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Enhancing EFL Majors' Listening Performance through Integrating Podcast and Learner Strategy Use

By

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to enhance listening performance of EFL majors using podcasts and learner strategies. The attempt was made to explore students' awareness of the strategies they employ during listening tasks and how this relates to their overall listening ability. Seventy-six third year EFL students were selected from the Faculty of Languages and Translation at Misr University for Science and Technology to participate in the study. They were randomly divided into two equal groups of 38; an experimental group and a control group. Two instruments were administered; namely, a listening performance test and a questionnaire on learner strategy use. The experimental group were exposed to podcast-based instruction while the control received their regular content. Results revealed that the experimental group's listening performance improved significantly. The findings also indicated that students' strategy use of listening strategies and their performance were positively correlated, with proficient students demonstrating greater strategy use than the less proficient. It was concluded that using podcasts is effective in enhancing listening performance of EFL majors.

Keywords: *listening performance; podcast; learner strategy use*

Introduction

The vital role of listening comprehension as a fundamental component of language learning lies in fostering meaningful interaction and responding appropriately in real time communication. Understanding the spoken language is concurrently the most challenging and the most neglected skill. According to Pratiwi et al. (2024), listening comprehension is crucial for language production. However, it is not accorded adequate attention by the majority of students (Utomo et al., 2019). Along with view, Kasim and Luwiti (2020), maintain that listening comprehension is more demanding than many teachers might perceive.

Several language components affect learners' grasp of spoken language, including phonetic, grammatical, lexical, as well as the purpose of the message intended by the speaker. The difficulty to decode the content arises if it is delivered by a fluent native speaker. Scarcely inferior are the personal factors of age, level of listening skill, listener's mood and how students process information in memory - all together or some of them may hinder successful communication (Rismayanti, 2018).

Recent research on foreign language learning indicates that the approach adopted for teaching listening affects students' self-efficacy and consequently their learning strategy use. In spite of the importance of employing listening strategies, teachers rarely teach students what strategies to adopt in FL learning context (Berne, 2004). Current teachers' practices often lack clear-cut explicit pedagogy with authorized activities (Siegel, 2015). Learners' awareness of strategy use is crucial as it furnishes them with the vision that can aid the listening process demonstrating comprehension (Siegel, 2015). Furthermore, successful listening performance is often revealed through strategies employed while listening (Lau, 2017; Nix, 2016).

The digital orientation of the 21st century has profoundly transformed the educational process, revolutionizing language learning skills particularly oral comprehension. Podcasts have

recently emerged as a tool extensively used for enhancing listening performance. The free of charge listening materials available on the Internet provide EFL students with authentic listening content reflecting everyday language use (Sendag et al.2019).

Due to versatile platforms currently made available, podcasts and videos offer ample opportunities for practicing listening through a wide range of content worldwide. The merits of using podcasts lie in the flexibility and convenience they offer listeners to practice anywhere and at any time. Another advantage is that they can be played on mobile and computers (Indahsari, 2020; Nisa et al., 2022).

Recent research indicates that instructional podcasts are efficient medium for enhancing listening skills. Adaptation to varied accents, speech patterns and vocabulary emerges as an additional advantage podcasts offer to learners. In a study by Rizqika (2023), results demonstrated that 77% of students revealed that their listening performance developed by virtue of using podcasts whereas 37% of them disclosed their improvement using the regular method.

Utilizing podcasts for educational purposes has remarkably developed recently, providing learners with compelling learning experiences (Camelia et al., 2021). Having replaced traditional radio, and presenting varied topics, podcasts function as a useful medium for enhancing listening performance. Individual differences of grasping the content among learners entails using diverse teaching strategies to meet different needs. The present study advocates utilizing podcasts to enhance listening performance taking into account the effect of the training program on adopting listening strategies.

Review of Literature

Listening is a crucial skill that demands concentration and exerting a great deal of effort by listeners in order to be able to respond appropriately to the feedback activities that follow the process (Zein et al., 2021). The issues investigated mostly pertains to strategy training (Fenyi et al., 2021; Haloho et al., 2022; Herlina et

al., 2021; Kasim & Luwiti, 2020; Kurnanika & Rachmijati, 2021), difficulties facing listeners (Andika & Indah Sari, 2021; Anggraeni & Somba, 2021; Jaya et al., 2021; Nadhira & Warni, 2021; Toni et al., 2021), as well as challenges of teaching listening (Ernita et al., 2022; Farhan et al., 2021; Nushi & Orouji, 2020). Though listening is the key to meaningful communication, it is the most neglected in the foreign language skills (Krivosheyeva et al., 2020). Reasons put forward by researchers included teachers focus more on reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary (Lestari et al., 2021); lack of knowledge and skills required for effective listening; and more importantly the challenge teachers face to find the right atmosphere, equipment and media for listening sessions (Aryana & Apsari, 2018).

Listening is an intricate process that exceeds comprehension to retention. Though this skill is acquired in early age with the mother tongue, it is demanding and requires strenuous effort for students of foreign language. Alzamil (2021) maintains that listening is so challenging in aspects of speed, limited vocabulary knowledge, intonation and anxiety. With the advances of technology and emergence of digital stories, games, video clips, music, animated videos and podcasts, let alone online environments, listening has become much easier (Djabbarova, 2020).

Listening intelligibly, being an indispensable requirement, should be accorded paramount importance for FL learners (Mantra & Maba, 2018). Lexical richness is necessary for EFL learners to grasp and express their own ideas (Mantra, & Kumara, 2018). Without having a wide range of vocabulary, learners may not be able to convey their thoughts precisely, which could lead to misinterpretation between interlocutors. Understanding spoken messages depends on the repertoire of words listeners possess. (Handayani & Widiastuti, 2019).

Listening is a complex process that involves recognizing sounds, interpretation of word meanings, sentence structure and the overall message. Understanding intonation, drawing inferences

based on prior knowledge and following flow of ideas and extended speech are all crucial to understanding spoken English (Antony et al., 2012). FL students allocate half of their study time for developing listening comprehension, indicating its utmost importance (Jafari & Hashim, 2015).

Both verbal and body language of the speaker serve the purpose of communicating the intended message effectively (Widiastuti et al., 2020). Decoding the target meaning is a prerequisite to interpretation and the appropriate response signaled by the listener. The appropriate response necessitates exerting the best possible effort to grasp the accurate meaning intended by the speaker (Astawa et al., 2018).

Though listening is considered as a receptive skill, it is actually an active process that entails concentration, perception and feedback. Because the external response is often negligible, listening is always misconceived as passive as the listener doesn't show the visible features exhibited by the speaker (Mantra et al. 2018). In fact, effective listening necessitates mental activity involving processing upcoming data, grasping subtle differences in word meanings and making heedful responses that require considerable effort, which are all cognitively demanding.

Essentially, learner strategies are deliberate actions adopted by learners to facilitate their learning, upgrade their efficiency, engagement and adaptability to new contexts (Oxford, 1990). Listening input represents a great challenge to foreign language learners due to their lack of exposure to normal speed of delivery and unfamiliar vocabulary (Bidabadi & Yamat, 2011; Nasri, Namaziandost, & Akbari, 2019; Pourhosein & Ahmadi, 2011; Zohrabi & Shokrzadeh, 2017). The insurmountable obstacle facing FL learners is the high speech rate they are not accustomed to as well as lack of prior knowledge required for understanding the audio. The appropriate response for such learners is to develop listening strategies that may help them grasp the entire message delivered. In spite of being crucial to oral communication, listening strategies were not accorded adequate

attention of researchers, owing to the view of listening as a passive skill (Vandergrift, 2004). Use of appropriate strategies help listeners develop the skills and decode the message intended.

A plethora of research consistently maintain that strategy use enhances learner independence and engagement (Oxford, 1990; Lui, 2008). The major contribution of strategy employment is inculcating self-direction and self-awareness which enable learners to take the lead of their learning and consequently identify their learning objectives and trace their development. Namaziandost et al. (2020) highlighted the function of listening strategies in improving comprehension and alleviating difficulties. Moreover, Berne (2004) claim that recognizing the value of these strategies help students develop autonomy and select need-geared strategies that match with their learning styles.

Several studies have been conducted on varied levels of proficiency groups maintaining that highly competent learners consistently use listening strategies more than less competent learners (Liu, 2008; Vandergrift, 2003). A growing body of research probed the relationship between listening comprehension and strategy employment, yielding progressively positive results (Eslahkonha & Mall-Amiri, 2014; Kassem, 2015; Kaya, 2017; Kök 2017; Yulisa, 2018).

In their attempt to achieve listening comprehension, FL learners are encountered with several challenges. First, the difficulty of grasping the purpose of the content in a podcast. Second, unfamiliarity with the vocabulary and accent used. Third, paucity of exposure to foreign language. Fourth, lack of familiarity with the native speaker sound (Indahsari, 2020). Fifth, lack of control of rate of delivery and conversational flow of native speakers. Sixth, time available for learning language skills in an integrated fashion. Lastly, inadequate media learning available for listening practice. All these factors may influence students' self-confidence and consequently their performance scores (Romadhon, 2019).

Podcasts have recently emerged as effective tools that may enhance listening and learning English in the classroom. Functioning on both audio and visual channels, podcasts help learners attain significant improvement in listening as well as other skills through using updated and compelling materials (Fatika & Rahayu, 2021).

The rapid dissemination of utilizing technology in teaching has had a tremendous effect on modern learning. Using technology in the classroom provides a real opportunity of flexibility in the time of learning and teaching for both teachers and students. Incorporating technology in teaching English not only facilitates learning but also enhances motivation and builds confidence (Abdulrahman, 2016). In teaching English especially listening, podcasts stand out as an effective medium that make the choice of authentic spoken content available, thereby allowing students to learn at their own pace and convenience (Kavaliauskiene, 2008).

Technology fosters EFL learning through providing adaptable devices that match with versatile learning styles. For example, podcasts and videos have the advantage of comprising audio and visual media, enabling students with varied styles to adapt and succeed academically (Alsawaier, 2018). In a similar vein, students with kinesthetic and visual aptitude find applications with gamified features particularly adequate (Igret, 2023).

The current advances in technology offer varied audio formats, including podcasts and songs, which can enhance listening practice (Egamnazarova & Mukhamedova, 2021; Nisa, Izzah & Hadi, 2022). Successful listening ensures grasping the message of the content (Putri, Bunau & Rezeki, 2018). Podcasts are particularly beneficial for fostering listening skills (Nisa, Izzah & Hadi, 2022). Personal computers and smart phones can help improve these skills (Agarid & Nurzahra, 2018). Utilizing podcasts is especially relevant due to their low consumption of the internet bundles (Laila, 2020).

The regular instruction of English as a foreign language has been widely evaluated to probe if it prepares students for successful communication (e.g., AlJarf, 2023; Bamanger & Alhassan, 2015). Owing to the crucial importance of listening in everyday language use, methods adopted should combine both theory and real classroom practice. The merits of using podcasts lie in the flexibility and diversification of content available, let alone the compelling features emerging as a favorable resource for enhancing listening skills (Nisa, Izzah & Hadi, 2022).

The term podcast is a mixture of iPod and broadcast, referring to audio content intended to be played again. Podcasts are digital files downloaded on computers and smartphones used to boost the teaching and learning process in an appealing manner (Bölükbaş & Dinç, 2022). Using podcasts provides learners with varied audio materials, energizes their motivation and fosters autonomous learning (Rajic, 2013). Moreover, recent research reveals that podcasts are effectively employed in FL learning, enhancing reading, speaking, listening and particularly vocabulary skills (Azizi et al., 2022; Liu, 2023; Samad et al., 2017). A special benefit of podcasts is the flexibility and accessibility they provide learners with, thereby fostering autonomy and engagement (Yaman, 2016).

Incorporating podcasts in teaching English has remarkably impacted FL learners' performance as well as their attitudes towards the language. Moreover, many a research consistently demonstrate that both students and teachers hold positive views on the use of podcasts in language learning (Chan et al. 2011; Fernandez, Simo & Sallan, 2009; Heilesen, 2010; Kim & King, 2011).

Scarcely inferior to the merits of using podcasts is the autonomy and control they offer learners thanks to the downloading and sharing features (Ramli & Kurniawan, 2018). The use of podcasts have currently expanded in both learning and teaching English, providing engaging and unique learning experiences (Camelia et al., 2021). The podcast content, being an

audio or video, is regularly updated. Such a free nature and versatile content and varying rates of delivery make podcasts available to learners of different level (Sukmawati, 2021).

Contrary to the current practices of teaching English which are often far from real, podcasts expose learners to authentic language whether conversations, interviews and stories. Exposure to authentic content characterized by versatile accents and varying rates of delivery enables students develop their listening skills through real-life situations (Rahman et al; 2018). Recent research maintain that exposure to authentic content, like that experienced in podcasts significantly enhance FL learners understanding spoken English. Podcasts offer the opportunity for students to listen actively to native speakers, grasp subtle language in various topics, encounter contextualized vocab and consequently develop more natural fluency. These findings are consistent with those reached by Bamanger and Alhassan (2015), maintaining that exposure to authentic spoken materials develop students' listening comprehension. Interaction with native speakers help students interpret subtle language, grasp contextualized vocabulary and foster fluency.

The interactive and engaging nature featuring podcasts make it a favorable alternative to rote learning. Using podcasts embodies the authentic content often used in conversational everyday language use, providing actual listening practice. The variety of topics practised makes it more appealing to learners, energizes their motivation and ultimately inculcates longstanding environmental awareness outside the classroom (Evtyugina & Volkova, 2020).

Though educationists view podcasts as useful tools to foster learning, teachers have concerns about maintaining students' engagement. The real worry teachers have relates to inappropriate design of the content in addition to teachers' overreliance on podcasts at the expense of direct teaching (Zitouni et al., 2021).

The idea of exposing students to authentic English and boosting their conversational skills makes podcasts a valuable tool

that effectively upgrades students' listening performance beyond the classroom. The content of podcasts, being accessible and rich in natural vocabulary and native-like pronunciation, motivates students to practice listening and develop their performance (Romadhon, 2019; Yoestra & Putri, 2018).

Recent research demonstrate that utilizing podcasts notably foster listening skills as shown by a study conducted by Syahabuddin et al. (2021). The results obtained maintain that students at Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh University have significantly improved following their exposure to 40 minutes weekly for eight weeks. This finding is consistent with that of Harahap's (2020), revealing that university students favor using podcasts in listening for the merits of diverse content and easy accessibility. In a more recent study by Sari's (2021), the results indicated that using podcasts yields better learner involvement compared to traditional listening activities.

Recent research provides evidence on the effectiveness of using podcasts to enhance listening comprehension. In a study conducted by Mirza (2021), the attempt was made to probe the effect of utilizing podcasts on EFL majors' listening comprehension and motivation. The participants, totaling 60, were divided into an experimental and a control group. Results revealed that using podcasts significantly boosts EFL majors' listening performance and a remarkable raise in motivation towards using podcasts as a tool for learning.

Research findings reached by Abeddaim (2013), reveal that incorporating podcasts can foster listening comprehension in comparison to other regular methods. Results obtained by Gul Ince (2015) gave prominence to the positive attitude students hold towards the podcast technology, seeing it effective and interesting tool for language learning. Along with this, Hassen (2016) maintained that using podcasts is fruitful in improving listening comprehension.

Recent studies showed that focused training on listening utilizing podcasts significantly yielded positive results in fostering

listening skills. The participants consisted of forty English majors who responded to listening training, proficiency test and a strategy questionnaire. Results revealed that students exposed to an hour a week training on listening have remarkably improved particularly in pronunciation and vocabulary. In spite of challenges students have gone through as regards rate of speech, technology emerged as a scaffolding tool in enhancing listening performance (Gonulal, 2020).

Abdulrahman, Basmala, and Widodo (2018) investigated the benefits of using podcasts in enhancing listening skills. The treatment group, consisting of 60 Indonesian secondary school students who were exposed to training using podcasts outperformed the control group students. The students responded to a survey to uncover their attitude towards podcasts -based training. They revealed their satisfaction with authentic materials and engaging activities which raised their motivation.

In a recent study by Kang (2016), the attempt was made to probe the effect of using self-regulation techniques through podcasts in listening performance. The participants, totaling 20 university students, received training for twelve weeks to compare the two groups in listening, speaking, attitudes, self-regulation, self-awareness and podcasts use. Results indicated that both groups improved in listening and speaking. Students high on self-awareness and self-regulation showed better performance in listening. Both groups liked using podcasts. Thus, the present study advocates investigating the impact of using podcasts and strategy use on enhancing EFL majors' listening performance, taking into account the differences between proficient and less proficient.

Statement of the problem

Most of the first year English department students at the Faculty of Languages and Translation Misr University for Science and Technology have difficulty in listening skills required for processing the flow of rapid speech which may lead to missed information and poor performance. Therefore, the present study advocates a podcast-based listening training program in

which students are exposed to diverse authentic speech that enable them to grasp implied meaning intended.

Questions

This study attempted to answer the following questions:

- (1) What is the effect of using podcasts in enhancing EFL majors' listening performance?
- (2) To what extent is there a correlation between EFL majors' listening strategy use and their performance?
- (3) To what extent do proficient versus less proficient listeners differ in strategy use?

Purpose

Two main objectives are considered in the present study:

- (1) to probe the effect of utilizing podcasts on listening performance of EFL majors.
- (2) to examine the relationship between EFL majors' use of listening strategies and their performance.

Hypotheses

The present study hypothesized the following:

- (1) There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and those of the control group on the post-test of listening performance in favor of the experimental group.
- (2) There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre and posttest of listening performance in favor of the post-test.
- (3) There will be positive correlations between EFL majors' listening strategy use and their performance.
- (4) There is a statistically significant difference between proficient and less proficient listeners in their use of listening strategies.

Significance

The significance of this study lies in the following:

- (1) It draws the attention of curriculum designers to the value of incorporating podcasts in the listening course with a view to improving students' performance.

- (2) Utilizing podcasts in teaching listening offers an opportunity for developing authentic listening as they expose learners to natural speech patterns and diverse accents.
- (3) Using podcasts make learning more flexible and enable students to proceed at their own pace and schedule.
- (4) The fact that students can choose podcasts according to their interests and goals can enhance autonomy and ownership of their learning.

Delimitations

The scope of the present study was delimited to:

- (1) Three classifications of listening performance strategies: repair, effective, and difficulty-causing.
- (2) Participants from first-year English majors at the Faculty of Languages and Translation, Misr University for Science and Technology.
- (3) Duration of the treatment material in 2024/2025 academic year.

Definition of Terms

- Listening Performance

Listening performance is defined, according to (Turel, 2021) as "the learner 's linguistic ability to grasp the meaning intended of a native spoken word delivered at a normal speed". Other definitions involve identifying sounds, making use of prior knowledge, and constructing meaning based on the context to attain comprehension (Brownell, 2013; Schmitt, 2010; Solak & Erdem, 2016). Listening performance is operationally defined in this study as the ability to grasp the meaning of spoken words, including recognizing sounds, utilizing prior knowledge and interpreting message delivered at a normal speed.

- Podcast

Podcasts are digital audio recordings created in a similar way to radio regularly found on the internet (Rosell-Aguilar, 2015). Characterized by talks presented by two persons or individually, podcasts deal with diverse topics including everyday life, academics, sports or politics (Sheylani & Pourhosein, 2021).

Podcasts are accessible audio or video data that are downloadable from the internet. These digital files can be read on the web or copied to a portable device for mobile listening (Suvarnaphaet & Suvarnaphaet, 2023). In addition, Mirza Susani (2021) pointed out that the name "podcasting" originated from the words "pod" (from the iPod) and "broadcast," which were fused. In the present study, podcast is operationally defined as authentic, readily available digital audio programs or series of programs that serve as stimuli for evaluating and developing EFL majors ability to comprehend spoken English in various contexts that can be downloaded via a computer, iPod, or other portable.

- **Learner Strategy Use**

According to Bao (2017), learner strategy use refers to the actions they take to facilitate their learning. In a similar vein, Hardan (2013) portrays learning strategies as the mental procedures students assume to make learning easier. Specifically, Sieglel (2025) points out that listening strategies refer to the way listeners interact with the message they hear. In the present study, listening strategies delineate deliberate actions adopted by listeners to facilitate grasping, remembering, and using the input they hear.

Method

The present study adopted a quasi-experimental design to examine the effectiveness of podcast and learner strategy use in enhancing EFL majors' listening performance.

Design and Participants

The participants of the study consisted of (76) third year EFL majors at the Faculty of Languages and Translation, Misr University for Science and Technology distributed randomly into two groups; an experimental group (N = 38) and a control group (N = 38). The control group followed the regular method, while the experimental group was exposed to the listening treatment using podcast during the first semester in the academic year 2024-2025.

Instruments

Two instruments were constructed to gather data required for the study; a listening test and a strategy questionnaire.

The Listening Test

Consisting of (28) items, the listening test contained pictures, multiple choice, completing short answer, and matching. Comprising of five parts, each was allocated to one of the five tasks. The participants were required to respond to the questions they were asked while listening. To determine validity, the test was submitted to a panel of professors of teaching English as a foreign language who, except for minor modifications, approved the test. The reliability of the test was determined using Alpha Cronbach with coefficient amounting to 0.81, indicating high reliability.

The Learner Strategy Use Questionnaire

To tap students' responses on listening strategy use, a list of text - level and word-level strategies was gathered. Less effective strategies were involved as alternative options. The questionnaire consisted of 30 items as follows: 1) Fifteen statements on what learners concentrate on to listen more effectively; 2) eight statements about things which may make listening in English difficult for them; and finally 3) seven statements dealing with what learners do to overcome comprehension failure, to gauge their awareness of repair strategies. Likert's technique was adopted to design the strategy questionnaire to ensure obtaining the highest reliability coefficient.

Treatment

Description of the podcast treatment material

The purpose of the podcast-based treatment material was to foster language learning, focusing on listening skills, using precisely selected podcasts. The treatment material encompasses mutual activities to maintain learners involvement in the listening process before, during and after.

- In the pre-listening stage, the main vocabulary is contextually introduced, prompting students to predict actions.
- During listening, students are required to answer comprehension questions, refer to details and take notes.

- In post-listening, students revise vocabulary, take the lead of discussion, summarize main ideas, and expand learning through writing and speaking activities boosted by the podcast.

The treatment exceeds listening to structured activities that aimed to enhance comprehension. Pronunciation, cultural awareness and vocabulary expansion were given added attention. The benefits gained through this treatment include authentic language spoken by native speakers made available as required, flexible accessibility to content and varied interesting topics that maintain motivation.

Procedures

This twelve-week experiment was conducted during the first semester of the academic year 2024/2025. Prior to experimentation, the participants took a pre- listening test. The experimental group were exposed to podcast-based training, with a view to examining the effect of utilizing podcast on listening performance whereas the control group received their regular listening instruction. To get students ready for the audio content, the researcher started the sessions with pre-listening activities, followed by listening podcasts using an application. To maximize benefit, the researcher would play a podcast several times, requiring students to listen intently so that they could answer content-related questions. Following each playback, students collaborated in groups to recognize the words they heard. Repeating this process until the correct words were detected, the researcher gave confirmation or the right answer if necessary. In the end of the experiment , students were presented with a post-listening test and a learner strategy use questionnaire.

Results and Discussion

The first hypothesis

To verify the first hypothesis, which states that “There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and those of the control group on the post-test of listening performance in favor of the experimental group”, t test was used for the two independent groups to compare the mean

scores in the post-test, as well as the effect size calculated by using the Eta square equation. Findings are presented in table 1.

Table 1. The "t" Value of the Experimental Group and the Control Group on the Post-test of Listening Performance

Test	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	η^2
Post	Control	38	11.36	1.36	23.58	0.88
	Experimental	38	18.44	1.41		

As shown in table 1, the t-value is 23.58, which is statistically significant at 0.01 level in favor of the experimental group. This indicates that the experimental group students' performance in listening has improved, in comparison to their counterparts in the control group due to the treatment material they were exposed to.

Table 1 also reveals that " η^2 " value for the effect size of the treatment material is greater than 0.14, indicating that using podcast is effective in enhancing listening performance, raising the variance of listening to 0.88. Thus, the first hypothesis was accepted.

The second hypothesis

To verify the second hypothesis, stating that "There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre and posttest of listening performance in favor of the post-test", t test for dependent samples was used to compare the difference between the experimental group students' mean score in the EFL listening performance test before and after administering the treatment material, with the effect size estimated using Cohen's equation. Findings are presented in table 2.

Table 2. The "t" Value of the Experimental Group on the Pre and Posttest of Listening Performance

Group	Test	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	d
Experimental	Pre	38	9.27	0.95	35.31	5.99
	Post	38	18.44	1.41		

Results in table 2 show that the mean score in the posttest of the listening performance is greater than that of the pretest. The t-value of listening performance amounts to 35.31, which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. Furthermore, the difference being in favor of the posttest of listening performance and that the "d" value for the effect size of the treatment being greater than 0.8, it could be inferred that the treatment material is effective in enhancing EFL listening performance. Thus, the second hypothesis was accepted.

The third hypothesis

To verify the third hypothesis, stating "There will be positive correlations between EFL majors' listening strategy use and their performance", the scores were first examined to identify the overall score of the listening strategy use of the participants. Further analysis of the data uncovered the listening processes students adopt while listening under three strategy types. Results are presented in table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Learner Strategy Use

Strategies	N	Mean	SD
Effective Strategies	76	3.58	0.43
Difficulty-Causing Strategies	76	3.39	0.50
Repair Strategies	76	3.01	0.67
Overall strategy use	76	3.32	0.53

Frequency rate approved by reported studies classify high rate (3.5 or higher) medium (2.5-3.4), and low (2.4 or lower). Inspection of table 3 shows means and standard deviations representing students' pattern of learner strategy use. The overall mean of learner strategy use amounted to 3.32 (SD=0.53), reveals medium strategy use. Regarding types of strategy, effective strategies are more frequently used (M=3.58; SD=0.43) The second in order came difficulty-causing strategies (M=3.39; SD=0.50), whereas the last in order came repair strategies (M=3.01; SD=0.67). Thus, both repair and difficulty-causing strategies are of medium frequency.

The relationship between learner strategy use and listening performance was calculated using Pearson correlation coefficient. The power of correlation was categorized as small ($r=0.10$ to 0.29), medium ($r=0.30$ to 0.49), or large ($r=0.50$ to 1.0). Inspection of table 4, the findings showed significant positive correlation between learner strategy use and listening performance ($r=0.73$). As regards strategy types significant positive correlation was found between effective strategies ($r=0.71$) and those addressing difficulty-causing ($r=0.73$). Conversely, moderate correlation was found between repair strategies and listening performance ($r=0.28$). Table 4. Correlations Between Listening Strategy Use and Listening Performance

Strategies	Listening Performance	
Effective Strategies	Pearson Correlation	0.71
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	76
Difficulty-Causing Strategies	Pearson Correlation	0.73
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	76
Repair Strategies	Pearson Correlation	0.30
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.029
	N	76
Overall strategy use	Pearson Correlation	0.73
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	76

Inspection of the table above shows a strong positive correlation between overall listening strategy use and listening performance. Thus, the third hypothesis was accepted.

The fourth hypothesis

To verify the fourth hypothesis, stating “There is a statistically significant difference between proficient and less proficient listeners in their use of listening strategies”, a t-test was used to assess differences in listening performance due to listening strategy use. For the analysis, participants were divided into two groups:

proficient strategy users versus less proficient strategy users. Table 5 presents the findings

Table 5. Means, Standard Deviations and *t*-values for the Mean Differences between Proficient and Less Proficient Strategy Users on Listening Performance

Strategies	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig.
Effective Strategies	Proficient	37	33.23	3.78	6.31	0.000
	Less Proficient	39	28.08	3.43		
Difficulty-Causing Strategies	Proficient	33	33.84	3.46	7.69	0.000
	Less Proficient	43	28.94	3.49		
Repair Strategies	Proficient	35	31.95	4.16	2.08	0.060
	Less Proficient	41	30.37	3.42		
Overall strategy use	Proficient	36	33.64	3.51	7.43	0.000
	Less Proficient	40	28.91	3.34		

Results in table 5 reveals significant differences in listening performance between proficient users of effective ($M=33.23$; $SD=3.78$) and difficulty-causing ($M=33.84$; $SD=3.46$) strategies and less proficient users of effective ($M=28.08$; $SD=3.43$) and difficulty-causing ($M=28.94$; $SD=3.49$) strategies in favor of proficient strategy users ($t= 6.31$ and 7.69 respectively; $p<0.05$). No difference in listening performance was found between proficient and less proficient users of repair strategies ($t= 2.08$; $p>.05$). The difference in listening performance by overall strategy use was significant. Proficient strategy users ($M= 33.64$; $SD= 3.51$) achieved higher scores than their less proficient peers ($M= 28.91$; $SD= 3.34$) ($t= 7.43$; $p< 0.05$). Consequently, the fourth hypothesis was accepted.

The present study addressed the topic of utilizing podcasts to enhance listening performance of EFL majors. The advantage of availability on demand offered exceptional opportunity for the experimental group students to view and hear the content of the podcast, interact and respond fruitfully, resulting in significant differences in their favor. This finding is consistent with those of Nisa, Izzah, and Hadi (2022) and Saputra (2014), who found out

that the use of podcasts is highly instrumental in fostering listening performance considerably faster compared to the regular methods adopted.

The remarkable gain EFL majors attained in listening comprehension could be attributed to the retrievability of the podcasts, which enabled students to retain literal information and details. This, in turn, enabled them to comprehend between the lines content as reflected in their significant attainment. This interpretation is in harmony with the results obtained by Abdi & Makiabadi (2019); Gonulal (2020).

The major result attained relates to the significant improvement of the experimental group in listening performance in comparison to their peers in the control group. This is consistent with the results reached by Gholami & Mohammadi (2015); Hasan & Tan (2013), maintaining that the easy access to various levels of podcasts enhance learners' listening performance, engagement and motivation.

The core idea behind using podcasts in teaching English is to engage students while they are learning the foreign language. The learning context should not only be attractive, but the ultimate target is to keep learners focused on the material. Combining audio, video, and text in an interesting way helps maintain students' attention on the content being delivered. The authentic context that podcasts offer may also help stimulate learners' motivation and enhance their learning.

Using podcasts as an instructional medium enabled student to develop effective ways to studying new subjects through finding reliable information, which is likely to enhance independent learning. This is consistent with the results found by Wake (2024), maintaining that the use of podcasts as a medium of instruction fostered independent learning and study skills.

The experimental group students perceived podcasts as stimulating and engaging medium that fosters lexical knowledge and listening performance in addition to variation added to the learning context. This is in harmony with the results attained by

Rahman et al., (2018), stressing that use of podcasts boosts concentration and enhances better listening.

The data gave support to the notion that utilizing podcasts exposes learners to authentic spoken language with various accents, which enhances their listening performance. This result is consistent with that reached by AlGhamdi (2025) confirming that learners exposed to authentic spoken language during learning activities showed greater improvement in listening performance.

Results demonstrated that there is a correlation between listening strategy use of EFL majors and their performance. The results found by In'nami and Koizumi (2022) are in concordance with those reached by the present study in taking notes and finding the meaning of difficult words delivered by the speaker. Similar findings obtained maintained that learning strategy adopted affect listening performance positively (Dousti & Abolfathiasl, 2013; Rasouli et al., 2013). The results reached by the present study are in harmony with those attained by Goh and Hu (2014) indicating high positive correlation between metacognitive awareness and listening performance.

Though no differences were found between proficient and less proficient users of repair strategies, the data gave support to the outperformance of proficient versus less proficient users of overall, effective and difficulty-causing strategies of listening performance. This is consistent with the results reached by (Bidabadi & Yamat, 2011; Yulisa, 2018). Similar to the results reached by the present study are those found by (Sartika, Santihastuti, and Wahjuningsih, 2019; Yu, 2003) confirming that high proficient listeners employed more strategies than less proficient listeners.

In conclusion, podcasts are a beneficial source for boosting listening performance among EFL majors due to the accessibility to authentic content they offer to learners on demand. Nonetheless, learners should be aware of the difficulties to be encountered while developing their listening skills. They should take the appropriate action to increment their listening activities by participating in

conversational exchanges and engaging in listening classes that provide corrective input in listening performance.

Conclusions

The results reached provided evidence that utilizing podcasts is fruitful in improving listening performance of EFL majors. Research shows that incorporating podcasts in learning can enhance learning outcomes. The absence of adequate training on listening performance stand behind lack of EFL majors' proficiency in listening. Use of authentic content, activities, feedback and everyday practice of target language created an ambitious setting for students to take charge of their own learning. The nature of podcasts aroused students' deep interest, which turned them from mere recipients into active participants. Such a conclusion suggests that use of podcasts in listening could be employed to arouse learners' motivation at any time. As for students' level of proficiency, a promising finding of the study maintained that students with better performance in listening used more strategies than their counterparts of lower level, revealing a dire need for strategy instruction to promote listening performance. It is hoped that this research may uncover deeper insight of utilizing listening strategies and their impact on boosting listening performance of EFL majors.

Recommendations

Based on the findings obtained, the following recommendations seem pertinent:

- (1) Podcasts should be incorporated in the listening materials presented to EFL majors to develop their performance.
- (2) Adequate training on listening should involve exposure to authentic materials both in and out of the classroom.
- (3) Listening instructors should pay attention to video-podcasting in training students and adopt new methods that minimize their workload, and maximize student participation.
- (4) Listening instruction should involve explicit presentation of listening strategies, giving prominence to activities highlighting the learning process.



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- (5) English majors should be trained using listening labs that are equipped with modern technology, allowing them to interactively engage with authentic listening resources.
- (6) Listening materials with varying rates of delivery should be incorporated in the curriculum of EFL majors so that students can handle the fleeting nature of spoken language.

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