Using Podcast as a Teaching Strategy for Enhancing EFL Students' Listening Skills.

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Acknowledgement:

Abstract

This study examines the effect of using English podcasts to enhance second secondary EFL students' listening skills in El-Shaheed Al-Raed Mostafa Yousry Omeira Secondary School for Girls in Egypt. The major purpose of the study is to boost the students' listening comprehension and to deal with specific classroom issues that the researchers faced. Forty-two students have participated in a single-group pre-test and post-test assessment as well as a satisfaction inquiry by the end of the experiment. The pre-test assessment was carried out to determine the students' basic listening skills. Following that, the test subjects were exposed to the "BBC Learning English" podcast as a procedure to enhance their listening skills. A post-test was subsequently conducted to evaluate the students' listening comprehension development. The researchers employed the use of tables to visually display the disparities between the responses provided by the students. The results suggest a large variation in the scores of the group during the post-test interval. The study also proposes that the podcast had an important effect on the development of listening comprehension which is demonstrated by the post-test's better results when compared with the pre-test's results.

Key Words:

Podcast, a listening teaching strategy, "BBC Learning English", enhancing listening skills.

1. **Introduction**:

In her paper "The Role of Listening in Language Acquisition; the Challenges & Strategies in Teaching Listening", Renukadevi (2014) regards listening as the key skill that affects language acquisition out of the four primary skills. She asserts that despite the importance of the other three skills and their role in building language acquisition, the primary contribution to language expertise is listening, as it is the first receptive ability to appear in human beings, which makes it the first to rouse the awareness of language. Other than being the fundamental means of communication, listening also helps learners understand the basic units of the language. Through listening to sounds, rhythms, intonations, and stress, learners can acquire much knowledge about language, making it easier to understand the intricacies of the language. Language acquisition was usually done through traditional teacher–student learning. That was until the continuous advancements in technology took place. This transition in the contemporary world has led to new ideas in the aspect of language teaching and acquisition. Researchers started coming up with creative techniques for strengthening the four skills of language using new teaching technology. Innovators are using numerous technologies, such as audiobooks for short stories and YouTube videos, to boost pronunciation in listening skills. Among them was the usage of podcasts to improve the students' listening skills. English teachers start intertwining technology in listening teaching, which transformed traditional teaching methods, leading to new and active ways of language acquisition. Technology provided the English teachers with dynamic teaching apps, online platforms, and many other tools that helped them in the classroom as an assisting teacher. Among the new technologies that emerged was the podcast, and as Sullivan (2019) stated, podcasts have grown to be among the most famous live streaming formats. It was established as an effective and easily accessible tool that can help with enhancing language acquisition. Podcasts are mainly utilized for entertaining purposes. However, it can also function as a promising resource for increasing listening capacity by giving authentic material. Podcasts are mostly obtainable to both students and teachers, acting as a beneficial tool for boosting learning and strengthening students' listening ability, both within and beyond the classroom. The researchers encountered various types of podcasts but mainly focused on academic and educational podcasts as they are motivating tools for linking the school curriculum with language acquisition. This study intends to illustrate the efficacy of adopting educational podcasts in boosting listening skills and addressing some classroom issues in the second secondary stage at El-Shaheed Al-Raed Mostafa Yousry Omeira Secondary School for Girls in Egypt. These classroom issues encompass various factors were usually associated with teachers, familial history, environmental factors, and psychological difficulties pertaining to the learner. In their research, Acevedo and Cassany (2023) emphasize the significance of listening abilities and the role of podcasts in enhancing them, as well as the impact of proper

pronunciation and comprehension on the students understanding. This research aims to adopt unique strategies to boost listening skills by employing the widely renowned platform "BBC Learning English," which is a highly recognized online platform for teaching English, especially in enhancing the listening skill. The researchers investigate the utilization of podcasts as an educational tool to improve students' listening skills. The objective is to find out the possibility of employing podcasts to enhance listening skills. To achieve the objective, the researchers intend to utilize an action research approach, incorporating pre–test and post–test evaluations prior to and following the viewing of a podcast, along with a satisfaction survey at the conclusion of the examination to evaluate participants' preferences regarding the experiment. By utilising podcasts, the students' comprehension is expected to boost regarding school topics as well as increasing their listening and lexical abilities by identifying and correcting their flaws.

2. **The Objectives of The Study**:

1– Enhancing the students' listening skills with the use of the "BBC Learning English" podcast.

2– Assisting the students in overcoming the difficulties they face with grammar tenses.

3– Assisting the students to gain knowledge about the simple present tense.

4– Assisting the students in attentively listening to podcasts and correctly answering related questions.

5– Examining the students' responses to the to the selected podcasts.

6– Measuring the change in the listening scores before and after implementing the treatment process.

3. **The Importance of The Study**:

For the majority of students have expressed negative feelings towards learning listening skills. However, 9% of a person's communication time is spent writing, 16% reading, 30% speaking, and 45% listening according to Artyushina et al. (2017). The majority of EFL programs place a strong emphasis on effective speaking, and listening is only briefly covered in language classes. Additionally, finding resources for teaching listening than speaking or reading was a challenge for many English teachers because comprehension processes are still poorly understood and English teachers frequently presume, just as what we noticed during our field training, that after teaching speaking, students will naturally pick up listening skills. According to Cheung, Yun K. (2008) the main skill in learning a new language should be listening and thus encouraging listening comprehension increases the acquisition of other language skills, which in turn leads to the acquisition of the target language. Students cannot speak correctly or produce an output until they have a thorough understanding of the input (listening comprehension).

Within this context, the researchers thought podcasts, as one of the most popular and effective methods for improving listening skills. Based on Erin Walton article, there are distinct reasons for the popularity of podcasts. Podcasts serve as an indispensable asset in English as a Second Language

(ESL) classrooms for their adaptability and accessibility as they offer useful information, interesting interviews, and debates of current events, all delivered with genuine accents and at a conversational pace. These privileges make podcasts a promising tool for developing students' listening comprehension skills. One of the primary advantages of podcasts is their versatility. Students can download them, listen to them as much as they want, change the speed at which they play, and even alter specific parts for target practice. Additionally, a wide variety of subjects are covered by podcasts, ranging from technology and food to science and fashion, so language learners can select information that suits their interests and objectives. English teachers may easily find podcasts on websites of major educational institutions and broadcasters like the BBC as well as on platforms like Google, iTunes, and the Play Store. Podcasts are a valid potential for ESL training because of their extensive availability and varied content, which facilitates both formal classroom learning and independent study. Sholikah and Isnaini (2024) attempted to highlight the effectiveness of podcasts and their rules in improving listening comprehension by fostering the growth of vocabulary and listening abilities. Podcasts promote vocabulary learning by presenting language in exciting and relevant circumstances, assisting students in comprehending the meaning of the words they hear. Additionally, podcasts can assist kids strengthen their comprehension of language and sentence structure. Podcasts can further help students improve their listening abilities by exposing them to actual language and varied accents. Moreover, Podcasts can help students improve their active listening abilities, including summarizing, identifying key information, and responding to what students hear.

In an optimistic attempt to further enrich the experience, the researchers attempted to use podcasts to improve the students' comprehension of some grammatical rules. The selected rules were the most challenging topics according to the students. This attempt reflects the expected improvement of the students' listening skills. As podcasts in this case is the replacement teacher for teaching these new and challenging grammatical topics. This strategy requires the researching team to meticulously survey many related podcasts with a selected rubric to choose from to objectively assess the selected objectives based on the students' responses. In case the results are positive, podcasts can be recommended as an assistant for English teachers in their journey of teaching grammar from a new perspective.

Literature Review

The effect of podcasts on enhancing students' listening abilities in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom was investigated by Rusdiyansa Muliasari (2020) in her research "Using Podcast to Improve Students' EFL Listening Skill at Senior High School 5 Bulukumba". With 70.00% of students responding favourably, the findings demonstrated that podcasts greatly enhanced students' listening abilities. Podcasts provide learners with modern, real-world listening techniques that let them take charge of their own learning and find inspiring and instructive content

on their own. Information and communications technology (ICT) has greatly benefited teachers and students in the digital age and podcasts are within the category of essential resources for enhancing students' listening abilities.

The study of Asmaa **Ghamry** (2020) "Using podcasting for developing EFL listening comprehension skills among secondary stage students" aims to enhance EFL listening comprehension skills among first-year secondary stage students at Alsadat Secondary School for Girls in Alzaqaziq. The study employed a one-group pre-post test design. and the results showed significant improvement in listening comprehension skills. Podcasting was found to be effective in developing EFL listening comprehension skills among students. Listening comprehension is a complex mental process that involves four main types of knowledge: phonological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic. According to the study, listening comprehension is one of the least understood processes, and learners often face difficulties due to factors such as lack of control over speech speed, inability to repeat words, limited vocabulary, failure to recognize signs of speaker movement, interpretation problems, and incorrect pronunciation to overcome.

The study "Podcasts as an Educational Tool for EFL Educators" of Yugsán-Gómez et al. (2019) views the impact of virtual and multimedia environments on students' lives, along with technological advancements which have generated major challenges for the teaching of EFL. This paper proposes the idea of podcasts as a technology instrument that can frequently make audio or video content available online, providing benefits and chances to enhance the teaching–learning process of foreign languages. Podcasts can be employed in different EFL teaching contexts, including direct student work, professional development for EFL teachers, and combining with other online digital resources. With cloud and portable devices integrating technology into every part of educational institutions, technological innovations have radically transformed the teaching methodology. Podcasts can provide a flexible, imaginative, and enticing alternative to English teachers, allowing them to focus on events taking place on all continents. Podcasts can also provide an opportunity to share the experiences of EFL teachers and provide thought-provoking insights for teachers from all parts of the world.

The Theoretical Framework

1. Listening Ability:

Rice (2015) in his study "Keywords in Sound" stated that "listening is understood to involve a deliberate channelling of attention towards a sound." Moreover, "listening is making an effort to hear something." This sets the difference between the two terms listening and hearing. Unlike hearing, which simply means the perceiving of sounds, listening is a more intricate skill that requires paying attention to understand what is being heard.

According to Purdy and Borisoff (1997), listening is considered the most basic skill of the language arts. It is the first language skill that children learn, as Lundsteen (1979) stated; "they listen before they

speak, speak before they read, and read before they write." This leads to the conclusion that an individual's ability to speak, read, and write is dependent on his ability to listen.

learners rehearse listening throughout many activities in their daily lives, such as listening to music, instructions, news, or even overhearing someone else's conversation. However, there is a difference between conscious and unconscious listening. Unconscious listening, as Treasure (2013) defined, is like standing in a noisy street; people suppress those noises to the point of being unconscious of it as if it does not exist even if it does affect them. This leads to the conclusion that unconscious listening is any noise surrounding the person even if he is not intentionally listening to it. On the other hand, Treasure defined conscious listening as knowing how a person listens and listening with the intention of understanding. He also added that conscious listening involves a person being present, focused, and aware of the message being delivered.

Within this context, the researchers' objective is trying to facilitate the students' development of active listening skills. This skill necessitates students' understanding and applying all the information acquired in the listening process as well as be able to retrieve this information to fulfil the required tasks.

2. Teaching Listening:

It is historically believed that English teachers have spent more time on teaching speaking than they did on teaching listening. Nunan (2001), stated that "listening is the Cinderella skill in second language learning. All too often, it has been overlooked by its elder sister: speaking" (p.51). This leads to the belief that, despite its importance and application in daily life, teaching listening has historically received little interest whether intentionally or unintentionally. That is due to the common belief that claiming a second language is only exhibited through being able to speak and write in that language. However, teaching listening gained a greater level of interest in the recent years. It is now employed in various aspects of life and is essential when applying for university entrance exams, job interviews, and many other situations that require listening as a basic component.

Rost (2011) asserted that the traditional method of teaching listening has always focused solely on memorization and repetition as well as being only teacher-centered. It mainly focused on students' repetition of the information they extracted from the listening material without caring about the students gaining any real comprehension from it. However, this notion has gradually changed nowadays,

> in the recent days, several listening strategies have been formulated to match with every different listening situation, and because of this, in teaching listening skills, the language learners are facilitated in getting adjusted to their listening behaviour to deal with a variety of situations, types of input, and listening purposes (Renukadevi, 2014, p.61).

More researchers focus on coming up with new strategies that would help the students get a more profound understanding of the listening material and not just memorize it.

Technology has become an indispensable component of modern life that takes part in every facet of life; thus, it should be involved in teaching listening too. For this reason, the researchers of this study preferred to adopt a new method of teaching listening in Cairo by utilizing Podcasts rather than relying on the common methods to solve the challenges that English teachers may face in teaching listening.

3. Challenges Concerning Listening Skills

Listening is a key skill that plays a significant part in communication, learning, and personal growth. However, many secondary school students suffer from listening comprehension, that usually leading to academic concerns. The study of Hande and Fatih (2015) explores the issues experienced by young learners in EFL listening comprehension. These obstacles can be classified into three basic groups: problems connected to English teachers, problems associated with learners' techniques, and problems based on students' psychology.

Problems connected to English teachers are usually related to the teaching methods which English teachers frequently overlook phonetic teaching, resulting in students encountering difficulties with pronunciation variations and misinterpreting spoken language. Inadequate exposure to genuine listening materials and the omission of listening strategies, such as identifying contextual cues and breaking down speech, worsen these problems. The second one is strategies employed by learners also influences listening comprehension. Some students have troubles with rapid word recall, whilst

others find it challenging to recognize words in spoken discourse, particularly during fast-paced exchanges. Moreover, individuals confuse the general point of a dialogue, concentrating excessively on specific phrases instead of grasping the context. Third, psychological obstacles significantly influence listening comprehension. Students frequently encounter anxiety while listening to English, apprehensive about their comprehension of the curriculum, and lacking confidence in their auditory skills, which may deter them from participating in listening exercises.

Another study by Saraswaty (2018) illustrates multiple challenges students face in strengthening their listening skills. The lack of attention to listening in EFL education is a primary cause of listening comprehension issues. Many schools and universities concentrate on grammar, vocabulary, and reading over listening and speaking, resulting to a lack of regular education and unprepared learners for real-life communication challenges. Listening comprehension requires cognitive functions such as perception, attention, memory, and reasoning. Many learners struggle with interpreting spoken language in real time, especially when the speech is fast-paced or involves foreign vocabulary. Psychological elements such as fear and lack of confidence further limit comprehension. To improve listening comprehension, a supportive learning environment is required to lower stress and build learners' confidence. Hence, Common listening problems faced by learners include speech rate, foreign words, accents and pronunciation differences, cultural variation, low-quality of recorded materials, length and difficulty of listening texts, lack of contextual comprehension, and limited exposure to genuine listening materials.

These obstacles contribute to learners' challenges in understanding conversations and overcoming issues with listening comprehension. To improve listening comprehension, it is vital to create an encouraging educational setting that reduces stress and builds confidence among students.

Furthermore, the study by Coşkun and Köprü (2021) identifies several challenges faced by secondary school children in their listening comprehension, including family-related concerns, environmental variables, educational obstacles, personal preparation, speaker-related difficulties, listener-related issues, and problems with listening materials. Family-related constraints include traditional family structures that do not value active listening, lack of parental involvement, and apathy from parents. External environmental factors like noisy classes and excessive use of technology also impact students' ability to listen successfully.

 Moreover, educational challenges regarding listening skills are often overlooked in the curriculum, leading to inefficient teaching approaches. Many institutions do not provide enough engaging listening exercises or materials, and overcrowded classrooms hinder English teachers' ability to provide exclusive focus. Physical and mental preparation also significantly impacts students' listening skills, with insufficient sleep, missing meals, and early morning sessions hindering focus and comprehension.

Also, speaker-related challenges stem from students themselves, who may lack understanding of the value of listening, get easily sidetracked, prefer speaking over listening, or have attention disabilities. The quality and relevancy of listening materials significantly enhance students' comprehension, but many find hearing books dull, too complex, or too lengthy, making it difficult for them to engage with the subject. Overall, these factors contribute to the challenges faced by secondary school students in developing effective listening skills.

Additionally, throughout the last two years field training, the researchers found out that listening is the least language skill that English teachers normally focus upon. This is due to various reasons: among them are low gadgets, as most schools don't have the right gadgets to increase the students' listening skills. In addition to the negligence, the English teachers treated that skill as if they thought it was not worth the class time and that it was just a waste of time where nothing good could come out it, showing no importance of teaching listening for the students throughout the years, which gave the students the feeling that it was irrelevant. This led the researchers to think of a way to motivate the students' interest in developing their listening skills; therefore, the researchers were motivated to use podcasts as a strategy to help the students enhance their listening skills in a positive rich learning environment. That is in addition to presenting a promising methodology to help English teachers facilitate lessons not only about listening but also in other genre of English language for their students and have the students focused and engaged during the whole lesson.

4. Podcast

According to Tryanti et al. (2018), the term podcast was first introduced in 2004 and is known as "an

internet audio blogging or internet audio publishing". The podcast audio recording is designed to be downloaded and listened to on mobile devices, computers, or even mp3 players. Some people confuse it with radio shows and while they could indeed be quite similar, they still differ in some aspects. Podcast allows listeners a huge amount of liberty. Podcast listeners get to choose the subject they desire and listen to it according to their own convenience. Also, podcast is pre-recorded and is usually episodic where a whole topic is discussed in various episodes. On the other hand, radio shows air lives in a specific time of day and usually tends to be hours long that discusses various subjects and is not dedicated to just one topic.

Woldemariam (2023) defines podcast as "audio and video files. They are free of charge materials and can be downloadable to a computer and a portable audio and video device." This makes podcasts a good learning material as they enable students to choose when and where to learn due to their flexibility and easy portability. They are easy to download, circulate, and modify, which provides the learners with an enhanced level of authority and control of their education. Moreover, podcasts permit learners to manage control over their learning processes and facilitate independent searching and discovery of motivational and educational content. According to Minooka (2024), the term "podcast" originated in 2004 through journalist Ben Hammersley. Hammersley cleverly combined the name of Apple's mobile audio player, the iPod, in which "pod" is derived from "play-on-demand", with broadcasting to indicate multimedia audio files that include recordings of portions of non-music broadcast or broadcasting-like content. There are different types of podcasts, and each of them tackles a specific genre; the most important one for this study is the educational podcast. According to Drew (2017), educational podcasts are ones that instruct listeners on different topics; most of the time, they concentrate on a single subject per episode. Publishers must provide accurate, reliable, and carefully analysed material to preserve credibility as well as avoid misleading the listeners.

4.1 Types of Podcasts

Educational podcasts have a huge popularity as tools of modern learning environments, providing a wide range of information to meet a variety of learning requirements and styles. According to Drew (2017), podcasts have grown into structured formats that encourage deep learning and engagement, making them an effective educational medium. One of the most prevalent varieties is lecture-based podcasts, which contain planned lessons and recorded university lectures. These podcasts simplify complex subjects by allowing students to revisit information at their own speed, encouraging comprehension. Furthermore, interview-based podcasts are an invaluable resource because they feature discussions with experts, teachers, and professionals, providing insights into specific issues from a variety of fields. This style not only offers varied perspectives, but it also exposes students to real-world applications of theoretical topics.

Another prominent category is storytelling and narrative podcasts, which use interesting storytelling approaches to clarify hard subjects.

These podcasts improve comprehension because presenting material in an enjoyable and accessible way, making them especially useful for courses like history, literature, and science. Drew's research demonstrates that storytelling formats promote deep cognitive engagement by allowing listeners to make mental connections between knowledge and real-life circumstances. Similarly, language learning podcasts create an immersive experience by emphasizing vocabulary, grammar, and conversational practice. These podcasts introduce learners to native speech patterns and cultural nuances, which can help them improve their listening and speaking skills in a second language.

Student-created podcasts are another creative format that encourages active learning and cooperation. When students make their own podcasts, they participate in research, critical thinking, and good communication, all of which benefit their overall academic development. This style encourages creativity and empowers students to take ownership of their education, making it a more engaging experience. Furthermore, professional development podcasts help instructors by providing solutions for classroom management, curriculum creation, and teaching practices. English teachers may stay current on educational trends while learning practical strategies for increasing student engagement.

Subject-specific podcasts are also popular for expanding knowledge in specific academic disciplines such as physics, mathematics, and literature. These podcasts frequently break down difficult theories and concepts, making them more understandable. Meanwhile, news-based educational podcasts offer analytical discussions of current events, assisting students in developing critical thinking abilities and staying up to date on global topics. Motivational and self-improvement podcasts contribute to lifelong learning by encouraging better study habits, time management, and personal development.

Drew's research stresses that educational podcasts not only enhance traditional learning methods but also provide learners with a flexible and accessible means to interact with educational content on their own terms. Unlike traditional classroom settings, podcasts enable students to access knowledge at any time and from any location, making education more inclusive and flexible to diverse learning styles. By introducing these many podcast formats into educational environments, students, teachers, and lifelong learners can benefit from an engaging, dynamic, and self-directed approach to knowledge acquisition.

4.2 Criteria for Choosing Listening Podcasts

To select an appropriate podcast for secondary-level EFL language learners, several factors must be considered, such as linguistic accessibility, content quality, and production standards. That is to ensure that the learners' learning objectives are met effectively. Underwood addressed this issue in 1989, and Woldemariam followed up in 2023. They established eight criteria that should be considered before selecting the appropriate podcast.

4.2.1 Language

English teachers must select the podcast that best suits their students' abilities. The language in the podcast should not be so advanced that learners struggle to understand it, nor should it be so simple that it adds nothing to their learning experience. Krashen coined the term "comprehensible input" in late 1970s, implying that learners learn best when the language is slightly above their current abilities. And this is exactly how English teachers should select podcasts for their students. The podcast should include vocabulary and grammatical structures that are just above the learners' abilities so that they can make the most of it. Also, the accent should also be taken into consideration. It is preferable to use received pronunciation in British English or a Midwest standard US speaker in American English because exposure to unusual accents will be difficult for learners.

4.2.2 Length

When deciding on the length of the podcast, the English teacher must keep in mind that most secondary-level students are teenagers who can get bored quickly. According to a survey conducted in 2017 by Michael J. Cosimini, most learners would prefer a podcast ranging from 5 to 15 minutes over one that is any longer or shorter. Long listening sessions can be overwhelming for learners and cause cognitive overload, rendering the information they learn useless. That is why it is best to use short podcasts and provide breaks in between if necessary.

4.2.3 Content

Before selecting content, the English teacher must thoroughly research his students' backgrounds and preferences. He must select content that is straightforward, clear, and relevant to the learner's culture and living environment. Other content that covers dense topics or is culturally dense may hinder the students' comprehension, which will distract them from the focus, which is enhancing their listening abilities.

4.2.4 Style of Delivery

Before selecting a podcast, it is essential for the English teacher to consider the delivery style. Speed of speech, pitch, and tone are all factors to consider in this aspect. The speech should be natural and clear, with no mispronunciations, and there should be no more than two speakers at most to prevent disturbing or interrupting the learners, as it might be distracting.

4.2.5 Speed of Delivery

It may appear tempting for the English teacher to slow down the audio to help the students understand better, but this would cause the opposite effect. It is critical for students to listen to spoken language at its natural pace, without speeding or slowing it. Because natural speech has clear natural rhythm and intonation, which the slowed-down version lacks.

4.2.6 Spontaneity

The English teacher should choose audio that sounds as natural as possible. Scripted recorded audios frequently lack features that are common and natural in real speech, such as hesitations, repetitions, and false starts. It is critical to expose students to spontaneous speech that they will encounter in real life rather than teaching them English that is only seen in the news and scripted talks.

4.2.7 Quality of Production

When selecting a podcast, English teachers should consider the technical quality of the audio. They must ensure that the sound is clear and there are no background noises that could distract the listeners. Clear audios ensure that students focus only on the content they are supposed to learn and make the most of it.

4.2.8 The Use of Visual Support

Visual aids such as pictures, maps, charts, and models can help novice learners understand and focus better. Wherever possible, choose a podcast that is accompanied by visual material or transcripts to provide additional context and aid comprehension. Furthermore, video recordings can be especially useful when enhancing listening skills, as they include nonverbal information, such as facial expressions and gestures, which aid interpretation.

4.3 Selecting Website Criteria: Surfing for a Pedagogical Podcasts

It is critical to investigate the credibility of the sources that may be used in any study or research paper. The same applies to the English teacher when selecting the website from which he will choose the podcast. It is critical to ensure that the site is up to date and does not contain any untrustworthy information, as using untrustworthy sources will undermine your credibility and make your arguments weak. In this study, the researchers obtained the necessary criteria points from Woldemariam (2023) and Buttram et al. (2012).

4.3.1 Accuracy

The first thing a researcher must do is to assess the web page writer and the content's reliability. The researcher must ensure that the author of the web page is qualified to discuss the subject matter. A reliable website must include the author's information as well as the references and citations used. Furthermore, domain types such as ".edu," ".org," and ".gov" are typically more reliable than ".com" sites, which are primarily commercial. The former is frequently associated with academic institutions and government agencies, making them more credible.

4.3.2 Currency

The term "currency" refers to the web page's content updates. The researcher must determine whether the website is updated on a regular basis and when the last update occurred. A trustworthy

website displays the date of the most recent update. It is critical for the website to keep up with recent updates in the real world because outdated information can lead to misunderstandings, which is especially concerning in fields such as education and medicine, as they can cause a lot of damage. Furthermore, the links and references embedded on the website must be up to date to function properly. Broken links and outdated references are clear indicators that a website is untrustworthy and should not be used.

4.3.3 Objectivity

To present authentic content, the researcher must ensure that the content presented on the website is free of bias and that the author's judgment is not presented in the text. If the author's judgment influences the content, it is no longer a credible source that can be used, and it may even have an impact on the study's conclusions.

4.3.4 Content

The content of the website is not only limited to the information it provides, but also to the overall visual design of the website. A well-organized website with a clear layout and logical flow is more appealing than one that is cluttered with excessive advertisements and pop-ups, which are likely to hinder the user's experience and distract him. The readability of the text is also an important point to consider; the size, colour, and style of the text font all play a role in attracting visitors.

4.3.5 Functionality

Functionality refers to the website's technical performance, such as whether it works properly and how long it takes to load and download files. Unnecessary delays and technical issues on a website can frustrate users and deter them from using it. The quality of the media on the website is equally important. If the media is of poor quality and not well integrated, it will distract the user. It is critical to provide clear content and a functional website to avoid negatively impacting the user, as broken elements and frequent crashes do.

4.4 "BBC Learning English" Criteria:

Based on the previous website and podcast criteria, the researcher was able to apply them to "BBC Learning English" and determine that it is a well-moderate website with well-moderate podcasts that could be used with secondary-level EFL learners.

4.4.1 Language

"BBC Learning English" excels in the use of clear and accessible language. When choosing language learning materials, they need to include a familiar topic, suitable vocabulary, and an easily understandable accent to aid the listening comprehension. The topics of the podcast episodes in "BBC Learning English" are based on everyday situations, which makes them reasonable and useful for the learners. Furthermore, the presenters use a clear, neutral British accent, which aids the listeners' understanding, getting them acquainted with a standard variety of English.

4.4.2 Length

The time length of the podcast is an essential point to consider as it affects the learners' comprehension and sustains their interest for the duration of the podcast. "BBC Learning English" episodes are deliberately designed to support different listening purposes like understanding the main idea, achieving global comprehension, or predicting what is to come. Very short audio segments that are less than one minute pose serious challenges for the learners as they might lack context and overall coherence. However, the six-minute length is ideal as it provides sufficient linguistic input while at the same time not overwhelming the learners, which makes it a good choice for structured language practice.

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4.4.4 Style of Delivery

Another important point to consider is the number of speakers and their interaction style. "BBC Learning English" always has two speakers, ensuring that there is a balanced and engaging dialogue. Gender representation is also considered because presenting a male and a female in the podcast helps the conversations be more inclusive and relatable to both genders. The conversational style of the podcast is lively but well-structured at the same time, preventing it from overwhelming the learners. Such a careful balance of structure and engagement makes the podcast an excellent one in terms of delivery style.

4.4.5 Speed of Delivery

The delivery rate of the speech in listening materials has a significant impact on the learners' comprehension. Unlike other podcasts that slow down the speech's pace to be easier, "BBC Learning English" maintains a natural pace of speech that allows the learners to get acquainted with authentic everyday speech. That helps the learners enhance their understanding of actual spoken language, such as connected speech and natural intonation. This is particularly helpful for secondary-level EFL learners who try to bridge the gap between classroom listening exercises and real-life conversations.

4.4.6 Spontaneity

Spontaneity is a factor that the "BBC Learning English" lacks. Conversations are overly scripted, which makes them lack important characteristics of

natural conversation, such as repetition, false starts, and hesitations. From this perspective, the podcast does help the learner get acquainted with more structured and clearer conversation like the one used in news programs; however, it does not help them get acquainted with everyday speech. As a result, it is average in the spontaneity criterion, as it lacks the freshness and roughness that can be found in unedited verbal exchanges.

4.4.7 The Quality of Production

Good technical production quality is an essential factor to consider for every audio-based learning material. The "BBC Learning English" podcast fulfils this criterion. The recordings are clear without any distracting background noise. High-quality audio makes it possible for the learners to focus solely on the content being delivered with no distractions. Sound clarity also helps language learners and enables them to hear and identify words, phrases, and intonation patterns accurately. In this criterion, the podcast has been rated with an excellent production quality score.

4.4.8 The Use of Visual Support

Visuals such as images, infographics, and video elements enhance comprehension by providing context to information. "BBC Learning English" podcast has very poor visual support. Aside from the cover image of the audio file, there are no other visual aids provided. Even if the podcast is generous with plentiful verbal explanations, they might not be enough for some learners to get a full understanding of certain things without any assisting visual aid. This means the podcast deserves

nothing more than an average score on this criterion.

5. **Methods of Research and Used Tools**

The researchers conducted the study using the action research methodology, which is a mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches, as it was best suited for the study. It is a methodology that aims to investigate and solve the issues and problems faced in real-life contexts and can be defined as "a study carried out in the course of an activity or occupation, typically in the field of education, to improve the methods and approach of those involved." Based on the OED definition.

The study used the pre-test and post-test technique to analyze and evaluate data on the use of the "BBC Learning English" podcast to improve the students' listening abilities. It also utilized the use of a satisfaction inquiry at the end of the experiment in order to gauge the students' contentedness with the experiment. The action method involved the students doing a set of listening tasks and the researchers measuring the students' performance in those tasks before and after employing the podcast treatment.

The application went through four distinct phases. The first phase is the pre-test, in which the researchers measured the students' listening abilities using a ten-question exam before applying the treatment. The second phase is the treatment, in which the researchers had the students listen to a podcast to solve the issues they faced during the pre-test. The third phase is the post-test, in which the researchers measured the students' listening abilities after applying the treatment using the same

ten-question exam. The last phase is a satisfaction inquiry that measured the students' satisfaction level about the whole experiment.

The study was applied to a group of forty-two first-year secondary students in the academic year 2025. The students are enrolled in El-Shaheed Al-Raed Mostafa Yousry Omeira Secondary School for Girls in Egypt. The study's sample was the forty-two students who were chosen randomly from one of fifteen classes. The experiment was carried out in the second semester of the academic year 2025. It consisted of 8 fifteen-minute time spans. Each of the pre-test, post-test, and satisfaction inquiry was conducted in one period, while the treatment required additional periods. The pre-test was conducted in the first week of February 2025, and the post-test was conducted in the first week of April 2025. This allowed the researchers a time span of two months to conduct the treatment phase, which was enough time for the students' abilities to improve.

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5.1 The Pre-test Stage

The researchers executed a systematic investigation into the efficacy of podcasts as a teaching approach. The study was carried out at El-Shaheed Al-Raed Mostafa Yousry Omeira Secondary School for Girls in Egypt, where a total of forty-two learners participated in the experiment. For starters, before playing the podcast to the students, they initially listened to a two-minute TOEFL-audio track. (https://drive.google.com/file/d/14_DAKyddv9tA-wHvHeCNcTHrOxwhtrOZ/view?usp=drive_link) The purpose of this initial listening track was to test students' listening skills, evaluate their grammatical comprehension, and refresh their prior knowledge. The brief track functioned as a warm-up exercise, letting the researchers comprehend the students. To examine the student's proficiency before going forward to the next educational step. After listening to the track, the researchers provided the students with a 20-minute-long pre-test. This test consisted of ten multiple-choice questions, mostly centered on grammar issues. The goal of the pre-test was not meant for student assessment but rather to study their first comprehension of essential grammatical structures and identify areas of difficulty.

5.2 The Post-test Stage

The researchers informed the students that the test's objective was to examine their improvement in listening skills and motivate them to perform to their full potential. The researchers first distributed the post-test materials, which were designed to assess the students' listening comprehension abilities in a similar manner to the pre-test. This allowed the researchers to assess the students' development after listening to the audio. The researchers then played a Podcast (from "BBC Learning English") about present tenses to a select set of students in the classroom. (https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p0j97yzt) He then compared the top and lowest scores from the pre-test and post-test and graded the results to

determine the general improvement in declining abilities. Furthermore, the researchers identified areas that required additional instruction and evaluated the individual and group strengths and weaknesses discovered through testing. Finally, the researchers provided feedback to the students, while also revealing the test results. The researchers underlined the students' achievements while highlighting opportunities for improvement. Pre-tests and post–tests are designed to assess progress and provide suggestions for education. Offering feedback and creating a supportive learning environment will increase students' motivation and encourage active engagement in improving their listening skills.

5.3 The Satisfaction Inquiry Stage

A systematic questionnaire was distributed to students to assess their satisfaction with the usage of podcasts as an aid for enhancing listening skills and grammar comprehension. This part sought to investigate students' impressions of podcast content, clarity, engagement, and general usefulness in language acquisition. The instrument included ten statements scored on a 5–point Likert scale ranging from *Highly Agree* to *Highly Disagree*. These remarks emphasized key satisfaction indicators including clarity, engagement, usefulness, pronunciation, and content length.

6. Research Limitations

The researchers encountered challenges throughout the course of the study, consisting of:

1. It was rare to find teachers prioritizing the listening skill as they just normally ignore it. Unfortunately, marginalizing listening skills was quite apparent due to the observation through the last two years of field training as well as other colloquies' feedback from other schools.
Hence, the researchers connected the podcast to not just enhance the listening ability but also to make it relevant to the rest of the curriculum. As the researchers used the podcast to explain a topic from the curriculum.

2. The idea of using podcast is a challenging approach that was not used before in this educational stage; therefore, when it was first presented, it was not disapproved yet not quite liked. Fortunately, due to the school's principal generosity and broad–mindedness, he provided the researchers with the adequate equipment that is necessary for the study.

3. Therefore, having the podcast connected to the curriculum proves that it can be used not just to enhance the students' listening skill yet also to facilitate the curriculum for both the English teacher and the student. Consequently, if used appropriately it will not be just a tool to help enhance the students' listening skill but also become a co–teacher to help improve other skills.

7. Research Results

The researchers administered a pre-test prior to the treatment and a post-test that follows the treatment. The aim was to determine whether there was an apparent improvement in students' listening comprehension after the incorporation of the Podcast.

The subsequent findings derive from the pre-test research observations:

Table 1: The Score of Students' Pre–Test

Students	Score	Students	Score
HA	9	MW	5
SH	9	MJ	8
SA	8	SM	9
N	8	SHSH	3
R	7	AM	9
N	7	MM	8
R	10	RM	9
SG	5	JE	9
MA	10	MM	9
HM	10	DA	6
WM	10	RH	10
JE	10	FT	10
SA	8	ME	5
TM	7	N	10
JT	8	F	4
JS	7	OM	2
RA	7	BD	8
MM	5	NA	9
MR	8	JA	3
MH	8	M	8
RA	3	MS	6
N= 42	Total: 314	Mean: 7.4	___

Pre-test scores data for students of listening comprehension is shown in table 1.

The findings from the pre-test according to table 1, one student received a score of 2, three students received a score of 3, one student received a score of 4, four students received a score of 5, two students received a score of 6, five students received a score of 7, ten students received a score of 8, eight students received a score of 9, and eight students received a score of 10. The mean pre-test result for the students was 7.4, with the greatest score being 10 and the lowest being 2.

However, below are the findings from the post–test observations of the examination.

Table (2): The Score of Students' Post–Test

Students	Score	Students	Score
NA	9	MR	9
JA	7	MH	9
M	8	RA	7
MS	9	MW	8
HA	9	MJ	10
SH	10	SM	10
SA	9	SHSH	5
N	8	AM	10
R	8	MM	10
N	7	RM	10
R	10	JE	9
SG	6	MM	10
MA	10	DA	10
HM	10	RH	10
WM	10	FT	10
JE	10	ME	8
SA	10	N	10
TM	9	F	7
JT	9	OM	4
JS	10	RA	10
BD	9	MM	7
N= 42	Total: 370	Mean: 8.8	

The data of students' post–test Scores of listening which is obtained into tables as follow:

From table 2, it can be shown that one student got 4 for their listening score, one student got 5 for their listening score, one student got 6 for listening score, five students got 7 for their listening score, five students got 8 for their listening score, ten students got 9 for their listening score, nineteen students got 10 for their listening score, the mean of students' post–test was 8.8, the highest score in post–test is 10 and the lowest score in post–test is 4.

Table (3). Statistical Table of Students' Pre-Test and Post-Test

No.	Students	Pre-Test X_i	Post-Test X_j	$(X_j - X_i)$	$D`$	$(X_j - X_i - D`)$	$((X_j - X_i) - \overline{D})2$
1	NA	9	9	0	1.33	–1.33	1.76
2	JA	3	7	4	1.33	2.67	7.13
3	M	8	8	0	1.33	–1.33	1.76
4	MS	6	9	3	1.33	1.67	2.79
5	HA	9	9	0	1.33	–1.33	1.76
6	SH	9	10	1	1.33	–0.33	0.11
7	SA	8	9	1	1.33	–0.33	0.11
8	N	8	8	0	1.33	–1.33	1.76
9	R	7	8	1	1.33	–0.33	0.11
10	N	7	7	0	1.33	–1.33	1.76
11	R	10	10	0	1.33	–1.33	1.76
12	SG	5	6	1	1.33	–0.33	0.11
13	MA	10	10	0	1.33	–1.33	1.76
14	HM	10	10	0	1.33	–1.33	1.76
15	WM	10	10	0	1.33	–1.33	1.76
16	JE	10	10	0	1.33	–1.33	1.76
17	SA	8	10	2	1.33	0.67	0.45
18	TM	7	9	2	1.33	0.67	0.45
19	JT	8	9	1	1.33	–0.33	0.11
20	JS	7	10	3	1.33	1.67	2.79
21	RA	7	10	3	1.33	1.67	2.79
22	MM	5	7	2	1.33	0.67	0.45
23	MR	8	9	1	1.33	–0.33	0.11
24	MH	8	9	1	1.33	–0.33	0.11
25	RA	3	7	4	1.33	2.67	7.13
26	MW	5	8	3	1.33	1.67	2.79
27	MJ	8	10	2	1.33	0.67	0.45
28	SM	9	10	1	1.33	–0.33	0.11
29	SHSH	3	5	2	1.33	0.67	0.45
30	AM	9	10	1	1.33	–0.33	0.11
31	MM	8	10	2	1.33	0.67	0.45
32	RM	9	10	1	1.33	–0.33	0.11
33	JE	9	9	0	1.33	–1.33	1.76
34	MM	9	10	1	1.33	–0.33	0.11
35	DA	6	10	4	1.33	2.67	7.13
36	RH	10	10	0	1.33	–1.33	1.76
37	FT	10	10	0	1.33	–1.33	1.76
38	ME	5	8	3	1.33	1.67	2.79
39	N	10	10	0	1.33	–1.33	1.76
40	F	4	7	3	1.33	1.67	2.79
41	OM	2	4	2	1.33	0.67	0.45
42	BD	8	9	1	1.33	–0.33	0.11
Total	–	314	370	56	–	0.14	67.24
Mean	–	7.47	8.81	1.33	–	–	–

The researchers used a t–test to analyse data on student listening skills before and after treatment, comparing pre–test and post–test results. Table 3 shows listening comprehension in pre and post-test, indicating significant differences.

Therefore, it is evident from the preceding table that the pre–test mean score was 7.47, and the post–test mean score was 8.81, up from 1.33. Based on the findings, it can be said that using podcasts to teach listening comprehension was more beneficial. The author examined the pre-test and post-test data for the students to ascertain the efficacy of using BBC's learning English podcasts for listening comprehension.

Table (4): The Score of Students' satisfaction inquiry

QUESTIONS	Highly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Highly disagree
1– The podcast was engaging.	4.76%	90.48%	___	4.76%	___
2– The content of the podcast was easy to understand.	57.14%	28.57%	9.52%	___	4.77%
3– The examples in the podcast helped me grasp the grammar concepts.	38.10%	52.38%	9.52%	___	___
4– The speaker's pronunciation and delivery were clear.	57.14%	33.34%	4.76%	4.76%	___
5– The length of the podcast was appropriate.	33.33%	19.05%	42.86%	___	4.76%
6– The podcast was useful of learning simple grammar tenses.	9.52%	85.72%	4.76%	___	___
7– Same parts of the podcast were confusing and unclear.	___	14.29%	9.52%	42.86%	33.33%
8– I would recommend this podcast to other students.	28.57%	66.67%	___	___	4.76%
9– I would like to hear more podcasts on grammar topics.	___	80.95%	14.29%	4.76%	___
10– I feel more confident using simple tenses after listening to the podcast.	19.05%	71.43%	4.76%	___	4.76%

The results of *Table 4* provide valuable information on students' satisfaction with the use of podcasts in grammar training. A substantial majority (90.48%) believed that the podcast was engaging, indicating that the format effectively piqued their attention. Only a small minority (4.76%) strongly agreed, while another 4.76% disagreed.

Regarding content clarity, 57.14% of students strongly agreed that the podcast was simple to comprehend, while 28.57% agreed. A tiny fraction (9.52%) remained neutral, while 4.77% disagreed,

indicating minimal concerns about content complexity.

The use of examples to teach grammatical principles was received with general satisfaction, 38.10%.

strongly agreeing and 52.38% agreeing that the examples clarified grammar issues. This illustrates the podcast's efficacy in promoting grammatical comprehension.

Students also gave positive feedback on the speaker's pronunciation and delivery, with 90.48% expressing agreement or strong agreement. Only 9.52% expressed neutrality or disagreement, which could indicate individual difficulties in interpreting specific speech parts. Opinions about the podcast's length were more split. While 52.38% thought the duration was adequate, 42.86% stayed indifferent, potentially reflecting ambiguity or a range of personal preferences. A small 4.76% expressed dissatisfaction with the podcast's length.

The podcast's effectiveness in teaching basic grammar tenses was highly appreciated. A total of 95.24% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, demonstrating the podcast's effectiveness in accomplishing its instructional goals.

In terms of clarity, 76.19% of students disagreed or strongly disagreed that the podcast was unclear. However, 14.29% of students reported bewilderment, while 9.52% remained neutral, indicating possibilities for improvement in content organization or explanation.

Students were very eager to promote the podcast, with 66.67% agreeing and 28.57% strongly agreeing. Only 4.76% strongly disagreed, indicating a positive overall assessment of the resource.

Furthermore, 80.95% reported a want to hear additional grammar-related podcasts, indicating an openness to continuing this strategy. Only a tiny percentage were neutral (14.29%) or disagreed (4.76%).

Therefore, most of the students' trust in utilizing simple tenses improved: 71.43% agreed, with 19.05% strongly agreeing. Only 4.76% stayed neutral, with another 4.76% strongly disagreeing, demonstrating that while most students benefited, whereas small number of students did not notice a significant difference.

The results suggest that English teachers should incorporate podcasts into the classroom to assist language learners in improving their listening skills through exposure to the content. The researcher proposes that subsequent studies should investigate the impact of utilizing podcasts to enhance speaking proficiency.

This link shows the results of the pre-test, the post-test, and the satisfaction survey.

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https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/17xiJwLhDdXU_iTkjNzvhAl36P1qmD4U?usp=drive_link

8. Interpretation of Results

The pre-test findings revealed that the students' samples lacked comprehension of a TOEFL audio track. They struggled to understand all of the sentences in the connected discourse. Furthermore, the students' samples revealed new organization and made linguistic blunders.

During the pre-test, the researchers allowed the students 20 minutes to answer a set of ten different grammatical problems from structured used in the audio track. Throughout the procedure, students expressed confusion, annoyance, boredom, and disinterest in the audio track. On the other hand, the post-test findings revealed significantly more improvement and better results. The students' listening skills increased dramatically because of the educational podcast, effectively addressing the shortcomings identified during the pre-test.

During the post-test, it took them 15 minutes to complete ten questions. Additionally, students displayed interest in Podcast after being taught about the structure rules, linguistic errors, and acquiring new vocabulary. Based on these findings, it can be inferred that incorporating podcasts into a listening class proved to be a compelling and advantageous approach for students. The utilization of Podcast, coupled with the students' inclination, had quantifiable effects on their acquisition of the English language of the school curriculum.

9. Recommendations

Based on the outcomes of this study, the recommendations that can be suggested are as follows:

1- Using a wide number of test subjects will allow the researcher to experience distinct types of responses to the treatment.
2- Giving the experiment enough time will help show true outcomes of the experiment's impact.
3- Using technology such as podcasts for educational purposes to improve the students' abilities is highly encouraged as it attracted their attention and allowed them to keep up with the real world.
4- Considering the students' opinions helps attract their attention and makes them cooperate as they feel heard.
5- Evaluating the podcasts' content is vital so as not to give the students inappropriate content that they should not engage with.
6- Evaluating the websites from which the researcher chooses the podcast is also important, as it ensures credibility and legitimacy.
7- Linking the podcast usage with the school curriculum ensures that there would be no complaints about the experiment wasting the students' time.

10. Conclusion

This investigation indicates that utilizing podcasts has a good influence on enhancing the listening skills of a sample of learners at El-Shaheed Al-Raed Mostafa Yousry Omeira Secondary School for Girls in Egypt. The researchers administered pre-test and

post-test assessments utilizing podcasts and concluded that the learners' listening capacity increased considerably. They displayed an enhanced ability to absorb the materials quickly and were capable of overcoming problems such as trouble comprehending the speech and language faults, which also helped them in grasping grammar lessons. This study confirms the advantages of using "BBC Learning English" podcasts as a genuine instrument to boost students' listening ability. Podcasts function as genuine resources, delivering a peek into the real world. Moreover, the topics provided in podcasts offer learners a realistic insight into actual utilization of the school curriculum themes in the real world, enabling them to swiftly pick up core information regarding various subjects by grasping real-life circumstances. Furthermore, podcasts help in utilizing the real language provided by those who are native speakers. By listening to information in native accents, children build a closer connection to the original language. Therefore, the outcome of the group of learners after the experiment was positive. The researchers carried out pre-test and post-test evaluations using a TOEFL audio track and conducted the treatment using a "BBC Learning English" podcast. The students struggled with understanding the TOEFL audio track and made several linguistic mistakes. However, after incorporating the educational podcast into a listening class, their listening skills improved significantly. The podcast helped students understand structure rules, linguistic errors, and acquire new vocabulary which was more than the study's objectives intended. Despite the letdown after the pre-test's results, the students were excited to try again after going through the treatment process. The findings indicated that podcasts aid

English teachers in developing exercises designed to improve students' listening skills, while also facilitating the recognition of curriculum and language in use. Furthermore, podcasts provide aural stimuli to students in the classroom, boosting their ability to interpret and understand the spoken language or words they encounter. in other words, podcast help the students acquire knowledge about the school's curriculum; consequently, having the students improve their language competence. The use of podcasts and students' interest in learning English significantly improved their English language acquisition in the school curriculum and showed that podcast can indeed enhance the students' listening skills and add to their understanding of the school curriculum without being a waste of time.

11. Areas for Future Investigation

The following are the areas that future researchers can investigate:

1- Using other forms of questions, such as written questions along with MCQ questions, would be advantageous as it will measure the students' responses to those varied types of questions.
2- Using podcasts as a tool to enhance speaking skills rather than only focusing on listening skills.
3- Using podcasts on a younger group of students, as it will help integrate those basic skills of listening from a young age.
4- Conducting further investigations to assess the obstacles faced if a podcast is utilized in a less fortunate school that is not properly equipped with the appropriate appliances.

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