect the real-life situation is continuously expected in this 21st century. Learners also can engage themselves to upgrade their language performance. With the world literally at their fingertips, today's students need teachers and administrators to maximize the function of technology in the classroom (Blair, 2012).

The presence of technology in education to support students' learning atmosphere was investigated (Diallo, 2014) and the objective of the study was to discover how technology tools facilitated ELLs become more skillful in English. Krashen, (1982) states that second language acquisition approach is used to give better understanding how new technology provides learners with comprehensible materials leading to acquiring faster the language. In addition, technology becomes supporting tool to hone students' language acquisition with a deep and comprehensive input which is relevant and motivated for ELLs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Technology and English Teaching

Foreign language listening was less investigated for some years within applied linguistics, become one interest of research with the blend of updated technology. Listening brings more vital role in language teaching and speaking which is the product of listening process. Jafari & Hashim (2012) state that listening comprehension provides the listeners varied information from which to expand their knowledge. When this knowledge is developed, students will begin to speak so listening has crucial role in communication (Nunan & Newton, 2009; Vandergrift, 2007). Recently, many tests like entrance test, university last exams, and others have started to take listening comprehension as one component of test, also an agreement that listening and speaking ability are significant aspects of language proficiency (Richard, 2009).

In this day of communication, besides teaching speaking, it is a vital importance that students are taught to listen effectively and critically. To develop the students' speaking skills, students need input as the results of the listening activities in language classroom. Fitch-Hauser *et al*, (2007) states having weak listening comprehension can be the factor affecting misunderstandings. Obviously, the learners often look many difficulties when they first effort to listen foreign language.

Penny (1984) believes that listening difficulties of the EFL learners arise from seven main reasons: speed, repetition, vocabulary, signals, interpretation, concentration, and perfectionism. The learners now need a great way to expose their spoken language and sufficient rehearsal in various listening situations and competence levels to progress their listening ability. However, students must be engaged in any classroom activities with comprehensive content of leaning. Cole *et al* (2007) Both listening and speaking become basic elements of the new standards for functional English. However, it appears significant inadequate material to help teachers advance their learners' skills and this is the principal reason for producing more effective teaching procedures. When teaching listening and speaking is delivered well, it will provide students rich resources to make it explicit, relevant and engaged for them.

Nevertheless, the growth of technology gave new sides to build literacy proficiency; global literacy, digital literacy, and visual literacy (Cohen & Cowen, 2008). The issue of literacy has been the priority in the world education. Teachers should not ignore the

potential media for students' learning because technology has been owned by students in lives, it raises the gap between home and school life and worriedly students will lost their motivation because their culture is not valued in the school setting. In that situation, teachers need to note the students' engagement in classroom activities because of the gap in home and school technology use (Bauleke & Herrmann, 2010). Otherwise, when teachers are still reluctant to get approach to technology use, absolutely it will affect to the students' learning outcome as well as their futures. If technology use in schools is not involved, teachers will be difficult to facilitate students' new literacy skills which is needed to navigate growing digitally mediated social practices in which employers search out in their life. The life time is going on and teachers always have a room for learning and upgrading their competence in using technology in the classroom setting. Technology can be integrated into the classroom in many learning purposes. Podcasting as current technology offers teachers one channel for technology integration. By reviewing the challenges of teaching listening and speaking, podcast as one familiar technology becomes one interesting and innovative media to help learners improve their skills. Podcasting states to the authoring of or subscription to audio and or video files that can be downloaded and played back offline or online on a wide range of mobile devices such MP3 players, and iPods (Dale & Pymm, 2009).

Podcast to Improve Teaching and Learning

This present study specifies using podcast as a part of technology. Deal (2007) defines podcast provides content in a video or an audio files on the web as a series of episodes with a large and common theme. It comprises a lot of files called a "feed" that allows listeners to subscribe to the series and receive new episodes automatically. It seems to be the new wing of change. The technology for podcast is readily available, easy to use and inexpensive, making it a more attractive option for providing additional flexible learning resources for students.

Podcast is such an interesting media which provides information and entertainment but soon educators saw the huge potential for teaching and learning (Warlick, 2005; Adams, 2006). So, the use of podcast is revolutionizing the English learning process. Its emergence seems to propose rich source of material for use in an EFL context and to assist listening instruction in specific. Podcast gives students flexibility when and where to learn at their desired learning pace and path. Furthermore, podcasts can be instantly downloaded, copied, shared, and even edited, granting learners more control on their competence and possession of their learning.

There are lots of podcasts web that students are flexible to adopt and adapt according to their learning needs. Thus, learning process and outcomes can be maximized because students are more engaged. Yet, language learners still do not acknowledge how to use podcast and the effect to their listening learning. Podcasts are an innovating way for students to learn in every situation without any visual clues. They can find their interesting topics and take the favorite, relevant and useful information as their ideas for listening and speaking. Rosell-Aguilar (2007). Taxonomy of podcasting for language learning consists of creating podcasts or using already available ones.

Some researchers have investigated the effectiveness of podcast to develop English proficiency. For example, Hasan, & Hoon, (2011) focused on the influence of podcast on students' language skills and their perception and attitudes towards podcasts. This study found that comparing with talk method or using chalk in the classroom, podcast is significantly more beneficial and helpful. Besides, engaging podcast in students' learning activities can develop academic performance, motivation, and promote learning. It can also fasten learners' listening skills but other language components as well like pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, speaking and related learning activities. Another study also emphasized *the benefits of Podcast* in enhancing language skills. Rajval & Devi (2011) uncovered that collaboration technology and language learning become a transforming package in the educational world called Tech-Edu. Innovative mobile technologies like podcast can inspire learners to appreciate wide range of literature and technology usage. It would also provide benefits students in his overall development thereby establishing the emergence of a new age in the learning process.


Based on the previous research, podcast becomes helpful, effective, and efficient devices to help English Language Learners (ELLs) become proficient in language skills such as listening and speaking. In this viewpoint, listening comprehension is basically a process of understanding what the speaker said. To improve the students' speaking skills, it will not be separated from listening activities as receptive skills of students. Students cannot begin to speak without a good listening comprehension. Thus, the use of podcast as a media in the teaching of listening and speaking skills is included.

TEACHING PROCEDURE APPLICATION

From the review of literature, this study was undertaken to introduce students regarding podcast taken from *British Council* as interesting tool of leaning activates. Students were encouraged to perform their ideas about social /environmental condition. One topic that emerges from this study was to increase students' motivation and practice their listening and speaking through podcasts. The study was instructed into three stages of listening activities. Those activities were divided into three main instructions; *pre- listening, whilst listening, and post listening*. Each activity had different procedures.

Listening and speaking instruction using podcast

In this paper, the writer provided the listening and speaking instructions for university students using podcast program. The followings were given some examples in listening and speaking instructions which some developed by the teacher and some are selected from some sources. The procedures were divided into three before, during, and after listening.

 Aims: developing listening and speaking skills
Level: 50-60 minutes
Source: VOA podcast, Worksheet, and Pen
Procedure:

PRE- LISTENING

- Students will listen the sound “traffic jam” and teacher asks students
- where and when they find the situation.
- what they feel when they get traffic jam.



- What students’ strategies to avoid traffic jam every day.
- Teacher shows picture about “City”.
- Teacher asks what students see whether it is the view of city or countryside.
- Teacher asks where students prefer to live in “city or countryside”.
- Teacher asks students’ experience living in the city / countryside.
- Teacher gives few vocabularies about the content of programmed that they will listen.
- Teacher asks students to predict what the speakers talk about in the programme.

After giving warming up about the lives of city, teacher will remind the students to move to next procedures with some activities.

WHILST LISTENING
INFORMATION GATHERING

Learn English Professionals
 BRITISH COUNCIL
 City Population

Presenter: Hello and welcome to ‘Visions of the Future’. This week we’re discussing the growth of cities in the twenty first century. In the studio we have the environmentalist Sue Shaw and Masako Ito an urban planner based in Tokyo. For the first time in human history more people now live in cities than in than in the countryside. Today Tokyo is the world’s largest conurbation. The combined cities of the Tokyo Bay Area now have a population of 28 million. Masako, how has Tokyo solved the problem of transport?.....(http://www.learnenglish.org.uk/prof_mp3/city-population)

Activities:

students will listen podcast (topic “City Population”) with different activities (yes/no questions and comprehension questions).

Activity 1:

Individual work: Teacher will introduce speakers and they roles in the programme.

- Teacher distributes yes/no questions and ask students to read before listening.

Listen to this excerpt from a radio programme about living in a big city.

Optional activity: While you listen, decide whether the following sentences are true or false.

Sentences	True / False
Sue Shaw is an expert on how to protect the environment.	
2. Masako Ito lives in Tokyo.	

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3. Today the Tokyo Bay Area has a population of 18 million.
 4. New roads have solved Tokyo's transport problems.
 5. There are high charges for cars to use the city's expressways.
 6. Travel by car is faster than travel by rail.
 7. Tokyo's transport infrastructure is a useful model for developing countries.
 8. Cities in developing countries should not rely on cars to solve their transport problems.
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(http://www.learnenglish.org.uk/prof_mp3/city-population)

- After listening, check students' work and the number of students' correct answer
- Keeping students' motivation by reminding them about more challenging activities with comprehension questions.

Activity 2:

- In pair work: Teacher distributes the comprehension questions and ask them to read questions with their pair first.

Relisten to this excerpt from a radio programme about living in a big city.

Optional activity: While you listen, answer the following comprehension questions.

1. What does the programme talk about?
2. What is the requirement of having car in Tokyo?
3. Why does she propose people stop the use of car as meant of transport?
4. What is the environmental mentalist proposed to protect environment in mega city?
5. Do you agree about her solution of the transport problem?

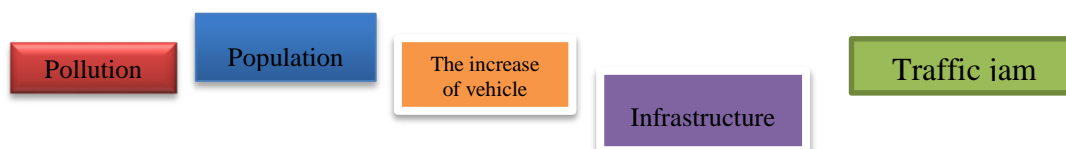
After the first listening, teacher asks students whether teacher needs to replay the audio or not. (Listening again). And at the end teacher invites them to share their opinion.

POST LISTENING



Activity:

After listening 20 minutes



Discussion: In pairs, students are given different topics related to city population. Then they exchange ideas or opinion to discuss some issues in city environment and find the alternative solution how to overcome the problems.

Follow-up roleplay: after the discussion, students provide some questions which might be asked: it can be the issue or the person / people introduced in the programme. Based on their pairs or groups: they can divide their roles as presenter/ speakers or environmentalist and start to ask and answer the questions. They can improve their ideas as their strategies to keep the show going.

In the end of class, the teacher will share some web sites providing podcast such as VOA or BBC and allow the students to download them based on their interest so they can learn every time and everywhere to improve their English proficiency.

PODCAST AND THE OUTCOMES OF LEARNING

Some findings of this study by implementing the teaching procedures in teaching listening and speaking and the observation in the classroom using podcast creates some activities and learning outcomes. Encouraging students to listening topics through podcast can activate students' engagement in listening practices with podcast for exchanging ideas in relation to find alternative solution how to overcome transport problem in city environment. Students are ready to communicate related the topic because previously they enrich their ideas from listening podcast and connect the topic with their real-life situation. Crawford (2007) found that podcasting can be applied to build different literacies because of its multimodal communication approach. A podcast contains various components depending on the type podcast being opened. Some podcasts are using audio only, or might be completed with visual simulation. Other podcasts offer students with a mix of audio and visual texts, while other podcasts are a combination of audio and still pictures. Depending on the type of podcast being used, different components of the technology may be more useful to users based on literacy favorites or major intelligence level. As said early, participants enjoyed two different types of podcasts, one's audio sense and more visually stimulating.

This study strengthened the previous study that podcast to listen makes learning nuance more attractive and alive for both teacher and students. Although the classroom only provided audio podcast for listening, some students who prefer to podcast with visual elements can also be motivated to learn (Gardner, 1999). It is obvious that using podcast students learn in many ways. Podcast can be presented to deliver instruction with applications to auditory and visual learners. That is also the challenge for teachers' role how to provide creative activities using podcast as media. Podcasting is a flexible technology that could be used dependent on the students' competence level from primary to adult learners because podcast provides lots of topics and difficulty level in the aspects of language use and information type. Teacher can use the available one or the mobility of podcast which challenges students to obtain the favorite topics, create, or distribute their podcast to their friends. Podcast does not work alone in the classroom to facilitate learning but teachers need to blend with the good method and instructional delivery. The success of using podcast for listening and speaking skill is dependent on the teachers' ability to operate the update technology like podcast and at last, when podcast is used meaningfully, podcasting can promote students' collaboration and faithful learning experiences among the students. One benefit of podcasting is to be a mobile learning tool.

The application of podcast also gave some advantages for students. Podcast provides students with an engaging some outlet of instruction. They are exposed to different kinds of podcast and involve into meaningful learning tasks. Linking technology and teachers 'instruction will break the gap between the students 'literacy experiences students at home and their engagement at school (Davidson, 2009). In addition, students can be trained to design their podcast to express their creativity and language improvement exposure for their project. Therefore, their podcast will be assessed by the real viewers. This study showed how podcast support teacher to provide some instruction for listening and speaking skills through interactive and collaborative learning. after gathering an

information (problem transport in city) from podcast, collaboration can be arranged into pair and small group of students to share information and exchange their ideas and perspectives about the specific issue. It is also possible to explore students' creativity to podcasting their classmate, schoolmate, or their friends from other countries. Lee (2009) did podcast with the American students who communicated with Spanish students via podcast to talk about issues affecting teens. That activity showed that podcasting can broaden students' activities and teachers' challenge to incorporate world podcast and richer literary into the classroom.

From the study, it is convinced that the application of podcast in English skills such as listening and speaking contribute a lot to give some improvement for both teacher and students. Teacher can bring ICT into the classroom practices, in the same time teacher is able to improve the technology skill in other to create the teaching atmosphere in the 21st century. For student's podcast provides students' learning styles, they might change their way to practice listening, increase vocabulary level, grammatical sentence, intonation, and imitate pronunciation. Those activities directly raise their motivation and willingness to apply their learning styles because it is more interesting and flexible to study. While students improve their language competence, they can also focus on the input. The more students listen various topics from podcast based on their interest, the more they store rich ideas and information that might be very important sources in performing speaking and even writing.

By having repertoires of classroom activates using podcast. It showed that the podcast use in listening practices integrated with speaking activities can engage or involve students become active in some activities. It proves that podcasts can be used most effectively. Although postcast can potentially lead students to the passive learning, it depends on how teachers blend podcast to engage students in learning activities. Podcast does not cover any harmful value. Otherwise, it supports the teachers and students meet their educational objectives with thoughtful facility and attractive learning activities.

CONCLUSION

It is unavoidable that technology in the 21st century takes an important role in developing teaching instruction and learning styles of students in improving students' English skills particularly in listening and speaking. What this study has explored that the use of podcast is very helpful to create classroom activities and students seem to be very motivated and attractive to engage themselves in listening and speaking practices in the classroom. Students enable to gather specific information from podcast and involve into group to use information in other to discuss some alternative solution about problems faced the speakers in podcast. It shows that podcast brings various interesting topics that enable to enrich students' input. Using technology like podcast teacher is also able to design proper instruction and develop his/her skill in operating technology. From that reason, having ability to use computer or technology to hone students' academic performance, teachers need to receive training for continuous professional development. It is expected technology i.e. podcast as tool of learning can help teacher and students reach the goals of education.

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