Using Online Podcast as a Speaking Activity in Online Classroom: ESP Students' Perspective

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ABSTRACT

In the digital era, English educators are required to improve the quality of the learning instruction by integrating technology into the learning process. Yet, challenges occur in integrating technology into speaking activities. The aim of the current study was to seek students' perspectives on using online podcasts as a speaking activity in an online classroom. The study used a qualitative approach with a total of 47 English for Specific Purpose students coming from the Tourism Management program participating in the study. The data were gathered through observation, questionnaire distribution, and interview and analyzed through three stages, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The result showed that most of the students perceived the online podcast as a positive activity for their speaking skills. The majority of the students admitted the use of online podcasts in the online classroom motivates them to practice their speaking, enhance their creativity, and improve their public speaking skills. Though, negative views on the activity's difficulties and students' anxieties could not be denied. Therefore, the English educators need to give assistance during the application of Podcasts as a speaking activity in the online classroom. Moreover, the result of the current study could become a consideration in selecting proper English-speaking activities.

Keywords: *English for Specific Purpose; Online Classroom; Podcast; Students' Perspective*

INTRODUCTION

English is widely spoken as one of the international languages. As a means of communication, English has been taught at various levels of education, from kindergarten to higher education (Anggraeni & Rachmijati, 2018). To meet demand, English is taught in various formats, including English as a second language (ESL), English as a foreign language (EFL), English for academic purposes (EAP), and English for specific purposes (ESP). The variety of forms of English education depends on the purpose of the English subject, whether it is for communication in general or specific skills (Singh et al., 2021). For example, in the vocational education curriculum, English is taught as an ESP subject. The ESP theme puts more emphasis on the use of English expressions in the labor industry (Ayuningtyas, 2020). They tend to teach students to use certain terms to some extent, such as English for medicine, English for law, English for business, and English for tourism (Bekteshi & Xhaferi, 2020). In other words, this subject not only improves the ability of students to use English in general, but also the ability of students to use English jargon and linguistic expressions in the real world (Buşu, 2019; Salmani-nodoushan, 2020). Therefore, ESP teachers need to incorporate various English expressions into their teaching and learning activities in order for students to prepare for work.

Recently, the rapid impact of technology has shifted the focus of education and learning processes from traditional education to technology-based education (Rohner et al., 2021). Many researchers deeply believe that technology can have a positive impact on the process of English teaching and learning. Technology is viewed as a means to improve language education and learning activities by improving teachers' classroom performance and classroom interaction (Rakhmawati, 2016). It also improves the quality of education and learning, especially in the provision of learning materials (Wu et al., 2017). On the student side, technology promotes the student's attitude towards learning. This includes motivation (Altun, 2015), enthusiasm (Anikina et al., 2015), and interests (Alresheed et al., 2015) It also supports a variety of learning styles for all students in the classroom (Ezza & Bakry, 2015). Many instructors, especially ESP instructors, are experiencing the benefits of using technology. However, we cannot deny the fact that several ESP lecturers still face difficulties in integrating technology, such as learning medium selection.

Challenges often arise when the instructor is interested in choosing a learning medium for speaking activities. Many instructors used video recordings of common learning media for their speaking activities. It is categorized as an interesting medium for students to learn meaningfully because it provides students with both

proper visual and auditory input (Shahani & Tahriri, 2015) and student confidence in producing spoken language output has also been shown to increase (Ockert, 2015). However, the recorded video could not promote interactivity between the speaker and the listener. When communicating with others, students need to have the ability to express their thoughts and opinions in a spontaneous reaction (Loranc-paszylk, 2015). This includes transferring and receiving information through listening and speaking processes (Leow et al., 2014) that cannot be provided by recorded video. Since recorded video scripted, it is far beyond from the aim of speaking which requires spontaneous reaction.

Instead, some teachers use video conferences as a medium for interacting with the students in online classrooms. It provides audio and visual modes for speakers to hear and see. In addition, this medium can create real-time situations between teachers and students to interact each other (Loranc-paszylk, 2015). However, due to limited computer skills and knowledge, not all instructors can perform specific computer operations (Faraji et al., 2015). In addition, there is no technical support, such as limited access to the Internet (Lubis, 2018), making it difficult to use this type of technology in the classroom. On the other hand, the limited devices that the students have, such as cameras and headphones, have proven to be a drawback of using video

conferencing in virtual education (Nova, 2020). Real-time interaction with visual display can also put more anxiety and pressure on students during speaking activities (Archibald et al., 2019; Krouwel et al., 2019). With these challenges and difficulties, utilizing videoconference requires proper preparation and higher budget for conducting desired online classroom.

To overcome the drawbacks in using prior utilized speaking activity medium, i.e. video and videoconferencing, one media which could possibly accommodate the speaking activity is podcast. Podcast, in common perspective, is used to spread specific information through audio device, which does not support visual image, but support a real-time interaction between the speaker and audience (Naidionova & Ponomarenko, 2018). Podcast is produced in real frame-time and can be recorded into audio file (Naidionova & Ponomarenko, 2018). The existence of Podcast is not new in English teaching and learning activities. Podcast has commonly been utilized as one of authentic listening materials in the classroom (Barjesteh & Ghaseminia, 2019). The existence of podcast has also seen as one learning media which can motivate the students in active listening (Agarid & Nurzahra, 2018) and provide authentic spoken language from native speaker (Naidionova & Ponomarenko, 2018). Since podcast provides spoken information, this media can also be utilized as a platform for producing spoken language, i.e. speaking.

Therefore, this study identified the potential of podcast as a speaking activity in online classroom based on ESP students' perspective.

In line with the aim of the study, there are two research questions proposed: 1. What are the positive perspectives given by the ESP students toward the application of podcast as a speaking activity in online classroom? 2. What are the negative perspectives given by the ESP students toward the application of podcast as a speaking activity in online classroom?

METHOD

In this study, the researcher employed a qualitative approach with case study design. The case occurred in one tourism vocational institute in Denpasar. The total of participants in this study is 47 ESP students coming from Tourism Management program (see **Table 1**).

Table 1. ESP Students' Demography

Characteristics	N	%
Gender		
Male	21	44.7%
Female	26	55.3%

These students were selected through purposive sampling in which the students should be in fourth semester and take English for Travel Agency subject. In English for Travel Agency subject, the students were required to hold an online podcast, presenting one tourism destination promotion. During the podcast, the students should present their tour package on the tourism destination and conduct a question and answer session to provide more detail about the information they have presented.

The data collection was started after the students had finished their online podcast session. The study employed three instruments to gather the data, including observation sheet, questionnaire sheet and interview guide.

The observation sheet was employed during the podcast session. The students' attitudes, expressions, and language content were observed and noted on the observation sheet.

Then, the questionnaire sheet was distributed as the main instrument and it gathered detailed information regarding students' perspective on the use of online podcast as a speaking activity. The questionnaire consisted of two open-ended questions which identify the tour package theme the ESP students presented and the ESP students' opinion toward the use of podcast as a speaking activity. The questionnaire was constructed in bahasa Indonesia in purpose of gaining deeper and clearer information from the students since the students' native language is bahasa Indonesia.

Furthermore, some interviews were also conducted with ESP students to clarify several unclear or ambiguous statements written by students on the questionnaire sheets. There were 11 students who got the

interview. These students were selected since they only provided short answer without further explanation such as "good", "nice", "exciting and challenging", "exciting enough", and "interesting". In the interview, the students were asked to provide more explanation on what they have made on the questionnaire. The interview was also conducted in bahasa Indonesia to gain clearer information. Any personal data of the students is not recorded either in questionnaire sheet or in interview.

After gaining the data, the data were analyzed qualitatively. Firstly, the data were triangulated by comparing the result of the questionnaire and interview and what the researcher observed during the podcast session. Then, the data were analysed with the sequences of qualitative data analysis model (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The process of data analysis involves four stages. It includes data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. To gain deeper insight, the result of data analysis was then interpreted and discussed with prior studies and findings to enrich the output of study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The ESP perspective on online podcast utilization as one speaking activity medium is reflected in this section. The questionnaires have gathered the students' answer regarding their perspective on online podcast utilization and the interviews conducted have collected some pieces of information to clarify the less clear statements provided on the questionnaires. The result of data analysis unraveled that the ESP students perceived the online podcast utilization in both positive and negative views.

Positive Perspective

Majority of the ESP students perceived the online podcast utilization positively. They viewed the speaking activity in online podcast is fun and interesting. They admitted that this kind of speaking activity is different from other subjects which required them to write a paper, without having any spoken output, and lead them into boredom.

"In my opinion, this task is unique and fun, because the other tasks (from other subjects) that I got are just writing papers." (P.6)

"It is very interesting and fun. While other subjects gave us many boring tasks, this podcast makes me happy." (P.7)

"It is so fun and I am so excited about this. I can tell the audiences about the topic that I discussed with my team and I learn how to make an interesting promotion of destination." (P.33)

"It is really great, sir. Because, in this class, we are not only making PowerPoint, but also can explore our creativity to produce interesting podcast. Then, we also can provide information for the audiences about the tourism destination that we discussed during the podcast and it is really interesting." (P.37)

The existence of technology has created positive atmosphere in learning. The utilization of podcast can lead to learning excitement for the ESP students. This supports prior findings which highlighted the use of technology for boosting learning enthusiasm (Anikina et al., 2015), and interests (Alresheed et al., 2015).

Furthermore, some other students also mentioned that the online podcast is a new thing for them. This kind of task could give them new experience in learning with technology, especially producing online podcast. On the other hand, some students even admitted that the online podcast elevated their creative skill in producing electronic advertising.

"It is really good. I got new knowledge to make podcast for the first time." (P.2)

"In my opinion, this is a new thing for me because this is my first time in making online podcast and, by making this podcast, I can express my creative idea that I have." (P.13)

"I think it is a great idea because we are challenged to be creative in producing the podcast. It is not only about the theme, but also the background sound, etc." (P.28)

The use of podcast for tour package promotion can elevate the students' creativity skill. They could express their creative idea and acquire new knowledge in audio editing. Different from video recording production (Shahani & Tahriri,

2015), audio recording seems simpler to be applied in language learning.

Moreover, some students also admitted that the online podcast motivated them to learn English better. They mentioned that through online podcast, they can practice their English, especially in speaking matters, such as fluency, accuracy, spelling, and pronunciation. In addition, few students also admitted that their public speaking skill is enhanced through podcast interaction.

"It is something new that I learn during my study. I even practice my speaking before performing the podcast talk." (P.5)

"For me, making podcast makes the learning activity more interesting. Why? Because, beside of practicing my speaking skill, I also learn how to pronounce new words in promoting tourism destination." (P.10)

"It is nice, sir. We can improve our speaking and spelling in English. Also, we can build up our ability and show them to the listener." (P.38)

"In my opinion, by having this podcast assignment, I can practice my English and also build my confidence in public speaking." (P.41)

The variety of speaking skills improvement in podcast utilization has unraveled the other benefits for speaking activity. Moreover, the student can also enhance their creativity and earning new knowledge in using podcast. Similar to

prior research's finding which identified that the use of video (Ockert, 2015), the utilization of online podcast can also increase students' spoken language productivity and enhances speaking skills.

The utilization of technology in classroom, especially in virtual one, could make students get more excitement in learning. Various positive feedback mentioned above could be a piece of evidence that online podcast is perceived positively by the ESP students. With the real-time feature provided in online podcast, the students are able to interact with their audience and produce spontaneous responses. Thus, the online podcast meet the need of transferring and receiving information through listening and speaking processes (Leow et al., 2014).

Negative Perspective

Even though majority of the students perceived positively toward the utilization of the online podcast, there are a few number of students who perceived negatively. This negative perspective occurs as they face some obstacles in conducting the online podcast. Few students admitted that the online podcast is challenging for them since this is a new thing for them and they have lack of experience in conducting a live podcast event.

"*It is quite interesting, but it is a bit hard for me, because this is my first time in making podcast.*" (P.23)

"*For me, the task is interesting, but it is a bit complex, especially in writing the script to make the podcast sounds interesting.*" (P.42)

The lack of experience and competence in using technology could be a barrier in utilizing technology in language learning. Even for some educators, dealing with technology needs guidance and practice (Faraji et al., 2015). Thus, the low technology literacy becomes a barrier for this students in accomplishing the project.

Besides, the students also face some anxieties during the online podcast. They admitted that they are anxious with their performance since the online podcast is conducted in real-time and they have no chance to cut or maintain some mistakes occurring during the live event. Furthermore, the lack of English capability also becomes a burden for them since they are afraid of making grammatical mistakes, mispronouncing any English words, and having less fluency in speaking.

"*It is actually good, but I am totally nervous, sir. I am afraid if my spelling or pronunciation is wrong.*" (P.39)

"*For me, it is fun enough. I like it, but I am so nervous. This is my first time in making online podcast and many people listened to me. I am afraid to make any mistakes and ruin the podcast.*" (P.17)

The existence of real-time interaction between the speaker and listener could bring both excitement and

anxiety (Archibald et al., 2019; Krouwel et al., 2019). In this case, some ESP students still admitted that this kind of interactivity puts them into pressure and grows some anxieties problem, such nervousness and fear of making mistakes. Even though they did not face their audience visually, but they could sense that many people could be aware of their mistakes through listening to their explanations. This confirms that the real-time interaction between the speaker and listener in podcast still could trigger students' speaking anxieties. Similar to the weakness of video conferencing (Archibald et al., 2019; Krouwel et al., 2019), the lecturer needs to be aware of any negative effect that could occur in utilizing online podcast as a speaking activity.

CONCLUSION

The digital era has already shifted the process of teaching and learning into virtual world. To fulfill the demand, the English teacher and lecturer should keep updated on the rapid development of technology and need to enhance their digital literacy. From the result of the study, it can be concluded that the problem in integrating technology into speaking activity in online classroom can be solved by utilizing podcast as the learning medium. Podcast, which is commonly utilized as authentic listening material, could be functioned as a medium for real-time speaking interactivity. The positive perspectives given by the students, i.e.

having fun and interesting learning process, raising learning motivation, enhancing creativity skill, and advancing the public speaking skill, have given an insight of the potential in utilizing online podcast as a speaking activity in English online classroom. Though, the negative views given also need to be put as essential consideration for the lecturer to elevate the effectiveness of the podcast as the learning medium.

However, some limitations of the study were identified. First, the topic in the podcast project was limited to one scope only, which is tour package talk show. Different varieties of podcast topic may show different result, especially in dealing with speaking's anxieties as each student may have different scope of interests. Second, the education level of the ESP students participating in this study was limited to fourth semester students. In the institution where the study was conducted, the fourth semester students have already taken three different English classes before entering the fourth semester. The English class exposures could raise their confidence in using English and have lower anxiety level. This may influence the perception in having podcast as a speaking activity.

Some further developments of the current study are required. First, the further study could take different scope of topics for podcast to deeply investigate the ESP students' perspectives. Second, the further study could conduct similar research on different English level, or even

different English learning, including English as a Second Language, English as a Foreign Language and English for Academic Purposes.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

In the process of writing the manuscript, MN managed the data collection and analysis completed with its interpretation. Each ambiguous and unclear responses were then reconfirmed through individual interviews by MN to gain further insight.

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