The Effect of Using Easy Stories In English Podcast on Spotify Application on Students Listening Comprehension

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A B S T R A C T

The research aims to determine whether using Easy Stories in English Podcasts on the Spotify application is effective for improving students' listening comprehension. The study involved two classes from XI SMA Negeri 1 Permata: 25 students in class XI.3 served as the experimental group, while 25 students in class XI.2 were the control group. The results indicate that using Easy Stories in English Podcasts on Spotify significantly improved test scores, particularly in listening skills. This improvement is reflected in the scores of the students. The test data were analyzed using normality and homogeneity tests, followed by a t-test. The average score for listening skills among students using the Easy Stories in English Podcasts was 69.60, compared to 55.60 for those not using the podcasts. This result leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis (Ho) and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (Ha). Therefore, it can be concluded that utilizing Easy Stories in English Podcasts on Spotify enhances students' listening skills.

INTRODUCTION

The global importance of English has made it a staple in school curricula across the world. Mastery of the language enhances communication abilities, boosts employability, and grants access to a wide array of academic resources. Proficiency in English also facilitates international collaboration and cultural understanding, which are crucial in our increasingly connected world. English education focuses on developing four essential skills: speaking, writing, listening, and reading. In high school, the objective is to achieve effective communication and comprehension in both academic and social settings.

Listening comprehension is a vital aspect of learning a language. Skilled listeners can more accurately understand and process spoken English, which helps in expanding their vocabulary and improving their grasp of grammar and pronunciation. Strong listening abilities also enhance speaking, writing, and reading skills. However, challenges such as limited vocabulary and insufficient engagement can impede the development of listening skills. As noted by Onotere & Abiodun (2019), effective listening promotes strong interpersonal relationships and facilitates learning. Researchers like Nascimento (2018) and Yuliawati et al. (2020) point out that students often struggle with understanding idioms and accents, underscoring the need for engaging and effective teaching methods.

The challenges students face in listening comprehension are attributed to several factors: (1) Difficulty in understanding spoken English, (2) Low motivation for listening exercises, (3) Generally low levels of listening skills, and (4) Limited use of modern media in instruction. This research aims to address these issues by enhancing listening comprehension among eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Permata through the use of Easy Stories in English podcasts available on the Spotify application. The researcher seeks to determine whether using these podcasts is effective in improving students' listening skills.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Listening Comprehension

Listening is a fundamental communication skill that people use frequently. It generally involves hearing, processing, and understanding what someone else says. Tarigan (2008) describes listening as the process of receiving information, encoding the message, and interpreting the meaning conveyed by the speaker through spoken language, with comprehension, consideration, appreciation, and interpretation. This process emphasizes that effective listening requires grasping the speaker's points and meanings.

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According to Pourhossein Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011), listening involves discerning thoughts, feelings, and intentions, which requires active engagement, effort, and practice. This underscores the importance of practicing listening to enhance and maintain active mental involvement. Rost (2009) also highlights that listening is an active cognitive process crucial for understanding and effective communication.

In language teaching, listening is a crucial element as it helps students acquire relevant information. Ramli (2018) notes that listening provides essential input in language education, facilitating students' learning and creativity. Motivated students, encouraged to pursue their interests, can benefit more from this process.

Overall, listening skills can be summarized as the ability to hear, understand, appreciate, and focus on what is being communicated. Effective listeners recognize sounds or words and use their existing knowledge to fully comprehend the message. Most students listen to gather specific, detailed information or to confirm their expectations.

Types of Listening

The term "discriminative listening" refers to the basic level of listening that involves monitoring and interpreting both visual and auditory stimuli. To fully understand and interpret the message or information provided by the speaker, one must first engage in comprehensive listening, which involves grasping the purpose of what is heard. Evaluative listening allows listeners to judge the accuracy, relevance, and value of the speaker's message to form a considered opinion. Appreciative listening, on the other hand, is about enjoying or valuing the input, such as listening to music that resonates personally. Dialogic listening is a reciprocal process where both the speaker and listener exchange ideas or opinions to reach a mutually acceptable solution. The final type, emphatic listening, requires the listener to deeply empathize with the speaker's feelings and thoughts, which can be challenging. A common example is listening to a close friend to provide emotional support.

While Hargie identifies six types of listening, Harmer categorizes listening into two main types: extended and intensive (Harmer, 2007, 308). Extended listening, akin to extensive reading, aims to improve vocabulary and grammar, thus enhancing language skills. In this approach, students choose content they enjoy, such as audiobooks, movies, or music, to listen to both in and outside the classroom. For extended listening to be effective, the materials should be engaging and suit the students' needs.
Additionally, elements of both extended and intensive listening can be combined. Since feedback for these types of listening comes from various sources beyond just the teacher, it can motivate students to improve their speaking and pronunciation skills.

Teaching Listening

Hearing is a crucial skill, while listening refers to the ability to understand spoken words. Listening is a fundamental aspect of communication and essential for learning a second language. Teaching listening skills to ESL students presents challenges, as it involves more than just using a language lab; it requires helping students grasp the speaker's message. Unfortunately, EFL students often have limited interaction with native speakers and minimal exposure to the language outside the classroom (Yusnida, Muslem, and Manan, 2017).

Effective teaching of listening skills demands additional effort from teachers beyond what is required from students. A key principle in listening instruction is that "Language content intended for listening comprehension training should not be presented visually first." High-quality listening programs include activities related to the main listening task both before and after the assignment. This approach highlights that effective listening education should combine both action and comprehension (Permatasari, 2013).

Media in Teaching Listening

In order to effectively communicate the subject to students, teachers must become proficient in the learning media. Students' ability to listen improves significantly when media is used to teach listening. These are some examples of media that teachers can use to engage pupils with the content they will be teaching, like: Sure, here is the paraphrased text:

1. Audio Visual

Wina Sanjaya (2014: 118) describes audiovisual media as those that incorporate both sound and visual elements, such as sound slides, video recordings, and films of various sizes. According to Syaiful Bahri Djamarah et al. (2013: 124), audiovisual media blend visual and auditory components, making them highly effective as they combine the strengths of both media types. From these perspectives, it is clear that audiovisual media include both visual and auditory elements, serving as a medium to convey educational messages and achieve learning objectives.

2. Visual

Daryanto (1993) characterizes visual media as educational tools that engage the senses and can be seen with the naked eye. Visual aids, such as images and parables, play a significant role in the learning process, enhancing understanding and memory retention. Visuals also help capture students' interest and create connections between the material and real-life experiences. Sayful (2002) defines visual-based media as those that rely solely on visual perception. Visual tools, including images and parables, are crucial in teaching and learning, improving memory and comprehension. Visual aids increase student engagement and link the curriculum to real-world applications. For visuals to be effective, they need to be presented in a relevant context, and students must interact with them to process the information.

3. Audio

Arief S. Sadiman et al. (2009: 49) define audio media as communication tools that use auditory symbols, which can be verbal or non-verbal. Audio media serves as a non-print intermediary that educators can use to play or listen to content, helping students learn and master specific skills. Examples of audio media include:

a) Radio
b) Tape Recorder
c) Podcasts

Podcast

Zachary, Vaddingham, and Jr. (2020) describe a podcast as a series of audio recordings that can be downloaded and accessed at any time. These recordings can be played on computers, laptops, or smartphones, allowing listeners to tune in whenever they choose. A podcast is akin to a television talk show, but instead of watching on TV, listeners can access it online or through apps like Spotify. Podcasts come in different levels, catering to the listener's proficiency. For beginners, the content typically features relaxed, everyday conversations on topics such as making restaurant reservations. Listeners can start at a beginner level and progress as they complete each episode.

Benefit of Podcast

Podcasts offer numerous advantages for listening classes, such as fostering creativity and confidence in students, expanding their vocabulary, aiding in learning new concepts, and improving their listening skills while developing new interests. Most importantly, podcasts motivate students to enhance their English listening abilities. By using podcasts as a medium, students become more engaged in the process of interpreting spoken English. Podcasts not only boost listening comprehension but also increase engagement by providing effective language practice and review (Widodo and Gunawan, 2019).

A significant benefit of podcasts is the ability to listen to them on various platforms that are freely accessible at any time and place. This flexibility allows users to tailor their listening experience to their schedules and preferences. Some platforms available for listening to podcasts include:

a) Apple Podcasts
b) Google Podcasts
c) Stitcher
d) Overcast
e) Pocket Casts
f) Castbox
g) Spotify

Spotify

Yonderau (2017) asserts that while Spotify is considered media, it also qualifies as technology because it is a streaming platform accessible to the public. Listening to podcasts and music on Spotify is convenient and can aid in online learning for non-native English speakers, making language acquisition easier. The company benefits significantly when many people download and use the application, illustrating a mutually beneficial symbiotic relationship.

Spotify provides a diverse range of music genres, featuring both new and classic songs from Indonesian and Western sources. Besides music, the Spotify app offers a wide selection of podcasts from various channels, covering topics from education to entertainment. Some notable podcast channels on Spotify include "Learn English Vocabulary," which offers extensive English vocabulary, "Harry's Speak Better English," which provides tips on proper English speaking, and "Easy Stories in English," which features short stories in English to help listeners learn the language.

Easy Stories In English Podcast

"Easy Stories in English" is a podcast designed specifically to help English language learners improve their skills through engaging storytelling. Available on Spotify, this podcast offers an enjoyable and effective way to learn English.

Each episode of "Easy Stories in English" features short stories presented in a clear and simple manner. The stories come from a variety of literary genres, including contemporary narratives and traditional fairy tales. The goal of this podcast is to make learning English more enjoyable while enhancing listeners' comprehension of the language.

One of the major benefits of "Easy Stories in English" is its suitability for beginner English learners, thanks to its slow and clear pronunciation. Additionally, transcripts for each episode are often provided, allowing listeners to follow along with the story as they read. This dual approach enhances both English reading comprehension and listening skills.

METHODE

This study utilizes an experimental design with a quantitative approach. Experimental design refers to the overall strategy of conducting research with an active independent variable. It is crucial because it determines the study's internal validity, or the ability to make accurate conclusions about the effect of the experimental treatment on the dependent variable (Donald, 2010, 302). Before starting the treatment, the researcher conducted a pre-test to assess the students' listening competency. After the pre-test, the researcher used the "Easy Stories in English" podcast on Spotify to teach listening in the experimental class during the first session. At the final session, a post-test was administered to evaluate the effectiveness of the "Easy Stories in English" podcast on Spotify as a tool for teaching listening. Similarly, the control group underwent a pre-test, a treatment, and a post-test, following the same learning phases as the experimental class. However, the control class used descriptive text as the learning medium, unlike the experimental class.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The researcher utilized the "Easy Stories in English" podcast on the Spotify application to enhance students' English listening comprehension. Positive improvements were observed in students' learning activities using the Cepat Mahir application. The study's data were analyzed using the SPSS program, leading to several supportive conclusions. The Experimental Class's total score for the Pre-Test was 945, and for the Post-Test, it was 1740. The results differed between the pre-test and post-test. The pre-test had a mean score of 37.80, with the lowest score being 20 and the highest 55. No student scored above 55. In the post-test, one student in the experimental class achieved the highest score of 85, with the mean score being 69.60 and the lowest score 50.

For the control class, the mean pre-test score was 38.60, with scores ranging from 20 to 55. The post-test mean was 55.60, with the highest score being 70 and the lowest 40. The total pre-test score for the control class was 965, and the post-test score was 1390. The pre-test scores for the experimental class were 37.80, compared to the control group's 38.60, indicating minimal change in listening skills between the two groups. In the post-test, the experimental class scored 69.80, while the control group scored 55.60. These results suggest that using simple narratives in English podcasts on Spotify positively impacts students' listening comprehension.

These findings align with a study by D. Rachmiati (2021), which showed that BBC podcasts could improve students' listening abilities. According to Rachmiati's research, students' vocabulary increased, and their listening difficulties, such as poor vocabulary knowledge and mispronunciation, were mitigated. Rachmiati's study used BBC podcasts accessible online, whereas this study used the "Easy Stories in English" podcast from Spotify, which can be accessed offline, making it more convenient for teachers and students.

The data from this study and previous research indicate that using audio media like podcasts can help students improve their listening comprehension skills. This study specifically used the "Easy Stories in English" podcast from Spotify, combined with an application, making it easier for students and teachers to access. It has been shown that this podcast significantly impacts students' listening comprehension. In summary, these findings answer the research question, "Does the use of simple stories in English podcasts on Spotify improve students' listening skills?" The study, titled "The Effect of Using Easy Stories in English Podcasts on Spotify on Students' Listening Comprehension," was conducted with eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Permata.

CONCLUSION

The research findings and discussion indicate that using the "Easy Stories in English" podcasts on Spotify has a significant impact on the listening skills of eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Permata. This is evident from the different pre-test scores between the experimental and control classes. The average pre-test score for the experimental class was 37.80, while the control class scored 38.60, indicating a difference between the two groups. After the treatment, the average post-test score for the

experimental class was 69.60, compared to 55.60 for the control class, showing a noticeable improvement in the experimental group. The study concludes that the "Easy Stories in English" podcasts on Spotify significantly enhance the listening skills of eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Permata. This conclusion is supported by data analysis with a statistical significance level of 5%, showing that the experimental class's average score of 69.60, after being taught using the podcasts, is higher than the control class's score of 55.60. The data analysis also reveals that the sig. 2-tailed (ρ) is less than or equal to α; $0.000 \leq 0.05$, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (Ho) and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (Ha). Therefore, it is evident that the "Easy Stories in English" podcasts on Spotify have a strong positive impact on students' listening skills.

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