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**Investigating EFL learners' Attitudes Towards Using English
Podcasts for Enhancing their Listening Skills**

**Case Study: First-year Master Students of English at the University of
Ghardaia**

**Dissertation Submitted to University of Ghardaia for Obtaining the Master's Degree
in Didactics**

Submitted by:

- DAOUADI Lamia
- BOUNOUA Hadjer

Supervised by:

Dr.Ezzoubeyr MEHASSOUEL

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Dedication

I would like to thank ALLAH for his blessing, and for giving me the strength to succeed
and to be where I am now.

I dedicate my work to my parents;

To my beloved “Mother”; the woman who has been supporting me since I started my
academic pursuit, my source of motivation, encouragement, love and Strength, May you
always be in my life!

To my deceased ‘father’ the beloved of my heart, the man I always wished to be with me
in my academic pursuit. May ALLAH have mercy on him!

To my sisters’ ‘Asmaa’ and ‘Salsabil’ and brothers ‘Abd El-Nour’ and ‘Abd El-Ssamad’,
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To all the members of my family for supporting me materially and morally.

Bounoua Hadjer

Dedication

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Abstract

This research aims to investigate the attitudes of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learner's attitude towards using English podcasts as a tool to enhance their listening skills. Listening is a crucial aspect of language acquisition, and the emergence of podcasts presents a new avenue for learners to develop their listening skills. By understanding EFL learners' attitudes towards podcasts, valuable insights which can help develop effective listening strategies. This study was conducted at the University of Ghardaia with the first-year masters' students of English. A descriptive research Design was employed, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Questionnaire was administered to 40 students, while interviews were conducted with six teachers. The results indicated that the majority of EFL learners are in favour of using English podcasts to develop their listening skills. The study's valuable insights highlighted the need to incorporate technological materials, such as podcasts, into the curriculum. This would allow students to practice and improve their listening skill and other skills such as speaking skill particularly pronunciation. However, educators should take advantage of podcasts and integrate them into the classroom as teaching materials, bringing the outside world into the learning environment.

Key words: listening skill, podcasts, attitudes, EFL learners.

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List of abbreviations

EFL : English as a foreign language.

ELT : English language teaching.

ICT : Information and communications technology.

RSS : Really simple syndication or rich site summary

IPOD : An apple designed portable media player

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General Introduction

General Introduction

Nowadays, Information and Communication (ICT) tools have become widely used worldwide, encompassing various areas of education. They are considered essential due to the advancements in technology, and have a significant impact on teaching and learning English as a second language as they can assist EFL learners in developing their skills and facilitate language acquisition.

Among the ICT tools, podcasts have gained recognition in recent years for their role in enhancing the teaching and learning process, particularly in improving listening skills for second language acquisition. Podcasts provide a variety of topic discussions, allowing students to access subjects that interest them. Besides, they contribute to other language competences such as vocabulary expansion, comprehension, and cultural awareness. The authentic language input provided by podcasts exposes learners to different accents, idiomatic expressions, and contextual usage of language, thus enhancing their overall language proficiency.

Therefore, implementing podcasts in English language learning is highly necessary. Students can utilize them for learning on their own way; as they encourage autonomous learning habits among students and enable them to explore and practice English beyond the confines of the classroom. Teachers can also leverage podcasts as teaching material in the classroom. Numerous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of podcasts in language learning and the development of listening skills.

However, understanding students' perceptions is crucial in the teaching process. Teachers should inquire about EFL learners' attitudes towards podcasts; do they find them beneficial? Are they aware of their usage? Are they interested in using them? By understanding students' attitudes towards podcasts, teachers can address any potential barriers or challenges that students may face in accessing and utilizing these resources. This understanding can help select the appropriate podcast that aligns with specific needs and learning goals.

In a nutshell, podcasts have emerged as a valuable tool in teaching and learning English as a second language. By understanding students' attitudes and perceptions towards podcasts, teachers can effectively integrate them into the curriculum, fostering autonomous learning and enhancing language skills. With their diverse content and

accessibility, podcasts offer an engaging and enriching learning experience, empowering students to become confident and proficient English speakers.

Statement of the problem

The mastery of listening skills is essential for EFL learners, as it does not only contribute to their proficiency in the English language, but also enhances their overall linguistic and cultural competences. Numerous students encounter challenges in understanding the speaker's message, mainly due to factors such as accent and speaking speed. Although multimedia, particularly podcasts, is recognized as an effective approach for improving listening skills, many EFL learners and teachers are unaware of the significant advantages and benefits that podcasts offer as a valuable tool for enhancing listening proficiency.

As a result, there is a need to investigate the attitudes of learners towards using podcasts to improve their skills and identify its challenges and benefits.

Research Questions

This study attempts to answer the following questions:

- What are the attitudes of first-year Master English students towards using podcasts to enhance their listening skills?
- What are the benefits of using podcasts as a tool to teach the listening skill?
- What are the challenges faced by students while using podcasts?

Research hypotheses

In order to answer these research questions, we hypothesize that:

- EFL students may have a positive interest in using English podcasts to improve their listening skills.
- English podcasts may have a significant impact on enhancing students' listening skills.
- Learners may face various challenges in using podcast.

Research Objectives

This research aims:

- To explore students' perceptions and attitudes regarding the use of English podcasts to promote their listening skills.
- To investigate the perceived benefits and challenges of using English podcasts for enhancing students' listening skills.

Research Methodology

For the sake of investigating the EFL learners' attitudes towards using podcasts to enhance their listening skills, a descriptive study was used through a mixed qualitative-quantitative method. To collect data a questionnaire was administered to 40 first-year Master students of English at the University of Ghardaia and a face to face interview with 6 EFL teachers. The questionnaire focused on students' attitudes towards using podcasts to enhance their listening skills and the obstacles they faced while utilising podcasts.

However, the interview with the teachers is focused on their experiences in using podcasts as a means to teach their students listening skill, as well as the challenges that learners encounter in listening to podcasts.

Rationale

This research endeavors to understand the attitudes and perceptions of EFL learners towards using podcasts as a tool to improve their listening skills, and explore the potential benefits and challenges of incorporating podcasts into language learning, as well as identifying any barriers or resistance that EFL learners may have towards this technology. By understanding EFL learners' attitudes towards using podcasts, educators and curriculum developers can better tailor language learning materials and resources to meet the needs and preferences of students, ultimately enhancing their overall language proficiency. Additionally, this research attempts to sensitize EFL learners and teachers to use innovative methods and be up-to-date with the use of technological tools in learning and teaching.

Limitations of the study

- This study is limited to Master 1 students of English at Ghardaia University who were questioned only about their perceptions of using podcasts in the classroom to enhance their listening skills and investigate their challenges; therefore, this study cannot be generalized.
- The short duration, the study may have been limited by a short duration of time.
- The proficiency level and awareness of students about podcasts may lead to unstable outcomes.

Structure of the dissertation

The dissertation is divided into two parts: the theoretical part and the practical part. The theoretical part comprises two sections. The first section provides an overview of the listening skill and its definitions, and discusses the different types and stages of listening. The second section offers a general overview of podcasts, their characteristics, and their significance in the learning process particularly in enhancing the listening skill of the learners. The practical part of the dissertation focuses on the analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaire administered to students and the interviews conducted with teachers.

Chapter One:

Literature Review

Introduction

Listening is considered the most commonly used language skill in almost all forms of communication. (Masudul & Bee, 2013), It is recognized as a crucial and effective skill for learning, extending beyond interpretation and understanding of spoken language and sounds. Babita (2021) emphasized that listening involves both hearing what a person says and having a psychological connection with the speaker (p.01). Proficient listening is essential for education, as it consists in absorbing information, comprehending complex concepts, and engaging in critical thinking. Listening plays a pivotal role in enhancing language skills, particularly the skill of listening, as well as other aspects such as pronunciation and vocabulary.

In recent years, podcasts have been regarded as one of the best ways for practicing and developing learners' listening skills. They have become highly popular in the field of education. Podcasts contribute to language learning and the enhancement of language skills, especially listening skills, by providing a wide range of topics and their user-friendly characteristics, which facilitate language learning.

This chapter is divided into two sections; the first section explores the definition of listening and its significance, examines various types of listening, describes the stages and processes involved in listening and discusses the barriers that can hinder effective listening. The second section revolves around the definition of podcasts and emphasizes their significance. It delves into the characteristics of podcasts and their role in English language teaching, particularly in enhancing the listening skills among learners.

I.1.Listening skill

I.1.1 Definition of the listening skill

Listening is recognized as one of the four fundamental language skills. It is categorized as a receptive skill that involves the process of interpreting and understanding spoken language, rather than producing it. Several scholars have offered definitions for the listening skill, which can be summarized as follows:

Underwood (1989) defined listening as the activity of paying attention to and trying to get meaning from something we hear (p.01). In other words, listening is an act of focusing on something is heard and understanding it.

On the other hand, Rost Michale (2011) mentioned that listening is process by which oral language is received, critically and purposefully attended to recognised and interpreted in terms of the past experience and future expectancies (p.04)

Moreover, Purdy & Borisoff (1997) stated that listening is "the active and dynamic process of attending, perceiving, interpreting, remembering, and responding to the expressed (verbal and nonverbal),needs, concerns, and information offered by other human beings" (p.08). They described the listening skill as an interactive and lively procedure involving paying attention, perceiving, understanding, retaining, and reacting to the expressed needs, concerns, and information provided by other individuals both verbally and non-verbally

Gary Buck (2001) adds that listening is an active process of meaning construction; this process is done by applying knowledge to the incoming sound. (p.31)

Sevik (2012) states that listening is the same as reading which is a receptive skill because both listening and reading focus on receiving information from an outside source (p.330). The students can do these activities without producing language; they rather receive and understand the language.

From a historical perspective, until the 1960s, listening was described as the process of analyzing and categorizing input to facilitate efficient storage and retrieval. Instruction primarily emphasized on perceiving and decoding sounds such as phonemes, word stress, and sentence-level intonation. In the same year listening was heavily influenced by pedagogy focused on productive skills. In the 1970s and 1980s, there was widespread acceptance of defining listening as the interpretation of the cultural significance of speech behavior. Then In the 1990s, listening was characterized as the simultaneous processing of input. Since the 1990s, various models have been introduced to describe the nature of listening comprehension. (Nazarie et al. , 2022)

Sometimes people get confused between hearing and listening and think they are alike. Keline (1996) explains the difference between hearing and listening as follows "hearing is the reception of sound, listening is the attachment of meaning to the sound. Hearing is passive, listening is active" (as cited in Yildirim & Yildirim, 2016, p.2096)

Therefore, hearing is different than listening, since the former is a sound perceived by the ear and very little or no effort is required; your mind may focus on other thoughts or

be involved in a different task while the speaker is sharing his or her thoughts with you. On the hand, listening refers to the ability to understand and interpret spoken language. It involves a range of cognitive processes that include the recognition and interpretation of speech sounds, intonation, stress, the comprehension of individual word meanings, and the understanding of sentence structure and syntax of auditory information, such as conversations, lectures, or speeches, and extracting meaning from it.

1.1.2 Significance of the listening skill

In the past, listening may have been overlooked compared to its current importance. However, it is recognized as a crucial skill in both personal and professional contexts. Listening goes beyond simply hearing words and involves actively paying attention, understanding, and interpreting the message being conveyed. It plays a significant role in communication and it is also vital in second language learning.

Listening is a powerful skill that enhances communication by enabling individuals to accurately understand others, respond appropriately, and build meaningful connections. By listening attentively, listeners can grasp the speaker's intended message and gain capacity to understand different cultures through listening to diverse backgrounds, which allows them to understand their perspective, beliefs in order to avoid misunderstanding. All in all, without understanding the speaker, a conversation can not be successful.

In the context of learning a second language, listening is essential as it provides learners with aural input and serves as the foundation for developing all language skills. Without understanding the input, the learning process cannot take place. Many people mistakenly believe that being able to write and speak in a second language means they know the language. However, without efficient listening skills, effective communication is not possible.

Listening enhances speaking skills and other language skills as well. It allows learners to distinguish various accents, acquire new vocabulary, understand difficult words, comprehend sentence and word structures, and use them spontaneously in real-life situations. According to Seyedeh (2016), the ability to comprehend oral language plays a major role in second language learning and use. Besides, it promotes the critical thinking of the learners and develops their ability to analyze and make judgement through listening to different viewpoints and evaluating the validity and credibility of information.

To sum up, listening plays a pivotal role in communication and language learning by honing listening skills, the learner can improve comprehension and engage in meaningful conversations, understand different cultures, acquire language more effectively, and develop critical thinking abilities.

1.1.3. Types of listening:

Schmidt (2016) claims that throughout the history of English language teaching (ELT), most students have never received instruction on how to effectively listen. Thorn (2009) suggests that listening activities in ELT often serve purposes other than improving listening skills, such as introducing grammar or vocabulary, facilitating discussions, testing comprehension without emphasizing comprehension development, and exposing students to different accents. Brown (2011, p. 36) also argues that activities like playing audio and asking comprehension questions or assigning tasks only amount to testing, rather than teaching, listening. Consequently, a significant portion of listening practice focuses on evaluating listening ability rather than actively instructing students in how to listen. This approach of testing a skill without first teaching it would not be considered acceptable for reading, writing, or speaking and it should likewise be deemed inappropriate for listening.

There are two (2) types of listening which are, intensive and extensive listening:

Extensive listening, as defined by Renandya & Farrell, (2011). involves listening for an extended period of time while concentrating on the meaning. It goes beyond language learning such as academic purposes, pleasure. Extensive listening can also involve extended periods of listening in the target language outside of the classroom. Similar to the concept of "reading for pleasure" in reading education,

According to Rost (2006); Vandergrift & Goh (2012) Increased exposure to a large amount of comprehensible aural input is called extensive listening. Renandya & Farrell, (2011). emphasizes that extensive listening encompasses a wide range of listening activities aiming for comprehensive and enjoyable input. In this type, learners listen to longer extracts and engage in meaning-oriented tasks. Teachers can support learners by providing instruction on comprehension strategies and offering global feedback.

Rost (2011) also suggests that for successful second language (L2) learning, learners need access to listening input that they can reasonably understand on the first listening.

Therefore, in the process of extensive listening for EFL students, it is recommended for them to select texts from a provided source that they find interesting and appealing. They listen to these texts multiple times, focusing on understanding the meaning. It is advantageous if the chosen texts have subtitles or transcripts available, as these can be utilized for follow-up intensive activities.

On the other hand, intensive listening as is defined by Rost (2006) as the formal input of activities that seek to concentrate learners' attention on elements of the language system (p.09). Students engage in activities that aim to develop specific listening skills and decoding abilities using the selected texts. Common and effective activities in this context include filling in gaps or transcribing texts. Rost (2011) adds other activities such as; dictation, elicited repetition and shadowing (p.185). Additionally, activities focusing on prosody marking and pronunciation are valuable. Afterward, students reflect on their achievements, strengths, and areas for improvement, helping them identify specific skills they need to work on. Strengthening these weaker skills becomes a goal for students to concentrate on during further listening practice (Schmidt, 2016). Besides, learners are required to pay close attention to the content of the speech for the sake of analysing it.

Rost (2011) emphasized that intensive listening focuses on precise sounds, words, phrases and grammatical units, in other words, phonology, syntax and lexis. It involves a high level of comprehension and it is considered as an essential component of listening proficiency.

In a nutshell, extensive listening focuses on understanding the general meaning of the utterance whereas intensive listening refers to understanding details of the message such as vocabulary, grammar, or pronunciation. It includes activities such as filling in the gaps, transcriptions in order to gain deeper understanding of the input.

1.4. Stages of listening

The process of listening occurs in five stages. They are: hearing, understanding, remembering, evaluating, and responding. (Babita, 2021)

1.4.1 Hearing

Hearing is the first stage of the listening process and involves the physical act of perceiving sound through our ears. It is the ability to detect sound waves and receive auditory stimuli. It involves more than just hearing, as it requires focused attention and selective perception. The brain screens stimuli and allows only a responding in the final stage of the listening process, where the receiver provides verbal or nonverbal feedback to the sender. This stage is essential because it allows the sender to determine if the message has been received successfully. Without this feedback, the sender has no other means of assessing the degree of communication success.

1.4.2 Understanding

Understanding is the stage where learners strive to understand the meaning behind the sounds they hear. It involves actively processing and interpreting the information received through listening. Comprehension requires focusing on the message, deciphering words, recognizing non-verbal cues, and extracting the intended meaning. The meanings attached to sounds are influenced by our past associations and the context in which they occur. In interpersonal communication, it is essential for the listener to understand the intended meaning and the context assumed by the sender.

1.4.3 Remembering

It refers to the stage where learners store the information that they have comprehended in their memory. It involves the ability to recall and retain the content of the message for future reference. Effective remembering is influenced by factors such as concentration, repetition, relevance, and personal interest.

1.4.4 Evaluating

In this stage of listening, active listeners critically evaluate and analyze the information they have heard. It involves assessing the validity, reliability, and credibility of the message, as well as comparing it to their existing knowledge and beliefs. Assessment helps them determine the accuracy and significance of the information and form their own opinions or judgments. In this stage starting the evaluation process before a message is

completed can disrupt the listening process, as it requires shifting attention away from the incoming message.

1.4.5 Responding

It is the final stage of the listening process, it also called feedback, where the listeners respond to the message they have heard. It involves expressing their thoughts, opinions, or emotions in response to the information received. Reaction can take various forms, including verbal or non-verbal feedback, asking questions, sharing insights, or engaging in further discussion. This stage is essential because it allows the sender to determine if the message has been received successfully. Without this feedback, the sender has no other means of assessing the degree of communication success.

1.5. Listening as a process

According to Wilson (2008), the listening process can be categorized into three types: bottom-up, top-down and interactive.

1.5.1. Bottom up process

This model is based on discrete unites of language in text where the listeners decode the smallest units - phonemes and syllabus to get the intended meaning. In other words, the listener combines words to form phrases, clauses to achieve a literal understanding. The interpretation of the message depends on the relevance of the information.

1.5.2. Top down process

This model emphasizes that listeners get the intended meaning of the message through the use of background knowledge as the listeners' familiarity with the topic allows them to anticipate what the speaker is going to say. All in all, this model relies on the previous knowledge of the listener to comprehend the input of the speaker.

1.5.3. Interactive process

Wilson (2008) stated that the interactive model is most relevant when listening to a foreign language. This model combines elements of both bottom-up and top-down processing. The listener is expected to utilize both approaches simultaneously in order to understand the message effectively. (p.15)

1.6. Barriers to effective listening

The listening process can be challenging, and various obstacles can hinder effective listening. These barriers can be classified into different categories:

1.6.1. Physiological Barriers

Some individuals may have genuine hearing problems or deficiencies that impede their ability to listen properly. These issues can be addressed through appropriate treatment. Additionally, some people may struggle with processing or retaining information in memory, which can hinder their listening comprehension. (Babita,2021)

1.6.2. Physical Barriers

These refer to distractions in the environment that can interfere with listening. Examples include background noise from sources like air conditioners, the presence of cigarette smoke, or an overheated room. These factors can disrupt the listening process and make it more difficult to focus on the speaker or audio content. It is important to recognize and address these barriers in order to improve listening skills and overcome the challenges they environment (Babita, 2021, p.06)

1.6.3. Cultural Barriers

Accents can pose challenges to listening as they can hinder the understanding of words pronounced differently. This issue is not limited to differences between cultures but can also occur within a culture. For instance, in a diverse country like India, accents may vary even among different regions or states, creating potential barriers to effective listening. (Babita, 2021.p.06)

On the other hand, Wilson (2008) claims that the difficulties of listening can be attributed to several factors that distinguished from other skill. These difficulties can be categorized into four main areas: the characteristics of the message, the delivery of the message, the listener's abilities, and the surrounding environment.

1.6.4. The characteristics of the message

Rick Altman's (1989) analogy describes the difference between how teachers perceive listening and how students experience it. While teachers view listening as a process akin to

reading speech, students often struggle with it, comparing it to finding hidden objects in drawings of trees. Merely knowing the written form of a word does not guarantee recognition of its spoken form. Identifying word boundaries can be challenging, and the irregular spelling system of English further complicates matters. Even if students are familiar with the individual words, pronouncing a sentence like “Mr Clough from Slough bought enough dough” can still pose difficulties due to the various pronunciations of the letter combination “ough.”

There are also linguistic challenges, such as encountering unfamiliar words, facing high lexical density (where content words are closely packed together, requiring heightened concentration), and encountering complex grammatical structures. Apart from linguistic factors, the listener’s familiarity with the subject matter or context of the message can also impact comprehension.(Wilson,2008 .p.12)

1.6.5.The characteristics of the delivery

The manner in which a message is delivered also plays a significant role in the challenges of listening. It is useful to differentiate between reciprocal and nonreciprocal listening in this context. **Reciprocal** listening involves interactive communication between two or more individuals, such as engaging in a conversation. For instance, speakers can respond to signs of confusion by backtracking their statements, while listeners can seek clarification, ask the speaker to slow down, and so on. On the other hand, **nonreciprocal** listening refers to situations where the listener has no opportunity to actively participate in a dialogue, such as when watching television or listening to the radio. In such cases, the listener’s lack of control over the incoming information becomes a crucial issue. (Wilson, 2008, p.13)

1.6.6.The characteristics of the listener

Teachers often observe that some students easily get distracted and struggle to maintain concentration. Additionally, certain students face difficulties in self-motivation when it comes to listening, which can be long-term issues.

Furthermore, some students have a preference for learning through modes other than listening. According to the Multiple Intelligences theory developed by Howard Gardner (1983), individuals possess different types of intelligences, such as linguistic, musical,

interpersonal... These intelligences are associated with preferred learning modes. Many people are subconsciously aware that they are more inclined towards one particular learning style over others. For instance, someone with musical intelligence might choose to learn a language by listening to songs.

In addition, age is another factor to consider. Young learners, have distinct listening needs compared to adults. They often have shorter attention spans, limited cognitive abilities, while children and teenagers are often more familiar and confident with multimedia materials.

1.6.7. The surrounding environment

The environment in which listening takes place can have an impact on listening performance. Factors such as the room temperature, background noise or faulty equipment that affects the clarity of recordings can all affect the listening experience. Additionally, the role of memory in listening is another aspect that influences listening in the environment. Information overload is one of the main reasons why students may switch off during listening activities. Many students are often confronted with poorly-designed tasks that focus more on testing memory rather than guiding them towards comprehension. (Wilson, 2008 p.14)

2. Podcasts and listening skill

2.1. Definition of Podcast:

A podcast is a digital audio or video file that can be downloaded or streamed online, Oxford Learner's dictionaries (n.d) defines a podcast as "a digital audio file that can be taken from the internet and played on a computer or a device that you can carry with you", typically it is available as a series, new instalments of which can be received by subscribers automatically. It was invented in 2004 by Adam Curry and Dave Winer. The term "podcast" is derived from a combination of "iPod" and "broadcast." They typically consist of several episodes covering a wide range of topics, from news to entertainment to education. Listeners have the option to subscribe and receive new episodes automatically. There are various platforms and apps available for listening to podcasts, which are often produced by individuals or organizations. In the context of English language teaching and learning, podcasts can be categorized as authentic, teacher-created, student-created, and for

English language learners. Also Yildirim and Hoffman (2010) classified podcasts into four categories according to their use; public broadcasting, miscellaneous, podcasts for English language learners and podcasts directories (Horváthová, & Křištofovičová, 2020, p. 95)

Podcasts have a great contribution in facilitating learning and teaching process, as Dahmana & Hermouch (2023) pointed out that learners can utilize English podcast in classroom and outside, and enable them to learn a wide range of vocabulary and bring authenticity to the classroom, teachers as well can rely on this teaching tool.

2.2. Importance of podcasts

In higher education, the significance of online and mobile learning resources is increasing due to students' growing demand for flexible and diverse educational tools. Among these resources is educational podcasts. (Rockhill et al, 2019).

Podcasts provide a distinct platform for educators and students to exchange and acquire new information pertaining to academic subjects. It can easily be used in educational institutions to impart education in a new interactive way to improve the teaching and learning methods so, many educational institutions have started their own podcasts which gives teachers and professors the ability to share their lectures with students seamlessly and make them available. (Rockhill et al, 2019).

These educational podcasts can serve a variety of purposes such as:

- Students use podcasts to learn and reinforce material at their own pace,
- Helping university students who might have difficulties attending courses in person, as podcasts could be used as a useful tool in the learning process,
- Help students reinforce lecture content, as well as also providing guidance on procedures for in-class activities or laboratory assignments that students will perform,
- A podcast has the potential to inform, inspire, or engage its audience,
- A podcast is a way to share content while some enjoy reading articles; others prefer something they can listen to,
- Podcasts engage both auditory and cognitive senses, enhancing comprehension and retention of information,

- Podcasting can use the medium in many ways which students can listen to podcasts while multitasking. It allows students to practice their listening comprehension of complex texts that are both conversational and formal.
- When students engage with the language and specialized terms of their area of study, this will not only enhance their comprehension of the field, but also empowers them to engage in more effective discussions, about the topics, at hand.

2.3 Characteristics of podcasts

Podcasts have features that distinguish them from ICT tools. One notable characteristic is their audio based format primarily designed for listening than watching or reading. However it's important to mention that podcasts can also include video content. Another standout feature is the flexibility they offer to listeners allowing them to choose topics of interest and consume content at their convenience wherever they may be. You can access podcasts on devices, like smartphones, computers and tablets.

Furthermore podcasts often follow a subscription model where listeners can automatically receive episodes related to their subjects. This wide range of topics is an advantage of podcasts as they cover subjects such as news, education, personal development, motivation and much more. Additionally podcasts are tools that encourage listener engagement through question and answer sessions, feedback sharing and active participation, in discussions. Moreover podcasts are typically hosted by one or more individuals who guide the conversation and provide commentary on the discussed topics.

Hew (2008) identified several distinguishing features of podcasts in comparison to other ICTs. These features include:

- a) Download:** Podcasts utilize file-based downloads instead of streaming. Unlike streaming where the media is played while it downloads, podcast files are downloaded in their entirety before they are played (McLoughlin & Lee, 2007).
- b) Syndication:** Podcasts can be syndicated and accessed using RSS and Atom technology, enabling automatic downloading or pushing of content to the user (Dixon et al, 2006).

While subscribing to an RSS feed is the most convenient method of receiving podcasts, users also have the option to manually download many podcasts from the internet (Copley, 2007).

c) Outlets: Podcast content is consumed on the user's personal computers or portable devices, such as dedicated MP3 players like iPods, mobile phones, and personal digital assistants (PDAs) with MP3 playback capabilities (McLaughlin & Lee , 2007).

Podcasts have a great impact on the users as they often foster a sense of community among people who share common interests and engage with the content through social media and other platforms.

2.4. Podcasts in English language teaching

When EFL teachers create a course using ICT tools that align with the interests and aspirations of their learners, they can achieve effective and efficient learning outcomes, leaving a positive impression on students. While television and radio were traditionally used as ICT tools for learning, the current emphasis has shifted towards computers, the internet, applications, and other technologies that enhance education across all levels. So teachers of English utilize ICT tools in teaching almost every aspect of the English language, especially listening. Podcasts are considered as one of these modern and effective technologies that can enhance learners' listening comprehension and help them recognize patterns of words used for communication, and understand the meaning expressed in different grammatical forms.

Jain & Hashmi (2013) highlighted that the modern learning setting in the ELT classroom offers such opportunities and ensure the best level of listening skills, speaking skills and presentation skills among the learners. The practicability of new techniques boosts the idea to broaden the possibility of faster learning and provides the constructive and virtual material to the learners in a virtual environment.

Dahamna & Hermouche (2023) highlighted that Technology plays an important role in education. It has become an integral part of it. Teachers and learners use it as a reliable source for their needs. It makes the process of teaching and learning easier and more productive. Teachers use it for a better presentation of information and as a facilitator to communicate and collaborate with their students as well as other teachers-through online

forums; meanwhile, learners find technology beneficial for their studies, research endeavours, and improvement of English language skills. These advantages are made possible through podcasts that can be used as an effective teaching aid in developing EFL students' listening comprehension,

In the field of education, there are primarily two types of podcasts that are commonly employed to acquaint students with specific themes or encourage them to delve deeper into the subject matter. The first type consists of podcasts created by lecturers, which serve as instructional resources for students. The second type involves the use of podcasts as an assessment tool, where students, either individually or in groups, produce their own podcasts as part of their learning experience.

- **When creating a podcast as a lecturer**, you have the option to be the main speaker or to interview a guest speaker. Some lecturers utilize podcasts as an alternative to traditional plenary sessions. However, it is essential to note that when doing so, the podcast should not merely be a dictation of the lecture but should be transformed into an engaging and captivating format. (Zijp & Karreman, 2020)

For instance, you can have your students listen to a podcast (be it before or after the lecture) and discuss the content during the lecture. Studies have shown that this is an effective way to increase students' reflective skills. (Andersen & Dau, 2021)

- **Encouraging students to create podcasts**

Podcasts serve not as a means of transferring information from the lecturer to the student. Also, giving the opportunity for students to create their own podcasts, this approach can effectively acquaint them with their chosen field of work thereby enabling them to engage in the level of Blooms Taxonomy "creation" (Krathwohl, 2002). By creating a podcast students can delve into deeper learning experiences. (Andersen & Dau, 2021)

Under the realm of enhancing listening skill, podcasts serve as suitable material that meets the needs and interests of learners and improves their listening skill.

Desdous and Boutas (2018) cited that audio content, such as podcasts, aids in memory retention three times more effectively than text. The auditory dimension of podcasting, including intonation and vocal expression, allows for direct communication of emotions and intellectual engagement with the listener. Thus, regularly engaging with

podcasts train the brain to become better at processing auditory information which allow learners improve their overall listening comprehension since they require focused attention as listeners rely solely on auditory cues to grasp the content.

By incorporating podcasts in the classroom or outside learning environments, students become familiar with a range of vocabulary through exposure to new words, colloquialism in context and different topics, also they will improve their pronunciation and intonation by paying attention to rhythm, accent and stress of speaker. It allows learners explore many cultural concepts through conversations and episodes as well as, they learn how language can be used in different settings, enabling them to distinguish between formal and informal language (registers), and potentially adopt these features in their own speech and their daily conversation.

Additionally, podcasts can also facilitate teaching by engaging students in conversations and discussions related to episodes and provide them with different perspectives and viewpoints, this allowing for interaction with the teacher and encourage critical thinking skill. podcasts bring authenticity into the classroom and enhances the learning experience

Conclusion

In conclusion, the ability to listen is crucial when it comes to language learning, and it plays a crucial role in achieving mastery of a language. Consequently, language learners strive to excel in this receptive skill by utilizing various platforms, apps such as apodcasts, which serve as excellent tools for honing this ability. Podcasts, in particular, offer exceptional opportunities for improving listening skills due to their features that allow learners to use them anytime and anywhere. Moreover, podcasts facilitate the development of vocabulary and pronunciation, while also familiarizing students with different accents, topics, cultures, and more. The following chapter will focus on the practical part of investigating learners' attitudes towards using podcasts and to indicate the role of podcasts and how it improves their listening skill.

Chapter Two:
Research
Methodology

Introduction:

This chapter aims to investigate the attitudes of EFL learners towards using podcasts to enhance their listening skills. This investigation is based on a clear strategy that utilizes both quantitative and qualitative methods. In order to gather precise information, a questionnaire was administered to first-year Master students in the department of English at the University of Ghardaia. Additionally, to ensure the validity of the findings, interviews were conducted with six teachers from the same university. This chapter includes a description of the research sample, data collection, interpretation of the questionnaire and interview results (data analysis). Finally, the research concludes with significant pedagogical suggestions and recommendations for further research.

2.1 Methodology

A descriptive research design was carried out through a combination of qualitative and quantitative approach to investigate the perceptions of EFL learners regarding the effectiveness of podcasts in enhancing their listening skill. The study involved collecting data from 40 first-year English Master's students at the University of Ghardaia through a questionnaires. Furthermore, face-to-face interviews were conducted with six recommendation to gather further insights.

2.1. Research sample

2.1.1. Students' sample

The first sample for this study consists in first-year Master students of English at the University of Ghardaia during the academic year 2024-2025. The total number of first-year Master students is 60, but due to the impracticality of working with the entire population, a sample of 40 students was selected. The sample was done randomley. The decision to focus on master's students was made because they were deemed most suitable for the research objective.

2.1.2. Teachers' sample

The second sample includes six teachers who were randomly chosen to participate in the interview. Among them, who hold Doctorate, Magister, and Master's degrees. These teachers have expertise in teaching different modules such as Civilisation, Phonetics, Linguistics, Oral expression, Information and Communication Technologies and Research Copyright. The intention behind diversifying the sample was to include teachers with varying levels of teaching experience.

2.2. Data collection

Data collection is an essential component in conducting research, as it enables the achievement of the study's objectives and the examination of research hypotheses. The data collection process is based on two main tools which are questionnaire and interview.

2.2.1. Discription of students'questionnaire

A questionnaire was administered to students to collect the necessary data. The students' questionnaire comprised sixteen (16) questions; close-ended questions requiring students to choose yes /No or pick up the appropriate answer from different options, or open-ended questions allowing them to answer freely. The questions cover general information about the students, the significance of podcasts in enhancing listening skills, the attitudes of EFL students towards podcasts and integrating them as teaching material in the classroom. The questionnaire aims to identify the benefits and challenges associated with podcasts usage among the students.

- Question (01) attempts to gather general information about the gender of the sample.
- Question (02) is designed to find out if the students are interested in listening to podcasts or no.
- Question (03) aims to know the frequency of listening to English podcasts
- Question (04) aims to indentify the attitudes of students towards the use of podcasts as an English a learning tool.
- Question (05) is concerned with knowing students' opinions about the effectiveness of podcasts to improve their listening skills.
- Question (06) is created to inquire about students' accessibility to podcasts.
- Question (07) attempts to indentify which skill that podcasts help to improve.
- Question (08) endeavors to know the preferred content of podcasts among learners.
- Question (09) aimed to indetify any suggestions and recommendations for enhancing the use of English podcasts in language learning.
- Question (10) is created to know whether students find podcasts more engaging than traditional textbooks.
- Question (11) aims to determine if the podcasts meet the students' learning needs.
- Question (12) aims to know whether podcasts are suitable for English learners of all levels or only for those who have an advanced level.

- Question (13) is designed to know students' opinions on incorporating podcasts into language learning classes.
- Question (14) is aimed to identify the difficulties encountered by learners when listening to podcasts.
- Question (15) is destined to assess the level of confidence among students after using podcasts.
- Question (16) determines which type of podcasts that are most effective for improving listening skills.

2.2.2. Teachers interview

In addition to students' questionnaire, a semi-structured interview was conducted to gather more comprehensive and validated data. Interviews allow for the simultaneous asking of multiple questions, contributing to the validity of the research findings. They also provide an opportunity to collect rich data and draw more detailed conclusions about the topic under investigation. The interviews were specifically directed towards EFL teachers in the department of English at the University of Ghardaia. The purpose of conducting these interviews is to explore whether they implement podcasts in their classrooms, their perceptions of podcasts, their awareness of students' attitudes towards podcasts, and their insights into the benefits and challenges of podcasts usage in the classroom. The interview protocol consisted of five (05) questions, designed to achieve the intended goals of the research.

2.2.1. Description of the teachers' interview

The interview consists of five (5) questions including close-ended and open-ended Questions which set to regard the teachers experience with the integration of technological tools in EFL teaching and the effectiveness of using podcasts in teaching and learning.

Question (01) is designed to know how long teachers have been teaching English?

Question (02) is about whether the teachers ever incorporated podcasts into their teaching?
If so how did they use them?

Question (03) is about what ways that podcasts can enhance learners listening skills?

Question (04) aims to know the challenges students may face while listening to podcasts?

Question (05) requires the teachers to suggest utilizing podcasts, for teaching English at the tertiary level?

2.3. Data analysis

2.3.1. Questionnaire results analysis

Question 01: What is your gender?

This question attempts to identify the number of students from each gender.

Table2.1 students gender

Options	Students Number	Percentage
Female	28	70%
Male	12	30%
Total	40	100%

The analysis of the gender distribution shows that 70% of the sample identifies as females, while 30% identifies as males, this sample shows a great representation of female students than male students.

Question 02: Do you like listening to English podcasts ?

This question is designed to know whether the students like listening to podcasts or not. The results obtained are shown in the table below.

Table2.2 learners' preferences of listening to English podcasts

Options	Students Number	Percentage
Yes	33	80%
No	7	20%
Total	40	100%

Based on the table (2.2) above we can see that the majority of the First-year master students 82.5% like listening to podcasts. On the other hand, 17.5% of the sample does not like listening to podcasts. These results show that while a significant portion of the students questioned enjoy listening to podcasts, there is also a sizeable proportion of students who do not find podcasts an enjoyable material of learning.

Question 03 : How often do you listen to English podcasts ?

This question focuses on determining the frequency of listening to English podcasts among students by requiring them to selecting an answer out of three options.

Table2.3 Frequency of listening to English podcasts

Options	Students Numbers	Percentage
Frequently	25	63%
Rarley	14	36%
Daily	1	1%
Total	40	100%

The table 2.3 reveals that out of 40 respondents, 63% indicated that they listen to podcasts frequently to learn English, while 36% reported that they daily listen to podcasts and 01% rarely. These findings suggest that the majority of the students, to some extent, have a tendency towards listening to podcasts to improve their listening and speaking skills, which is a positive sign in developing education.

Question 04 : Do you think English podcasts are a useful tool for learning English ?

This question aims to identify the perception of students towards the effectiveness of podcasts as an English learning tool. The results presented in the table below.

Table2.4 Students' perceptions of podcasts effectiveness in learning English

Options	Students Number	Percentage
yes	38	95%
No	2	5%
Total	40	100

We tended this question to know if they really consider English podcasts as a beneficial tool for learning English and improving their skills. The table 3.4 shows that 95% of the respondents agreed that English podcasts is an essential tool for them to learn English. In contrast, 5% of them do not agree that podcasts can be used in the learning process.

Question 05 : Do you think listening to English podcasts helps improve your listening skill?

This question is designed to know students' opinions about the role of English podcasts in enhancing their listening skill. Results are shown in the table below.

Table2.5 Students' perceptions of podcasts effectiveness to improve the listening skill

Options	Students Number	Percentage
Yes	37	78%
No	3	22%
Total	40	100%

The table 2.5 reveals that the majority of the students (78%) responded that they agree with the effectiveness of podcasts in enhancing their listening skill. While the rest of the participants, who represent the average of 22%, have responded otherwise

Question06: Do you find English podcasts easy to access and listen to?

This question was built to know if learners may face encounter challenges to access to podcasts and listen to. It required to selecting one answer out of three options. The results are shown as follows.

Table2.6 Accessibility of podcasts

Options	Students Number	Percentage
Yes	23	58%
No	2	5%
Somehow	15	38%
Total	40	100%

The table 2.6 shows that 40 stidents (58%) responded that podcasts are easy to access and that they do not face difficulties in listening to English podcasts, 5% of them said that they face difficulties to access to podcasts, and 38% of them are somehow having

difficulties which it depends. Therefore, the accessibility of podcasts and the difficulties faced while listening to them differ from a student to another.

Question 07 : Do you think listening to English podcasts help improve your... ?

This question aims to identify which skill learners use podcasts to improve. The results in the table below.

Table2.7 Podcasts contribution in improving various skills.

Options	Students Number	Percentage
Vocabulary	9	22%
Pronunciation	18	45%
Listening	11	28%
Speaking	2	5%
Total	40	100%

The above table demonstrates that 45% of the respondents do listen to English podcasts to improve their pronunciation, while 28% use them to improve their listening, and another 22% use them to improve their vocabulary. Therefore, learners use podcasts to improve skills that they need depending on their level, the remaining 5% reported using podcasts to improve their speaking.

Question 08: What content of podcasts do you prefer for English language learning?

This question is designed to find out the podcasts content preferred by EFL learners.

Table2.8 Types of podcasts content preferred by students.

Options	Students Number	Percentage
News	2	5%
Interviews	7	17%
Learning English	8	20%
Personal Development	17	43%
Other	6	15%
Total	40	100%

The data collected from this question indicates that the majority of the students (42, 5%) prefer personal development podcasts, 20% of them prefer the content related to learning English, while 17% prefer podcasts containing interviews with different personalities, 05% prefer news-related podcasts and 15% of them use podcasts for other reasons. Therefore, students listen to different types of podcasts according to their interests and learning objectives. This highlights the importance of the content which incite students to use podcasts significantly.

Question 09 : Do you have any suggestions for improving the use of English podcasts in language learning ?

This is an open-ended question that aims to gather suggestions and recommendations for enhancing the use of English podcasts in language learning.

The findings revealed that students provided various suggestions for the integration of English podcasts in language classroom. One common suggestion was to listen to podcasts and practice, repeating and imitating the content, a technique known as shadowing, to enhance pronunciation skills. Another recommendation was to listen to podcasts with transcriptions and subtitles, allowing learners to read along and recognize vocabulary. Some learners suggested listening to podcasts and engaging in discussions with others, emphasizing the importance of repeating key sentences.

Additionally, some participants mentioned the significance of selecting podcasts that covered topics of personal interest, such as life stories or subjects related to their learning goals, as this helps maintain engagement and motivate students.

Another suggestion was to translate the content of the podcasts, particularly for beginners, as it was considered an effective way to improve language skills. Summarizing the podcast content in one's own words and incorporating newly learned vocabulary was highlighted as a beneficial strategy for vocabulary acquisition and writing improvement.

Furthermore, participants recommended writing down challenging words and attempting to use them in daily conversations. Lastly, the inclusion of subtitles in podcasts was suggested as a means to improve both reading and listening skills simultaneously.

The majority of respondents emphasized the importance of attractive podcasts content that is concise and not excessively long, in order to prevent boredom.

Question10 : Do you think podcasts are more engaging than traditional textbooks or other learning materials ?

This question inquired whether students find podcasts more engaging than traditional textbooks.

Table2.10 The effectiveness of podcasts comparedto textbooks

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	35	87.5%
No	5	12.5%
Total	40	100%

Based on the data collected, 87.5% of the students who answered "yes." argued that podcasts are more engaging than traditional textbooks because they cover a wide range of topics and cater to various language skills. On the other hand, 12.5% of the students responded with "no." They justified that podcasts are primarily created by native speakers for purposes other than teaching. Additionally, some learners mentioned that both podcasts and textbooks have their own effectiveness and value. They acknowledged that podcasts play a significant role, just as textbooks do. Others stated that textbooks take into consideration the students' proficiency levels in a structured manner, which is not always the case with podcasts.

Question 11: Does the use of podcasts meet your learning needs?

This question aims to determine if the podcast meet the students' learning needs. The table below shows the results obtained.

Table2.11 The use of podcasts to meet learning needs

Options	Students Number	Percentage
Yes	35	87%
No	6	13%
Total	40	100%

The majority of students 87% responded affirmatively, indicating that podcasts did meet their learning needs. Conversely, 13% of the students answered negatively, suggesting that podcasts did not fulfill their learning requirements.

Question 12: Do you think podcasts are suitable for all levels of English learners, or only for those who have advanced levels?

This question aims to determine whether podcasts are suitable for English learners of all levels or only for those who have an advanced level.

Table2.12 The suitability of podcasts for all levels of English learners

Options	Students Number	Percentage
Yes	24	62%
No	16	38%
Total	40	100

According to table above the majority of students (62%) responded affirmatively. On the other hand, 38% of the respondents answered negatively. The majority of participants justified that podcasts are suitable for learners of all levels stating that podcasts offer different levels and provide various topics that can cater to learners' proficiency levels. Some respondents pointed out that the podcasts cover a wide range of topics, allowing learners to choose the appropriate level and topic that interests them, by selecting the content they are interested in, learners will keep motivated to learn quickly, even if they encounter language difficulties, as they can grasp the meaning from the context. Others emphasized that beginners should listen more than read or speak to improve their pronunciation.

However, the minority of respondents argue that podcasts may not be suitable for all levels stating that most podcasts are authentic and not specifically designed for teaching at a beginner's level, which can pose difficulties due to language complexity, fast speaking speed, idiomatic expressions...etc. Some respondents mentioned that beginners often lack patience and lose hope when faced with obstacles in language learning, so podcasts are more useful for advanced levels.

Question 13: Do you think English podcasts should be used more in language learning classes ?

This question designed to know students' opinions on incorporating podcasts more into language learning classes.

Table2.13 incorporating podcasts into language classes

Options	Students Number	Percentage
Yes	34	85%
No	6	15%
Total	40	100%

The majority of students (85%) answered affirmatively, stating that the use of podcasts in language classroom is highly beneficial and adds an authentic touch to learning experience. Also, this helps improve the quality of teaching and keeps students up-to-date with technological advancements. Some participants noted that podcasts expose students to real-life language usage, allowing them to experience the language, thoughts, beliefs, and even culture of native speakers. Additionally, podcasts help students become familiar with a wide range of vocabulary, as they cover diverse topics. Some participants highlighted that podcasts promote learner autonomy and engagement as it make language learning more dynamic.

Conversely, 15% of the students answered negatively, believing that podcasts should not be used in language learning classrooms. Their justifications included the difficulty of understanding complex language used in podcasts and the concern that podcasts would consume too much class time. However, some suggested that short video or audio podcasts could be used instead. Others emphasized that podcasts are primarily a personal development tool and can not be public.

Question 14 : What are the challenges that faces you in listening to podcasts ?

This question aimed to identify the difficulties encountered by learners when listening to podcasts. The results are shown in the table below.

Table 2.14 Types of challenges learners face when listening to podcasts

Options	Students Number	percentage
The accent	7	18%
Speed of speaker	20	50%
Culture of speaker	2	5%
Unfamiliar vocabulary and expressions	10	25%
Other	1	2%
Total	40	100%

Based on the data provided in the table 2.14, the primary obstacle faced by students, as indicated by 50% of respondents, is the speed at which the speaker talks. Following that, 25% of participants identified unfamiliar vocabulary as a significant challenge, while 18% mentioned the speaker's accent as a barrier. Lastly, the cultural background of the speaker was identified as the least common obstacles.

Question 15 : How confident do you feel about your listening skill after using podcasts?

This question aims to assess the level of confidence among students after listening to podcasts. Results are shown in the tables below.

Table 2.15 Students confidence after using podcasts

Options	Students Number	Percentage
Confident	27	67.5%
Very confident	11	27.5%
Not confident	2	5%
Total	40	100%

According to the results shown above, 67.5% of respondents expressed feeling confident, while 27.5% reported being very confident. Only 5% indicated that they were not confident, this shows that listening to podcasts helps boost confidence among students.

Question 16: Which type of podcasts you think is more effective in enhancing your listening?

This question is created to determine the type of podcasts that are most effective for improving listening skills.

Table 2.16 Types of podcasts learners consider effective

Options	Number	percentage
Audio podcasts	13	35%
Video podcasts	26	64%
Other	1	1%
Total	40	100%

Based on the data provided, the majority of the participants (64%) chose video podcasts for being more effective in enhancing not just their listening skills, but also their speaking skills and their storing memory. On the other hand, 35% chose audio podcasts as a type that is more effective in enhancing their listening skill.

2.3.2. Interview analysis

Section 01: General information

This section comprises one question about the teaching experience of the teachers and aims to grasp general information about the sample, identify the potential source of support, and get a comprehensive understanding of the teachers' background and expertise level.

Question 01: How long have you been teaching English?

- **Teacher 01:** 16 years. 13 years at secondary school and 3 years at University
- **Teacher 02:** 05 years
- **Teacher 03:** 02 years
- **Teachers 04:** 09 years

- **Teacher 05** : 01 year
- **Teachers 06**: 05 years

The feedback from teachers about their English teaching experience indicated that the majority of them have less than five (05) years of teaching experience, except for two teachers who have been teaching English for one (01) year and one teacher has been teaching for two (02) years. Additionally, one teacher has about sixteen years of teaching experience. The interviews revealed that all the teachers possess extensive experience and a strong background in various levels and fields. Given their diverse experiences, they can serve as valuable resources to support the subject matter.

Section 02: Podcasts and listening skill

This section comprises four (04) questions aimed at gathering information regarding the utilization of podcasts by teachers to enhance their students' listening skills. It also seeks to identify the challenges that students may encounter while listening to podcasts and determine the suitability of podcasts for teaching English at the university level.

Question 02: Have you ever used podcasts to teach English? What for?

- **Teacher 01:** yes, a lot.
- **Teacher02:** never, for myself yes, but for students no.
- **Teacher03:** No, not really, but I recommend it for my students.
- **Teacher04:** No, I didn't.
- **Teacher05:** yes, for myself and I encourage my students to use always technology tools
- **Teacher06:** yes, I have used podcasts before to teach oral expression module.

According to teachers' perspectives on the use of podcasts in teaching, most of them primarily utilized podcasts for their personal interests rather than for instructional purposes. However, some teachers did recommend audio-visual materials, such as podcasts, to their students outside the classroom. This was particularly beneficial for students who faced challenges with speaking, as it may allow them to focus on developing their listening skills, which in turn could improve their spoken language skills. The effectiveness of podcasts in this regard depends on the learners' interests and the relevance of the podcast topics to their preferences. If students were interested in a particular topic and the podcast aligned with their interests, they would more likely be influenced by the

language they were exposed to. It is worth noting that only one teacher specifically used podcasts to teach the oral expressions module, aiming to enhance both speaking and listening skills.

Question 03: How can podcasts develop the learners' listening skill?

Based on teachers' answers, podcasts are typically created by native English speakers. All of the teachers agreed that podcasts are highly beneficial for improving students' language skills and provide opportunities for them to work on various aspects of language learning. They emphasized that the effectiveness of podcasts depends on the content being listened to, as it helps students to familiarize themselves with sounds, words, pronunciation, intonation, and phrases, while also attempting to understand the meaning conveyed. The teachers mentioned that students can discuss the podcast material to enhance their listening comprehension. Additionally, six teachers specifically mentioned that podcasts enable students to practice both inside and outside the classroom.

Question 04: What kind of problems students may encounter while listening to podcasts?

The teachers' feedback highlights various challenges that learners might encounter when using podcasts. Firstly, one major issue is the language barrier. Since podcasts are usually created by native speakers, students with lower language proficiency may struggle to understand the content, leading to demotivation. Additionally, limited vocabulary can pose a problem for students who are unfamiliar with certain words, potentially resulting in misunderstandings of the message conveyed in the podcast.

Secondly, the accents and pronunciation used in podcasts can also present difficulties. Students who are not accustomed to different accents, such as British or American accents, may find it challenging to grasp what is being said or understand the meaning of the content.

Also, the podcats topic itself may be considered as one of the problems; If the students do not have some ideas and concepts of the content, it may be hard for them to get the meaning.

Additionally, one of the teachers highlighted a technical concern regarding the absence of internet connectivity, which could potentially create difficulties for students. Without access to an internet network, they would be unable to utilize podcasts effectively.

Furthermore, some teachers mentioned that learners may feel isolated and have limited opportunities for interaction when using podcasts. Additionally, podcasts can be distracting and lead to decreased attention among students.

Question 05: Do you recommend exploiting podcasts for teaching English at tertiary level ? Why ?

- **Teacher01:** yes.
- **Teacher02:** yes, of course.
- **Teacher03:** yes, as an addition it will be good tool.but students may face some challanges.
- **Teacher04:** yes, I recommend it.
- **Teacher05:** yes, I recommend it.
- **Teacher06:** yes, I do

The answers to this question showed that teachers highly recommend incorporating podcasts at the tertiary level due to their authenticity and valuable range of topics. They believe that podcasts can motivate students to practice their English language skills and have a significant impact on their language proficiency. One teacher emphasized that English language learning should be based on authentic materials like podcasts to raise students' levels and develop their listening skills and competencies. Listening is considered the most challenging skill, requiring attention, fluency in language reception, and comprehension. Therefore, teachers recommend the use of podcasts to familiarize students with and enhance their listening abilities, as well as to develop their overall language skills, including vocabulary and knowledge.

It was mentioned that podcasts are particularly useful in regular classroom settings. For instance, for a Phonetics module taught in a language laboratory, specific materials such as headphones and microphones are required, along with a specific number of students, making it challenging. However, podcasts can be easily implemented in a standard classroom environment. Nonetheless, it is essential for the teacher to prepare their lessons and design their courses effectively. Another teacher mentioned that there are some barriers to integrating podcasts in the classroom, such as the difficulty of finding a common and engaging podcast for all students, considering their diverse interests and levels. It was suggested that teachers could use podcasts that teach students how to learn English or provide information about language learning. Additionally, teachers should select podcasts that align with learners' objectives and have content that is easily understandable by all students. Another teacher highlighted that podcasts are an excellent

way to bring authenticity to the classroom but may be limited by classroom time constraints.

All on all, the interview revealed that all teachers agreed on the benefits of implementing podcasts as a modern and effective method of language learning. However, the success of integrating podcasts into the classroom depends on the teacher's methods and how they are integratele.

2.4. Discussion of the findings :

This subsection deals with the results of each study instrument on the light of the proposed hypotheses. The study aimed to investigate the attitudes of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners towards using podcasts to enhance their listening skills. And identify the benefits of using podcasts and any obstacles faced by learners. As it was address the following hypothese to get a valuable comprehensive data.

1. EFL students may have a positive interest in using English podcasts to improve their listening skills.
2. English podcasts may have a significance impact on enhancing students' listening skills.
3. Learners may face various challenges in using podcast.

A critical analysis of student questionnaires and teacher interviews revealed that first-year master's degree students expressed a positive attitude towards using podcasts. They viewed podcasts as a valuable tool for improving their language skills and considered them authentic materials that contribute to language development. Teachers also recognized the effectiveness of podcasts and supported the use of information and communication technology (ICT) tools in language learning. Although some teachers did not frequently incorporate podcasts into their teaching, they encouraged students to utilize them. While teachers mainly used podcasts for personal interest, they acknowledged their potential to enhance students' listening skills. Additionally, the majority of students reported that podcasts helped them improve their language skills, particularly their listening skills. However, the questionnaire analysis indicated that most students faced difficulties and challenges when using podcasts, such as difficulties with accents, speaker speed, unfamiliar vocabulary, and cultural concepts. Despite these challenges, students

reported easy access to podcasts and mentioned that they felt more confident in their listening skill after using them

Conclusion

As provided in this chapter the obtained results from the two research instruments that we inserted in order explore EFL learners towards the application of podcasts in EFL teaching and learning, and its contribution on developing listening skill. Thus, it is confirmed that the effectiveness of podcasts as tool enhances their listening skills, as well as its usefulness in language learning.

General Conclusion

General conclusion

Currently, technology has made its way into various fields, providing a range of tools that are incorporated into the teaching and learning process. One such tool is podcasts, which offer a great opportunity for the development of language skills, especially listening skills. However, it has been observed that both EFL learners and teachers are not fully aware of the benefits of using podcasts as learning and teaching materials. In light of this, the research calls for solutions to the problems that students encounter on listening and address the challenges faced by students while using podcasts. The research poses the following questions:

1. What are the attitudes of Master 1 English students towards using podcasts to enhance their listening skills?
2. What are the benefits of using podcasts as a tool to teach the listening skill?
3. What are the challenges faced by students while using podcasts?

These questions led the researchers to formulate the following hypotheses:

4. EFL students may have a positive interest in using English podcasts to improve their listening skills.
5. English podcasts may have a significance impact on enhancing students' listening skills.
6. Learners may face various challenges in using podcast.

The research is divided into two chapters. The first chapter, the theoretical part, discusses the variables separately. The first variable provides an overview about listening skills, including different definitions, importance, types, and the process of listening. The second variabl (using podcast) is devoted to giving a general overview and highlighting its importance in the process of learning a foreign language. This chapter presents podcasts as a useful tool in language teaching and their role in the classroom.

The second part, the practical part, deals with the sample, tools, data analysis, and discussion of the findings. This section analyzes interviews conducted with teachers and questionnaires administered to a sample of 40 first-year master's degree students of english department at the University of Ghardaia. Aiming either to refute or accept one of the hypotheses. The questionnaire explores the attitudes of EFL learners towards using

podcasts, the challenges they face in listening, and the obstacles encountered while using podcasts. The interviews with teachers investigate their opinions and views on implementing podcasts in the classroom and identifying the problems students face, as well as the difficulties associated with podcasts.

The findings and results indicate that EFL learners have a positive attitude towards using podcasts to enhance their listening skills and they perceive podcasts as a beneficial tool for improving their language skills. Both teachers and students recognized podcasts as authentic materials that contribute to language skill development. Thus, the first hypothesis is confirmed.

Regarding the second hypothesis, it is also deduced that podcasts play a notable role in improving listening skills. Furthermore, the use of podcasts as authentic materials in the EFL learning environment has been found to be highly beneficial for both teachers and learners. Additionally, students reported that podcasts helped them improve their language skills, particularly their listening skills. Therefore, the second hypothesis was confirmed.

The third hypothesis proposed that learners may encounter obstacles when using podcasts. However, the findings from the questionnaire analysis indicated that the majority of students encounter difficulties in utilizing podcasts as the teacher and students mentioned some problems such as accent, speed of speaker, unfamiliar vocabulary and the cultural concepts. Although the students reported that they can easily access to podcasts. Consequently, the third hypothesis is confirmed.

In conclusion, the research explores EFL learners' attitudes towards using podcasts to enhance their listening skills. The results show a positive perception among the majority of students, as they agree that podcasts help improve their English language skills, particularly in listening. Consequently, it is suggested that incorporating podcasts into EFL classrooms as authentic materials can effectively improve students' language learning.

Recommendation and suggestions

The findings of this study aims to suggest several recommendations for the integration of English podcasts in teaching, especially at tertiary level. The following recommendations need to be regarded:

- Curriculum should contain technological materials in order to practice and improve students listening.
- Learners should utilize podcasts as learning tool to enhance sepeaking particulary pronunciation.
- Teachers should take adventage of podcasts and integrate it in classroom as teaching material and bring the outside world life inside.
- Teachers should walk align with the technological advancement and training on ict tools such as podcasts.
- Learners create collective learning podcasts at University of Ghardaia English departement as well as learning club.
- Podcasts can affectand shape the learners cultural identities.
- Podcasts plays as massive too to raise awareness about social issues.

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Appendices

Appendix 01

Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

This investigation aims to measure the attitudes of 1st year Master students towards the use of English podcasts to enhance their listening skills. Your feedback will be helpful and of great significance for conducting our research. The collected data will be confidential and solely used for scientific purposes.

Please answer the following questions:

1. Gender

- Male
- female

2. Do you like listening to English podcasts ?

- Yes
- No

3. How often do you listen to English podcasts ?

- Daily
- Frequently
- rarely

4. Do you think English podcasts are a useful tool for learning English?

- Yes
- No

5. Do you think listening to English podcasts help improve your listening skill?

- Yes
- No

6. Do you find English podcasts easy to access and listen to?

- Yes
- No
- somehow

7. Do you think listening to English podcasts help improve your?

- Vocabulary
- pronunciation
- listening
- speaking

8. What content of podcasts do you prefer for language learning?

1. News
2. Interviews
3. Learning English
4. Personal development
5. Other specify.....

9. Do you have any suggestions for improving the use of English podcasts in language learning?

10. Do you think podcasts are more engaging than traditional textbooks or other learning materials?

- Yes
- No

Why?.....
.....

11. Does the use of podcast meet your learning needs ?

- Yes
- No

12. Do you think podcasts are suitable for all levels of English learners, or only for those who have advanced levels?

- Yes
- No

Why?.....
.....

13. do you think English podcasts should be used more in language learning classes?

- Yes
- No

Why?.....
.....

14. what are the challenges that faces you in listening to the podcast?

1. The accent
2. Speed of speaker
3. Culture of speaker
4. Unfamiliar Vocabulary and expressions
5. Other Specify.....

15. How confident do you feel about your listening skill after using podcast?

- Very confident
- Confident
- Not confident

16. Which type of podcast you think is more effective in enhancing your listening.

- Audio podcasts
- Video podcasts
- Other

Appendix 02

Teachers' interview

Dear teachers

You are kindly asked to answer the following questions which are going to be a part of our research.

Section one: General information

1.How long have you been teaching English?

Section two: Podcasts and listening skill

2.Have you ever used podcasts to teach English? What for?

3. How can podcast develop the learners' listening skill?

4.What kind of problems students may encounter while listening to podcasts?

5.Do you recommend exploiting podcasts for teaching English at tertiary level? Why?

تعد مهارة الاستماع أمرًا بالغ الأهمية عندما يتعلق الأمر بتعلم اللغة، وتلعب دورًا حاسمًا في تحقيق إتقان اللغة. وبالتالي، يسعى متعلمو اللغة إلى إتقان هذه المهارة من خلال استخدام منصات مختلفة، وتطبيقات مثل البث الصوتي أو ما يطلق عليه اسم "بودكاست" والتي تعمل كأدوات ممتازة لصقل هذه القدرة. حيث توفر ملفات البودكاست، على وجه الخصوص، فرصًا استثنائية لتحسين مهارات الاستماع نظرًا لميزاتها التي تتيح للمتعلمين استخدامها في أي وقت وفي أي مكان. يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة وجهات نظر الطلاب حول استخدام بودكاست كوسيلة لتطوير مهارة الاستماع. كما يهدف لإستكشاف الإيجابيات هذه الوسيلة في تطوير اللغة والبحث عن أية عوائق قد تواجه المتعلمين أثناء استخدامها للبودكاست. ومن أجل تأكيد فرضياتنا تم إستخدام أداتي بحث في هذه الدراسة لجمع البيانات، إستبيان للطلاب ومقابلة مع الأساتذة. حيث تم توجيه إستبيان لأربعين طالب لغة إنجليزية من سنة أولى ماستر من كلية الاداب واللغات بجامعة غرداية، كما تم مقابلة ستة 6 أساتذة من نفس الكلية. توصلت الدراسة إلى أن الطلاب لديهم وجهة نظر ايجابية تجاه استخدام بودكاست لتطوير مهارة الاستماع بالرغم من وجود بعض العوائق أثناء استخدام هذه الأداة. كما أسفرت النتائج على أن بودكاست وسيلة جد قيمة لتعلم اللغة الانجليزية عامة وتطوير مهارة الاستماع خاصة. علاوة على ذلك، يعمل البودكاست على تسهيل تطوير المفردات والنطق، كما تتيح للطلاب أيضًا فرصة استكشاف والتعرف على لهجات ومواضيع مختلفة والإحتكاك بثقافات مختلفة من كل العالم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: بودكاست، تطوير اللغة، مهارة الاستماع