Exploring the Effects of Using Podcasts on EFL College Students with Low English Proficiency Listening Comprehension

Delgadillo Yazmin* and Illera Clara

Universidad del Cauca, Colombia
Email: yazmindc@unicauca.edu.co (D.Y.); cillera@unicauca.edu.co (I.C.)
*Corresponding author
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***Abstract*—This study delves into the impact of using Podcasts on college students with low English proficiency. The objectives of the study encompass understanding students' attitudes toward Podcasts concerning listening comprehension, evaluating the influence of Podcasts on motivation for listening skills, and comparing pre-test and post-test results. Employing a mixed-method design, quantitative data were gathered through pre-and post-tests as well as a questionnaire, while qualitative data were derived from semi-structured interviews. The findings revealed that a majority of students exhibited improvement in their post-test results, underscoring the effectiveness of Podcasts. The responses from the questionnaire indicated that the students derived high levels of enjoyment and experienced improved skills as a result of Podcast usage. Notably, motivation and vocabulary acquisition also displayed significant gains. The semi-structured interviews further corroborate the positive impact of Podcasts on language acquisition. Podcasts actively engage students through their versatility and stimulating content, fostering positive attitudes, motivation, and enjoyment. Ultimately, this study highlights Podcasts as a valuable tool for enhancing language education, offering autonomy, exposure to authentic materials, and heightened engagement. This study recommends further exploration of Podcasts' efficacy for college students of English by conducting larger-scale studies encompassing diverse proficiency levels and extended timelines. Incorporating student perspectives and insights into future research endeavors will enrich understanding and application. This study contributes to the enhancement of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' listening skills through the integration of Podcast, providing a foundation for future investigations.**

***Keywords*—college students with low English proficiency, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), listening comprehension, language learning benefits, Podcasts**

I. Introduction

Language learning has undergone significant transformations with the integration of innovative technologies, and among these, podcasts have emerged as a powerful medium for both entertainment and education. "Technology has produced prominent contribution on education in this information age. It is well known as edutechnology" [1]. Within the realm of education, podcasts have proven to be invaluable in enhancing language learning experiences, particularly in the development of listening skills for students of English as a foreign language. The potential for enhancing listening skills and competence through the utilization of podcasts cannot be overstated. As Sze [2] suggests, podcasting is a promising technology for improving second language learners' listening and speaking abilities, with the convenience of downloading content to portable devices enabling practice during travel. Furthermore, the creation of podcasts has become increasingly accessible due to user-friendly recording and editing tools, facilitating global reach and student motivation. Crafting podcasts not only encourages meaningful language use, which is valuable for second language acquisition, but also benefits even less confident learners by reducing anxiety related to real-time interaction. Educators can harness this technology imaginatively to effectively enhance students' listening and speaking skills. Podcasting is a new technology that can aid in the development of students' listening and speaking abilities. With a vast array of materials available online, learners have unlimited access to these resources whenever they need them.

There is a wide bibliography of articles related to the use of podcasts in English teaching, and many of them emphasize their significant advantages in the learning process, particularly concerning listening comprehension. Listening comprehension, for a significant percentage of students, proves to be the most challenging language skill due to various factors such as accents, speaking speed, and vocabulary usage, among others. Barrera and Ivalla [3] extensively analyze the use of podcasts as an educational tool for improving listening comprehension in learning English as a Foreign Language. This methodology combines online and mobile learning to reinforce both external and internal listening comprehension. The flexible and self-directed approach allows students to practice listening comprehension based on their individual preferences, emphasizing the importance of students constructing their knowledge from mistakes and experiences. This learner-centered methodology has been shown to improve self-esteem and listening skills, creating a relaxed communicative environment. The positive results suggest that the use of podcasts as an educational resource can be effective and motivating for language learning.

Teachers today are confronted with the daunting task of fostering an engaging atmosphere and incorporating real-world experiences into classroom activities. The integration of technology in language learning is crucial for adapting traditional language instruction methods, as highlighted by Rajval and Devi [4]. In their study, they underscore the vital role of technology in enhancing teaching methods and students' learning approaches in the 21st century, particularly concerning English listening and speaking skills. This study emphasizes the effectiveness of podcasts in creating engaging classroom activities that motivate students

to actively participate in language practice. Podcasts empower students to extract specific information and collaborate in groups to discuss solutions related to the challenges posed by podcast speakers. This approach not only enriches students' knowledge with diverse topics but also equips teachers to adeptly integrate technology into their instruction. To harness the potential of technology for enhancing academic performance, teachers should engage in continuous professional development to effectively incorporate tools like podcasts, thereby contributing to broader educational objectives.

Listening, often considered the most challenging language skill to acquire, should not be underestimated in its significance within language learning. Active listening allows us to absorb linguistic information that forms the foundation for our language production abilities. Despite the repeated emphasis on the importance of listening comprehension in language education, many English language learners still fail to accord it the attention it warrants within their classrooms. This is where the utilization of podcasts can play a pivotal role in enhancing listening skills and overall language proficiency. Nisa *et al*. [5] discuss in their article the use of podcasts for enhancing students' listening comprehension in English Language Teaching in Indonesia, highlighting its effectiveness as a pedagogical tool. The study sheds light on the benefits of incorporating podcasts into language learning, providing valuable insights into how this medium can contribute to improved listening skills among students.

No prior research has been conducted at the university where this study took place regarding the use of podcasts with students to discover its effects on the listening comprehension of college students with low English proficiency. Consequently, the decision was made to introduce podcasts into English classes with students with low English proficiency, to gauge their attitudes, motivation, and outcomes concerning listening comprehension skills, both within and outside the classroom.

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach to investigate the impact of podcasts on students' listening comprehension in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. The results indicate that podcasts exert a significantly positive influence on listening skills and vocabulary acquisition, ultimately contributing to enhanced language proficiency. The students' positive feedback along with their favorable attitudes towards podcast-based learning underscores the pivotal role of podcasts in language curricula. As language educators explore new technologies, it is imperative to consider the individual preferences and needs of learners to effectively integrate podcasts as a pedagogical tool.

II. Literature Review

A. Podcast

A podcast, as defined by the Oxford Dictionary, is an audio file that can be downloaded to a computer or portable media player or streamed online. Although the term "podcasting" was first coined in 2004, the medium itself has been in existence since 2000. In contemporary times, podcasts have gained immense popularity as a form of audio entertainment. Furthermore, the field of education has warmly embraced the use of media to facilitate knowledge acquisition. What sets podcasts apart is their unique capacity to offer accessibility at any time and from any location, thereby introducing a crucial element of flexibility into the learning process. As a result, learning is no longer constrained by temporal or geographical limitations [6]. One significant advantage of integrating podcasts into education centers around the accessibility of content. Evans [7] highlights that modern lifestyles impose a demand on students to engage in their studies at any given moment, regardless of their physical whereabouts. Hence, students require portable technology that affords them easy access to learning materials.

Educational podcasting has garnered widespread popularity among educators worldwide, as articulated by Mikat *et al*. [8] "Podcasts are versatile, reusable, interesting, and stimulating to the new generation of technology-savvy students." This technological tool furnishes the learning process with a multitude of advantages, facilitating students' interaction with the materials they are studying or will explore in the classroom.

B. Listening Skill

The listening process is inherently a two-way interaction, involving one individual who produces language and another who receives it. Consequently, listening is rightly categorized as a receptive skill. Within the realm of foreign language teaching and learning, listening holds a pivotal position as it plays a vital role in oral communication. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, the practice of listening assumes significant importance. This is especially true for learners who do not reside in a native English-speaking environment, as they may have limited opportunities to hone their listening skills through interactions with native speakers. Such interactions are widely recognized as a valuable resource for enhancing listening skills [9]. Consequently, language educators are perpetually exploring diverse methods to assist students in practicing this skill and thereby enhancing their proficiency in communicating in a foreign language.

The domain of listening skills encompasses a broad spectrum of activities, each designed to encourage students to engage with the skill and diversify their approaches to training their listening abilities. Within this range of listening activities, various types can be identified, including intensive, responsive, selective, extensive, casual attention, comprehension, critical, deep, discriminative, empathetic, evaluating, and more [10].

According to Vishwanath [11], the process of listening can be delineated into five stages: receiving (hearing), understanding (learning), remembering (recalling), evaluating (judging), and responding (answering). This perspective underscores that listening encompasses not just the act of hearing but also incorporates other crucial aspects that educators need to consider during the teaching process.

Furthermore, the realm of listening skills also encompasses strategies that can aid students in approaching the listening process more effectively. One way in which students can develop improved listening habits is through the employment of listening strategies in their listening practices [12]. These

strategies empower students to engage with the listening process in a more structured and purposeful manner, ultimately leading to enhanced listening.

C. Podcast in Language Learning

The integration of technology in the classroom has evolved into a fundamental component across various fields of study, and language teaching and learning are no exceptions to this trend. In recent years, language educators have increasingly incorporated a range of technological tools into their teaching practices to enhance students' language acquisition. Among these specialized tools, podcasts have emerged as one of the most widely utilized resources for developing listening skills. The utilization of podcasts represents a highly effective approach to fostering students' ability to engage in meaningful listening experiences, exposing them to a diverse array of language learning opportunities. Rosell-Aguilar [13] contends that podcasts align seamlessly with constructivist learning methodologies, underscoring the significance of active exploration, observation, processing, and interpretation in the development of knowledge.

One of the primary advantages of podcasts lies in their capacity to offer language learners direct exposure to natural language and authentic materials [14]. A notable study conducted by Abdulrahman et al. in 2018, focusing on students in Indonesia, sought to investigate the impact of podcasts on students' listening comprehension within EFL classrooms. The findings of the study demonstrated a substantial positive effect on students, highlighting podcasts as a remarkable medium for enhancing their learning abilities and motivation.

D. Attitudes toward Language Learning

According to Richards and Schmidt [15], attitudes encompass individuals' feelings, both positive and negative, toward a language. These emotions are linked to perceptions of the language's difficulty or simplicity, its societal significance, and even extend to how one regards those who speak the language. It is noted that language attitudes can significantly impact the process of acquiring a second or foreign language. The identification of language attitudes holds valuable insights for the realm of language teaching and learning. Hogg and Vaughan [16] contribute to this understanding by defining attitude as a lasting configuration of beliefs, emotions, and actions directed towards critical social objects, groups, events, or symbols. Mathewson [17] further elaborates on attitudes, proposing three key components: affective, cognitive, and behavioral. The affective component pertains to an individual's emotional disposition towards the attitude object, while the cognitive component encompasses a person's thoughts and beliefs about the attitude object, which could be a person, idea, or situation. The third facet of attitude involves a behavioral response, where one's attitude influences their actions in specific situations.

The acquisition of a foreign language can evoke various attitudes toward it, serving as a reflection of the social context in which learners are immersed. These attitudes, as noted by Ellis [18], have a direct impact on the process of learning a second language (L2). Researchers such as [19, 20] have underscored the pivotal role of attitudes toward the target language in motivating learners. Gardner [20] posits that learners with positive attitudes toward the target language tend to experience a more favorable and productive learning journey. Consequently, recognizing students' attitudes towards the foreign language they are learning holds paramount importance, as it equips them with alternative approaches to fulfill their language-learning needs. Attitudes are integral to the learning process, as emphasized by Reid [21], and have a direct influence on language performance, as suggested by Visser [22]. In essence, success in mastering the target language hinges not only on intellectual capacity but also on learners' attitudes towards language acquisition. Therefore, it is imperative to approach language learning primarily as a social and psychological phenomenon, transcending the confines of pure academia.

E. Motivation in EFL

Motivation in an EFL classroom encompasses the driving force that not only kindles but also sustains learners' interest, engagement, and enthusiasm for acquiring the English language as a foreign entity. It emerges as a pivotal determinant of the level of achievement students will attain throughout their language learning voyage.

Foreign language acquisition, contrary to being a mere accumulation of facts, represents a skill honed through practice. Maintaining motivation and fostering extended practice beyond the confines of the classroom emerge as paramount considerations [23].

The dynamics of motivation in an EFL classroom are multifaceted. Jeremy [24] discerns two primary categories: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation underscores learners' inherent desire to engage with the language, driven by personal interests or objectives. In contrast, extrinsic motivation hinges on external stimuli, such as rewards or grades, which serve as catalysts propelling learners towards language acquisition. The interplay of motivation in an EFL classroom is influenced by an array of factors. These encompass the teaching style employed by the instructor, the learning environment, the applicability of language content to students' lives and interests, the degree of challenge posed by the linguistic material, and the level of support and encouragement extended by both peers and teachers.

It is incumbent upon educators and teachers to cultivate a nurturing learning environment that not only fosters but also sustains learners' motivation. This can be achieved through the provision of engaging and pertinent language content, the cultivation of a sense of community within the classroom, the consistent delivery of constructive feedback and encouragement, the application of positive reinforcement techniques, and the incorporation of diverse teaching strategies and methodologies that cater to the varied learning styles of students.

In summary, motivation stands as an indispensable factor within an EFL classroom, wielding considerable influence over the level of success learners will attain in their journey of language acquisition. Consequently, educators and teachers bear the responsibility of comprehending the factors that underpin motivation and implementing strategies aimed at

nurturing and sustaining learners' motivation throughout their language learning odyssey.

III. Method

This study employed a mixed-method design, which encompassed the collection of quantitative data through pre-tests and post-tests, as well as the administration of a questionnaire. Additionally, qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews. The choice of this mixed-method approach aligns with the insights of [25] who assert that researchers often grapple with questions that cannot be adequately addressed through a single method alone. To comprehensively explore both the macro and micro aspects of a research issue, it becomes imperative to employ multiple methods. In this context, mixed methods offer a more holistic perspective on the subject under investigation, as these approaches complement one another. While quantitative research may not directly capture the voices of participants, qualitative research can bridge this gap. Conversely, qualitative research, while providing rich insights, may sometimes fall short in terms of generalizability to larger populations. Consequently, the strengths of one approach can offset the limitations of the other and vice versa [26].

The utilization of pre-test and post-test methods in this study proved essential due to the impracticality of random participant assignment. This quasi-experimental design was selected to establish a causal relationship between the intervention implemented by educators and the subsequent evaluation process. Such an approach aligns with the insights of [27] emphasizing its utility in gauging the effectiveness of educational interventions administered prior to the evaluation phase.

A. Participants

The participants consisted of a group of 50 English Level 1 students enrolled in an English program at a university. These students belonged to various undergraduate programs. It's important to note that these courses were offered free of charge and were not mandatory within their respective curricula. Instead, they served as an optional training opportunity for students looking to enhance their English language proficiency. The authors were responsible for overseeing four groups during the second semester of 2022.

B. Data Collection Instruments

The data collection process involved the utilization of several tools, including a pre-test, a post-test, a questionnaire, and in-depth interviews. These instruments collectively provided a comprehensive dataset, enabling a thorough examination of the impact of using podcasts on students' listening comprehension. Below, we provide a brief overview of each instrument employed in the study.

C. Pre-test / Post-test

The primary feature of the pre-test and post-test design entails obtaining a preliminary measure of the targeted outcome before implementing any treatment, followed by a subsequent assessment using the same measure after the treatment has been administered [28]. The purpose of the pre-test was to gauge students' listening comprehension abilities. This pre-test was conducted to evaluate the listening comprehension levels of the participants and was administered during class time, lasting approximately 15 minutes.

The assessment format varied depending on the course delivery method. For face-to-face classes, a paper-based test was administered, while synchronous courses utilized a computer-based format. The assessment materials, both for the pre-test and post-test, were sourced from the Ministry of National Education of Colombia (MEN) website, which offers a free toolkit for teachers to assess students across various language skills in alignment with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). To evaluate students' listening skills, we employed the English Paper Listening Test A1 as the pre-test and the Listening Test A2 as the post-test. These assessments were conducted both before and after the incorporation of podcasts into the curriculum, encompassing in-class and independent study sessions. The Listening Tests encompassed four sections: Section 1: Students were presented with images and instructed to listen and assign them numbers in the order of mention. A multiple-choice component required them to identify crucial information in a conversation or monologue and select the correct corresponding image; Section 2: Students were given sentences to read, followed by listening to audio content to identify the correct response from two options. They were also tasked with associating one or more simple conversations with their main messages; Section 3: Students read sentences, then listened to audio material, filling in gaps with provided words. This section involved listening to a monologue and completing transcripts; Section 4: Students examined a table and, upon listening, placed phrases from a given set in the correct locations. This section required listening to recordings to comprehend detailed information and character opinions.

Regarding the validity of the assessment, it was administered to a group of students with similar characteristics who did not participate in the initial investigation. This step aimed to evaluate the instrument's effectiveness and necessitate any required adjustments. The post-test was conducted at the conclusion of the academic term following engagement with podcast materials in the classroom throughout the semester. It aimed to assess students' listening comprehension after their exposure to podcasts in both classroom and independent study settings, measuring the impact of podcast utilization on their listening abilities.

D. Questionnaire

The questionnaire utilized in this study employs a Likert Scale to assess students' attitudes and motivation toward the use of podcasts as a learning strategy for listening comprehension. It was administered to all participating students at the conclusion of the course. As noted by Luna [29], the Likert-type scale is a valuable quantitative data collection tool employed in research. It constitutes an additive scale that corresponds to an ordinal level of measurement, comprising a series of statements or judgments to which respondents are asked to react. Each statement or judgment

presented to the respondents represents the specific attribute the researcher seeks to measure. Respondents are instructed to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with these statements using a range of response options. The most commonly employed scale features five response categories, with each category assigned a numerical value. The cumulative scores of all items yield a final score, indicating the respondent's position on the scale. The questionnaire comprises a total of ten questions.

E. Semi-structured Interview

According to Cross and. Galletta [30] the semi-structured interview offers a versatile approach with well-defined structure to explore specific topics of interest while allowing participants to provide additional insights on the subject under investigation. It can be employed as the sole data collection method or in conjunction with other data-gathering techniques. In the context of this study, the semi-structured interview was employed to delve deeper into the insights and perspectives shared by students regarding their experience with podcasts in their English language learning journey. This method aids researchers in gathering data that can be compared with findings from the other two selected methods. Magaldi and Berler [31] describe this type of interview as exploratory, providing a general framework while affording flexibility to probe further. The semi-structured interview possesses several key characteristics, as outlined by Mason [32]. Firstly, it fosters a dialogue between participants, encouraging interaction. Secondly, it maintains an informal atmosphere, facilitating a fluid exchange of information. Thirdly, this type of interview goes beyond mere reporting; it allows for the reconstruction of knowledge. The semi-structured interview was conducted at the conclusion of the course, following the administration of the questionnaire, with a randomly selected group of ten students. Its purpose was to delve deeper into their opinions and insights regarding their experiences with podcasts in their English language learning. The interview comprised seven questions.

F. Procedures and Data Analysis

To acquire the necessary information regarding the initial level of listening comprehension among students at the commencement of their Level One course, a pre-test was administered. Following the administration of the pre-test, the groups embarked on their podcast-based coursework. Podcast materials were carefully selected for both in-class and at-home use. Prior to making our selection, an extensive review of online options was conducted. Ultimately, a decision was made to invest in access to podcasts designed for English learners of all proficiency levels, ensuring alignment with the course topics. The website chosen for this purpose was https://www.podcastsinenglish.com/. Specifically, podcasts suitable for beginners and Level 1 students were selected.

A thorough review and organization of the material allowed us to designate certain podcasts for in-class use and others as homework assignments. The accompanying worksheets included pre-listening, during-listening, and post-listening activities. Some podcasts also featured related videos.

It is important to note that the podcast material was intended to complement the course book. Each week, students were tasked with listening to two podcasts. One of these podcasts was utilized during class, involving pre-listening, during-listening, and post-listening activities. The second podcast, assigned as homework, was submitted for review. It is worth mentioning that student performance on the podcast assignments did not contribute to their overall course grades.

The quantitative data obtained from the initial questionnaire and the survey was subjected to analysis using descriptive statistics and relevant frequency analysis. Additionally, the qualitative data gathered through in-depth interviews was analyzed in accordance with the three analytical strategies outlined by Creswell [33]: initial organization and preparation of the data, subsequent reduction into thematic categories through a coding process, and finally, presentation in the form of figures, tables, charts, or discussions. A meticulous examination and refinement of codes facilitated the identification of broader categories and subcategories, greatly enhancing our understanding of the impact of podcasting on students' learning experiences.

IV. Results

A. Findings from the Pre-test and Post-test

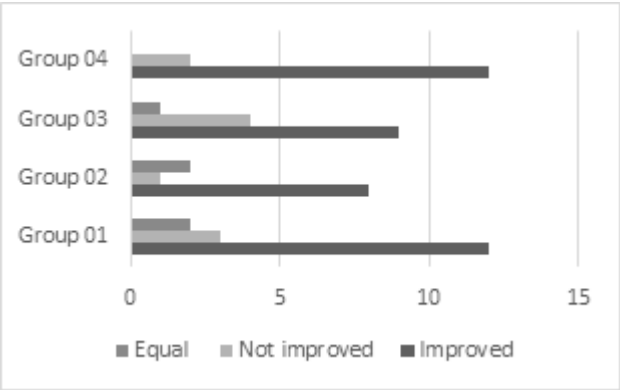

Fig. 1. Findings from the pre-test and post-test.

In both the pre-test and post-test, each assessment consisted of 25 questions, which were thoughtfully categorized into four distinct sections. Section 1 consisted of five multiple-choice questions strategically designed to assess the ability to extract essential information from conversations or monologues, and subsequently, to select the appropriate corresponding images that best represented the content. Section 2 featured five matching questions, each serving as a valuable tool for assessing the aptitude in listening comprehension. The main objective here was to evaluate the listener's ability to discern the main messages embedded within one or more straightforward conversations in each question. Section 3 included five completion questions, intentionally crafted to evaluate the skill in listening to monologues and accurately completing the accompanying transcripts. Section 4, the most extensive section, consisted of ten questions that combined both, multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank formats. This comprehensive segment was meticulously designed to appraise listening skills by focusing on the comprehension of detailed information and character

opinions presented in audio recordings.

The pre-test and post-test, as can be seen in Fig. 1, were administered to four groups and yielded results from 50 students, revealing that 74% of students demonstrated improvement in the post-test, 18% did not show improvement, and only 8% achieved the same results.

B. Findings from the Questionnaire

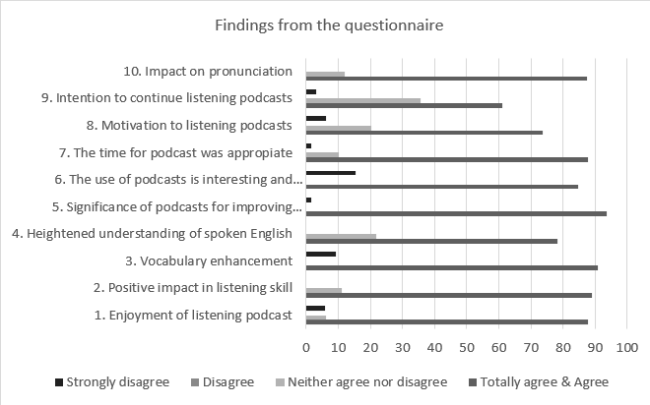

Fig. 2. Findings from the questionnaire.

When students were asked to provide their feedback on the use of podcasts in their English class, the responses between the "Strongly agree" and "Agree" options revealed several noteworthy findings: As Fig. 2 shows, the majority, 87.7%, expressed genuine enjoyment in listening to the English podcasts incorporated into the course. An overwhelming 89% of the students believed that the utilization of podcasts positively impacted their listening skills. Regarding vocabulary enhancement, a substantial 90.85% confirmed that their vocabulary had indeed improved as a result of incorporating podcasts into their English class. Furthermore, 78.3% of students reported a heightened understanding of spoken English, while only 21.7% maintained a neutral stance on this aspect. When it came to the significance of podcasts for improving listening skills, an impressive 93.6% of students deemed them essential. A substantial 84.7% of respondents found the use of podcasts to be both interesting and motivating for their learning journey. Equally notable, 87.65% of students believed that the time allocated for working with podcasts, both inside and outside the classroom, was appropriate, with only 12.35% expressing neutrality on the matter. In terms of motivation, 73.55% of students reported feeling inspired to listen to English podcasts, while 20.3% remained neutral in their response. Furthermore, 61.15% expressed their intention to continue listening to English podcasts independently, although 35.7% remained undecided. Lastly, in assessing the impact on pronunciation, a significant 87.6% either strongly agreed or agreed that using podcasts had contributed to the improvement of their pronunciation, with only 12.1% taking a neutral stance. In sum, the results gleaned from this survey underscore the students' collective recognition of podcasts as a valuable and motivating tool for enhancing their listening skills in the English language.

C. Findings from the Semi-structured Interview

The seven questions posed during the semi-structured interview (refer to Appendix), along with the corresponding responses, were categorized to gain deeper insights into students' experiences with podcasts in the course. These categories encompassed aspects such as language skill improvement, time allocation for podcast work, interests and motivation related to podcasts, satisfaction with podcast usage, motivation to continue independent podcast listening, and suggestions for enhancing podcast-related activities. The information gleaned from this instrument underscores the students' overwhelmingly positive reception of podcasts in the course, highlighting their positive impact on the acquisition of the English language.

V. Discussion

In this section, we undertake a comprehensive analysis of the findings previously presented and contextualize them within the broader landscape of language acquisition, podcasts, listening proficiency, attitudes, motivation, and their intricate interrelationships, drawing upon existing scholarly research.

This study sought to investigate the impact of podcast utilization on the listening comprehension of elementary-level students studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL), guided by the central inquiry: What is the influence of podcasts on the listening comprehension of EFL students?

The results gleaned from the pre-test and post-test data consistently align with the established corpus of research in this domain. The integration of podcasts into the EFL classroom has demonstrated its efficacy in significantly augmenting students' listening skills and facilitating vocabulary acquisition. These findings substantiate prior research, such as the work of [34], which underscores the pivotal role of podcasts in enhancing listening proficiency and overall linguistic competence. Additionally, Rosell-Aguilar [35] suggests that podcasts align with constructivist pedagogical methodologies, underscoring the significance of active exploration and interpretation in knowledge development, a phenomenon congruent with the observed lexical enrichment.

The affirmative responses derived from the administered questionnaire not only encapsulate students' disposition towards podcast-based learning but also resonate with sentiments articulated in earlier academic discourse. An impressive 87.7% of students expressed genuine enthusiasm while engaging with English podcasts during the course, mirroring the findings of [36], who identified podcasts as a motivational medium for students. Moreover, the revelation that a substantial majority (89%) acknowledged the pronounced enhancement of their listening aptitude through podcasts mirrors the empirical observations of [37], thus affirming the instrumental role of podcasts in fostering language skill development.

Motivation, a pivotal factor in the context of language acquisition, finds vivid manifestation in the survey responses. The heightened motivation reported by 73.55% of students when engaging with English podcasts corresponds with the research of Dornyei [38], which posits that learners harboring positive attitudes towards the target language are predisposed to a more favorable learning trajectory. Furthermore, the

expressed intent of 61.15% to continue independent engagement with English podcasts aligns with [39] assertion that sustaining motivation and encouraging prolonged autonomous practice outside the classroom are seminal factors in the realm of foreign language acquisition.

This research not only substantiates the potential of podcasts in enhancing listening skills, expanding lexicon, shaping attitudes, and fostering motivation within EFL classrooms but also engenders profound contemplation regarding their pedagogical implications. Language educators ought to view podcasts not as mere supplementary tools but rather as transformative agents capable of reshaping established paradigms in language instruction. Podcasts offer a dynamic platform that authentically mirrors real-world language usage, providing students with an invaluable conduit to authentic linguistic contexts.

This research illumines the potential of podcasts in ameliorating listening skills, lexicon, attitudes, and motivation within the EFL classroom. The overwhelmingly positive feedback from students underscores the paramount importance of considering podcasts as a valuable adjunct to language curricula. As the landscape of language acquisition continues to evolve in tandem with technological advancements, educators must adapt and harness innovative tools like podcasts to cater to the diverse needs and preferences of individual learners.

VI. Conclusion

Our study has unveiled a range of compelling findings that shed light on the impact of podcast integration in education. These findings encompass various aspects, such as enhanced student engagement, improved listening skills, and heightened motivation. Throughout our investigation, we have remained closely tethered to our central research question: What is the influence of podcasts on the listening comprehension of EFL students? Our results directly address this inquiry by highlighting the transformative effects of podcast utilization on language education.

The practical implications of our study are abundant. Educators and decision-makers in the field of English language education can draw upon our findings to enrich classroom practices. The versatility and reusability of podcasts, as revealed in our research, make them a valuable tool for fostering active learning and improving language acquisition. We also provide specific recommendations for integrating podcasts effectively into language curricula.

Our research has theoretical implications as well. By showcasing the efficacy of podcast-based learning, we contribute to the ongoing discourse in English language teaching theory. Our findings introduce new perspectives on the role of technology in language education and underscore the importance of aligning pedagogical practices with evolving technological landscapes.

As we conclude this study, it is worth reflecting on the significance of our research journey. We have not only expanded our understanding of effective language education methods but have also witnessed the transformative potential of technology, such as podcasts, in the learning process. This research has reaffirmed the importance of adaptability and innovation in language education and has deepened our appreciation for the dynamic interplay between technology and pedagogy.

In summation, our study offers a comprehensive exploration of podcast integration in English language teaching. We have recapitulated our findings, related them to our research question, discussed their practical and theoretical implications, acknowledged study limitations, suggested future research directions, and closed with a reflective note on the journey. Our hope is that these findings will inform and inspire educators, researchers, and policymakers in their ongoing efforts to enhance the English language learning experience.

This study aims to enhance the listening skills of EFL learners in a higher education institution in Colombia through the exploration of podcasts. It offers valuable insights into the benefits of adopting this approach. It is essential to acknowledge the limitations of our research. While our study offers valuable insights, it is not without its constraints. These include the specific demographics of our study participants, the duration of the study, and the need for further investigation into the long-term impact of podcast integration. To further investigate this topic, conducting a similar study with a larger sample size, encompassing both elementary and intermediate students, would be advantageous. This could help ascertain if the results remain consistent across various levels of English proficiency. Additionally, future research should explore the use of podcasts over an extended duration, taking into account the perspectives of both students and teachers. This broader perspective would enable the collection of more diverse opinions and perceptions, enriching the understanding of the impact of podcasts in language education. Building on our findings and recognizing the need for continued exploration, we suggest several promising avenues for future research. These areas include deeper investigations into individualized learning experiences, the integration of podcasts across different language proficiency levels, and the assessment of the long-term effects of podcast-based language instruction.

Appendix

Table A: Seven Questions from the Semi-structured Interview

Number	Question
1	Do you consider that the use of Podcasts in class helped your English language learning? Please explain.
2	Do you think that the use of Podcasts helps to develop listening skills? Please explain.
3	Does the use of podcasts help improve other learning skills besides listening? Please explain.
4	Do you think that the time to work on podcasts and the number of podcasts worked in the classes was appropriate? Please explain.
5	Did you find the podcasts interesting and/or motivating in your English language learning? Please explain.
6	Would you continue listening to Podcasts in English on your own? Please explain.
7	What suggestions, if any, do you have for improving the use of Podcasts in the English course? Please explain.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Both authors, YD and CI conducted the research and analyzed the data; both wrote the paper, proofread, and converted the paper into the template; all authors had approved the final version.

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