



Two Birds, one stone: Using Audiobooks for improving Reading and Listening Fluency

Names of students:

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Esraa Nasreldeen Mohamed Abdulrazek.

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Raghda Ali Mohamed Ali.

Sondos Sayed Abd EL Salam.

Tasneem Khaled Mahmoud Rashad.

**Supervisor: Dr. Ahmed Abdelsattar Abdelaziz Keshk, Doctor of English
Literature–fiction.**

**Program: Bachelor of Arts and Education (Preparatory and Secondary) English
language and literature major. Faculty of Education, Ain Shams University.**

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Academic E-mails:

english2021_24@edu.asu.edu.eg
english2021_13@edu.asu.edu.eg
english2021_237@edu.asu.edu.eg
english2021_180@edu.asu.edu.eg
english2021_233@edu.asu.edu.eg
english2021_109@edu.asu.edu.eg
english2021_51@edu.asu.edu.eg

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Abstract:

This study investigates the impact of audiobooks on improving listening and reading fluency in Egyptian secondary EFL students. Ten participants from Insaaf Serry School were subjected to a one-group pre-test and post-test design. Pre-testing was conducted to determine their initial fluency levels. The participants were then exposed to audiobooks as a kind of treatment. A post-test was undertaken to assess the improvements in fluency. The researcher used a line graph and chart to visually depict the alteration in scores and average scores between the pre-test and post-test phases. This graphical depiction provides a lucid visualization of the transition in scores before and following the audiobook, highlighting any significant variations in performance. The results indicate a substantial statistical difference in the scores of the group during the post-test period. The results demonstrate that audiobooks had a significant contribution to the enhancement of listening and reading fluency, as indicated by the higher post-test scores in comparison to the pretest scores. The audiobooks facilitated the group's improvement in listening and reading fluency, as evidenced by their superior performance on the post-test compared to the pre-test.

Key Words:

Audiobooks, British and American pronunciation models, reading fluency, and improving Listening.

Introduction:

This study examines seven obstacles (three about reading and four about listening) encountered by Egyptian EFL students in secondary schools when utilizing audiobooks to enhance their fluency in reading and listening.

One factor is the tempo since the speaker plays a role in the process that enables children to listen. According to Trismasari (2016), students can encounter challenges in listening comprehension, particularly when it comes to understanding the speaker's message.

Utters at an accelerated pace, so depriving listeners of the ability to regulate the tempo of the discourse.

Connected speech poses numerous challenges for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, and elision is one such impediment. Elision is the process of omitting sounds in connected speech. Students have a strong understanding of isolation, but they struggle to recognize it when it is used within a phrase. Therefore, providing examples of elision rules can assist students.

Furthermore, how students articulate words can have a substantial impact on how we are perceived and comprehended by others. Gaining insight into the distinctions between British and American accents can enhance your proficiency.

Nevertheless, it continues to be disregarded in numerous EFL (English as a foreign language) classrooms. When instructing pronunciation, it is unfeasible to conduct a course solely dedicated to pronunciation practice due to the bad perception of pronunciation as an ancillary activity in many educational institutions. There is no text provided. Moreover, in the context of acquiring a foreign language like English, the impact of native language can have a substantial influence on the development of speaking abilities. Every language possesses its distinct phonetic system, causing non-native speakers to often substitute the phonemes of the target language with the closest alternative from their original language. Aside from the obstacles of pronunciation, students encounter numerous difficulties when it comes to employing conjunctions.

Research has revealed that a specific set of students struggled with understanding how to properly utilize conjunctions.

According to Chapman (1983), it is recommended that students in school be taught how to detect conjunctions and learn their meanings.

This research investigates the effects of introducing audiobooks into English as a Foreign Language, with a specific focus on the practice of reading while listening. It aims to explore the impact of this practice on learners' listening fluency and vocabulary acquisition. It is worth noting that fluency in L2 language instruction has not gotten much attention previously. The widely accepted assumption in L2 learning is that fluency facilitates comprehension, and comprehension is crucial for acquisition.

Learning English as a second language poses lexical difficulties for students. An example of a challenge is coming across unexpected vocabulary and idiomatic expressions in a written passage. During these situations, students depend on contextual cues to decipher the meanings of these mysterious terminologies. This topic explores the several tactics used by language users to decipher the meanings of words using contextual hints.

Objectives of the study:

The research aims are as follows:

1. Assess the magnitude of the change in listening scores after the experiment in comparison to the scores before the trial.
2. Evaluate the extent of disparity in vocabulary test scores after the experiment in comparison to the scores before the experiment.
3. Examine the influence of the experiment on both listening and vocabulary test scores.

The primary objective of this study was to examine the relationship between the utilization of audiobooks and improvements in reading

competency, as well as attitudes toward reading and listening abilities. In addition to test scores, they also observed the students' engagement with audiobooks in the classroom. Through the analysis of alterations in reading proficiency and listening fluency.

Importance of the research:

In his research, Brown (2004, p.119) emphasizes the significance of listening in the process of language acquisition. He poses a rhetorical question to underscore the undeniable connection between hearing and speaking: "Is it possible to speak a language without also engaging in the act of listening?" According to Downs (2008, p.1), listening goes beyond simply hearing. One's auditory perception allows for the reception of sound, but the act of actively paying attention and comprehending the information conveyed through sound may not occur. Similarly, according to Broughton et al. (1978), one can hear, but may not comprehend. These remarks highlight the significance of utilizing audiobooks to enhance listening and reading fluency.

There are multiple overarching benefits of including audiobooks in language training. An inherent advantage is that it allows learners to acquire new vocabulary. This is because learners encounter unfamiliar terms while reading and listening, which then become integrated into their spoken and written lexicon (Serafini, 2004). An additional benefit of audiobooks is that they assist learners in acquiring the correct pronunciation and intonation of words they encounter both audibly and visually (Saka, 2015; Tagninezhad, Khalifah, Nabizadeh, Shahab, 2015). In addition, audiobooks offer learners the chance to improve their active listening abilities, boost their listening skills, and develop their reading skills (Jakobs, 2006; Türker, 2010; Kartal & Şimşek, 2011).

Another benefit of audiobooks is that they provide learners with an opportunity to improve their independent reading skills and reading fluency. This is achieved by exposing them to models of fluent reading for the content they listen to (O'Day, 2002; Nalder & Elley, 2003).

Review of literature:

Listening and reading are widely regarded as the primary language abilities necessary for obtaining effective communication and academic success among learners. Listening is a crucial skill that learners typically develop first (Oxford, 1993; Vandergrift, 1999), making it highly integrative. Vandergrift (2003) has highlighted the significance of it as a crucial element in the process of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Listening comprehension is a multifaceted and dynamic process in which a listener must differentiate between sounds, grasp vocabulary. Furthermore, what are the benefits of listening to audiobooks that are comparable to reading traditional printed books? Extensive research confirms the significance of reading aloud to students, asserting that the process of reading aloud imparts novel language and concepts. In the realm of education, there exists a technique known as reading aloud, when a person (often a teacher) reads a book aloud to others. Audiobooks function in a similar manner, with the exception that the reader's voice in the reading activity is replaced by someone else's voice in the audiobook (Larson, 2015). Audiobooks might serve as a promising method to provide suitable support for independent second language (L2) reading, particularly for individuals who are encountering difficulties in attaining smooth and proficient reading and listening skill.

1. Audiobook:

Audiobooks serve as a valuable resource for language acquisition, allowing learners to comprehend spoken language and expand their vocabulary. Audiobooks are a highly effective resource for enhancing reading and listening skills. According to Reid Lyon (2002), reading aloud to children is an established method for enhancing vocabulary and language skills. It has a direct impact on improving both the ability to understand and the ability to communicate language. Reading aloud can also improve children's understanding of new concepts that may be present in both spoken and written language. The researcher operationally defined audiobooks as audio recordings of the narration of a printed book, which users can listen to and repeat while reading the physical copy of the book.

2. Audiobooks and the Enhancement of Language Skills:

Convenient availability and utilization of audiobooks by educators and learners enhance the acquisition of foreign language proficiency. Prior empirical research has demonstrated that engaging with audiobooks enhances both reading comprehension and listening abilities (Jakobs, 2006; Turker, 2010).

Proper enunciation is a crucial concern in English as (EFL) lessons. The primary cause of poor pronunciation in (EFL) environment is the historical neglect of listening skills until the late 1960s when it was viewed as a passive aspect of language learning (Demirezen, 2005, p. 184).

3. Reading Fluency:

The definition of reading fluency has been a subject of ongoing debate in the literature on reading fluency. This debate has important

implications for how fluency is assessed and taught. However, it is widely accepted that “key components include accuracy, automaticity (rapid and easy processing), and prosody (expressiveness)” (Grabe, 2009). The importance of fluency development mainly stems from the “Automaticity Theory” (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974) which defines reading fluency as the capacity to simultaneously decode and comprehend. Literary consumption Fluency is a crucial element of language learning, especially in academic environments. Being fluent in reading implies the ability to comprehend many concepts and read with speed and ease. Nevertheless, the obstacles encountered by individuals learning a foreign language in comprehending written material frequently result in shortcomings in their reading skills and struggles when participating in reading activities. Therefore, effectively dealing with challenges in understanding requires a thorough method that incorporates many techniques, such as explicit teaching of vocabulary and grammar. By acknowledging the significance of fluent reading and adopting focused interventions, educators can effectively assist foreign language learners in attaining academic achievement and developing enduring language proficiency. The primary objective of the current study is to examine the impact of audiobooks on the enhancement of reading fluency and the motivation of young readers.

4. Listening Fluency:

Listening fluency is a crucial aspect of comprehending spoken language and achieving proficiency in speaking, especially in the context of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL), because opportunities for exposure and practice are limited to academic or self-study settings.

Iwanaka (2014), Chang and Millett (2014), and Andrade (2006) argue that this skill has motivated several students to not only learn the language but also enhance their intellectual abilities, cultural knowledge, and communication skills. Rost (1991) and Kim and Maeng (2012) propose that listening fluency is a crucial skill that enhances learners' capacities to become more proficient listeners, enhance oral communication, and concentrate on others' speech. Richards (2008) states that "listening fluency is now a target in speaking courses as learners strive for genuine communication despite their limited English proficiency" (p. 2). Practicing listening fluency enables EFL students to proficiently engage with the substance and circumstances of spoken communication, whether it is in-person talks or audio-visual recordings.

The Theoretical Framework:

1. Tempo:

The challenges faced by English as (EFL) learners in listening comprehension appear to stem from their approach to the listening process. "In contrast to native language (L1) listeners, who can effortlessly comprehend spoken language without actively focusing on each word, most language learners need to consciously analyze and interpret the meaning of what they hear" (Vandergrift, 2004). "In other words, they typically make an effort to actively listen to every word and are unable to disregard any parts of the input that are not essential for comprehending the message." This category of factors contributing to the hearing difficulties experienced by EFL learners includes challenges related to the pace of speech, unfamiliar vocabulary and ideas, and the duration

of the listening material. According to Hasan (2000), Arabic EFL learners encountered difficulties with the rapid pace of speech and unfamiliar terminology in the listening materials. Similarly, Graham (2006) and Bennu (2007) discovered that EFL learners commonly faced difficulties in hearing due to the fast pace of spoken texts. This led to their inability to accurately detect and comprehend words within a continuous flow of information. Underwood (1989) identifies several obstacles that hinder the process of effective listening comprehension. Listeners cannot regulate the pace of spoken language. The primary challenge associated with listening comprehension is the lack of control listeners have over the pace at which speakers speak. Secondly, listeners are unable to have words reiterated, which might lead to significant challenges for them. According to Buck (1995) and Field (2003), the following factors can lead to difficulties in comprehension. Beginning language learners sometimes find that a text read at normal or moderate speed is interpreted as very rapid or even too quickly. "This information is significant as studies have indicated that the speed at which speech is delivered is linked to the level of understanding achieved (Buck, *ibid.*)". For instance, each augmentation in the speed at which speech is delivered generally leads to a decline in understanding, and when the speech rate is beyond a crucial threshold, comprehension becomes nearly unattainable. "It is important to note that many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners have a lower threshold for speech rate, beyond which comprehension becomes impossible, compared to more advanced learners." "A significant number of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, particularly those with limited language proficiency, perceive listening as

the most challenging skill among all areas of English language learning (Bacon 1980; Farrell and Mallard 2006)." Several factors contribute to this issue. One reason is that English is not their natural language, making it challenging for them to fully comprehend the speech of a native speaker. Another factor is that second language learners are not accustomed to comprehending speech from native speakers who speak at a rapid pace. Numerous research has been undertaken to examine the impact of speech rate on listening comprehension. "The majority of studies on listening comprehension have found that non-native speakers gain an advantage from a slower rate of speech." "Griffiths (1990, 1992) conducted studies where he compared the listening comprehension of three different speech rates, varying from fast to slow." "The findings indicated that the learners' ability to understand spoken language at a fast pace was significantly inferior to their ability to understand language spoken at an average or slow pace." However, there was no discernible disparity in comprehension between the average and slow speaking rates. "Griffiths' discovery indicated that while learners gain advantages from a reduced pace of speech, slowing down the speech rate may not be useful at certain proficiency levels. "Additionally, he noted that there were variations among individuals in their perception of the speed at which speech is delivered." According to Zhao (1997), there were variations among individuals in how they perceived the speed at which speech was delivered. In his research, he investigated if allowing learners to control the speed of speech would enhance their comprehension compared to just repeating a piece given at a rapid tempo. It was discovered that even when allowed to repeat the section at a rapid pace, their understanding was

not as strong as those who could regulate the speed of speech.

2. Elision:

Elision is a significant subject in the study of English phonology. "It refers to the omission of a sound that was previously present in precise speech" (Jones, 1984: 133). This means that a phoneme can either be realized as zero, have zero realization, or be deleted. The present study aims to assess the proficiency of English as (EFL) learners in identifying syllables that are likely to be elided, as they may encounter challenges in this aspect.

In the field of generative phonology, it exemplifies the latter definition. Schane (1973: 52) defines elision as a phonological process that occurs inside the syllabic structure of words. He refers to this process as a syllabic structure process, where phonemes are omitted in specific settings, leading to changes in the syllabic structure. In the past, the words 'listen' and 'Christmas' were pronounced with /t/ sound following the /s/ sound. In modern times, the pronunciation of the letter 't' has changed and no longer corresponds to its historical pronunciation. The pronunciation of some sounds has undergone a shift from being articulated to being unarticulated. This phenomenon is associated with a certain historical period and transformation (Wells and Celson, 1971: 57). According to Finch (2005: 44–45), elision is the act of leaving out a certain sound in spoken language. The consonant elision typically occurs in English when /t/ and /d/ appear at the end of a syllable or word and are surrounded by other consonants. The phonemes /t/ and /d/ are found within a consonant cluster. /t/, /d/ are elided when occurring between consonants.

For instance:

- **Postcard** is pronounced as / pʊskɑ:rd /
- **Facts:** is pronounced as /fæks/
- **Next day:** is pronounced as /neiks deɪ/
- **last post:** is pronounced as /ðə lɑ:s pəʊst/
- **Handsome:** is pronounced as /'hæɪn.səm/

It is a frequent occurrence in informal speech patterns, particularly at the juncture between words.

Types of elision:

1. Historical elision

In the past, the words "listen" and "Christmas" were spoken with a "t" sound after the "s". However, in modern times, the "t" sound is no longer pronounced, even if it is still spelled with a "t". This change in pronunciation, where the "t" sound is no longer pronounced, is known as elision (Wells and Celson, 1971: 57). Instances of elision throughout history are frequent. The English word "knee" /ni:/ exhibits elision of the original start /k/, and the /w/ sound is no longer spoken in the English word "write". Additional instances include words such as "knight," "knife," "gnat," and "know."

The historical omission of some sounds in the English language can be exemplified by the absence of /r/ and /l/ in words such as "walk" (pronounced as wɔ:k) and "Ford" (pronounced as fɔ:d). Certain allophones in English words, such as knight /nait/, may be shortened or elided. Furthermore, there exists another type of historical omission of English consonants, specifically consonant clusters, which can be observed in

words such as writer, know, gnaw, and knee. Certain middle consonants in words such as "fasten" and "castle" can also be elided. Historical elision is also seen in final positions in words such as lamb, comb, and hymn (Gimson, 1976: 238). Historically, elision is denoted by silences.

Contextual elision

Refers to the phenomenon when sounds disappear in compound or related phrases.

Contextual omission is more diverse than historical omission. The former typically impacts consonants, vowels, and occasionally syllables as well (Salman, 2009: 18–19). It is noted that words, and sometimes even entire phrases, vanish in connected discourse through the use of reduced forms. This phonological case can be traced to two reasons:

1. Initially, speakers conserve energy by eliding sounds, such as avoiding challenging consonant sequences.
2. Secondly, there is a rhythmic rationale behind this phenomenon. English prosody norms mandate that some closed-class words, such as prepositions, pronouns, and conjunctions, are never emphasized and may be spoken in a weak, unstressed manner. By examining informal conversation, it becomes apparent that the sounds /t/ and /d/ are frequently left out. It is well acknowledged that these sounds are the most frequently missed consonants in the context of elision.

3. Mother tongue impact:

The impact of one's native language on English speaking ability is an extensively studied subject in

the field of second language acquisition. Multiple studies have demonstrated that an individual's pronunciation, fluency, and overall skill in speaking English are greatly influenced by their native language or mother tongue. The influence of one's native language on English speaking abilities is as follows:

Todaro (1970) conducted a comparative analysis of English and Egyptian Arabic. The objective of his research was to identify the primary challenges encountered by Egyptian individuals when learning English as a second language, namely due to the structural disparities between their native language and the target language. He has forecasted that the learners will not be able to create sounds that are not present in their phonetic inventory, such as /p/, and instead, they would replace these sounds with ones that are already part of their inventory, such as substituting /b/ for /p/.

Todaro predicted that Egyptian learners will encounter challenges in pronouncing certain English sounds that are not present in their native Arabic phonological system. English contains the voiceless bilabial plosive sound /p/, which is not present in Egyptian Arabic. Todaro hypothesized that Egyptian learners may encounter challenges in producing this sound, resulting in its substitution with the closest available alternative. In the Egyptian language, the pronunciation of the word "pencil" may be represented as "bensil" using the phoneme /b/.

The word "please" may be pronounced as "blease". The language also encounters a phonological phenomenon known as Voiceless Palato alveolar fricative /sh/ being substituted with voiceless palato alveolar /ch/ and vice versa. For instance, the word "cheap" may be pronounced as "sheap" and "chips" may be articulated as "ships".

Aside from consonant clusters, which are groups

of two or more consonant sounds that occur consecutively in a word without a vowel in between, Egyptians have a tendency to insert a vowel in the middle of the cluster. Occasionally, speakers may interpose a vowel sound amidst consonant clusters in order to facilitate pronunciation. For example, the word "friends" could be sounded as "friendes" while "improve" might be pronounced as "imperove". Both Todaro and Various scholars have investigated the influence of one's native language on pronunciation while acquiring a foreign language. One such researcher is James Emil Flege, who extensively studied the acquisition of second language speech, with a specific emphasis on how the mother tongue affects the pronunciation of a second language. Peter Ladefoged, a renowned phonetician, made significant contributions to the study of articulation in speech sounds across different languages. The research emphasized the impact of variations in phonetic systems between one's native language and English on second language acquisition.

4. Comparison between British English and American English: English is a globally spoken language. It is spoken by millions of people worldwide, both as their first and second language. The English language comprises various dialects, including two main classifications: American English, British English, and others. Floris (2010) states that English serves as a means of communication between persons from ENL countries and those from ESL and EFL countries. Consequently, one of the language-related challenges that often arise after acquiring a new language is the difficulty in articulating words.

American English and British English are distinct varieties of the English language, each with its own set of peculiarities and distinctive features (Setiawan, 2020). Due to the utilization of both British English and American English in Egyptian schools, distinct attitudes might be observed among secondary students.

The primary objective of this paper is to ascertain the distinct challenges in pronunciation that students have when learning American and British English. Most Egyptian students are acquainted with two primary English dialects: Received Pronunciation, which is linked to British English, and General American, which symbolizes American English.

American English exhibits less variation in pronunciation compared to British English. Conversely, (GA) shares several similarities with RP. According to Odenstedt (2000:137), American English is considered to be slower, clearer, and easier to comprehend compared to British English, which is characterized by a more indistinct nature that makes it more challenging to grasp. Moreover, American English is more readily available to a bigger population of individuals who speak it as their first or second language, which naturally contributes to its increased global significance.

One of the primary issues is that numerous students are unaware of the existence of multiple variations of the English language. In addition, students may not have the opportunity to choose their preferred English dialect as many teachers choose to teach British English rather than American English.

The primary objective of this study is to educate students about the various accents of English and

to highlight the distinctions in pronunciation between AmE and BrE that may be evident to native speakers but not always easily discernible to non-native speakers. RP and GA exhibit variations in the articulation of vowels, consonants, lexical stress, vowel reduction, and intonation. The research will specifically focus on consonants, particularly the /r/ sound, which will be discussed in detail.

So, the main focus is on pronunciation differences with a specific focus on variations between /-/ vs /r/. This is what phonetician called Rhoticity and Non-Rhoticity.

- /-/:

Refer to there is no sound for the sound /r/

- /-/ vs /r/:

In Received Pronunciation, the letter "r" is typically silent except when it precedes a vowel or occurs at the beginning of a word. It remains unpronounced when it comes before another consonant or at the end of a word, unless the following word begins with a vowel. This silent "r" in RP, known as non-rhoticity /r/, contrasts with General American (GA) pronunciation, where the /r/ sound is pronounced in all positions.

- **"car"**: is pronounced as [kɑ: r] in General American English and as [kɑ:] in Received Pronunciation.
- **"far"**: is pronounced as [fɑr] in General American English and as in [fɑ:] Received Pronunciation.
- **"farm"**: is pronounced as [fɑ:rm] in General American English and as [fɑ:m] in Received Pronunciation.
- **"hard"**: is pronounced as [hɑ:rd] in General American English and as [hɑ:d] in Received Pronunciation.

4.5 Difficulties in using coordinating conjunctions:

Conjunctions have a crucial role in enhancing reading comprehension and vocal communication. Conjunctions are widely acknowledged as one of the primary cohesive devices that connect different parts of a text and facilitate the reader's ability to form coherent messages with ease and speed. Azar (1981:267) defines conjunctions as a means of connecting words or phrases that share the same grammatical patterns inside a sentence.

Conjunctions establish specific semantic relationships between the connected elements of the text, such as additive, adversative, causal, and temporal or sequential linkages. Treanor (1997:292) states that there exist three types of conjunctions. One of these conjunctions is a coordinating conjunction. Our main focus will be on the challenges that students face in Egyptian schools and thereafter address them, while employing coordinating conjunctions.

Budiarjo (2018) defines coordinating conjunctions as words that serve to connect words, phrases, and clauses inside sentences. There are a total of seven conjunctions, one of which is a coordinating conjunction that can be abbreviated as "FANBOYS".

(For): This conjunction is also known as causal conjunction, as it is used to describe reasons or purposes, similar to the role of the word "because".

- Every Sunday, I visit the park to see the dogs engaging in ball games, as I have a strong fondness for it.

(And): The conjunction "and" is used to provide additional information by combining two existing things. To avoid any conflict, it is important to express a single idea within the same sentence.

- I like both hot and cold drinks.

(Nor): The word “nor” is used to introduce an alternative notion in a negative phrase. It is used to offer further information to a negative sentence that comes before it. For example,

- He doesn't eat meat, nor does he like fish.

(But): This conjunction is used to indicate a sharp contrast between two items and is hence also referred to as a contrast conjunction.

- Ahmed attempted to comprehend a French novel but encountered difficulty in doing so.

(Or): This conjunction functions as a coordinating conjunction to provide additional information or indicate that there are multiple options. This combination is utilized daily.

- Would you prefer tea or coffee?

(Yet): This conjunction serves as an introductory expression that presents a notion that is in opposition to the logical idea previously mentioned. The context is comparable to the conjunction "but" and can also be referred to as a contrast conjunction.

- I am fatigued, yet I desire to venture outside.

Due to the abundance of available conjunctions, students frequently struggle with their proper usage, resulting in common issues connected to sentence construction. According to Chapman (1983), students in school should receive instruction on identifying conjunctions, understanding their meanings, and developing the ability to discern the semantic relationships that conjunctions convey in written text. Students may

misuse conjunctions either due to their incorrect application of the formula or their limited understanding and vocabulary.

To overcome these challenges, the researcher employed two methodologies:

1. Explanation the definitions and purposes of conjunctions, as well as provide guidance on their appropriate usage to effectively distinguish between them.
2. Utilizing a specifically chosen audiobook manuscript.

The purpose of audiobook’s script is to provide a clear explanation of the usage of conjunctions in the text and their role in language, both in written and spoken language, to enhance reading fluency and comprehension.

Assisting students in recognizing the specific type of conjunctions to differentiate them from other functional terms like prepositions.

5.Limited Vocabulary:

Acquiring proficiency in listening and reading skills in a second language can be challenging, especially in second-language environments. A significant obstacle in the development of second language listening skills is the limited exposure to the language (Rost, 1994, 2006).

The term "listening while reading" is commonly used in numerous research on first-language reading. This word refers to a strategy that is frequently employed to enhance literacy skills and reading fluency, especially in children (Beers, 1998; Rasinski, 1990). Both the practice of listening while reading and reading while listening entails simultaneous engagement in reading and listening activities. However, there are distinctions in terms of the emphasis, the resources utilized,

and the pace of the listening component. When engaging in the practice of listening while reading, the primary objective is to enhance reading skills. This is achieved by simultaneously listening to spoken versions of written texts at a quicker pace than when reading while listening. This is because reading speed is typically faster than speech. However, when engaging in reading while listening, the primary emphasis is on listening. Therefore, spoken texts such as discussions, stories, lectures, and movies are employed to enhance listening comprehension.

Studies have shown that students demonstrate different levels of word acquisition in three specific reading modes: (RWL), (LO), and (RO). The results indicate that students achieve the most favorable outcomes in word learning while using the RWL mode, followed by the RO mode, and lastly the LO mode.

In a recent study conducted by Brown et al. (2008), the acquisition of vocabulary through three different modes of input (reading, reading while listening, and listening only) was investigated. The study revealed that the students learned the highest number of words in the reading while listening mode, while the listening-only mode resulted in the lowest number of words learned, as determined by both meaning-translation and multiple-choice tests.

7. Guessing the meaning from the context:

Teaching vocabulary encompasses more than simply consulting a dictionary and incorporating the words into a sentence. According to Pikulski and Templeton (2004), the most effective resources we can provide children with, to excel

not just in their schooling but also in life, are extensive and diverse vocabulary, along with the ability to effectively utilize those words. Thornbury (2006:322) emphasizes the significance of acquiring knowledge within a certain setting or situation. According to Thornbury, texts, whether they be spoken or written, offer significant benefits for the aim of expanding one's vocabulary compared to learning terms from lists. The majority of linguists place significant emphasis on the efficacy of acquiring vocabulary through contextual learning. Prince (1996: 489) outlines three advantages of learning from context. Firstly, understanding the meaning of a word in context requires learners to develop strategies like anticipation and inference. These strategies become more beneficial as learning progresses, as they foster a sense of self-reliance that is characteristic of proficiency. Furthermore, the deliberate and organized exposure to unfamiliar terms within a specific context highlights the fundamental role of words in facilitating effective communication. Context ultimately offers insight into how the words are employed. A study conducted by Dole, Sloan, and Trathen (1995) focused on teaching vocabulary by emphasizing the meanings of terms within certain contexts. Many words had many meanings, and just consulting the dictionary did not adequately assist students in comprehending the intended meanings of the words as they were employed in the texts. Students acquired the definitions of unfamiliar words through their contextual usage in the readings. The solitary acquisition of vocabulary was hindered and instead, students were shown how word learning is always situated inside a context. Students were allowed to apply the vocabulary they learned in the reading selections. By generating sentences that incorporate the

words in their proper context and engaging in discussions that explore the words' relevance to the given selections, students were exposed to the terms on several occasions.

In addition, they were able to observe the direct correlation between words and the plot, topic, and characters in the selections. The engagement in these activities facilitated the thorough cognitive processing of the words and frequent encounters with them, both of which have been demonstrated to enhance the acquisition of new vocabulary and comprehension skills (p. 459).

Students often experience frustration when they encounter texts that are predominantly composed of unfamiliar vocabulary. To optimize their incidental learning, individuals should engage in both leisurely reading and intellectually stimulating reading (Johnson & Johnson). Now, how can one properly deduce the meanings of words from context? Nation and Coady (1988: 104) propose an approach consisting of five steps to make educated guesses based on context:

1. Finding the part of speech of the unknown word.
2. Looking at the immediate context of the unknown word and simplifying this context if necessary.
3. Looking at the wider context of the unknown word. This means looking at the relationship between the clause containing the unknown word and surrounding clauses and sentences.
4. Guessing the meaning of the unknown word.
5. Checking that the guess is correct.

Clarke and Nation (1980) in the following example suggests another strategy how to guess the

meaning from a context. Thornbury (2002: 148) recommends the following steps for guessing meaning from context:

1. Decide the part of speech of the unknown word—whether, for example, it is a noun verb, adjective, etc. Its position in the sentence may be a guide, as might its ending (e.g. an-ed or -ing ending might indicate it is a verb).
2. Look for further clues in the word's immediate collocates—if it is a noun, does it have an article (which might suggest whether it is countable or not)? If it is a verb, does it have an object?
3. Look at the wider context, including the surrounding clauses and sentences—especially if there are "signposting words, such as (but- and- however- so) that might give a clue as to how the word is connected to its context. For example: We got home, tired but elated: the presence of but suggests that elated is not similar in meaning to tired.
4. Look at the form of the word for any clues as to meaning. For example: downhearted is made up of down + heart+ a participle affix (-ed).
5. Make a guess as to the meaning of the word, on the basis of the above strategies.
6. Read on and see if the guess is confirmed; if not and if the word seems critical to the understanding of the text- go back and repeat the above steps. If the word does not seem critical, carry on reading. Maybe the meaning will become clearer later on.

Based on what was mentioned, these steps can be followed:

- 1- Read Surrounding Text: Look at the words and sentences around the unfamiliar word. They can provide clues about the meaning.
- 2- Identify Word Type: Determine if the word is a noun, verb, adjective, or adverb. This can help narrow down possible meanings.

3- Look for Definitions: Sometimes, authors provide definitions or explanations of unfamiliar words within the text itself or in footnotes.

4- Analyse Word Structure: Break down the word into its root, prefix, and suffix to understand its possible meanings. Finally, in order to facilitate the comprehension of a text, vocabulary knowledge is extremely important. If students do not understand the meanings of the words they encounter in a context, their comprehension of the context is likely to fail. To develop reading fluency and increase reading efficiency guessing the meanings of words from context is significantly useful. New words presented in isolation are hard to learn but words in context help learners to deduce meaning from context and learners see how new words are used grammatically in a Sentence.

To continue reading without interruption, guessing meanings of words from context is a useful skill.³

5. Methods of Research and the tools used:

Action research is carried out within the context of a meticulously defined action plan. Sagor (2005) defines action research as a process that involves concluding the problem, creating an action plan within a theoretical framework, and then using the application and outcomes to develop a new action plan. This cycle was also implemented in the current study.

This action research used a pre-test, post-test tool to analyse and evaluate data on the utilization of audiobook in English. The experiment is referred to as "action" because it involves measuring students' performance before and after they engage in listening and reading tasks employing

audiobook treatment. Given the limited number of participants, the study primarily examined descriptive statistics using line graph and chart.



1. Phase 1: Apply a pre-test to a group of individuals and record their scores.
2. Phase 2: Apply some treatment designed to change the score of individuals.
3. Phase 3: Apply a post-test to the same group of individuals and record their scores.

Participants

Ten female students from first year of secondary stage of a public school which is called Insaaf Serry in Egypt participated in this study. The school is not specialized in English language learning, with students coming from regional areas. Selection criteria included their formal English education through nine years. Students had rarely practiced listening to an audio model of reading materials, and overall reading in English had been limited to short passages (e.g., 100–300 words) given in the textbooks.

The test aimed to identify common challenges faced by students in learning English, through analysis of their test responses.

Study Materials and Treatment

The study materials for participants were mainly graded readers with audiobook from Oxford website assisted with Nareeket website to change the language from American to British.

<https://www.narakeet.com/app/text-to-audio/?projectId=d3cc3e0f-e629-49ba-a36e-778382bf283d> and LibriVox website for audiobooks.

<https://librivox.org/jane-eyre-by-charlotte-bront/>.

and this website for the script itself.

<https://www.fulltextarchive.com/book/Jane-Eyre/>

The participants selected a listening textbook that included a variety of themes sourced from diverse resources, such as Oxford supplementary materials and Librivox, to enhance their reading and listening skills.

Undoubtedly, the implementation of listening stages can significantly improve the efficiency of any listening activity. Below is an analysis of the customary phases encompassed in a listening process:

1- Pre-listening phase:

To adequately prepare the experimental group for the listening activity and guarantee their motivation and engagement, the researcher can adhere to the following procedures:

1.1 Overview of the Subject:

Commence by providing an initial overview of the subject matter covered in the listening readings.

Offer a concise summary of the content that the listeners will be hearing.

1.2 Purpose of Listening: Precisely elucidate the objective of the listening activity.

The group must listen attentively. To emphasize this, we might provide them with straightforward written questions that they can answer depending on the information they have heard.

1.3 Instructions for Listening Tasks:

Provide detailed explanations of the tasks, ensuring that all participants have a clear understanding of the expectations.

Address any inquiries they may have on the duties.

2. The During Listening Stage: In this stage, each student in the experimental group will listen to the material independently while simultaneously completing the questions provided on a printed paper. While listening, students are allowed to take notes if needed, jotting down important points, unfamiliar vocabulary, or any queries that come up. Note-taking enhances students' concentration and promotes active interaction with the reading.

3. The Post Listening Stage: Each pupil will commence perusing a hard copy of the material, and the subject matter will be deliberated with each individual.

Measurements

1. Listening Fluency Test

Listening fluency is assessed based on the amount of comprehension of auditory input presented at a natural speech tempo, as opposed to an artificially slowed-down pace. This is in contrast to reading fluency, which is typically measured by the number of words read per minute. A higher level of comprehension corresponds to a greater level of fluency in the listening process.

The listening test comprised 16 multiple-choice items. The multiple-choice items necessitated students to actively listen for the questions and carefully read the four available answers. Students were permitted to listen twice: once for comprehension and a second time to assess the impact of listening while reading. The sequencing of the items at the same level was altered during the post-test, and the students were not informed about the repetition of the test. The test was conducted on all students at the conclusion of the second semester. Students who answered a single item correctly were awarded one point.

2. Reading fluency Test

It was impossible to evaluate the particular words acquired from the study materials. Nevertheless, the majority of the books were specifically created for ESL learners with strict vocabulary limitations (Hill, 2001), resulting in a predominance of commonly used words in the texts. A vocabulary proficiency test was used to measure their acquisition of high-frequency language. Each student who answered a single item correctly was awarded one point. The sequencing of the items at the same level was altered during the post-test, and the students were not informed about the repetition of the test. The primary objective of the study was to assess the extent to which the group exhibited differences in their vocabulary improvement following the intervention

Result of research

RQ 1: To what extent do the listening scores differ after and before the experiment?

Table (1): shows listening Pre-Test

listening Pre test	Temp o	Elision	Mother Tongue impact	Rhotic &Non-Rhotic Accents
A	2	2	2	3
B	3	2	1	3
C	1	2	1	2
D	2	2	2	3
E	2	2	2	2
F	2	1	1	1
G	1	1	1	2
H	1	2	2	2
I	2	3	2	3
J	2	2	2	1

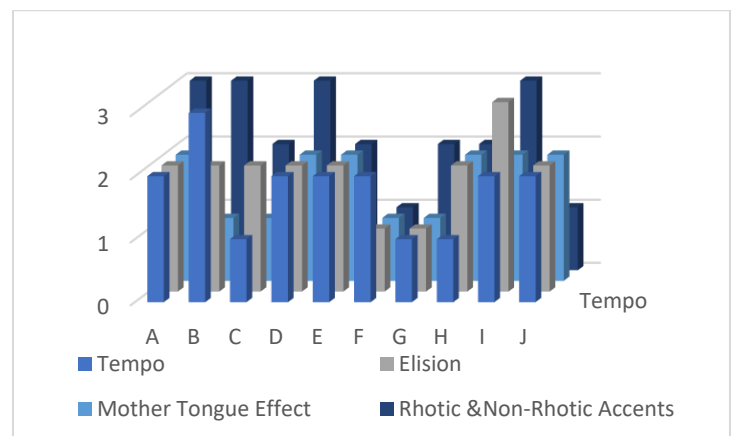


Figure (1)

Table (2): shows Listening Post Test:

listening post test	Tempo	Elision	Mother Tongue Effect	Rhotic &Non-Rhotic Accents
A	3	3	4	3
B	2	3	3	3
C	2	2	3	3
D	3	2	4	4
E	3	2	4	3
F	4	4	4	4
G	3	2	4	4
H	2	3	3	3
I	3	4	4	4
J	4	4	4	3

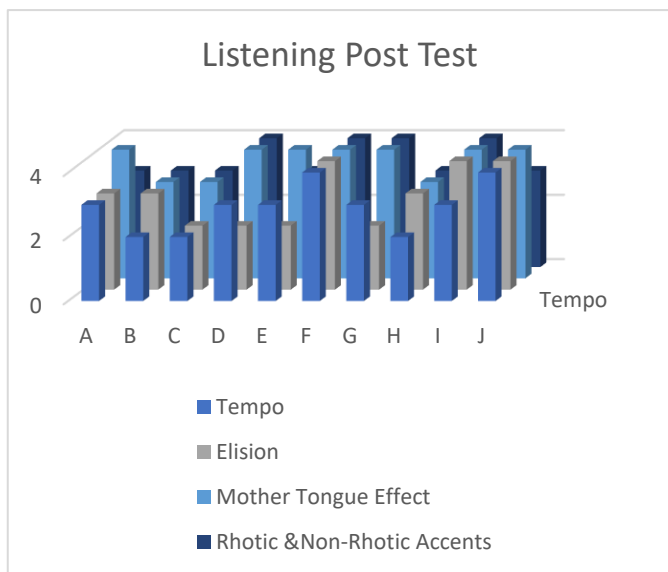


Figure (2)

Evaluation of the pre-test and post-test listening assessments

The students' performance showed a clear and significant improvement from the pre-test to the post-test. The pre-test scores varied from 1 to 3, with three students scoring 1 out of 4, six students scoring 2 out of 4, and one student scoring 3 out of 4. In contrast, the post-test scores ranged from 2 to 4, with three students scoring 2 out of 4, five students scoring 3 out of 4, and two students scoring a perfect 4 out of 4.

Furthermore, the students face significant difficulty in comprehending elision inside passages. This was apparent in the pre-test findings, as students demonstrated difficulties with elisions, particularly in consonants. This was clear from the incorrect responses given by the students regarding what they had heard. The researcher commenced by elucidating the principles of elision and using audiobooks to elucidate the concept of elision. Based on the post-test findings, pupils

demonstrated an improved ability to identify omitted sounds, indicating a strong understanding of the rules.

Based on the provided chart. The impact of audiobooks on students is significant. The overall grade average has shown improvement among all students. Specifically, the pre-test revealed that pupils struggle with elisions, particularly in consonants.

However, according to the data presented in Table 1, the majority of students performed poorly on the pre-test, with only 1 or 2 correct answers out of 4. This indicates that they faced difficulties with certain questions, likely due to their unfamiliarity with the sounds or their inability to distinguish between them, influenced by their native language. However, after listening to the audiobook, all students achieved a perfect score of 4 out of 4, except for three students who scored 3 out of 4. This suggests a significant improvement in their listening fluency, as they are now able to successfully differentiate between the sounds.

In addition, the pupils refrained from combining British and American English characteristics. The pronunciation choices of the students may be influenced by the context in which the words are used.

Based on the findings presented in Table 2, the majority of students, specifically six out of ten, achieved a score of 3 out of 4 on the post-test. Additionally, four students obtained a perfect score of 4 out of 4. These students reported that their listening skills were accurate in distinguishing between words spoken with the sound /r/ and those that were not. However, there are three primary factors contributing to these results, which explain why pupils struggle to remember when to pronounce the /r/ sound in British accents. They consistently asserted that they frequently heard

their teacher pronounce these terms with a /r/ sound. The third one that those students struggle with is listening. The hearing challenges experienced in it make it tough to comprehend the accurate pronunciation of the words.

Reading Pre-Test	co ordinating conjunctions	limited vocabulary	guessing the meaning from the context
A	2	3	4
B	0.5	1	3
C	1.5	3	4
D	2.5	1	4
E	1	2	2
F	1	1	2
G	1	2	2
H	2	2	1
I	2	1	2
J	1	1	2

Figure (3)

RQ 2: To what degree do the vocabulary test scores differ after and before the experiment?

Table (3): shows the Reading Pre-Test Scores

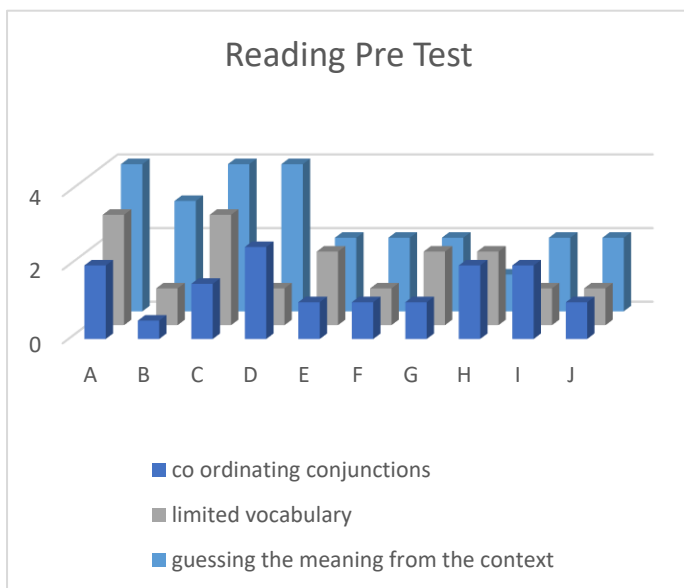
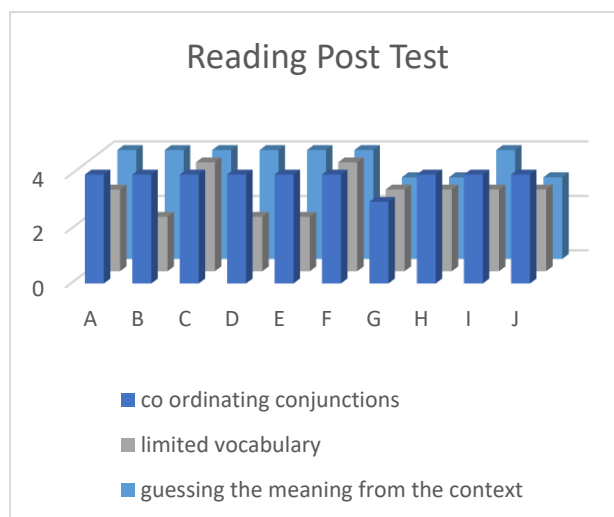


Table (4): shows Reading Post-test Scores

Reading Post Test	co ordinating conjunctions	limited vocabulary	guessing the meaning from the context
A	4	3	4
B	4	2	4



C	4	4	4
D	4	2	4
E	4	2	4
F	4	4	4
G	3	3	3
H	4	3	3
I	4	3	4
J	4	3	3

Figure (4)

Analysis of Reading pre-test and post-test

Following the experience of these auditory comprehension obstacles, students may additionally find difficulty in the domain of reading. Gaining proficiency in pronouncing words accurately is crucial since it directly influences one's comprehension of written texts.

The data was gathered from the students' scores in the pre-test and post-test to determine the notable disparity in the students' challenges when employing coordinating conjunctions.

Before and following the use of a certain audiobook script, based on the students' pretest scores, it can be concluded that the students had difficulties in employing coordinating conjunctions.

The average score of the pretest is 1.45. The students had problems due to their struggle to select the suitable type of coordinate conjunctions to fill in the blanks and ensure alignment with the context of the sentences.

Based on the previous explanation, the researcher was able to analyze the various challenges that students commonly encounter while using coordinate conjunctions. One major difficulty identified was a lack of awareness regarding the

purposes of coordinate conjunctions. Additionally, some students lack proficiency in the skill of sentence combination.

In addition, many individuals still struggle when tasked with determining the suitable coordinating conjunction to use in finishing a phrase. Finally, some lack comprehension of sentence context. We employed two strategies to overcome these challenges, subsequently subjecting them to post-testing.

The efficacy of the intervention was evident in the post-test findings, as indicated by the substantial disparity between the mean score of the post-test (3.9) and the mean score of the pre-test (1.45).

Upon analyzing the pre-and post-tests, it was observed a significant enhancement in the student's academic performance. This indicates that the solution approaches employed have effectively impacted the students' proficiency and resolved challenges associated with the utilization of coordinating conjunctions.

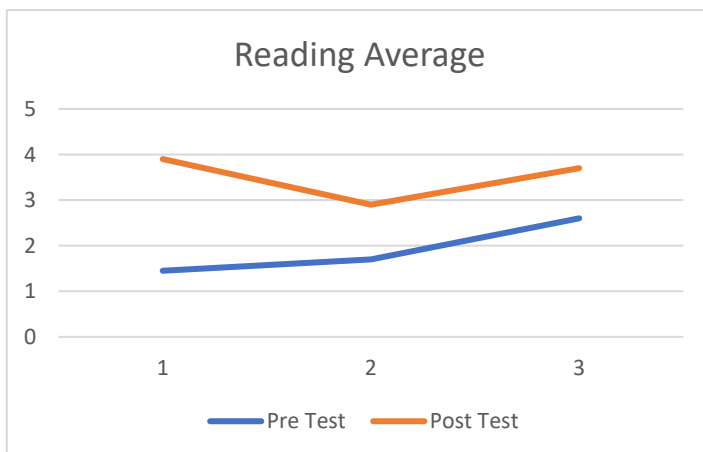
Moreover, there appears to be a substantial disparity in the acquisition of vocabulary between the post-test and pre-test when employing audiobooks for reading. This discovery implies that audiobooks could be a potent instrument for enhancing vocabulary development. Nevertheless, it is crucial to scrutinize the precise data and context to derive more precise findings. Each right response in the Pre-test is worth one point, indicating that the group likely acquired one new vocabulary word in the first exam. Table 4 demonstrates that the student achieved a significantly higher number of words in the reading test compared to the pre-test results provided in Table 3. Given that each test consisted of 4 terms, it may be inferred that the majority of these students were familiar with these words. There are two possible explanations for the

outcomes: One reason is that the unknown terms of the students were distinct. For instance, during the pre-test, five students obtained a score of 1 out

	Coordinating conjunctions	Limited vocabulary	Guessing the meaning from the context
Pre-Test	1.45	1.7	2.6
Post-Test	3.9	2.9	3.7

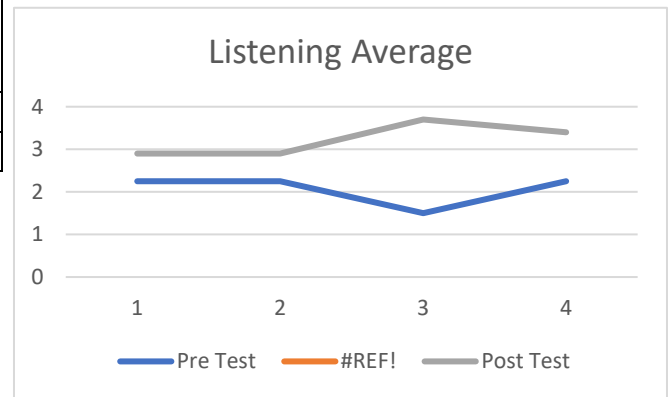
of 4 words, which was the lowest score within the group. Subsequently, two individuals improved their scores to 2 out of 4, while the other four students achieved a score of 3 out of 4. These students probably acquired knowledge. Another significant factor may be that certain students prioritize the cultivation of listening fluency, namely by concentrating on the correct pronunciation of words containing the /r/ sound, rather than dedicating their efforts to vocabulary acquisition.

Furthermore, the findings from the pre-and post-test indicate that relying on contextual clues to infer word meaning does not contribute to the acquisition of new vocabulary. Instead, it mostly



aids in comprehending the overall message of the text. Upon reviewing the pre-test results, it became evident that the students who underwent testing exhibited a lack of comprehension of certain vocabulary words within the book. Consequently, their understanding of the text's content was compromised, leading to incorrect

responses to the questions. After being instructed on the techniques and tactics for inferring the definition of a term based on its context, their



responses to the questions in the post-test showed improvement, albeit not of a substantial nature. Hence, the techniques for inferring the definition of a word based on its context are not effective in acquiring new vocabulary.

	Tempo	Elision	Mother Tongue impact	Rhotic & Non-Rhotic Accents
Pre-Test	2.25	2.25	1.5	2.25
Post-Test	2.9	2.9	3.7	3.4

Table (5): shows Listening average

Figure (5)

Table (6): Shows the Reading average

Figure (6)

Upon analysing the Pre and Post Test Results, it is evident that the audiobook has a substantial impact on the students' reading, with a noticeable improvement in the average scores between the pre and post-tests.

Research Limitations

The study faced difficulties in retaining participants since some persons migrated or voluntarily withdrew before its completion. In addition, persons who did not participate in both the pre- and post-tests were eliminated. As a result, the sample size was smaller than anticipated, which could potentially impact the study's ability to make generalizations based on its findings.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, the following suggestions might be made:

1. Conduct longitudinal studies: Examine the enduring effects of audiobook exposure on the development of reading and listening fluency in various demographic groups, to get insights into the progression of these skills over an extended period.
2. Conduct comparison studies to evaluate the relative efficacy of audiobooks compared to traditional print reading in improving reading and listening fluency, taking into account characteristics such as comprehension and retention.
3. Consider Individual Differences: Analyze how individual variations, such as prior reading experience and personal preferences, influence the impact of audiobooks on reading and listening fluency.
4. Utilizing Technology: Given that kids in

secondary years are already adept at utilizing tablets and depending on technology, including an audiobook library on these devices would be a beneficial enhancement. This will enable students to readily access a diverse array of educational resources in audio format, so facilitating their engagement with audio content to bolster their learning and potentially augment their proficiency in reading and listening.

5. Diversity of questions in the pre- and post-test: not using only MCQ questions, but also written question, short-answer questions, and long-answer questions.

Conclusion

Based on the study's findings, the researcher determined that audiobooks were effective in enhancing the listening and reading fluency of ESL secondary-year students. Hence, audiobooks should be utilized during classroom

listening and reading sessions, as well as for completing homework tasks assigned by ESL instructors, to improve the listening and reading proficiency of ESL students.

Future research

This study primarily investigated the efficacy of audiobooks in improving reading and listening fluency. However, it would be advantageous to expand this method in future studies to specifically address the development of listening and speaking abilities.

Another important focus is on a cohort of students aged 15 to 16. Including participants from older age groups would enhance the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. By doing experiments on audiobooks with age groups exceeding 15 to 16 years old.

Abbreviations

EFL: English as Foreign Language.

ESL: English as Second Language.

L1: First Language.

L2: Second Language.

RWL: Reading while listening.

LWR: Listening while reading.

RO: Reading Only.

LO: Listening Only.

AmE: American English.

BrE: British English.

SLA: Second Language Acquisition.

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