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**Using Audio Podcast-Based Learning in Enhancing EFL Students'  
Listening Comprehension:  
EFL Sophomores' Choices and Perspectives**

Dissertation Submitted to the English Department as a Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Didactics of Foreign Languages

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This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved family and for everyone who gave me the power to achieve this work.

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I dedicate my work to my father. Finally, I have realized our dream. To my life's candle, my mother who believes in me. Also, to my older sister Rebiha Hermouche who had been the shoulder I relied upon, and to the rest of my brothers and sisters for their motivation. Thank you for being part of my life.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Listening is regarded to be a crucial skill that EFL learners seek to develop in order to understand the speaker and to avoid communication breakdowns. Podcast is one of the ICT tools that have proved to be effective in learning English, especially the listening skill. However, some Algerian curriculum designers are still not aware of this technology and its benefits. Thus, this study has investigated the perceptions from using podcast to enhance EFL learners' listening comprehension. For this sake, a questionnaire was distributed to 108 second year Bachelor students and an interview was conducted with 5 students as well at Bordj Bou Arreridj University. The results showed that students had positive attitudes towards the use of podcast to improve their listening comprehension. Although, there were some challenges faced by students in listening to podcast such as lack of concentration, the speaker's accent and speed, yet they consider it as a useful tool that facilitates learning listening courses.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ICT tools	Information and Communication Technology
LMD	Licence Master Doctorate
L2	Second Language ESL English as Second Language
B.B.A	Bordj Bou Arreridj
FLFL	Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social sciences FM Frequency Modulation
E-tools	Electronic Tools

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# CHAPTER 1

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Technology has become a vital part of human beings' daily life since it is used in all fields. For seniors, it has created amazing tools and resources, putting useful information at people's fingers to develop and change the world. Technology has paved the way for multi-functional devices too; Internet and smartphones are some notable examples. Without technology, life would not be easier, faster, and better. According to Zuckerberg (2014), technology is seen as a mostly positive force in the world.

Internet is the most recent and interactive innovation globally because of its wide use in all different fields. According to Bill Gates (2013), the internet is becoming the town square for the global village of tomorrow. All limits that served as barriers between individuals have been removed, people can communicate from one country to another in the world, and everything is currently available to everyone. Without it, all official work and education would have been difficult to continue during the pandemic. Additionally, many systems and machines cannot function and certain works cannot be done without an Internet connection. That what makes the network is important in everyone's life.

The most accessible and advanced form of technology around the world is smartphone, also called 'Cell phone' or 'Mobile Phone'. Smartphone include applications and advanced features (Herdiyanti, 2014). In earlier times, mobile phone uses were limited. But now due to its connection to the internet, it is not only used for communication and for several purposes, such as online tickets booking, web browsing, video calling, and for educating. Because of these benefits, it can be said that smartphones have become the essential components of people's daily life.

Therefore, technology plays an important role in education. It has become an integral part of it. Teachers and learners use it as a reliable source for their needs. It makes the process of teaching and learning easier and more productive. Teachers use it for a better presentation of information and as a facilitator to communicate and collaborate with their students as well as other teachers-through online forums, whereas learners find it helpful in their studies, researches, and English language skills improvement. All of these advantages are done using online sources such as web blogs, social media, and podcasts.

The podcast was developed in 2004 as a new version of radio. This one is pre-recorded and on-demand audio or video content that can be edited and accessible to listeners at any time, by downloading that episode and streaming it later on as compared to radio. It is created by a host and published episode by episode in a form of series that discusses different topics. The term “podcasting” is a blend of the words “iPod” and “broadcasting” (O'Bryan & Hegelheimer, 2008), which relate not only to iPod and software to allow the automatic downloading of audio files for listening at the user's convenience.

Nowadays, Podcast is becoming a common tool that people rely on for entertainment, hearing updates and news, or learning. EFL students rely on it to improve their listening comprehension, in a way that they get exposed to a wide variety of communications, which will help them familiarize themselves with the rhythm and the pace of the English language, and learn some of the common expressions that native speakers use as well.

Mastery of listening skills to comprehend the English language is one of the main objectives for all EFL learners. Therefore, teachers should engage their students using suitable strategies. One of these strategies is the use of ICT tools which are considered helpful in education. The podcast is among these tools that can be used as an effective teaching aid in developing EFL students' listening comprehension, for instance, when students listen to podcast they will enable them to achieve success in communicating with others.

Students consider listening as their favorable and less tedious skill, automatically they will find implementing podcast in pre-and-post listening performance effective in language learning. By listening to the podcast, the students will have a rich English vocabulary, and they will learn English quickly, easily, and naturally. Therefore, this research attempts to identify the students' perceptions in pre-and-post implementing podcast in listening performance.

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Listening skill is one of the fourth skills that help EFL learners master the English language. Furthermore, listening is the key to improve the listening comprehension of learners; as a result, they would improve their communication. If the listening process is not effective, the EFL learners will not receive the message effectively. University of Bordj Bou Arreridj still adopt traditional methods in their teaching of listening skills. One effective method that helps the learners develop listening skills is using podcast in the classroom. The problem posed is, do podcast considered as an effective method to improve the listening comprehension of EFL

learners? And to what extent can podcast enhance their listening? This is a challenging issue to discuss in the current study.

### **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This research addresses the following questions:

1- What are the students' perceptions in pre-and post-implementing podcast in listening performances?

2- What are the students' challenges in listening to podcast?

### **1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The main objectives of the present research are as follows:

1- To identify students' perceptions in pre-and-post implementing podcast in listening performances.

2- To investigate students' challenges in listening to podcast.

### **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study intends to raise the curriculum designers' attention to integrate ICT tools within the study curriculum because they make teaching and learning easier and more effective. Using audio podcast in classrooms or laboratories will help EFL students develop their listening comprehension to be able to criticize the information obtained, decode and memorize words, and learn the pattern of stress and intonation used when people are speaking.

### **1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

This current study was conducted at Bordj Bou Arreridj University to identify and investigate second-year English students' perceptions and challenges towards using audio podcast-based learning in developing their listening comprehension. The students who are trained and interviewed are participants from the faculty of letters and foreign languages at English department.

### **1.7 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

This study is limited to EFL second-year LMD students of Bordj Bou Arreridj University who are trained and interviewed only to identify their perceptions towards using podcast to

enhance their listening skills and to investigate their challenges in listening to audio podcast. Thus, this study cannot cover all the students or other universities and cannot be generalized to other contexts.

## **1.8 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS**

The key terms used in the present study include, Audio Podcast-Based Learning, Listening Comprehension, Sophomores, Perspectives, Perceptions, and Challenges.

### **1.8.1 Audio Podcast-Based Learning**

The digital audio podcast file can be used through free internet and listened to on any device that supports MP3/MP4 files such as computer, Smartphone, and MP3 player (Samad, Bustari, & Ahmad, 2017). It can also be utilized as an extra learning resource to support the teaching and learning process in producing language skills and having a better understanding. According to the current study, the audio podcast is a learning medium that can help second-year EFL students develop their listening comprehension by implementing it in classrooms.

### **1.8.2 Listening Comprehension**

Highrich (2007) defines listening comprehension as the ability to understand and comprehend spoken information. According to the context of this study, listening comprehension refers to the sophomores' understanding of the information provided by the speaker, including accent and pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary that can advance language learning.

### **1.8.3 Sophomores**

The term sophomores are a combination of two Greek words 'sophos' and 'moros', meaning a wise fool (Sokolowski, 2018). Sophomores in this study, refer to second-year EFL students who are trained and interviewed at the English Department of Letters and Languages faculty at Mohamed El Bachir El Ibrahimi University, Bordj Bou Ariridj to identify and investigate their perceptions and challenges towards listening to audio podcast as a learning tool.

### **1.8.4 Perspectives**

Perspective means understanding that what you see may differ from what someone else sees ("Level 1 Visual PT"; Masangkay et al., 1974; Moll & Tomasello, 2006). In this research, perspectives refer to the students' willingness pertaining to the audio podcast.

### **1.8.5 Perceptions**

Démuth (2016) believes that perception signifies a unique source of how to experience something. In this study, perceptions refer to the sophomores' awareness and comprehension towards implementing podcast in pre-and-post listening performance.

### **1.8.6 Challenges**

Challenges are situations that need mental or physical efforts to overcome (Online Cambridge Dictionary, 2021). In this research, challenges refer to the difficulties that sophomores face in listening to audio podcast.

## **1.9 SUMMARY**

This chapter discusses the study's background, which deals with the effect of technology on the learning process by creating new tools such as podcast that becomes an appropriate tool used by people for many purposes, especially learning a foreign language. The problem posed in this study is highlighted in addition to the research questions, the research objectives, and the significance of the research. Lastly, the scope and limitation of the study as well as the definition of key terms are presented.



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents a comprehensive review of the literature concerned with audio podcast use to enhance listening comprehension in English Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. It begins with an overview of learning media and an exploration of technology role, particularly in the context of language learning. It discusses the different types of listening, including interactive and intensive listening, as well as the cognitive and metacognitive strategies involved in listening comprehension. Furthermore, it examines the challenges faced by EFL learners while listening and emphasizes the importance of teaching listening in EFL classrooms using ICT tools, particularly podcast, which was defined and categorized into different types. Lastly, several studies on students' perceptions towards the implementation of podcast to enhance their listening comprehension were presented.

#### **2.2 LEARNING MEDIA**

Research suggests that several things affect visual attention. A group of elements known as formal features includes the usage of various speech kinds (such as children, adult males, and adult females), laughter, sound effects, various forms of music, animation, cuts, zooms, and pans, among other things. Children's fleeting visual attention may leave the display, but data suggests that they constantly scan the presentation at a surface level, allowing particular aural cues to refocus their attention. Besides that, women's and children's voices, laughter, strange voices, sound effects, auditory shifts, and visual movement are characteristics that are linked to the beginning of visual attention. In addition, new media also facilitate a broader range of assessment modes. The machine itself can provide some feedback using natural language processing algorithms, and this feedback is computable. There is also the possibility of constant, machine-mediated human feedback (Surowiecki, 2004).

Media can be described and distinguished by characteristic capabilities that can be used to process or operate on the available symbol systems. Thus, information can be searched or its pace of progression changed with videodisc in a way that is not possible with broadcast video. Including processing attributes in the definition of media can create useful distinctions between videodisc and broadcast video, even though both have access to the same symbol systems. Computers are, of course, particularly distinguished by their extensive processing

capabilities rather than their access to a particularly unique set of symbol systems. According to Vygotsky (1978), in the zone of proximal development, the learner may eventually decide to include them into their cognitive process repertoire. This review will look at studies that demonstrate how particular media processing skills can change and improve the dynamic features of learners' mental models. This view of learning with media as a continuous, reciprocal interaction between person and situation-between learner and mediated information is compatible with Snow's (1989) evolving aptitude-treatment interaction theory.

## **2.3 TECHNOLOGY FOR LANGUAGE EDUCATION**

Technology has had a profound impact on the way individuals engage in communication with each other. It is a helpful tool for language learning environment. Many researchers have looked into the way technology and pedagogy interacts. The TPACK framework, developed by Punya Mishra and Matthew J. Koehler, explores the interaction between technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge. TPACK emphasizes the need for teachers to proficiently integrate technology within their teaching methodologies by considering the combination of technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge required to facilitate effective teaching and learning. Moreover, technology and pedagogy are recognized as inevitably, entangled, allowing for more meaningful analyses of educational activity (Cousin, 2005). Anderson and Dron (2011) use the metaphor of dance, in which 'technology sets the beat and creates the music, while the pedagogy defines the moves. Furthermore, it is more possible that teachers can improve their courses and those language learners have more possibilities to be exposed to the target language in a variety of way such as news articles, podcasts, songs, role-plays, discussions due to the innovation and integration of technology into pedagogical settings. As a result, environments of language learning and instruction can become more interactive and receptive to students' requirements.

Additionally, some studies have explored the effectiveness of different technological tools, such as podcasts, chat rooms, social network sites, wikis, and blogs on teaching language. Warschauer & Healey (1998) examined the influence of interactive whiteboards on students' engagement and learning in high school classrooms. The findings revealed that incorporating interactive whiteboards enhanced student engagement. Another study focused on investigating the effectiveness of mobile learning apps in higher education. The results indicated that the utilization of mobile learning apps enhanced student engagement and increased accessibility to course materials. Technology allows expanding thinking about evidence. Digital systems allow capturing stream or trace data from students' interactions.

This data has the potential to provide insight into the processes that students use to arrive at the final product (traditionally the only graded portion).

## **2.4 LISTENING SKILL**

Listening skills play a vital role in communication with other people to achieve social purposes. The more the environment is rich, the more the learners develop their stimuli and are able to acquire listening skills. Moreover, practicing is essential in the acquisition process, if they do not practice manually, it will diminish. Despite its importance, listening is probably the most neglected skill or rather the least explicit (Vandergrift, 2004). Goh and Taib (2006) claimed that learning to listen well can be challenging, particularly for beginners and intermediate students. This could be the outcome of various aspects, such as; emotion and cognition. Thus, it is recommended that teachers encourage students to assume responsibility for their listening development. Cameron (2001) revealed that listening is the receptive use of language, and since the aim is understanding speech so, meaning is given importance over language. A study by Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011) stated that listening involves three main important elements; thoughts, feelings, and intentions. These three elements need active participants, work, and action to be achieved.

## **2.5 TYPES OF LISTENING**

There are many types of listening, which are selective listening, intensive listening, interactive listening, discriminative listening, listening for comprehension, critical listening, and appreciative listening. Each type helps students to enhance a range of skills and strategies. The major theme of this section is that the sorts of listening to that take place in language classes are constrained compared to those that take place outside the classroom. In addition, teachers are limited in their selection of listening passages by the requirements of the comprehension technique, and the activities they are given typically involve answering specific questions or filling in blanks. There will be a case made for more flexibility in the recordings utilized and the required responses. The two main types of listening discussed are interactive listening, intensive listening.

### **2.5.1 Interactive Listening**

Interactive listening focuses on helping them create good replies. The effectiveness of the learners' participation in group discourses can be improved by their awareness of the options and techniques available to listeners. This significantly expands the account provided by Ur

(1984). She highlights three characteristics that refer to as the "real-life listening" characteristics: the ability to access contextual cues, input in the form of brief chunks, and the requirement for reciprocity and reaction from the listener.

### **2.5.2 Intensive Listening**

Intensive listening is defined as the formal input of activities that seek to concentrate learners' attention on elements of the language system. Listening intently for specific sounds, words, phrases, grammatical constructions, and pragmatic units is referred to as intensive listening. Although it may not appear necessary to listen intently in most ordinary settings, precised perception is necessary for comprehension and listening at a higher level. An important aspect of listening proficiency is the capacity to listen intently when called upon, such as when searching for precised details or identifying a particular word (Rost, 2013)

## **2.6 LISTENING COMREHENSION**

Many researchers have tackled the definition of the term "listening comprehension". Listening comprehension is a way of comprehending and interpreting spoken language, by being aware of speech sounds, understanding the meaning of specific words, and comprehending sentence syntax. Furthermore, it refers also to the capacity of understanding what the listener heard and their ability to retell the whole speech and rephrase it, but they may respell the sounds without deep comprehension of the speech. Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011) stated that listening comprehension is an active process in which the listener constructs meaning by using cues from contextual information and existing knowledge while relying upon numerous strategic resources to perform the task requirement.

## **2.7 DIAGNOSTIC APPROACH TO L2 LISTENING**

In L2 listening literature, a pre-set question-and-answer comprehension strategy has long been criticized. Field (1998) argues that comprehension questions merely test listening ability rather than teach it, with little or no regard for how answers were reached. However, in Japan, a recent study of English instruction at tertiary institutions Siegel (2014) found that comprehension questions are still used in the majority of listening lessons. Field (1998) suggests that by employing a diagnostic approach of listening by following up on how answers were reached; teachers can identify where comprehension broke down and focus on these areas for further instruction. Researchers currently rely on extensive experience when instructing second language listening. It embodies the idea that exposure to numerous spoken texts in the target language over time helps learners' listening abilities. The reader's aptitude

for handling texts of escalating linguistic difficulty is used to evaluate the learner's progress. Efforts are made to grade the texts in terms of the frequency and complexity of the language they employ.

## **2.8 A PROCESS VIEW OF LISTENING**

A process view of listening refers to understanding listening as a dynamic and interactive activity involving multiple stages and components. Although a process view acknowledges that listening involves active engagement and cognitive processing, listening is not considered a passive act of merely receiving information. A process view of listening discusses two main elements: decoding (sound, syllables, and words) and grammar and intonation use.

### **2.8.1 Decoding: Sound, Syllabus, and Word**

An outline for listening decoding offers a thorough, convincing, and well-illustrated explanation of why this is the case before suggesting activities to add a new dimension to listening lessons and get students ready for speaking English outside the classroom. In these situations, spoken English must be understood as it is produced, without the priming and support typically provided in listening lessons by pre-teach.

### **2.8.2 Using Grammar and Intonation**

Pronunciation and intonation have a central role. The ability to modify the pitch and tone of speech is defined as intonation. The major components of messages, words, and phrases must be stressed correctly. The rise and fall in pitch indicate several changes. Intonation is when people hear certain accented words as prominent, whereas, knowing the language pretty well allows the listener to recognize where one word ends and another begins without needing to hear every single sound in every single phrase. Besides that, intonation has a relationship with pronunciation. Listening requires careful attention to pronunciation issues. The main issues and problems in learning pronunciation are students having a difficult time hearing pronunciation features, detecting the various patterns of rising and falling tones or hearing intonation.

## **2.9 STRATEGIES IN SECOND LANGUAGE LISTENING**

Teachers should help the learners develop vocabulary grammar and phonology before they teach students listening strategies. According to Vandergrift (1999), the development of strategy is significant for the training of listening, enabling learners to guide and evaluate their comprehension and responses. There are three categories of listening comprehension

strategies: cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective. Based on the skill level of the students, these strategies may differ. There have been numerous studies about how learners utilize listening techniques. Vandergrift (1999) said that metacognitive strategies lead to listening achievement when they deal with cognitive strategies. Less efficient learners utilized cognitive and memory strategies most frequently and social strategies least frequently. The more efficient learners often applied strategies. They used top-down and metacognitive strategies which are related to the learners' listening skills. The less efficient learners did not use top-down strategies but utilized bottom-up strategies (Graham, Santos, & Vanderplank, Shang, 2008).

### **2.9.1 Cognitive Strategies**

Cognitive strategies mean to understand and store information in the short or long-term memory for eventual use. Comprehension starts with the data that has been received; comprehension is evaluated as a series of formation stages and a decoding procedure. A cognitive strategy is a problem-solving method that learners apply to deal with the learning activity and facilitate the learning of knowledge (Bingol, Celik, Yildiz, & Mart, 2014). Derry and Murphy (1986) defined cognitive strategies as problem-solving techniques that learners use for the acquisition of knowledge or skill. Furthermore, cognitive strategies are connected to learning activities and involve using or modifying the learning materials directly. According to Goh (1998), learners utilize cognitive strategies to assist their process, keep, and remember new information.

In listening, there are two types of cognitive strategies: bottom-up and top-down. Bottom-up strategies are defined as word-for-word translation. Controlling voice rate, repeating the spoken text, and focusing on prosodic aspects of the text are examples of bottom-up techniques. However, top-down strategies include forecasting, speculating, clarifying, and visualization. Advanced students use more top-down tactics in comparison to novices.

### **2.9.2 Metacognitive Strategies**

Metacognitive strategies are management techniques the learners used to manage their learning by planning, checking, assessing, and changing. For instance, listeners use certain elements of the aural language input that facilitate the understanding of aural input when using metacognitive planning techniques. Mart (2014) stated that in this strategy, students are aware when listening to the text. Learners learn how to plan, monitor, and evaluate the collected information from the listening part. According to Wenden (1998), learners who use

metacognitive strategies can learn faster and integrate the knowledge outstandingly. Wenden believes that metacognition affects the self-esteem of students because poor metacognition makes students unable to develop proper self-esteem. The use of metacognitive strategy in the listening process has an important role; it develops learners' self-confidence, motivation, and ability to complete the activities easily. There are two types of metacognitive skills: knowledge of cognition and regulation of cognition. Regulation of cognition deals with what learners should do to listen appropriately, whereas knowledge of cognition deals with the learners' consciousness of what is going on.

## **2.10 THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING LISTENING SKILL IN EFL CLASSROOMS**

Previously, listening has received less attention than other language skills, but its importance in English teaching has recently been well established (Hogan, Adlof & Alonzo, 2014). Listening skills are receiving more attention as they represent one of the most important turning points in communication. Through exposure to audio media such as television, podcasts, films, music or other audio sources, students develop their listening comprehension skills. By listening to an English material, students will be able to distinguish tones and intonation, acquire vocabulary and develop an organized language (syntax, etc.) (Modi, 2005). Moreover, Mike (2013) found that regular and sustained listening to a variety of authentic English audio and visual materials help the students form their own sentences faster and better when practicing adequately listening comprehension in English.

## **2.11 LISTENING SKILL CHALLENGES**

Unlike other skills; speaking, reading, and writing, listening is not easy and requires much concentration effort to stand in the way of effective listening. Listeners may encounter challenges within outside the workplace.

A study done by Nuriah (2021) at Nurul Huda University, Indonesia, aimed at understanding the problems that students encounter when listening to the daily situational topics. Thereby, a questionnaire was administered to 34 students in the second semester. The research resulted in 30 problems while listening to daily situational topics. These problems are categorized as follows, with their analyses.

### **2.11.1 Physiological Challenges**

These challenges are related to the human body and mind (memory, attention, and perception). They may result from individuals' personal discomfort, caused by ill-health, hearing problems or deficiencies. 34% of students feel tired when they listen to a long speech. 88% feel anxious when they do not understand the speaker (Nuriah, 2021). The interviewee in this study claimed that the quality of the sound or the headphones he uses makes him lose concentration.

### **2.11.2 Physical and environmental Challenges**

Refer to physical distractions that get in the way of listening such as telephone, noise, and the sound of an air conditioner. Also, poor lighting, uncomfortable, unhygienic, too-hot, or cold environment can affect listening comprehension. It was noticed that 97% of 34 students lose attention due to poor recording quality. The surrounding noise makes it difficult for 91% of 34 students to concentrate (Nuriah, 2021). In this study, one of the five interviewees mentioned that noise is the main difficulty of podcast listening.

### **2.11.3 Attitudinal Challenges**

When someone is occupied with others or work, he/she cannot focus completely on what the speaker is saying. Another bad attitudinal difficulty is egocentrism, or the belief that a person has more knowledge than the speaker. People with this belief are close-minded and very poor listeners. 74% of 34 students could not concentrate when searching for answers and listening at the same time. 82% of 34 students had difficulty predicting what would happen next (Nuriah, 2021).

### **2.11.4 Wrong Assumptions**

Both sender and receiver contribute to the success of communication. Not only the speaker who takes responsibility but also the listener by paying attention, seeking clarification, and giving feedback. 34 students have poor grammar. 82% of students misunderstand when using unknown words. 82% of 34 students had difficulty recognizing words (Nuriah, 2021).

### **2.11.5 Cultural Challenges**

Accents can be obstacles to some listeners since they affect the understanding of different pronounced words. This problem of accents can appear between cultures and within a culture, such as India. 76% of 34 students have the difficulty of understanding when the speakers have different accents (Nuriah, 2021). The data revealed that the respondents insisted that their problems while listening to podcast are due to the host's accent and speed.



### **2.11.6 Bad Listening Habits**

Some people do not listen, they only hear. They fake attention to impress the speaker. Others may tend to listen to each and every detail, and as a result, they miss out the main point. 59% of 34 students lost their concentration when getting the expected answer (Nuriah, 2021).

### **2.11.7 Gender Challenges**

Cognitive and metacognitive studies were investigated by Minh Trang (2022) to explore gender differences in listening. The review reveals that males listen better than females due to the facts that males pay attention to facts while females like to listen to information.

### **2.11.8 Lack of Training**

Listening is not an innate skill; it is acquired and developed through practice and training, otherwise, it becomes a difficulty. Nadhira and Warni (2020) interviewed eight students at a Senior high school in West Java, Indonesia to explore the factors behind students' listening difficulties. Most of the interviewees mentioned that they only do the listening activities in school without practicing them at home.

## **2.12 THE USE OF ICT TOOLS IN TEACHING LISTENING SKILL**

Recently, teachers are gradually changing their teaching methods towards technologies and other available facilities. As there is a complete change in students' mentality and exposure, classroom lectures will remain no longer the same. Since students are familiar with and influenced by these technologies, they will find it easy and simple to work using them inside the classroom. If EFL teachers design a course using ICT tools based on the learners' interests and aspirations, they will reach effective and efficient goals and students will be impressed. The traditional ICT tools used for learning were television and radio, nowadays, the focus goes to computers, internet, applications, etc., to promote the proficiency of education at all levels. ICT refers to all communication technologies such as internet, networks, cell phones, software, and other resources that enable users to communicate, store, create, and manipulate information. English teachers utilize ICT in teaching almost every aspect of English language teaching, especially listening. Computer, smartphone, and podcast as one of these modern and effective technologies can enhance listening comprehension. Learners become active listeners that can learn and retain information and criticize what is said (Ludmilla, 2011). Furthermore, they help them recognize stress patterns, rhythm, intonation, basic vocabulary, rules and

patterns of words used for communication, and understand the meaning expressed in different grammatical forms. Cross-genre multimedia content enables a comprehensive experience of different voices with differing rates and speech styles. Although ICT tools offer many advantages in teaching listening skills, teachers should select their materials carefully.

### **2.12.1 Definition of Podcast**

According to Chan, Lee and Mcloughlin (2007), the term podcast combines two words iPod and broadcast. This medium can be an audio or video file published on the internet (Notes, 2005). It is available in a series of episodes accompanied by a file called a “feed” that allows subscribers to receive new episodes automatically. However, the listeners can choose the appropriate topic they want (Constantine, 2007), which allows all listeners with any level to join this resource on any devices that support MP3/MP4 players (Samad, Bustari, & Achmad, 2017) such as computers and smartphones. Podcast can be downloaded or uploaded. The new Oxford American Dictionary (Oxford University Press, 2005) defines a podcast as a downloadable digital audio file that can be played using a portable media player, handphone, computer, etc. (BBC,2005). EFL learners can use English podcast application and listen to a wide range of topics inside and outside the classroom as an entertainment form of education. This will help them learn everyday English, understand the conversation, and become familiarized with the target language. Even teachers can rely on the podcast as teaching material for a better understanding since they are readily available, easy to use, and inexpensive.

### **2.12.2 Types of Podcast**

Audio podcast, video podcast, and enhanced podcast (combines audio and video slides) are all different types of podcast (Size, 2006; Bolliger, et al., 2010; Shoar, et al., 2011; Darwis, 2016). The audio podcast contains only audio and requires small storage space. It can be played using MP3 players with or without an internet connection, which makes it easy to create and listen to. Another type of podcast is video podcast or “vodcast”. It consists of static image or video recording of the podcast hosts and guests. It is distributed primarily through YouTube or websites, which takes up more storage and needs active attention than the audio podcast. Some podcasts on YouTube and Spotify applications provide podcast transcripts to help listeners have a visual and textual understanding of the content. The last type is an enhanced podcast; this one comprises an audio file with links to images in the meantime. It includes slides, images, photographs, short videos, and chapters to make podcast more interactive.

### **2.12.3 The Use of Podcast in EFL Classrooms**

The podcast presents an ideal opportunity to promote authentic use of the target language as against the completion of dry exercises that have no context. It is used particularly for extensive listening activities, for the purpose of increasing students' interest in listening to English, and exposing them to native speakers' speech. However, listening to podcast inside and outclass offers varieties of English language into the classroom, which will effectively bridges the gap between the formal English that dominates most foreign language classrooms and the informal English used in most real-life communication situations (Stanley, 2006). Integrating technological tools such as podcast will facilitate the process of teaching and learning. It makes it easier for teachers to provide knowledge and for learners to acquire it. Teachers' use of this simple media in listening classes will motivate and encourage students to create their own podcasts as tasks, or they can make a discussion, an interview and share them with their classmates, such process mountain interaction. Gannod et al., (2008) added that through podcast, students discuss, reflect, problem solve, and collaborate in groups. Additionally, when implementing podcast for multiple instructional purposes (e.g., to complete specific assignments, for students video presentations, or for guest lectures) and not for reviewing only, students are likely to report academic benefits. The results obtained from Lonn, and Teasley (2009) study on the use of podcasting and its impact at American Wide Western University classrooms showed that both lecturers and learners agreed upon the benefits of podcasting for increasing their attention and focus on listening. In this sense, the use of podcast can be considered as a possible alternative and effective pedagogical innovation in EFL classrooms

### **2.12.4 Using Podcast in Listening Skill**

Podcast has been widely used in various fields, especially in EFL learning. Students use mainly podcast application to improve their English listening ability. Alm (2013) found that podcasts facilitated students' second language (L2) listening by providing a variety of contents that met their interests and could be applied in their daily life. Regarding this, the students' typical exposure to podcasts and daily talk engages them to a real language in use (Barjesteh & Ghasemina, 2019; Naidionova & Ponomarenko, 2018) which supports their daily communication. Moreover, podcast provides students with various accents to listen to (Abdulrahman et al., 2018; Barjesteh & Ghasemina, 2019). It improves students' listening comprehension through supporting the language areas of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation (Naidionova and Ponomarenko, 2018), and encourages them to practice

listening outside the classroom (Yoesta & Putri, 2018). Also, through exposing EFL students to different types of podcasts with distinctive sounds, rhythms, and intonation patterns, the learner becomes familiar with the sounds of the target language (Constantine, 2007).

Many researchers studied the use of podcast on students' listening skill. Among them Syofianis, Marhamah, and Okstasari (2015) experimental study that demonstrated a positive effect of the use of podcast on listening comprehension at the Islamic University of RIAU, in Indonesia. Another experimental study was conducted by Hussain and Ali (2019) at Saudi Arabia University concluded that audio-podcasts are useful tools for enhancing EFL learners' listening comprehension. A mixed-method study of seventy-eight high school students in Madrid (Spain) confirm that the creation and the use of podcast is beneficial for improving EFL linguistic competence, especially listening skill. A questionnaire was administered by Bartos (2008) to EFL students at Masaryk University (Czech Republic) to check their awareness of podcasting on listening practice. The result showed that students were aware of the vital role of listening on language learning, but were unfamiliar with the podcasting tool. Huntsberger and Stavitsky (2007) administered a survey to 209 undergraduate students in Journalism Education at Oregon University on the implementation of podcast to develop listening skills. Their findings indicated that students found podcasting informative and added value to their listening class experience. An experimental design was followed by Shih and Chiyan (2011) at the National Central University, In Taiwan, added to a questionnaire and an interview to explore the efficiency of using podcasts in language learning. Their findings revealed that podcasts support language learning, particularly, listening development.

## **2.13 STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS USING PODCAST IN CLASSROOMS**

Perception refers to someone's belief or opinion, how he/she sees, understands, and interprets something through the senses of smell, touch, taste, hearing, and sight. According to Démuth (2016) perception and sense signify a unique source of how to experience something. These definitions are in line with what the researcher wants to get from University students' perceptions of using podcast in EFL classrooms.

However, students' perceptions towards implementing such tool have been investigated in several studies, and in most cases. For example, a study by Hasan and Hoon (2013) from an intact class Putra University, Indonesia, investigated 53 second year undergraduate female and male respondents aged between 21 and 25 about their perceptions and attitudes towards

the use of podcast in English learning using an adapted close-ended questionnaire. Positive attitudes were documented. Some respondents found podcast an effective and an enjoyable method of learning. One student stated that “I think podcasts are an interesting way for ESL learners to improve their listening and should be used more often”. Another participant commented, “I might end up as a loyal podcast user in the future”. A survey questionnaire was distributed to 30 high school students in experiment class at University Islam As-Syafi'iyah, Indonesia to explore their perceptions on the use of podcast instruction in teaching listening. The results showed that students have positive attitudes towards the use of podcasts in listening courses. Another study of Kavaliauskienė and Anusienė (2009) at the faculty of social policy, Mykolas Romeris University, Lithuania indicated that 76% of the participants showed positive attitudes towards podcast implementation in developing learners' listening skills. Ince (2015) stated that the findings of his research showed that students generally rate this technology positively. Most of them found it easy to use, efficient in language learning and entertaining at the same time. A number of positive learning outcomes using podcasts in class as pedagogical implications are described in Phillips's study (2017) at University of Applied Sciences Burgenland, Austria. A case study carried out at Institute Agama Islam Negeri Palangka Raya Indonesia, 2018 found that students have willingness in using podcast as an alternative way to learn listening. Additionally, a survey research design was conducted by Nwachokor, Onah, and Uddin (2019) at Nsukka University, Nigeria to examine students' perceptions of vodcast and podcast as teaching materials. The students of this study agreed that vodcast and podcast increase productivity, promote creativity and facilitate academic learning. A case study design by Rachmaniputi, Purnawarman, and Gunawan (2021) investigates students' perceptions of podcasting in a classroom of 25 students at a public senior high school in Bandyung, Indonesia. The result of this study indicates that the students' feedbacks on the use of podcasts in the classrooms are generally positive. Another study by Harashap (2020) attempted to explore the impact of podcasting on the listening skills of students at Tadris Bahasa Inggris Sekolah University Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri Mandailing Natal using questionnaires and interview tools. Overall, most participants agreed that they like podcasts because they help them learn English and improve their listening comprehension.

The majority of the respondents of the current study mentioned that utilizing the podcast was an effortless and enjoyable tool that kept them engaged without encountering any feelings of boredom. As a result, the data revealed that all respondents have come to an agreement that they have enjoyed listening to podcast.

## **2.14 SUMMARY**

The chapter has reviewed the literature relating to the important variables of the current study. Firstly, the chapter began with a discussion of the learning media and technology for language learning. In addition, listening skill as one of the variables in the current study was reviewed such as types and strategies of listening skill, listening comprehension, listening difficulties, and the importance of teaching listening skill in EFL classrooms. Next, podcast definition, types, implementation in EFL classrooms to improve listening comprehension was discussed. This chapter concluded with some studies on students' perceptions pertaining to the use of podcast.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The current chapter presents the third part of the study, which is the theoretical part that aims at identifying students' perceptions in pre-and-post implementing podcast and investigating their challenges in listening to podcast at Mohamed El Bachir El Ibrahimi University. This chapter includes some methodological matters, such as a description of the research design and the research participants (sampling). An explanation of the methods used to carry out this study and an overview of data collection procedures and data analysis techniques.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

In this research, a mixed-method study was used. It was carried out using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The researchers used a questionnaire as a quantitative method to identify English sophomores' perceptions in pre-and-post implementing podcast and a semi-structured interview as a qualitative method to investigate students' challenges in listening to podcast. Qualitative research uses qualifying words and descriptions to investigate aspects of social reality. However, quantitative research makes use of measurement to investigate aspects of social reality (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000).

The research design of the current study is mixed methods sequential explanatory. It consists of two phases; qualitative followed by quantitative method 65 (Creswell et al., 2003).

#### **3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLING**

The population of this study consists of second-year EFL students in the English department at Mohamed El Bachir El Ibrahimi University, Bordj Bou Arreridj. They were enrolled in semester two during the academic year 2023/2024, and their total number was 270 in all four classes. Krejcie and Morgan's table was employed to determine the sampling number of the study; where 108 second-year EFL students were selected randomly as a sample for the present research. However, to determine the qualitative data sample, the researchers interviewed 5 students as well based on non-random sampling. According to Creswell (2012), this sampling method is based on certain characteristics the researcher seeks to have in some

individuals. These characteristics of the sample for this study refer to the students who were present during the training sessions and interested in listening to podcast.

Table 3.1: The population and the sample of the research

Students' level	Population	Sample size
Second year EFL students	270	108

Table 3.2: Table for determining size for a given population

N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	346
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	28	140	103	340	181	1000	278	4500	354
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	191	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	170	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	180	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	190	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	200	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	370
65	56	210	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	220	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	230	144	550	226	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	240	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	250	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	260	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	254	2600	335	100000	384

Note: "N" is the population size

"S" is a sample size

Source: (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970)

### 3.4 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Two instruments were employed in this study: a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview for EFL students to gather more information and to have enough data. The combination of both qualitative and quantitative approaches provides a better understanding of research problems than using each approach apart (Creswell & Clark, 2007).



### **3.4.1 Questionnaire**

A questionnaire (Appendix A) was employed in the current study with 108 EFL second-year students to identify their perceptions in pre-and-post implementing podcast to enhance their listening skills. The questionnaire items were adapted from the questionnaires of Rehouma (2019) and Djebbari (2016). It consists of 10 items that reveal the participants' perceptions towards implementing podcasts in EFL classrooms. In item 1, students were asked about their listening proficiency in using podcast, for instance, "listening proficiency in using podcast is good". In item 2, students were asked about the importance of podcast as a listening skill. Then, in items 3 and 4, students were asked if they had experienced listening courses using podcast and if they would like to use new technology in listening English, "I experienced listening courses using new technology like podcast". In items 5 and 6, students were asked if they heard of the podcast before and if it is easy to access. Moreover, in item 7, students were asked if they enjoyed listening to podcasts. In item 8, 9, 10, students were asked whether podcast is a helpful tool that can motivate them to learn English and enhance their listening skill, for example, "I think that podcast can develop my listening skill and motivate me to learn English". The participants were asked to respond to each item on a five-point Likert Scale, that is 1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, and 5= Strongly agree.

### **3.4.2 Interview**

The interview is a conversation between the interviewer and the interviewees (respondents). It is a method of data collection that is used by many researchers to have information about their study. A qualitative interview is when a researcher asks one or more participants questions and records their answers (Creswell, 2012). In this study, a semi-structured interview was conducted in addition to a questionnaire for the sake of collecting more data about the subject matter. The interview was administered to second-year English students. The researchers selected the respondents based on saturation of knowledge, and after they all signed the consent form (Appendix C) and agreed about their participation.

The semi-structured interview consisted of six (7) items (See Appendix B) adapted from Djebbari's interview (2016). They included both open-ended and close-ended questions which set to investigate the students' challenges in listening to the podcast. Both of interviewers and interviewees felt flexible to skip or/and add questions when needed. This sample consisted of five (5) English second-year students from Bordj Bou Arreridj University. The interviewers relied on note-taking and recording during the interview.

### 3.5 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection involves asking people questions or observing their behavior using research instruments to collect information (Creswell, 2012). As this research is a mixed-method design, quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques were used. A questionnaire is used to identify EFL sophomores' perceptions towards using podcast, and an interview is designed to investigate students' challenges in listening to podcast with the respondents of the present study. Some procedures of data collection are presented as below.

Table 3.3: Dates and activities of data collection for the actual study

Dates	Activities
14/02/2023-15/02/2023	Pre-questionnaire distribution
20/02/2023-21/02/2023	Training periods
27/02/2023-28/02/2023	Post-questionnaire distribution
05/03/2023	Semi-structured interview conduct

#### 3.5.1 EFL SOPHOMORES' TRAINING SESSIONS ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF USING PODCAST IN EFL CLASSROOMS

The training sessions were conducted in 2<sup>nd</sup> semester of the academic year 2023/2024. The students were trained to know their listening comprehension improvement through the English Podcast application and to realize the effectiveness of implementing podcast on their perceptions on listening competency. The researchers (as trainers) conducted the sessions with a help of a lecturer from English Department. The researchers distributed pre-questionnaires to know the students' basic knowledge of podcast application for their listening comprehension. In the first session of training, the researchers introduced their research topic and the purpose of the training in addition they invited the students respectfully to collaborate with them, then they asked them if they are familiar with the term podcast. Some of them were familiar and others were not so, the researchers used PowerPoint presentations (Appendix D.1) in order to explain what a podcast is, what its types are, how to use it, and how much is important in EFL classrooms?

In the second session, the researchers used the English Podcast application to play for students an audio podcast entitled "tips to overcome anxiety". They asked students to listen

carefully, so they can answer the content questions, such as, what is the general idea of the podcast? What are the tips to overcome anxiety? How long it takes to get better? After answering the questions, students were asked about their experience in listening to podcast. Most of them answered that this experience is completely different, impressive, and educative in an enjoyable way. The ones who experienced before podcast, they support badly the implementation of ICT tools such as podcast in learning due to the role it plays nowadays as compared to traditional instruments.

In the third session, the students were asked again to listen to another audio podcast entitled “tips for English learning practice” and discuss its content by asking questions, for example, what is the type of this podcast? What is its main idea? What are the suggestions given by the host to learn and practice English? After answering the questions, there was a discussion between them on whether the use of podcast is effective to enhance listening skills or not.

At the end of the training sessions, the post-questionnaires were distributed to students (Appendix D.2) to answer, and they were able to realize the importance and the effectiveness of podcast in EFL classroom use. Table 3.4 demonstrates the training sessions’ descriptions that were conducted as follows:

Table 3.4: Time table of training sessions on podcast application

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Session1</b>	<b>Session2</b>	<b>Session3</b>
Trainers	Conducted by the researchers	Conducted by the researchers	Conducted by the researchers
Trainees	108 EFL Sophomores	108 EFL Sophomores	108 EFL Sophomores
Dates	14\15 Feb. 2023	20\21 Feb. 2023	27\28 Feb. 2023
Duration	1hour and a half	1 hour and a half	1 hour and a half

### 3.6 DATA ANALYSIS FOR THE QUANTITATIVE DATA

For the data analysis, the quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS. As for the procedure employed is descriptive statistics while for qualitative data analysis, content analysis was conducted to categorize reoccurring themes.

#### 3.6.1 Analysis Technique for Quantitative Data

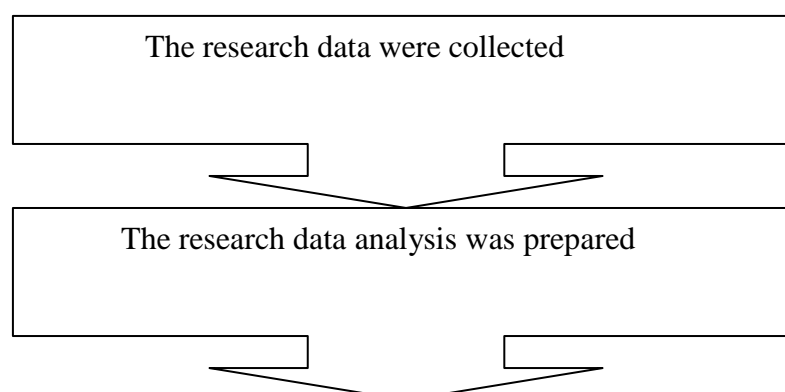
The technique employed for quantitative data analysis of the present study is explained as follows.

##### 3.6.1.1 Descriptive Statistics

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 was utilized to analyze questionnaire data. Babbie (2010) stated that the nature of quantitative data is numerical based on measurements, statistics, and scores that are collected through polls, questions or surveys. One of its main features is generalizing the research result across groups of people. According to Pallant (2005), descriptive statistics are employed to characterize a sample of a study. In this study, descriptive statistics describe the dataset found in questionnaire and measure EFL sophomores' perceptions towards using podcast.

### 3.7 ANALYSIS TECHNIQUE FOR QUALITATIVE DATA

In this research, thematic analysis for qualitative data analysis was employed. In thematic research design, the researchers seek to discover the most relevant themes in a text at different levels (Attride-Stirling, 2001). In a qualitative approach, the researcher seeks to gather data first and then, prepare them for analysis (Creswell, 2012). Figure 3.1 shows the qualitative data process for the current study



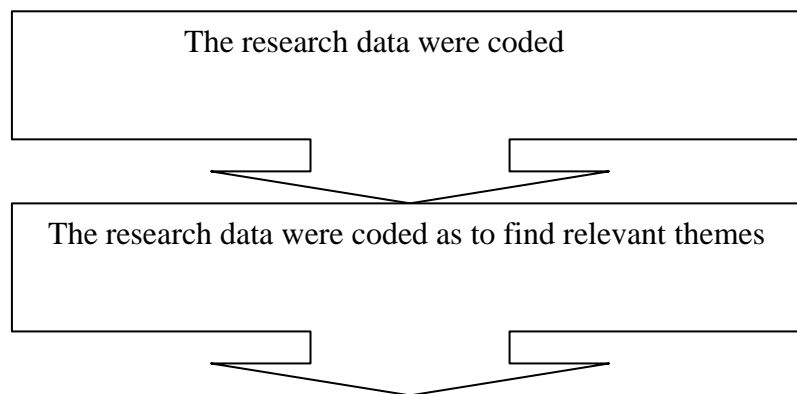


Figure 3.1: The qualitative process of data adapted from Creswell (2012).

In analyzing qualitative data for the current study, few steps were taken. Firstly, the data were collected from the interviewees after reaching a saturation point. The data were prepared for analysis after the transcription. It involved a stimulus process of analyzing and collecting data. Then, some interesting features of the data were coded systematically across the entire dataset as to find relevant themes that came from the respondents' answers. Before analyzing the themes there should be a classification of the interviews' contents into different excerpts, such as words, phrases, sentences, clauses or references (Neuendorf, 2002). Therefore, the data derived from the interviewees' responses on the challenges of EFL learners in listening to podcast were divided into excerpts based on the common themes. These excerpts were thematically analyzed and coded to ensure a systematic description of the interview data analysis. The following are the examples of how respondents were coded:

- Gender ( M-male, F-female)
- Student (S)
- Interview number (1-5)

For instance, F'S/1 refer to a female student whose interview code is 01. In addition, M' S/5 indicates a male student whose interview code is 05. In open coding, the researcher focused on the text to note down initial ideas (Khandhar, 2009). At this level, the researchers familiarized themselves with their data to distinguish each broad concept and category in the qualitative data using colored highlights (Gallicano, 2013).

### **3.8 VALIDITY OF THE QUANTITATIVE AND THE QUALITATIVE INSTRUMENTS**

According to Meriam (2005), the term validity refers to what a result of an instrument measure what it is supposed to be measured. The content of the questionnaire and the interview has been checked and consulted by an expert from the English department, who suggested a few changes on the questionnaire and the interview items. For example, he suggested making the term podcast in a singular form with all the questionnaire items and omitting the word “learning” and replacing it with “listening” in the first item of the questionnaire. This is to have a clear comprehension of the items. He recommended also adding the researchers’ names and e-mails at the end of the questionnaire for formality. Concerning the interview questions, he proposed adding “why” in questions 1 and 3, “please explain” in question 2 and “give examples” in question 5. In addition, he insisted to focus on the research questions as they present the backbone of the study. As a result, the researchers took into consideration all the expert's comments to achieve research validity.

### **3.9 SUMMARY**

To conclude, this chapter has presented an overview of the methodology of research including research design, population, and sampling, as well as research tools and procedures that were employed to collect and analyze data from EFL learners. Also, the validity of both qualitative and quantitative methods was provided.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the results of the study are pointed out. According to the research design, the results are categorized into two sections: quantitative and qualitative results. In the first section, the results are reported through the use of Mean (M), and Standard Deviation (SD) while the qualitative one is reported by themes. Moreover, the results indicated that second-year EFL students have positive attitudes towards using audio-based podcasts in enhancing listening comprehension, besides some challenges which are categorized into themes. The last section sums up the entire chapter of the study findings.

			Pre		Post
		M	SD	M	SD
1	My English proficiency level is good.	2,11	,813	1,72	,561
2	Listening is an important skill to me.	2,21	,928	2,19	1,169
3	I experienced listening courses using technology like podcast.	2,32	1,092	2,30	1,061
4	I would like to use new technology in learning English.	2,01	1,081	2,05	,921
5	I heard of Podcasts before.	2,02	,864	2,06	1,159
6	Podcasts are easy to access.	2,21	1,014	2,28	1,022
7	I enjoy listening to podcast.	2,02	,864	2,39	1,109
8	I think that podcasts are helpful as learning tools.	1,81	,877	1,89	,789
19	I think that podcasts can develop my listening skill and motivate me to learn English.	1,84	,877	1,84	,877
10	Podcast is an interesting tool in enhancing my listening skills.	1,96	,976	2,19	1,203
	Total	2,051	0,09	2,091	0,20

Table 4.1: English sophomores' responses in mean scores and standard deviation for the questionnaire items

Figure 4.1: (M=Mean, SD= Standard Deviations)

## 4.2 QUANTITATIVE RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Concerning the results of the first research question, the statistical analysis results showed that the majority of second-year EFL students argued that their English proficiency level is good as shown with a mean score of (M=2.11), however, it is higher than the post with a mean score of (M=1.72)(item1). The reason for the decrease in perceived English proficiency after the intervention may be attributed to various factors, such as changes in teaching methods or instructional materials. These factors could have influenced the students' perceptions of their English proficiency level. In pre-questionnaire, the students claimed that listening is an important skill to them (item 2) with a mean score of (M=2.21). It is higher than the post, with a mean score of (M=2.19). The reason for this slight decrease could be attributed to individual variations among participants such as interests, and learning preferences. These factors may have influenced their perceptions of the importance of listening, leading to slight variations in the post-analysis scores. Using listening tools such as podcast to study among students is higher in pre-questionnaire with a mean score of (M=2.32) whereas, the post-questionnaire showed a mean score of (M=2.30). Furthermore, the findings demonstrated that they are familiar with podcast with a mean score of (M=2.02) the number increased in the post with a mean score of (M=2.06). However, the post-questionnaire score revealed slightly higher grades than the pre-questionnaire (M=2.28) and (M=2.21) respectively as it is demonstrated in (Figure 1) (item 6).The participants pointed out that the accessibility of the podcast is effortless. Besides, the post-questionnaire demonstrated a high mean score of (M= 2.39) whereas, the pre-questionnaire showed a mean score of (M= 2.02) which means that the podcast is an enjoyable device for students. The content of the podcast should be of interest to students (Rajic, 2013). On the other hand, the results showed that the participants considered the podcast as a useful educational resource in the pre-questionnaire with a mean score of (M=1.81), however, it increased in post-questionnaire with a mean score of (M=1.89)(item8).In addition, the participants considered the podcast as a motivational and educational tool to enhance their listening skills. In item 9, it showed that they have the same mean score as respectively as it is demonstrated in (Figure 4.1) (M=1.84 ) (M=1.84). Likewise, many participants in post-questionnaire agreed on the impact of using podcast as an effective instrument to improve their listening abilities with a mean score of (M=2.19) which is higher than the pre-questionnaire with a mean score (M=1.96) (item 10). The result of the study showed positive perceptions towards the use of audio podcast-based learning to enhance English sophomores' listening comprehension.



### **4.3 QUALITATIVE RESULTS OF THE STUDY**

This section represents the results that are obtained from the interview that aim at exploring English sophomores' challenges in listening to podcast. Based on the students' responses, the main challenges are classified into seven themes which are the enjoyment of listening to podcast, the difficulties of the listening material "podcast", the challenges of understanding the host, the problems encountered while listening to podcast, the factors that affect the understanding of podcast (the host's accent, speed, vocabulary), and the effectiveness of podcast for low-skilled listeners.

#### **4.3.1 The Enjoyment of Listening to Podcast**

The majority of the respondents mentioned that utilizing the podcast was an effortless and enjoyable tool that kept them engaged without encountering any feelings of boredom. As a result, the data revealed that all respondents have come to an agreement that they have enjoyed listening to podcast.

"Yes, I have enjoyed listening to podcast. It contains new ideas and information, it is motivational and relaxing, so it is good for the ears and the brain." (M'S/1)

"Yes, of course, I enjoyed it a lot, especially when i work and listen to it at the same time. It saves my day." (F'S/3)

"Yes, I have enjoyed it because it is a new way of learning and improving the listening skills and speaking skills as well". (M'S/4)

#### **4.3.2 Difficulties of the Listening Material "Podcast"**

The Difficulties of the listening material "podcast" are another main theme that was discussed in this section. The Listening material "podcast" can present certain challenges for listeners. According to the respondents, the accent is the main difficulty they faced while listening to podcast. They added that unfamiliar accents, regional variations, and speech speed hindered their comprehension. As a result, the data revealed that the respondents have different difficulties in listening to podcast.

(F'S/3), (M'S/2) claimed that the accent is the main issue in listening to podcast. For instance, "if the host is Scottish, you cannot guarantee full understanding of what the host is saying." Yes, sometimes when the host speaks quickly and since we are not native speakers, we barely grasp everything.

Sometimes hard vocabulary plays a role in misunderstanding or not getting the full picture of what the host is trying to deliver." (M'S/4)

Whereas, (M'S/1) claimed that the noise and lack of materials are the main difficulties of podcast listening. "Let us say I am listening to podcast, and I am surrounded by noise, I cannot focus unless I put air iPods or something like that." (F'S/5) mentioned that podcast must be listened to individually, not in groups. "So, if I am listening alone, I have no problem. There are headphones and iPods that help me enjoy the podcast, but if I am listening in team or class it would be a problem. The podcast is an individual practice and experience."

#### **4.3.3 Challenges of Understanding the Host While Listening to Podcast**

The data revealed that most of the respondents (M'S/1, F'S/3, M'S/4, F's/5) claimed that the accent is the main issue in misunderstanding the host as they are foreign language students, whereas the host is a native speaker. He/she could be a Scottish, a British, an American, or a Canadian speaker. They prefer to listen to an Arabic podcast rather than an English one. They added also that the quality and the clarity of the sound, the vocabulary used, and the podcast topic are important factors that contribute in listening comprehension.

"I find it so hard to understand when I listen to a British accent. Maybe I can understand some words and the others I cannot."(M'S/1) "It depends on the way the host speaks, when he uses difficult words, or the voice is not clear enough to understand."(F'S/3)

However, only one respondent (M'S/2) said that he rarely listens to a podcast but if he wants to, he prefers to watch visual podcast rather than audio one. He added that he has no difficulties understanding the host."I do not listen a lot to podcasts but if I want to listen, I select the visual podcast in order to find the subtitles under the video, it makes it easier."(M'S/2)

#### **4.3.4 Problems Encountered while Listening to Podcast**

The data revealed that the respondents insisted that their problems while listening to podcast are due to the accent, the host's accent and speed.

"My only problem that I encountered while listening to podcast was the accent. I need to focus more to understand."(M'S/1)

(F'S/3) mentioned that the materials are the reasons behind her inability to listen to podcast freely, such as headphones, the quality of the sound, and the environment surrounding the

host in the recording process, for example, the low-quality of the microphone leads to an incompressible podcast.

“Yes, I do have some difficulties, for example, the quality of the sound or the headphones that I use. Also, when there is a noise in the host records or when he speaks very slowly.” (F’S/3)

Whereas (F’S/5) had different opinion. She thought that the topic of the podcast maybe will be against her thoughts. She mentioned also the quality of the voice, and the clearness of the host's speech.

“It depends on what are you listening to, if the podcast is good in quality, good person who is talking, there will be no problem, but sometimes the host of the podcast is beginner there will be some problem maybe noise, he raises his voice that hurts us in ears.”(F'S/5)

While (M’S/2) said that he had no problem while he was listening to podcast. (M’s/4) stated that he had no problem as well, saying that podcast is free to access everywhere, available anytime on Spotify or Youtube, and effortless.

#### **4.3.5 Factors Affecting the Understanding of Podcast**

The majority of the respondents had selected the three choices given including, the host accent, vocabulary, and pace.

##### **4.3.5.1 The Host Accent**

(M's/1) strongly believed that his only problem of understanding is related to the host's accent, he claimed as well that the clearer the word is, the more you understand the topic. For the vocabulary, you can write it down the difficult word and look for its meaning to memorize it later. “When the host tells you new words, you can write it down and check it after, I think the most difficult thing is the accent, you cannot hear the word very well.” (M’S/1)

##### **4.3.5.2 Accent and Vocabulary**

The data revealed that both host’s accent and vocabulary are the main obstacles students faced during listening.

(F'S/3) believed that misunderstanding the host is not his fault but ours, because as we are a foreign language students or specifically non-native speakers, we are not able to understand

everything; so the host cannot generalize his accent for everyone, however, concerning the vocabulary, it depends on the topic of the podcast.

“Vocabulary difficulty depends on the topic. Simple language is understood, whereas complicated language like a scientific topic I need to check the difficult word on the dictionary.”(F’S/3)

(F’S/5) agreed with the previous responses by saying that the host must take into consideration his audience either their age or country. In addition, the topic affects the misunderstanding of the terms.

#### **4.3.5.3 The Pace and Vocabulary**

(M’S/2) claimed that the host must control his voice while he is recording and take into consideration the low-skilled listeners. He mentioned as well that the listeners must have rich vocabulary to understand the host easily.

“It depends on the host's pace. If he speaks faster, listeners will stop focusing. They replay the podcast and listen many times to understand what the host is saying. Vocabulary depends on the host and the listener, if the host has vocabulary more than the listener, it will make it harder for the listener.” (M’S/2)

#### **4.3.6 Effectiveness of Podcasts for Low-Skilled Listeners**

The data revealed that the respondents agree on the effectiveness of podcasts for low-skilled listeners.

"Yes, podcast is effective for students with low listening skill. It makes them active listeners who do not pass any information, so we have to practice by listening to podcasts or audio podcasts or even visual podcasts." (F’S/3)

“Yes, it can improve their listening skill and also improve their speaking skill as well. Because those who have low listening skills can take time to process what the host is trying to deliver.” (M’S/4)

### **4.4 SUMMARY**

In this chapter, the results reported indicate that the majority of the students showed positive perceptions in pre-and-post implementing podcast in listening performance. Even though, they have encountered certain difficulties, which are classified into seven themes including

the enjoyment of listening to podcast, the difficulties of the listening material “podcast”, the challenges of understanding the host, the problems encountered while listening to podcast, the factors that affect the understanding of podcast (the host’s accent, speed, and vocabulary), and the effectiveness of podcast for low-skilled listeners.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISSCUSSION**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents a discussion of the research results related to the research objectives. Furthermore, the findings are discussed with relevant references to experts to justify the research findings on students' perceptions of using podcast to enhance their listening comprehension as well as to explore the challenges they faced in listening to this tool. The study was conducted through a pre-and post-questionnaire design to examine the change of students' perceptions towards audio podcast use in their listening performance. Additionally, interviews were used to explore the challenges that students faced when listening to audio podcast.

This section aims to discuss the results and findings achieved through this inquiry. The findings of the study indicated that second-year English student's possessed favourable perceptions towards the use of audio podcast-based learning to develop their listening comprehension. The positive perceptions revealed and demonstrated in this study depict the significance of using technology such as authentic materials in developing listening comprehension. Furthermore, students can use it for learning the English language either as a personal desire or for academic needs such as teaching or learning.

The majority of respondents highlighted the importance of listening proficiency since it helped them develop their listening comprehension. Thus, listening skills receive the most interest and focus from EFL learners, followed by other skills. The first research question tackles the perceptions of students in pre-and post-implementing podcast in listening performances. In the field of language learning, audio podcast has been used as a tool for enhancing listening comprehension skills. The following discussion will explore the potential benefits of using audio podcast.

One of the main benefits of using audio podcast for enhancing listening comprehension is its accessibility. Podcast can be downloaded for free and are available at any time, which helps learners practice their listening skills. This flexibility is mainly useful for learners who may not have mastered the language or for those who cannot attend regular classes because of their busy schedules.

Another benefit of using audio podcast is that it provides exposure to authentic spoken language. Learners can listen to a wide variety of native speakers, including different accents, dialects, and speech patterns, which can improve their listening comprehension skills. This exposure to authentic language can also help learners develop their understanding of natural spoken language and improve their ability to communicate effectively in real-life situations.

However, despite the potential benefits, the study also revealed some challenges that students faced when listening to audio podcast. These challenges include technical difficulties in accessing and downloading the podcast, limited time in listening to the podcast due to busy schedules, and difficulty in understanding the language used by the speaker. It is essential to address these challenges to ensure that learners can use audio podcast effectively to enhance their listening comprehension skills. One of the main challenges is the content. Some learners found it difficult to understand the content of the podcast. Moreover, podcast is often produced for a general audience, which means that the language used may be too advanced or difficult for learners who are still developing their listening skills or for low-skilled listeners. On the other hand, another challenge is that learners did not receive feedback on their listening comprehension skills. It was difficult for learners to know whether they understood the content correctly or they need to focus on improving their listening skills.

Therefore, more than half of the participants described their level of listening comprehension as average or weak. Most of them pointed out that factors such as the accent used by native speakers and lack of materials (such as iPods) to listen professionally were the main factors that prevented them from listening to podcast. Vandergrift (1999) described listening comprehension as a complex and an active process that requires the listener to understand vocabulary and grammatical structures to retain and interpret these elements within the immediate and larger socio-cultural context of the utterance.

As mentioned by Hasan & Tan (2013), in their study "Podcast Applications in Language Learning", they discovered that podcasts could be useful in supporting essentially all English language learning skills. Moreover, Gholami & Mohammadi (2015), in their experiment on "Podcast-Mediated Language Learning: Levels of Podcast Integration and Developing Vocabulary Knowledge", found that the integration of podcasting led to a significant improvement in the performance of participants. The research also found that learners who had greater exposure to mobile learning through podcasting were more motivated to learn the language due to the allure of both offline and online services.

However, in real contexts, the implementation of teaching listening is still far behind the expectations of both teachers and learners due to a lack of listening materials for some learners and schools. Ur (1996) discovered that learners who often listen encounter several difficulties, including problems with sound quality, unfamiliar vocabulary and expressions, natural native speech, limited exposure to authentic audio material, and discouragement in the listening classroom. Moreover, Lie (2007) concludes in her investigation that in her country, the primary limitation faced in EFL listening is the limited exposure to the target language. Due to these classical constraints, listening skill receives less attention in the field of teaching English as a foreign language. As a result, learners should be provided with a diverse range of authentic, easily accessible, reliable, and affordable listening materials that motivate and encourage them to learn to listen efficiently.

In addition, limited vocabulary prevented the learners from clearly comprehending the content of the podcast. So, the more lexical items the learners have the more active they will be in listening. They also have to master the pronunciation of different accents to understand the hosts' pronunciation in the listening process. The lack of laboratories to practice the listening process in the department is also a factor that hinders students from developing their listening comprehension. As there are different learning styles, some participants preferred listening to audio videos because they are visual learners, whereas others thought using audio-podcast is more efficient, beneficial, and practically accessible for free. Additionally, some learners believed that video scenes facilitate remembering new vocabulary items. Nevertheless, others argued that audio podcast helped them concentrate on listening without distracting their attention. However, all learners agreed that podcast is a reliable authentic material for developing language knowledge and enhancing listening comprehension.

In conclusion, audio podcast can be a useful tool for enhancing listening comprehension skills. It provides learners with exposure to authentic spoken language and can be accessed at any time. However, it is important for language learners to be aware of the potential challenges and to supplement their podcast listening with other forms of instruction and practice. This may include attending regular classes, participating in language exchanges, or using language learning apps that provide feedback on listening comprehension skills.



## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### GENERAL CONCLUSION

Developing the listening skill has become one of the most important goals for EFL students due to its importance in understanding the spoken language for better communication. Various methods are used to master this skill and the use of podcast is one of them. This study aimed at investigating the effectiveness of podcast use in English learning to enhance students' listening comprehension through asking the following questions that used two different data collection instruments (a questionnaire and an interview):

1/- What are the students' perceptions towards using podcast in classrooms?

2/- What are the challenges faced by the students in listening to podcast?

This research work was severed into two main chapters. The first one was a theoretical chapter that discussed the concepts related to podcast and listening skill. The second chapter, however, was a fieldwork. A questionnaire and an interview were used as research instruments to collect data from the participants. Both instruments were addressed to second year EFL students at Bordj Bou Arreridj University. The collected data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The primary aim for choosing such tools of data gathering is because they have fit the limited time given for the research. The third chapter covered the results and interpretations. After the discussion, this chapter concludes the main findings of the current research in addition to some recommendations for future research and conclusion.

This study revealed positive perceptions regarding using podcast as an ICT tool to promote the learning processes, especially of the listening skill as it is mentioned in item 9 in students' questionnaire. The findings proved the significance of podcast in raising students' motivation to develop their vocabulary and pronunciation. Besides, using podcast in classes is very beneficial and helpful in the sense that students can listen to and discuss the topic raised. The findings also indicated that students may encounter some difficulties when listening to this tool such as lack of concentration, host's accent and speed as it is mentioned in question 6 in students' interview.

Some limitations were marked in this study. The most important one is the problem of sample size in quantitative data. As it is included in table 3.1 the sample of the population 270

is 159 but only 108 participants who answered the questionnaire the rest were absent because some of them are workers and the others were not interested in attending the training sessions, which reduced statistical power. This would have generated more accurate results.

To put in a nutshell, based on the conclusion above, podcast plays a significant role in learning English. In other words, by using podcast in classrooms, the students will improve their listening skill of English language and make them actively participate during learning activities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings and the conclusion above, the researchers propose the following recommendations:

1. Implementing e-tools within the curriculum. When the learners are exposed to authentic materials they will benefit from the varieties of oral language and different English accents.
2. EFL learners should experience listening courses at laboratories for better listening practice.
3. For furthering research, a number of recent technologies are proposed (apps, websites, etc) in language learning due to their importance as based-learning technologies nowadays.
4. This research involves only one aspect of podcast, which is listening. Other research can tackle other aspects that were not tackled in this work, such as speaking.
5. In this research, two instruments (questionnaire and interview) were addressed to students. Another research can address students and teachers or any member of education.
6. An experimental design could be employed for further research since it brings more factual results.
7. The findings of this study are limited to second year EFL students in the faculty of letters and languages at the English department. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized to the overall number of second year EFL students.

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# LIST OF APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### Students' Questionnaire

Dear students

This questionnaire serves as a data collection tool to identify 2<sup>nd</sup> year English students' perceptions towards pre-and-post implementing podcast in EFL classrooms in fulfillment of master dissertation. You are most kindly requested to provide us with your opinions to help us accomplish this work. Your participation is enormously appreciated.

Please, tick (✓) the appropriate answer.

Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Listening proficiency in using podcast is good.					
2. Listening to podcast is an important skill to me.					
3. I experienced listening courses using technology like podcast.					
4. I would like to use new technology in listening English.					
5. I have heard of Podcast before.					
6. Podcast is easy to access.					
7. I enjoy listening to podcast.					
8. I think that podcast is helpful as a listening tool.					
9. I think that podcast can develop my listening skill					

and motivate me to learn English.					
10. Podcast is an interesting tool in enhancing my listening skills.					

Thank you for your collaboration

**Candidates' information**

Dahamna Dounia  
E-mail: dounia.zizo90gmail.com

Hermouche Halima  
E-mail:halimahermouche9gmail.com

## **APPENDIX B**

### **The Interview Questions**

Question 1: Have you enjoyed listening to podcast? Why?

Question 2: What are the difficulties of the listening material “podcast”?

Question 3: Did you find it challenging to understand the host while you were listening to podcast? Why?

Question 5: Are there any problems that you encountered while you were listening to podcast? If yes, please state them and give examples.

Question 6: Do you think that the difficulty in understanding is a result of:

- a- The host’s accent.
- b- The vocabulary used by the host.
- c- The pace of the host’s speech.
- d- If there are other reasons, please specify.

Question 6: Do you think that podcast is effective for students who have low skill in listening?

Question 7: Do you want to add something?

## APPENDIX C

### Consent Letter for Participants

Mohammed El Bachir El Ibrahimi University

English (Didactics) Department

Dear students

We, as researchers, Dounia Dahamna and Halima Hermouche, are master candidates in the English (Didactics) Department at the University of Mohammed El Bachir El Ibrahimi, Bordj Bou Arreridj. As part of our degree, we will be conducting a research project about “Audio Podcast-based learning in enhancing EFL sophomores’ choices and perspective”. It is a pleasure to invite you to be part of it as participants to identify EFL sophomores’ perceptions towards using podcast in EFL classrooms.

We would be glad to ask for your consent formally and specifically in terms of data use. Your participation in this research will help us collect important data as well as achieve the objectives of our study. Also, bear in mind that your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you will be asked for permission at every step. The confidentiality of your information is entirely ensured. I would be thankful if you could tick“√” and sign the content clauses below:

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time.

I understand that the information I give will be kept confidential.

I understand that my responses will be hidden after analysis and prior to thesis write-up.

**Participants Signature:**

**Name in Block Capitals:**

**Date:**

## APPENDIX D

### Trainers and Trainees' Pictures during Training Sessions

#### APPENDIX D.1: Trainers' Presentation



#### APPENDIX D.2: Consent Sheet of One of the Participants

Mohammed El Bachir El Ibrahim Ibrahim University  
English (Didactics) Department

Dear students

Our names are Dahamna Dounia and Hermouch Halima, Master candidates in English (Didactics) Department University of Mohammed El Bachir El Ibrahim. As part of our degree, we will be conducting a research project about "Audio Podcast-based learning in enhancing EFL sophomores' choices and perspective" and we would like to invite you to participate in it to help us identify EFL sophomores' perception towards using podcast in EFL classrooms.

We would be glad to ask for your consent formally and specifically in terms of the data use. Your participation in this research will help us to collect the important data as well as to achieve the objectives of our study.

Additionally, your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. The confidentiality of your information is entirely ensured. I would be thankful if you could tick"" and sign the content clauses below:

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any any time without giving any reason. I understand that my withdrawal from the project will not affect my grades or my relationship with the lecturer in any way.

I understand that the information I provide will be treated in strictest confidence and that confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations.

I understand that my responses will be anonymised after analysis and prior to thesis write-up and further publications.

Signature:

I have read and understood the information in this form. My questions and concerns have been answered by the researcher, and I have a copy of this consent form. Therefore, I consent to take part in this research project.

Participants Signature: *Mzyan*

Name in Block Capitals: *Mzyan Mouhamed*

Date: *5/03/2023*

## RÉSUMÉ

L'écoute est considérée comme une compétence cruciale que les apprenants EFL cherchent à développer afin de bien comprendre l'orateur et essentiellement pour éviter une rupture de communication. Le podcast est l'un des outils TIC qui s'est avéré efficace pour apprendre l'anglais, en particulier la capacité d'écoute. Cependant, les concepteurs de programmes algériens ne sont toujours pas conscients de cette technologie et de ses avantages. Ainsi, cette étude a étudié l'utilisation du podcast pour améliorer la compréhension orale des apprenants EFL. A cet effet, un questionnaire a été distribué à 108 étudiants de deuxième année Licence et un entretien a été réalisé auprès de 5 étudiants également à l'Université Bordj Bou Arreridj. Les résultats obtenus à partir des données analysées ont montré que les étudiants avaient des attitudes positives à l'égard de l'utilisation du podcast pour améliorer leurs compétences d'écoute. Bien que les étudiants aient rencontré certains problèmes lors de l'écoute du podcast, tels que le manque de concentration, l'accent et la vitesse de l'orateur, ils le considèrent néanmoins comme un outil utile qui facilite l'apprentissage des cours d'écoute.



الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية  
وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي

جامعة محمد البشير الابراهيمي برج بوعريريج

**تصريح بالالتزام بقواعد النزاهة العلمية لإنجاز البحث**

أنا الممضي (ة) أسفله،

السيد (ة) . هرموش حليلة. الصفة: طالبة

الحامل (ة) لبطاقة التعريف الوطنية رقم: 404336609 و الصادرة بتاريخ:

2023/01/17

والمكلف (ة) بإنجاز مذكرة ماستر،

عنوانها:

Using Audio Podcast-Based Learning in Enhancing EFL Students'  
Listening Comprehension: Sophomores' Choices and Perspectives.

اصرح بشرفي أنني التزم بمراعاة المعايير العلمية والمنهجية ومعايير الأخلاقيات المهنية  
والنزاهة الأكاديمية المطلوبة في إنجاز البحث المذكور أعلاه.

التاريخ: 2023/07/12

توقيع المعني (ة)

الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية  
وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي

جامعة محمد البشير الابراهيمي برج بوعريريج

**تصريح بالالتزام بقواعد النزاهة العلمية لإنجاز البحث**

أنا الممضي (ة) أسفله،

السيد (ة) . دحامنة دنيا. الصفة: طالبة

الحامل (ة) لبطاقة التعريف الوطنية رقم: 405590291 والصادرة بتاريخ: 2023/04/20

والمكلف (ة) بإنجاز مذكرة ماستر،

عنوانها:

Using Audio Podcast-Based Learning in Enhancing EFL Students'  
Listening Comprehension: Sophomores' Choices and Perspectives.

اصرح بشرفي أنني التزم بمراعاة المعايير العلمية والمنهجية ومعايير الأخلاقيات المهنية  
والنزاهة الأكاديمية المطلوبة في إنجاز البحث المذكور أعلاه.

التاريخ: 2023/07/12

توقيع المعني (ة)