



The Effects of Using Podcast on Listening Comprehension among Iranian Pre-intermediate EFL Learners

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Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to explore the effects of using podcast on listening comprehension among Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners. To fulfill the objectives of the study a Homogeneity test (Oxford Quick Placement Test) was administered among 90 students at the pre-intermediate level of Poyesh language Institute and finally 60 participants were selected. Then, they were non-randomly divided into two subgroups, namely control and experimental groups. Before starting the treatment, a validated teacher-made listening comprehension test was administered to students as pre-test to assess the participants' listening comprehension at the beginning of the course. Then, the experimental group received the treatment, which was teaching listening comprehension through using podcasts while the control group was taught using traditional methods of teaching listening with no multimedia source. After 20 sessions of treatment, the two groups were administered the same teacher-made listening test as post-test. Data were analyzed by Paired and Independent Samples t-test. The findings showed that the experimental group significantly performed better than the control group. Generally, the experimental groups outperformed the control groups. The results suggest that podcasts can be used in English classes to develop listening ability among Iranian EFL learners.

Keywords: Computer-assisted Language Learning, Listening Comprehension, Podcast

1. Introduction

1.1 Preliminaries

The verifiable part of English as a worldwide method for correspondence can be the reason that English is obliged as one of the subjects educated at school. The vital part of English is brought up by Diem (2011) who states, "To satisfy the necessities in globalization period, English will assume the vital position on the planet" (p.160). Hence, having English aptitude can be considered as advantageous. For instance, individuals who need to have better openings for work and in addition better possibilities in staying aware of what is new in their field of claim to fame can acquire more credit on the off chance that they can communicate in English.

In addition, the advancement in data and innovation has revolutionized English educating and learning approaches; learners of English can without much of a stretch make utilization of their own electronic gadgets to study English. In instructing and learning English listening aptitudes, podcasts are said to give English learners additional listening practice both inside and outside classrooms. They offer understudies sounds and recordings listening documents with credible and relevant materials, then students' listening understanding capacity can be expanded by time. Particularly, they convey understudies chances to work on listening in a self-coordinated way, and at their own places that implies broad listening exercises outside classroom with fascinating points podcasts which can be downloaded naturally from for nothing out of pocket podcasts sites (Kavaliauskienė & Anusienė, 2009).

Nowadays, In Iran, English has a key part in numerous parts of life, especially in science and innovation, English has been instructed as required subject from junior high school up to the senior high school level. The significance of English, as Ihsan (2011) claims, incorporates the capacity to impart both orally and in composing, Therefore, Ihsan (2011) contends, "individuals need to master all skills of English to be specific tuning in, talking, perusing, a written work" (p.12). Listening as one of the English language skills is the receptive skill which is the most well-known

correspondence action in day by day life. It is a dynamic action that includes accepting, understanding, and seeing a message from a discussion. Morley (1991) calls attention to that listening as one of the language skills is a significant component that should be aided by grown-up outside language learners since, individuals can hope to listen twice as much as they talk, four circumstances more than they read, and five circumstances more than they write. In other words, listening has essential parts in human life as individuals listen more than they talk, read, and compose. The significance of listening in English language learning is additionally highlighted by Richards (1990, 2008) who expresses that language learning relies on tuning in, which gives the aural info that serves as the reason for language procurement and empowers learners to connect in talked correspondence. Listening can likewise give a great part of the info and information that learners get in language learning, since when individuals begin to take in a remote language, their most punctual learning comes essentially through their ears (Scott & Yterberg, 1990). However, listening does not seem to receive as much attention as the other language skills. As indicated by Tompkins and Hoskisson (1995, p. 81), "Among four dialect abilities –listening, talking, perusing, and composing listening has been known as the slighted skill for a couple of decades". Moreover, Persulesy (1988, as cited in Wicaksana, 2009) states, "one reason for the sentiment that listening has a tendency to be dismissed is the inclination among language instructors that this ability is naturally gained by the learners as they figure out how to talk language ". In other words, Most English instructors underestimate it and trust that listening skill will grow normally inside the procedure of English language learning.

Additionally, listening appreciation is a standout amongst the most hazardous aptitudes for dialect learners. Regardless, when it is seen as that an extensive part of the learners have mechanical devices, for instance, MP3 players, PCs, tablets and phones allowing them to listen to the sound reports easily, the issue of listening gives off an impression of being more sensible. There are various courses for upgrading dialect learners' listening capacities with the help of contraptions said above, and the mix of two clear words which are iPod and broadcasting gives lingo learners and teachers with a champion among the most promising techniques for discarding this listening issue: Podcasting. Podcasting is a late development which has started to be used for lingo guideline. Late surveys on informative podcasts have maintained their sufficiency in dialect learning (Ashton-Hay and Brookes, 2011; Hasan & Hoon, 2013; O'Brien & Hegelheimer, 2007).

McGarr (2009) noticed that podcasting alludes to the sharing sound or video records in computerized format. It can be downloaded physically from the web or naturally appropriated to endorsers. These records are open straight from the desktop or transmittable to a media gadget. The term podcasting turned out from the utilization of Apple's compact sound player, the iPod. Additionally, different organizations made a scope of transportable sound and video players in which the term podcasting issued to portray the telecom of all sound or video records over the Internet.

Therefore, in order to develop listening skills and listening competence, *podcast* may assume a critical part. Podcast is viewed as a —new innovation for building up students' listening and talking abilities (SZE, 2006, p. 127). Since it offers a lot of materials on the web, learners can have entry to those at whatever point they need through web. It is true that in Iran, podcast has not yet been extensively executed. However, the effect can be accepted considering its focal points and drawbacks. This review will see if podcasting, can enhance listening abilities of Iranian EFL students.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

As the educational modules of schools and universities basically concentrate on perusing and composing skills, most students depend on — comprehension and writing composition in Iran (Matin, 2012, p. 239). Moreover, educators abstain from listening and talking activities because of extensive class (Chowdhury, 2012) or for insufficient or minimal presence of appropriate materials. Accordingly, listening and speaking skills both get to be distinctly peripheral abilities from Iran setting. The present review tended to this issue and attempted to see if podcast can be utilized as a part of especially improving students' listening abilities. It also addressed the fact that even though technology can help promoting learner autonomy (Warschaur, Shetzer, & Meloni, 2000), whether students will be independent or not. Hence, how podcast can be utilized and how students respond to podcast will appear in this review.

Moreover, many studies show that listening comprehension is the skill with which L2 learners feel most uncomfortable (Artyushina, Sheypak, Khovrin, & Spektor, 2011; Graham, 2006). The use of authentic listening materials may help language learners to manage listening related problems (Chinnery, 2006; Gilmore, 2011). These materials are easily accessible thanks to the recent developments in technology which includes educational podcasting. Podcasting may have a huge potential for improving students' listening skills and making them more comfortable with it (Artyushina, et al., 2011). However, because of the novelty of this technology, the studies on educational podcasting directed at developing listening skills are limited (Fox, 2008; Hasan & Hoon, 2013).

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Podcasting wonder, an inventive innovation for broadcasting sound documents and projects on the Internet has been presented in 2005 and from that point forward there have seemed quick advances (Selingo, 2006). Podcasting which was initially an apparatus for passing on data, news, and stimulation, soon, was identified by instructors who appropriately saw the potential it can have for educating and learning (Adams, 2006). The present review endeavored to see if podcasting can be a valuable system in advancing learner self-rule from Iranian understudies' point of view. It likewise expected to demonstrate the viability of utilizing innovation, i.e. podcast as opposed to utilizing customary technique. In this manner this review appeared to what degree podcasting can be useful in advancing learner independence and in building up understudies' listening abilities.

1.4 Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study attempts to answer the following question:

RQ1. Is there any significant difference between Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners who are users and nonusers of podcasting in terms of listening ability?

This study is based on the following null hypothesis:

H 0 1. There is not any significant difference between Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners who are users and nonusers of podcasting in terms of listening ability.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Podcasting changes the study propensities the same number of understudies no longer attempt to take part in conventional classes, yet they like to connect with the course substance for all intents and purposes (Facer, Abdous, & Camarena, 2009; McCombs & Liu, 2007). By executing podcasting to classroom educational programs, a noteworthy feeling of adaptability is improved as understudies will not miss any point in the event that they dropped any session. Podcasting ought to be incorporated with typical classroom exercises as it is an extraordinary way to deal with advanced does not shared learning styles. In fact podcasting makes preparing more advantageous. In any case, it doesn't imply that it can supplant genuine classes, yet it can go about as a medium to repay the classroom participation. Students can utilize this innovation as a supplement of the genuine classes in which they can allude to the materials whenever they need. Moreover, this study will be an attempt to find out the use of technology in teaching listening in pre-intermediate level. It found out whether podcasting can be used as an effective tool in encouraging learner autonomy. The findings of this research provided information to further research studies, which include CALL and Learner Autonomy in the field of education in Iran. This study also look forward to taking hold of attention of the English language teachers of Iran. It demonstrate to them an alternate way where they can reconsider their conventional methods and incorporate CALL in showing listening skills.

2. Review of the Literature

The utilization of PC and data advancements in dialect learning and educating has prompted to PC helped dialect learning turning into an examination field all alone. Dialect instructors and understudies are turning out to be progressively acquainted with the utilization of PCs for dialect learning purposes.

CALL is a moderately new term that came into support in the mid-1980s, supplanting the more established term CALI (PC helped dialect direction). The term CALI dropped out of support since it got to be connected with customized learning, i.e., an instructor focused as opposed to a learner-focused approach that drew intensely on behaviorism History of CALL (2004).

CALL is essentially characterized as any procedure in which the language learner utilizes the personal computer (PC) keeping in mind the end goal to accomplish certain learning results Beatty (2003). It incorporates such issues like materials plan, innovations, academic speculations and methods of direction. Because of the changing way of CALL, it is viewed as a trained teach, continually creating in both instructional method and mechanical advances in equipment and programming. Beatty (2003) portrays conveyance techniques for CALL as including individual PCs at home or in the classroom, dialect research centers in which PC capacities have been consolidated, online direction through the Internet, and separate and arranged learning using email and different methods of online communication

Davies (2004) characterized CALL as a way to deal with dialect educating and learning in which the PC is utilized as a guide to the presentation, support and appraisal of material to be adapted, for the most part including a generous intelligent components. Also, Philips (1986) included, CALL is an approach of instructing and learning dialect movement helped straightforwardly by a PC. To aggregate up, CALL, when all is said in done, can be characterized as a scholastic field for educating and learning remote dialects in which the PC assumes a focal part in understudies learning and in the assessment of their execution.

Additionally, as Warschauer (2008) put it, CALL has enhanced in the course of recent years. It has experienced three stages: behavioral CALL, informative CALL, and integrative CALL. Each stage identifies with a particular level of development and certain informational theories (Gorjian, Pazhakh, and Parang, 2012). Behavioral CALL which began from 1950s and kept going to 1960s-1970s, depended on overwhelming behaviorists' hypotheses of learning. This stage involved dreary dialect bores and practices. The PC was utilized as a gadget for introducing instructional materials to the understudies. Two critical elements undermined behavioral CALL in the late 1980s. To begin with, behavioral approaches to manage lingo learning had been rejected both at theoretical and informative level. In addition, the presentation of the microcomputer allowed a radical new extent of potential results. Open way to deal with instructing got the opportunity to be particularly no matter how you look at it in the 1980s. Proponents of this approach felt the drills and practices of the earlier decades were not of much esteem and they impeded genuine correspondence.

The integrative phase of CALL was developed based on the integration of language skills like listening and reading. Hypermedia made multimedia powerful and it made authentic learning environment available by listening through seeing. Skills were easily integrated and students by themselves controlled and managed their learning. The primary focus was the content, and language forms were secondary focus. Internet surprisingly boosted writing and reading skills, online speaking and listening. Actually, this phase put all theoretical language teaching principles into practice and integrated meaningful and authentic communication into language learning curriculum. In addition, this combination helped learners to significantly recall a greater number of vocabularies when reading a text.

Besides, CALL has assumed a vital part in customizing instruction. The late advances in instructive uses of PC equipment and programming have given a quickly developing asset to dialect classrooms. The useful uses of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) are developing at such a fast pace, to the point that it is practically unimaginable for a classroom educator to stay aware of the field. This development is very legitimate as far as instructive focal points it offers especially the accessibility of rich assets for both learners and educators and the expanded probability of online cooperation as a hotspot for further learning. As Roger (1996, cited in Lai, 2006) states, when the computer is utilized as a part of conjunction with conventional second dialect classroom examine, understudies can concentrate all the more freely, leaving the instructor more opportunity to focus on those parts of second dialect showing that are still hard or outlandish by PC. Attributable to such academic advantages, PC innovation has turned out to be more available to both people and schools and the developing comprehension of its possibilities has energized a move of accentuation far from PC innovation itself to different utilization of such innovation in more pragmatic parts of educating and learning.

Podcast is a cutting edge advanced innovation that can be utilized viably for dialect educating and Purposes. As indicated by Robinson (2009) the term podcast is a mix of two words: Pod mean iPod-the name of famous MP3 player and Broadcasting. As he characterizes, podcasts are sound or video records on the web which can be uninhibitedly downloaded to a PC and listened to on a PC or any compact playback gadget that backings MP3 documents.

Moreover, Sze (2006) characterized podcasts as a powerful action identified with dialect perception. Sze's (2006) thoughts are considered as the previous renditions of the present conceptualization of podcasting that characterizes podcasts as more than watching or listening only for delight. They express the view that learners ought to have both joy and learning destinations in utilizing these documents (podcasts). Understanding these documents needs the learner's past data about the diverse components of the content, for example, syntactic and semantic parts, which assume an essential part to anticipate meaning (Rezapour, Gorjian, & Pazhakh, (2012).

Based on the distinctive record sorts of podcasts, they are isolated into three principle sorts are sound just, sound and still envisions, and video. Be that as it may, with respect to podcasts' makers, Man (2007) arranges them into two sorts are radio podcasts and autonomous podcasts. Existing radio projects that transform into podcasts are called as radio podcasts, for example, RTHK-radio TV Hong Kong. Conversely, online podcasts created by people and associations are characterized as autonomous podcasts. These podcasts are demonstrated to have immense potential for English dialect educating, and afterward they are called ELT podcasts. ELT podcasts are said to be the most reasonable for broad listening however they can likewise be potential hotspots for serious tuning in, as showed by Stanley (2006). The scientist then partitions ELT podcasts into three littler sorts as underneath:

Authentic podcasts: which are often not aimed at ELT students but are believed to be a potential source for listening. Although many podcasts belonging to this type seem to be more suitable for advanced students, some others are ideal for upper and lower level ones.

Teacher- created podcasts: are created by teachers and usually aim to support students' learning by producing listening content not being available elsewhere.

Students- created podcasts: are produced by students, often with teacher help. However, concerning about ELT podcasts' content, Man (2007) shows different content types of ELT podcasts such as comprehensive, whole lessons, vocabularies, idioms, conversations with transcripts, and so on.

As guaranteed by Thomas (2006) podcast may bring another worldview of educating and learning. With podcasts understudies can really ruminate, and listen again to addresses and instructional exercises as a method for empowering basic, scientific methodologies. Podcasts are a rich hotspot for legitimate materials that could be used in educating and too learning outside dialects. In 2007, Gura & King (cited in Bartoš, 2008) calls attention to that podcasts bring new shots for instructors to find the zones of showing which are appealing yet appears not to be really attempted by educators. They can utilize podcasts for sharing their thoughts and proposals to enhance their technique for educating. More than that, with respect to understudies, podcasting is said to be elective technique for discovering that can improve their listening skills. Patten and Craig (2007) asserts that the utilization of podcasts engage understudies to deal with their own particular time that implies it empowers them to learn during an era that the best suits them the best, take control over their learning, deal with the speed of their learning amid predefined address times. Obviously, Bartoš (2008) proposes in his paper that podcasts can be essentially utilized for addresses recording, autonomous learning, and project- based learning as well.

Based on the examinations on podcasting instructional method, podcast appears a device to encourage learners creating English dialect aptitudes. Hasan and Hoon (2013) have demonstrated that podcasts could bolster learning in talking and tuning in, as well as in other dialect abilities and territories, for example, articulation, vocabulary, and linguistic use, It likewise gives chances to EFL educators to rearrange taking in a dialect and discover an answer for the conventional instructing and learning techniques challenges.

According to a study done by Kargozari and Zarinkamar (2014) in Iran, use of podcasts as an instructive gadget in learning vocabulary was extensively more viable than procedures utilized generally as a part of EFL classes. Istanto (2011) and Chan, Lee, and McLoughlin (2006) proposed that podcasts can be utilized to quicken EFL learners' capability in English as supplementary material to bolster the course targets in accordance with the course materials.

Vandergrift (2006) cited that listening comprehension ability may rely on upon metacognitive learning, for example record sorts, listening systems and targets. With respect to scientist encounter there is an extensive variety of podcasts on the web that gives chances to each learner to be utilized as a supplementary and offbeat material. It can upgrade

learners' listening perception capacity. Kan (2010) examined that Web content planners should explain their method of reasoning, systematize the substance and consistently enhance its activities to address the learners' issue in building up their listening aptitudes.

The effect of listening to podcasts on the listening cognizance capacity of some Iranian EFL college understudies has been explored. The aftereffects of this review demonstrated that members in the test bunch who used podcasts for their listening exercises had higher and huge execution than the ones in the control group. They likewise had uplifting states of mind toward podcast application for listening. (Ashraf, Noroozi, & Salami, 2011).

Generally persuading learners outside the class can be a troublesome mission; however, the implementation of podcasting can support this issue (Asoodar, Marandi, Vaezi & Desmet, 2014; O'Bryan & Hegelheimer, 2007). A gathering of studies finished up the constructive outcome of podcasting on the understudies' uplifting states of mind toward learning through podcasts (Chan, Chi, Chin, & Lin, 2011; Heilesen, 2010; Kim & King, 2011). In a review study, Kavaliauskienė and Anusienė (2009) investigated learners' view of listening to podcasts. The review observed that seventy six percent of the subjects indicated inspirational states of mind toward the utilization of podcasting to upgrade listening aptitudes. So also, Chan et al. (2011) investigated the impact of two podcast courses proposed to supplement classroom educating for Chinese and Koreans as remote dialects. The outcomes found that members who utilized podcasting had critical inspirational states of mind towards this instrument. Heilesen (2010) presumed that understudies' dispositions were for the most part positive towards the usage of podcasting and there were not very many members who reported dismissal towards podcasting. Ruler (2008) assessed a joint venture on utilizing podcasts for an undergrad phonetic course with a specific end goal to assess understudies' elocution and mentalities. The findings reported that the majority of the participants enjoyed the project. Similarly, Evans (2008) found that understudies were a great deal happier with considering and looking into their topic by the utilization of podcasts than course notes. In a later review, Fernandez, et al. (2009) made judgments about the responses of a few members who utilized podcasts. As indicated by their discoveries, they expressed that podcasting was not a substitute for conventional learning framework; in any case, it expanded their inspiration. Kim and King (2011) guaranteed that their discoveries observably demonstrated that the execution of podcasting into the classroom was intriguing, and persuasive. Furthermore, they concurred that mentalities toward podcasts fluctuated relying upon their past encounters with different sorts of PC innovations.

According to Underwood (1989), listening means "the activity of paying attention to and trying to get meaning from something we hear" (p.36). Mendelsohn (1994) defines listening comprehension as the ability to understand the spoken language of native speakers. O'Malley, Chamot, and Kupper (1989) likewise give a decent meaning of tuning in: "Listening appreciation is a dynamic and cognizant process in which the audience develops importance by utilizing signs from logical data and from existing information, while depending upon different key assets to satisfy the undertaking necessity" (p.19).

Listening is a psychological phenomenon, which happens on an intellectual level inside individuals' heads, and a social marvel, which grows intuitively amongst individuals and the earth encompassing them. "Listening is considered as an intricate procedure, which should be comprehended keeping in mind the end goal to show it, and therefore, assess it before coordinating it with phonological angles and with the expertise of talking" (Bueno, Madrid & McLaren, 2006, p. 282). As we know, listening is the skill of understanding spoken language. Listening is an essential skill, present in most of the activities we carry out throughout our lives, as Lindsay and Knight (2006) suggest:

"We listen to a wide assortment of things, for instance; what somebody says amid a discussion, up close and personal or on the phone; declarations giving data, for instance, at an air terminal or railroad station; the climate conjecture on the radio; a play on the radio; music; another person's discussion (spying); an address; proficient exhortation, for instance, at the doctor's, in the bank; guidelines, for instance, on the most proficient method to utilize a scanner or other apparatus; bearings; a taped exchange in class" (p.45).

Listening as comprehension is the conventional state of mind about the way of tuning in. Undoubtedly, in most technique manuals listening and listening perception are synonymous. The perspective of listening is based the suspicion that the fundamental capacity of listening in second language learning is to encourage comprehension of spoken discourse (Richard, 2008). Richard states that to comprehend the way of listening procedure, we have to consider a portion of the qualities of talked talk and the uncommon issues they posture for audience members. Spoken discourse has altogether different qualities from composed talk, and these distinctions can add various measurements to our comprehension of how we prepare discourse. For example, talked talk is typically momentary. The audience must process it —online and there is frequently zero chance to hear it out once more.

Moreover, the significance of listening in language learning and showing request the language educators to help their students get to be distinctly compelling audience members (Maria, 1998), for example, the school builds up one day in a week to utilize English language, so the understudies will be acquainted with listening process.

Rezapour, Gorjian, and Pazhakh (2012) aimed at clarifying the probable effect of Podcast versus Moodle as Web-based Language Learning approaches on vocabulary development of Iranian Pre-intermediate EFL learners. To fulfill the objective of the study, the concentration of the review was converted into two invalid theories tending to these two sorts of methodologies. The study was conducted in Islamic Azad University of Abadan. Ninety EFL learners were selected out of 120 learners. Three classes were chosen based on a Placement test (Richards' Interchange Language Placement Test, 2007) whose reliability value of this test was calculated through KR-21 formula, and then 90 male and female

learners whose scores were one standard deviation above and one standard deviation below the mean were selected as a homogeneous group. Then they were divided into three groups whose level was indicated as pre-intermediate. Each group included 30 subjects who were divided into Podcast group, Moodle group, and Control group. In the present survey, three tests were used: Interchange Language Placement Test (Richards, 2007) was used as the homogeneity test to test the level of proficiency among the learners in order to determine the learners' proficiency level and divide the sample population into three groups, it included 50 multiple choice items and its reliability value was calculated by KR-21 formula as (.78). It came to be realized that the Podcast bunch beat alternate gatherings while the Moodle amass outflanked the control one ($p < .05$).

Rahimzadeh, Gorjian, and Pazhakh (2013) tried to find the effect of using computer-assisted language learning approach on the learners' recall and retention at the elementary level. In order to have homogeneous participants, the researcher used Nelson proficiency test (Fowler & Coe, 1976). 50 participants whose scores fell one standard deviation below the mean were chosen to take part in the research. Two groups took a post-test immediately after the treatment and a delayed post-test after a two-week interval. Paired samples t-test and independent samples t-test were used to compare the groups' means. The findings revealed that control group was good only at the recall of vocabulary items and the experimental group was good not only at recall but also at retention of vocabulary items.

Yeh (2013) investigated a podcast learning project integrated into an English speaking and listening class for the purpose of promoting extensive listening and fostering independent learning. The study was conducted in an English speaking and listening course at a public university in southern Taiwan. The course was mandatory for first-year English majors and was also open to all other students on an optional basis. Among the 23 undergraduates registered for the course, 13 were English majors and 10 were non-English majors. Their estimated English competence levels ranged from low-intermediate to low-advanced. Results proposed that understudies were key in picking podcasts appropriate for their interests and capability levels. Overall, they discovered gaining from podcasts advantageous as well as helpful in improving their dialect capability and world learning. Their general fulfillment with the experience can be credited to elements including flexibility of decision, significant practice, and close incorporation with the syllabus. Be that as it may, understudies likewise experienced disappointment with podcasts containing unscripted true substance conveyed at a quick discourse rate.

In a study by Shahramiri and Gorjian (2013), the researchers investigated the effect of podcast transcription on learners' writing accuracy of intermediate and advanced groups among Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners. The study was conducted at Abadan University, Iran. Fifty EFL learners were selected out of 90 learners. Two classes were chosen based on a placement English test extracted from Barron's TOEFL iBT developed by Sharpe (2009). Toward the finish of the treatment which took 10 sessions of direction, they sat for a post-test composing precision accomplishment test. Information were gathered and dissected through engaging and inferential measurements. Matched Samples t-test was race to look at the impact of podcast translations among gatherings. It came to be realized that advanced learners outperformed the other group in increasing higher scores in composing accomplishment post-test ($p < .05$)

Asaadinezhad and Gorjian (2015) aimed to investigate the effect of reconstruction podcasts on pre-intermediate English as foreign language (EFL) learners' speaking proficiency. It attempted to examine students' speaking skill among Iranian Islamic Azad University of Ahwaz at BA course level. The study was constructed at Islamic Azad University of Ahwaz, Iran. The present study suggests that the use of the reconstruction podcasts in speaking proficiency could be a beneficial activity which improves both fluency and accuracy of the EFL learners' speaking skill.

Moreover, Davoudi and Rezaei (2016) investigated the influence of podcasts (POD) on language comprehension of Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners. The participants of this study consisted of sixty ($N=60$) male and female university students, ranging in age from 18 to 20, who were in their first semester. The experimental group received just the audio file of the POD, and the control group received a different treatment which was the transcript file of the same audio podcast file of the experimental group. The results of the t-tests revealed that there was no significant difference in language comprehension scores across the posttest between two groups. Based on the interview results after the post-test, all of the participants (100%) agreed that both audio and the transcripts (written texts) were useful for them and claimed that it is a good method of improving language comprehension.

3. Method

3.1 Participants

The participants of this study were 60 language learners who were selected among 90 pre-intermediate students from Poyesh English language institute in Dehloran, Iran. They were all female students and their age range was from 12 to 20. They took an Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) (Appendix A). Upon the administration of this test, 60 participants whose band score was between 19 to 39 were selected as participants of the study. Then they were non-randomly divided into two equal groups of control ($n=30$) and experimental ($n=30$). The participants were further assigned as the control group who were taught using traditional methods of teaching listening with no multimedia laboratory. But the experimental group attended multimedia language laboratory and had a personal computer, so that they could use podcasts of listening materials. It means that the experimental group was exposed to listening using a new method through podcasting, while the control group was taught listening skill through listening to CDs and class question and answer and discussion.

3.2 Instruments

The following instruments were used in order to collect the data in this study.

3.2.1 Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT)

The first instrument of this study was the OPT (Appendix A). The Second Version of Quick Placement Test developed by Oxford University Press and University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (Syndicate, 2001)) had been used to choose two nearly homogenous experimental and control groups in which all the participants were at the pre-intermediate level of language proficiency. This placement test has two main parts including part one (Questions 1 – 40) and part two (Questions 41 – 60) that needed to be complete in 40 minutes. This instrument was used to gather information on the learners' proficiency. It included 60 multiple-choice items and the learners who achieved from 19 to 39 were determined as the pre-intermediate level.

3.2.2 Pre-test

The second instrument was a listening pre-test. To realize current participants' listening comprehension level, a researcher-made pre-test (Appendix B) was designed based on the students' text book. (i.e., New Interchange 1) developed by Richards (2008). It was a listening comprehension test of 40 objective items including filling the blanks, true or false items, and multiple choice items. The participants have sat for the test in a regular session. They have accomplished the test individually and silently in approximately 30 minutes after which their copies have been gathered to be analyzed. Then as treatment, the students in the experimental group received listening skills according to the principles of the Podcasting and the students in control group were exposed to listening skills according to the traditional methods. The reliability of the pre-test was calculated through a pilot study and it was met based on Cronbach Alpha formula as ($r=.934$). Moreover, the validity of the pre-test was confirmed by two experts.

3.2.3 Post-test

After the treatment, a modified version of the pre-test was used for the post-test (Appendix C) as the third instrument of the current study and it was given to the participants to assess their listening comprehension after the treatment period and to measure the impacts of using podcast on their listening comprehension skill. Face validity of the post-test was confirmed by two English experts who validated the pre-test. It was piloted among pre-intermediate EFL learners and its reliability index was calculated through Cronbach Alpha formula as ($r=.899$).

3.3 Data Collection Procedures

In order to elicit relevant data from the respondents, the researcher administered the Oxford Placement Test to realize the participants' homogeneity level. Then the listening comprehension pre-test was administered to assess the participants' listening comprehension at the beginning of the course. After the pre-test, the researcher practiced the treatment on the experimental groups. As podcasting was the treatment of the study, the researcher had chosen 13 files among 23 podcast files as supplementary material to be used asynchronously prior to each session of the class. The podcast files were about personal development and they had been developed by Pavlina (2005). There was no need to listen to the podcast files online but it could be listened asynchronously. The students in the experimental group had the opportunity to choose the time they wanted to listen. Moreover, the students selected the order of the podcast files that the researcher assigned them to be heard during the term. In the control group the learners were asked to listen to a radio program in English for thirteen times before each session. All activities in both groups were completely the same the only difference was the type of treatment in the experimental group. Based on the teacher's instruction there was no linear direction to do the activities and students were free to return to any part they needed and follow the process as they have required. The teacher did not teach the content of the podcasts and the students listened to the files prior to their class time. They were used as supplementary materials apart from their main course book. There was just a quick review and evaluation of the learners' listening practices and their general understanding of the topic to be discussed in groups within the class. The activities accomplished within each class were as follows:

- Every session all students listened to one podcast in the experimental before the class time.
- Every class was divided into two groups of 6 to 8 students.
- Each podcasts was divided into equal chunks for each student within her group.
- Per session a group of students (6 learners in the experimental group) and (8 learners in the control group) was responsible to transcribe one podcast for the next coming session.
- Every session the assigned group of students shared the complete transcription with all their classmates before the class.
- Based on the teacher's instruction every student had to write her general understanding of the podcast she listened to beforehand and write at least one paragraph as a summary about her listening comprehension.
- The teacher suggested to the students to reflect on the topic and recall their feeling or personal experience toward that podcast and its content.
- The teacher asked the individuals to state their understanding of the topic and created a free discussion regarding to the podcast they had listened to.
- Students engaged in multi-task activities each session.

The treatment took 20 listening sessions. All groups had the same materials and time of instruction. Five lessons of New Interchange 1 were taught to the participants; in each session the half of the lesson was taught by the researcher. Before teaching each lesson, the researcher provided some background knowledge for the learners then she played the CDs for

them. She wanted the students to listen to the lesson carefully. The technique of interactive feedback strategy was used for the learners of the experimental groups. For this purpose, the researcher in these groups restated or reformulated the learners' incorrect answers in performing the listening comprehension tasks or exercises without mentioning their errors and letting them find out their errors. The researcher provided comments on the erroneous utterances of the students through reduction recasts in the experimental groups. However, the control groups were provided with traditional listening comprehension including question and answer, explanation and class discussion and their errors were directly corrected by the teacher. The learners performed the related listening comprehension tasks and exercises of the text book regularly in the control group. The researcher corrected their mistakes directly without providing feedback for them. In addition, a post-test of listening comprehension was employed after twenty-session treatment to gather data. After collecting the data, they were analyzed through SPSS software, version 17. Finally the result were analyzed.

4. Results and Discussion

In order to analyze the data obtained from the pretest-posttest administrations, the SPSS (1) package was used. It is important to note that the researcher employed all the formulas with the level of significance set at 0.05

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 4.1 presents descriptive information about pre-test and post-test scores of both experimental and control groups

Table 4.1 Descriptive statistics related to participants' performance on pretest

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-test	Control	30	14.7667	1.85106	.33796
	Experimental	30	14.6333	2.07586	.37900

Table 4.1 indicates the descriptive statistics of the participants' performance on listening comprehension in the pre-test. The mean score of the experimental group is 14.6333 and the mean score of the control group is 14.7667. In order to see if there is any significant difference between two groups in the pre-test and they have been homogeneous before the treatment or not, an Independent Samples t-test was run. Table 4.2 shows the results.

Table 4.2 Independent Samples t-Test (pre-test)

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.369	.546	.263	58	.794	.13333	.50779	-.883	1.14
Equal variances not assumed			.263	57.254	.794	.13333	.50779	-.883	1.15

Table 4.2 shows that the observed t (.263) is less than the critical t (2.000) with df=58, so the difference between the pre-test of experimental and control groups is not significant at ($p < 0.05$).

Therefore, the two groups are homogeneous which shows no significant difference between the two groups. So, it can be claimed that two groups were homogeneous at the beginning of the experiment regarding their prior knowledge.

Table 4.3 Descriptive Statistics (Post-test)

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Post-test	Control	30	14.9333	1.87420	.34218
	Experimental	30	16.1667	2.03560	.37165

Table 4.3 reports the descriptive statistics of the participants' performance in the post-test. The mean score of the experimental group is 16.1667 and the mean score of the control group is 14.9333. It can be concluded that the using podcasts had positive effects on the experimental participants' listening comprehension.

Table 4.4 Independent Samples t-Test (post-test)

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.344	.560	-2.441	58	.018	-1.2333	.5051	-2.244	-.222
Equal variances not assumed			-2.441	57.60	.018	-1.233	.5051	-2.244	-.221

Table 4.4 shows since the observed t (2.441) is greater than the critical t (2.000) with df 58, the difference between the two groups is significant ($p < 0.05$). This means that there is significant difference between the means of scores in experimental and control groups. Thus, the treatment made a significant difference between control and experimental groups' posttests. In other words, podcasts developed listening comprehension of the pre-intermediate EFL learners.

Table 4.5 Descriptive Statistics (Control vs. Experimental)

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre-test Control	14.7667	30	1.85106	.33796
	Post-test Control	14.9333	30	1.87420	.34218
Pair 2	Pre-test Experimental	14.6333	30	2.07586	.37900
	Post-test Experimental	16.1667	30	2.03560	.37165

Table 4.5 shows the descriptive statistics of participants' performance on pre and post-tests. As this table shows, the mean score of the experimental group in the post-test is 16.1667 while this amount for the pre-test of the same group is 14.6333. This table also shows that the mean score of the control group in the post-test is 14.9333 whereas this amount for the pre-test of the same group is 14.7667. Both groups were at the same level of listening in the pre-test but regarding their performances in the post-test the experimental group did very better. To find out if there is any significant difference between the pre and post-tests of each group, a Paired Samples t-test was administered. Table 4.6 indicates the results.

Table 4.6 Paired Samples t-Test (Pre vs. post-tests)

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper			
		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference							
Pair 1	Pre vs. Post-tests-Control	-.166	2.166	.3956	-.9758	.6424	-.421	29	.677
Pair 2	Pre vs. Post-tests-Experimental	-1.533	.6288	.1148	-1.7681	-1.298	-13.35	29	.000

The above table indicates that the observed t (.421) of the pair 1 (Control group) is less than the critical t (2.0452) with df 29, so the difference between the pre-test and post-test of the control group is not significant. In contrast, observed t (13.35) of the pair 2 (Experimental group) is greater than the critical t (2.045); therefore, the difference between the pre-test and post-test of the experimental group is significant.

4.2 Discussion

The first research question is answered in the following section and the results will be discussed thoroughly as follows:

RQ1. Is there any significant difference between Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners who are users and nonusers of podcasting in terms of listening ability?

The use of the podcasts with applying some actions was successful in improving the students' listening skill. That finding could be inferred from the observations of the teaching and learning process. Besides, it was also supported by the result of the pre-test and post-test of the students' listening skill. After collecting and analyzing the data, the results indicated that performance of the control and experimental groups in the listening pre-test was almost the same. However, the results obtained from their post-test showed the experimental groups outperformed than the control groups. It means that the experimental group who received the instruction through using podcasts, performed better in the post-test in comparison to the control group. It is concluded that using podcast had positive effects on Iranian EFL learners' listening comprehension. The results proved that podcast helped the participants of experimental group to do better in the post-test. In the current study, some different podcasts were used. It indicates that the participants who focused on podcasts learned better than those who did not. In other words, it will be better to use both aspects of learning to take the best advantage of the educational time to acquire knowledge as much as possible. The obtained results in chapter four show that using podcasts can enhance the students' language learning. For instant, the implementation of listening by podcasts was generally successful in improving the teaching of English listening skill practices and student's involvement. Podcast were used to improve the students' vocabulary skill and made the students more interested in the class. Most of students were actively engaged in the activities. Based on the researcher's observations, those indicated that they were enthusiastic in the activities. The findings might be explained in terms of Krashen's (1985) input hypothesis. This study refers to language learners which enhance and advance along the regular request when they learn second language "input" as one stage of phonetic skill. The change in the listening expertise of the members in the test gathering may be owing to the supplementary information they got which was painstakingly chosen to be recently past their capability level and subsequently intelligible.

The results of this study are in line with Rezapour, Gorjian, and Pazhakh (2012) who investigated the probable effect of Podcast versus Moodle as Web-based Language Learning approaches on vocabulary development of Iranian Pre-intermediate EFL learners. They worked on 90 participants whom they were divided into three groups whose level was indicated as pre-intermediate. Each group included 30 subjects who were divided into Podcast group, Moodle group, and Control group. The findings showed that the Podcast group outperformed the other groups while the Moodle group outperformed the control one ($p < .05$).

This study also supports the findings of Yeh (2013) who tried to investigate a podcast learning project integrated into an English speaking and listening class for the purpose of promoting extensive listening and fostering independent learning. The study was conducted in an English speaking and listening course at a public university in southern Taiwan. Among the 23 students enlisted for the course, 13 were English majors and 10 were non-English majors. Their evaluated English capability levels extended from low-halfway to low-progressed. Comes about recommended that understudies were key in picking podcasts appropriate for their interests and capability levels. By and large, they discovered gaining from podcasts helpful as well as valuable in improving their dialect capability and world learning.

Moreover, the results of the study are compatible with Khedidja Kaouter and Mechraoui (2015) who contrasted between listening with podcasts and the conventional classroom listening strategy and the impact these two modes have on coincidental vocabulary procurement. To this point, a pretest and posttest exploratory outline was embraced. The participants were 34 Thai Nursing students at the pre-intermediate level enrolled at the Self-Development Summer Program offered by the Centre of Foundation Studies, at the International Islamic University, Malaysia. The learners were assigned randomly to the podcast listening (experimental) and traditional classroom listening method (control) groups. Each group had 17 students each, they had the same teacher and were taught from the same book; Cambridge Interchange 2 (Pre-intermediate). The data obtained was analyzed using SPSS package (T-test analysis), and it revealed that both the experimental and control group showed significant incidental vocabulary gains. However, the experimental group demonstrated higher progress in comparison to the traditional classroom listening method group.

Furthermore, the results of this study confirm the outcomes of Naseri and Motallebzadeh (2016) who investigated the effect of listening to podcasts on Iranian upper- intermediate EFL learners' self-regulation ability and their perception toward the use of technology. To meet the objectives of the current study, 54 female upper-intermediate EFL learners from the Bayan Language Institute in Torbat-e Heydarieh were selected among 118 students. According to the findings of this study, the use of podcasts as an educational technology can significantly influence and foster self-regulation ability of the learners. Most participants showed a positive perception toward the use of podcast as an educational technology in language learning.

Finally, results of this study do not agree with those of Davoudi and Rezaei (2016) who examined the influence of podcasts (POD) on language comprehension of Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners. The participants of this study consisted of sixty (N=60) male and female university students, ranging in age from 18 to 20, who were in their first semester. They were all majoring in English teaching in Sari, a city in northern part of Iran. The experimental group received just the audio file of the POD, and the control group received a different treatment which was the transcript file of the same audio podcast file of the experimental group. The results of the t-tests revealed that there was no significant difference in language comprehension scores across the posttest between two groups. After analyzing the data, they come to a conclusion there was no significant difference in language comprehension scores across the posttest between two groups.

5. Conclusion

It is clear from the reviews that utilizing podcast is more valuable and accommodating than utilizing the customary chalk and talk technique. Numerous research studies on podcasts confirm the efficacy of computer applications in second language learning and teaching contexts, and claim that the integration of podcast in learning can improve academic performance, enhance motivation, and promote learning. Podcast is also considered a powerful learning method in many aspects such as culture and history of the areas where the target language is spoke.

Moreover, podcasting innovation could be actualized as a compelling dialect instructing instrument that gives instructors the upside of amplifying their addresses past as far as possible and permits the learners to get to the dialect material whenever and in wherever (O'Bryan & Hegelheimer, 2007; Shahramiri, & Gorjian, 2013). The present study which aimed to examine the effectiveness of podcasting on EFL learners' listening comprehension indicated that the type of instructions plays an important role in learners' listening comprehension. As students cannot do well in English and have difficulty in listening, teachers can take advantage of the study to provide their students with a more interesting and effective teaching instruction- using podcast. This study shows that using podcast is an effective technique for teaching and learning English. According to the results of t-test analysis, experimental students' listening comprehension improved thanks to podcasting. It can be maintained that the results confirmed the effectiveness of podcasting users along with non-users. To sum up, the findings of this study may be effective for the students to develop their listening since the results of this research confirmed the usefulness of applying podcasts, i.e. using audio in MP3 format in language learning process.

Generally, the findings recommend that dialect learners were certain towards utilizing podcast innovation, and they were intrigued to utilize podcast innovation into their dialect learning forms. A portion of the explanations behind the positive discernments incorporated the open door for understudies to learn at their own time, and to listen to particular materials that they miss or don't comprehend different circumstances. Effects, attitudes, and perceptions towards podcasts have been investigated and in most cases, positive effects and attitudes towards podcasting are documented.

This study has some implications for teaching and curriculum development in the Iranian EFL context. In the first place, podcasts as another innovation acknowledged worldwide ought to be given their due consideration in instructing of language sound-related skills particularly listening. EFL educators are prescribed to present and actualize podcasts in their classes. This may impact student learning background emphatically. Learners might be more responsible for and autonomous in improving their listening ability. Podcasts can be utilized by EFL teachers both specifically in the classroom and out of the classroom as a supplementary apparatus. It can likewise be beneficial for the classroom while doing some related tasks in the classroom checked by educator, predominantly to spare time. In developing curricula and listening syllabi, it is better to pay special attention to students' likeliness to take advantage of new technology. With the growing interest in using internet among young learners, teachers and curriculum developers should try to bring technology to the classrooms. This not only will give the teachers a useful asset in following their teaching goals but also will be a motivating factor for students to pursue their learning more meaningfully. However, it should be mentioned that the implementation of podcasts in EFL classes needs careful planning and adequate training of teachers

so that it becomes an effective teaching and learning tool. Moreover, the findings of the current study might be useful for EFL instructors in terms of the use of podcast lectures in all levels listening courses.

In the course of this study many questions have risen some of which are included here with the hope that they will be pursued and investigated.

1. It is strongly suggested that a research with the same characteristics of this study including more participants to be conducted in an attempt to find the obtained results.
2. Similar studies can be done on other proficiency levels, namely elementary, intermediate, upper-intermediate and advance.
3. This study did not include male students. Due to gender performance, future research on idioms would need to focus on the EFL learners for male students. Is there a significant comparison between female and male EFL learners?
4. A future study is essential in which the immediate and delayed post-tests are conducted at different time intervals to show the effectiveness of using podcasts in shorter and longer periods.
5. Variables other than the ones used in this study can help the investigation of the same issue. For instance, the same experiment with male or female learners within the same age range is necessary to confirm the result of this study.
6. The next suggestion for the upcoming researches is to investigate other language skills and sub-skills through applying podcasting.
7. Similar studies are critically needed in other parts of the Iran in order to see whether the results will be the same as or different from the results of the present study.

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