

High-Quality Podcasts for Learning English

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Podcasts are a new and exciting way to improve English listening skills. Cost-free, students can download enjoyable but educational listening files into their i-Pods and computers. Importantly, students can listen to discussions that they are interested in — ranging from daily news to cross-cultural topics, to speaking skills, to English grammar discussions — again, all for no money!

The present study consists of three parts. First, we look at the nature of high-quality English-learning podcasts; what types of podcasts would be effective for learning English here in Japan? Second, 298 Japanese university students are surveyed to find out about their current podcasting habits and desires. Finally, 77 English-learning podcasts which are available on the Internet for free are evaluated, and the best podcasts are identified.

BACKGROUND

Podcasts in education are a wave of the future and the present. America's Duke University and other colleges provide incoming freshmen with iPods pre-loaded with content relevant to their foreign language, music, social sciences, humanities, and engineering courses. At Aoyama Gakuin University in Japan, audio and video podcasts are being produced for the English Department's Integrated English program, and collaborative projects involving the student creation of podcasts are underway in the Departments of Economics and Science (Dias, 2007). At Hiroshima University, the current paper is part of a project which will put a large number of English-learning podcasts online for the general public within the next two years.

A podcast is usually an audio file created in mp3 format, but it can also be a video file. It is uploaded onto a server. The files resemble radio or short TV programs, and usually last from one minute to an hour. Students can easily download the files to their computers, iPods, and mp3 players by using a digital media player such as iTunes (which is available free on the Internet). The students can then listen to or watch the files whenever they want, as often as they want. All podcasts have an associated Web page where students can sometimes find written supporting materials such as transcripts, vocabulary notes, and/or comprehension exercises.

To improve general English listening skills, Hinkel (2006), in a review of the literature, states that audio materials which are slower-than-natural speed are undoubtedly beneficial for most learners. Findings show that the materials should have pre-listening exercises to help students, not only with vocabulary and pronunciation, but also with cultural schema. Listen-and-

do tasks, such as note-taking and speaking, are also helpful. Similarly, Chang and Read (2006) found that utilizing pre-listening materials and repeatedly listening to the audio clips are the two factors most closely associated with successful listening comprehension.

In the field of Computer Assisted Language Learning, Chapelle (2001) emphasizes the importance of having supporting online resource materials such as vocabulary activities, dictionaries, and comprehension quizzes. Smidt and Hegelheimer (2004) found that web-delivered video can improve English listening skills.

Podcasts, according to Herrington (2005), need to have high-quality producers, writers, engineers and hosts. The producer designs the themes of the show, finds good guests, and knows how to edit the program. The writer is capable of making interesting notes in the way people talk. The engineer is constantly thinking of producing quality sound, utilizing suitable sound effects and music. The host has a quick mind, composure, confidence, and humor.

Schrock (2008) of Discovery Education, which is associated with the Discovery Channel, offers detailed guidelines for evaluating educational podcasts. Those criteria include having written transcripts available.

THE PRESENT STUDY: QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

First, 298 Japanese students at two universities in Hiroshima Prefecture were surveyed to find out about their current podcasting habits and desires. The students came from various faculties, and most of them were in their first three years of college. About 60% of the students were males. The survey was written in Japanese and can be viewed in the appendix of the article written by Enokida (2008) in this journal.

A compressed English version of the survey (which the students never saw) and the results are listed below. (Numbers sometimes do not add up, because some students left items blank.)

1. Do you have a digital audio player (such as an iPod) and/or a music-enabled cellular phone (such as a Keitai Walkman)?

Yes = 198 No = 100

- If "Yes" , please answer the following questions:

- (1) Please write the name of your player: (iPod = 89, Cell Phone = 47, Walkman = 18, Others (SD Player, Gigabeat, D-Snap, etc.) = 44
- (2) How often do you use your player?
Almost every day = 92 Once in a while = 76 Rarely = 27

2. Do you listen to any "Podcasting" programs (free downloadable shows on the Internet)?

Yes = 31 No = 267

- If "Yes" , please answer the following questions:

- (1) How do you listen to the program(s)?

On a digital audio player/ cellular phone = 8 On a PC = 23

(2) Do you use the Podcasting programs to learn English?

Yes = 15 No = 16

- If "Yes" , please answer the following questions:

(a) Please write the names of your favorite programs: (Two wrote: NHK News. One Each: Brain Food 英単語編, 英語のヒント, 英語と仲直りできる Podcast, BBC News, BBC, English Studio Classroom, Nikkei Weekly Interview, e-chat, World Football, ALC.)

(b) How often do you listen to them? Almost every day = 3 Once in a while = 9
Rarely = 2.

- If "No" , please give the reason why. (Choose as many as you like)

I'm not interested. = 54

I'm not sure what "Podcasting" is. = 181

I don't know how to subscribe. = 55

I tried to, but soon I stopped listening. = 6

I don't have a digital audio player or a PC to listen to the programs on. = 26

3. If you were able to download English learning materials on the Internet for free, what kind of programs would you want to listen to? (Choose as many as you like)

Campus news = 15; Dialogs = 97; Documentaries = 44; Dramas = 168; Free talk = 52; Listening quiz = 60; Local information = 30; Pronunciation practice = 51; Short stories = 78; TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) practice = 126. Other: 3 students wrote news or foreign news; One student each wrote: The Golden Eggs, NHK's Eigo de Shaberanaito, Japanese mixed in with English, spur-of-the-moment talks, how to say various things in English, standup comedy like "manzai" in English, movies, talks about things that everyone knows, talks about Harry Potter, and variety programs.

The most surprising result of the survey is that only 10% (N = 31) of the entire population sometimes listens to podcasts of any kind, and most students (N = 181) are not even sure what they are. This comes despite the fact that podcasts can be listened to on any computer free of charge. Also, it was found that, even though two out of three students have digital audio players or cell phones capable of downloading podcasts, only 16% (N = 31) of these people sometimes do so. This raises the question: What are most of the students doing with those players and phones? The answer is probably that they are either listening to music or not using the podcast capabilities.

Of the 31 students who sometimes listen to podcasts, half of them (N = 15) say they have tuned into English-learning podcasts. Most of those students listen "once in a while," and their preferences for particular podcasts vary greatly.

Student preferences for future podcast themes were interesting. An amazing 168 students

indicated that they would like to listen to drama podcasts, and similarly, 78 students said they were interested in short stories.

Importantly, 126 students said they would like to listen to TOEIC practice on podcasts. Conversational dialogs were also popular with 97 students. Documentaries, free talk, listening quizzes, and pronunciation practice each garnered between 40 and 60 votes. Less popular were campus news and local information.

The Best Podcasts

In the next part of this study, 77 English-learning podcasts, which are available on the Internet free of charge, were evaluated. (The parts of programs which cost money were not examined.) The above research results were utilized to establish the following evaluation criteria:

Category 1 – hereafter, C1) Interesting and Pedagogically Sound = 40% of the Score. The podcasts were given up to 40 points if they were judged to be appealing and educationally valuable for intermediate-level young Japanese adults learning English. The judge (the current researcher), who has been teaching English in Japanese universities for over 20 years, considered students' current interests and needs. From zero to 40 points were awarded.

C2) Japanese Support = 20% of the Score. If the podcast had both audio and written Japanese notes, it could receive up to 20 points. If there was only Japanese audio support, it received about 10 or 15 points. In this category, as in the others, both quantity and quality were considered.

C3) English Transcripts = 20% of the Score.

C4) Vocabulary-Grammar Explanations and Worksheets = 8% of the Score. The amounts and appropriateness of the support materials were examined. Up to 8 points were awarded. If the notes were only available in audio form, then the podcast received 2 to 4 points.

C5) Ample Archives = 4% of the Score. If there were at least 20 files available through iTunes, the podcast received 4 points.

C6) Moderately Long Listening Files = 4% of the Score. Shorter files are less appealing, because listeners are often troubled when they have to listen to many short files. So, if the files were usually 20 minutes or longer, they received 4 points. Files of about 15 minutes received 3 points, those of about 10 minutes received 2 points, and those of 4 to 7 minutes received one point.

C7) Slightly Slower than Native-Speaker Conversation = 4% of the Score. Since the podcasts were judged on their appropriateness for “intermediate-level” learners of English, slightly slower conversation speed than natural is preferable.

In the results below, Web addresses are not cited, because any student can easily find the site within seconds by typing the name of the program into the “Search” function at iTunes Store, located within the iTunes software. When a producer has multiple podcasts, they are listed under the producer's name. Each podcast was classified into one of the following categories: a) Lower Level, b) Higher Level, c) Video, and the following for intermediate level: d)

Business, e) News, f) Culture, g) Language, and h) Language and Culture.

Importantly, only the top half of scores in each category qualified for the “Best” lists. All the podcasts and their scores are listed in the appendix.

RESULTS

Best Podcasts for Lower-Level Students

	Name	Comments
1	ユーキャンのポッドキャスティング	Conversation expressions. About 13 min. <u>Good points</u> : Well made skits. <u>Weak points</u> : Rather small archive. No new files since early 2007.
2	Machigai Podcast	Discussions about tricky grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. For example, l and r. An American man and a Japanese woman talk. About 5 min. <u>Good points</u> : Humorous. Lots of audio Japanese support. Slower. <u>Weak points</u> : No script. Files short, with promos taking up too much time. Maybe too much Japanese?
3	毎日1～3分ポッドキャスト 英語日記	Conversation phrases and various topics. 1-2 min. <u>Good points</u> : Nice Japanese support online. <u>Weak points</u> : Files too short. One announcer, so may become boring. Maybe too much audio Japanese.

Best Podcasts for Higher-Level Students

	Name	Comments
1	英会話 eChat Vancouver	Discussions, slang, culture. Fast speech. Bilingual audio. 10-15 min clips. <u>Good points</u> : Interesting and energetic. <u>Weak points</u> : No transcripts. Must listen to audio commercials.
2	南美布の Step up with TOEIC	TOEIC practice. Co-sponsored by Nikkei Net and TOEIC. 10 min. <u>Good points</u> : Well-made. <u>Weak points</u> : Scripts limited. No new files since summer 2007.
3	Splendid Speaking	Nonnatives from various countries do some talking, then a native corrects the speech. Free script and comprehension questions available by e-mail. 10 min. <u>Good points</u> : Nice idea for improving speaking skills. <u>Weak points</u> : Not so exciting. Some students don't want to listen to nonnative students.
4	Eiken Times: めざせ1級！リーディングで高める英語力	Talks about the Eiken test. 10 min. <u>Good points</u> : Well-made. <u>Weak points</u> : Not very exciting. Archives small. Only some script.
5	Grammar Girl's Quick and Dirty Tips for Better Writing	Talks about vocabulary and grammar, aimed mostly toward native speakers. 3-5 min. <u>Good points</u> : Interesting niche. <u>Weak points</u> : Too fast for most learners.
6	English, baby! Daily Podcasts	Various discussions. 1-3 min. <u>Good points</u> : Energetic talks. Script and comprehension exercises on line. <u>Weak points</u> : Too fast for a lot of students. Talks too short. Archives hard to access.

Best Video Podcasts

	Name	Comments
1	Weblish: メディア英会話	Comedy stories. 10 min. Subtitles. <u>Good points:</u> Unique footage. College students will really like this! <u>Weak points:</u> Script on video only. Few language notes.
2	The Daily English Show	Clips from around the world. Produced in Hokkaido by Sarah (a native of New Zealand) 2-10 min. <u>Good points:</u> Exciting! <u>Weak points:</u> 2007 episodes seem to have more online Japanese support than newer episodes.
3	Station 81.com: 日常英会話	Clips from abroad. 3-6 min. <u>Good points:</u> Well made. Japanese support. <u>Weak points:</u> Too fast for some students. Maybe too much Japanese.
4	Gaba G Style English	Conversation situations. Lower intermediate. 10 min. <u>Good points:</u> Well-made. <u>Weak points:</u> Script on video only.

Best Business Podcasts for Intermediate-Level Students

	Name	Comments
1	EigoTown Podcasting: The Nikkei Weekly Interview	Based on Nikkei's English newspaper. High level. Natural speed. 20 min. <u>Good points:</u> Well made. Script. A few words translated. Long recordings. <u>Weak points:</u> Too difficult for most college students. Little Japanese support. Stopped production in Aug. '07.
2	Let's Read the Nikkei Weekly	Bilingual talk. Also high level. 30 min. <u>Good points:</u> Well made. Long files. Nice vocabulary notes on line. <u>Weak points:</u> Commercials. To get detailed written support, a person needs to buy the newspaper.
3	Business English Pod.com	Discussions about business English. Natural speed. 10 min. <u>Good points:</u> Very well made. <u>Weak points:</u> Only a small part of each script is free. Supplementary exercises cost money.

Best News Podcast for Intermediate-Level Students

	Name	Comments
1	英語モノにする Podcast	Short news broadcast read at regular speed, slow speed, and with a detailed audio vocabulary and grammar explanation. Read by a bilingual Japanese man. 5 min. <u>Good points:</u> Lower-intermediate level students can study important news. <u>Weak points:</u> Only one reader may be boring. No trimmings such as lead-in music.

Best Culture Podcasts for Intermediate-Level Students

	Name	Comments
1	Voice of America Special English	Culture and news talks, especially concerning the US. 5-15 min. <u>Good points</u> : Educational culture points. All vocabulary among 1,500 most frequent. Slow English. Scripts. <u>Weak points</u> : May not be exciting enough for young Japanese adults. Few vocabulary explanations.
2	Languagecaster.com	Soccer talk! 10-20 min. <u>Good points</u> : Comprehensive scripts, and worksheets. <u>Weak points</u> : Sometimes too fast for a lot of students. Few audio vocabulary explanations. No Japanese support. Not everyone likes soccer.
3	Cross Cultural Seminar	A male former Japanese NHK English announcer and an American woman talk about cross-cultural topics. Audio vocabulary explanations. 10 min. <u>Good points</u> : Nice talks. Speakers are professionals. <u>Weak points</u> : No script. They use too much Japanese?
4	Deborah's Smooth English from New York	One American speaks with a Japanese friend about interesting cultural topics, especially around New York City. Based on Tokyo FM's program called "Tapestry." Relatively slow speed. 5 min. <u>Good points</u> : New York is an interesting place. <u>Weak points</u> : Only a small part of the transcript. Full scripts are possibly available, but are hard to locate. Very little language support.
5	English Conversations	Unique interviews with people around the world. Culture talks. 1-3 min. <u>Good points</u> : World accents. Scripts. <u>Weak points</u> : Short files. Little language help.
6	The Bardwell Road Centre Podcast	Podcasts made by students in Britain. Interviews of foreign students. 15-20 min. <u>Good points</u> : Interesting idea. <u>Weak point</u> : No scripts.

Best Language Podcasts for Intermediate-Level Students

	Name	Comments
1	ECC 英会話 Podcasting	Idioms used in conversations. Low-intermediate level. Part of script on line. 10-15 min. <u>Good points</u> : Well made. <u>Weak points</u> : Too much Japanese? Promos.
2	日米会話学院 Podcasting	Conversational expressions. American man and Japanese woman. Only English. 5 min. <u>Good points</u> : Well made. Script. Relatively slow. <u>Weak points</u> : No Japanese support online.
3	GTBcast	Language talks. Conversation strategies, pronunciation, idioms, etc. 20 min. <u>Good points</u> : Produced in Japan for Japanese students. Script. Good teaching style. <u>Weak points</u> : No Japanese support. One person speaking may become boring.
4	BBC Learning English: Talk about English	Discussions about language. <u>Good points</u> : High-quality production. Longer clips, about 20 min. <u>Weak points</u> : Too fast for some learners. Only current episodes downloadable.

5	BBC Learning English: Grammar Challenge	Grammar talks. Nice if you like grammar. 6 min. <u>Good points:</u> High-quality production. Comprehension quizzes. <u>Weak points:</u> Too fast for some learners. Only current episodes downloadable.
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Best Language & Culture Podcasts: Intermediate Level

	Name	Comments
1	English Journal: Space ALC Podcasting Station	Talks about movies, TOEIC, and various topics. 5-10 min. <u>Good points:</u> Well produced. A lot of scripts on line. <u>Weak points:</u> Time-consuming promos. Script only sometimes available for free.
2	EigoTown Podcasting: 英語の ヒントシリーズ	Easy conversations, and culture drama. Audio Japanese support. 10-15 min. <u>Good points:</u> Well made. <u>Weak points:</u> Only a small amount of script on line. Too much Japanese. Some promo ads.
3	ESL and Archie Comics	Comics! Audio file explanations, while visual comics are on Web site. One speaker explains vocabulary and meaning of comics. 10 min. <u>Good points:</u> Fun. Many students love comics. Good vocabulary explanations. Relatively slow. <u>Weak points:</u> Visuals not downloadable to an iPod. One speaker may become boring. Relatively small archive, and no recent files.
4	The English Teacher John Show	Culture and language topics. Sometimes interviews, sometimes alone. Clips 15-45 min. <u>Good points:</u> Slow speaking. Made in Japan, so takes up Japanese topics. Longer shows. <u>Weak points:</u> No Japanese support. One speaker so might become boring.
5	Listen to English- Learn English	Grammar and culture talks. 3-5 min. clips. <u>Good points:</u> Interesting. Nice slow speed. Full script. Notes and quizzes. <u>Weak points:</u> Usually only one person speaking. No Japanese support. Files short.
6	English Aya Pod	Various discussions. 5-10 min. <u>Good points:</u> Produced in Japan. <u>Weak points:</u> No free script. Fast speech. Some commercials.
7	エイゴの時間	Language and culture talks. One Japanese woman talking. 2-4 min. <u>Good points:</u> Nice expressions. Only English on audio file, but lots of Japanese support online. <u>Weak points:</u> Only small part of script available. One announcer, so a bit boring. Short files.
8	EigoTown Podcasting: Time Magazine	News talks based on the magazine. An American and a Japanese discuss. Bilingual audio. 15 min. <u>Good points:</u> Well-made. Nice casual style. <u>Weak points:</u> No script. Too much audio Japanese? No new files since summer 2007.
9	English in the Real World	Both culture topics (especially British) and talks about learning English. 15 min. <u>Good points:</u> Nice pre-listening comprehension questions. Relatively slow. Dictation exercises. <u>Weak points:</u> Mainly one speaker, so maybe not so interesting. Only the most recent shows have full scripts.

CONCLUSION

This study has found that only about 10% (31 out of 298) of students have ever listened to podcasts of any type. Of the students who have listened to them, about half say they sometimes listen to English-learning podcasts. The study also found that two out of three students have digital audio players (such as iPods) or music-enabled cellular phones (such as Walkmans), so most students have the potential of downloading podcasts and using them very conveniently. Many students say that in the future they would like to listen to drama, conversation, and TOEIC podcasts in English.

Some of the best podcasts for intermediate-level Japanese learners of English were found to be Weblish: メディア英会話, The Daily English Show, 英会話eChat Vancouver, English Journal, ECC 英会話Podcasting, Voice of America Special English, and the Nikkei Weekly Interview. The best podcasts often have Japanese support, full transcripts, comprehension exercises, longer files, and rich archives. Especially, they appeal to the interests of young Japanese adults. The video podcasts received some of this highest scores in this study.

The results of this research are being utilized to produce high-quality podcasts at Hiroshima University. Those podcasts will be made open to the public within the next two years.

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Appendix:

Points Awarded for Each Evaluation Criterion

C1= Interesting and Pedagogically Sound; C2= Japanese Support; C3= English Transcripts; C4 =Vocabulary-Grammar Explanations and Worksheets; C5 = Ample Archives; C6 = Moderately-long Listening Files; C7 = Slightly Slower than Native-Speaker Conversation.

Name	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	Total Score
1) The Bardwell Road Centre Podcast	23	0	0	1	4	3	2	30
2) BBC Learning English: How to...	30	0	20	6	2	1	1	60
3) BBC Learning English: Grammar Challenge	30	0	20	8	2	1	1	62
4) BBC Learning English: Talk about English	35	0	20	2	2	3	1	63
5) BetteratEnglish.com	30	0	20	2	2	1	1	56
6) The Bob & Rob Show	15	0	0	2	4	3	4	28
7) Breaking News	25	0	20	8	4	1	4	62
8) BusinessEnglishPod.com	35	0	3	2	4	3	2	49
9) CNN Student News	30	0	20	4	4	2	0	60
10) Cross Cultural Seminar	20	15	0	3	4	2	3	47
11) The Daily English Show	40	16	20	4	4	1	1	86
12) Dave Kee' s Podcasts for Students & Teachers	10	0	0	1	4	2	4	21
13) David 先生の英語リスニングルーム : eigolistening.com	9	2	0	0	2	0	3	16
14) Deborah's Smooth English from New York	30	3	0	1	4	1	3	42
15) ECC 英会話 Podcasting	30	20	15	3	4	3	2	77
16) 英会話 eChat Vancouver	40	15	0	3	4	3	0	65
17) Effortless English Podcast	10	0	0	2	2	1	4	19
18) EigoTown Podcasting: 英語のヒントシリーズ	35	20	8	3	1	3	2	72
19) EigoTown Podcasting: The Nikkei Weekly Interview	30	20	20	1	2	3	0	76
20) EigoTown Podcasting: Time Magazine	20	15	0	2	3	3	1	44
21) Eiken Times: めざせ1級！リーディングで高める英語力	20	10	10	3	1	2	2	48
22) Eiken Times: 英検と遠山先生の Ken's Cafe	20	20	5	4	0	2	3	54
23) ELT Podcast: Basic conversations	20	0	20	1	0	1	4	46
24) English Aya Pod	22	20	0	2	2	2	1	47
25) English, baby! Daily Podcasts	20	2	20	3	1	0	0	46
26) English Conversations	18	0	20	0	2	0	0	40
27) English Essentials	10	0	20	8	1	0	1	40
28) English Grammar HELP and Podcasts for the inquisitive ESL Student	20	0	2	3	2	1	4	32
29) English Journal: Space ALC Podcasting Station	35	20	15	4	4	2	3	83
30) English Mojo	15	0	20	1	2	2	3	43
31) English Pod	20	0	0	2	2	3	0	27
32) English Podcast	7	0	0	1	1	3	1	13
33) The English Teacher John Show	25	0	20	3	4	4	4	60
34) ESL Aloud	25	0	20	0	4	2	4	55
35) ESL and Archie Comics	30	0	20	6	1	2	4	63
36) ESL Business News	20	0	20	0	1	2	4	47
37) ESLpod.com	20	0	0	2	4	3	4	33

38) ESLPod.com's Guide to the TOEFL® Test Podcast	20	0	8	3	2	3	3	39
39) ESLpodTV	30	3	20	6	1	1	2	63
40) English in the Real World	20	0	10	3	2	3	3	41
41) Gaba G Style English	35	20	15	5	4	3	1	83
42) Genki English	20	20	10	2	1	0	2	55
43) goFluent's English in the Real World	25	0	0	2	2	2	4	35
44) Grammar Girl's Quick and Dirty Tips for Better Writing	18	0	20	4	4	1	0	47
45) GTBcast	28	0	20	3	4	4	4	63
46) Johnny's ESL Page	15	0	5	4	4	2	3	33
47) Languagecaster.com	25	0	20	6	4	3	0	58
48) Let's Read the Nikkei Weekly	35	20	0	4	4	4	1	68
49) Linguivocal	5	0	0	4	1	4	0	14
50) Listen to English- Learn English	20	0	20	6	4	1	4	55
51) Machigai Podcast	35	20	0	4	4	1	4	68
52) Matt's Today in History	8	0	8	0	3	2	1	22
53) Melinda's ESL for Work	7	0	5	3	1	1	2	19
54) Mr. Bakin's ESL Podcast	10	0	0	0	2	0	1	13
55) NHK World Radio Japan: English	9	0	0	0	4	2	1	16
56) The Pig's Ear	15	0	0	3	3	1	3	25
57) Podictionary Weekly	6	0	20	2	4	4	0	36
58) Seigakuin Radio English Broadcast	15	0	0	1	2	3	1	22
59) Speaking English Podcast	20	0	0	4	2	1	3	30
60) Splendid Speaking	20	0	17	5	4	2	2	50
61) Station 81.com: 日常英会話	40	20	15	3	4	1	2	85
62) Station 81.com: Brain Food 英単語集	2	20	20	0	4	0	4	50
63) Station 81.com: Marimo's English	2	20	0	1	4	4	1	32
64) Very Vocabulary	10	0	0	3	4	2	1	20
65) Voice of America Special English	30	0	20	1	4	2	4	61
66) Weblish: メディア英会話	40	20	15	4	4	2	2	87
67) オリンパス英会話スクール	10	3	0	4	0	2	1	20
68) 英語をモノにする Podcast	20	20	20	6	3	1	4	74
69) 英語脳の芽が育つ	5	20	20	6	4	0	4	59
70) エイゴの時間	13	20	5	3	3	0	3	47
71) こどもと英語で話そう	20	15	0	2	4	2	3	46
72) 戸田奈津子「映画の中の英語」	5	20	0	3	4	1	2	35
73) 日米会話学院 Podcasting	35	0	20	3	3	1	3	65
74) 南美布の Step up with TOEIC	20	20	5	3	2	2	1	53
75) 毎日ちょこっとリスニング CNN English Express	25	20	10	8	4	0	3	70
76) 毎日1～3分 ポッドキャスト英語日記	12	20	20	6	4	0	3	65
77) ユーキャンのポッドキャストインク	30	20	20	4	1	3	4	82

Following the numbering of the podcasts on the left in the table above, the podcasts were classified according to genre in the following way: For Lower-Level Students: 23, 27, 42, 51, 69, 76, 77. For Higher-Level Students: 16, 21, 25, 30, 38, 43, 44, 49, 57, 60, 64, 74. Video Podcasts: 9, 11, 39, 41, 59, 61, 62, 66. Business Podcasts: 8, 19, 31, 36, 48, 53. News Podcasts: 7, 55, 68. Culture Podcasts: 1, 10, 14, 26, 32, 47, 52, 54, 56, 58, 63, 65. Language Podcasts: 3, 4, 5, 15, 22, 34, 45, 71, 73. Language and Culture Podcasts: 6, 12, 13, 17, 18, 20, 24, 28, 29, 33, 35, 37, 40, 46, 50, 67, 70, 72.

要 約

良質の英語学習用ポッドキャスト

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英語のリスニングの技能を向上させるための新しくかつ刺激的な方法の一つとしてポッドキャストがある。楽しいだけでなく教育的でもあるサウンドファイルを、学生たちは iPod やコンピューターにインターネットから無料でダウンロードすることができる。重要なのは、日々のニュースから異文化情報、スピーキングの技能さらには英文法をめぐる議論まで、彼らに関心を持つ諸々のテーマの議論を、しかも無料で聞くことができる点である。

本研究は三つの部分からなる。我々は、まず第一に良質の英語学習用ポッドキャストの特質に関し、どのようなタイプのポッドキャストが英語学習に効果的であるかを検討した。次に、298人の日本人大学生を対象にアンケート調査を行い、彼ら現在がどのようにポッドキャストを使っているか、どういうポッドキャストを望んでいるかについて調べた。最後に、インターネット上の無料で利用可能な77の英語学習用ポッドキャストサイトを分析し、最良のサイトをいくつか選び出した。

この研究の結果からわかったこととしては、たとえば、現在、3人に2人の大学生がデジタル・オーディオプレーヤー（例：iPod）や音楽再生機能のついた携帯電話（例：携帯ウォークマン）を持っており、簡単にポッドキャストをダウンロードして使うことができる環境にある。しかし驚くべきことにわずかその1割（298人中31人）の学生しかポッドキャストを聴いたことがなく、その半分のみが、英語学習用ポッドキャストをときどき利用しているに過ぎなかった。英語の中級レベルの日本人学生に適したポッドキャストの例としては、たとえば Weblish: メディア英会話、the Daily English Show、English Journal などのサイトがあることも明らかになった。