



PODCASTS EFFICACY TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' LISTENING SKILLS.

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Abstract: Listening is one of the major skills that students should develop in order to acquire the language and initially, it might be one of the most challenging tasks for a language learner. This article aims to study the benefits of listening to Podcasts in improving students' listening skills and perception of a foreign language. Qualitative method included surveys, interview questions and piloting of BBC learning English podcast for 4 weeks. The finding of the research reveal that listening skills were highly improved through Podcasts. By listening to the podcasts, students not only mastered their listening ability but also improved their pronunciation and vocabulary.

Key words: listening, podcast, BBC learning English, Google Podcast, Spotify, Hamouda (2013)

Introduction

Listening is one of the major abilities that a learner acquires from the first days of his/her life. Many students have developed their listening skills to a high degree by now. Due to the hard work students could improve their listen. However, some pupils have poor listening skills which the absence of independent study. Also, health problems many have a detrimental impact on kids, hearing loss thus their listening. The next reason is stress or worry that can make listening difficult for might be poor to focus on the recording. Chronic exhaustion and sleep deprivation may add inhibit their listening skills. For many Uzbek teenagers in listening is the easiest skill to acquire since it's receptive skill. With the use of resources like audiobooks music and podcasts students can enhances their hearing. According to Cifci that One of the two methods of perceiving formal language is through listening which is a professional and goal oriented method of performing hearing (Cifci, 2001, p.68).

Rost stated that English as a foreign language EFL is acquired primarily through the reception of understandable inputs and listening capacity is a significant constituent in achieving understandable language input. Listening has an important role in language classrooms because in provides input for listeners. (Rost, 1994). Thus, Derrington and Groom(2004) distinguished several types of listening, namely: informative, appreciative when the learner perceives the information due to his manner and enjoys it; critical which means the deduction, analyzing the information thoroughly, discriminative when the listener determines emotions and conclusions due to the listener determines





emotions and conclusions due to the voice tone and empathic which presumes the nonverbal behavior of the listener that pays attention to what is said. The abovementioned listening types.

In a similar vein, listening comprehension is the conventional method of understanding the nature of hearing, according to Richards (2008:3). In fact, listening and reading comprehension are used interchangeably in the majority of technique books. According to Nation and Newton (2009:38), listening is a method of language acquisition that provides learners with the information they need to acquire the knowledge required to use the language. Thus, the skill of listening is the ability to listen to someone else properly.

According to Hamouda (2013), EFL learners have crucial problems in listening comprehension because universities pay attention to grammar, reading and vocabulary. Listening and speaking skills are not significant parts of many books and teachers do not consider these skills in their classes.

Literature review

A listening podcast is defined as a collection of audio segments that are often accessible via streaming services such as Google Podcasts, Apple Podcasts, or Spotify. Every episode discusses a particular subject, frequently with a host or group of hosts facilitating the discussion.

Accessibility: Because podcasts are on-demand, listeners can do so at any time and from any location. Because they may be listened to while driving, working out, or even just unwinding, they can be a great tool for folks with hectic schedules or who prefer multitasking. **Formats for Podcast Listening** One of the most popular forms is interview-based, in which presenters speak with celebrities, subject matter experts, or people with distinctive backgrounds. These offer a variety of viewpoints, which makes them insightful.

Narrative or Storytelling: These podcasts use excellent production values, sound effects, and occasionally voice acting to tell stories, whether they are fictional or true to life. Podcasts about genuine crime or tragedies in fiction are two examples. **Educational:** A lot of podcasts concentrate on imparting knowledge in areas like science, history, language, and personal growth. They are set up to present teachings in an understandable manner.

News and Current Events: As an alternative to typical news sources, these podcasts offer summaries and assessments of recent events. **Conversational Chat:** Informal, unplanned discussions about common subjects, fashions, or cultural happenings between hosts. **What Makes Podcast Listening Beneficial?**





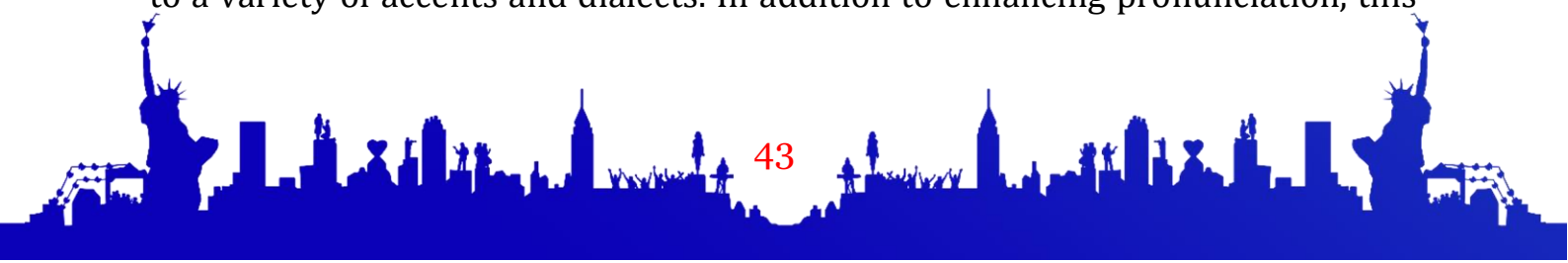
For Language Learning: Podcasts are a great way to practice your language skills. Learners can enhance their vocabulary, pronunciation, and comprehension of idioms and slang by listening to native speakers.

Enhancing Focus and Understanding: Listening to podcasts on a regular basis improves listening skills by teaching you to concentrate on spoken information without the aid of visual clues. Convenient and Adaptable: People may learn or keep informed while on the road thanks to podcasts, which are available whenever they choose. Free or Low-Cost Access: Since the majority of podcasts are free, they provide an inexpensive means of gaining access to a variety of information and viewpoints.

Advantages for Various Audiences for Students: With professionals breaking down difficult subjects into easily understood language, podcasts provide an avenue for students to learn about subjects outside of the classroom. They can be used as study tools as well. For Professionals: Podcasts tailored to a particular industry offer perspectives on contemporary trends and professional growth. For Casual Listeners: They provide entertainment for all interests, ranging from humor and fantasy to science and history. To Begin Listening to Podcasts we should select a Platform: Audible, Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, and Spotify are a few well-known examples.

Investigate students' Interests: The majority of networks offer curated lists or categories. Start with well-liked or easy-to-follow episodes: Try "Best of" episodes or ones with high ratings to get a sense of the format. Podcast Listening and Listening Techniques Frequent podcast listening can significantly improve critical listening abilities, which is particularly beneficial for non-native English speakers. Understanding tone, identifying important details, identifying various accents, and following talks of various complexity are some examples of these abilities.

According to research, students can improve their listening skills by using podcasts, which provide an engaging substitute for more conventional listening exercises. Richard Vandergrift, a linguistics expert, for instance, notes that podcasts help students learn how to actively listen. In addition to learning new idioms and pronunciation patterns, students can make language learning more exciting and personalized by choosing podcast subjects that align with their interests. Kristin Millers, a language education expert, also emphasizes how podcasts help students better understand linguistic variances by exposing them to a variety of accents and dialects. In addition to enhancing pronunciation, this





experience helps students understand tone and context, which better prepares them for discussions in the real world.

Furthermore, listening to podcasts exposes kids to a variety of accents and dialects, which improves their comprehension of linguistic variances, according to language teaching expert Kristin Millers. Students have a better understanding of tone and context in addition to improving their pronunciation, which better equips them for conversations in the real world. Alan Garrison, a specialist in journalism and mass communication, notes that listening to podcasts on a daily basis can help develop organizational and critical thinking abilities. Students' comprehension of spoken information and capacity to formulate their own answers are strengthened by this practice. All things considered, podcasts assist students in developing their listening comprehension, contextual awareness, and analytical abilities in addition to language acquisition, which helps them communicate more effectively in everyday situations. Furthermore, listening to podcasts exposes kids to a variety of accents and dialects, which improves their comprehension of linguistic variances, according to language teaching expert Kristin Millers. Students have a better understanding of tone and context in addition to improving their pronunciation, which better equips them for conversations in the real world. Alan Garrison, a specialist in journalism and mass communication, notes that listening to podcasts on a daily basis can help develop organizational and critical thinking abilities. Students' comprehension of spoken information and capacity to formulate their own answers are strengthened by this practice. All things considered, podcasts assist students in developing their listening comprehension, contextual awareness, and analytical abilities in addition to language acquisition, which helps them communicate more effectively in everyday situations.

Aim

The goal of the study is "Listening Podcasts for Students" is to investigate how podcasts can be an effective instrument for improving students' general language proficiency and listening comprehension. Podcasts provide students a versatile and captivating educational tool in a world where digital media is becoming more and more accessible. Understanding the particular advantages that podcasts provide-such as exposure to a variety of dialects, language, and cultural contexts-is the aim of this study. It also discusses how podcasts promote self-directed learning, going beyond conventional classroom techniques to let students advance their critical thinking and understanding skills at their own





speed. In the end, this topic highlights how useful and approachable podcasts are as teaching tools, examining how they might enhance learning and make it more relevant to students' interests.

Research gap

The most painful point in the classroom right now is the listening skill. We made it a problem because student's listening skills are very low. This is a pressing problem at the moment. If we improve this skill in students it helps to improve other skills with Podcast. We think there is a solution in improving listening skills through podcasts. That's why we solved it in the podcast.

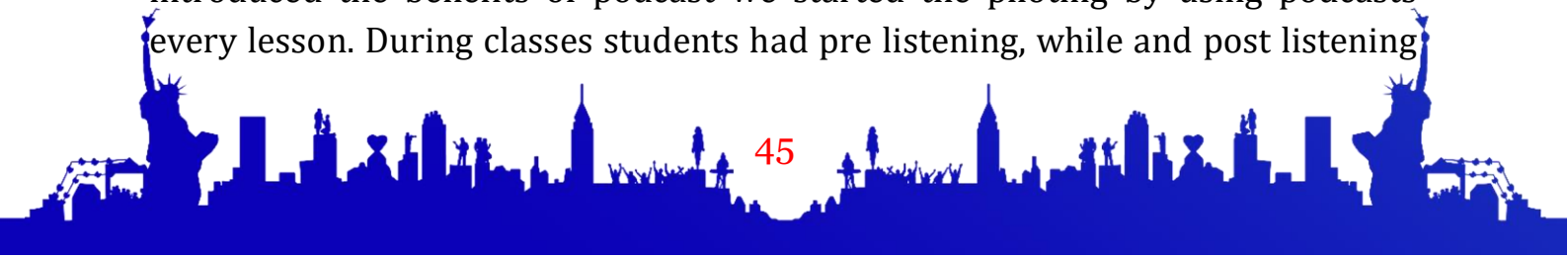
Research questions:

1. How to enhance students' listening skills?
2. How podcasts could be effective to enhance students' listening skills?

Methodology

To identify and gain a thorough grasp of students' listening skills, we employed a qualitative technique in our study. 20 students were chosen randomly to be actively engaged in the action research. They agreed to become a part of the study which will help them improve their listening skills. The initial stage of research was done to gather using structured interviewing and observation techniques. We conducted in-person interviews which was held with sophomore students to learn about their issues and motivations they have when listening to recordings, announcement and movies. Various facets of listening issues were explored in the 15–20 minute interviews. Students responded to the structured interviews may not understand words. Pronunciation, structure, rapid pronunciation, complex phrases, and sentences may not be understood. Also, excessive music or background noise in a podcast can make it difficult to hear and understand.

The second stage was to find out how podcast could enhance their active listening skills. We decided to pilot podcast in English classes in order to improve students listening skills. The decision was made taking into consideration students' interest in watching English movies and cartoons. Senior teachers and students themselves chose that "BBC learning English" would be of a great use to integrate in English lessons. Firstly, we explained the essence of "BBC learning English" podcast to students in the initial steps of the piloting project. The students were given thorough information how to listen to a podcast and how to benefit more by using podcast on a daily basis. Having introduced the benefits of podcast we started the piloting by using podcasts every lesson. During classes students had pre listening, while and post listening





activity which even strengthened the effect of the podcasts in enhancing students' listening skills.

After the piloting was completed the questionnaire was taken from the students on the Google form. Open ended and multiple choice questions were given to the students in order to evaluate how "BBC learning English" podcasts were effective to improve students' listening skills.

Result and discussion

More than 80% of students reported feeling more confident and motivated in their listening skills after incorporating podcasts into their study. The study's findings demonstrate how beneficial podcasts have been for helping students improve their listening abilities. Students gained new vocabulary and an understanding of other dialects by listening to podcasts. Additionally, they reported that they found listening enjoyable and that their trust in the lesson had grown. Students can utilize podcasts at any time and from any location, which is their greatest advantage. However, it can occasionally be difficult to pick the best podcasts for students and develop the habit of listening to them on a regular basis. To use this instrument more efficiently, it is crucial to give appropriate guidance.

Podcast N1: Was the grammar in the podcast understandable?

72.7% of students rated it as understandable. The average understanding was 27.3%. There were no students who did not understand.

Podcast N2: Were the words in the podcast understandable?

54.5% of the students understood the podcast moderately. 45.5% of the students found the podcast understandable. There were no students who did not understand the podcast.

Podcast N3: Was the podcast effective for your listening level?

Students rated it 100% effective.

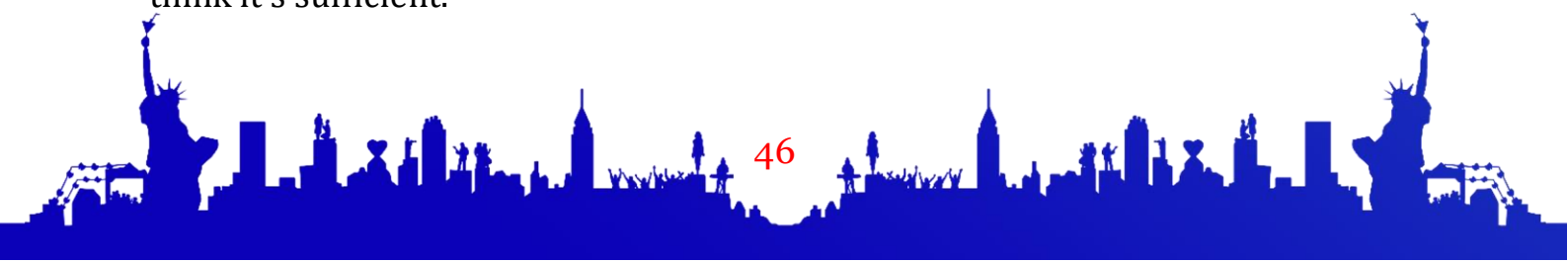
Podcast N4: Can podcasts improve listening? What do you think?

In our open-ended question, the students responded as follows:

1. Yes, you can definitely improve your listening. You can improve your Vocabulary level and Listening level by listening to podcasts. If you listen to podcasts and practice speaking what you understand, your Speaking level will improve.

2. Yes, the podcast has benefits; it improves listening skills.

Yes, I think it can be improved. Yes, in my opinion, it helps a lot. No, I don't think it's sufficient.



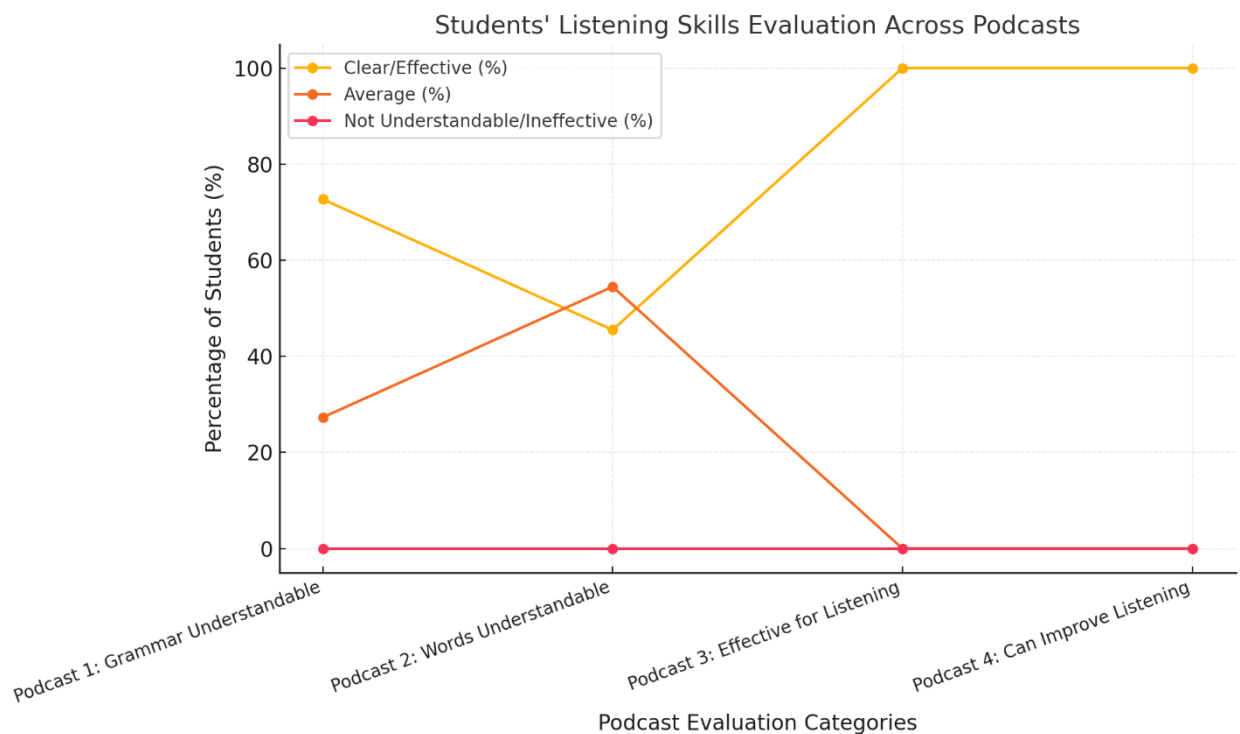


3. I think you can improve your level through podcasts. You can listen to podcasts not only in class, but also on the road, on the bus, on the street. This will help you improve your level.

When asked "Was the podcast effective for your listening level?" 100% of respondents rated it as Effective. This was a strong result.

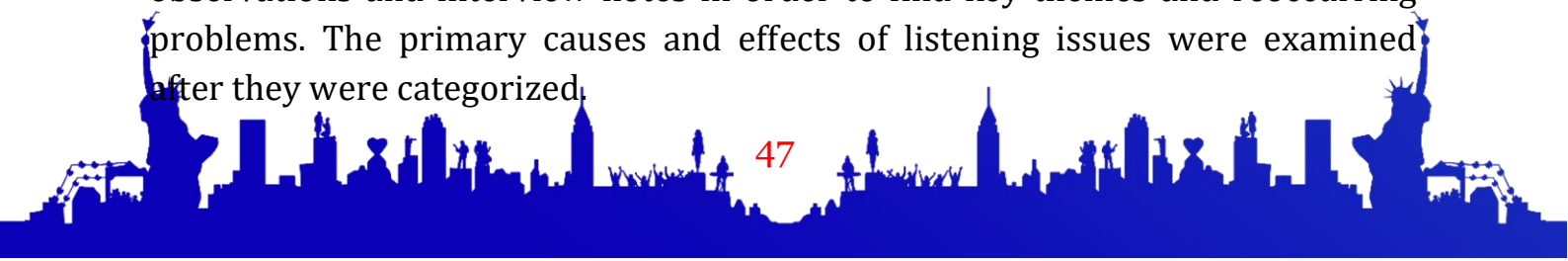
The question "Was the grammar in the podcast understandable?" found that 72.7% were clear and 27.3% were average. This is an average result.

When asked "were the words in the podcast understandable?", 46.5% said they were understandable and 54.5% said they were averagely understandable. This is a low result.



According to the data we can see that podcasts as BBC learning English was of a great help among 69% of students. The positive effect of the podcasts demonstrates how students' listening skills might be improved if podcast could be used for a longer period of time 4 weeks gave such good results. If it had been 1 or 2 semesters, we would have had even better results.

Study limitations: There were certain restrictions on the study. Specifically, the results cannot be extrapolated to all pupils because of the limited sample size. However, it's possible that students were reluctant to discuss their issues candidly during interviews. The study's time constraints also made it more difficult to recruit additional responders. o software was used to code the observations and interview notes in order to find key themes and reoccurring problems. The primary causes and effects of listening issues were examined after they were categorized.





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