

USING PODCAST IN TEACHING SPEAKING AT UNIVERSITAS HAMZANWADI

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ABSTRACT

Indonesian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students persistently struggle with speaking proficiency, a challenge exacerbated by teacher-centered instruction that lacks authentic communicative practice. This study aims to investigate the effect of paired podcast activities—unscripted, collaborative digital audio tasks—on students' speaking proficiency. Employing a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design, the research involved 46 second-semester students at Universitas Hamzanwadi, assigned to an experimental group (n=29) and a control group (n=17). Data were collected through speaking performance tests evaluated via an analytic rubric (assessing pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension) and a post-intervention student questionnaire. Wilcoxon Signed-Rank tests revealed significant within-group improvements for both cohorts. While the Mann-Whitney U test indicated no statistically significant difference in post-test scores between the groups ($p = 0.378$), the experimental group demonstrated a descriptively higher mean gain (2.55 vs. 1.24), predominantly in fluency and vocabulary, alongside a homogenized proficiency variance. Furthermore, a medium practical effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.551$) and highly positive affective responses (Overall $M = 3.65$) were recorded. The study concludes that despite sample size constraints limiting statistical superiority, paired podcast activities provide a practically meaningful, highly engaging pedagogical framework that accelerates conversational fluency and facilitates peer scaffolding in EFL classrooms.

Keywords: Paired podcasts, speaking proficiency, EFL learners, peer scaffolding

ABSTRAK

Mahasiswa *English as a Foreign Language* (EFL) di Indonesia secara konsisten menghadapi kesulitan dalam kecakapan berbicara, sebuah tantangan yang diperburuk oleh instruksi yang berpusat pada guru dan kurangnya praktik komunikasi otentik. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki efek dari aktivitas *paired podcast*—tugas audio digital kolaboratif tanpa naskah—terhadap kemampuan berbicara mahasiswa. Menggunakan desain kuasi-eksperimen

pretest-posttest, studi ini melibatkan 46 mahasiswa semester dua di Universitas Hamzanwadi, yang dibagi menjadi kelompok eksperimen ($n=29$) dan kelompok kontrol ($n=17$). Data dikumpulkan melalui tes performa berbicara yang dievaluasi dengan rubrik analitik (menilai pengucapan, kefasihan, kosakata, tata bahasa, dan pemahaman) serta kuesioner respons mahasiswa pasca-intervensi. Uji Wilcoxon menunjukkan peningkatan internal yang signifikan pada kedua kelompok. Meskipun uji Mann-Whitney U tidak menunjukkan perbedaan skor *post-test* yang signifikan secara statistik antar kelompok ($p = 0.378$), kelompok eksperimen menunjukkan peningkatan rata-rata yang secara deskriptif lebih tinggi (2,55 vs 1,24), terutama pada aspek kefasihan dan kosakata, serta pemerataan varians kecakapan. Selain itu, ditemukan ukuran efek praktis tingkat sedang (Cohen's $d = 0,551$) dan respons afektif yang sangat positif (Rata-rata Keseluruhan = 3,65). Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa meskipun kendala ukuran sampel membatasi superioritas secara statistik, aktivitas *paired podcast* menyediakan kerangka kerja pedagogis yang bermakna secara praktis dan sangat interaktif, yang berhasil mengakselerasi kefasihan percakapan dan memfasilitasi perancah teman sebaya (*peer scaffolding*) di kelas EFL.

Kata Kunci: Paired podcast, kecakapan berbicara, pembelajar EFL, perancah teman sebaya

A. Introduction

English speaking proficiency has become an indispensable competence for university graduates in the 21st century. However, the teaching of these skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms is frequently dominated by teacher-centered instruction, such as mechanical grammar drills and text recitation, which fail to replicate real-world spontaneous interaction. Amidst this pedagogical impasse, the utilization of podcasts has emerged as a highly responsive instructional medium. As flexibly accessible digital audio recordings, podcasts provide authentic exposure to spoken language, facilitating students in internalizing sentence patterns, intonation, and natural expressions essential for meaningful communication.

Although the effectiveness of podcast-based instruction has been empirically proven to enhance speaking fluency and accuracy (Yeh et al., 2021; Lizamuddin & Zuhri, 2025), the majority of previous studies are limited by their exclusive focus on individual podcast production or consumption. Concurrently, observations indicate that Indonesian

EFL students, including those at Universitas Hamzanwadi, consistently encounter significant difficulties across five primary speaking dimensions: pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension (Anggraini et al., 2025; Argawati et al., 2025). A distinct research gap exists regarding the implementation of paired podcasts—a collaborative recording format where two students interact spontaneously through a structured question-and-answer design—despite theoretical assertions that peer interaction is crucial for reducing speaking anxiety and building confidence (Tajuddin & Shafie, 2025; Nhan, 2024).

The scientific and practical urgency of this study is driven by the stagnation of national English proficiency, as reflected by Indonesia's decline to the 80th position in the 2025 EF English Proficiency Index (EF Education First, 2025). Practically, the failure of conventional methods to stimulate communicative competence necessitates a paradigm shift toward task-based activities that demand unscripted oral interaction. The use of paired podcasts is urgent to investigate because it integrates peer

scaffolding with the demands of sustained verbal production, wherein the resulting audio track can be utilized for reflective self-evaluation.

Grounded in this research gap and educational urgency, this study aims to comprehensively investigate the effect of paired podcast activities on EFL students' speaking proficiency. Specifically, this study is designed to determine whether there is a significant difference in speaking ability between students facilitated with paired podcasts and those taught using conventional methods. Furthermore, this research examines the extent to which this interactive audio media intervention improves specific achievements in the components of pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension, as well as explores students' responses and perceptions regarding its classroom implementation.

Through this investigation, the article is expected to make a substantial dual contribution to the development of language education science. Theoretically, the findings of this study expand the literature on audio-based instructional strategies by advancing the understanding of

how collaborative communicative tasks mediate oral language development in university settings. Practically, this article offers an innovative, evidence-based pedagogical model that can be replicated by educators and institutions to integrate digital technology into the learning curriculum, aiming to overcome the limitations of oral communication in an interactive, measurable, and meaningful manner.

B. Methods

This study employed a quantitative approach utilizing a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest control group design. This design was deliberately selected to accommodate the practical constraints inherent in authentic university classroom settings, where full randomization of individual participants is not feasible without disrupting existing curriculum arrangements and schedules (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The research was conducted at the English Language Education Study Program of Universitas Hamzanwadi, located in East Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. The implementation of the study took place

during the second semester of the 2025/2026 academic year, a period chosen because the students had acquired a foundational level of English proficiency adequate for engaging in collaborative podcast activities.

The population of this study comprised all second-semester students enrolled in the English Language Education Study Program, totaling 46 students across three class sections. A purposive sampling technique was applied to select two intact class sections, yielding a final sample size of 46 students, which was divided into an experimental group ($n = 29$) and a control group ($n = 17$). Purposive sampling was utilized based on specific inclusion criteria, namely active enrollment in the regular speaking course and comparable academic schedules, to ensure that no systematic advantage was conferred by external contextual factors. Furthermore, group equivalence was statistically verified prior to the treatment through an independent samples t-test on the pre-test scores, confirming that both groups possessed a homogenous baseline speaking proficiency.

Data collection was conducted using speaking performance tests and a structured questionnaire. The primary instrument was a speaking test administered before (pre-test) and after (post-test) the six-week instructional period to assess students' oral communicative ability. Students' performances were digitally recorded and evaluated by two independent raters using an analytic rubric adapted from Brown (2004), which measured five components: pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension. The rubric demonstrated strong validity with a Content Validity Index (CVI) of 0.89, and inter-rater reliability was maintained using Cohen's kappa coefficient targeting $\kappa > 0.80$. Additionally, a 13-item questionnaire utilizing a five-point Likert scale was administered exclusively to the experimental group to explore students' responses across dimensions such as confidence, motivation, and perceived effectiveness. The questionnaire was validated through a pilot test, yielding an acceptable internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.82. The procedure involved administering the pre-test, implementing six sessions of

paired podcast activities for the experimental group and conventional instruction for the control group, and

All collected quantitative data were processed and analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics software. Descriptive statistics were initially computed to summarize the mean scores, standard deviations, and score gains for both groups. Prior to inferential analysis, prerequisite assumptions were tested using the Shapiro-Wilk test for normality and Levene's test for homogeneity of variance. Due to the small sample size, the non-parametric Mann-

concluding with the post-test and questionnaire distribution.

Whitney U test was selected as the primary inferential tool to determine between-group differences in post-test scores, while the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test was used to assess within-group improvements. Additionally, an independent samples t-test was reported for supplementary comparison, and Cohen's *d* was calculated to quantify the practical effect size of the paired podcast intervention.

C. Result and Discussion

Result

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Total Speaking Proficiency Scores

Group	Measurement	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Gain Score
Experimental	Pre-test	29	12.21	3.609	5	17	-
	Post-test	29	14.76	2.641	11	20	2.55
Control	Pre-test	17	11.65	4.499	5	19	-
	Post-test	17	12.88	4.442	5	19	1.24

The data in Table 1 reveals that while both groups began with comparable baseline speaking proficiency ($M = 12.21$ vs $M = 11.65$), the experimental group achieved a mean gain more than twice as large as

the control group (2.55 vs 1.24) following the intervention.

Crucially, the experimental group demonstrated a marked decrease in standard deviation from the pre-test (3.609) to the post-test (2.641),

contrasting with the control group whose variance remained high (4.499 to 4.442). This contraction in standard deviation indicates that the paired podcast activities effectively

homogenized the students' speaking abilities, systematically closing the gap between low-performing and high-performing students and leaving fewer learners behind.

Table 2. Mean Gain Scores by Speaking Component

Component	Experimental Gain	Control Gain	Difference in Gain
Pronunciation	0.45	0.24	+0.21
Fluency	0.79	0.24	+0.55
Vocabulary	0.55	0.24	+0.31
Grammar	0.31	0.18	+0.13
Comprehension	0.45	0.35	+0.10

Table 2 deconstructs the overall improvement by isolating the five specific speaking components, demonstrating that the experimental group outperformed the control group across every single metric.

The most profound disparity occurred in fluency (0.79 vs 0.24) and vocabulary (0.55 vs 0.24). This indicates that the strict prohibition of script-reading during podcast recordings successfully forced students into real-time cognitive processing, aggressively training their

spontaneous lexical retrieval and eliminating hesitation.

Conversely, grammar exhibited the smallest developmental gain in both groups (0.31 and 0.18), underlining the reality that structural morphosyntactic accuracy is highly resistant to short-term communicative interventions and requires a longer incubation period to manifest changes.

Table 3. Inferential Statistics: Hypothesis Testing (Wilcoxon and Mann-Whitney U)

Test	Group/Comparison	Statistic Value	p-value	Conclusion
Wilcoxon (Pre vs Post)	Experimental	Z = -4.458	0.000	Significant Improvement
	Control	Z = -2.840	0.005	Significant Improvement
Mann-Whitney U (Post)	Exp vs Control	U = 208.000	0.378	No Significant Difference
Cohen's d (Effect Size)	Exp vs Control	d = 0.551	-	Medium Practical Effect

The inferential statistics in Table 3 expose a critical divergence between statistical significance and practical effect. The Wilcoxon test confirms that both instructional methods successfully facilitated significant internal growth ($p < 0.05$).

However, the primary Mann-Whitney U test ($p = 0.378$) dictates the retention of the null hypothesis, meaning the paired podcast method cannot be declared statistically superior to conventional instruction.

Nevertheless, the calculation of Cohen's d yields a value of 0.551. This medium effect size provides critical nuance: the lack of statistical significance is primarily an artifact of the constrained, unequal sample size ($n=29$ vs $n=17$), whereas pedagogically, the podcast intervention still delivered a substantive, practical advantage in the classroom.

Table 4. Student Questionnaire Responses by Thematic Dimension (Experimental Group)

Dimension	Mean Score (Out of 5)	Category
Confidence	3.53	High
Perceived Effectiveness	3.61	High
Motivation and Interest	3.68	High
Collaboration	3.60	High
Acceptance and Recommendation	3.90	High
Overall Mean	3.65	High

Table 4 highlights the psychological and affective reception of the intervention, revealing a uniformly high evaluation across all domains (Overall M = 3.65).

The peak score in "Acceptance and Recommendation" (M = 3.90) strongly contrasts with the neutral statistical findings of the hypothesis test. This discrepancy signifies that while test scores may take extended periods to show radical divergence, the students' immediate subjective experience was highly positive; they recognized the peer-scaffolding dynamic as a highly motivating, low-anxiety framework that they actively wish to sustain in future curricula.

Discussion

The pronounced development in students' fluency and vocabulary directly validates the core tenets of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). By enforcing unscripted, spontaneous interaction, the paired podcast format compelled students to bypass mental translation and engage in real-time lexical retrieval. This mechanism aligns tightly with the findings of Nhan

In conclusion, the data demonstrates that paired podcast activities provide a clear, descriptive advantage over conventional speaking instruction, particularly in accelerating fluency and vocabulary retrieval, while simultaneously standardizing students' overall proficiency levels. Although methodological constraints—specifically a small sample size—prevented this advantage from achieving conventional statistical significance ($p = 0.378$), the intervention's medium practical effect size ($d = 0.551$) and highly favorable affective reception confirm its viability as a robust, engaging pedagogical tool.

(2024), who posited that structured peer-based question-and-answer tasks uniquely accelerate conversational turn-taking and automaticity compared to monologic exercises. The necessity to instantly decode a partner's utterance and formulate a coherent response forces the cognitive processing systems into a state of high engagement, effectively dismantling speaking hesitation.

Conversely, the resistance of grammatical accuracy to rapid improvement reflects a well-documented linguistic reality: morphosyntactic acquisition demands extended, form-focused incubation. While interactive podcasts excel at generating communicative momentum, spontaneous conversational tasks inherently prompt learners to prioritize meaning over structural precision. During the cognitive overload of maintaining a continuous dialogue, students tend to rely on fossilized grammatical structures. This explains why grammar remained the most stagnant metric, confirming that while peer interaction builds fluency, it does not automatically correct deep-seated syntactical errors without targeted pedagogical intervention.

The divergence between the observed practical effect size and the absence of conventional statistical significance offers a critical point of departure from the existing literature. While Lizamuddin and Zuhri (2025) and Yeh et al. (2021) reported statistically significant superiority for podcast interventions, their studies primarily investigated individually recorded monologues. The present

study introduced the complex variable of unpredictable peer interaction. The cognitive load required to navigate unscripted dialogues may momentarily disrupt pristine performance scores; however, the marked homogenization of students' abilities—evident in the shrinking variance of post-test scores—indicates that this peer-mediated pressure successfully standardizes proficiency, pulling lower-performing students upward more effectively than conventional isolated practice.

Finally, the highly positive affective reception of the intervention corroborates the mechanisms of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, specifically the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The paired podcast format naturally facilitated peer scaffolding, transforming a typically anxiety-inducing speaking performance into a collaborative meaning-making endeavor. This directly supports the conclusions of Tajuddin and Shafie (2025), reinforcing the argument that collaborative digital media substantially lowers the affective filter. By shifting the audience from an evaluative instructor to a cooperative peer, the learning environment

became highly conducive to linguistic risk-taking, which is essential for overcoming the communicative

barriers prevalent among EFL learners.

D. Conclusion

The implementation of paired podcast activities provides a practically meaningful and descriptively superior advantage over conventional speaking instruction in developing EFL students' oral proficiency, particularly in accelerating fluency and vocabulary retrieval. Although methodological constraints—namely a small and unequal sample size—prevented this advantage from reaching conventional statistical significance, the medium effect size and the marked reduction in post-test score variance demonstrate that this collaborative intervention successfully homogenizes student abilities, effectively elevating lower-performing learners. Furthermore, the highly favorable affective reception confirms that the interactive audio format substantially lowers speaking anxiety and fosters intrinsic motivation.

Theoretically, this study reinforces the tenets of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and Vygotskian sociocultural theory,

illustrating that unscripted, peer-mediated digital tasks act as a powerful catalyst for cognitive automaticity and peer scaffolding. Practically, this research equips educators and institutional stakeholders with a cost-effective, highly accessible pedagogical model utilizing standard smartphones, which effectively subverts the limitations of teacher-centered classrooms by maximizing authentic, spontaneous communicative practice.

The primary scientific contribution of this research lies in its reconceptualization of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) tools. It successfully bridges the gap between digital media and collaborative learning by shifting the pedagogical use of podcasts from a solitary, monologic recording exercise to a dynamic, interactive conversational platform that mirrors real-world discourse.

To build upon these findings, future research must address the methodological limitations of the

present study. It is imperative to conduct fully randomized controlled trials with larger, balanced samples over an extended academic semester to ascertain whether the developmental momentum seen in fluency can eventually manifest in structural and grammatical accuracy.

Additionally, future studies should incorporate qualitative discourse analysis of the podcast audio tracks to microscopically examine the specific peer scaffolding strategies and interactional competencies that students deploy during unscripted meaning negotiation.

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