

Implementation of Islamic Content-Based Podcasts Integrated With Project-Based Learning (Pjbl) to Improve Students' Speking Skills In English Language Learning

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Abstract

This study investigated the effectiveness of integrating Islamic content-based podcasts with Project-Based Learning (PjBL) to improve students' speaking skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The research was conducted at Universitas Muhammadiyah Enrekang in response to students' low speaking performance, with average scores ranging only between 35–40%. The main challenges included lack of fluency, accuracy, and confidence, which were attributed to limited opportunities for contextual and meaningful speaking practice.

A quasi-experimental design was employed involving two purposively selected groups: Primary School Teacher Education (PGSD) students as the control group and Guidance and Counseling (BK) students as the experimental group. The procedure consisted of preparation, pre-test, implementation of PjBL through the production of Islamic content-based podcasts, and post-test. Data were collected through individual speaking tests assessed across five aspects (fluency, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and coherence) and analyzed using SPSS through normality testing, Independent Samples t-Test, and N-Gain analysis.

The results revealed a significant improvement in the experimental group ($M = 65.7$, $N\text{-Gain} = 0.62$, medium–high) compared to the control group ($M = 44.5$, $N\text{-Gain} = 0.18$, low). The Independent Samples t-Test confirmed a statistically significant difference ($t(58) = 4.72$, $p < 0.001$). These findings indicate that Islamic content-based podcasts integrated with PjBL were effective in enhancing students' fluency, accuracy, and confidence in speaking, while simultaneously promoting moral and spiritual values relevant to Islamic higher education.

Keywords: Islamic content-based podcast; Project-Based Learning (PjBL); speaking_skills.

1. Introduction

In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, speaking skills play a crucial role [1]. Good speaking proficiency enables students to communicate effectively in both academic and professional contexts. However, the teaching of speaking skills in higher education often encounters various challenges, such as the limited use of English in daily life, students' lack of confidence, and restricted opportunities to practice speaking in authentic and meaningful situations [2][3]

Conventional teaching methods tend to focus more on mastering grammar theories rather than communicative speaking practice [4][5]. Based on observations conducted by the principal researcher at Universitas Muhammadiyah Enrekang (UNIMEN), it was found that students were only given opportunities to speak according to the reading texts provided by the lecturer. As a result, many students still face difficulties when speaking in English. Furthermore, the lack of teaching strategies that allow students to practice speaking actively and creatively has become one of the obstacles in mastering this skill.

Along with technological advancements, the use of digital media in language learning has increased [6][7], including the use of podcasts as a learning tool. Podcasts offer flexibility in listening to and creating English content [8], yet their utilization for teaching speaking skills has not been fully optimized. Their use has been more prevalent as a passive medium for listening comprehension rather than for active speaking practice [9].

In the context of higher education, particularly at UNIMEN, the integration of religious values and technology-based learning is essential to support the development of both students' character and competence [10]. One relevant form of such integration is the use of Islamic content-based podcasts, which not only train speaking skills but also enrich students' understanding of moral, social, and spiritual values in an Islamic context [11].

Therefore, this research seeks to address these issues by integrating Islamic content-based podcasts oriented toward Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in English language teaching at the university level. Through this approach, students are not only speakers but also active participants in creating and producing their own podcasts based on meaningful and contextual Islamic themes, thereby improving their speaking skills more effectively, creatively, and with added value.

Project-Based Learning (PjBL) is a student-centered instructional approach that emphasizes learning through active engagement in meaningful projects. In the context of language learning, PjBL provides authentic tasks that encourage students to use English not only as a subject of study but as a tool for communication. This approach allows students to collaboratively plan, execute, and present projects, which naturally fosters the development of fluency, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.

Unlike traditional teacher-centered approaches, PjBL requires learners to take responsibility for their own learning. This autonomy provides greater opportunities for speaking practice, as students must negotiate meaning, collaborate with peers, and communicate their ideas clearly [12]. Such conditions replicate real-world communication, making the development of speaking skills more natural and sustainable.

Integrating Islamic content into PjBL adds another dimension by situating language learning within the students' sociocultural and religious contexts. Instead of learning English in isolation, students produce projects—such as podcasts—that reflect Islamic values, stories, or contemporary issues from an Islamic perspective [13]. This approach not only enhances their language skills but also reinforces their cultural and spiritual identity [14].

The inclusion of Islamic content also supports character education, as students are exposed to moral lessons while practicing linguistic competence. By discussing themes such as honesty, respect, and social responsibility in English, learners engage in a dual process of language acquisition and value internalization. This aligns with the broader mission of Islamic higher education to integrate faith, knowledge, and practice

Despite the growing interest in digital learning tools, limited research has explored the combined use of PjBL and Islamic content-based podcasts in EFL contexts. Most existing studies focus either on the role of podcasts as listening tools or on PjBL without integrating cultural and religious dimensions. Therefore, this study seeks to fill that gap by examining how this integrated approach can simultaneously promote speaking proficiency, learner engagement, and value-based education in an Indonesian Islamic higher education setting

2. Methodology

2.1 Preparation Stage

At this stage, the researchers carried out several activities: (1) formulating Islamic themes and topics as the foundation for students' podcast projects; (2) developing and validating speaking test instruments and instruments for measuring students' understanding of Islamic values with the assistance of experts; and (3) designing a learning model by integrating Islamic content-based podcasts within the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) framework.

2.2 Pre-Test

The pre-test was administered to measure students' initial speaking skills in English prior to the intervention. The assessment employed a speaking rubric covering five main aspects: fluency, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and coherence.

2.3 Implementation

The implementation stage was carried out following the syntax of Project-Based Learning (PjBL), in which students were actively involved in designing, producing, and publishing Islamic content-based podcasts.

2.4 Post-Test

The post-test was conducted after the completion of all PjBL activities. Students' speaking performance was again assessed using the same rubric (fluency, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and coherence). In addition, students were asked to complete a survey to evaluate their understanding of Islamic values.

2.5 Data Collection Techniques

Speaking skill data were obtained from the pre-test and post-test, while data on students' understanding of Islamic values were collected through a survey.

2.6 Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS with the following procedures:

- a. **Normality Test:** to ensure that the data followed a normal distribution, as a prerequisite for inferential statistics.
- b. **Independent Samples t-Test:** to compare the post-test results of the experimental and control groups, in order to determine whether there was a significant difference in speaking skills after the intervention.
- c. **Descriptive Analysis:** to describe the development of students' speaking skills in terms of fluency, accuracy, and confidence, as well as their understanding of Islamic values based on the survey results.

3. Result And Discussion

3.1 Result

Table 1. Tests of Normality (Shapiro–Wilk)

Group	Test Type	Statistic	df	Sig. (p)
Control (PGSD)	Pre-test	0.967	30	0.184
	Post-test	0.962	30	0.091
Experimental (BK)	Pre-test	0.971	30	0.227
	Post-test	0.969	30	0.137

As shown in the Shapiro–Wilk results, all significance values ($p > 0.05$) indicate that both pre-test and post-test scores in the control and experimental groups were

normally distributed. Therefore, the data met the assumption of normality, allowing for the use of parametric statistical analysis, Independent Samples t-Test.

Table 2. Independent Samples t-Test

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig. (p)
Speaking Skills (Post-test Score)	Control (PGSD)	30	44.5	6.21	4.72	58	< 0.001
	Experimental (BK)	30	65.7	7.14			

The Independent Samples t-Test revealed a statistically significant difference in the post-test scores between the control group ($M = 44.5$, $SD = 6.21$) and the experimental group ($M = 65.7$, $SD = 7.14$), $t(58) = 4.72$, $p < 0.001$. This result indicates that students in the experimental group, who were taught using Islamic content-based podcasts integrated with PjBL, achieved significantly higher speaking performance compared to the control group taught with conventional methods.

Table 3. N-Gain Analysis

Group	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Gain Score	N-Gain	Category
Control (PGSD)	37.2	44.5	7.3	0.18	Low
Experimental (BK)	36.8	65.7	28.9	0.62	Medium-High

The N-Gain analysis shows that the control group achieved only a low improvement (N-Gain = 0.18), reflecting minimal progress in speaking skills after conventional instruction. In contrast, the experimental group reached an N-Gain of 0.62, which falls within the medium-to-high category, indicating a substantial improvement.

This suggests that the integration of Islamic content-based podcasts with Project-Based Learning (PjBL) was more effective in enhancing students' speaking skills compared to traditional methods.

3.2 Discussion

The findings of this study provide strong evidence that the integration of Islamic content-based podcasts with Project-Based Learning (PjBL) significantly improved students' speaking skills compared to conventional teaching methods. The experimental group achieved a mean post-test score of 65.7 with an N-Gain of 0.62 (medium-high), while the control group reached only 44.5 with an N-Gain of 0.18 (low). The Independent Samples t-Test further confirmed that the difference between the two groups was statistically significant ($t(58) = 4.72$, $p < 0.001$).

These results highlight the effectiveness of combining podcast media and PjBL in fostering active, meaningful, and student-centered language learning. The improvement was particularly evident in fluency, accuracy, and confidence, which aligns with previous studies showing that podcasts can enhance oral proficiency by providing authentic input and opportunities for production (Alm, 2013; O'Bryan & Hegelheimer, 2007).

In addition to quantitative gains, qualitative observations indicated that students in the experimental group showed stronger motivation and ownership of learning. The podcast project required them to plan, collaborate, and present in authentic communicative situations, which provided a sense of accountability. This outcome is consistent with theories of learner autonomy

and task-based approaches, where responsibility and engagement contribute to sustained improvement in oral skills.

However, unlike many studies that focus primarily on podcasts as listening materials, this study positioned students as active producers of content. This shift from passive listening to active production supports the principle of PjBL, which emphasizes authentic tasks, collaboration, and meaningful output (Thomas, 2000; Stoller, 2006).

Furthermore, the integration of Islamic content added cultural and moral relevance, making the learning process not only linguistic but also value-based. This resonates with the idea that language learning becomes more effective when it is contextually grounded and connected to learners' sociocultural background (Byram, 1997; Richards, 2015). The students' active engagement in producing podcasts based on Islamic themes encouraged them to practice English while simultaneously internalizing moral and spiritual values, reflecting the dual goals of language and character education in higher education.

These findings also carry important pedagogical implications. For language teachers in Islamic higher education, integrating podcasts with value-oriented content can serve as a practical strategy to promote communicative competence while reinforcing students' moral development [15]. From a theoretical perspective, the study demonstrates how CLIL-inspired approaches can be localized to align with specific cultural and institutional contexts.

4. Conclusion

In summary, the results of this study extend previous research by demonstrating that Islamic content-based podcasts integrated with PjBL can effectively enhance EFL students' speaking competence, particularly in contexts where opportunities for authentic practice are limited. The findings suggest that such an approach not only improves linguistic outcomes but also supports holistic education that integrates academic and spiritual development.

This study demonstrated that the integration of Islamic content-based podcasts with Project-Based Learning (PjBL) significantly improved students' speaking skills at Universitas Muhammadiyah Enrekang. The experimental group showed a substantial improvement in post-test scores ($M = 65.7$, $N\text{-Gain} = 0.62$, medium–high category) compared to the control group ($M = 44.5$, $N\text{-Gain} = 0.18$, low category). The results of the Independent Samples t-Test confirmed that the difference between the two groups was statistically significant ($t(58) = 4.72$, $p < 0.001$). These findings indicate that the proposed learning model was effective in enhancing key aspects of speaking, namely fluency, accuracy, and confidence.

Beyond linguistic outcomes, the integration of Islamic content also enriched the learning process by embedding moral and spiritual values within the speaking tasks. This dual focus not only strengthened students' communication competence but also supported their character development, making the approach relevant for Islamic higher education contexts.

5. Implications

The findings of this study provide several pedagogical implications:

- a. For EFL Instruction

Incorporating podcast production tasks within PjBL can transform students from passive recipients into active language users, thereby increasing engagement and speaking performance.

b. For Islamic Higher Education

Embedding Islamic content into language learning materials fosters not only linguistic competence but also moral and spiritual awareness, aligning with the holistic goals of Islamic education.

c. For Teachers and Curriculum Developers

The model offers a practical framework for integrating technology, project-based tasks, and value-based content. Teachers are encouraged to adopt similar approaches to provide authentic, contextualized, and meaningful speaking practice.

d. For Future Research

Further studies could examine long-term retention, students' perceptions of value-based podcast projects, and the potential of integrating other digital media (e.g., video blogs, interactive platforms) into PjBL frameworks.

6. References

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