Effectiveness of Podcasts in Enhancing Listening and Speaking Skills at Tertiary Level

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Abstract:

Nowadays, learning and speaking English is must for each and everybody. If we look at the present world, we come to know that students face obstacle in their language learning through old talk and chalk method. It raises question how can language learning be made enjoyable and effective? One possible thing is to integrate podcasts into ELT which help to the students in language learning.

Hence, the present paper entitles, '*Effectiveness of Podcasts in Enhancing Listening and Speaking Skills at Tertiary Level*' focuses on how the new pedagogical tool provides new ways into language teaching and learning. How podcasts are helpful for teachers and learners in language teaching and learning respectively than the old talk and chalk method and here the research study is carried out to know the effectiveness of podcasts on the learners.

Key words: podcast, skills, tertiary

Introduction

If we glance at the present scenario we come to know that English language turns out to be a world's language and it becomes obligatory for everyone to know, to learn, to teach, and to speak it. Moreover, it is unavoidable, and necessary of people. Therefore, the National Knowledge Commission has emphasized the importance of English languageby enlightening that in the current scenario an understanding and command over the English language is a most important determinant of access to higher education, business conduction, travel communication, to spread the knowledge, employment possibilities and social opportunities.

NKC therefore recommends that the teaching of English as a language should be introduced, along with the first language either mother tongue or the regional language of the child, starting from Class I. Further, NKC has also focused on the need to reform the pedagogy of English language teaching and the use of all available media to supplement traditional teaching methods(Commission, 2009).

Furthermore, today's world is known for technological advancement. It was used for business conduction before and it made the life easy and comfortable. Hence, educators started using technology in the education for various purposes. Technology or computer assisted language learning now becomes very common for everyone. Teaching through technology is a resource designed for elementary and tertiary.

In past decade, technological gadgets such as CD- ROMs, DVDs, personal computers (PCs) or iPods, were often followed by efforts to adapt them for educational purposes. But the arrival of new technological tools like blog, wiki, Nicenet, Flubaroo, podcast etc. also known as web 2.0 tools shake old gadgets and old teaching method and have also been adapted for teaching and learning by professional educators and have also gained its place in and outside of the classroom (Kybartaite, 2010).

The meteoric rise in use of these tools over the last few years has allowed the youth of the world to have their voices heard like never before. In today's technological environment, students can be engaged in conversations with teachers from the other side of the world through the use of web 2.0 tools. They can share their thoughts, feelings and opinions through the use of various web 2.0 tools such as blogs and podcasts (Matthew, 2010).

Technology plays a large role in today's society in terms of shaping youth identities. Web 2.0 is something that our students will have grown up with; to them, it is not something that has emerged, but rather something that always was. It is important as forward thinking educators that we acknowledge these how society has been changed by web 2.0 tools that are relevant in students' home lives as a scaffold to learning in the classroom (Matthew, 2010).

Review of Related Literature

Patel, (2015) found in his dissertation entitled *Effectiveness of Podcasts in Developing Listening Skills of ESL Learners at Tertiary Level* that podcast is conducive to develop language skills inside as well as outside the classroom provided conscious usage is done through apt guidance and mentoring. Moreover, one of the qualities of podcast is that it motivates learners intrinsically and extrinsically by providing them a scope for anxiety free learning considering podcast, a medium of virtual learning and distance learning. The investigator learnt that podcast web tool is teeming with possibilities for autonomous learning, developing basic language skills, with a shift from teacher – centered learning to autonomous learning.

Ng'ambi, &Lombe (2012) in their research paper *Using Podcasting to Facilitate Student Learning: A Constructivist Perspective* mentioned that podcasts can be used as learning

resources for facilitating student learning. The podcasts can be illustrated as teaching and learning tool. Student ownership of mobile devices able to play podcasts is yet to support mobile podcasting as the primary means of academic podcasting.

Edirisingha, Rizzi, Nie, &Rothwell (2007) in their research paper *Podcasting to Provide Teaching and Learning Support for An Undergraduate Module on English Language and Communication* found that podcasts were successful in supporting students' preparation for assessed work, providing significant advice on portfolio and presentations.

Deal (2004) in his book entitled *A Technology with Technology* mentioned that podcasting does not contain any inherent value. It is only valuable inasmuch as it helps the instructor, teachers and students reach their educational goals

The adoption level of emerging web technologies is on the rise in academic settings (Long, 2006). These technologies include blogs, wikis, instant messaging (IM), social bookmarks, podcast, vodcasts, flubaroo, nice-net etc. (Wikipedia, 2015).

Kaplan-Leiserson (2005) points out in his research paper *Trend: Podcasting in Academic and Corporate Learning* that podcasting can provide another medium for material review and can assist students to develop their basic language skills like listening and speaking skill.

Research Questions

- Can podcast be effective in enhancing listening skills for ESL participants?
- Can podcast be effective in enhancing speaking skills for ESL participants?
- Can podcast be effective in enhancing listening skills of rural and urban area participants?
- Can podcast be effective in enhancing listening skills of rural and urban area participants?
- Can podcast be effectively used for students at tertiary level?

Research Objectives

- To find out effectiveness of podcast in enhancing listening skills of ESL participants.
- To find out effectiveness of podcast in enhancing speaking skills of ESL participants.
- To find out the effectiveness of podcast in enhancing listening skills of rural and urban participants.
- To find out the effectiveness of podcast in enhancing speaking skills of rural and urban participants.
- To find out effectiveness of podcast at tertiary level learners.

Research Design

The present research is a pre-experimental one. The researcher selected the topic *Effectiveness of Podcasts in Enhancing Listening and Speaking Skills at Tertiary Level.* The researcher followed the one group experimental design and conducted it in three stages:

1) Pre-test (Listening and Speaking Skills)

Items	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

2) Remedy (practical and theory)

3) Post-test (Listening and Speaking Skills) and

3) Feedback.

The participants were exposed to the pre-test of listening and speaking skills in the beginning. In pre-test of listening skills, participants were provided ten MP3 audio files followed by tasks (for tasks Flubaroo was used. The links of podcast and Flubaroo were posted on blog from where students could access). To listen Mp3 audios, participants were given opportunity to access podcast website created by the researcher himself where audios were uploaded by the researcher. In pre-test of speaking skills, an interview was conducted in which ten questions were asked.

After conducting tests, students were given remedy on the basis of pre-test including practical and theory. For the post-test of listening and speaking skills, the researcher followed the same method as he did in pre-test. The duration of Mp3 audio file was around 3 to 5 minutes. At last they were asked to give feedback in form of the questionnaire. The feedback was analyzed on the basis of questionnaire filled.

Participants

The researcher administered the programme with post graduate students of M.A (ELT) of H.M. Patel Institute of English Training and Research at Sardar Patel University during the fall of II and IV semester of 2017. As the research is an experimental one and the data was collected with the help of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was sent to M.A (ELT) students of II and IV semester. They were expected to fill up the questionnaire online on Flubaroo form which automatically got submitted to the researcher. The researcher used cluster sampling. 50 participants participated enthusiastically. There were 13 male participants and 37 female participants.

Data Analysis

With the help of flubaroo form, the data was collected using questionnaire through which the researcher tallied, tabulated and analyzed quantitatively. All the questions were closed – ended questions which followed quantitative analysis using frequencies, percentages, mean scores and standard deviations.

Category	Statement	N	Mean	SD					
Usefulness and effectiveness of podcast in the Classroom for learning	'Podcasts can be used in the classroom for English language learning'. Do you agree with this statement?	50	4.36	.525	0	0	2	60	38
	'I found e-audio very effective in actual classroom session'. Do you agree with this statement?	50	4.16	.584	0	0	10	64	26
Teaching	'Podcasts can be used in schools to teach basic language skills'. Do you agree with this statement?	50	4.30	.463	0	0	0	70	30
Listening Skills	'The use of podcasts help to develop listening skill'. Do you agree with this statement?	50	4.54	.646	0	2	2	36	60
	'Podcasts can be used to improve the listening skills of ESL learners'. Do you agree with this statement?	50	4.44	.577	0	0	4	48	48
	'My listening skill improved considerably through my exposed to e-audio of podcasts via internet'. Do you agree with this statement?	50	4.00	.452	0	0	10	80	10
	'Podcasts can be used to improve the listening skills of rural areas' students.' Do you agree with this statement?	50	4.08	.724	0	4	10	60	26
	'Podcasts can be used to improve the listening skills of urban areas' students.' Do you agree with this statement?	50	4.32	.471	0	0	0	68	32
Speaking Skills	'The use of podcasts help to develop speaking skills'. Do you agree with this statement?	50	3.88	.746	2	2	16	66	14
	'Podcasts can be used to improve the speaking skills of ESL learners'. Do you agree with this statement?	50	3.88	.799	0	8	14	60	18
	'My speaking skills improved considerably after recording of podcasts'. Do you agree with this statement?	50	3.94	.682	0	4	14	66	16
	'Podcasts can be used to improve the speaking skills of rural areas' students.' Do you agree with this statement?	50	3.66	.688	0	12	10	78	00
	'Podcasts can be used to improve the speaking skills of urban areas' students.' Do you agree with this statement?	50	3.90	.544	0	2	14	76	18
Access	'Podcasts can be used with elementary level students'. Do you agree with this statement?	50	3.98	.377	0	0	8	86	4
	'Podcasts can be found effective at elementary level students'. Do you agree with this statement?	50	3.94	.373	0	0	10	86	4
Autonomy	'I found that podcasts can be used for self-directed learning'. Do you agree with this statement?	50	4.18	.482	0	0	4	74	22
Curriculum	'I found that podcasts can be implemented in curriculum'. Do you agree with this statement?	50	3.92	.778	2	4	10	68	16

	Items	N	Mean	Std. deviation					
Usefulness of Podcasts	'I found podcast interesting, useful and easy to use'. Do you agree with this statement?	50	4.24	.517	0	0	4	68	28
	'Podcasts can be useful to elementary level students for language learning'. Do you agree with this statement?	50	4.02	.515	2	2	6	80	12
Effectiveness of Podcast (Listening Skills)	'While listening to the e-audio contents, I was able to understand them'. Do you agree with this statement?	50	4.06	.550	0	2	6	76	16
	'While listening to the e-audio contents, the accent of the speaker did not pose any problem for me'. Do you agree with this statement?	50	3.54	.838	0	18	14	64	4
	'Podcasts provided a variety of e-audio-listening content'. Do you agree with this statement?	50	4.18	.523	0	0	6	70	24
	Items	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. deviation**	**Never**	**Rarely**	**Sometimes**	**Often**	**Always**
Freedom	As a future language teacher, I would………… like to use podcast for my sessions.	50	3.70	.814	0	0	52	26	22
	As a future language teacher, I will………….. use podcasts in my classroom.	50	3.74	.828	0	0	50	26	24
	Items	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. deviation**	**-------**	**Bad**	**Poor**	**Satisfactory**	**Good**
Usefulness and effectiveness of podcast in the Classroom for learning	How do you feel after working with podcasts in actual classroom session?	50	3.86	.351	-------	0	0	14	86
	Items	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. deviation**	**Not at all important**	**Not very important**	**Somewhat important**	**Very important**	**Very Important**
Teaching	How did you find podcast as a tool to teach in the classroom?	50	3.40	.969	8	4	34	48	6

Table 1: Responses about usefulness of web tools for language teaching and learning

	Item	N	Percent
Usefulness of web tools	Which of the following web tool, do you think, is very useful for language teaching and learning? (You may select more than one option)		
	Podcast	50	93.8%
	Blog	50	43.8%
	Nice net	50	10.4%
	Wiki	50	33.3%
	Any Other	50	0%

Table 1

Table2: **Responses about effectiveness of podcasts**

Table 2

As shown in table 1 and 2, the sample of the study consisted of 50 male and female students of MA ELT of HMP Institute. Respondents have shown a higher agreement that podcasts can help them to develop their listening and speaking skills, and provides learners autonomy. In table 1, respondents reacted more positively towards podcast as web tool for language teaching and learning with 93% agreement. The questions which followed Likert scale for responses are reported in table 2, along with the five point Likert scale, averages of 3.5 or higher are generally considered high use or positive attitude, averages of 2.5-3.4 medium use or medium degree of support, and averages of 2.4 or lower, low use or low degree of support (Oxford and Burry Stock, 1995). Here also the respondents have shown a positive attitude towards use of podcasts for language learning with a higher mean score of 4 and more than 4 for most of the statements.

Conclusion

This study investigated the use of podcast to enhance listening and speaking skills of tertiary students. It is found after analyzing the feedback with the help of SPSS software that Podcasts are more useful to teach listening and speaking skills. Hence, it can be said that the study supports our primary idea about the effectiveness of using podcast in enhancing listening and speaking skills of tertiary students. In conclusion, the researcher recommends to use podcasts for enhancing basic language skills i.e. listening and speaking.

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