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Investigating Students' Perceptions towards the Implication of ELT Podcasts in Teaching Listening Comprehension

Case Study: Third Year LMD Students at Ahmed Salhi Naama

Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of "Master" in Linguistics.

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Dedication

***T**his dissertation is dedicated to:*

***M**y lovely mother, the light of my life*

***M**y father, who always back me up despite his sickness*

***M**y brothers and sisters*

***M**y cute nephews: Fethi and Hibat El Rahman*

***M**y friends and classmates who always encouraged me to fulfill this work.*

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Abstract

Nowadays, in the classroom, students who are learning English as a foreign language are required to maintain the four language skills including listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, despite the importance of the integration of the four skills, listening as a receptive skill seems to be the most challenging one that EFL students attempt to master in order to succeed in their communi**c**ation circle. Therefore, the current investigation aims at assessing the implication of educational podcasts as a media sharing service in developing EFL students' listening abilities as well as exploring their attitudes and perceptions towards this technique. Thus, the researcher has designed two research instruments including a structured classroom observation in addition to a questionnaire submitted to students in order to obtain both quantitative and qualitative data. In fact, twenty seven (27) third year LMD students at the level of foreign language department "section of English" at Ahmed Salhi university Centre of Naama were chosen randomly from the wider population as a representative sample.The research obtained data revealthat students are enthusiastic and curious towards the use of podcasts and it is highly an effective tool in enhancing their listening comprehension skills.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ALM: Audio Lingual Method

BUP: Bottom-up Process

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

ICT: Information Communication Technology

LMD: License, Master, Doctorate

MP3: Moving Picture-Layer 3 (Audio file format/extension).

MP4: Massively Parallel Prototype Production Project-Layer 4.

NET: Internet

RSS: Real Syndication System

TDP: Top-down Process

TV: Television

General Introduction

Language is a means of communication and expressiveness among human beings. Nowadays, as globalization has taken place, multicultural communities have increased as well, then the need to learn other foreign languages becomes necessary in order to interact with the members of those speech communities. Therefore, learning English as a foreign or second language has gained a great attention all over the world in different domains such as business, cultural exchange, and social networking communication. (S.Sravani, 2016, p 493).

The contribution of traditional teaching methods in developing EFL students' oral proficiency has been considered insufficient. As a result, EFL teachers have shifted their interests into implementing ICT (Information Communication Technology) based tools to better validate and guarantee valuable outcomes. Simply put, ICT has opened doors for knowledge construction as it provides a variety of tools and audio visual resources (Clara, C., Joao, B., 2010, p.20). Thus, students become able to learn at their own pace in more personalized manner and giving sense to what they listen and see as well as serving their needs especially for large classes with different learning styles.

Similarly, Prashi (2009, p. 252) has stressed on the importance of media sharing services as scaffolding that feed users and allow them to search for different contents and self-correct their ideas and notions. Among these services, podcasting has dominated. Accordingly, podcasts are used by teachers as a tool to record their lectures and publishing them for their students. Listening to educational podcasts in EFL classrooms enables students to develop their aural and cognitive skills. In addition, via podcasts, teachers can motivate their students to listen to audio and visual contents on their areas of Interest, creating group discussions and introducing new lexical items. In fact, the researcher has chosen 3rd year students level due to the importance of listening as an essential skill to develop their linguistic proficiencies and communicative competencies. Therefore, the problematic set out to this research work is as follow:

*To what extent does podcasting strategy influence 3rd year EFL students' listening abilities in the University Centre of Naama?

Based on the main question stated above, the following sub questions are introduced:

1. Do EFL teachers of oral expression at Ahmed Salhi University Centre of Naama rely on podcasts while teaching listening comprehension?
2. What are the attitudes of 3rd year EFL students towards listening to podcasts in and outside the classroom?
3. How do teachers select the appropriate podcasts?

To answer the recent questions, the following hypotheses are advocated:

1. EFL teachers of oral expression may use ELT podcasts in the most of their sessions as it enables them to make their teaching more comprehensible as well as fostering their students' engagement and listening comprehension.
2. Podcasts technique is innovative and EFL students are interested and enthusiastic to depend on for the development of their listening abilities according to its content, objectives, styles, and others. Moreover, students may also listen to podcasts outside the classroom for the sake of strengthening their comprehension and lexical background.
3. EFL teachers may select the appropriate podcasts based on many criteria, such as: content, language proficiency, time-frame, and others.

In order to probe the effectiveness of using ELT podcasts in fostering students' aural skills, this research has been divided into two main chapters. The first chapter reviews some essential backgrounds and insights about listening as a challenging skill and its main components as well as its significance in English language teaching. In addition, this chapter is also devoted for the introduction of podcasts as an educational support in teaching listening comprehension including its main types, content, advantages and drawbacks, and its importance in teaching and learning processes.

The second chapter highlights the research procedures and data collection methods that have been based on. Thus, in order to reach the investigation target aims, 3rd year students at Ahmed Salhi University Centre have been chosen from the

whole population as a sample. Basically, the researcher has designed two research instruments including a structured classroom observation conducted by the researcher to observe teachers' and student's actions and reactions while being exposed to podcasts in oral expression session and a questionnaire submitted to students to point out their attitudes and perceptions towards the significance of listening to podcasts as a listening comprehension development tool. Those instruments have been implemented purposely to get both quantitative and qualitative data as well as ensuring research validity. In addition, the final results are dealt with under one section where some suggestions and recommendations are drawn.

Chapter One

Literature Review

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1.1.Introduction

English language learning is regarded as a complex process that carries a number of steps and procedures based on a set of skills. Listening is one of these skills that has received attention due to its complexity and variability among EFL students. Therefore, EFL teachers have always been interested in using authentic materials for the sake of providing more comprehensible input for their students and improving their learning outcomes. In fact, educational podcasts take place as a teaching aid that may create a vivid learning atmosphere and offer a vantage to develop students' listening comprehension.

This chapter highlights the notion of teaching listening comprehension via educational podcasts. It aims at discussing the main concepts related to listening skill including its background, its definition, listening comprehension mechanisms and strategies, as well as, the different sub-skills involved in listening and the importance of teaching listening in EFL classrooms. Moreover, this chapter introduces some definitions of podcasts as a teaching strategy, its major types and contents, the process of creating a podcast, as well as, its advantages and disadvantages in the learning environment. Furthermore, an association between podcasts and listening skill will be dealt with.

1.2. Teaching Language Skills

Teaching any language requires a set of elements or components to reach the target aims. Language educators refer to these elements as the four basic skills including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These skills are conventionallylabeled as the "macro-skills" in contrast to the "micro-skills which entail grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and spelling (Hakan, 2014, p.673)

The four skills of language are classified into two types: receptive skills and productive skills. The former entail listening and reading while the latter consist of speaking and writing. As its name implies, receptive or sometimes passive skills involve reception and interpretation since learners do not produce the language but rather receive and understand it. On the other hand, productive skills (or active

skills) require learners to produce the language; they have to articulate spoken words and written scripts to communicate, share ideas, and solve problems (Richards and Schmidt 2002, cited in Rahman and Akhter, 2017, p. 32). By and large, the four skills shape the process of communication in both oral and written modes.

However, listening seems to be the most important skill in learning English as a foreign language. In this sense, Gary and Gary (1981)[1] contend that prioritizing listening over other skills has many benefits which are cited as follow:

a) - **A cognitive benefit:** in which the learner's attention is directed to only one skill rather than focusing on two or more skills simultaneously.

b) - **Speed of coverage:** by which learners receive knowledge faster than producing it.

c) - **Motivation:** where listening tasks increase learners' willingness to engage in real language situations (communication).

d) - **A psychological benefit:** in which listening activities reduce learners' stress, shyness, and glossophobia.

1.3. The Teaching of Listening

Traditionally, foreign languages were taught for the sake of reading and writing when learners used to read literary passages from the classics and translate them into their first language. Teaching was based on reading and translation. Listening was almost discarded. However, **the audio lingual method** took place as a dominant foreign language teaching method in the 1960s and early 1970s. In that period, teaching listening became increasingly valued since A.L.M stressed on forming students who are able to communicate effectively in the target language. Hence, this method was based on the behaviorism psychology when language laboratories emerged. It focused on listening to audio recordings, the memorization

[1]Cited in Nation and Newton (2009, pp. 38-39).Teaching ESL/EFL Listening and Speaking. New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.

and the rote practice of scripts (dialogues) that include different language patterns (grammatical structures). (Wilson,2008, p.17).

In addition, **the natural approach** has been founded by Tracy Terrell (1981) taking its principles from Krashen's monitor model that ensure the importance of teaching listening through exposing learners to much comprehensible input. Krashen'sinput hypothesisreveals that language is acquired when people understand messages by means of language materials that have not to be neither too easy nor too difficult.(Richards, et al, 1985, cited in Nunan 2003, p. 25). Therefore, listening has become a crucial source of comprehensible input.

Moreover, **the communicative language teaching approach** has also favored listening as a means of developing the ability of the learner to put language into practice in any situation and developing his or her communicative competence. C.L.T advocates the use of authentic materials such as audio recordings that represent the learner's daily life activities to make language more contextualized and vivid. (Wilson, 2008, p. 19).

To sum up, teaching listening has become essential and effective with the appearance of the audio lingual method of teaching in addition to the other modern approaches which have shifted the interest of teaching EFL from a prescriptive standpoint into the actual use of language as a means of communication.

1.3.1. Listening Skill Overview

Listening is considered as one of the receptive skills in addition to reading. However, it is quite common that listening is more complex than reading through which students should carefully recognize the spoken words and understand their meanings. In the same vein, Nation and Newton (2009) have claimed that:

> **Listening is the way of learning the language. It gives the learner information from which to build up the knowledge necessary for using the language. When this knowledge is built up, the learner can begin to speak. The listening-only period is a time of observation and learning which provides the basis for the other language skills. (p.38)**

In other words, listening provides an effective learning platform for learners through supplementing them with information needed to build up a mental map in the mind that will be used during oral performance.

Additionally, listening plays a remarkable role in the learner's communication circle as it feeds his/her linguistic competence and improves his lexical and syntactic background, and boosting his semantic abilities such as understanding and meaning decoding.(Field, 2008, p.5) .Similarly, Rost (2002) has identified listening as meaning based in which studentsare highly attentive when they receive aural messages .Simply put, they analyze the speaker's intended message, decoding it and relating it with their prior knowledge grounded in their minds.(Cited in Bingol, 2017, p.109).

1.3.2. Types of listening

Listening as an important and complex skill can be categorized into various sub-skills which operate together making the teaching process more adequate and balanced.

1.3.2.1.Intensive Listening:is one in which the listener concentrates on every single detail in the listening passage i.e. he/she listens carefully to grasp particular sounds, lexical and grammatical items. For this type, teachers may include some tasks and assignments such as dictation, elicited repetition, and error spotting. (Rost, 2002, p. 184).

1.3.2.2. Selective Listening: in which the listener has a pre- determined aim for listening to a piece of information i.e. listening to what they need to fulfill a particular task and discarding what is irrelevant. In this context, note taking can be used in the form of tasks such as filling in the gaps with messing words. (ibid, pp. 187-188).

1.3.2.3.Interactive Listening: here, the learner engages actively in the process of listening comprehension through working collaboratively in different activities such

as asking questions, clarifying answers and opinions, and affording feedback. (ibid, p.190).

1.3.2.4. Extensive Listening: which refers to listening for pleasure through which the listener tends to further listen to audio recordings focusing on the content. This requires extended periods of time. Extensive listening can take place inside the classroom (academic setting) where the teacher should provide sheltered instructions .i.e. short listening contents to avoid exposing learners to too much input, as well as outside the classroom. (ibid, p. 194).

1.3.2.5. Responsive Listening: this type focuses mainly on the listeners' responses to what theyhear. However, the listenersare not required to parrot the content of the listening passage, but rather discussing it and expressing their ideas and viewpoints. Teachers can use some tasks such as **paused task** where they present short audio recordings and stop it at a particular point to attract students' responses. (ibid, p. 198).

1.3.2.6. Autonomous Listening: which refers to self- directed listening where the learners themselves decide what to listen to independentlywithout the control of the teacher i.e. they design their own listening tasks, reflect on their own listening problems. Therefore, they can learn at their own pace in more personalized manner (students-centered approach). (ibid, p. 200).

1.3.3. The effect of Listening on Speaking

There is no doubt that listening differs from speaking as the former is receptive while the latter is productive. However, the two skills are complementary and go hand in hand in the process of oral communication. Admittedly, Noblitt (1995) corroborates that listening and reading are the starting point in learning any language as they provide the learner with what he calls **declarative knowledge.** As a result, students are able to speak if they activate that knowledge into linguistic items. (Cited in Astorga, 2015, p.45).

Listening is considered as the input of oral communication in which the listener cannot speak effectively or perform appropriately in communicative situations if he/she has poor listeningabilities.As a result, teaching listening contributes a great deal in developing students' speaking skills. According to Oprandy (1994, p. 153), EFL students cannot achieve fluency without developing their listening skills since every speaker is simultaneously a listener and every listener is potentionally a speaker.Therefore, it is imperatively to consider that listening comprehension is the source and the input of language and speaking is the output.

1.4. Listening Comprehension

Listening comprehension in second language learning refers to the different mechanisms used by the learners to derive the meaning of what they hear. It is a highly complex process that requires learners to implement their cognitive skills and strategies to decode the spoken discourse. In this respect, Vandergrift (1999, p. 168) accentuates that

> **Listening comprehension is anything but a passive activity. It is a complex, active process in which the listener must discriminate between sounds, understand vocabulary and grammatical structures, interpret stress and intonation, retain what was gathered in all of the above, and interpret it within the immediate as well as the larger sociocultural context of the utterance**

Therefore, listening is not passive since the listeners engage actively in the comprehension of the messages being sent; they assign the meaning of what is being heard taking into consideration all the aspects of the message including sound measurement, the speech deliver's tone of voice , grammatical and semantic features, and make an association between the new material (i.e. the message) presented in the listening passage or record and their posterior knowledge depending on linguistic clues.

Moreover, despite the fact that comprehension is considered as the major outcome of listening, it may not be easily observed since listening is described as a covert skill. Thus, for EFL teachers, the only way to ensure that their learners

achieve comprehension is to rely on overt responses through spoken or written communication, facial expressions and gestures performed by learners. However, this depends on the listener' affective variables, the nature of the task, and the environmental conditions. (Schwartz, 1998, p.3).

1.4.1. Listening Comprehension Stages

In designing a listening lesson, EFL teachers follow gradually a number of stages using particular tasks and activities for each stage to allow their learners achieving comprehension. (Schwartz, 1998, p.14).

1.4.1.1. The Pre-Listening Stage

The pre-listening stage is the first step in a listening lecture in which the teacher prepares his students through introducing specific activities which help them to have an idea about the new material. The activities used by the teacher may be in the form of **discussion**by which students are recommended to bring their prior knowledge about the topic. In addition, the teacher should **pre-teach some vocabulary** and **background information** related to the topic to make students having reasons to listen and to predict the content of the listening passage they are going to listen to. This is done through reading something relevant, looking at pictures and so on. (ibid, p.16-17).

1.4.1.2. The While-Listening Stage

The while listening stage comes right after the previous one by which the teacher introduces a piece of text or recording and ask students to listen carefully and take notes. Afterwards, he provides students with activities such as **filling in gaps the missing words in a picture, items or events sequence**. Thereby, by providing feedback, the teacher ensures that students are able to monitor their listening strategies and make their learning process more meaningful rather than rote memorization of answers. (ibid, pp. 17-18).

1.4.1.3. The Post-Listening Stage

The post-listening stage is the last step of a listening lesson which comes after hearing the text several times where the teacher prepares certain activities. These activities seek to ensure learners' comprehension of the listening passage, and evaluating their listening strategies. Post-listening activities would entail role- play debate, and problem-solving tasks. (ibid, pp. 18-19). Therefore, post-listening activities reinforces learners' listening comprehension, allowing them to construct their own schemas, and developing their speech output.

Consequently, by following these three stages, students would be characterized as competent listeners and active learners.

1.4.2. Listening Comprehension Mechanisms

Listeningmechanisms refer to the processesthat the listener relies on in the operation of speech perception. There are two different processes that allow the listener to decode the aural messages:

1.4.2.1. Bottom-up Process

The term bottom– up process refers to cognitive operation where the listener tries to decipher the incoming message using his linguistic knowledge**. "The bottom-up model emphasizes the decoding of the smallest units - phonemes and syllables - to lead us towards meaning"**. (Wilson 2008, p.15). Thus, the listener first recognizes sounds in isolation (phonetic elements), then he divides the input stream into syllables and words which then, are intricately put together to construct sentences. Finally, the listener delivers speech by turning out these sentences into texts and conversations based on existing schemas.

Therefore, the bottom - up strategy is characterized as text-based as the listener concentrates on the language rather the content of the message. In BUP, the listener combines lexical items (sounds and elements) with the grammatical aspects of language to derive the meaning of what he or she hears.

1.4.2.2. Top-down Process

Unlike the bottom-up model which moves from language to meaning, top-down processing refers to the implication of non- linguistic knowledge in the comprehension of the meaning of a message. Thus, TDP entails the transition from meaning to language. In other words, the listener utilizes his/her prior knowledge to predict the content or the meaning of the message. The listener's posterior knowledge involves insights about the topic, the form and the context of communication and the participants. (Richards, 2008, p. 7).

To put in a nutshell, it would appear that both bottom-up and top down processes work in a harmony allowing learners to develop their listening fluency in which they can listen to any passage and recognize its content smoothly and attentively.

1.5.Listening Strategies

Teaching listening successfully requires the listener to utilize a set of strategies which allow him to manage the listening task i.e. knowing how to focus on the content of a text and how to listen to. There are two kinds of strategies that aim at making the listener engage actively:

1.5.1.Cognitive Strategies:

The term of cognitive strategies refers to a set of mental tasks and activitiesthat are related to the comprehension and the storage of the input in short term-memory and long- term memory and how it can be recalled. Buck (2001) highlights the following strategies:

a) **Comprehension process:** which reveal how linguistic and nonlinguistic inputs are processed.
b) **Storing and memory processes:** which is related to the way linguistic and nonlinguistic input is stored in the short-term memory and long-term memory.

c) **Using and retrieval processes:** This entails how to access to memory in order to release an output.(p.104).

1.5.2. Metacognitive Strategies

The term metacognitionis identified as knowing about knowing or thinking about thinking.Livingston (1997) asserts that metacognition is a psychological state in which one is aware of his own thinking processes. Hence, students tend to use their owntechniques in decoding and interpreting aural input. Conventionally, Listeners use different skills and strategies known as metacognitive strategies. Schwartz(1998, p.7) has identified a set of metacognitive sub-skills or procedurescited as follow:

a) **Planning:** the learner determines and chooses what to listen to.
b) **Monitoring:** the listener monitor his comprehension and the influence of the strategies he or she has chosen.
c) **Evaluating:** checking if the learning objectives have been reached, and reflecting on the listening strategies.

1.6. The Significance of Teaching Listening Comprehension

The fact that listening comprehension requires much attention and focus lead to assume that learners are in need to get exposed to more authentic and comprehensible listening resources. According to Rost (1994) and Ziane (2011), the teaching of listening comprehension provides more fruitful advantages for learners because they are going to receive input which cannot be caught and maintained without comprehension. On the functional level, the absence of comprehension would make the learning handicapped. (Cited in Gilakjani and Sabouri, 2016, p. 1672).

The teaching of listening comprehension enables the learners to receive much comprehensible input necessary for the development of their language development. In this vein, Morely (2001, p. 70) asserts that listening is regarded as the core skill responsible for the provision of the grammatical elements and structures and the

perception of new lexical items for learners who themselves will be able to contextualize them in different communicative situations.

1.7. Podcasting as a Teaching and Learning Aid

Recently, the new digital technologies become a central part in the educational setting as it assists EFL teachers and learners with digital resources that afford authentic inputs. Podcasting become wildly appreciated and popular since it allows learners to access to real, free and valuable resources that contain different contents and activities, as well as supporting teachers with the opportunity to record diverse courses and delivering them for their learners in a listening lesson. (Gromik 2008, cited in Rosell-Aguilar, 2013, p. 76).

Moreover, ELT teachers start implementing podcasts as a supporting teaching aid due to the diversity of its contents and the variety of topics and lessons included in those podcasts. Moreover, it is said to be that podcasts offer a great opportunity for flexibility and learning on the go as well as promoting students' learning experience in which they can listen to podcasts wherever and whenever they are, and reinforcing their knowledge background. (Frydenberg, 2008, p. 4).

Therefore, using podcasts in the teaching and learning environment allows teachers to adapt smoothly the teaching materials in accordance to their learners' needs and interests, as well as enabling them to develop their listening comprehension and personal engagement.

1.7.1. Definition of Podcasts

Podcasts are audio/video formats published in the internet asynchronously including voices, graphs, and pictures. In this concern, Paul Man (2006, p.p. 116-117) asserts that**"Podcasts are audio (sometimes video) programs on the Web which are usually updated at regular intervals. New episodes can be listened to on the computer, or downloaded to an MP3 player or iPod for later listening".** In otherwords, podcasting refers to a method of publishing content files via the internet where users are able to receive automatically the newest information after

subscribing to a feed. Podcasts have been also identified as the process of recording human voice, uploading it via the internet, and distributing it to the internet users. As a matter of fact, teachers depend on this tool as a technique of creating a collaborative learning atmosphere which requires the engagement of all the learners. (prashi, 2009, p. 252).

The concept of podcast is originated from the association of two words: i Pod(a mobile mp3 media player) and broadcasting (which refer to the transmission of news via television and radio). (Anna 2010, p.122). However, podcasting is quite different from broadcasting in which the former entails audio files that can be automatically downloaded using reader application such as iTunes and Google Reader after subscription through an RSS (Real Simple Syndication)) feeds. (Mahjouri and Purnall 2007, cited in El Qasim and al Fada, p. 31).

1.7.2. Types of Podcasts

Podcasts are characterized by its multiple formats that give users the opportunity to choose what suit them (see appendix A). Bolliger et al (as cited in Darwis, pp. 83-84) categorize podcasts in terms of the format of the content into three main types listed as follow:

1.7.2.1. Audio Podcast

Audio podcasts consists of only audio files without added slides, pictures or videos (i.e. it is purely audio). This type is highly admired in which the Net user can download easily and smoothly the audio episodes. Fortunately, audio podcasts demand a small storage capacity(less than 10MB) usually in mp3 format that can be played using an mp3 reader.

1.7.2.2. Video Podcasts

Video podcasts or vodcasts differ from the audio ones as they contain audio-visual content. i.e. this category resembles TV in which it requires a high band-width connection and a high storage capacity. Additionally, video podcasts are frequently created in an mp4 format that can be read using an mp4 player.

1.7.2.3. Enhanced Podcasts

This kind combines audio and synced (still) images through which the user can move from one slide to another in the form of slide show or PowerPoint. Basically, enhanced podcasts provide a platform for both audio and visual contents in the form of mp4.

1.7. 3. Pod-casting Process

The process of creating a podcast carries out multiple steps that should be followed carefully to ensure the clarity of the content. According toRajic (2013, pp. 90-91), there are three main stages when performing a podcast namely file production, podcast publication and delivery and playback.File production entails planning, writing and recording content in which the podcast creator needs a digital microphone connected to a computer and a program to initiate the edition and recording of the audio or visual episodes. Then, the podcaster films content, editing and saving it. In addition, the creator should generate an RSS feed which includes information concerning the podcast such as publishing date, title, and description of each episode. Finally, he should post the audio or audio-visual file into a website so that the listener can access the podcast automatically once he subscribes and listen freely using their portable devices or computers.

1.7.4. The Content of Podcasts

ELT podcasts cover a wide range of subjects and contents which ELT teachers implement in their courses as they allow them to plan the lesson according to their learners' needs and interests. [2]A brief survey of ELT podcasts reveals the following content types:

1.7.4.1.Comprehensive: which contain a variety of activities such as listening comprehension tasks, interviews and vocabulary.

[2]Taken From Man. P. S.Z.E, (2006, p. 118). Developing Students' listening and Speaking Skills through ELT Podcasts.Educational Journal.34(2), 116-119.

1.7.4.2. Whole lessons: this type of content is directly used by teacher (ready-made lessons) as it entailsaudio stories and texts usually accompanied with its written scripts where the host can listen and read simultaneously.

1.7.4.3. Vocabulary, idioms:this content is highly admired since it contains a huge amount of vocabulary usually contextualized in quotes to enable the learner to recognizing the different use of lexical items in different contexts when teaching using idioms and quotes.

1.7.4.4.Conversations with scripts: these are communicative activities structured in the form of conversations with native speakers with subtitles to help slow learners improving their language accuracy and fluency.

1.8.Educational Use of Podcast

The use of podcasts in English language teaching and especially in higher educational institutions has a myriad benefits and merits as well as a set of constraints which may slow down the process of teaching listening.

1.8.1. Benefits

Podcasts provide an innovative and enthusiastic way to support learning. The main important advantages of podcasts in EFL classroom, as Rajic(2013, p. 92) has proposed,can be summarized as follow:

1.8.1.1. Portability and Information Access

Podcasts allow for a great amount of flexibility in which students are able to access information easily and at any time through downloading what suit them by means of their personal media players and mobile phones. They can also listen to a downloaded lecture multiple times as they can manipulate the recorded material and reviewing it. As podcasts are free and easy to access, students will take responsibility over their own learning.

1.8.1.2. Increased Interaction with the Instructor

In which students will take responsibility for their own learning through taking notes while listening to the podcasts, discussing the content with their teachers, writing and rewriting scripts and participating effectively which result more comprehensible and meaningful learning process.

1.8.1.3. Supplemented to Traditional Class Notes

Podcasts media enable students to learn on the go in which they can go back over the lecture at home to check what they miss in their written notes. Moreover, students can create an archive of lessons with references in addition to the ability to post lessons online for those who missed the sessions.

1.8.1.4. Creative Learning

Podcasts raise students' creativity and innovation in which they will be cautious to create their personal podcasts, thus they will be active knowledge-constructors. It also enables easy sharing of information and experiences with students from other schools and ignite their social and cognitive skills, such as collaboration and engagement, group working, time management, communicative competence and critical thinking.

1.8.2. Drawbacks of Podcasts

Despite the importance of podcast as a teaching and learning tool, it has a set of drawbacks which may negatively influence the educational setting. Among these disadvantages the poor speed of downloading audio or video files which may require a high bandwidth connection due to its large size. Moreover, podcasts require extensive trained teachers who can manipulate computer software and hardware skillfully; otherwise the lack of digital literacy may lead to poor performance and learning outcomes.

As a matter of fact, equipping educational settings with appropriate and advanced materials for the delivery of podcasts content need much funds and this is not accessible for everyone. Finally and most importantly, time allocation for

teaching using podcast may be a complex task since podcast content need to be taught in a pre-determined time-frame to reach teaching objectives and to avoid the problem of time consuming and students' boredom. Therefore, it is preferable to use short content type of podcast instead of lengthy podcast to catch learners' attention and making them enjoying while listening.(Cited in Salmon and Edirisingha, 2008).

1.9. The significance of ELT Podcasts in Enhancing Students' Listening comprehension

Listening comprehension is considered as the most important component in English language teaching and learning. According to Al Qasim and Al Fadda (2013, p.33), the use of podcasts in the learning environment is crucial through which audio contents help learners to recall information much better than written texts.Additionally, podcasts provide authentic intensive listening activities that create a buffer zone between formal English and informal English. As a result, learners become motivated and enthusiastic to further listen to audio content outside the classroom. (i.e. extensive listening).

In addition, Pandy(2009) suggests that podcasts content offer a great opportunity for conveying a message directly the listener auditory input (by means of intonation and the vocal expression). As a consequence, the speaker's speech is more vivid and entails the revealing of subjective variables such as emotions and feelings which cannot be caught within a textual message. To sum up, listening to ELT podcasts opens door for the development of learner's intensive and extensive listening abilities, as well as improving their sense of comprehension through reflection and observation.(Cited in ibid, p.34).

1.10. Conclusion

This chapter shed lights the main important key terms related to listening comprehension via ELT podcasts. It has discussed listening as a challenging skill denoting out its background in the field of foreign language teaching and its sub-skills. Besides, it puts an emphasis on listening comprehension and its main stages, as well as, the effective mechanisms in teaching listening comprehension.

Moreover, this chapter spots light on the use of ELT podcasts as a teaching aid in enhancing students' listening comprehension including its background and main categories. It also explains the process of creating an educational podcasts. Furthermore, it covers some notions related to the content of podcasts and its advantages and disadvantages. Finally, a combination between podcasts and listening comprehension has been discussed. The coming chapter represents the practical side of this inquiry where a process of data collection and interpretation takes place. It demonstrates the methodology held while gathering primary data from the sample concerned.

Chapter TWO

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Chapter Two: Data Analysis and Interpretation

2.1. Introduction

2.2. Aims of Study

2.3. Research Design

2.3.1 Case Study

2.4. Sample of Study

2.4.1. Students' Profile

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2.5.1. Students' Questionnaire

2.5.1. Description Of Students' Questionnaire

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2.5.2.1. Description of Classroom Observation

2.6. Data Analysis

2.6.1. Analysis of Students' Questionnaire

2.6.2. Analysis of Classrrom Observation

2.7. Data Discussion and Interpretation

2.8. Suggestions and Recommendations

2.9. Conclusion

2.1. Introduction

The importance of listening skill has led educators to search for suitable and authentic materials to foster EFL learners' comprehension. ELT Podcasts offer the opportunity to structure learners' knowledge and enhancing their listening abilities thanks to its content variability and originality as well as its popularity among modern generations in the ever changing technological world.

Therefore, the second chapter highlights the research procedures and data collection methods that have been based on. In order to reach the investigation target aims, 3rd year students at Ahmed Salhi University Centre were chosen from the whole population as a sample.

In fact, two research tools have been designed namely a structured classroom observation where the researcher tends to observe students' behaviours and responses while they are learning through podcasts, and a questionnaire conducted to students to explore their views and standpoints concerning the effectiveness of podcasts as a supporting tool in enhancing their listening comprehension skills. The aforementioned instruments have been carried out to obtain data which then will be analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. At the end of this section, a number of suggestions and recommendations will be formulated to help teachers having better insights about the effective use of podcasts in the classroom.

2.2. Objectives and Aims of the Study

Teaching English language listening skill has gained importance recently as an essential element in oral communication. In fact, using podcasts in EFL classroom may afford effective outcomes for learners' aural performance. Based on data availability and research instruments, the researcher has carried out this investigation related to the significance of ELT podcasts in strengthening students' listening capacities for a set of objectives and aims. Essentially, this study seeks to assess students' perceptions towards the implication of educational podcasts in EFL classrooms as a supporting teaching aid in developing their listening comprehension. It also tends to explore students' attitudes while being exposed to

podcasts as well as pointing out how teachers effectively implement podcasts in their oral sessions. More specifically, this inquiry aims at investigating students' listening difficulties and discovering the main strategies used by teachers while teaching listening comprehension via podcasts. Finally, the researcher aims at offering further suggestions and recommendations to validate and ensure the appropriate use of ELT podcasts as a part and partial tool in teaching listening comprehension.

2.3. Research Design

A research design is a technical or procedural plan that paves the path of the research inquiry where the researcher prepares a conceptual framework for collecting data needed to answer the research questions and confirming its hypotheses. In this context, Thyer (1993) contends that:

> **A traditional research design is a blueprint or detailed plan for how a research study is to be completed, operationalizing variables so they can be measured , selecting the sample of interest to study, collecting data to be used as a basis for testing hypotheses and analyzing the result**
>
> (p. 94)

Therefore, a research design is a guide line that allows the researcher to decide what data is needed, what methods should be taken for granted to collect and analyze the findings.For this investigation, the researcher has opted for a case study.

2.3.1. Case Study

Case study is regarded as a research approach that entails a variety of methods and techniques used to investigate a particular phenomenon in a real-life context. Hinkel (2005) points out that:

> **Case studies focus on context, change over time, and specific learners or groups. In other words, when we want to understand how a specific unit (person, group) functions in the real world over a significant period of time a case study approach may be the best way to go about it**
>
> (p. 196)

By and large, the potential of case study is to highlight the investigation of real phenomenon in its real context using several sources of evidence where single or multiple instances of that phenomenon are dealt in depth.

2.4. Sample of Study

Sampling refers to the process of selecting a particular item or unit from the entire population. This process offers an opportunity to generalize the research findings and since the researcher's aim is to make generalization a simple random technique is used. In this inquiry, the researcher has selected randomly twenty seven (27) EFL third year LMD students from Salhi Ahmed Naama University Centre to answer to the research instrument addressed to them and to observe their actions and attitudes while being exposed to ELT podcasts. The main reason for choosing this level is that students are really in need to develop their listening skill so that they can develop their speaking performance in return.

2.4.1. Learners' profile

The selected sample reflects third year LMD students of English at Ahmed Salhi Naama University Centre as they are familiar with the use of podcasts inside and outside the classroom as supporting learning tool. In fact, this sample consists of twenty five (27) students; eleven (11) are males and sixteen (16) are females. The study will be held in oral expression session.

2.5. Data Collection Instruments

Data collection is regarded as the most important component of any research at any domains as it implies the act of gathering information from different valid and real sources to answer the research inquiries, and to validate the hypotheses set for the research in addition to the planned objectives. However, collecting data does not come at random, but rather needs a set of tools or instruments such us survey questionnaires, interviews, observational schedules, tests… Etc.

Therefore, in order to collect valuable data for this inquiry, the researcher has relied on two research instruments which are a structured classroom observation and a questionnaire submitted to students.

2.5.1. Classroom Observation

The classroom observation is a method of collecting primary data in which the researcher or the observer uses his sensory input mainly looking and listening to observe a particular phenomenon and to describe how participants behave in their natural setting. **"Observation is a purposeful, systematic and selective way of watching and listening to an interaction or phenomenon as it takes place"** (Kumar, 2011, p. 134).

Unlike questionnaires and interviews, Classroom observation is an objective and an eye-catching technique which enables the researcher to get accurate, live and direct information without the need to ask the informants questions. Besides, it is appropriate in research investigations especially in cases where participants cannot express their feeling verbally due to many factors. (Kothari, 1990, p.96). Thus, classroom observation provides objective viewpoint about the observed phenomenon and eliminating any sort of bias that may influence the process of research.

Generally speaking, classroom observation can be categorized in term of the design into structured format (rating scale and checklist) and unstructured format (field notes). It can be also classified in term of the role of the researcher into two types: participant observation and non participant observation.

2.5.1.1. Description of Classroom Observation

In this study, the researcher has decided to observe 3rd year LMD students in three lectures with group one and group two to be a part of a structured observation. In structured observation, the researcher is completely involved as a member in the studied group. In fact, the researcher has used structured observation or what is known also as observational schedule or protocol. This involves attending the target

natural setting (classroom) with a pre- determined and focused planning in which the observer records what he or she notices using rating scales or checklists (Dörnyei, 2007, pp. 179-180).

The observer has been involved as a participant in the classroom after asking the permission of teachers and without revealing to students the aim of the observation to let them behave naturally and to get more accurate and valid data. The observer has employed checklist as a recording tool in a listening comprehension session in which he has prepared a set of questions (items) and statements to comment on. These statements are nine each has a specific aim presented as follow:

Item1: Does the teacher rely on podcast while teaching listening comprehension?

Aim: to check if teachers use ELT podcast as a teaching aid.

Item2: Do students take share while being exposed to ELT podcasts?

Aim: to observe students' actions and reactions while listening to podcasts and assessing their attitudes and behaviours.

Item3: Do students encounter any difficulties while listening to podcasts?

Aim: to shed light on the main barriers and complexities that students may stuck with while listening to podcasts.

Item4: Does the teacher provide appropriate time- frame for teaching listening via podcast?

Aim: to evaluate and ensure the length of podcast presented by the teacher.

Item5: Does the teacher play an active or passive role while using podcasts?

Aim: to observe and determine the nature of the role of the teacher while teaching listening using podcasts.

Item6: Does the content of podcasts suit students' levels and needs?

Aim: to check if the content of podcasts goes along with students' language proficiency and level of understanding.

Item 7: Do students feel relaxed and motivated while listening to podcast?

Aim: to assess students' affective variable that may develop or hinder their performance.

Item 8: Which format of podcast is frequently use by the teacher?

Aim: to highlight the main and frequent format that the teacher relies on in the most of time in teaching listening comprehension.

Item 9: Respect of podcasts quality: voice quality, screen delivery, clearness, and equipments.

Aim: to find out the characteristics of a good podcast as a teaching and learning tool.

2.5.2. Students' Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a research tool that entails a set of written questions directed to a large number of respondents to obtain quantitative and qualitative data about their behaviours, attitudes and interests. It is a typed document that provides subjects with questions or statements to be answered through two options; either by formulating their own answers or selecting from responses prescribed by the researcher himself. (Brown, 2001, cited in Dornyei, 2007, p. 102).

Questionnaires are highly preferable since they are cheap to administer, and need a little training skill, and they can be easily analyzed. (Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003, p.8). Broadly speaking, a questionnaire consists of several types of questions mainly closed- ended questions and open- ended questions. The former entails a precise number of answers from which the respondents are asked to select such as dichotomous questions that entail yes/no answer, and multiple choice

questions. This type of questions is usually used to get quantitative data. On the other hand, open- ended questions seeks to obtain qualitative data in which the respondents are required to formulate their personal answers allowing them to express their opinions and viewpoints usually with clarification.

2.5.2.1. Description of Students' Questionnaire

In order to fulfill this inquiry, the researcher has designed this questionnaire for 3rd year LMD students whose number is 27 at the level of English language department at Ahmed SalhiNaama University Centre. In fact, this questionnaire has been administrated to students during the second semester of the academic year 2018-2019. It consists of 14 written questions; 11 are closed to obtain quantitative data in which students are asked to select **yes** or **no** answers or putting a tick on the appropriate alternative options prescribed by the researcher, and 3 are open to get qualitative data where they are invited to express their opinions and perspectives. To sum up, the questionnaire aims at gathering data about the informants' opinions and attitudes toward the implementation of ELT podcast in listening comprehension divided into two main sections with specific aims listed as follow:

- **Section one**: this consists of some factual questions to get demographic characteristics including age and gender.
- **Section two:**which entails 14 questions each has an aim as following:

Q 1: Do you use technology in the classroom?

This question aims at probing if EFL students are familiar with the use of technology bases tools in the classroom setting.

Q 2: Do you support integrating information communication technology in the classroom?

The aim of this question is to explore students' attitudes towards the implementation of ICT materials as a teaching and learning aid.

Q 3: Is podcasting technique used by your teachers of oral expression while teaching listening?

The aim behind this question is to know whether students have an idea about the concept of podcast as a learning tool.

Q 4: **Do you think that learning through podcasts helps you in improving your listening comprehension?**

This question aims at knowing students' perceptions about the effectiveness of podcasts on their listening abilities.

Q 5: Do you listen to podcasts outside the classroom?

The aim of this question is to find out if students further listen to podcasts outside the traditional setting.

Q 6: How often do you listen to podcasts in the classroom?

This question seeks to determine how frequent students listen to podcasts in a listening comprehension session.

Q 7: Which type of podcasts do you prefer to listen most?

The sake of this question is to know the preferable type or podcast format student do enjoy listening.

Q 8: What are the difficulties that you may encounter while listening to podcasts in a listening comprehension session?

This question has been proposed to discover the complexities and the problems that students may face when they come to listen to podcasts.

Q 9: To what extent are you interested while listening to podcasts?

The aim of this question is to measure the degree or the intensity students' enthusiasm while being exposed to podcasts?

Q 10: How can you evaluate your comprehension abilities after listening to podcasts?

This question seeks to have insights about students' satisfaction or disagreement concerning the impact of podcasts on their listening outcomes.

Q 11: What aspect of language proficiency does listening to podcasts help you to develop?

For this question, the researcher has given students the opportunity to select more than one option to know how they benefit from listening to podcasts.

Q 12: What are the benefits of listening to podcasts while learning English?

The aim of this question is to allow students to list the main advantages of listening to podcasts in developing their English proficiency and academic achievements.

Q 13: How can listening to podcasts affect you mood and psychological state?

This question aims at assessing the significance of podcasts as an affective variable on their internal state.

Q 14: Can you suggest some other techniques that may help you in developing your listening abilities?

The purpose of this question is to enable students to propose their own strategies that they follow to foster their listening skills.

2.6. Data Analysis

Since the aim of the researcher is to get both quantitative and qualitative data through the questionnaire and classroom observation,the obtained data will be analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively in the form of tables, pie-charts, bar charts and in the form of written passages, respectively.

2.6.1. Analysis of Classroom Observation

Criteria One: Does the teacher rely on podcasts while teaching listening comprehension?

Yes, teacher **A** does use podcasts as a teaching aid in teaching a listening session and each time bring a different format; for instance in the first observed session, he brought for his students an audio podcasts talking about an interesting topic which is the process of coffee production explaining its ingredients. In addition, teacher **B** followed an interesting and clever methodology. At the beginning, he provided the listening video record without the passage to check his students' attention and reactions, and then he showed up the content of the podcast which was in the form of a dialogue between two people.

Criteria two: Do students take share while being exposed to the podcast?

Yes, most of students engaged actively with the content of the podcasts in which it was observed that they started expressing their viewpoints at ease, answering the questions asked by the teacher. They show no negative responses as they were highly enthusiastic and attentive. However, few of them showed no response with the lecture as they were looked passive and hesitative when the teacher started discussing the content of the listening record.

Criteria three: Do students encounter difficulties while listening to podcasts?

Yes, initially, most of students did not get the main idea of the podcast in addition to some words which were ambiguous for them. Thus, they asked the teacher to replay the listening record. Few minutes later, students started participating and asking the teacher for the meaning of some complex items. By and large, the main observed difficulties were the complexity of some words and expressions.

Criteria four: Does the teacher provide appropriate time-frame for teaching listening via podcasts?

Yes, it was noticed that the time-frame of the podcast acceptable (ranges between 5 to 7 minutes). Both teachers gave students the opportunity to think about the content of the record and the questions that correspond it. Moreover, post-listening activities have been done on time. In general, both teachers were successful in managing and measuring time suitable to fulfill the target task.

Criteria five: Does the teacher play an active or passive role while teaching listening using podcasts?

It was observed that teachers played the role of a guider and feedback provider through which theywere explaining only the difficult words and correcting students' spelling mistakes while most of the time students were discussing and expressing their opinions. Therefore, the main advantage of using podcasts is that learning centered approach becomes more dominated and students are able to engage actively and positively during the session.

Criteria six: Does the content of podcasts suit students 'level and needs?

Yes, teacher**A** and teacher **B** were so aware of their students' needs, interests, and language proficiency in which the language used in the record was simple, clear, and comprehensible except few words. It was quite academic (formal) with no slangs or idiomatic expressions.

Criteria seven: Did students feel relaxed and motivated while learning via podcasts?

Yes, most of students were satisfied, convinced and enthusiastic while listening to podcasts. They did not feel embraced or shy as they listening carefully and interestingly. The teachers accepted and reacted positively towards their responses which helped a great deal in strengthening their self-confidence and self-efficacy.

Criteria eight: Which format of podcasts is frequently used by the teacher?

It was obvious that both teachers(**A** and **B**) did not rely only on a specific type of podcasts but rather multiply the use of different format mainly audio and video podcasts so that students will not feel bored and can listen and watch the podcasts at the same time.

Criteria nine: Does the teacher respect of podcasts quality; voice quality, screen delivery, clearness and equipments.

Yes, both teachers were so careful and successful in preparing a good podcasts in which the content was so clear, the voice was perfect, no offensive language was noticed, headphones were suitable and in operation, the screen delivery was in high clarity without interruption or noisy gestures.

2.6.2. Analysis of Students' Questionnaire

As previously mentioned, the questionnaire has been administrated to 3rd year LMD students at Ahmed SalhiNaama university center. In fact, the researcher has selected 27 students to fill in the questionnaire to probe their standpoints about the significance of ELT podcasts as a technology based tool in promoting their listening abilities. Precisely, this questionnaire is composed of two sections. The first section consists of demographical questions to investigate students' age and gender while the second one entails a set of diverse questions turn around students perceptions concerning the importance of podcasts, their interests, and preferable types of this teaching aid.

Section one: students' profile

Table 3.1: Students' Gender

Gender	Number of students	Percentage
Male	11	40%
Female	16	60%
Total	27	100%

The above table shows that the percentage of male students is 40% while that of female students is 60%. Therefore, female students represent a great deal the whole population.

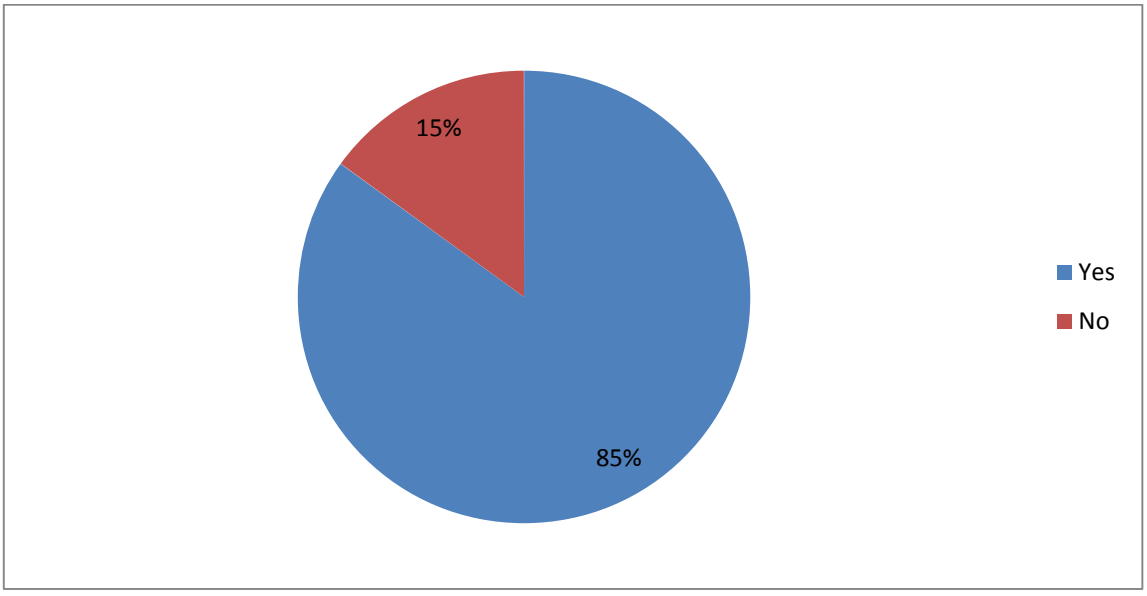
Table 3.2: Students' Age

Age	Number of students	Percentage
21 years	3	11%
22 years	20	74%
24- 27 years	4	15%
Total	27	100%

Apparently, most of students (75%) age 22 years old while 15% of them ranges between 24 and 27 years old. Only 11% of students age 21 years old.

Section two: Podcasts use in EFL Classroom

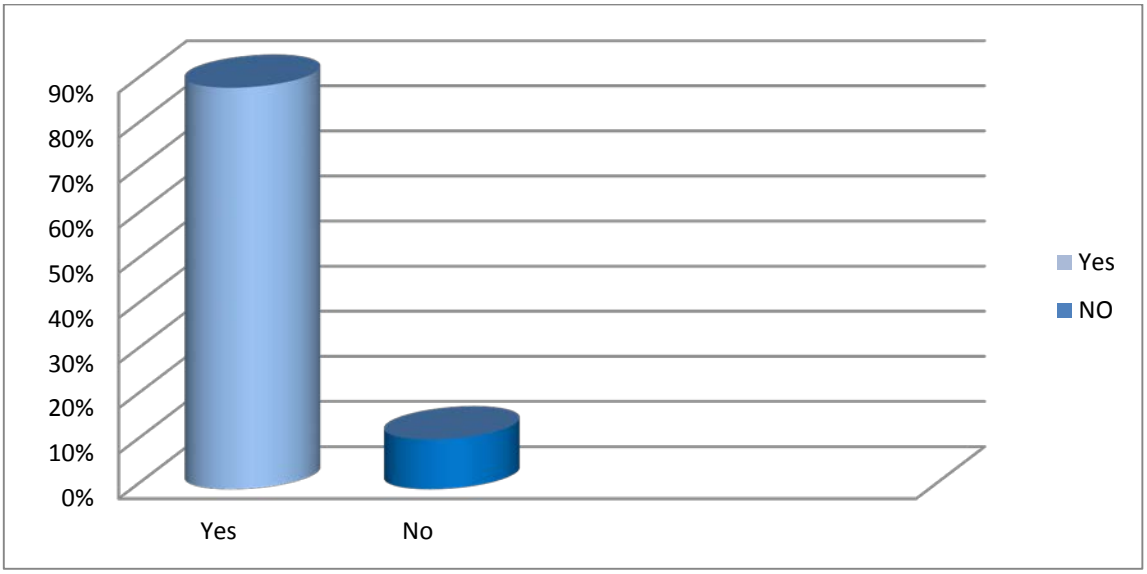
Item 1: Do you use technology in the classroom?



Pie-chart 2.1. Technology Use in the Classroom

From the above pie-chart, it is obvious that the majority of students have confirmed the use of technology in the classroom setting in which twenty three of them (85%) have confirmed by **'yes'** while four of them (15%) have said **'no'**.

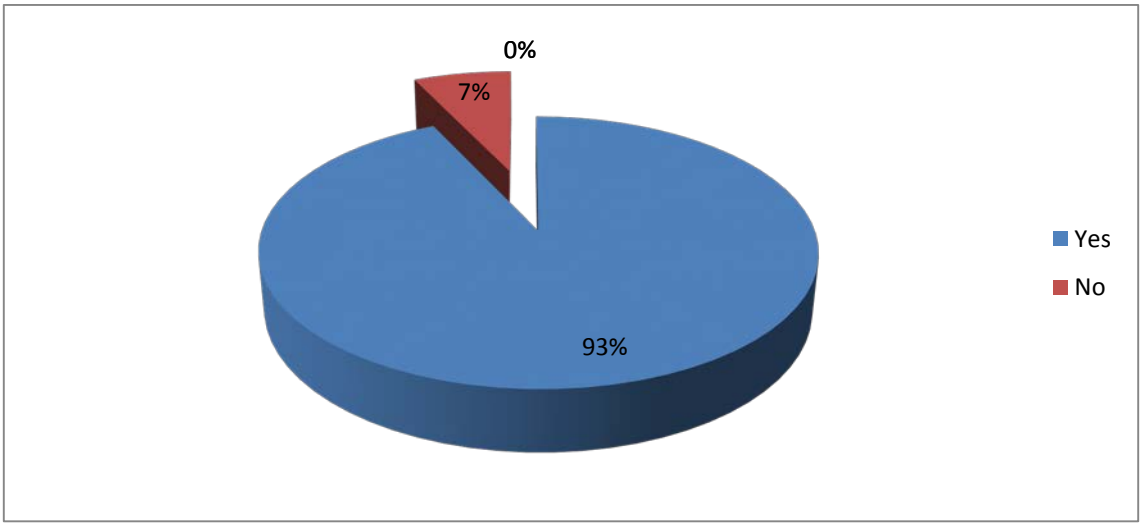
Item 2: Do you support integrating information communication technology in the classroom?



Bar-graph 2.1. Students' Opinion about Integrating ICT in the Classroom

The above graph demonstrates that twenty four students (89%) agree with the integration of ICT in the classroom setting .On the other hand; three students (11%) do not support it as a teaching aid.

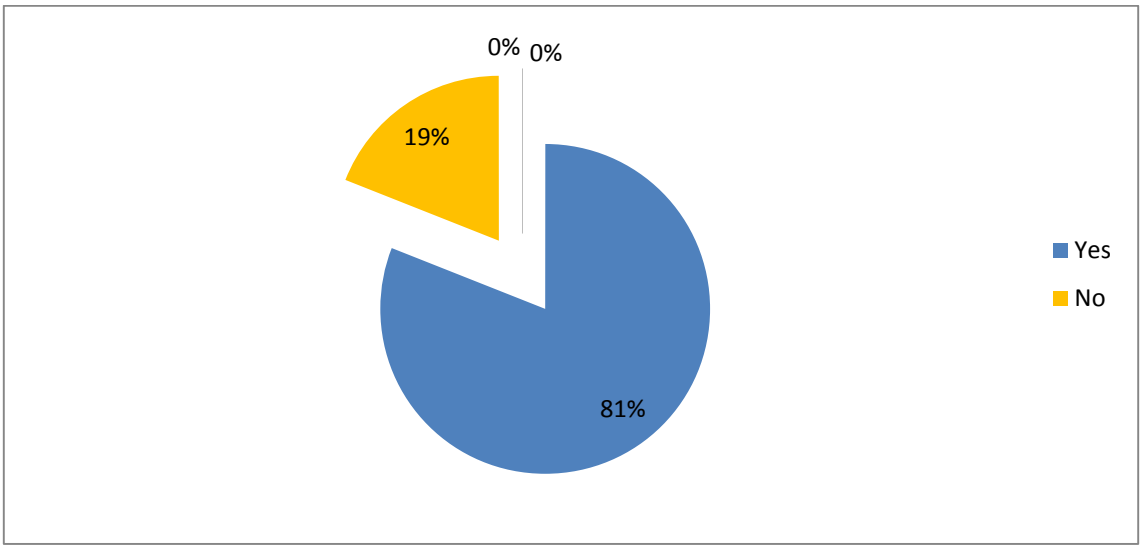
Item 3: Is podcasting technique used by your teachers of oral expression while teaching listening comprehension?



Pie-chart 2.2. Podcast Use in Oral Expression

The current pie-chart reveals that twenty five students (93%) have said **'yes'** concerning the implementation of podcasts as a teaching aid during a listening comprehension session in oral expression module. However, two students (07%) have negatively answered by **'no'**.

Item 4: Do you think that learning through podcasts helps you in improving your listening comprehension?

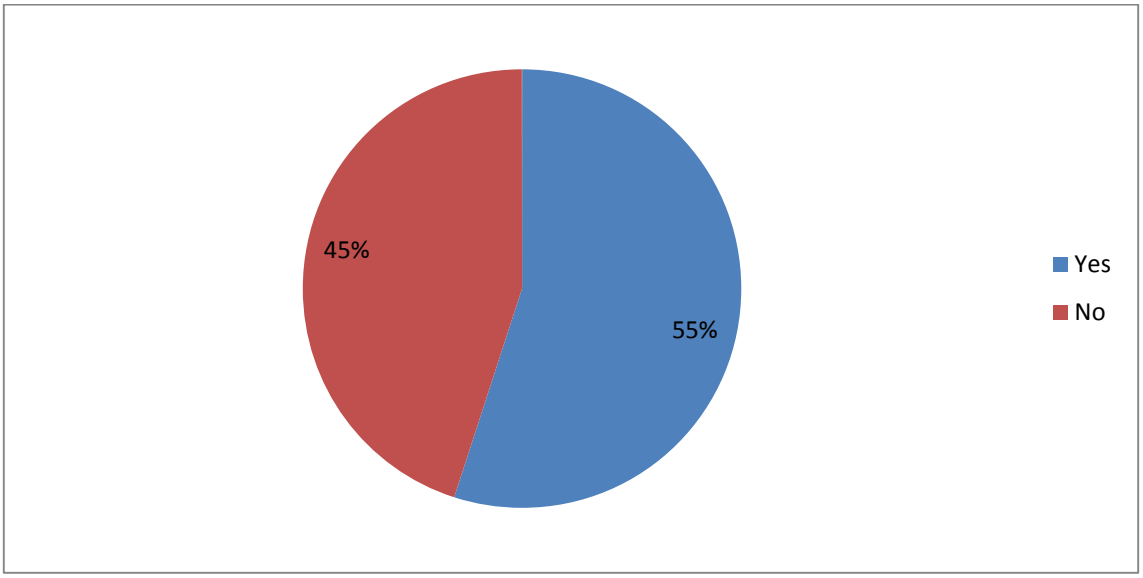


Pie-chart 2.3. Students' Opinions about Podcasts

The findings demonstrates that twenty two students (81%)have answered by **'yes'** in which they consider podcasts technique as an essential teaching and

learning aid in strengthening their listening comprehension. They have justified their views by the authenticity and the variability of the content of podcasts mainly the educational one as they are able to listen to diverse accents and maintain the right pronounciation of complex words. In addition, according to them, listening to podcasts enables them to ignite their cognitive skills and fresh their memory allowing them to relate their posterior schemas with the new presented material. On the other hand, five students (19%) have said**'no'** in which they disfavored the use of podcasts since the latter needs much time and great efforts in addition the quality of the content as they are afraid from the understanding of native speakers who speak speedily.

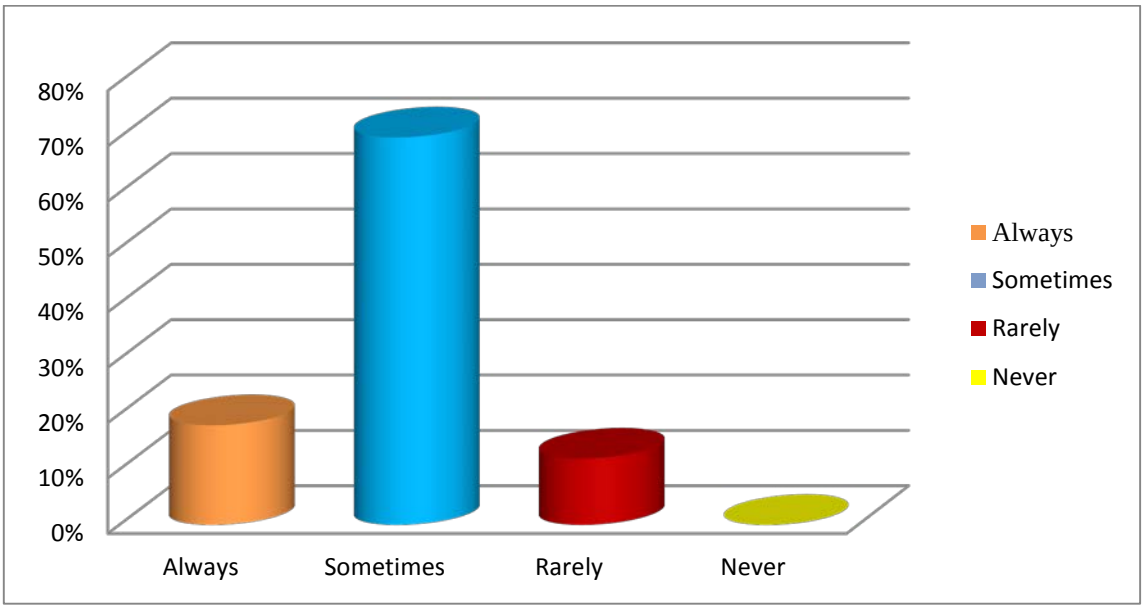
Item 5: Do you listen to podcasts outside the classroom?



Pie-chart 2.4. Students' Listening to Podcasts outside the Classroom

The results highlight that fifteen students (55%) do listen to podcasts outside the classroom setting while thirteen of them (45%) do not.

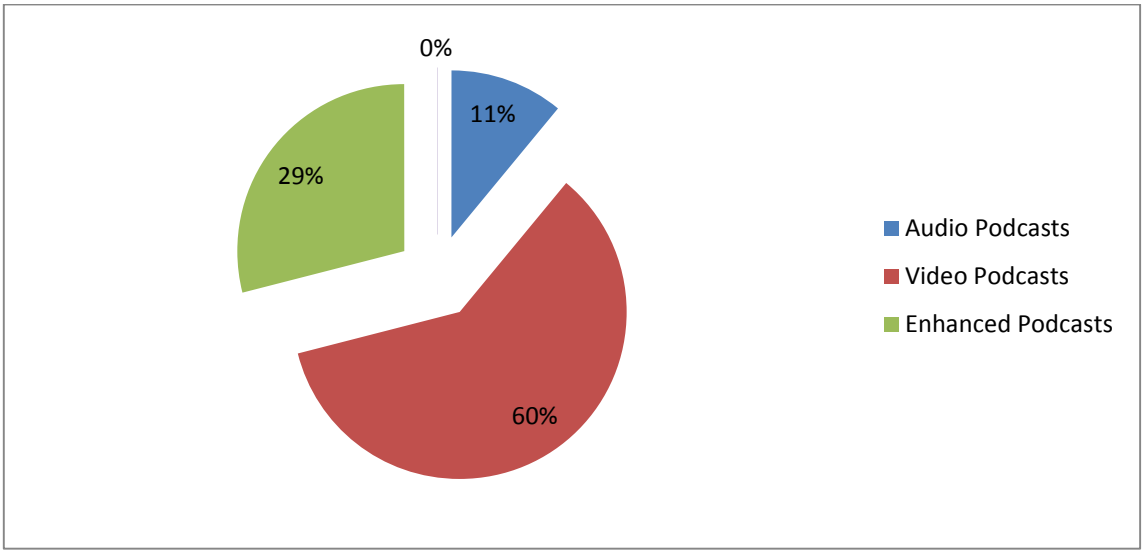
Item 6: How often do your teachers use podcasts in the classroom?



Bar-graph 2.2. Teacher's Frequent Use of Podcasts in the Classroom

It is obvious from the above graph that (18%) of students have claimed that teachers of oral expression always employs podcasts technique as a supporting material in teaching listening while the majority of them (70%) have contended that the teacher sometimes use podcasts. In addition, 12% of students have said that they rarely be exposed to podcasts and no one answers by never.

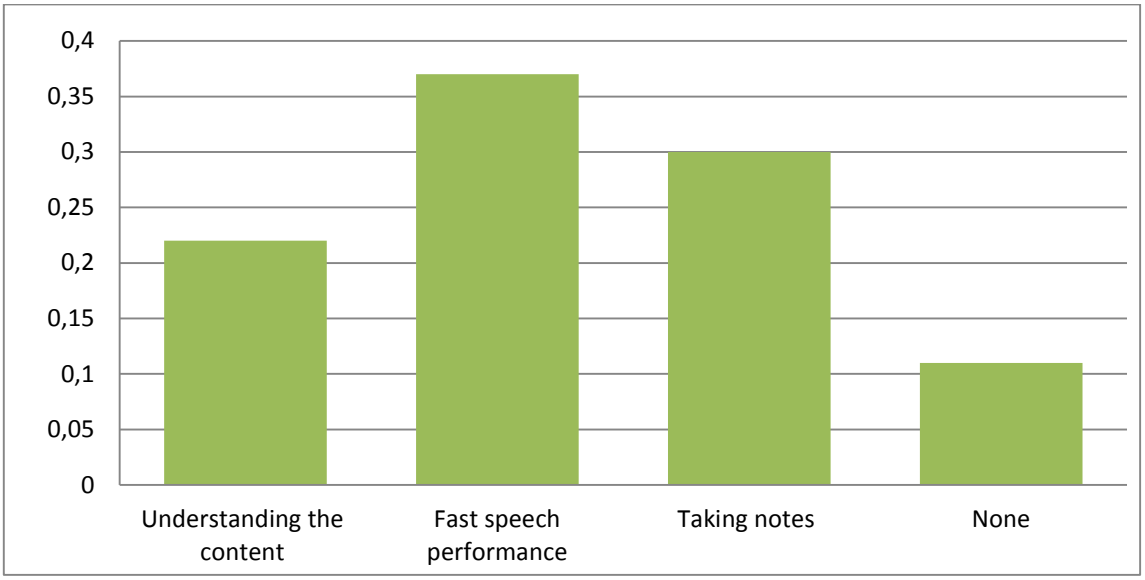
Item 7: Which type of podcasts do you prefer to listen to?



Pie-chart 2.5. Students' Preferable Type of Podcasts

The obtained finding shed light the fact that (60%) of students prefer video podcasts format to listen, however, 29% of them favor enhanced podcasts while 11% of them enjoy listening to audio podcasts.

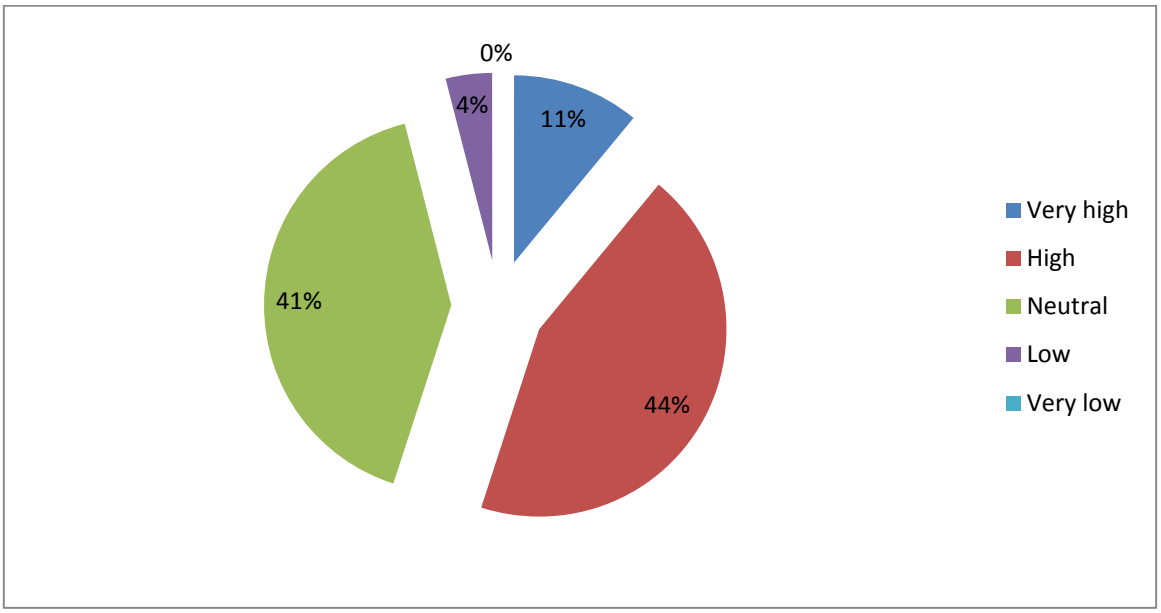
Item 8: From the following options, what are the difficulties that you may face while listening to podcasts?



Bar-graph 2.3. The Difficulties that Students Face while listening to Podcasts

The obtained data show that the majority of students (37%) cannot cope effectively with podcasts due fast speech performance while (30%) of them find difficulties in taking notes while listening to the podcast record. Others (22%) cannot understand easily the content of the podcasts whereas (11%) face no difficulties.

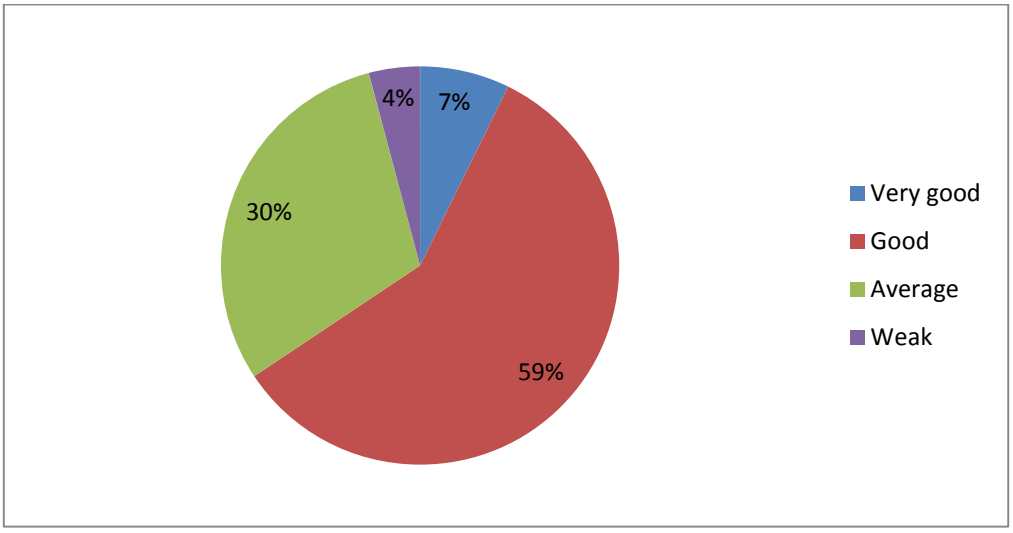
Item 8: To what extent are you interested while listening to podcasts?



Pie-chart 2.6: Students' Degree of Interest while Listening to Podcasts

The above pie-chart demonstrates that (44%) of students are highly interested while being exposed to podcasts while 41% of them have a neutral interest. On the other hands, only (11%) have answered with very high and (4%) with low. No one answered with very low.

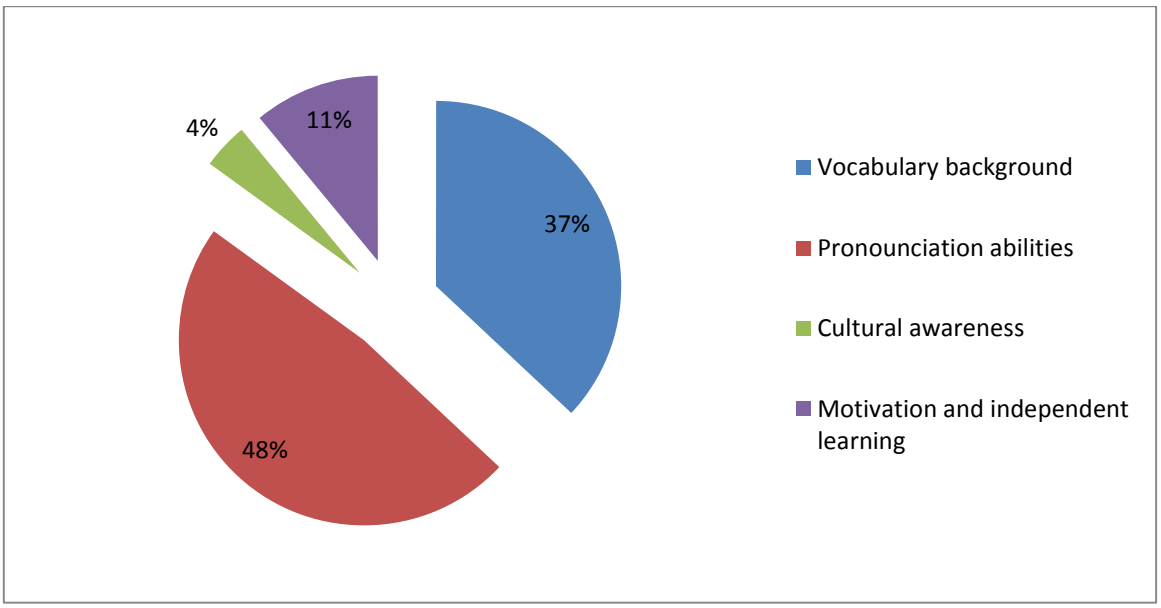
Item 9: How can you evaluate your comprehension after listening to podcasts?



Pie-chart 2.7. Students' Perception towards their comprehension through listening to podcasts

The results highlight that (59%) of students asserted that they have a good level of understanding thanks to podcasts while (7%)consider having a very good listening comprehension. Whereas, 30% answered with Average, others (4%) answered with weak.

Item10: Listening to podcasts while learning English helps you to develop mainly your



Pie-chart 2.8. Students Academic Achievement through Listening to Podcasts

The findings show that (48%) of students gain a rich vocabulary package when being exposed to podcasts while (37%) of them become able to pronounce words correctly. On the other hand, (11%) have asserted that listening to podcasts helped them in increasing their motivation as well as allowing them to learn at their own pace (i.e. independent learning). Others (4%) stated that listening to podcasts strengthen their awareness towards the target culture of the target language.

Item 11: What are the benefits of listening to podcasts while learning English as a foreign language?

Most of students have stated that learning English language via podcasts is considered as a funny way in which they feel themselves free and at ease and this way allow them to collaborate and engage effectively and positively with their

teacher and classmates. Thus they are able to actively construct their knowledge. Others have asserted that learning through podcasts enable them to improve their cognitive skills as well as their comprehension and vocabulary package. In addition, one student has stated that the merit of podcasts is the ability to see and listen to its content simultaneously and learning the language in its essence i.e. they can ameliorate their pronunciation through listening to native speakers' conversations. However, two students have no answers for this question.

Item 12: How can listening to podcasts affect your mood and psychological state?

The majority of students agree on the point that listening to podcasts provides a relaxing and enjoyable learning environment through which they are able to learn at their own pace and break the psychological barriers that may slow down their performance. Additionally, one student has claimed that the influence of podcasts on the learner' psychology depends on its nature (the subject or the content) which either lead him to participate or hinder his enthusiasm.

Item 13: According to you, what are the other techniques and strategies that may help you in developing your listening abilities?

For this question, students have suggested diverse strategies which they rely on to develop their listening comprehension such as:

-Watching YouTube channels which offer interesting videos.

-Watching movies, pieces of theatre, blogs, vlogs, and chatting with native speakers via Skype.

- Group discussion on a particular topic, debates, listening to English songs with lyrics.

- Gap information activities, watching cartoons.

- Recording shows and listening to them backwards.

- Listening to American radio channels.

2.7. Data Discussion and Interpretation

The researcher has relied on two research instruments which are a structured classroom observation and a questionnaire administrated to students for the sake of getting both quantitative and qualitative data. In fact, the discussion of the obtained data is based on statistical analysis and the researcher's interpretation of the results which are then used to either confirm or inform the previous mentioned hypotheses set for the research questions.

After analyzing the obtained data from both students' questionnaire and classroom observation, it is obvious that EFL teachers really rely on ELT podcasts as a teaching aid as it enable them to make their teaching process more innovative, meaningful and comprehensive due to its authenticity in teaching listening comprehension. More importantly, students themselves contended that teachers most of the time bring different format of podcasts in oral expression sessions which entail different tasks to assess their listening comprehension. These results are proved by students' answers of questions **3** and **6** from the questionnaire and **item 1** from the classroom observation. Thus, the above answers strongly support and confirm the first hypothesis concerning the use of podcasts as a teaching material in teaching listening comprehension.

Moreover, the findings show that most of students have positive attitudes towards the use of podcasts as a learning aid in enhancing their listening abilities in which they are frequently familiar with the use of podcasts inside and outside the classroom and they benefit a great deal from its content as it allow them to catch their attention and memory retention. Besides, podcasts help them in Improving their vocabulary background and pronunciation skills, as well as, it afford a great opportunity to practice the language authentically and effectively, and providing a relaxing and supporting learning atmosphere, breaking down any kind of constraint which may embed their performance as it was observed in the classroom where they are active and responsive to teacher' assignments and instructions while being

exposed to podcasts. However, other students are not satisfied and interesting about the use of podcasts and they have justified their views claiming that they find difficulties in understanding the content of the podcasts due to fast speech performance which prevent them from focusing and taking notes while listening. These answers were opted from questions 2, 4, 6, 9, 10, 12, and 13 from students' questionnaire and items 2, and 7 from the classroom observation to validate the second hypothesis.

Finally, to validate the third hypothesis, the obtained data from the observation (see criteria 6 and 9) reveal that teachers select the suitable podcasts which are characterized by the clarity and the clearness of its content, its language is easy and goes with students' level of understanding and linguistic profile. Additionally, they respects the time allocation for the recorded format as students were energetic and did not feel bored and each podcast did not exceed 7 minutes so that the tasks will be fulfilled on time.

To sum up, the results obtained from students' questionnaire and classroom observation are complementary and goes along with the point that ELT podcasts are implemented in EFL classroom as a supporting teaching and learning aid in teaching listening comprehension , and students do enjoy learning via podcasts in and outside the traditional setting. Teachers are highly dependent on podcasts to assist their learners with authentic sources of listening. The previous mentioned research hypotheses, thus, are confirmed.

2.9. Suggestions and Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is apparent that podcasts play a vital role in teaching EFL students listening comprehension thanks to its portability, richness of content, and authenticity. However, the effective integration of ELT podcasts in EFL classrooms and especially in higher education require teachers to carry out a well podcasts' pedagogical design and a sense of digital literacy in order to make

students appreciate their learning and increase their autonomy. [1]Therefore, in order to help teachers in creating a high-tech listening comprehension environment, the following recommendations are suggested:

a) Content and Objective

Teachers ought to take into consideration students needs when recording their lectures; considering if the listening record goes along the current events and students' area of interest. In addition, it is highly recommended to avoid routine lessons as they just make the learning process more one- way and deviate from the target aims. Thus, teachers should be creative and introduce more innovative topics to catch students' attention and enthusiasm. To sum up, the content of podcasts should be clear, relevant and interesting for users.

b) Type of Podcasts

As previously mentioned, podcasts fall into three categories; audio, video, and enhanced and thereby teachers ' selection of the appropriate type has to be based on the content they want to transmit and more importantly the bandwidth and the device students have to access.

c) Duration and Frequency

Determining the appropriate time-frame for the delivery of podcasts to have an insight about how students will replay it.

d) Accessibility

Teachers should ensure that all students will be able to access course materials of the podcasts. This is accomplished through supplementing the podcast with alternative formats of information containers such as a script or a summary that can be downloaded.

[1] Retrieved from www.surrey.ac.uk/e-learning.Educational Podcasting: Enhancing Learning and Teaching with Technology. University of Surrey.

e) Delivery

Make sure that the content of podcasts is clear from offensive language, and entails an effective use of sound pitch and music, flowing smoothly and contains no fillers in speech.

f) Copyright

Teachers should avoid infringing the copyrights of the original creators of the podcast i.e. they ought to respect their intellectual property through mentioning honestly the true owners before adding or extracting a podcast format.

❖ **Characteristics of a good podcast**

In regard to Rajic (2013, p.93),there are a number of strategies that should be followed by teachers to better validate effective listening outcomes while using podcasts.

- **Follow a logical and well organized structure**

The podcast has to have a clear outline; it has to start with an introduction and ends with a conclusion.

- **Use of visual embedded**

The use of visual embedded within the podcast allow students to reinforcing their comprehension

- **Use of thinking pause**

In which the teacher demand from his students to stop listening to the podcasts for a while and ask them to think about a specific concepts mentioned in the record. This will empower their reflection and critical thinking skills.

- **Explain the content of podcasts**

Using dialogues, interviews and monologues to guide students and enable them to ask each other on a particular task.

- **Use of questions at the end of the podcast**

This allows students to prepare themselves for the coming lecture and plays an important role in developing their cognitive skills.

2.10. Conclusion

This chapter presented an overall insight about the methodology followed in this inquiry in which the researcher has relied on two main research tools in the process of data collection: a questionnaire administrated to students and a structured classroom observation.In fact, the questionnaire aims at assessing student's attitudes and perceptions towards the integration of ELT podcasts as a teaching scaffolding in developing their listening comprehension skills. besides, the classroom observations has been opted for the sake of getting live information about students' and teachers'behaviours, actions, and reactions while being exposed to podcasts. It also highlights the procedures used when analyzing and interpreting the obtained data. Finally, it footprints some recommendations and suggestions which have been drawn to help teachers managing effectively and appropriately their classroom environment while teaching students listening comprehension via podcasts.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

Over the years, the process of teaching English as a foreign language has witnessed a revival change when teachers changes their traditional beliefs and approaches from a traditional perspective into the integration of technology tools to assist their students with real and concrete sources of knowledge. It is worth pointing out that ELT podcast is one of the main advanced tools that is utilized by teachers and start taking its position in higher education institutions in virtue of its popularity among young generations and spread on YouTube channels. However, the appropriate exploitation of this technological aid requires teachers to have extensive digital skills and information literacy so that students will be able to make their learning conscious, sustainable, active, and straightforward. Therefore, the main objective set out for this investigation is to probe the effectiveness of implementing ELT podcasts in developing EFL students listening comprehension skills and to test their attitudes towards it as a learning tool. Thus, in order to reach this target, the following hypotheses have been tested to validate the research questions:

1. EFL teachers of oral expression may use ELT podcasts in the most of their sessions as it enables them to make their teaching more comprehensible as well as fostering their students' engagement and listening comprehension.
2. Podcasts technique is innovative and EFL students are interested and enthusiastic to depend on for the development of their listening abilities, and they may be varied according to their content, objectives, styles, and others. Moreover, students may also listen to podcasts outside the classroom for the sake of strengthening their comprehension and lexical background.
3. EFL teachers may select the appropriate podcasts based on many criteria, such as: content, language proficiency, time-frame, and others.

In this study, the researcher has opted for two research instruments in the process of data collection: a structured classroom observation and a questionnaire submitted to students.

The results of the classroom observation reveal that EFL teachers, indeed, use podcasts in their sessions to teach listening comprehension in most of their sessions

and they are more creative and innovative as they brought interesting topics for their students supplemented with listening comprehension activities. These results confirm the first hypothesis. Besides, it was observed that students engaged actively in the course while being exposed to podcasts and they felt at ease. Additionally, teachers gave students the opportunity to take the lead through which the learning – centered approach was dominant while teachers play the role of a facilitator and feedback provider. It has also been observed that teachers succeed in using podcasts effectively as they took aware the clearness of the contents, the linguistic level and needs of students, and the appropriate duration and frequency of delivering the listening record. These results confirmed the third hypotheses. Besides, a set of recommendations and suggestions have been proposed to reinforce the third hypotheses addressing the main effective strategies that should be carried out by teachers to better achieving a successful listening outcomes for their students.

The results of the questionnaire reveals that the majority of students consider podcasts as an integral part in a listening comprehension session since it allows them to get more chances for practicing intensive skills activities as well as enriching their linguistic achievements including vocabulary, pronunciation. They have also asserted that podcasts offer an exciting atmosphere to practice all the aspects of language and relieving their psychological barriers. They added that often further listen to podcasts outside the classroom to reinforce their listening comprehension and learn new vocabulary items. However, few of them discarded the importance of podcasts in developing their listening achievements in which they pointed out that it is not much funny and its content seem complicated and does not go along with their level and linguistic proficiency. These results confirmed the second hypothesis.

To put in a nutshell, the whole findings show that podcasts, undoubtedly, contribute a great deal in developing students listening comprehension skills and creating a supporting learning platform as well as allowing them to learn at their own pace and developing their cognitive skills.

General Conclusion

Finally, it has to be said that podcasts a teaching and learning aid is not the only tool that should be taken for granted in teaching listening comprehension, but there are other techniques and strategies that may more be effective and beneficial and this open doors for further researches in attempt to test its impact and contribution.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Podcast Format

Podcast Formats



Figure 1. Podcasts format (www.salesforce.com)

Appendix B

Classroom Observation

Classroom Observation

University center :	Academic year :
Observer :	Grade :
Session :	Date and time :

Items (Criteria)	**Yes**	**No**	**Comments**
1- Does the teacher rely on podcast while teaching listening comprehension?			
2- Do students take share while being exposed to ELT podcasts?			
3- Do students encounter any difficulties while listening to podcasts?			
4- Does the teacher provide appropriate time-frame for teaching listening via podcasts?			
5- Does the teacher play an active or passive role while using podcasts?			
6- Does the content of podcasts suit students' levels and needs?			
7- Do students feel relaxed and motivated while listening to podcast?			
8- Which format of podcast is frequently use by the teacher?			
9- Respect of podcasts quality: voice quality, screen delivery, clearness, and equipments/			

Appendix C

Students' Questionnaire

Students' Questionnaire

Dear student,

This questionnaire aims at assessing the effectiveness of using ELT (English language teaching) podcasts in developing Students' listening skills. Therefore you are kindly invited to answer the following questions by putting a tick (✔) in the appropriate answer and expressing your opinions when necessary.

Thank you for your collaboration.

Section one:

Gender: male ☐ female ☐

Age:

Section two:

1. Do you use technology in the classroom?

Yes ☐ No ☐

2. Do you support integrating information communication technology in the classroom?

Yes ☐ No ☐

3. Is podcasting technique used by your teacher of oral expression while teaching listening?

Yes ☐ No ☐

4. Do you think that learning through podcasts helps you in improving your listening comprehension?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Justify your answer:

……
……
……

5. Do you listen to podcasts outside the classroom?

Yes ☐ No ☐

6. How often do you listen to podcasts in the classroom?

a. Always ☐
b. Sometimes ☐
c. Rarely ☐
d. Never ☐

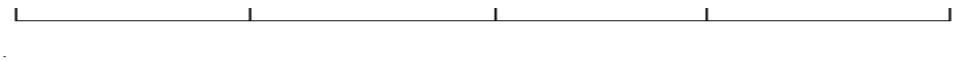
7. Which types of podcasts do you prefer to listen?

a. Audio podcasts ☐
b. Video podcasts ☐
c. Enhanced podcasts (audio and video content) ☐

8. From the following options, what are the difficulties that you may face while listening to podcasts?

a. Understanding the content of the listening record ☐
b. Fast speech performance ☐
c. Taking notes while listening ☐
d. None ☐

9. To what extent are you interested while listening to podcasts?



Very high High Neutral low very low

10. How can you evaluate your comprehension abilities after listening to podcasts?

a. Very good ☐
b. Good ☐
c. Average ☐
d. Weak ☐

11. Listening to podcasts while learning English helps you to develop mainly your:

a. Vocabulary background ☐
b. Pronunciation abilities ☐
c. Cultural awareness ☐
d. Motivation and independent learning ☐
e. None ☐

12. What are the benefits of listening to podcasts while learning English?

……
……
……
……

13. How can listening to podcasts affect your mood and psychological state?

.....
.....
.....

14. According to you, what are the other techniques and strategies that may help you in developing your listening abilities?

……
……
…….