

## Podcasting for Saudi EFL Learners: Evaluating New Strategies for Pronunciation Enhancement

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### ABSTRACT

Saudi EFL students find English pronunciation a major obstacle to their learning experience. The reason is partly the favoured pedagogy which is grammar translation, and majorly, little or no exposure to spoken language. In this scenario, podcasts have been proven to be of a great use for providing to the learners readily available listening materials. However, such interventions are rare in Saudi learning environments. The current study aimed to fill this gap and examined the attitudes of twenty three Saudi students of English at Qassim University towards podcasts as a facilitator for proper pronunciation. Five podcasts related to the current English listening and speaking textbook were given to the learners who were to use these over a period of six weeks with a follow-up questionnaire administered at the end of the experiment. Responses indicated that students had positive attitudes and a high acceptance rate to the use of the podcasts and reported that the intervention was helpful in both learning of new pronunciation and practice of language they already knew. Though CALL as a language learning strategy is highly recommended by institutions in Saudi Arabia, micro studies on specific aspects are still few, and therefore, the findings of the current study will aid in introducing pedagogical changes for the larger good of the student community and their specific needs.

**Key words:** Attitude, FL, Podcasting, Proper Pronunciation

### INTRODUCTION

Previous research has clearly established that the key factor to good pronunciation is listening to a language as it is spoken by its native speakers. Therefore, good pronunciation is a product of good listening. Learners of English in Saudi Arabia face the obstacle of the lack of language naturalness and nativity. So far, instructors in EFL limited themselves to recorded video and audio input but winking to the fact that these being specially produced for the purpose, the content was most often, artificial and removed from real language output. In short, this solution played a role in accommodating students' need for naturalness in a very limited way and with technology that was fast becoming redundant. Consequently, it failed to engage the learners satisfactorily and teachers too were challenged to develop suitable pronunciation modules to help the learners in EFL environments.

Indeed, CALL technology tools can best satisfy this need. One of the latest technological innovations, which language educators take as part of CALL, is podcasting. Podcasting is a technology that falls into the category of what educators are describing as e-Learning 2.0 (Downes, 2005). Podcasts are electronic audio files connected to internet and to which users can subscribe. Those files can be downloaded to computers, laptops, and other mobile devices. Podcasting is different from other methods of online audio lesson delivery by

the idea of automatically downloaded content. Also, podcasts have the additional features of mobility and transportability that allow learners to use them across a variety of settings such as homes, schools, buses, cars, and parks. Many online teacher-created podcasts are available for non-native speakers in ESL and EFL environments.

Podcasting as a new technology has captured the attention of academics from all sectors of education. A number of researchers discussed how podcasts would function as a new source of exposure to the target language. Diem (2005) introduces the idea of podcasting and enumerates on its applicability to TEFL. Thorne and Payne (2005) criticized computer aided learning on the premise that speech and comprehension are not sufficiently represented in it. Their study attempts to explore the use of podcasting to improve out-of-class pronunciation skills.

The current study does not deal with the effectiveness of podcasts in enhancing learners' pronunciation. Rather, it examines how such a technological tool would be viewed by the students of English in terms of the role it can play in helping to teach proper pronunciation. Approaching the new CALL innovations from an attitudinal perspective is the trend that language educators and researchers adopt. Levy (2007) claims that there might be differences between what a researcher aims to achieve and the approach they take depending upon the stage in which the emergent technology

as it is often subjected to pilot studies to understand the attitudes and perceptions to it.

### Statement of the Problem

As a former student of English and as a teacher of English, the researcher observed that many Saudi students at university level have difficulty pronouncing English appropriately. Besides, they mostly adopt the pronunciation features of their first language (Arabic) when they speak English which probably led to fossilized pronunciation errors. However, they may be excused as they are not adequately exposed to English as spoken by native speakers. Thus, if the problem of poor pronunciation is not tackled, there is a potentiality of those prospective teachers transferring the same pronunciation errors to their students. The researcher believes that students of English are supposed to go beyond the pedagogical aim of simply getting the message across but rather demonstrate pronunciation proficiency. This view along with the researcher's personal interest in podcasting as an influential means in improving pronunciation has led to this study.

### Purpose of the Study

As this is an attitudinal study, it aims at exploring the attitudes of Saudi students of English towards podcasts as a tool for acquiring proper pronunciation.

### Significance of the Study

The significance of the study lies in its expected effect on students of English to make a move forward in the process of acquainting students with podcasting as a new language input tool and to show how important it is to implement podcasts in the process of acquiring proper pronunciation. The current study is also intended to function as an attention grabber for academics, language instructors and students to podcasting in education in general and in language learning in particular.

### Research Questions

The current study seeks to answer the following question:

1. What are the students' attitudes towards podcasts as a facilitator for the proper pronunciation of English?

### Hypotheses of the Study

The researcher hypothesizes that:

1. EFL learners have positive attitudes towards podcasts as a facilitator to proper pronunciation.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Overview

This section provides an overview of literature related to the present study. It is divided into two main sections. The first section presents podcasting, traces back its emergence. Moreover, it sheds light on studies conducted on podcasts in

relation to pronunciation. The second section demonstrates the literature related to learners' attitudes towards pronunciation-specific podcasts.

### Podcasting

"Podcast" is combination of iPod and broadcast (Notess, 2005). The first mention of the term "podcasting" was in Aled Williams' article in *The Guardian* in February 2004. Since that time, podcasts have made their presence felt in various aspects of contemporary life and have grown in a large scale. Campbell (2005) mentioned five reasons why podcasting has grown so rapidly:

- 1) Internet usage pervades all regions and time zones of the world.
- 2) Net accessibility has grown drastically in terms of speed and data handling, allowing for large downloads in a few seconds.
- 3) Personal computers have become machines not just for handling personal data, but also as multimedia tools.
- 4) Streaming and downloading are closing in on each other and the day is not far when they would be practically the same.
- 5) iPods and MP3 devices are becoming commonplace.

Al Qasim (2013) reported that the best part about using podcasts in the language classrooms is that they are free and easily available and are favoured by EFL learners in all environments.

Abdulrahman et al. (2018) investigated the change in learners' listening comprehension with the intervention of podcasts in high school Indonesian EFL learners and found that the difference in performance was significant. In an additional questionnaire, they also found that the learners were positively disposed to the use of podcasts in EFL classrooms as they found the content authentic, interesting, and meaningful to their specific needs.

Gomez et al. (2019) asserted that Podcasts make audio and video content accessible to learners at all times and for this and other reasons is an influential teaching strategy in EFL settings. They also attribute innovativeness and motivation as the added benefits of using podcasts.

### Podcasting Specific to Pronunciation

Podcasting, among the various advanced technological tools available today, is most suitable to the development of pronunciation skills. Constantine (2007) claimed that to get teacher feedback in an exercise with podcasts, the learner can listen to the audio, record his/her output and send an audio file to the teacher for evaluation. The teacher would listen to the student's recording and would give appropriate feedback about the learners' pronunciation. He added that such activities helped the students develop fluency in speaking and pronunciation. It is to be noted that most studies targeting podcasting in conjunction with pronunciation are of an attitudinal type, which will be adequately discussed throughout the final section in this review of the literature. The next section covers language attitudes and attitudes towards podcasting in ESL contexts.

### Attitudes towards Pronunciation-specific Podcasting

In an early study, Tavales and Skevoulis (2006) suggested that students, with the help of podcasts, could record themselves or native speakers and then listen for pronunciation, grammar use or intonation. Results showed an enhancement in their pronunciation.

Ducate and Lomicka (2009) conducted a study examining the efficacy of podcasts in pronunciation enhancement in second language learning and looked at changes in students' attitudes toward pronunciation over the semester. The study included 22 participants in intermediate German and French courses. They completed a pre- and post-survey based on Elliott's (1995) Pronunciation Attitude Inventory to assess their perspectives regarding pronunciation. The study concluded that students found the podcast project positive and enjoyable.

Lord's (2008) study is one of the few early studies on pronunciation and podcasting in FL teaching. In this study, 19 students in an undergraduate phonetics class recorded tongue-twisters, short readings, and personal reflections on their own pronunciation. Lord concluded that both attitudes and pronunciation were found to improve.

Jessica and Anne (2010) pointed out many benefits to active inclusion of podcasting into a pronunciation course, including the opportunity for learners to modify the course material by redoing the content in their own words and in an original format. They asserted that with the use of podcasting into any course learner's attention was naturally taken to the importance of accurate pronunciation.

O'Bryan and Hegelheimer (2007) reported that in a semester-long experiment, students listened to a total of 14 podcasts for a listening course. Based on follow up surveys, podcasts were viewed very positively and contrary to initial fears, very few technical problems were encountered.

Lee and Chan (2007) conducted a study on 18 students studying information technology. The students, after listening to three to five minute podcasts over the course of a semester, participated in a survey which later indicated that students perceived listening to the podcasts as worthwhile and enjoyable.

## METHODOLOGY

### Design of the Study

The current study functions as an exploratory survey in which both qualitative and quantitative methodologies are implemented. In fact, there is a two pronged rationale behind approaching this study from an attitudinal perspective rather than an experimental perspective: first, there are very few attitudinal studies on podcasting in Saudi Arabia so as to pave the way for experimental studies, secondly, previous studies on emerging technological applications are reported to start with the investigation of attitudes and feedback. Once such applications become established in a society, their effect can be researched and examined. Apparently, podcasting in education in general, and in language teaching in particular, is considered to be an emerging technology in Saudi Arabia.

### The Setting

The study was carried out at Qassim University, Department of English from which the researcher graduated. The study lasted for six weeks starting with a presentation on podcasts and ending with questionnaires administration.

### Participants

The participants were 23 third-level students of the department of English at Qassim University. All of the students had gone through an intensive course in English for one academic semester. Their ages were between 20 to 23 years and Arabic was their first language. The reason behind targeting this group was the appropriateness of the academic level in which they were studying. More clearly, they were neither beginners to say that they may not have valued the importance of pronunciation yet nor advanced enough to say that they need not hone their pronunciation ability.

### Course Description

Podcasting was introduced to the learners during a mandatory listening and speaking course (see Appendix B). The course textbook used was *Mosaic 1 Listening and Speaking ME, Gold Edition*, by Hanreddy and Whalley (2007). It is recognized as one of the world's most popular and comprehensive academic skills series that combines communicative activities with skill-building exercises to boost students' success. In ten chapters, the textbook contained contemporary lectures and dialogues meant to engage students with content relevant to their lives and work. The textbook is usually accompanied with audio MP3 files to provide students with convenient options for refining their listening skills. The researcher utilized those audio files and used them as a source of FL input in a form of podcasts. The ultimate goal was to get students to make good use of the podcasts in order to enhance their pronunciation. Those files were sent to the students in a form of podcasts via iTunes.

### Instrument

In order to answer the research question that guided the study, the researcher employed a questionnaire as the main data-gathering instrument for this study. The questionnaire which was meant to investigate students' attitudes towards podcasts, had three sections (See part II in appendix A). The first section concerned nine statements of Likert's scale type. According to Turner (1993), Likert scale is a useful and effective means of determining opinions and attitudes. Of the nine statements, six statements were structured by drawing on the relevant literature on learners' attitudes towards podcasting with some paraphrasing in their wordings. In the light of the research question, the other three statements were formed. The participants would express their level of agreement by ticking the terms strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. The participants were required to only tick the choices that they thought were most appropriate and applicable to them. The second section was

in the form of four closed-ended questions. The first question examined students' knowledge of podcasts. The other three questions covered three technical aspects of podcasts; sound quality, ease of access and online subscription. The third section is composed of two open-ended questions about podcasts. In fact, this section was meant to be bias-free in the sense that participants were given a space of freedom to show their comments on podcasts and to cover up any unmentioned information.

### Procedures and Materials

The researcher made a presentation which included four slides (see Figure 3 in the Appendix B). The first slide represented an introduction to podcasting. The second slide covered examples of reputed English-related podcasts providers such as [www.englishpronunciationpod.com](http://www.englishpronunciationpod.com). The third slide demonstrated characteristics and potentials of English-related podcasts. The fourth slide showed devices that support podcasts. The researcher then showed a video tutorial on how to technically access and subscribe to podcasts using a smart phone (see Figure 4) and a computer (See Figure 5). Throughout a six-week period, all podcasts related to the first five chapters of the textbook were made available for the students on iTunes (see Figure 1).

### Validity

For the purpose of questionnaire validity, described by Oller (1979) as the extent to which a test measures what it is supposed to measure, the questionnaire items were revised by a number of raters. They provided some insights and suggestions for the researcher to make.

### Reliability

Trochim (2006) states that a measure is considered reliable if it gives almost the same results when it is conducted more than once. To ensure that the statements were accurate, clear-cut and not open to different interpretations, the researcher made a test and gave the questionnaire twice to three students

of English in another university. Getting similar results upon repeating the same questionnaire was a good indicator for the reliability of the questionnaire.

### Questionnaire Distribution and Data Collection

During the sixth week, a total of twenty-three copies were distributed among the students. Both the instructor and the researcher were present to help the students fill in the questionnaire as the form was written in English. The students were told to be realistic and not to look for ideal answers. The students spent almost thirty minutes filling in the forms. The researcher collected sixteen forms and the other seven forms were received via email.

## DATA ANALYSIS

### Attitudes towards Podcasts

The questionnaire investigates students' attitudes towards podcasts in three sections. The first section composed of nine Likert's scale statements. Table 1 below shows the scores of attitudes towards podcasting.

#### Likert-scale Statements

An examination of the scores in Table 1 below reveals that more than 17 (74%) students agreed that podcasts were interesting, only one participant did not agree and five (22%) participants were unsure. As for the usefulness of podcasts, 19 (83%) students found podcasts useful, and none of them denied the usefulness of podcasts. Podcasts were enjoyable for 14 (61%) subjects whereas they were not for only two students. 74% believed that podcasts could provide the opportunity for the learning pronunciation versus 26% who were unsure or did not agree. A total of 19 (83%) liked the idea of integrating podcasts in listening and speaking courses while only three (13%) were unsure.

Table 2 shows the integrated scores of attitudes to podcasts. Regarding the improvement in pronunciation gained through listening to podcasts, as many as eight (35%) students felt this improvement while the majority of them 13 (57%) did not notice any improvement in their pronunciation. Only

**Table 1.** Attitudes towards podcasts

Item	SA	%	A	%	N	%	D	%	SD	%
1. I found listening to podcasts interesting.	6	26	11	48	5	22	1	4	0	0
2. I found listening to podcasts useful.	11	48	8	35	4	17	0	0	0	0
3. I enjoyed the podcasts as a whole.	8	35	6	26	7	30	1	4	1	4
4. Podcasts provide the opportunity for learning pronunciation anytime anywhere.	12	52	5	22	4	17	0	0	2	9
5. I like the idea of integrating podcasts in a listening and speaking course.	11	48	8	35	3	13	1	4	0	0
6. I felt that my pronunciation enhanced when I listened to podcasts.	3	13	5	22	2	9	7	30	6	26
7. I believe listening to different podcasts helps me identify the different accents of English.	13	57	6	26	4	17	0	0	0	0
8. I plan to continue listening to podcasts in order to improve my pronunciation.	10	43	7	30	3	13	3	13	0	0
9. I feel comfortable listening to lectures-related material in my own time using podcasts.	6	26	7	30	7	30	1	4	2	9

**Table 2.** Integrated scores of attitudes towards podcasts

Item	SA-A	%	N	%	D-SD	%
1. I found listening to podcasts interesting.	17	74%	5	22%	1	4%
2. I found listening to podcasts useful.	19	83%	4	17%	0	0%
3. I enjoyed the podcasts as a whole.	14	61%	7	30%	2	9%
4. Podcasts provide the opportunity for learning pronunciation anytime anywhere	17	74%	4	17%	2	9%
5. I like the idea of integrating podcasts in a listening and speaking course.	19	83%	3	13%	1	4%
6. I felt that my pronunciation enhanced when I listened to podcasts.	8	35%	2	9%	13	57%
7. I believe listening to different podcasts helps me identify the different accents of English.	19	83%	4	17%	0	0%
8. I plan to continue listening to podcasts in order to improve my pronunciation.	17	74%	3	13%	3	13%
9. I feel comfortable listening to lectures-related material in my own time using podcasts.	13	57%	7	30%	3	13%
Total		69%		19%		12%

**Table 4.** Responses to open-ended questions

Participant	What ways do you use in order to acquire the proper pronunciation of English?	How do you view your experience of learning pronunciation through podcasts? Was it successful?
1	Radio and TV	(No answer)
2	Internet	(No answer)
3	T.V.	(No answer)
4	English programs	Successful.
5	Movies, video games and YouTube.	(No answer)
6	(No answer)	Nice.
7	TV and YouTube.	Good.
8	BBC	(No answer)
9	T.V. and Video games.	Very successful
10	Movies, interaction with native speakers.	(No answer)
11	T.V. and radio.	Helpful.
12	Podcasts and radio.	Successful.
13	Songs, chatting and talking with natives.	Unsuccessful.
14	Academic lectures YouTube and podcasts.	So successful.
15	Movies and T.V. shows.	(No answer)
16	English programs.	(No answer)
17	Podcasts.	(No answer)

**Table 3.** Responses to closed-ended questions

Question	YES	%	NO	%
1. Have you heard about podcasts before they were introduced to you?	11	48%	12	52%
2. Have you subscribed to English-related podcasts in iTunes?	8	35%	15	65%
3. Did you find accessing pronunciation-related podcasts in iTunes an easy procedure?	15	65%	8	35%
4. Are you satisfied with the sound quality of podcasts?	22	96%	1	4%
Total		61%		39%

two subjects were unsure of any improvement in pronunciation. With regards to the identification of the different accents of English, there were 19 (83%) subjects who believed that podcasts could help identify the various accents of English. Seventeen students planned to continue listening to podcasts, representing 74%. The remaining group, representing 26%, were unsure or disagreed. Of the total number of the participants, there were 13 subjects who felt comfortable listening to lecture-related materials at their

convenience. Table 3 above shows the integrated scores of attitudes towards podcasts.

The Figure 1 below demonstrates the positive and negative attitudes towards podcasts:

#### **Closed-ended questions**

The second section is in the form of four closed-ended questions examining four aspects about podcasts; knowledge,

online subscription, ease of access and sound quality. Table 4 shows the subjects' responses.

As much as 48 % of the subjects had heard of podcasts before the technology was introduced to them in class. Only eight (48%) managed to subscribe to podcasts in iTunes while 15(65%) participants did not. As for the technical aspects of podcasts, there were 15 (65%) subjects who found accessing podcasts an easy procedure but eight found the process difficult. Regarding the sound quality of podcasts, up to 22 (96%) subjects were fairly satisfied with the sound quality of podcasts and only one single participant dissatisfied. The Figure 2 below shows the results of this section more clearly:

### Open-ended questions

The third section contains two open-ended questions about podcasts. As mentioned earlier it is intended to give the subjects the opportunity to express their comments freely about two main points. First, they are required to judge podcasts and to compare them as similar to or better than other listening resources in enhancing the skill of pronunciation. The second point is to evaluate their experience with podcasts as successful or unsuccessful. It is to be noticed that there were six students who did not do this section altogether. Table 3 sums up the answers of the other 17 students.

The chart below demonstrates the positive and negative attitudes towards podcasts:

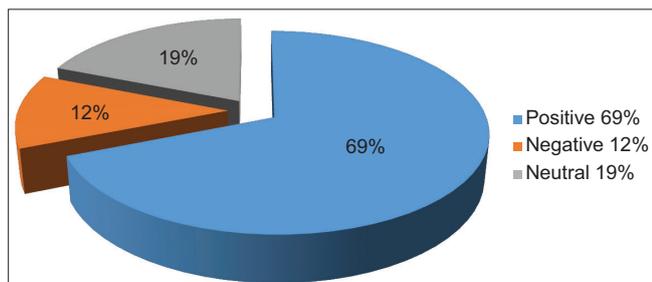


Figure 1. Attitudes towards podcasts

## CONCLUSION

### Attitudes Towards Podcasts as a Facilitator for Proper Pronunciation

#### Likert- scale statements

An examination of the pie chart in chapter four showed that the positive attitudes gained 69% whereas the negative attitudes gained 12%. The first three items which stated that podcasts were interesting, useful and enjoyable received a high positive attitude rate ranging from 61% up to 83% and a very low negative attitude rate ranging from 2% down to 0%. This fact implies that the subjects were highly oriented to CALL tools and have a good attitude towards utilizing the new technology. This result could be ascribed to the outburst in technological devices and smart phones that support podcasting along with students' ownership and interest in such devices. Moreover, the plethora of benefits and features of such tools makes the use of devices interesting, enjoyable and useful. In Ducate & Lomicka (2009) study, participants perceived podcasts as positive and enjoyable.

Items 5 and 9 discussed the integration of podcasts as a supplement in listening courses. Nineteen students (83%) supported the idea of integrating podcasts in a listening and speaking course and 13 (57%) felt comfortable listening to lecture-related podcasts. This finding shows that students are no longer restricted to language laboratories as a resort for listening materials since podcasts have been easily accessible. Similarly, Stanley's (2006) study proved that podcasts could be used as a supplement to textbook materials and a source for authentic listening materials. Jessica and Anne (2010) pointed out that one of the benefits of integrating podcasts in a pronunciation course was the opportunity for learners to recycle the course material by reformulating the content in their own words.

Items 4 and 7 covered two functions that podcasts can provide for EFL learners. Podcasts could serve as ubiquitous

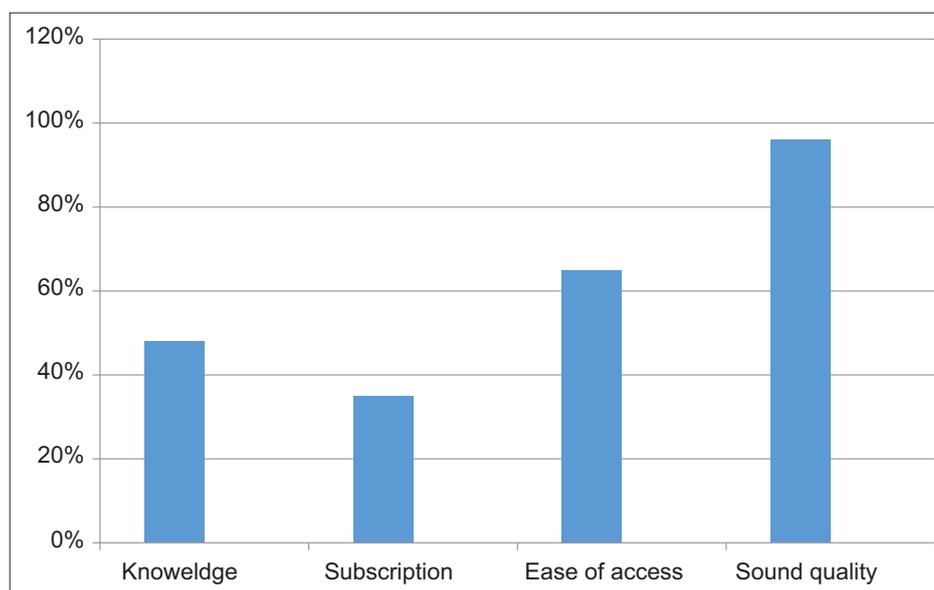


Figure 2. Percentage of closed-ended questions

learning tools and identify the various accents. Seventeen students reinforced the former function and 19 supported the latter function. None of the students disagreed with the role that podcasts could play in helping to identify the different accents of English. Such a result is an indicative of the students' belief in the usefulness of portability of podcasts since they have been raised in a media-rich environment and have lived in an information-centric world.

The two items 6 and 8 are the most crucial ones since they evaluate the improvement in pronunciation gained throughout listening to podcasts during the employment of the current study. Only eight subjects felt their pronunciation improved, two were unsure, and as many as 13 students reported experiencing no improvement in pronunciation. There are a number of possible justifications as to why these participants did not experience substantial improvement in their pronunciation. First, perhaps the six-week period is an insufficient amount of time for pronunciation to improve, especially in an intermediate language course where the focus is not specifically dedicated to this skill. This result contradicted those of Graeme (2006), and Lord (2008) where students succeeded in improving their pronunciation. However, the focus in those three studies was not on global pronunciation but rather exclusively on specific phonemes and phonetics. The high rate of attitude (74%) that item 8 gained showed the subjects' readiness to keep on listening to podcasts in order to improve their pronunciation.

In a nutshell, despite the low rate of improvement in pronunciation, the overall findings proved that the attitudes towards podcasts as a facilitator for proper pronunciation were positive. This fact is compatible with what the researcher hypothesized earlier in this study.

### ***Closed-ended questions***

This section contained items that targeted four aspects about podcasts. These aspects are knowledge, subscription, ease of access and sound quality. Almost half of the subjects (52%) never heard of podcasts before. This result would give this project a plus point since it introduced a new technological innovation that had come to the scene since 2005 and had been utilized by many language educators specifically in the industrial world countries. Additionally, students are acquainted to a new exposure source to a foreign language. The second item, which sought to examine the number of participants who subscribed to pronunciation-related podcasts, was meant to measure how interested in podcasts the subjects were. Only eight subjects managed to subscribe to podcasts. The third item was about how easy it was to access podcasts. As much as 65% of the subjects found accessing podcasts an easy task. This outcome would encourage learners to keep on using podcasts. Regarding sound quality, which is the most salient feature of podcasts, received a very high agreement rate representing 91% of the total number of subjects. Technically speaking, this good sound quality would allow podcasts to surpass all other sound formats.

### ***Open-ended questions***

As stated earlier, this section was meant to give the opportunity to the participants to add any comments regarding

podcasts. It contained two questions about what other sources that the participants depended on to learn pronunciation and what their evaluation and feedback about podcasts were. It had been found that there were six students who did not do this section altogether. In response to the first question, students mentioned a number of resources such as TV, radio, movies, songs, YouTube, videogames, academic lectures and podcasts. The majority of them considered movies as a resource for learning pronunciation. Responding to the other question, only one student did not see his experience with podcasts as successful. The other six students described their experience as successful which would be a strong indicator of the efficiency of podcasts. It is to be noted here that the last section contained some conflicting responses that are somewhat unjustifiable.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

The findings suggest that podcasting alone is not sufficient to improve pronunciation over an academic semester. If teachers want their students to improve their pronunciation skills, with the help of audio aids such as podcasts, they are recommended to provide them with more focused and consistent pronunciation practice in class. However, the same results of this study are promising and encouraging not only because they are in compliance with previous research findings indicating that EFL students have the potential to increase performance in pronunciation skills but also for the role that new technologies such as podcasting can play in the process of language development in general. Accordingly, the researcher suggests that EFL instructors should integrate podcasting into listening and speaking classes in order to lead to more advances in pronunciation skills. Precisely, a listening and speaking course is ideally a ripe environment for the employment of course-related podcasts as an authentic listening material supplement. Usually, listening and speaking skills textbooks are accompanied with CDs or MP3s, but those aids cannot surpass the many ubiquitous features of podcasts. Nowadays, the internet is abundant with pronunciation-specific podcasting providers that teach the various components of pronunciation. Language educators should keep up with new CALL innovations as today's students do demand the usage of technological applications in classrooms and if educators do not provide it, they are more liable to be left behind in the archaic dust.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Addressing some of the limitations in this study would provide useful information for future researches and add to the growing number of empirical studies on implementing podcasting in FL classes. When considering the final results of this study, the following limitations should be taken into consideration:

1. The limited number of the participants would hinder generalization of the results.
2. The lack of control group to determine if improved pronunciation and attitudes are truly the outcome of listening to podcasts would not give a clear-cut result.

### Suggestions for Future Studies

This exploratory survey could open the doors to more comprehensive studies for further research. A similar experimental study with a larger number of participants could come up with more generalizable results. Further studies on podcasting that include more students, more levels and more raters could result in clear and dependent outcomes. Also, such suggested studies could reveal whether students' pronunciation might improve over a year or even longer. Since the current study had not emphasized any particular pronunciation features, a more detailed examination of the acquisition of particular pronunciation features (segmental and suprasegmentals), as well as the impact podcasting can have on these features would be worth investigation. It would be useful to follow up the results of similar studies in order to assist learners and educators to model strategies for using podcasts in EFL contexts.

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## APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Questionnaire Form

Dear student,

You are invited to participate in this research study. Your participation in this study is absolutely voluntary. This questionnaire aims to elicit the attitudes of students of English towards pronunciation and towards podcasts. I do appreciate your contribution to this study by completing the attached questionnaire. For this study to achieve a high level of credibility, please make sure that your responses reflect your real knowledge, not what is ideal or what is supposed to be. Because first responses are real in most cases, please don't refer back to your previous responses or try to change them. The information obtained from this study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings and conferences. However, your identity will remain confidential. Thanks in advance for your valuable contribution to this study which will hopefully benefit the field of language learning.

NAME:.....

## PART I

## PART 1: (Adapted from Elliott's Pronunciation Attitude Inventory)

Please answer all items using the following response categories:

5 = Always or almost always true of me

4 = Usually true of me

3 = Somewhat true of me

2 = Usually not true of me

1 = Never or almost never true of me.

Statement	5	4	3	2	1
1 I'd like to sound as native as possible when speaking English.					
2 Acquiring proper pronunciation in English is important to me.					
3 I will never be able to speak English with a good accent.					
4 I believe I can improve my pronunciation skills in English.					
5 I believe more emphasis should be given to proper pronunciation in class.					
6 One of my personal goals is to acquire proper pronunciation skills and preferably be able to pass as a near-native speaker of English.					
7 I try to imitate English speakers as much as possible.					
8 Communicating is much more important than sounding like a native speaker of English.					
9 Good pronunciation skills are not as important as learning vocabulary and grammar.					
10 I want to improve my accent when speaking English.					
11 I'm concerned with my progress in my pronunciation of English.					
12 Sounding like a native speaker of English is very important to me.					

## PART II

## Section one:

Please tick the option that best conveys your opinion.

Strongly agree SA, agree A, neutral N, disagree D, and strongly disagree SD.

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
1 I found listening to podcasts interesting.					
2 I found listening to podcasts useful.					
3 I enjoyed the podcasts as a whole.					
4 Podcasts provide the opportunity for learning pronunciation anytime anywhere.					
5 I like the idea of integrating podcasts in a listening and speaking course.					
6 I felt my pronunciation enhanced when I listened to podcasts.					
7 I believe listening to different podcasts helps me identify the different accents of English.					
8 I plan to continue listening to podcasts in order to improve my pronunciation.					
9 I feel comfortable listening to lectures-related material in my own time using podcast.					

### Section Two:

#### Closed-ended Questions: Answer with Yes or NO:

QUESTION	YES	NO
1 Have you heard about podcasts before the podcasts were introduced to you?		
2 Have you subscribed to English-related podcasts in iTunes?		
3 Did you find accessing pronunciation-related podcasts in iTunes an easy procedure?		
4 Are you satisfied with the sound quality of podcasts?		

### Section Three

#### Open-ended Questions:

Please answer the questions: (You can write in Arabic if you want).

1. What ways do you use in order to acquire the proper pronunciation of English?

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2. How do you view your experience of learning pronunciation through podcasts? Was it successful?

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## APPENDIX B: THE FIGURES

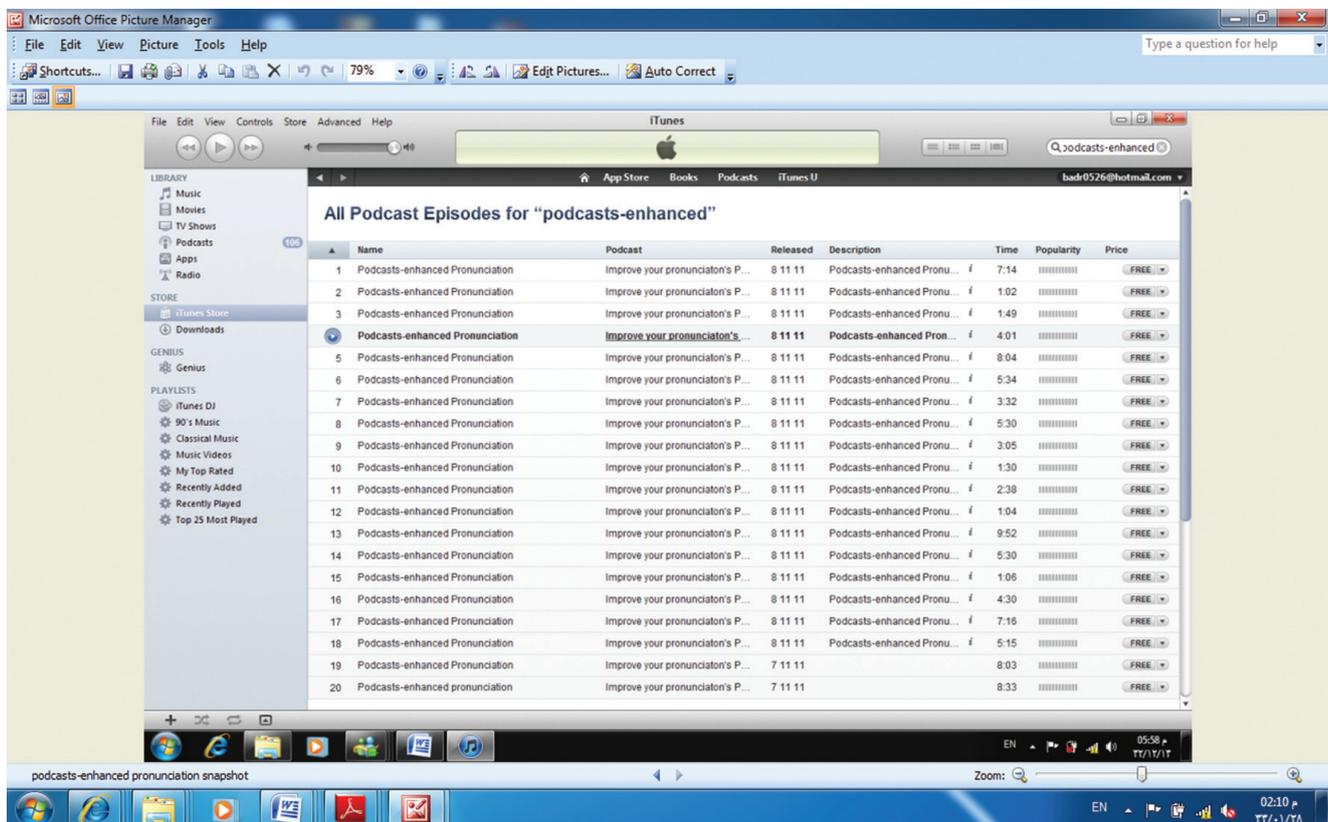


Figure 1. A snapshot of the course-related podcasts on iTunes

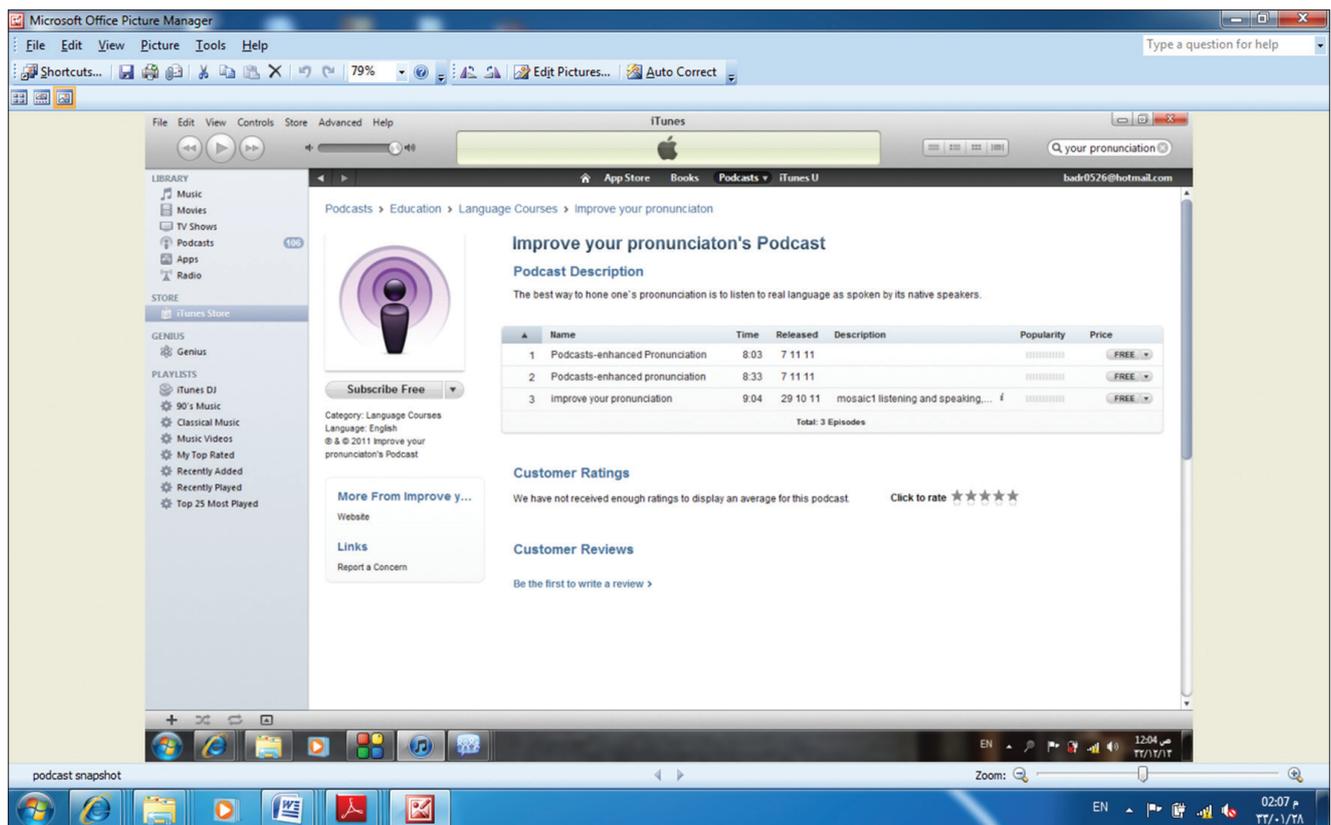


Figure 2. A snapshot of the podcasts logo on iTunes

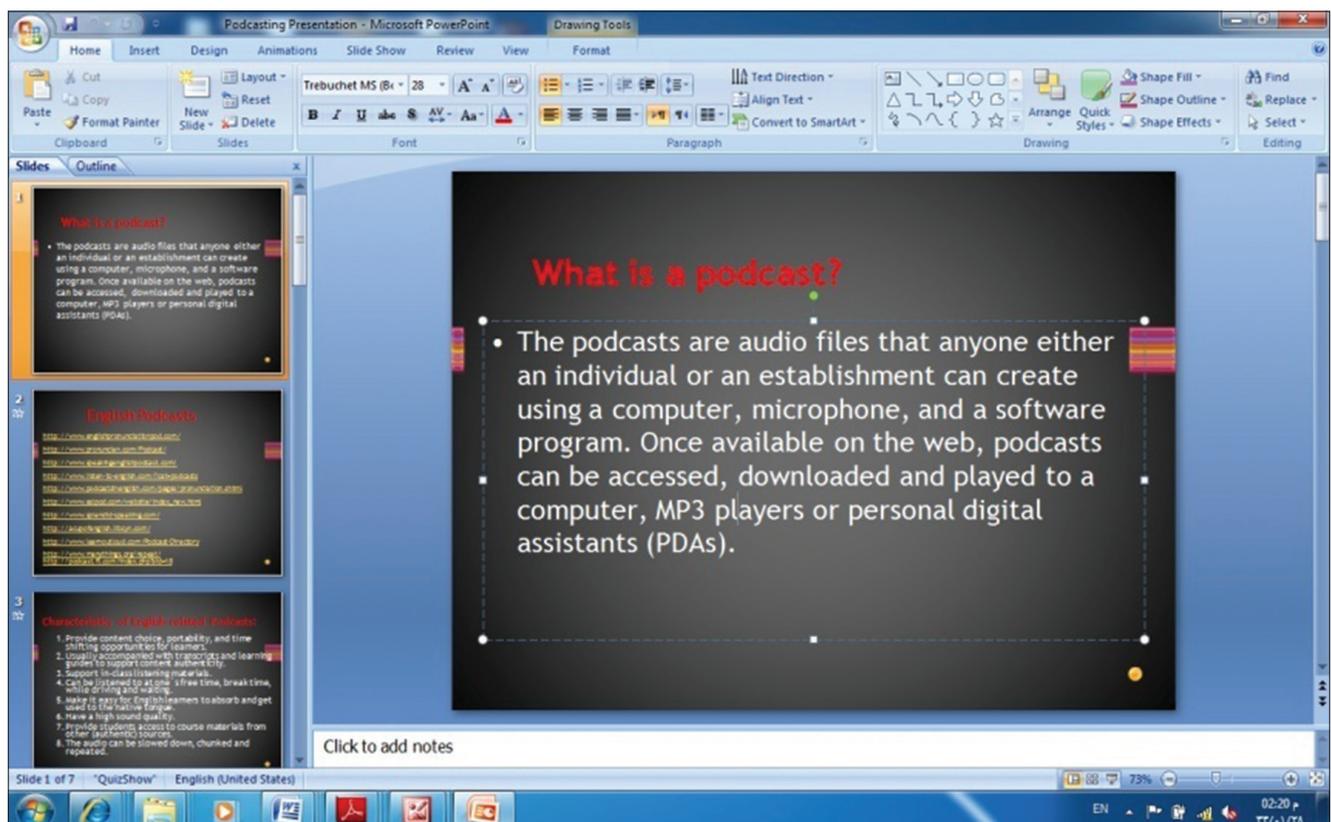


Figure 3. A snapshot of the podcasting presentation

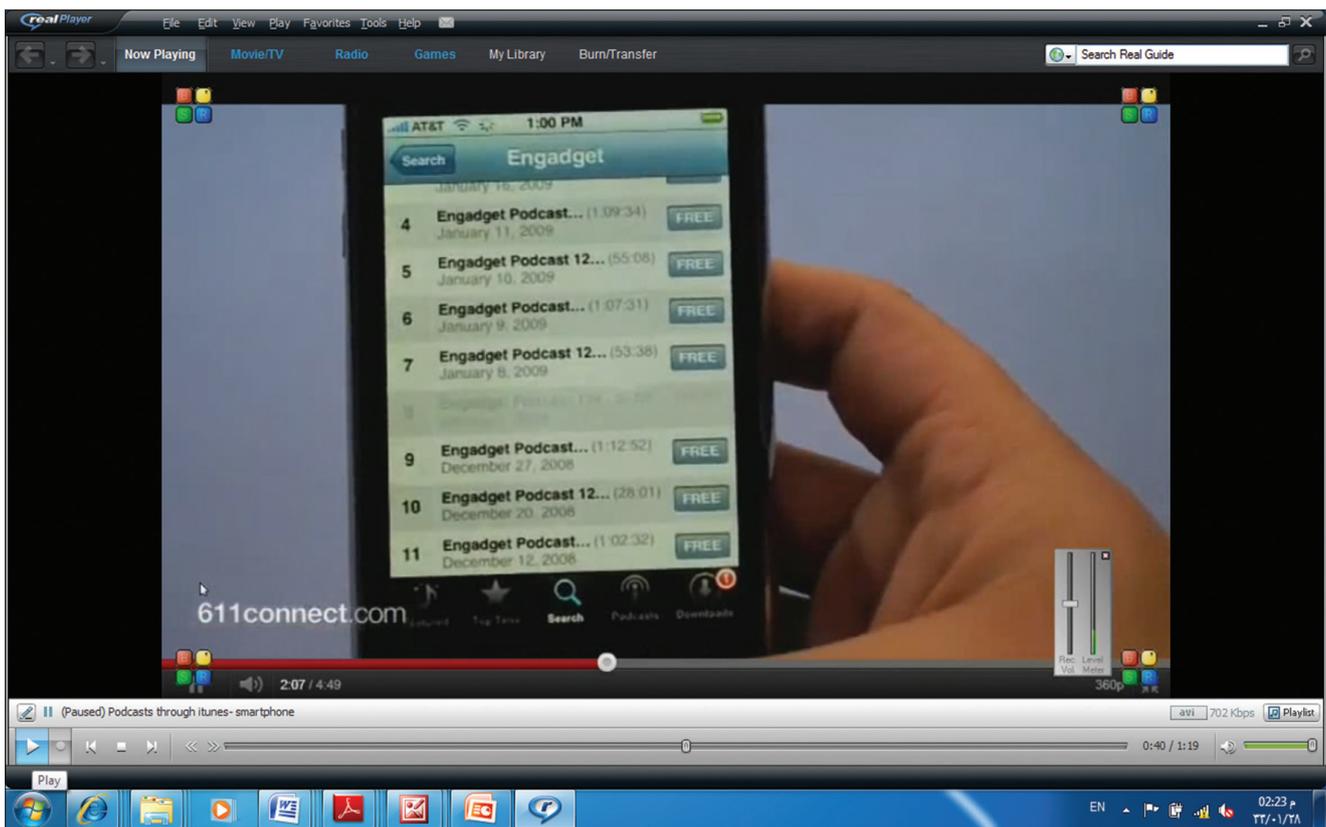


Figure 4. A snapshot of how to access podcasts via a smart phone



Figure 5. A snapshot of how to access podcasts via a computer