

Effectiveness of Strategy Instruction Using Podcasts in Second Language Listening and  
Speaking

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### Abstract

Mobile devices have become a significant part of students' lives. Applying suitable and effective instructional techniques in mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) is crucial. Podcasts, one type of MALL, have been proposed as a technological tool to improve second language (L2) learners' listening and speaking skills (e.g., Ducate & Lomicka, 2009; O'Bryan & Hegelheimer, 2009). Such improvement might be achieved by using teaching methods that include self-regulated listening and self-awareness strategies in order to guide students toward autonomous learning (e.g., Alderson, 2005; Roussel, 2011). This dissertation study evaluated the effectiveness of incorporating self-regulated and awareness strategies with podcast activities in an integrated listening and speaking English as a second language (ESL) class. Participants were 20 PIE Level 4 students in the Spring 2015 semester. This study employed a quasi-experimental research design. Two independent variables were time (within-subjects factor) and group (between-subjects factor). Six dependent variables included listening skills, speaking skills, attitudes, self-regulation, self-awareness, and use of podcasts. A series of mixed-method ANOVAs will be conducted to analyze two groups' performances on the pre-, post- and delayed post-test measures. Additionally, participants' weekly listening logs and speaking performances will be charted across weeks to examine trends.

*Keywords:* attitudes, L2 listening, L2 speaking, MALL, podcasts, self-awareness, strategy

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### **Background**

Applying mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) and podcasts into second language (L2) listening and speaking instruction is a promising topic nowadays and requires more empirical analysis. As many researchers and teachers have discussed, “the best of technology does not by itself create a productive learning environment” (Egan, 1999, p. 281). Applying suitable and effective teaching methods in MALL is crucial. Although podcasts themselves have various advantages, teachers and students are facing difficulties in successfully and effectively incorporating podcasts into their L2 listening and speaking classes.

There is a lack of evidence from previous empirical research showing the effectiveness of podcasts on learners’ linguistic improvements. In most of previous studies, assessing learner’s attitudes towards new technological tools was the primary concern (e.g., Abdous, Camarena, & Facer, 2009). There is also a lack of research indicating the effectiveness of podcasts in the English as a second language (ESL) environment. Most of previous studies on podcasts were conducted in the foreign language (FL) learning context, such as learning English in Japan, Korea, and Taiwan (e.g., Kondo, Ishikawa, Smith, Skamoto, Shimomura, & Wada, 2012) and learning German, French, Japanese, and Spanish in the US (Abdous et al., 2009).

### **Research Questions**

1. To what extent does strategy instruction using podcasts affect students’ listening comprehension?
2. To what extent does strategy instruction using podcasts affect students’ speaking skills?

3. Does podcast activity with strategy instruction lead to greater self-awareness of oral performance over time?
4. Does strategy instruction lead to greater use of self-regulation strategies when students are listening to podcasts?
5. Is there an improvement in students' attitudes towards podcast over time between podcast group with strategy instruction and without strategy instruction?
6. How do students use podcasts to complete listening logs?

### **Methods**

Participants in this study were 20 PIE Level 4 students in the Spring 2015 semester. Two intact classes were randomly assigned into either an experimental group (podcast activity with strategy instruction) or a comparison group (podcast activity without strategy instruction). The treatment lasted for 13 weeks. Each student should complete a total of 12 integrated listening and speaking podcast tasks in both groups, whereas only the experimental group received metacognitive strategy instruction and practice.

This study employed a quasi-experimental research design. The data obtained from the pre- and post- tests will be analyzed to evaluate the effect of podcast activities with strategy instruction on L2 learners' listening and speaking skills. The data obtained from the pre-, post-, and delayed questionnaires will be used to investigate the effect of podcast activities with strategy instruction on L2 learners' self-regulation and self-awareness. A series of mixed-subjects ANOVA will be conducted to compare the changes between two groups. In addition, L2 learners' weekly listening logs and weekly speaking performances during the treatment will be calculated and charted over weeks to further investigate the developmental trends in their listening and speaking skills.

### Results

Currently, the researcher is coding the collected data, and the results will be completed by early September 2015.

### Relevance to PIE and Second Language Learning

Five intended beneficial consequences of the proposed dissertation study are to (a) provide empirical research evidence on different instructional techniques using podcasts, (b) perfect podcast activities in L2 classes, (c) motivate L2 learners to take advantage of authentic materials outside the classroom, (d) encourage L2 learners to take responsibility for their own learning outside the classroom, and, (e) in the long run, develop learner autonomy.

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