Using Podcasts to Enhance Students' Public Speaking Skills

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A R T I C L E I N F O	A B S T R A C T

Developing one's public speaking skills was necessary. And, podcasts can be used as a medium for practicing public speaking. In particular, podcasts were a popular form of media among Indonesians. This study adopted the mixed-method approach. The participants of this study were the students from the English for Public Speaking class (BIC06), a combined class from three majors, which were Psychology, System Information, and English studies at UBM. There were 34 participants, consisting of 15 females and 19 males. The research was started by conducting a pretest. Then, the researchers gave treatment related to podcast production and supporting ideas. Afterward, the participants produced podcasts as their post-tests. The participants' pre-test and post-test were analyzed based on a scoring rubric by a rater. Finally, the writers conducted a semi-structured interview. The results showed that the student's public speaking abilities are progressing from *Average to good* to *Good to excellent.* Also, this study supports the idea that students' confidence, fluency, and pronunciation improved when they produced podcasts as part of their public speaking exercises. In terms of accuracy, the complete data set helped them to have a flowing conversation, which resulted in fluency. The conversational podcast format is credited with the increase in score. Last, despite providing a safe space, podcast projects also resulted in giving the students a *too comfortable* environment as they presented ideas among friends.

1. Introduction

Communication science includes public speaking as a subfield. This is so because the purpose of communication is to establish a connection between two people. The method by which information is communicated is very basic; it begins with a series of abstract concepts or ideas in a person's mind, which are then combined to form a message. Interestingly, although everyone can speak, very few people can elegantly combine words to create sentences that captivate listeners (Girsang, 2018, p. 82). Here lies the importance of public speaking skills. Public speaking is oral communication spoken in front of large groups that combines the skill of speaking and the art of speaking. To master this skill, a person needs two important aspects, the speaking itself and the way to deliver the speech (Mufanti et al., 2017).

According to research, having public speaking abilities improves three areas of communication: individual, interpersonal, and social/cultural. Without a doubt, at the individual level, public speaking builds self-confidence and the ability to speak publicly about our thoughts, opinions, and feelings, which is critical to aspects of personal growth. In addition, one must logically arrange their thoughts, analyze data, and create strong arguments when preparing a speech. Consequently, there is a close connection between speech and thought, so mastering public speaking skills supports the general development of cognition (Westwick et al., 2024, p. 2). In the interpersonal communication context, speaking in front of an audience enables us to engage in conversation more appropriately, effectively, and ethically. By analyzing the audience and strengthening listening skills, public speaking fosters empathy with others and makes it possible for people to communicate more meaningfully. Finally, having skills in speaking publicly enables us to engage as good citizens in our communities, socially and culturally. Powerful public speakers have played a crucial role in promoting political and social change. In addition, effective speakers can bridge the digital gap by fostering personal connections during public presentations. Indeed, public speaking develops future leaders who can inspire positive transformations in society (Westwick et al., 2024, pp. 3–4).

In addition, recently, podcasting has emerged as a powerful medium for public speakers to share their expertise, connect with audiences, and establish authority in their niche. Podcasts are available in an extensive variety of sounds and sizes and offer a wide variety of content, ranging from in-depth knowledge sharing to pop-culture commentary, as well as "vanity casting" for corporate brands (McHugh, 2022, p. 1). Interestingly, one type of media that the people in Indonesia enjoy is podcasts. As of the third quarter of 2021, the proportion of podcast listeners in Indonesia is the second highest globally. In Indonesia, podcast listeners make up 35.6% of all internet users between the ages of 16 and 64. Indonesia only lost to Brazil, with a 37% percentage (Pahlevi, 2022). The rise of podcasts is not surprising, given that podcasts are currently a popular way for information to be shared among a wide range of audiences, particularly Gen Z and the millennial generation. In the end, podcasts' popularity contributed to the birth of many creative individuals in Indonesia (Kemenparekraf/Baparekraf RI, 2023).

Because of this, scholars have studied prior studies on the use of podcasts to improve public speaking abilities. First, Yustisia et al. showed that students feel their public speaking skills improve because they can speak as if there were someone even with a camera, they can communicate with their podcast teammates, and they can also make sentences so that they learn new vocabulary. The use of podcasts in public speaking courses is very beneficial for students in improving their speaking skills because of the engaging learning method (2022, p. 12). Also, the benefits of podcasting for students include improving communication skills, developing critical thinking abilities, and cooperating in practical activities involving the use of podcast media in public speaking classes (A. M. Ningsih & Sopha, 2022, p. 61). Finally, Meliasari et al. stressed that students' creativity is enhanced by podcasts because the students are asked to manage their topic and improvise while on camera (2023, p. 114).

Despite the previous scholars' investigation, most of them concentrated on studying the students' fluency, and confidence. In addition, most professionals believe that delivery is more vital than the content itself whereas, content and delivery are twin pillars – both conveying emotion and meaning are the twin pillars of building true engagement (Dailey, 2022). The writers believe that when it comes to meaningful content, the students' fluency and confidence are not always on par. Thus, through this research, the writers aim to argue that content is equally crucial to delivery.

Previously, Kinasih et al (2022) studied the ways to enhance the opening of students' speech by implementing seven strategies to get the attention of the audience which are: *tell a story, begin*

with a quotation, question the audience, arouse the curiosity of the audience, startle the audience, state and demonstrate the significance of the topic, relate the topic to the audience. However, the attempt only focused on the beginning of the speech. This research aimed to enhance the students' body of speech (content) that is performed in the podcasts project. Therefore, this study aims to answer the question:

1. To what extent does the implementation of podcasts affect the content of students' public speaking speeches?

2. Methods

This study adopted the mixed-method approach, which collects and analyzes both quantitative and qualitative data in one study while making an effort to incorporate the two methodologies at one or more points during the research process. The purposes of mixed methods are to reach multiple audiences, validate findings from various viewpoints, and obtain a more thorough understanding (Dörnyei, 2007). By adapting this approach, the writers aimed to not only find out whether there is any score progress, but also the opinion from the students as they make the podcast during the treatment period. To find out students' opinions, the writers adapted the questionnaire in this research from the one used by Anggia & Setyadi (2016). This questionnaire was distributed to all participants of the research.

Last, the writers conducted a semi-structured interview with a random sample of students consisting of 6 people, 3 males and 3 females. Random sampling uses chance to select people (elements) from a population of interest. The writers used random sampling as the selected participants represented the characteristics of the population (Kumar et al., 2022, p. 70).

The participants of this study are the students from the English for Public Speaking class, a combined class from three majors, which are Psychology, Information Systems, and English studies at UBM. There are 34 students, consisting of 15 female students and 19 males.

3. Research Procedure

Firstly, the research began with the writer giving pretests. The pretest was done by asking the participants to perform a 7-minute speech individually. Then, the participant's performance is assessed by using the scoring rubric from (Y. Ningsih et al., 2023) as seen below.

Table 1. Scoring Rubric for Oral Presentation

Category	Scoring Criteria	Total Points	Score
Organization	The type of presentation is appropriate for the topic and audience.	10	
	Information is presented in a logical sequence.	5	
	The presentation appropriately cites the requisite number of references.	5	
Content	The introduction is attention-getting, lays out the problem well, and establishes a framework for the rest of the presentation.	5	
	Technical terms are well-defined in an appropriate language for the target audience.	5	
	The presentation contains accurate information.	5	
	The material included is relevant to the overall message/ purpose.	5	
	The appropriate amount of material is prepared, and points made reflect well their relative importance.	5	

	There is an obvious conclusion summarizing the presentation.	5
	The speaker maintains good eye contact with the audience and is appropriately animated (Ex, gestures, moving around, etc).	5
	The speaker uses a clear, audible voice.	5
	Delivery is poised, controlled, and smooth.	5
Presentation	Good language skills and pronunciation are used.	5
	Visual aids are well-prepared, informative, effective, and not distracting.	5
	The length of the presentation is within the assigned time limit.	5
	Information was well communicated.	10
Score		100

Secondly, in the next 3 sessions, the writer gave the students treatments. The treatments were explained in detail as follows:

a) Session 1: The writer went into detail about the what, why, and how of implementing podcasts in the first session.
b) Session 2: In the following meeting, the writer discussed further details about the significance of implementing Coopman et al.'s strategies of supporting ideas, which are: *narratives, examples, definitions, testimony, facts, and statistics* (2018, p. 132)*.*
c) Session 3: In the third session, the writer elaborated on the post-production of podcasts and the danger of spreading hoax/ unverified information online. The writer also rediscussed Coopman et al.'s strategies for supporting ideas.

Then, the writer conducted a post-test for the participants. The post-test was done by asking the participants to make a 7-10-minute podcast individually. By doing this, the writers argued that technology can be applied in education since it can make the learning process more efficient, adaptable, and engaging. Applications like Skype, Twitter, YouTube, and Podcasts can help you improve many practical skills, including public speaking and professional email writing (p. 110).

Following its popularity and rapid growth method of mobile learning among the millennials and Generation Z, nowadays, podcasts can be divided into two types: audio podcasts or video podcasts/vodcasts (Parija & Padmavathi, 2020). In this project, the participants are asked to create a video podcast along with the program name, tagline, and the specific niche of their podcast. The writer believed that podcasts are suitable for Gen Z students because they are highly motivated by engaging with their passions, specifically, those causes they care about (Kinasih & Mery, 2021).

Finally, the writers conducted a semi-structured interview to find more opinions and deeper insights into the usage of the vlog to enhance students' speaking skills.

3.1 Data Analysis Procedure

The participants' pre-test and post-test were analyzed by a scoring rubric adapted from the comprehensive public speaking competence scoring rubric adapted from Y. Ningsih et al (2023). The assessment of the pre-test and post-test was done by a rater. The rater is an English lecturer who has taught the English language major for more than 10 years. The rater has taught English for Public Speaking in the previous semesters at UBM. The results of the pre-test, post-test, and questionnaire will be analyzed by using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science). The purpose of using SPSS is practicality and efficiency.

4. Result

4.1 Descriptive Statistic

This section compares the results of students' ability to perform public speaking before and after treatment by administering a test to them. To confirm the effectiveness of the treatment, the writers used a statistical test, utilizing the Paired Samples t-test by SPSS 26.0. Table 2 shows the results of the analysis of students' ability to perform public speaking before and after treatment.

Table 2. Result of Paired Samples T-Test

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	PRE-TEST	75.2059	34	8.95368	1.53554
	POST-TEST	80.0588	34	8.47435	1.45334

Based on Table 2, 34 participants were examined in this research. The mean score of the pretest is 75,2. Then, after treatment, the student's scores increase. The mean score of the post-test is 80,05. Looking at the progress, the students were able to perform better in their public speaking post-test.

Table 3. Result of Paired Samples Test

Paired Samples Test

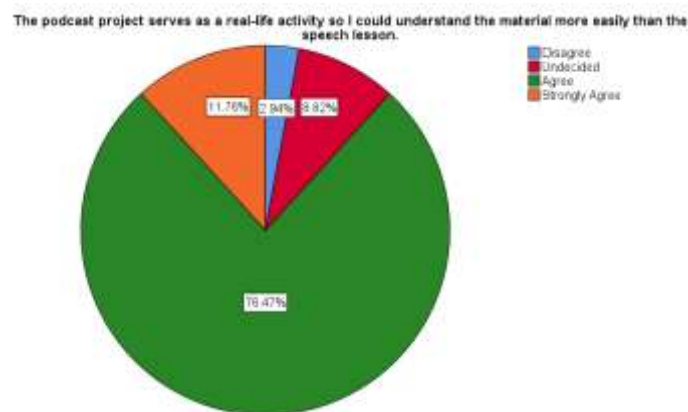| | | Paired Differences | | | | | | | |
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	PRE TEST - POST TEST	-4.85294	4.65235	.79787	-6.47622	-3.22966	-6.082	33	.000

Then, from Table 3, it can be seen that the standard deviation of the pretest was 8,95 and the standard deviation of the post-test was 8,47. Whereas the significance value of the pre-test and post-test was 0,000. By using the level of significance α = 0.05 then the data was statistically significant because $\rho \leq \alpha$. Based on the results of the pre-test and post-test, it can be inferred that there was a difference in the students' public speaking skills. Therefore, H0 was rejected and H1 was accepted.

Test scores	Probable class performance
80-100	Good to excellent
60-79	Average to good
50-59	Poor to average
0-49	Poor

Fig. 1. Harris' achievement level Harris (1969)

Based on the achievement level proposed by Harris (1969), it can be seen that the students experienced progress. Once the students had been exposed to the treatment, the mean score of the post-test was 80,0. This indicates that the student's public speaking abilities are progressing from *Average to good* to *Good to excellent*.

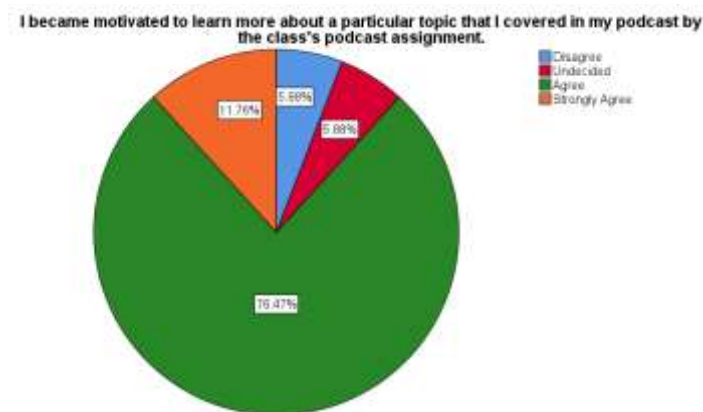### 4.2 The result of the questionnaire

Fig. 2. Questionnaire results on how the podcast project serves as a real-life activity

Based on Figure 2 above, it can be seen that more than 75% of the participants strongly agree, followed by 11,76% of participants that the podcast project serves as a real-life activity. The students are therefore able to learn the subject matter with ease.

> Compared to speech, I like podcast projects more. When we prepare a speech, we know that it is formal, so we try so hard to sound professional, to sound formal. The gesture and body language must be formal. The words that we say must be formal too. If we forget, we can't just say things to fix it. But when we do podcasts, we can use daily conversation language. I think it [the podcast] is more natural. It's just like talking with friends, but we're on cam (Participant B, personal communication, December 27, 2024).

From the excerpt above, it can be seen that Participant B shared his opinion, stating that podcasts are produced by daily language expression. Before the participants were exposed to the podcast project, they learned how to perform a speech. When the students are asked to perform a speech, they realize that they cannot use just any language expression to substitute for the forgotten part. In addition, they need to think about gestures and body language, which need to be formal. He, therefore, thought that because it was not formally staged, the conversation flowed

more naturally, much like in real life. This result supports Constantine's idea (Setiawan & Wahyuni, 2024) that for language learners of all skill levels, podcasts offer real-life learning opportunities.
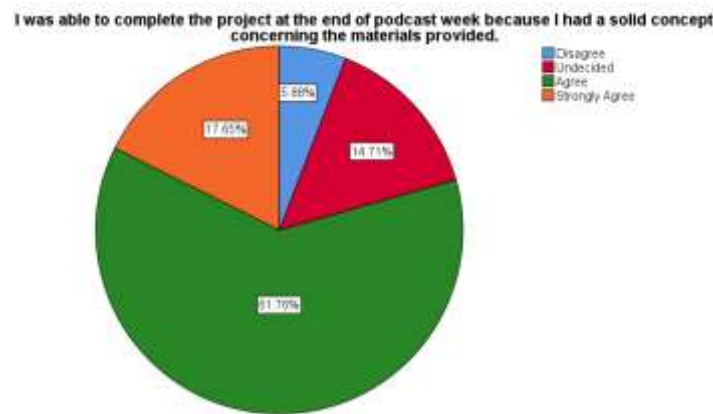

Fig. 3. Questionnaire results on participants' motivation in learning a particular topic for the podcast

Secondly, based on the figure above, it can be seen that the same number of participants, 76,47%, strongly agreed with the idea that their enthusiasm to learn more about a specific subject related to their podcast productions increased. Next to follow are 11,76% of participants who agreed with the statement, followed by the same percentage who were unsure (5,88%) and disagreed (5,88%). The interview with Participant D highlights important points regarding the implementation of the podcast project in class, as follows:

> Before [podcast project], we were asked to perform a speech. I know that podcasts and speeches are different but I think they complement each other. When we did a speech, we were asked to use credible sources from credible journals and data. I think this is important. *Cause*, in the podcast, we're not only chatting, right? But we need to share or mention 1-2 data, or current news reports. If we don't know the data, then what to say? We've learned to check the source of data before presenting it in front of the class. So, now when we do podcasts, and we need to dig some info before class, we're accustomed (Participant E, personal communication, December 27, 2024).

It is clear from the above excerpt that Participant D believes that speech projects and podcasts enhance one another. The habit of checking the source has made it easier for the students to check the data for their podcasts. They were advised to use data from credible sources, such as the national news website, books, or journals. According to a study, podcast elements like accuracy and credibility need to be taken into account. The accuracy of information here is intended for the information to be presented. For the listener , the accuracy poses a question about the host's subjectivity. To prevent any inconsistencies in news and opinions, this process of accuracy is necessary. Thus, accurate information is obtained from the results of research on the latest news searches to produce factual information (Renisyifa et al., 2022).
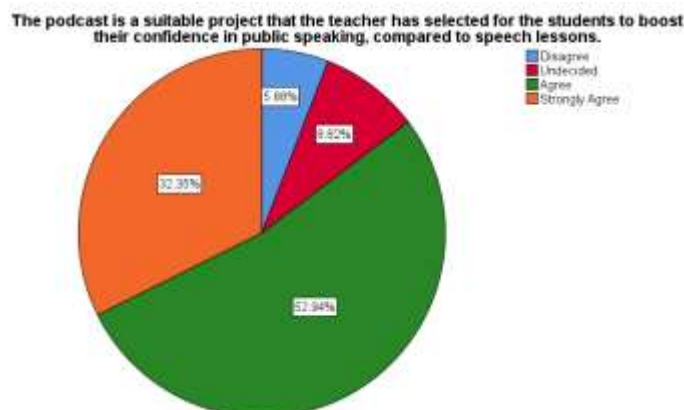
Fig. 4. Questionnaire results on whether participants' concepts about the podcast project

Third, interesting findings can be seen from the third question above. Even though more than 79% of participants agreed that the podcast project was doable, as they had grasped solid concepts about their podcast. The writers found that 14,71% of participants were unsure when comparing the concept preparation for the podcast and speech project. Additionally, 5,88% of respondents disagreed with the notion that they have a better concept for podcast projects.

> I don't think preparing a podcast is easy. I think both project, have their own difficulties. I think, that when I present a topic in speech, I was helped by the structure of speech. We know that there's an attention-getter, then we move to body ideas, then conclusion. I need the exact structure to help me memorizing the content. But, in podcast, everything seems like go with the flow. Once we forget the things we want to discuss, then the video can just go everywhere. Too long. (Participant F, personal communication, December 27, 2024).

From the excerpt above, it can be seen that Participant F stated that preparing a podcast project is not easy. When she was asked to perform a speech, she was helped by the exact structure of a speech, such as the introduction, the body, and the conclusion. For Participant F, not only did the structure help her memorize the content of the speech, but it also kept the performance within the time limit. In contrast, if she forgets the topics that should be covered in the podcast, the discussion may deviate off-topic. The podcast will therefore be too lengthy and go over the time allowed. The point of view of Participant F supports the idea that podcasts are generally a do-it-yourself medium without official gatekeepers (Aroesti, 2023).
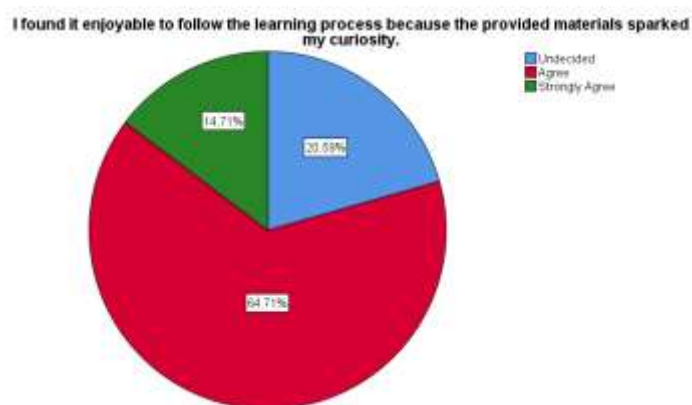
Fig. 5. Questionnaire findings on whether creating a podcast increases participants' confidence
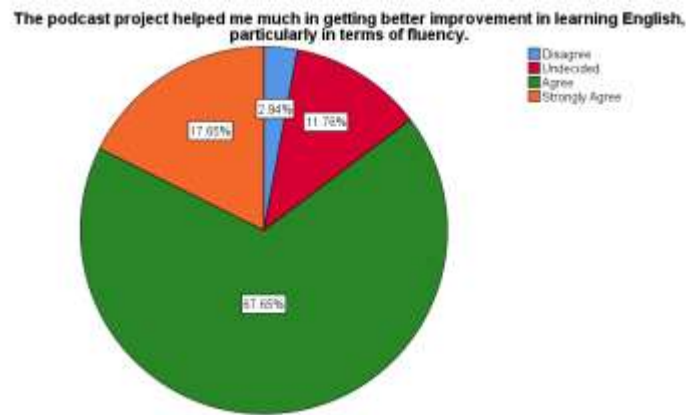
Fourth, the podcast project has increased the participants' confidence in public speaking, according to 85.39% of them, as shown in Figure 4 above. However, 5,88% of participants disagreed, and 8,82% were unsure of the statement. While both speech and podcast projects allow students to speak in front of an audience, podcasts are thought to be more accommodating because the participants thought they were conversing about the chosen subject.

> Basically, when we tapped the podcast, we're simply having a conversation about a topic *kan*, Miss? So, even though we know that people are watching this video, some friends were there when we recorded the video, and we know our classmate might see our episodes, but we can talk more freely because we are not memorizing. *Ya…* we are still teling some information, like trivia about the topic. We interview the guest in podcast too, but it's like we chat in English but it is recorded. So, if we make mistake… *ya udah*, we're not ashamed. *Ya udah lanjut aja terus* [just continue], find another words for it. The conversation doesn't stop if we forget. (Participant A, personal communication, December 27, 2024).

Given that the fundamental premise of podcasting is that the host is conversing with the guests, it is shown by the above excerpt that Participant A claimed that tapping a podcast video is more permissive. The discussion continues even if the host or guest forgets something during the tapping session. When they forget during the tapping, they are not embarrassed, and the topic can still be covered in the delivery. These findings support the study from Yeh et al (2021), which stated that making podcasts developed students' learning confidence as it decreased anxiety about speaking English.

Fig. 6. Questionnaire Survey findings on whether creating a podcast increases participants' curiosity

Based on the figure above, more than 79% of participants agreed that the learning process during the podcast project was enjoyable. In addition to being enjoyable, the podcast project piqued the interest of the participants, although 20.59% of them were still undecided. This finding is aligned with Azmi & Bahiyyah's study (2023), stating that when podcasts were used as a teaching tool for speaking in the classroom, the students met the learning objective by creating a fun atmosphere.
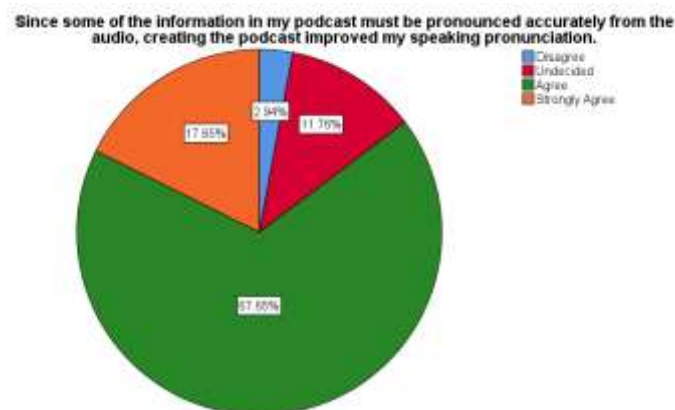
Fig. 7. Questionnaire Survey findings on whether creating a podcast increases participants' fluency

Sixth, Figure 7 demonstrated that over 85% of participants thought that the podcast project improved their ability to speak English fluently. Additionally, 2,94% of participants disagreed that their English-speaking fluency was improving, while 11,76% of participants were unsure. Yeh et al (2021) stated that fluency can be indicated by the decreased number of pauses in their narration. A similar opinion was shared by Participant C below.
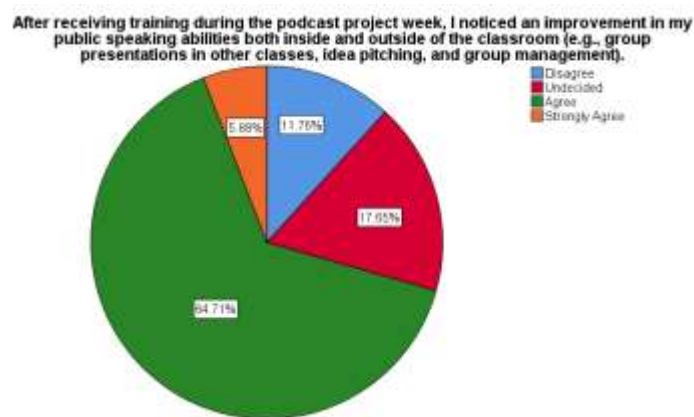
> I think podcast encourage us more to speak English fluently because it has different goal [compared to speech]. The vibes is different. When we make podcast we are surrounded by people we know. The guest in our podcast is from our class too. That's why the conversation between the host and guest is casual as with friend. So, it works for those who want to be fluent in conversation (Participant A, personal communication, December 27, 2024).

Based on the interview excerpt above, Participant A thought that creating a podcast video and giving a traditional public speaking speech served different purposes. Additionally, the atmosphere of the podcast setup differs from that of a traditional speech, including the audience, stage, and podium (Yeh et al., 2021). Having friends participate in the podcast production process makes the conversation flow naturally on camera. Here lies the reason why Participant A thought that the podcast project is suitable for students who want to practice fluent conversation in English.

Fig. 8. Questionnaire Survey findings on whether creating a podcast increases participants' pronunciation

Figure 8 shows that over 85% of participants agreed that listening to podcasts improves their pronunciation. It's interesting to note that 11.76% and 2.94% of participants, respectively, are in disagreement and undecided. These findings are aligned with the previous research, which stated that students' pronunciation was enhanced by using podcasts. This progress is made possible through the role-playing involved in the podcast project weeks (Mellisa et al., 2021).

Fig. 9. Questionnaire Survey findings on whether podcast increases participants' public speaking skills

Last, the writers would like to highlight the findings from the last pie chart as seen in Figure 9. As can be observed, over 70% of participants reported that the podcast project week improved their public speaking abilities, including group management and idea pitching in class. However, it should be mentioned that 11,76% of students disagree with the statement, which is the highest percentage at this point. Also, Figure 8, which shows 17,65% of undecided students, shows a high percentage. The writers also point out two issues with this finding: although students think public speaking is terrible, some drawbacks should be considered, as stated by Participant E below.

> Yes, the podcast project makes us less nervous. Then, we can just talk fluently in the video. I think, the reason is because we make the podcast video with friends. We know who they are and not afraid. It's like safe space *gitu miss*. But, if I want to be more fluent, I would be more excited to talk with stranger. For example, we are asked to present things people at the lobby shortly, that would be challenging more (Participant E, personal communication, December 27, 2024).

From the excerpt above, it can be seen that the podcast project makes the students less nervous. However, he also realizes that their friends are the reason for it. They speak more fluently and with less stuttering on one side. On the other side, though, they are speaking English to each other through their clicks. It would be more difficult, according to Participant E, if students were required to go down to the lobby and show the guests small items and present them to random people in the lobby.

5. Discussion

First, 34 participants were examined in this research. These participants were given a pre-test and a post-test in English for Public Speaking class. The mean score of the pretest is 75,2. Then, after treatment, the student's scores increase. The mean score of the post-

test is 80,05. Based on the achievement level proposed by Harris (1969), it can be seen that the students experienced progress. Once the students had been exposed to the treatment, the mean score of the post-test was 80,0. This indicates that the student's public speaking abilities are progressing from *Average to good* to *Good to excellent.*

The second goal of this study is to draw attention to how crucial accurate data is for podcast content. From this study, it can be seen that students find it easier to verify the information for their podcasts because they have developed the habit of checking the source. They were instructed to utilize information from reliable sources, like books, journals, and the national news website. According to a study, podcast elements like accuracy and credibility need to be taken into account. For the listener, the accuracy poses a question about the host's subjectivity. In this study, the participants understood that accurate information can be obtained from the results of research on the latest news searches to produce factual information (Renisyifa et al., 2022). The complete data set has equipped them to have a flowing conversation, which resulted in fluency.

Third, this study highlights the notion that podcasts increase students' confidence, fluency, and pronunciation as they develop public speaking skills. Based on the results, the writers want to emphasize that the conversational podcast format is a contributing factor to this increase. Thus, the results are consistent with the thesis of Becstead et al., which said that podcast projects are appropriate for use in academic settings. Podcasting allows for both the freedom to express oneself vocally and the freedom to set off from the formalized tone of voice that is imposed by lectures. Unlike speech, podcasts sound more like conversation than the type of carefully crafted, polished performance, where we are free to ask questions, provide comments, and share our thoughts in the form of casual conversation. With its strong foundation in conversation, podcasting can be free-flowing (2025). Here lies the reason why the participants feel more confident in elaborating on the topic. Additionally, the level of fluency is higher because there are no lengthy pauses when one of them forgets something; either the host or the guest can simply fill in the blank.

Finally, based on the earlier results, the writers want to address the problem that, despite providing a safe space for idea presentation publicly, podcast projects have disadvantages. The participants collaborated with their friends to produce the podcast. As a result, they are familiar with the audience. In addition, they tend to have a conversation with their best friend in pairs in the podcast video. The issue is that students may still feel anxious when asked to present their ideas to people they have never met before. Waruwu et al. (2024) stated that students are encouraged to interact with a variety of audiences and develop empathy and understanding through public speaking. They develop important interpersonal skills by learning how to connect with people from diverse backgrounds and modify their communication styles to fit various situations. Therefore, as suggested by Participant E, additional research can emphasize the notion that students attempt to share their ideas with strangers in the campus lobby. Their confidence and fluency can then be evaluated further.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, in this study, the participants were given a treatment of podcast making in the public speaking class. Afterward, these participants were given a pre-test and a post-test. The student's public speaking abilities are progressing from *Average to good* to *Good to excellent.* Second, this study supports the idea that students' confidence, fluency, and pronunciation improve when they produce podcasts as part of their public speaking exercises. In terms of accuracy, the complete data set has helped them to have a flowing conversation, which resulted in fluency. Moreover, the writers would like to stress that one of the reasons for this rise in score is the

conversational podcast format. Last, despite providing a safe space for idea presentation publicly, podcast projects have disadvantages. As a result, they are familiar with the audience and environment too comfortable. Therefore, more research can highlight the idea that students try to express their opinions to strangers in the campus lobby. It is then possible to assess their fluency and confidence further.

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