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Innovating Listening Pedagogy through English Story with Audio Application in EFL Contexts

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ABSTRACT

English Story with Audio is a downloadable and playable audio-based learning application featuring recordings by native speakers. This application is used by teachers to improve students' listening comprehension. The purpose of this study was to determine: (1) whether or not there was a significant improvement of the ninth graders' listening achievement at MTs Negeri 1 Palembang using English Story with Audio Application, and (2) whether or not there was a significant difference on listening achievement between the ninth graders of MTs Negeri 1 Palembang who were taught using English Story with Audio Application and those who were not. This study used a quasi-experimental design involving 60 students, divided equally into experimental and control groups. Listening tests were given before and after the treatment. Data were analyzed using paired and independent sample t-tests through SPSS. The results showed significant improvement. In the experimental group, 43.3% of students achieved an "Excellent" level, while only 20% in the control group reached the average level. The application proved effective, interactive, and a modern alternative for teaching listening skills at the junior high school level.

Introduction

The integration of technology into education has become indispensable in the digital era, transforming how teachers deliver instruction and how students access knowledge. While digital tools in education have rapidly advanced, certain fundamental pedagogical principles remain constant. Educational technology ranging from desktop computers, laptops, tablets, ultramobile devices, smartphones, PDAs, and gaming consoles to recording equipment such as cameras, audio and video recorders, sensor-based tools, interactive whiteboards, Web 2.0 applications, multimedia platforms like TED-Ed and iTunes, communication tools such as Skype, Moodle, Edmodo, blogs, and wikis, cloud storage services like Dropbox and SkyDrive, and offline software including Inspiration, Adobe Illustrator, and Letters Alive offers diverse resources to enhance teaching and learning (Ng, 2015).

Within language learning, technology provides authentic input, fosters learner autonomy, and creates engaging contexts for skill development. Among the four macro skills, listening is recognized as a foundational ability that must be mastered before speaking, reading, or writing (Rost, 2013). It is essential for understanding spoken communication and supports learning in multiple academic disciplines. However, listening is also one of the most challenging skills for EFL learners because it requires processing linguistic, paralinguistic, and contextual cues simultaneously. Teachers face difficulties in providing authentic input, designing supportive activities, and establishing clear assessment criteria, while students often feel discouraged due to the absence of fixed rules to memorize and external factors such as accent variation, speech rate, background noise, and limited vocabulary (Nemtchinova, 2013). In the Indonesian EFL context, listening instruction often suffers from limited authentic materials, insufficient exposure to English outside the classroom, and monotonous textbook-based activities. Preliminary observations at MTs Negeri 1 Palembang on October 18, 2024, revealed that many ninth-grade students had low listening comprehension due to the lack of interactive and engaging media, minimal continuous English exposure, and restricted vocabulary mastery, which led to passive learning and low motivation.

Addressing these challenges requires innovative approaches, and one promising solution is the use of the English Story with Audio application, which provides authentic listening materials with natural pronunciation, intonation, and sentence structures while exposing learners to diverse vocabulary in meaningful contexts. Story-based learning stimulates imagination, helps students visualize real-life situations, and fosters intrinsic motivation. The application is easily accessible via the Play Store, allowing learners to practice anytime and anywhere, aligning with mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) principles. It supports teachers in enhancing student participation and offers flexibility for differentiated instruction by enabling learners to select stories suited to their proficiency level. Empirical evidence from Bestary et al. (2019), demonstrated that integrating English Story with Audio improved students' comprehension by providing engaging narratives and contextually relevant vocabulary, aligning with Krashen's Input Hypothesis, which stresses the importance of comprehensible input slightly above the learner's current level. Thus, the integration of English Story with Audio in EFL listening instruction has the potential to overcome persistent challenges, enrich learning experiences, and significantly improve students' listening proficiency, particularly in the Indonesian junior high school context.

Previous studies have consistently demonstrated the effectiveness of technology-assisted listening instruction in EFL contexts. Bestary et al. (2019), found that the English Story with Audio application significantly improved students' listening comprehension by providing authentic language input and contextualized vocabulary exposure. Similarly, Mulyaningsih (2018) reported that the Listen English Full Audio application enhanced students' listening performance through repeated exposure to spoken English and flexible access to listening materials. Furthermore, Situmeang et al. (2023), revealed that audio-visual media positively affected junior high school students' listening comprehension, indicating that technology-based learning environments can facilitate more meaningful language acquisition.

Beyond application-based learning, recent studies have emphasized the pedagogical value of mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) in listening instruction. Mobile applications enable learners to access authentic materials beyond classroom boundaries, increase learning autonomy, and provide opportunities for repeated listening practice. These features contribute to greater listening engagement, vocabulary acquisition, and comprehension development among EFL learners.

Although previous studies have confirmed the positive effects of audio-based and mobile-assisted learning media on listening achievement, several limitations remain. Most studies focused on vocational high school or senior high school students, while evidence from Islamic junior secondary school contexts remains limited. In addition, many studies primarily examined students' listening comprehension without specifically investigating the effectiveness of story-based audio applications that combine narrative learning, contextual vocabulary exposure, and independent mobile learning. Therefore, further investigation is necessary to examine whether the English Story with Audio application can effectively improve listening achievement among ninth-grade students at MTs Negeri 1 Palembang.

Despite the growing body of research on technology-enhanced listening instruction, several research gaps can still be identified. First, previous studies have largely focused on general audio-learning applications and audio-visual media, with limited attention given to story-based audio applications that integrate authentic narratives with listening practice. Second, most existing studies were conducted in vocational or senior high school settings, leaving a lack of empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of such applications in Islamic junior secondary schools. Third, while prior research generally reported improvements in listening comprehension, little attention has been paid to how story-based mobile applications can address motivational issues, limited vocabulary exposure, and the lack of authentic listening input simultaneously.

Considering these gaps, the present study investigates the effectiveness of the English Story with Audio application among ninth-grade students at MTs Negeri 1 Palembang. This study contributes to the literature by extending previous findings to a different educational context and by examining the pedagogical potential of a story-based mobile listening application in supporting listening achievement among EFL learners.

The implementation of the English Story with Audio application is intended to enhance students' listening abilities, prompting the researchers to utilize this tool to tackle the identified challenges. This research explores the effectiveness of the English Story with Audio application in improving listening achievement and aims to assess how significantly it can support students in developing their listening fluency and comprehension. As a result, the researchers are motivated to carry out research entitled " Innovating Listening Pedagogy through English Story with Audio Application in EFL Contexts."

The problem of this research was formulated as follows "Was there a significant difference on listening achievement between the ninth graders of MTs Negeri 1 Palembang who were taught using English Story with Audio Application and those who were not?". The objective of this study was To find out whether or not there was a significant different in

listening achievement between the ninth graders of MTs Negeri 1 Palembang who were taught using English Story with Audio Application and those who were not.

The hypothesis of this study consists of "Null Hypothesis" (H0) and "Alternative Hypothesis" (Ha). As states below:

Ho²: There was no a significant difference on listening achievement between the ninth graders of MTs Negeri 1 Palembang who were taught using English Story with Audio Application and those who were not.

Ha²: There was a significant difference on listening achievement between the ninth graders of MTs Negeri 1 Palembang who were taught using English Story with Audio Application and those who were not.

Method

This research was carried out using a quantitative design, specifically employing a quasi-experimental approach. According to Creswell (2023), a quasi-experiment does not involve randomly assigning participants to groups. This research involved two variables and was conducted in two separate classes: an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group received instruction using the English Story with Audio application, while the control group was taught using the lecture method. The lecture method, often referred to as a traditional teaching approach, remains commonly used in schools. This conventional style typically involves recitation, where students sit quietly while each one takes turns reciting parts of the lesson.

This research employed a non-equivalent control group design with pre-tests and post-tests. A pre-test was administered to both groups prior to the intervention, and a post-test was given after the treatment to measure the outcomes.

This research involves two variables: the dependent variable and the independent variable. The dependent variable is the students' listening achievement, while the independent variable is the use of the English Story with Audio application. According to Creswell (2023), a research population refers to the entire group that a researcher aims to draw conclusions about. It is the main focus of the study, and the findings are intended to be generalized to this group. The population in this research consists of ninth-grade students at MTs Negeri 1 Palembang. A sample is a subset of the target population selected for observation or analysis. This study used purposive sampling as the sampling technique. As stated by Fraenkel et al. (2023), purposive sampling differs from convenience sampling in that it involves selecting individuals based on specific criteria or prior knowledge, rather than merely choosing those who are readily available. In this research, purposive sampling was applied because the selected classes were taught by the same teacher, ensuring uniformity in instructional methods, materials, and teaching approaches.

The instrument used in this study was a listening comprehension test administered as both a pre-test and a post-test. The test consisted of 30 multiple-choice items based on narrative texts and short spoken passages. The items were designed to measure students'

ability to identify main ideas, specific information, vocabulary meaning, inference, and detailed comprehension from audio materials. The listening materials were adapted from English learning resources and audio recordings appropriate for ninth-grade students.

To ensure content validity, the test items were developed based on the listening competencies outlined in the junior high school English curriculum and were reviewed by English language teaching experts. The same test format was administered before and after the treatment, with different audio passages of comparable difficulty levels. Students' scores were calculated based on the number of correct responses and converted into percentage scores for statistical analysis.

Tests were utilized in this study as a means of collecting data. According to Brown (2019, p. 3), a test is a method used to assess an individual's knowledge, skills, or performance in a specific area. To evaluate students' abilities before and after the intervention, the researchers administered pre-tests and post-tests. These test items were adapted from a variety of sources, including books and online materials. The data collected from both tests were analyzed statistically using SPSS version 24, specifically employing the independent sample t-test. Prior to conducting the main analysis, tests for normality and homogeneity were performed to ensure the data met the necessary assumptions.

Results and Discussion

Result of Normality Test

The primary objective of this research to find out whether or not there was any significant differences of the ninth graders' listening achievement between the students who were taught by using English Story with Audio Application and those who are not at MTs Negeri 1 Palembang. The following section presents a summary of the normality and homogeneity of students' listening achievement, as outlined below:

Normality of the Use of the English Story with Audio Application on Listening Achievement. The normality analysis of students' listening achievement using the English Story with Audio application was conducted through the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The results indicated that the p-values for both the pre-test and post-test scores in the control and experimental groups were greater than 0.05, which is the accepted significance level. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the data are normally distributed. The data is displayed in Table 1.

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Table 1

Normality Pre-test and Post-test Experimental Class

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Pretestexp	Posttestexp
N		30	30
Normal Parameters[a,b]	Mean	67,07	89,63
	Std. Deviation	5,278	4,295
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	,213	,217
	Positive	,213	,168
	Negative	-,177	-,217
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		1,166	1,187
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		,132	,119

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

The data's normality was evaluated using the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for both the pre-test and post-test scores in the experimental group (N = 30)**.**

Pre-Test Experimental Group:

The average score was 67.07, with a standard deviation of 5.278. The largest deviations between the observed and expected cumulative distributions were: absolute difference = .213, positive difference = .213, and negative difference = -.177. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test statistic was 1.166, with a two-tailed asymptotic significance value of .132, indicating that the data were normally distributed since $p > 0.05$.

Post-Test Experimental Group:

The mean score was 89.63, with a standard deviation of 4.295. The most notable differences between the observed and expected cumulative distributions were: absolute difference = .217, positive difference = .168, and negative difference = -.217. The test statistic was 1.187, and the two-tailed asymptotic significance value was .119. Since $p > 0.05$, this indicates that the data also met the assumption of normality.

The analysis indicates that both the pre-test and post-test data in the experimental group are normally distributed, as evidenced by significance values exceeding 0.05 after the application of the Lilliefors significance correction.

Table 2 presents the normality test results for the pre-test and post-test in the control group, as detailed below:

Table 2
Normality Pre-test and Post-test Control Class

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Pretestcon	Posttestcon
N		30	30
Normal Parameters[a,b]	Mean	43,40	65,43
	Std. Deviation	5,673	7,986
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	,143	,186
	Positive	,137	,186
	Negative	-,143	-,128
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		,785	1,021
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		,569	,248

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

The data's normality was evaluated using the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for both the pre-test and post-test scores in the control group (N = 30).

Pre-Test Control Group:

The average score was 43.40, with a standard deviation of 5.673. The largest deviations between the observed and expected cumulative distributions were: absolute difference = .143, positive difference = .137, and negative difference = -.143. The test statistic was .785, and the two-tailed asymptotic significance value was .569, indicating that the data were normally distributed since $p > 0.05$.

Post-Test Control Group:

The mean score was 65.43, with a standard deviation of 7.986. The most significant differences between the observed and expected cumulative distributions were: absolute difference = .186, positive difference = .186, and negative difference = -.128. The test statistic was 1.021, and the two-tailed asymptotic significance value was .248, confirming that the data were normally distributed ($p > 0.05$).

The findings confirm that the pre-test and post-test data for the control group are normally distributed, as indicated by significance values greater than 0.05.

Result of Homogeneity Test

The homogeneity analysis of students' listening achievement, conducted using Levene's Test, showed that the p-values for the pre-test and post-test score variances were above 0.05. This suggests that the students' performance in both the pre-test and post-test groups was statistically homogeneous. Additionally, the significance values for the reading test also exceeded the 0.05 threshold, indicating no significant difference in variance.

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Table 3

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

posttestexpcon			
Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
2,440	1	57	,124

The Levene's test yielded a statistic of 2.440, with degrees of freedom (df1 = 1, df2 = 57) and a significance value of .124. This outcome further supports the conclusion that the post-test scores have equal variances, as $p > 0.05$.

Based on these findings, the assumption of equal variances is met for the post-test scores of both the experimental and control groups.

Result of Paired Sample t-Test

Table 4 below presents the results of the paired sample t-test.

Table 4

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre-test - Post-test	-22,56667	7,50486	1,37019	-25,36903	-19,76430	-16,470	29	,000

The average difference between the pre-test and post-test scores was -22.56667, with a standard deviation of 7.50486 and a standard error of the mean of 1.37019. The 95% confidence interval for this difference ranged from -25.36903 to -19.76430. The t-statistic was -16.470 with 29 degrees of freedom (df = 29), and the two-tailed significance value was 0.000. These results indicate a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores ($p < 0.05$), confirming a notable improvement in performance after the treatment.

In response to the initial research question, the researchers assessed whether there were significant differences in listening achievement among students taught using the English Story with Audio application. The findings revealed differences that exceeded the 0.05 significance threshold. As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating a clear and meaningful difference in listening performance between students who received instruction with the application and those who did not at MTs Negeri 1 Palembang.

Result of Independent Sample t-Test

The researchers relied on the results of the statistical analysis and findings to inform the formulation and implementation of hypothesis testing, ensuring alignment with the research question.

The researcher used an independent sample t-test to see if whether or not there was a significant difference between the experimental and control groups.

Table 5 below presents the Independent Sample t-Test.

Table 5
Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Post-Exp-Con	Equal variances assumed	17,832	,000	14,618	58	,000	24,20000	1,65548	20,88620	27,51380
	Equal variances not assumed			14,618	44,482	,000	24,20000	1,65548	20,86462	27,53538

Based on the independent sample t-test results comparing the experimental and control groups, the two-tailed significance value was 0.000. Since this value is less than 0.05 and the calculated t-value of 14.618 exceeds the critical t- table of 1.987 (with df = 58), it can be concluded that a significant difference exists between the two groups. Therefore, the null hypothesis (Ho2) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (Ha2) is accepted.

Discussion

The findings of this research indicate that using the English Story with Audio application significantly enhances students' listening skills. The paired sample t-test results for the experimental group revealed a notable improvement in scores from the pre-test to the post-test, demonstrating that students gained from more effective learning through this audio-based tool. This outcome supports the idea that audio media can facilitate a more engaging and efficient absorption of listening materials for students.

The findings of this research reveal that the use of the English Story with Audio application has a significant positive effect on enhancing students' listening skills. The paired sample t-test results within the experimental group showed a marked increase in scores from the pre-test to the post-test, indicating that students benefited from improved learning through this audio-based medium. This supports the idea that audio media can make listening material easier and more engaging for students to absorb. Furthermore, the results

demonstrated a significant difference between the experimental and control groups. Students who learned with the audio application showed greater improvement compared to those who were taught using the traditional lecture method. Although the control group did show some progress, their level of achievement was not as substantial as that of the experimental group. These findings suggest that audio-based media, such as English Story with Audio, is more effective in supporting the enhancement of students' listening skills than conventional teaching methods.

These findings align with the research by Fadhila Bestary Putri et al. (2019), which demonstrated that using the English Story with Audio application significantly enhanced the listening skills of vocational students. Both studies highlight that interactive audio media can make learning more engaging and help students better grasp the material. Further support is provided by Sukmawati Tono Palangngan and Eka Mulyaningsih (2018), whose research showed that the Listen English Full Audio application effectively improves students' listening abilities. Both studies focus on the crucial role of audio exposure in developing oral language comprehension. Additionally, this conclusion is reinforced by the work of Khaterina Vonbora Situmeang et al. (2023), which found that audio-visual media positively influences listening comprehension in junior high students. Although their study combined both audio and visual elements, the audio component was still identified as a key factor in enhancing students' understanding.

The use of the English Story with Audio Application at MTs Negeri 1 Palembang led to improvements in students' listening achievement scores related to narrative stories. Therefore, it can be concluded that the English Story with Audio application is effective as a tool for listening instruction at MTs Negeri 1 Palembang.

Conclusion

This study investigated the effectiveness of the English Story with Audio application in improving the listening achievement of ninth-grade students at MTs Negeri 1 Palembang. The findings revealed a statistically significant difference between students who were taught using the application and those who received conventional instruction. Students in the experimental group demonstrated substantially higher post-test scores, indicating that the application effectively supported listening comprehension development.

The results suggest that integrating story-based audio applications into EFL classrooms can provide authentic listening input, increase learner engagement, and facilitate vocabulary acquisition through meaningful contexts. Therefore, the English Story with Audio application can be considered a valuable alternative instructional medium for teaching listening at the junior secondary school level.

This study contributes to the growing literature on technology-enhanced language learning by providing empirical evidence from an Indonesian Islamic junior secondary school context. Future studies are recommended to investigate the long-term impact of story-based mobile applications on other language skills and across different educational settings.

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