



جامعة بجاية
Tasdawit n Bgayet
Université de Béjaïa

Abderrahman Mira University of Bejaia

Faculty of Arts and Languages

Department of English

Exploring Students' Perceptions towards the Integration of English Podcasts into EFL Classrooms to Enhance their Pronunciation Skills.

Case of First Year EFL Students at the University of Bejaia

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master
degree in "Linguistics".

Submitted by:

Miss. Sabrina Anes

Miss. Lynda Benamara

Members of the jury:

President: Dr. Nawel Kadri.

Examiner: Dr. Soraya Arib.

Supervisor: Dr. Siha Boughani.

Supervised by:

Dr. Siha Boughani

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Abstract

Learning a foreign language requires mastering its four main skills, including reading, listening, writing and speaking. This latter involves pronunciation, which is a language aspect that is often regarded as a hurdle by many EFL learners. Having a correct pronunciation is considered crucial that is why many foreign language learners want to acquire it and improve it as much as possible. However, only a few teaching programs are included to target this skills. In light of this, the current thesis aims to explore first-year EFL learners' perceptions towards the use of English podcasts in the purpose of enhancing their pronunciation since it involves exposure to native speakers. In order to accomplish this goal, this study follows a non-experimental design, implemented with 60 first-year BA students of English as Foreign Language at the University of Bejaia. Moreover, it employs a mixed method, which bases on both quantitative and qualitative tools for the data collection; the study method employs a students' questionnaire as a quantitative research tool; while, it uses an online interview posted for teachers of English at the same university to investigate their perspectives concerning the issue under study. The findings disclosed positive attitudes of the participants regarding the implementation of this new material to enhance EFL students' pronunciation because it can be practical, enjoyable and interesting while creating opportunities to listen to native speakers in the educational field. The teachers' perceptions also were positive as the data revealed. The study entails some suggestion for an advantageous use of podcast in EFL classrooms.

Keywords: English as a foreign language, EFL Learners, Pronunciation, Native speakers, English podcasts, Language teaching and learning.

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Dedication

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List of abbreviations

CPH: Critical Period Hypothesis.

EFL: English as a Foreign Language.

ESL: English as a Second Language.

MTV: Music Television.

RSS: Really Simple Syndication.

SL: Second Language.

VJ: Video Jockey.

Q: Question.

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General Introduction

1. Statement of the problem

Language learning includes developing its four skills; mainly, speaking, writing, reading, and listening. Among these, speaking is considered one of the most important skills of all the four ones. It is important because the principal reason for learning a language is to be able to communicate and express one's thoughts orally and to engage in conversations with native and non-native speakers.

Specifically, one more crucial aspect of English communication is pronunciation. A good, native-like pronunciation is something many learners strive to achieve as they enhance their fluency and accuracy in speaking the target language. However, despite the importance of the speaking skill, it is perceived as one of the most challenging ones by foreign language (EFL) learners and is often the most neglected due to the high focus on the three other skills while teaching the English language. This situation leads to not only its regression but also a feeling of anxiety and a lack of students' confidence during the oral presentation or even in real conversations.

In the last decade, technology has witnessed a major development; it has spread throughout all the nations; and its importance has increased its use on a daily basis. In addition, the integration of these innovations into the field of education has also been marked as significant by many research works because, as it is claimed, they help in developing the educational process by introducing modern teaching methods (Harris & Park, 2008, as cited in McGarr, 2009). Nowadays, students can have access to different tools and applications that help facilitate the process of learning the English language and enhance their awareness of different linguistic features like the phonemic, syllables, etc. The most commonly used technological tools for learning languages are Duolingo, authentic videos, TED talks, and podcasts.

A podcast is an audio episode or series that may be streamed or downloaded on demand through a subscription service or from the internet (Brown 2020). These podcasts are recorded by native speakers and could be of great help to EFL students who are interested in developing their pronunciation. Regarding the importance of pronunciation skills, many research studies are interested in developing pronunciation using new technologies. According to Guettaftemam (2016), podcasting improves vocabulary and provides

opportunities to practice proper pronunciation. Additionally, Suseno (2023) stated that podcasts can improve the way topics are presented and pronounced.

First-year students of English at the University of Bejaia are studying phonetics, which is a subject that teaches about the phonetic system of English. However, the content being taught seems to lack actual practice because of the lack of real conversations with native speakers. Consequently, searching for new innovative methods that might fill in this gap and satisfy the curiosity of first-year students of English ought to be explored. Since podcasts represent a suitable tool for the native content they share, the forms used in these native podcasts convey to the students the appropriate language with the authentic pronunciation these students aim for. Therefore, the current study aims at exploring first-year EFL students' perceptions towards the use of English podcasts as an educational tool to enhance their pronunciation at the University of Bejaia.

2. Research questions

Based on the issue mentioned above, the aim of this study is to answer these questions:

1. What are the challenges that first-year EFL students face at the level of English language pronunciation?
2. What are first-year EFL students' perceptions towards the integration of English podcasts as an educational tool to enhance their pronunciation?
3. How can English podcasts be applied effectively in a first-year EFL classroom to enhance their pronunciation?

3. Purpose and significance of the study

This study aims at exploring first-year EFL students' perceptions towards the use of English podcasts as an educational tool to enhance their pronunciation. Its main objective is to describe the students' perspectives on whether English podcasts could be presented as new teaching material or not. Besides, this study seeks to understand the challenges first-year EFL students face at the level of pronunciation. Finally, it investigates the different strategies and methods that can be used to maximize the advantageous application of podcasts in EFL classrooms.

As far as significance is concerned, the findings of this study can help both teachers and students consider a new method to teach and learn the skill of pronunciation and improve

it. The results could help in giving an insight into the EFL students' and teachers' way of thinking concerning the integration of English podcasts to enhance EFL learners' pronunciation, as they could raise awareness and potentially lead to the use of this new teaching material.

4. Sample and population

First-year English students at Abderrahmane Mira University of Bejaia is the population of this study. Since this study aims at creating a solid base for students in terms of pronouncing English accurately and correctly, the first year is considered to be the right level to choose as that is when they start learning about the English pronunciation, mainly in phonetics module.

Because of the difficulty to reach all members of the population, a sample consisting of 60 first-year EFL students, including both males and females, was selected. The sampling technique that was chosen in this study is the random sampling technique. By employing the random sampling technique in this study, the research ensures a high representation rate of the whole population.

5. Research design and methodology of data collection

The research design employed in this study was a non-experimental one because there is no manipulation in the process of collecting the necessary data; this design bases on the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data, resulting in the employment of a mixed methodology. Hence, it mainly employs a questionnaire distributed randomly to first-year EFL students to get their opinions concerning the issue under study. In addition to an online interview posted to teachers of the English language at the department of English, at Bejaia University who have experience in the field to obtain their perceptions concerning the same issue.

6. Data collection tools

The main aim of this study is to explore first-year EFL students' perceptions towards the use of English podcasts as an educational tool to enhance their pronunciation.

Hence, for the sake of collecting the necessary data, a questionnaire for first-year EFL students with close-ended and open-ended questions was made. This questionnaire aims

at gaining a profound understanding of the intended participants' perceptions towards the pronunciation of English as a foreign language, including the issues faced. In addition to their attitudes towards using English podcasts as a tool for enhancing pronunciation, this would provide valuable insights into the potential influence of these podcasts on this skill.

The second tool used in this study is an interview, which is intended for teachers of English at the University of Bejaia. It is designed to gather their perceptions which are yielded from their years of experience, regarding the inclusion of podcasts as an instructional material on the subject of phonetics. The interview is made up of seven questions that seek teachers' wise experience and perspective about the aforementioned issue.

7. The organization of the dissertation

This dissertation consists of two chapters, in addition to a general introduction and a general conclusion. The two chapters represent theoretical and practical elements that build up the study. The first chapter is entitled "Theoretical Background," which is divided into three sections. The first section discusses the skill of pronunciation, including its definition and importance in speech as well as its effect on EFL learners. Moreover, it also includes aspects of connected speech and their importance, a comparison between native and non-native speakers, and the factors that affect pronunciation. The second section discusses podcasts, their history, content, and role in teaching a foreign language. Finally, its last section includes a literature review related to the idea discussed in this study.

The second chapter is the practical part of this current study, and it is divided into four sections. The first section presents the research methodology and provides detailed information about the chosen method, the tools for data collection (questionnaire and interview), and information about the sample and population. The second section consists of the analysis of the findings, and then the third section is dedicated to the discussion of the results obtained from the research tools. The fourth section deals with the suggestions, recommendations, and limitations of the study. Finally, the dissertation concludes with a general conclusion.

Chapter one: Theoretical Background

1. Section One: Pronunciation

The principal purpose of learning a language is to be able to communicate with others, particularly by achieving proficient and native-like pronunciation. Speaking is nowadays one of the most important skills among the four language skills.

An important factor that differentiates native speakers from non-natives is their fluency and accuracy in pronunciation. Danisti et al. (2023) said that pronunciation can be a challenging task; as is it quite difficult to speak and pronounce a foreign language' words like natives while learning it. However, good pronunciation skills are essential for effective communication and help increase confidence when speaking a foreign language. Additionally, it is one of the challenges that EFL learners face when learning English language despite their general knowledge of the language and their ability to speak it fluently. This affects the students psychologically as it leads to low self-confidence and discouragement by stuttering or being stopped during the speech.

Therefore, pronunciation is an important part of language because it influences how others perceive and understand what has been said. It is essential to transmit meaning efficiently as well as correctly. Moreover, precise pronunciation improves communication by reducing the possibility of misunderstandings and building a stronger connection with listeners. Hence, regular pronunciation practice, asking for feedback and becoming aware of native speakers' fluency are all necessary stages towards improving this skill.

1.1. Definition of Pronunciation

Based on what has been said above and according to Harmer (2007), pronunciation refers to the way a language is spoken by an individual and how each word sounds and is pronounced, including the sounds, stress, and intonation used to indicate feeling when uttering these words (as cited in Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016a); it involves the correct and accurate production of speech sounds in a given language.

Yates and Zielinski (2014) defined pronunciation as the way individuals produce the sounds they use to make meaning when they speak (as cited in Hassan, 2014). It includes the particular consonants and vowels of a language (segments), aspects of speech beyond the level of individual segments, such as stress, timing, rhythm, intonation, and phrasing

(suprasegmental aspects), and how the voice is projected (voice quality). Mainly, it consists of the manner of articulating sounds in order to transmit meaning (Yates & Zielinski, 2009, as cited in Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016b).

In addition, Schnur and Wang (2022) reported that the study of proper pronunciation often involves understanding phonetic elements such as consonants, vowels, and various phonological features in order to achieve clarity and coherence in the spoken language. Likewise, Danisti (2023) stated that good pronunciation is essential for effective communication. In essence, it guarantees that words are well understood and interpreted as intended, it also contributes to the overall fluency and spontaneity of speech.

Consequently, pronunciation can be understood as the element in language that governs successful communication. Moreover, Gilakjani (2018) asserted that understandable pronunciation is an important part of the communicative competence, and individuals who have an acceptable pronunciation can easily interact with others and have proper conversations with them.

1.2.Aspects of connected speech

Aspects of connected speech are one of the essential concepts that deal with the natural flow of words in speech, especially when words are pronounced one after the other, where Vaselovska (2016) said that connected speech is one of the important factors for good communication, which includes effective auditory perception and speech production.

Additionally, this concept was defined by Cambridge dictionary (2024) as “words that are spoken one after another, which may be heard as a continuous sound rather than as separate words: words spoken in connected speech often sound different to how they sound when spoken in isolation”.

In view of the above, assimilation, linking, deletion, insertion and reduction are among the aspects of connected speech that will be explained in this present study. By understanding these features, knowledge about how speakers adjust their pronunciation in order to effectively and coherently convey meaning in conversations will be acquired (Entwistle, 2020).

1.2.1. Assimilation

Skandera and Burleigh (2005, p. 89) defined assimilation as “a process whereby one sound, usually a consonant, becomes more like, or identical with a neighbouring sound regarding one or more of the distinctive features” (as cited in Benmezal & Bensemmane, 2017). That is to say that assimilation is a process where one sound merges or becomes more similar to a nearby sound. Alternatively explained, this process refers to the way a sound within a word can influence the sounds of its neighbouring words (Ismail Al Abbasi, 2019). According to him, assimilation is usually found in rapid, casual speech rather than in slow utterance. Moreover, the difference that it makes could either be very recognizable or very slight. For example, in the phrase “good boy”, the letter /d/ changes into /b/, and it becomes /gub boi/ (Betti et al., 2023, p.1).

1.2.2. Linking

The second aspect of connected speech is linking, which is referred to as liaison by other researchers (Cruttenden, 2014; Underhill, 2005, as cited in Visentin, 2020). The term linking, also known as attraction, juncture, and transition, has been used in different ways. It can refer to the changes that a word undergoes in continuous speech when combined with other words, as opposed to its pronunciation in isolation (Hieke, 1987, as cited in Alameen, 2007). In other terms, it is how people smoothly connect words together when they talk, making their speech sound natural and flowing. Hence, this is the process by which the last sound of one word within a phrase connects with the first sound of the word that follows, which combines them easily. For instance, the phrase “four eggs” becomes \ fa:r egz\ in continuous speech (Ismail Al Abbasi, 2019, p.14).

1.2.3. Deletion

The third aspect can be found under the following names: deletion, elision, or omission. It occurs when a sound that would be present in a word spoken in isolation is omitted in connected speech (Underhill, 2005, p.61, as cited in Visentin, 2020). This means that the sounds that are normally spoken separately are omitted during the speaking of words in connected speech, which allows it to become more fluid and efficient. Besides, speakers often eliminate consonants that are unnecessary or difficult to pronounce rapidly in order to simplify their pronunciation. Gasmi (2022) claimed that elision is the feature of rapid connected speech. It is used in the purpose of facilitating the pronunciation of sounds in

connected speech. This can involve omitting whole syllables inside words as well as consonants and vowels. For example, the sentence “last time” turns into /las taim/, when spoken with the application of this aspect of connected speech (Betti et al., 2023, p.3).

1.2.4. Insertion

The fourth feature according to Reed and Levis (2015, p.163) differs from the more traditional linking in that the segmental changes that involve modifications that add sounds can be noticed (as cited in Visentin, 2020). In addition, insertion also be called intrusion is the opposite of elision, that includes adding phonemes within or between words (Nokes, 2018). In essence, it is the process of adding additional sounds that are not present in the original words, contrary to normal linking that connects existing sounds inside words to create smooth transitions between them. Accordingly, the central difference lies in the fact that the intrusive sounds are not part of the spelling, but they are added to better combine words together (Visentin, 2020). An example of this aspect would be inserting the sound [w] in between “do it” and it becomes “do[w]it”; and in between “go away” and it becomes “go[w]away” (Visentin, 2020, p.34).

1.2.5. Reduction

Regarding the fifth aspect, Reed and Levis (2015) highlighted that “reduction is segmentally linked with unstressed syllables and suprasegmentally as a connected speech process, especially with word classes such as one-syllable determiners, pronouns, prepositions, and auxiliaries” (as cited in Visentin, 2020). It is to say that reduction in connected speech refers to the simplification or change of sounds, syllables, phrases and even complete words. This aspect is also asserted by Nokes (2018) as the process of changing, minimizing or eliminating phonemes in spoken language to improve pronunciation. In other words, it is performed in order to make communication easier and more effective, particularly in casual conversations. This process leads to the weakening and changing of the sound of unstressed syllables (Ochildievna, 2019). Accordingly, an example provided by Tomaka (2017) shows how “I want to talk” becomes [aɪ 'wɒnə 'tɔ:k] with this aspect of connected speech.

1.3. The importance of connected speech in teaching

According to Akram (2010), features of connected speech (Elision, Assimilation, Deletion, Juncture, etc.) are not taught in government schools, and maybe this is the reason why students face so many difficulties in the area of pronouncing English (as cited in Akram & Qureshi, 2014). Hence, Entwistle (2020, p.235) claimed that “Raising students’ awareness of connected speech is key in helping them speak more naturally and helps ease listening comprehension”; in other words, connected speech improves the spontaneity of speech, as well as the understanding of one another in daily communication.

1.4. Native English speakers versus non-native English speakers

A native speaker or L1 user of a language is defined by Cook (1999) as a person who speaks and uses it as a small child in a natural setting (as cited in Lee, 2005); this means that, being a native speaker of a language is a fact that cannot be changed later in life through training or learning. Besides, Bloomfield (1933) stated that “the first language a human being learns to speak is his native language; he is a native speaker of this language” (as cited in Lee, 2005). This refers to the fact that a native English speaker is an individual whose first language is English, and acquired it naturally during childhood within an English-speaking environment, usually through hearing their parents when communicating. Being an English native speaker often demonstrates an innate and comprehensive understanding of English grammar and vocabulary (Chomsky, 1965, as cited in Lee, 2005).

According to Chomsky (1965), native speakers are capable of making valid judgements on their language and recognizing incorrectly formed grammatical statements, even though they might not be able to identify the precise reason for the incorrect construction (as cited in Vulchanova et al., 2022). Moreover, their communication is characterized by an innate mastery of idioms and cultural references common to English-speaking communities, according to many researchers (Coulmas, 1981; Medgyes, 1992, Phillipson, 1996, as cited in Lee, 2005).

Additionally, Cambridge Dictionary (2024) defined a non-native speaker of a language as “someone who has learned a particular language as a child or adult rather than as a baby”. Apart from this, Boecher (2005) defined non-native speakers as “speakers of a language that is not their L1” (as cited in Lukić, 2017); that is, a person who has learned a language as a second (L2) or third language (L3) but has a different mother tongue. Therefore, the same case applies for the English language, where a non-native English speaker is an

individual whose first language is not English but who learned it as a second or foreign language. They usually learn English through formal education or self-study. In comparison between native and non-native speakers and according to Medgyes (1992), some authors claim that non-native speakers' competence is limited and native speakers are always better at reaching communicative goals in English (as cited in Lukić, 2017). In regards to this matter, many non-native speakers are aware of the weaknesses in their understanding of the English language compared to native speakers, and this might make them feel inferior to them. However, this does not necessarily mean that they speak the language any less correctly than a native speaker. Phillipson (1996) mentioned that "a non-native speaker, through effective training, can acquire most of the other elements that define the concept of a native speaker" (as cited in Lee, 2005).

Nevertheless, Scovel (1988) concluded that it is impossible for any learner of a language to become a native speaker unless he or she is born again; otherwise, an L2 or L3 can never become someone's native language as individuals learn the language as adults, unlike native speakers (as cited in Lee, 2005).

1.5. Factors affecting pronunciation

According to the Cambridge dictionary (2024), pronunciation refers to the way in which a word or a letter is said or uttered correctly, or the way in which a language is spoken. As a matter of fact, the process of learning pronunciation and enhancing it is affected by several aspects. This is supported by Brown (2001, pp. 284-285) who claimed that there are six factors affecting pronunciation (as cited in Antaris & Omolu, 2019). These factors include: native language, age, exposure, innate phonetic ability, identity and language ego and lastly motivation and concern for good pronunciation.

1.5.1. Native language

The native language or the mother tongue plays a significant role in influencing how an individual pronounces and speaks in a second or foreign language (Antaris & Omolu, 2019). If the students try to learn a new language, this element will have an impact on them because particular languages that students learn as their mother language do not have some phonemes similar to those in English; this makes it difficult for them to pronounce certain words. Similarly, Ali Khan (2019) claimed that it is well known that the first language interferes with the acquisition of the pronunciation of the second language. This researcher

went further in his explanation by saying that a second language learner relies on the structure of his first language when he tries to express himself in the target language, either orally or by writing. Hence, this learner can make a lot of mistakes that slow the learning process if the structures of the two languages are different.

1.5.2. Age

According to Sokphal (2021), children under the age of puberty are able to keep a native-like pronunciation in a foreign or second language if they have constant exposure to the language in authentic situations. On the other hand, after the age of puberty, also known as a critical phase, the possibility of acquiring a normal language is unattainable. Yet, adults could achieve a native accent as children do. As a matter of fact, there is a concept known as “the critical period hypothesis” or CPH, and it was first introduced by Lenneberg (1967) (as cited in Ali Khan, 2019). Ali Khan (2019) stated in his study that after a certain age period, it gets harder for learners of a second language to get a good pronunciation, according to the CPH theory. He further explained that learners who begin speaking a second language before the age of six, have little to no accent. Moreover, those who start speaking a SL between the age of seven and eleven years, have a slight accent. Finally, learners who try to speak a SL after the age of twelve, definitely acquire an accent (Nation & Newton, 2009).

1.5.3. Exposure

Gilakjani (2012) mentioned the exposure to the target language as one of the crucial aspects in learning a good pronunciation, where the cultural group that the learner identifies and spends time determine whether the learner will develop native-like pronunciation. Therefore, teachers should encourage students to speak English outside the classroom and assign structured encounters to make that happen. Equally, Sokphal (2021) stated that the social environment has a significant role in this factor because it provides learners with several opportunities to practice the target language. They need to be exposed to input in the target language both within and outside of the classroom, such as in learning centre situations where they can hear actual oral discourses from native speakers.

1.5.4. Innate phonetic ability

According to Brown (1992), innate phonetic ability is sometimes called phonetic coding ability (as cited in Sokphal, 2021). The authors (2021) assumed that it is generally accepted that certain language learners can reproduce sounds more correctly than others and can distinguish between two sounds with greater accuracy. Learners have a greater probability of acquiring and being exposed to native-like pronunciation if they were born and raised in an English-speaking environment. For example, Antaris and Omolu (2019) stated that individuals who were exposed to a language since childhood may find it easier to acquire it as adults. However, because learners are born with different phonetic abilities, biology and physiology, not all learners who are born and raised in native speaking situations are able to achieve native pronunciation consistently. Hence, the degree of daily exposure to the target language will largely determine their ability to sound like native speakers (Sokphal, 2021).

1.5.5. Identity and language ego

Zhang (2009) affirmed that learners' learning identity and attitudes also affect their pronunciation. According to him, each learner's attitude towards the target language and its community can either help or hinder the development of pronunciation abilities. By the same token, prejudices and negative attitudes towards the target language and community might be an obstacle to language learning. In regards to this aspect, Sokphal (2021) also asserted that a speaker's attitude towards the target language, as well as their connection to its speakers, are critical for acquiring pronunciation. When people have a good attitude towards the language and believe they belong to its community, they are more determined to learn it properly. In addition, he stated that language ego, or a person's confidence in using the language, plays an important role. As learners gain confidence and awareness, they tend to focus on pronunciation and enhance their skills; in other words, improved pronunciation abilities and more natural language use are the result of learners' increased self-awareness and confidence, which also motivates them to focus more on their practice, ask for feedback, and pay more attention to how they pronounce words.

1.5.6. Motivation and concern for good pronunciation

According to Sokphal (2021), this factor may have the highest influence compared to the others. The researcher claimed that some learners achieve native-like pronunciation when they are very motivated. However, it is also related to the attention they pay to their

pronunciation and how important it is for them, because if they do not care, they will most likely not be motivated. Moreover, Ikhsan (2017) declared that among the aspects that could affect a learners' pronunciation mastery, motivation was the most influential one. This motivation helps SL learners do whatever and go wherever it takes, if they could, to master their pronunciation level. Additionally, some learners think that pronunciation is not important, but others do. In this case, motivation will help those who think that it is important to have a good pronunciation (Antaris & Omolu, 2019).

1.6. The importance of pronunciation in speech

Effective communication relies deeply on proper pronunciation; this idea is explained by Prashant (2018) while saying that people need correct pronunciation to achieve better communication, because pronunciation affects the understanding of words' meaning. Therefore, clear and accurate pronunciation enhances the clarity of one's message, ensuring that words are well understood as intended.

Moreover, in the context of language learning, pronunciation is a fundamental aspect for achieving proficiency; it helps in comprehension, allowing learners to better understand spoken language in its different contexts. Gilakjani (2012) said that it is more possible for students with good communication skills to be understood even when they make mistakes in other areas, unlike learners with poor pronunciation but perfect grammar (as cited in Prodanovska-Poposka, 2017). Then, when it comes to academic and professional contexts, proficient pronunciation can improve academic performance, job interviews, and presentations, which leads to personal and career success (as cited in Prodanovska-Poposka, 2017).

Furthermore, pronunciation is important not just for the speaker but also for the listener because deficient pronunciation is very challenging to listen to and requires greater effort and concentration on the part of the listener (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016b). That is to say, a good pronunciation contributes to the overall listening experience, allowing the audience to engage fluently with the content of the speech and reducing the probability of misunderstandings. On this concern, Prashant (2018) declared that mispronounced words or incorrect intonation were the root cause of many communication misunderstandings.

1.7. The effect of good pronunciation on EFL learners

For English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, clear pronunciation is beneficial in many ways; this is clearly explained by Fraser (2000) who stated that pronunciation is the most important oral communication skill (as cited in Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016b). He claimed that pronouncing words correctly augments their capacity to speak clearly, facilitates their ability to understand what others are saying, and to effectively communicate with them; this increases their self-esteem, motivates them to engage accurately in discussions and eventually improves their speech fluency.

Furthermore, according to Prashant (2018), correct pronunciation is a basis for efficient communication in English; pronouncing words correctly is a crucial aspect to effective communication in addition to having a wide range of vocabulary and knowledge of grammatical rules. Similarly, Yates and Zielinski (2009) mentioned that people can understand learners with a good pronunciation even if they make mistakes in other areas of language, but they are not able to understand those who have incomprehensible pronunciation even if they have extensive vocabulary knowledge and know grammar fully (as cited in Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016b).

Thus, good pronunciation is a key aspect of language competency and language learning process. It provides opportunities for those who master it, to be successful in their lives by having more chances in their academic, professional, and personal projects. Likewise, Baker and Westrup (2003, p. 5) mentioned that “a student who can speak English well may have a greater chance for further education, finding employment, and gaining promotion” (as cited in Belhabib, 2015). That is to say, since English is an international language that is mostly used in all domains, people who master it have more opportunities in studying abroad and finding jobs.

As a conclusion, pronunciation is an essential component of the English language because it provides a clear understanding of its message when transmitted; and it is a crucial component of efficient communication. The key to improving pronunciation for language learners is the exposure to native speakers along with careful and continuous practice. Additionally, the advancements in technology, mainly online resources and applications for language learning offer beneficial options for people who want to independently work on their pronunciation and who want to develop an understanding that will improve their capacity for an effective pronunciation.

2. Section Two: Podcasts as Teaching and Learning Material

Over the last decade, technology has witnessed major and noticeable growth, giving rise to numerous media platforms that serve not only as sources of entertainment but also aid in the process of teaching. Podcasts stand out as a prominent example of such media tools. Robinson and Ritzko (2009) stated that podcasting is one of the newest uses of internet technology. On its simplest definition and according to the New Oxford American Dictionary (Oxford University Press, 2005): “a podcast is a multimedia digital file made available on the internet for downloading to a portable media player, computer, etc” (as cited in Al Qasim & Al Fadda, 2013). Hence, podcasts consist of a series of videos or only audio content resources presented by speakers with different professional backgrounds, covering a variety of authentic topics that listeners can access by downloading them. These podcasts can be listened to both online and offline (as cited in Yaman, 2016).

Nowadays, in the field of education, it is supposed that podcasts could serve as excellent and helpful tools for teaching different subjects. Additionally, they help not only in the preparation of the lessons but also in creating a closer and more engaging interaction between students and the material, along with many other benefits (as cited in Goldman, 2018). Moreover, the implementation of podcasts in language teaching is regarded as beneficial, as it is believed that exposure to native speakers could positively impact the learning process, helping to facilitate the learning of foreign languages (as cited in Yaman, 2016; Jain & Hashmi, 2013; and Chan et al., 2011).

2.1. Definition of Podcasts

According to Tarmawan et al. (2021), the term podcast is derived from two concepts: “iPod” and “broadcasting.” It is defined as a digital audio medium that a person can download from online platforms, including discussion materials according to their preferences that can be heard at any time. In other words, podcast users can have access to their preferred discussion materials through online platforms, and with the help of this medium, people can choose and download podcasts to listen to at any time. Besides, this term, according to Brown (2020), refers to “an episode or series of audio-content downloaded or streamed from the internet on demand or via subscription service.” That is to say, it gives its users access to a variety of interesting content: podcasts, audiobooks, and other examples of digital media that

let them select and enjoy individual episodes or complete series whenever it is appropriate for them.

Podcasts, according to the Cambridge dictionary (2024), are “a radio program that is stored in a digital form that you can download from the Internet and play on a computer or on an MP3 player.” Another definition provided by Merriam-Webster (2024) states that a podcast is a digital program that can be taken from the internet and downloaded automatically. To summarize, an English podcast is a digital audio or video file or recording in the English language, usually part of a themed series, available for downloading over the internet.

2.2. History and Development of Podcasts

The emergence of podcasts was in the early 2000s as a result of advancements in web-based technology, which enabled the distribution and accessibility of audio files. In 2003, a software engineer named “Dave Winer” developed an audio RSS feed, also known as Really Simple Syndication, which was what the technology of podcasts centralized architecture revolved around. The use of RSS allows its users to subscribe to podcasts, which are automatically downloaded whenever there is an update or new published content (Rosell-Aguilar, 2007). It was used by a public radio host named “Christopher Lydon” for the purpose of offering audio content of the interviews found on his blog, as well as to host the world's first podcast, “Radio Open Source” (cited in the complete history of podcasts, 2023).

That upcoming year, “Winer” created IPodder in partnership with “Adam Curry,” a former MTV VJ (music television, video jockey). This was a program that made it possible for people to download internet radio, VJs, broadcasts, and other audio content on their iPods, which were soon named podcasts. In 2004, the word “podcast” was first used by the journalist “Ben Hammersly” in an article named “Audible Revolution” that was written in “The Guardian,” a British news website (as cited in Kuchta, 2021). In 2005, the term “podcast” quickly became the word of the year in the new Oxford American Dictionary (as cited in the complete history of podcasts, 2023).

After the appearance of podcasts, they had a massive spread across the world. Locker (2018, p. 1) highlighted that in 2014, there were 7 billion total Apple podcast downloads, 10.5 billion in 2016, 13.7 billion in 2018, and in March of 2018, Apple Podcasts reached 50 billion total podcast downloads and streams (as cited in Zeb et al., 2019). Furthermore, a research

study named “Edison Research” that was published in 2018 showed that 73 million Americans have listened to podcasts around that time, where they listened to about seven podcasts per week (Sullivan, 2019).

According to Balas (2005), a journal paper published in November 2005 suggested that blogging is outmoded while podcasting is gaining popularity. Furthermore, research into investigating the use of video podcasts in education began to emerge in 2002, with references to audio graphs by Loomes et al. (2002) (as cited in Kay, 2012). Moreover, podcasts in recent times have traced their way into the field of education and are becoming a part of it, and since technology has been integrated in education since a long time ago, it would not be a completely new concept for podcasts to be used as well, where they could be an exciting platform for a variety of subjects (as cited in Goldman, 2018).

Warlick (2005) stated that podcasts were originally used to convey information and entertain their listeners (as cited in Ramli, 2018); however, later, their effectiveness in the acquisition of language was investigated by many educators, which shed light on the potential these podcasts could have other than entertainment.

2.3.Content of Podcasts

In 2020, Spotify listed its most popular genres of podcasts, which were related to: society and culture, comedy, lifestyle and health, arts and entertainment, and education (Spotify Newsroom, 2020, as cited in Rime et al., 2022). With the highest number of downloads and streams compared to stories, music, games, business and technology, sports and recreation, news and politics, comedy, kids and family, and true crime, podcasts outshined Spotify. Its wide variety is one of the reasons that attracts people to become interested and be regular listeners because there's something for everyone (Rime et al., 2022).

With this availability, this success usually goes back to the listener and his preferences when it comes to choosing a podcast topic, and this could change according to the needs and wants of the listener. Therefore, if the desire was entertainment, then the person could simply look up and find podcasts that target that area. On the other hand, if one needs to gain information or be educated about a certain topic, then that content would probably be available as well (cited in Tobin & Guadagno, 2022).

According to Tobin and Guadagno (2022, p. 4), “podcasts provide a relatively easy way to increase one’s knowledge about a variety of topics,” which makes the topic a major component of a successful podcast. Moreover, good hosts make the greatest difference when it comes to the success of podcasts because they provide the foundation of a good podcast in terms of creating a relationship between them and the listeners; hence, this makes podcasts’ users feel connected to the host and, as a result, engage more (Tobin & Guadagno, 2022). To summarize, having an interesting topic and entertaining hosts are the factors that make a podcast successful.

Podcasts fall into three main categories: non-fiction narrative story-telling podcasts, fictional story-telling podcasts, and hybrid podcasts (as cited in Rime et al., 2022). The authors explained these three categories as follows:

1. Non-fiction narrative story-telling podcasts are those that include monologues or interviews. Their content includes real stories or experiments that are narrated authentically (Rime et al., 2022).

2. Fictional story-telling podcasts, as the name suggests, revolve around unreal stories. They are often scripted and performed. Their creators tell a variety of tales, fictional stories, and scripts (Rime et al., 2022).

3. Hybrid podcasts (conversational) are the most common ones and are those that involve a host yet different guests in each episode. In these, questions could be asked, stories or experiences could be told, and different topics could be discussed (Rime et al., 2022).

2.4. Podcasts in education

Since the integration of technology in the field of education, different methods that assist in the process of teaching and learning through media tools and platforms (such as PowerPoint presentations, in-class videos, digital images, graphs and so on) emerged (Goldman, 2018). On the other hand, when podcasts gained popularity, researchers started to look into the educational purposes of podcasting (Rosell-Aguilar, 2015). Regarding this concept, Goldman (2018) asserted that in educational settings, teachers use podcasts to share lectures and course materials, giving students the opportunity to interact with the information at their own convenience. In addition, podcasts serve the educational field positively in many ways, such as acting as an innovative teaching resource for teachers to design new classroom

activities, helping students in their learning process both inside and outside the classroom, and assisting in teachers' preparations (as cited in Goldman, 2018).

2.5.Podcasts for Teaching a Language

Teaching a language is an important part of the language learning process for all students, especially EFL learners. According to Budiasningrum and Rosita (2022), podcasts have the potential to be extremely beneficial resources in the study of languages (as cited in Ramirez, 2024); thus, they could be useful tools for language teaching and learning. Teachers can use them as excellent resources to help their students improve their speaking and listening skills (Jain & Hashmi, 2013). The authors (2013) claimed that these podcasts offer an engaging educational experience by listening to native speakers, interacting with people through podcasts, and communicating in everyday situations, which enriches them with a boost of confidence in learning the correct pronunciation and accent.

According to Stanely (2005), "podcasting as a new technology has huge potential for enhancing second learners' listening and speaking skills" (as cited in Jain & Hashmi, 2013); this means that these audio resources offer learners the opportunity to enhance their speaking and listening skills by exposing them to natural and authentic speech, including a range of accurate accents, learning new vocabulary, and acquiring the exact pronunciation.

Chan et al. (2011) and Kaplan-Leiserson (2005) stated that podcasts can speed up learners' process of language learning not just in listening but also in other areas including pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, speaking, and similar learning activities (as cited in Hasan & Hoon, 2013). That is to say that podcasts improve other language skills such as vocabulary and reading by providing authentic speech, discussions, TV, and radio programs, in addition to being useful for enhancing listening and pronunciation (Ramirez, 2024).

In addition, Yaman (2016) mentioned that podcasts as a tool for teaching a language could be motivating, flexible, with no specific time or space to be listened to, both online and offline, with limitless resources, and most importantly, authentic. Moreover, specifically in teaching audio-visual comprehension, educational podcasts have shown a positive impact on increasing the listening comprehension skills of language learners (Fardavoodi et al., 2020).

Rosell-Aguilar (2015) stated that in 2007, he suggested several purposes that language learning course podcasts should serve. Although a podcast is unlikely to accomplish

all of these aims, the list of goals below offers an example of what an increasing number of podcasts are trying to accomplish (Rosell-Aguilar, 2015). The list includes:

- Expose learners to the target language, its characteristics, and its culture.
- Include a set of accurate materials.
- Be interesting and of appropriate length.
- Consider the features of the podcast medium and media players, such as their portability and screen size.

To conclude, podcasts serve as valuable resources for teaching languages, offering an engaging learning experience for students. In addition, due to their flexibility and authenticity, they have the potential to enhance various language skills, including speaking, listening, vocabulary, and cultural understanding. With the increasing availability of language-learning podcasts, educators have a variety of resources to support their teaching objectives and enhance students' language proficiency effectively.

2.6. The importance and role of podcasts in enhancing language skills (pronunciation)

According to Chinnery (2006), the human and personal features of podcasting make podcasts particularly suitable for learning in some subjects, such as language learning, as they bring an authentic cultural experience to students who are learning foreign languages (as cited in Edirisingha et al., 2007). Similarly, Guettaftemam (2016, p. 22) asserted that “podcasts open the gate for learners to discover the foreign language and the foreign culture”; in other words, podcasts help students not only learn the language through exposure to natives’ authenticity but also allow them to gain knowledge of their culture. Podcasts are not only a useful tool for language learning, but they also provide an accessible approach for learners to improve their pronunciation, which could have a significant positive influence on the enhancement of this skill (Mohammed & Al-Ahdal, 2020).

Additionally, the use of podcasts provides an opportunity for learners to exchange multimedia content through audio or video, allowing them to listen to real-life language in order to acquire a native-like pronunciation without requiring considerable effort (Guettaftemam, 2016).

As a matter of fact, a way to enhance pronunciation is by developing the skills of listening and speaking (Suseno, 2023); these happen to be the two areas that podcasts affect

the most. According to Abdulrahman et al. (2018), podcasts have a considerable effect on students' listening comprehension; not only that, but EFL students acknowledged their appreciation of this tool, stating that it made them more determined to learn English.

Regarding the speaking skill, the podcasts created by native English speakers can potentially help students develop their speaking abilities, whether within the classroom or outside the educational setting. Hence, when used appropriately, these audio recordings could successfully assist students in facing their challenges regarding speaking skills and improving their oral communication (Suvarnaphaet & Suvarnaphaet, 2023). Therefore, according to the literature, podcasts could have a noticeable positive impact on EFL students' improvement in pronunciation.

Consequently, podcasting, a new technology, offers great potential for improving ESL/EFL learners' listening and speaking skills (Guettaftemam, 2016); this could ensure the ability to hear how words are pronounced correctly and explore the different accents, which helps in acquiring the accurate form of the language and, as a result, improve pronunciation.

Podcasts have developed into a significant medium that provides a wide variety of information for both learning and entertainment. They are considered by many researchers to be helpful resources in different sectors, particularly language teaching and learning. They help students create strategies for education and self-education and can take place on a daily basis (Sysoyev, 2014). Therefore, podcasts are an easily accessible resource for listeners to interact with authentic and interesting content.

3. Section three: literature review

In the last years, the process of learning a language and mastering the pronunciation has remained a problem for many EFL students because it requires much effort to sound fluent or close to natives. Regarding this issue, this concept has captured the attention of many researchers, some of whom will be mentioned in this present section. The researchers are interested in exploring the benefits of podcasts in teaching a language, specifically improving one's pronunciation. Thus, many studies have been conducted and showed mostly similar positive results.

First of all, regarding the impact of podcasts on teaching a language, "The Potential Benefits of podcasts for Language Learning. *Journal of Educational and Instructional Studies in the World*" was a descriptive study conducted by Yaman (2016) to investigate the potential benefits of podcasts when it comes to learning English as a foreign language. In this experiment, there were no time or place restrictions, which enabled students to have access to these podcasts 24/7, giving them the opportunity to pause and repeat as much as needed. The study showed a variety of results, with both advantages and disadvantages. The positive side of using podcasts included the fact that they could be motivating for students, offering them freedom with no restrictions on when to use them, which goes back to their ability to be both online and offline. Most importantly, this study came to the conclusion that the authenticity of podcasts contributes to the development of both listening and pronunciation skills, as well as other ones. However, as mentioned above, this research was still able to identify the disadvantages that this tool could have on learners, such as the fact that it could be distractive sometimes and that it may cause over-dependence on technology over time. In addition, some websites require a paid subscription, which could make it difficult for students to get a hold of these podcasts, and even these podcasts could be of limited use if not supported with rich linguistic content.

Concerning language acquisition, a skill that needs to be mastered in order to help EFL or any second language learners speak a language is listening. Listening to natives or to the language spoken will ensure the acquirement of accurate pronunciation and sounds, which will eventually make learners speak the language properly. For this matter and to determine whether podcasts could assist in ameliorating students' listening comprehension, a study was conducted by Fardavoodi et al. (2020) and was entitled "Investigating the effect of using educational podcasts on listening comprehension of language learners", specifically in

Tehran. The research was quantitative and quasi-experimental, with pre-tests and post-tests done on a sample of 60 students. After the analysis of the data with the SPSS software, results confirmed the significant effectiveness of educational podcasts in enhancing the listening comprehension skills of language learners, which led to recommending them as a tool for teaching audio-visual comprehension to learners.

Moreover, since pronunciation was a problem that many non-native students faced, it would be ideal to find new ways to facilitate its acquisition and improvement. A study by Al-Ahdal, “Overcoming pronunciation hurdles in EFL settings: An evaluation of podcasts as a learning tool at Qassim University Saudi Arabia,” was conducted in 2020. In their study, the audio-visual MP3 option was used by Saudi EFL students on their smartphones, and they were given challenging activities to check their progress in their skill of pronunciation. Over the course of three months, results were visible. A remarkable improvement in these Saudi EFL students’ pronunciation was noticed, by almost 50 percent in the post-test. Thus, this study was among the ones that concluded that podcasts could be beneficial for enhancing pronunciation and should be integrated more as a tool for teaching pronunciation.

Furthermore, the aspect that facilitates the acquisition of a language is the motivation to do it. If a student enjoys learning, then it will be much easier and faster. Kafes and Caner (2020) conducted an exploratory qualitative study to learn about students’ perceptions of using podcasts as a tool for improving pronunciation. The impact of podcasting on the pronunciation skills of pre-service EFL teachers was examined. Eighty participants were used for this experiment, and after analyzing the data using the content analysis technique, the results showed the positive perceptions that the participants had towards podcasts, and they supported their opinion with the freedom that these podcasts give, which allowed them to use them at their own convenience.

Regarding the students’ perceptions, another study was done in 2017 by Almaqrn and Alshabeb, and the article’s title is “EFL learners’ attitudes towards the proper pronunciation of English and podcasts as a facilitator of proper pronunciation”. The main aim of this study was to monitor Saudi students’ attitudes towards proper English pronunciation and podcasts as a new educational tool. To collect data, an attitudinal questionnaire containing questions regarding both English pronunciation and the use of podcasts was distributed to 23 level 3 Saudi EFL learners from the Department of English at Imam University. After collecting the answers, students showed an interest in proper English

pronunciation. This was considered a good sign for improving it. Concerning podcasts, the students were presented with five podcasts related to their listening and speaking textbooks that were used for eight weeks, and at the end of the period, they were asked to answer a questionnaire. The results showed a high rate of acceptance of these podcasts and a positive attitude towards them.

As this literature review shows, the idea that is discussed in this study has captured the interest of many researchers who have conducted experiments as well as search on it. Revealing different results but mainly ones that confirm the effectiveness of podcasts in enhancing the speaking of a foreign language as well as its pronunciation.

**Chapter two: Methods, Research Findings,
Discussion of the Results, Recommendations and
Limitations.**

1. Section One: Research Methodology

This research explores the perceptions of EFL students towards the use of English podcasts as an educational tool to enhance their pronunciation skills. This section aims at providing a description and an explanation of the methodology employed. It first reviews the scope of the study and then describes the tools that are used to conduct this research. More specifically, the section explains in more detail these components: the scope of the study, the research variables, population and sampling, research design and methodology, and finally data collection tools.

1.1.Scope of the study

This study aims at exploring first-year EFL students' perceptions of the importance of using English podcasts to improve their pronunciation. The latter is considered by many learners a significant struggle in the English language learning process. The sample for this study consists of first-year EFL students at the University of Bejaia who were selected using a random sampling technique. The process of collecting data involve a questionnaire designed for first-year EFL students and an interview for teachers at the department of English at the same university. The students' questionnaire was constructed with the purpose of gathering their perceptions and opinions regarding the use of English podcasts to develop their pronunciation. Moreover, the teachers' interview aims at exploring their attitudes concerning the idea of integrating English podcasts to teach the skills of pronunciation and how to use them in case both teachers and students validate their positive impact.

1.2.Research variables

English podcasts and pronunciation are the focus variables of this study. More specifically, this research seeks to explore first-year EFL students' perceptions towards the use of English podcasts to improve their pronunciation.

A podcast is defined as an “audio or visual content that is automatically delivered over a network via a free subscription” (Rajic, 2013, p. 90). It involves placing recorded material on a website from which it can be downloaded and listened to at a later time (Scutter et al., 2010). Therefore, English podcasts fall under the same definition, except that the language of the podcasts is in English.

The second main variable of this study is pronunciation; it is the way certain sounds are produced (Richard & Schmidt, 2002, as cited in Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016a). Likewise, Calka (2011) explained that pronunciation is one of the most difficult language skills, especially if the learner aims to acquire a native-like pronunciation. Moreover, Yowani (2021) stated multiple causes behind learners' difficulties in learning the English pronunciation; these reasons include the foreignness of the English sound system and the difference between how English speakers pronounce the ending sounds and how non-natives do it in their mother tongues. These hurdles make it challenging for them to acquire the correct English pronunciation. Lastly, the learners' phonetic mistakes that cause incomprehensible speech lead to their lack of confidence in both speaking and listening skills. (Zhang & Yin, 2009, as cited in Yowani, 2021).

As a matter of fact, the suggested relationship between the two variables is cause and effect, where the podcast construct is the independent variable that can have an effect on the second dependent variable, namely, pronunciation. In spite of the fact that this research suggests this kind of relationship, the main goal of conducting this study is not to empirically prove the cause and effect relationship but rather to support it with the exploration of the perceptions of both teachers and students' towards this relationship. That is to say, the researchers' aim is to contribute to this area by a description of the perceptions of the participants and not to provide empirical evidence to the existence of this relationship between the two variables.

1.3. Population and sampling

When conducting a research, selecting the appropriate population is a crucial aspect that needs to be considered. In this case, first-year EFL students of the University of Bejaia were chosen to share their perceptions because they are beginners compared to the other levels (L2, L3, M1, and M2) in terms of learning the English language as a major, and to L2 students in terms of learning about English phonetics as a module.

After choosing the population, a sample selection is necessary since the researcher cannot reach all the population members. Thus, in the current study, a random sampling technique is used to select 60 first-year EFL students at the University of Bejaia in order to participate in the study. The sample, then, is composed of a majority (78.3%) of females and

males with a percentage of 21.7%; furthermore, 80% of the sample's age is between 18 and 20 years old.

1.4. Research Design, Methodology, and Procedures for Data Collection

This study is conducted on first-year EFL students at Bejaia University to explore their perceptions towards the use of English podcasts as an educational tool to enhance their pronunciation. Therefore, in order to collect the necessary data to reach the aim and answer the research questions, a set of procedures is followed:

1.4.1. Research design

This research explores both the teachers' and the students' perceptions towards the use of English podcasts to enhance students' pronunciation. Besides, it tries to find out the issues of pronunciation faced by first-year EFL students. Finally, it attempts to describe the use of English podcasts as a new teaching tool in the EFL classroom. For this purpose, this research opts for a non-experimental research because there is no experiment to be conducted on students and no manipulation to confirm the validity of English podcasts as educational material to enhance pronunciation, and the tools are used to survey the opinions of the participants.

1.4.2. Research methods

The mixed method (qualitative and quantitative) is applied in order to gather the necessary data. The quantitative method is opted for in order to quantify the students' perceptions and categorize them into majority and minority, positive and negative, whereas the qualitative method is employed to seek the details concerning the adoption of the podcasts into the EFL classroom and to get more explanations from the teachers concerning this.

More precisely, a questionnaire intended to collect quantitative data was distributed to first-year EFL students at the University of Bejaia with the purpose of exploring their point of views regarding the use of English podcasts in classrooms as a step towards the improvement of their pronunciation skills. Then, an interview, which was designed to gather qualitative data, is shared online with teachers of English at the same university. This tool seeks to better understand their perceptions towards this material and the idea of adopting it in the field of education.

1.5.Data Collection Tools

As it is mentioned above, this study makes use of two main tools: a questionnaire and an interview. This section provides a detailed description of both tools.

1.Questionnaire: This quantitative tool is designed to gather information about how students feel about their pronunciation and how they feel about listening to English podcasts. During the process of data collection, sixty students from the first-year EFL classrooms took part in this survey; however, some of the students did not complete it.

The questionnaire is divided into three sections with both open-ended and closed-ended questions; these include personal questions, views regarding speaking and pronunciation, and opinions on English podcasts. For most questions, participants must choose one response from a list of options, but for other questions, they may select more than one response. Additionally, it is expected from the respondents to justify some of their answers. The questionnaire has five (5) questions in its first section that investigate general information, including age, gender, and interests. Ten (10) other questions constitute the second sections which focuses on the students' perceptions towards pronunciation as well as their level of anxiety when speaking in English. They were also asked to rate their level of proficiency in the English language and to indicate if they have any fears or obstacles related to their studies and whether they have used any other programs to improve their pronunciation. Then, seven (7) questions are asked in the third section to focus on the perceptions of the students towards English podcasts; the participants are asked to give their opinions about their knowledge of podcasts, whether they have used them previously or not, as well as their opinion towards integrating them in the field of teaching English, specifically to target pronunciation.

2.Interview: This qualitative tool is used to collect the perceptions of teachers of English towards the idea of using podcasts as a teaching tool to enhance students' pronunciation levels. The interview includes a set

of open-ended questions that seek a detailed description of their personal experience in teaching to the idea of integrating podcasts in the field of education. The interview started by asking the teachers about the skill of pronunciation and if it is taught sufficiently compared to the other skill or not. The following question directly introduced the concept of incorporating English podcasts as a tool to teach pronunciation. From these points and on, all the remaining questions were related to the suggested material, such as the different ways in which podcasts could be used in classrooms and if the students would be interested in them, the possibility of their adoption in Algerian universities, as well as their advantages. Finally, the teachers were asked to share any further suggestions concerning the issue of the study.

The first section of the second chapter of the current research aims at exploring first-year EFL students' perceptions towards the use of English podcasts to enhance their pronunciation. It covered the main approach used in the application of the non-experimental study. It also provided more information about the population and the sample that is selected to participate in the study's surveys. Furthermore, it described the research design and the techniques applied to collect the necessary data for the study.

2. Section two: Analysis of the results

This study aims at exploring EFL students' perceptions towards the use of English podcasts to enhance their pronunciation level. First-year EFL students at the University of Bejaia were selected to be the subjects of this research. This section contains the data analysis of both the questionnaire and interview that were used to collect the data required to answer the research questions. To analyse the data, the SPSS software was used.

2.1. Questionnaire's results

Section one: Personal information

Q1: What is your age?

Table 1: Participants' age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18- 20	48	80%
21-25	12	20%
More than 25	0	0%
Total	60	100%

Based on the data provided in Table 1, it is noticed that 80% of the participants' age is between 18 and 20 years old; 20% of them specifically are between 21 and 25 years old; and there are no participants reported to be older than 25 years old.

Q2: What is your gender?

Table 2: Participants' gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	13	21,7%

Female	47	78,3%
Total	60	100%

Table 2 provides an overview of the participants' gender, revealing a significant difference between male and female respondents. Specifically, the data indicates that the majority of the participants where 78.3% are females, whereas only 21.7% of them are males.

Q3: How well do you master the English language?

Table 3: Participants' level of English

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Very well	13	21,7%
Good	45	75%
Not at all	2	3,3%
Total	60	100%

The findings presented in Table 3 shed light on the participants' proficiency levels in the English language. According to the data, 75% of the respondents claim to be good at the English language, 21.7% of them master it very well, and only 3.3% mentioned that they do not master it at all.

Q4: What is the skill that you are interested in developing the most?

Table 4: The skill wanted to develop by participants

Skills	Frequency	Percentage
Speaking	51	85%
Writing	11	18,3%
Reading	6	10%
Listening	5	8,3%

Table 4 highlights the preferences of the students regarding the skills they aim to develop in the English language. The data indicates that speaking skills are the top priority for the majority of students, with a percentage of 85%. The next desired skill to improve is writing, as indicated by 18.3% of the students. Then, 10% of them selected the reading skill, and only 8.3% of them wanted the listening skill.

Q5: What is your goal of studying English as a major?*Participants' goal of studying English*

The goal of the participants regarding studying English as a major varied from wanting to learn the language just to develop and achieve a high level of proficiency in it in order to communicate with foreigners, to pursuing it for the purpose of finding a job. In addition, some of them desire to leave the country and go abroad, that is why they chose to study English. As it has been said, their responses concerning work were various, such as: becoming a teacher, a writer, a professor at the university, a cabin crew member, and a freelance interpreter.

Section two: Students' attitudes towards pronunciation**Q6: In addition to in class sessions, what are the other methods that you use in order to learn English?***Participants' methods in order to learn English*

Regarding the different methods that can be used to learn a language, most of the students mentioned and agreed on the following ones:

- Reading books and novels or documentaries.
- Listening to music and podcasts.
- Watching movies and series with subtitles.
- Some opt for analyzing complicated words, writing, playing games since there is an interaction with natives through them.

Q7: Do you think that you are fluent in English?*Table 5: Participants' fluency in English*

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	37	61,7%
No	23	38,3%
Total	60	100%

Table 5 provides insights into the students' opinions about their fluency in the English language. Among the 60 participants, the data reveals that 61.7% of the respondents described

themselves as fluent in English; whereas, 38.3% of them expressed that they do not consider themselves fluent.

Q8: Which of these issues affect your speech?

Table 6: Issues affecting participant' speech

Issues	Frequency	Percentage
Fear of not having a correct accent	20	33,3%
Fear of pronouncing words incorrectly	41	68,3%

Table 6 demonstrates insights into the issues affecting the participants' speech in English, highlighting two significant concerns among the population. Firstly, the data indicates that 68.3% of the students express a fear of pronouncing English words incorrectly when speaking English. Secondly, 33.3% of them report a fear of not having a correct accent.

Q9: On a scale of 1 out of 10, how would you rate your pronunciation?

Table 7: Ratings of participants' pronunciation

The rating scale	Frequency	Percentage
Very low level	0	0%
Low level	3	5%
Average level	18	30%
Good level	30	50%
Very good level	9	15%
Total	60	100%

Table 7 indicates the different levels of English pronunciation according to the participants. Half (50%) of the students described their pronunciation as good. Additionally, 30% of them rated their pronunciation as average, and 15% assessed it as very good. On the other hand, only 5% of them stated that their pronunciation level is low. Notably, none of the participants chose the very low level.

Q10: What are the main difficulties related to pronunciation that you struggle with?*Table 8: Difficulties related to pronunciation that participants struggle with*

Difficulties	Frequency	Percentage
Accent	28	46,7%
Vowels	8	13,3%
Consonants	0	0%
Aspects of connected speech	35	58,3%

Among the difficulties related to pronunciation that students struggle with when learning the English language; as shown in the table 8, the aspects of connected speech emerged as the most prevalent difficulty, with 58.3% of the participants expressing challenges in this area, and 46.7% of them reported having problems with accent. Finally, 13.3% of them indicated struggles with vowels, whereas none of them reported issues with consonants.

Q11: How do you usually overcome them?*Participants' ways of overcoming the difficulties related to pronunciation*

Concerning the ways that the participants usually use to overcome their difficulties related to pronunciation, they cited the following ones:

- Listening to native speakers to follow their speech patterns, as some of them claim, the more they listen to natives, the better their pronunciation gets.
- Noticing how they pronounce each single word.
- Practising while using applications to correct their errors.

Q12: Do you think that phonetic sessions are useful in teaching English pronunciation?*Table 9: Participants' opinions regarding phonetic sessions' usefulness in teaching the English pronunciation*

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	53	88,3%
No	7	11,7%
Total	60	100%

Table 9 shows the students' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of phonetic sessions in teaching English pronunciation. The majority of the respondents, including 88.3%,

express the belief that phonetic sessions are indeed useful in teaching English pronunciation. However, only 11.7% disagree with the idea.

Q13: What do you suggest for better pronunciations instructions?

Participants’ suggestions for better pronunciation instructions

The EFL students who responded to the questionnaire suggested multiple recommendations to improve pronunciation such as:

- Using new materials like podcasts.
- Watching educational videos.
- Providing audio devices and integrating listening sessions into the program of teaching English, which will probably increase students’ awareness of the existence of audio-visual materials.
- Listening and repeating as well as reading loudly.
- To make speaking amusing, they recommended playing roles in class.

Q14: What are the strategies that you follow to improve your pronunciation skill?

Table 10: Strategies that participants follow to improve their pronunciation skill

Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Listening and repeating	47	78,3%
Listening and writing	11	18,3%
Reading aloud and recording	11	18,3%

Table 10 indicates the strategies adopted by the participants in order to enhance their pronunciation skills in English, where 78.3% of the students opted for the strategy of listening and repeating, 18.3% of them indicated that they use listening and another 18.3% of them mentioned reading aloud and recording.

Q15: Do you follow any native speakers’ programs (documentaries, YouTube videos, real life stories, news....) in order to develop pronunciation level?

Table 11: The amount of participants who follow native programs to improve their pronunciation level

Options	Frequency	Percentage
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Yes	43	71,7%
No	17	28,3%
Total	60	100%

Question 15 seeks to find out the amount of the participants who follow native programs to improve their pronunciation level in English. As it is demonstrated in table 11, 71.7% of the students actively follow native programs for this purpose, whereas 28.3% of them do not.

Section three: Students’ perceptions towards English podcasts

Q16: Have you heard of podcasts?

Table 12: The amount of participants who heard of podcasts

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	55	91,7%
No	5	8,3%
Total	60	100%

Question 16 is concerned with the students’ awareness of podcasts’ existence. As it is shown in the findings of table 12, 91.7% of the participants have heard of podcasts. On the other hand, specifically, 8.3% reported not being aware of podcasts.

Q17: Have you ever used podcasts?

Table 13: The amount of participants who used podcasts

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	33	55%
No	27	45%
Total	60	100%

It does not only stop in knowing the material, but it is also important to know whether the students use them or not and that is why question 17 is asked for them. Hence, as it is seen in table 13, 55% of the participants reported using podcasts; whereas, 45% of them did not.

Q18: What do you think about the idea of integrating podcasts as an educational tool for learning English?

Participants' opinions about using podcasts as an educational tool for learning English

The majority of the students who participated in the questionnaire agreed on the idea of integrating podcasts as an educational tool for English language learning; claiming that it is a good idea and can be an interesting, useful, both as an educational and fun concept.

Q19: What do you think is the ideal way of using English podcasts in the classroom?

The ideal way of using English podcasts in the classroom according to participants

The answers of the EFL students who participated in the questionnaire included: using them in phonetics during the lecture; to demonstrate how sounds are produced and how words are pronounced. In addition, podcasts can be employed as an instructional tool in the oral sessions to introduce topics, ask students questions about it or let them debate. However, it is important to provide suitable tools such as teaching in media rooms using computers with good methods to make this concept's introduction possible.

Q20: If you find out that podcasts contribute to enhancing your pronunciation level, will you use them?

Table 14: The amount of participants who would use podcasts, if they find out that they contribute in enhancing their pronunciation level

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	55	91,7%
No	5	8,3%
Total	60	100%

Table 14 demonstrates the participants' visions towards using podcasts to enhance their pronunciation skills in English. The data indicates that 91.7% of them will use them if they perceive them as contributing to the improvement of their pronunciation skill, while, a small percentage of them (8.3%) will not.

Q21: Which aspect of pronunciation do you think podcasts would influence more?

Table 15: Aspect of pronunciation that podcasts could influence according to participants

Aspects of pronunciation	Frequency	Percentage
Phonetics	29	48,3%
Word stress	20	33,3%
Sentence stress	35	58,3%

Table 15 shows valuable insights into the aspects of pronunciation that the participants believe could be influenced by podcasts. The data reveals that the majority of the participants, representing 58.3%, stated sentence stress as an aspect of pronunciation that could be influenced by podcasts. Then, nearly half of them, specifically 48.3%, checked phonetics, and 33.3%, identified word stress.

Q22: Do you have any further suggestions concerning the use of podcasts to enhance EFL students' pronunciation? Feel free to write whatever you think

Participants' further suggestions concerning the use of podcasts to enhance EFL students' pronunciation

The participants' suggestions regarding this concept included:

- Listening carefully to podcasts, searching for words, their meaning and then practicing their pronunciation.
- Taking the concept of podcasts as an educational tool seriously without using it during the whole lecture.
- Some prefer to rely on oneself to learn the language and improve its pronunciation.

2.2.Interview results

Theme 1: The teachers' views regarding the programs of teaching pronunciation skills at the University of Bejaia

The first question that is directed to the teachers is concerned with the skill of pronunciation, specifically whether it is neglected while teaching the English language or not. After gathering the answers provided, two teachers said that this skill is not neglected compared to the other skills, where one said: "No,for me there IS no neglection .” and one supported this opinion with the existence of the module on phonetics “I don't think they are neglectful since there is the module of phonetics of which program is designed to teach pronunciation”. From another perspective, the other respondents thought the opposite, as they

stated that it is in fact neglected and that the programs are giving less emphasis on proper pronunciation of the English language.

Even though in the first- and second-year at the Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree the students were taught phonetics and phonology modules, it is still insufficient. This is explained by one teacher who said: “Yes. Although the modules of phonetics and phonology were introduced to First and second years of the BA degrees, but this isn't enough. The curriculum does not involve any sophisticated materials or methods for this skill instruction in comparison to other skills of language, mainly, reading, writing, listening and speaking”. Additionally, when it comes to teaching the pronunciation skill, the curriculum does not use advanced resources, rules, or practice opportunities like it does for teaching other language abilities such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening; this is stated by another teacher “Indeed, syllabi are paying less attention to correct English pronunciation, everyone in a non-native context is producing an idiosyncratic form of an accent which is due to the fact of not teaching pronunciation forms and allowing enough time to practice”.

Theme 2: The teachers' perceptions in regards to the idea of integrating English podcasts as an educational tool to target EFL students' pronunciation and first-year students' reactions to this concept according to them

The second and third questions of the interview aim at finding out the teachers' perceptions in regards to the idea of integrating English podcasts to improve EFL students' pronunciation, and how first-year students would react to that.

In fact, the teachers showed a positive attitude towards this concept and claimed that it would be a great and beneficial concept. Moreover, because students find anything related to technology captivating, and take pleasure in using it to facilitate their learning, especially when it is trending on social media, podcasts could be interesting and attract students' attention. This is stated by one teacher when saying: “Students are interested to anything related to technology and they feel enjoying the process of learning through tech. Add to this, podcasts are trending on social media, and this might really attract the students' attention”. The same teacher further explained that podcasts' implementation should be well structured and well chosen, they should be selected based on the students' needs and interest; this might help in benefiting more from them. The teacher added: “This is from the students' perspective...

concerning the podcast themselves, if well chosen, with appropriate content, and based on the students' needs and interests, it would be a good teaching material”.

Furthermore, the interview revealed that a podcast could be a key tool to use and put into practice in order to improve the pronunciation of English, inspire students, and attract their attention; this idea is confirmed by two teachers, as the first said: “A key tool to improve the students level of pronunciation”, while the other claimed: “I think this is a good idea because the podcast might trigger the students' motivation”.

Additionally, the podcast would systematically concentrate on both pronunciation and the delivery of some essential information on a certain subject; this is supported by another teacher when she said: “I think this is a great concept which is at the same time coping with new artificial intelligence tools which I believe are attractive to students. Not only this, the podcast would systematically focus on both pronunciation and the delivery of some important content on a given topic”.

Regarding the learners' reactions to this idea according to the teachers and their experiences with first-year EFL students, they all stated that the students would be very interested in using podcasts in the classroom, and will be very excited to implement a new method, this is something one of the interviewees explained; “yes, they would be very exciting to use new methods”. Furthermore, another teacher thought that students will not get annoyed and demotivated using this new method which is different than traditional ones: “Of course they would because we as teachers feel that students are getting annoyed and demotivated using traditional mediums of instruction”. In addition, the teachers expressed that the students are already showing some interest in the module of phonetics, and adding one more positive thing would make the learning motivating; this is declared by another respondent who claimed :“To certain extent yes, since they show some sort of interest to Phonetics module”.

However, the implementation of podcast, from the teachers' perspective, is limited to some conditions. As they said, there should be well-formed teachers who can appropriately implement this method “Think about having well-formed teachers first who can implement this method”. This means that the teachers think that podcast implementation needs teachers who are well aware about this tool and know how to get appropriate educational benefits from them.

Theme 3: The possibility of integrating English podcasts in Algerian universities in terms of materials' accessibility according to the teachers and how they could be applied

The fourth and fifth questions of this interview seek to question the possibility of implementing English podcasts in Algerian universities according to the teachers and how that can happen.

The fourth questions' answers revealed that most of the teachers agreed that Algerian universities do not have the necessary, accessible materials to implement this method in classrooms, as the ones that they already have are not sufficient. This answer is supported by two teachers, the first said that "Unfortunately not. We don't have the necessary materials to use technology or in this case podcasts un our classrooms", while the other explained "Somehow acceptable but not sufficient"

On the other hand, the other interviewees stated that with the new governmental laws, Algerian universities are able to include the needed materials for integrating podcasts into their educational programs; and one teacher asserted that by saying: "With the new governmental laws, Algerian universities are able to include the needed materials for including podcasts in the curriculum"; another supported this idea by stating: "Yes, I think they have to have only basic materials, like Laptop or mobile, camera and voluntary or witness persons for doing surveys on several subjects." However, even with the presence of basic materials like laptops, mobiles, and media rooms, human competencies are as necessary as the material itself to make this idea possible. This is stated by the fourth teacher "...Material yes but human competencies are also necessary".

Additionally, according to the teachers interviewed, English podcasts could effectively be applied in classrooms in different ways. First, by devoting time to the use of this material, as stated by one teacher "Through devoting much time for using such material". Second, the teachers suggested the implementation of a type of podcasts that target beneficial topics for students and at the same time, target their listening to correct pronunciation forms. Moreover, one teacher chose the selection of adequate knowledge as a method "The selection of the adequate knowledge" as this answer shows. Apart from this, exploring the students' needs and interests is a key point to one of the interviewees, while he proceeded to explain that phonetics and phonology lectures should be presented to the students, and along with

these lectures, teachers should prepare exercises or practice assignments using podcasts as the source material so that the students can listen to the speakers and learn from them: “I think the teachers should first investigate students' needs and interest concerning the content to be presented. Then phonetics and phonology lectures should be presented to the students, and along with these lectures, the teachers should make activities or practicing tasks using podcast as raw materials to listen and learn from the speakers.”.

Nonetheless, even if it is mainly the role of the teachers to implement this method, the students should also provide and bring the necessary materials and means, such as laptops, smartphones, and shared internet connection as stated by one teacher: “It would be the role of the teacher mainly and also the students to provide the necessary materials and means to make this happen (as bringing laptops or smartphones in class, share internet connection, ...)”. Yet, this should be possible if only the students themselves have these materials with them.

Finally, creating a concept of a classroom podcast that students themselves would broadcast and bringing speakers and data shows was another suggestion provided by one of the interviewees as she claimed: “Choosing podcasts on the basis of form and content we can get some podcasts targeting beneficial topics to students and which at the same time target their listening to correct pronunciation forms. We can go a step ahead by creating a concept of a classroom podcast which students themselves would broadcast, it's a kind of practice”. This would be beneficial not only for the students' language skills, but also for their self-confidence and self-worth.

Theme 4: The benefits that English podcast can bring to first-year EFL students according to the teachers

The sixth question in this interview tries to find out the benefits the English podcasts could have on first-year EFL students according to the teachers of English.

Moreover, the benefits that English podcasts could bring to first-year EFL students, according to the teachers interviewed, varied from improving their listening and pronunciation skills to developing their vocabulary and critical thinking, especially if the topics were interesting and of high quality. This idea is supported by two teachers, as the first said: “Improving the listening skills and pronunciation of learners”, and the second explained: “It will help them in pronunciation as you mentioned earlier, and it will be beneficial to

develop their vocabulary and help them to develop a critical thinking especially if the topics are interesting.”

Additionally, one teacher provided different aspects that these materials could benefit the students in the process of learning a language which include: helping in improving their listening comprehension (which is the basis of accurate pronunciation), reinforcing correct articulatory places, enhancing pronunciation clarity by focusing on correct articulation techniques such as voicing quality, sonority, and phonological elements; and articulating aspects of connected speech elements that stimulate native-like accents. The teacher specifically stated: “Developing their listening skills which is the basis of a good pronunciation, Reinforcing correct places of articulation, Reinforcing clarity of pronunciation by focusing on correct manners of articulation, voicing quality, sonority, stridency, and phonological aspects, Articulating aspects of connected speech which promote native like accents”.

Furthermore, since native speakers produce podcasts, they can serve as a source of natural pronunciation which can help in many aspects including vocabulary, fluency, and grammar, sharing cultural elements, in addition to the language forms. The respondent explained: “Podcasts if produced by natives can act as a raw material with native pronunciation; not only pronunciation but also many other skills like vocabulary, fluency, and others. Additionally, the podcast do not only convey the language but also cultural aspects. And because language and culture go together, students will surely benefit from them”. Therefore, as language and culture go together, students will certainly benefit from both of them since first year students are in their first steps of learning a new language, and learning about how the language is used in its native and natural context. One of the teachers added: “They are of paramount importance since students are in their first steps of learning a new language”, while another further explained: “first, it brings the pronunciation skill, then you can get also several things about English habits and culture”.

In short, the teachers’ attitudes towards the introduction of podcast into first year EFL classes would be advantageous from different aspects. These advantages include pronunciation, listening, and culture.

Theme 5: The teachers’ further suggestions concerning the use of podcasts in classrooms to enhance EFL students’ pronunciation

The last question that is asked to the teachers of English at the University of Bejaia in this interview aims at finding new suggestions concerning the use of podcasts in classrooms to enhance EFL students' pronunciation.

The teachers in their answers asserted in this part that the implementation of podcasts should be taken into consideration regarding the benefits they can bring for students during their early experiences of learning a new language. But the choices for the podcasts should be focused on academic or beneficial content, as highlighted by one teacher "The implementation of podcast should be taken into consideration regarding the benefits they can bring. But the choice of the podcasts should be revolving around academic or beneficial content". They also pointed out towards how students feel comfortable and confident when they speak like natives, particularly at the level of pronunciation, and that is an area that podcasts could target. This might happen especially because podcasts involve listening, which is one of the receptive skills that is related to the skill of pronunciation; and they include factors such as intonation, stress, assimilation, rhythm, and more about phonology and phonetics. This is expressed by one of the respondents when saying: "I guess that using podcasts is very important for EFL students especially in their early experiences with such a new language. Students feel comfortable when they use appropriately their new language especially at the level of pronunciation as native like speakers. In addition, listening is one of the receptive skills of language upon which learning a new language is based especially at the level of pronunciation including a variety of factors as intonation, stress, assimilation, rhythm, etc."

Furthermore, it is believed that if the podcasts discuss important, challenging topics, they could help students develop their critical thinking, competences, knowledge, and general culture; this is what is pointed out by another teacher while stating: "As I said, critical thinking is important for any student in any field, and I think if the podcasts can discuss important challenging topics that may give students a possibility to develop their competences, knowledge and general culture, that would be perfect". In addition, listening to English podcasts, using the application and software to evaluate students' pronunciation could be helpful as suggested by one of the respondents: "use some applications to repeat words after you have listened them". With all these insights, the implementation of podcast can be advantageous to not only the students, but also to the teachers, because teaching is a lifelong process.

The second section of the second chapter deal with the analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data collected through two primary tools, mainly, the students' questionnaire and the teachers' interviews. Moreover, the purpose of this analysis is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the perspectives, and experiences shared by both the students and the teachers regarding the integration of English podcasts into the field of education, specifically to teach the English pronunciation skill. Furthermore, the findings show mostly a positive view towards the suggested material from both the students' and the teachers' perspectives. This demonstrates the potential of this tool in the educational setting; however, its implementation should be well-designed and structured, and the necessary materials should be prepared for a better application in the class.

3. Section Three: Discussions of the Results

The study aims at exploring the perceptions of first-year EFL students at the University of Bejaia towards the use of English podcasts to enhance their pronunciation skills. It starts by revealing the common issues that first-year EFL students struggle with in their pronunciation to gain an understanding of its importance.

There are three main questions that the researchers seek to explore in this study. The first question tries to demonstrate first-year EFL students 'difficulties in pronunciation. The second question aims at exploring their perceptions towards the incorporation of English podcasts to improve their pronunciation. Finally, the third question focuses on how EFL students could overcome their pronunciation challenges with the use of English podcasts. In order to seek answers, a mixed method (qualitative and quantitative) is used to achieve the study's aims and to respond to the research questions. First-year EFL students were given a questionnaire to complete with the purpose of exploring their perceptions regarding the use of podcasts to improve their pronunciation skills. Afterwards, an open-ended questionnaire (interview) is conducted with the teachers of English at the University of Bejaia to gather their opinions regarding the integration of this new teaching tool within the university and the benefits they might bring to EFL education.

Therefore, this section discusses the participants' responses to the questionnaire and the interview in relation to previous studies about similar topics to the one investigated in this research paper, with an emphasis on answering its three questions.

3.1. First-year EFL students' challenges regarding pronunciation

Pronunciation is one of the major problems that affects non-native students during the process of learning English. After analyzing the questionnaire, the participants stated that speaking is the one skill they are most interested in developing, with the highest percentage (85%) in comparison to the other skills. Regarding pronunciation, 68.3% of the students affirmed that the fear of pronouncing words incorrectly is the major issue that affects their pronunciation, similar to a previous study conducted by Samad et al. (2017) that concluded that the inability to produce the correct pronunciation is one of the issues that affected students' speaking performances. Whereas 33.3% of them struggle with the fear of not having a correct accent. Moreover, in terms of pronunciation and its features, the majority of the students, mainly 58.3% of them, struggle with "aspects of connected speech," while 46.7% have a problem with the English accent, vowels with a percentage of 13.3%, and finally, none of them have difficulties with consonants.

In the field of teaching the English language, specifically the skill of pronunciation, 88.3% of the participants agreed on the usefulness of phonetic sessions in teaching English pronunciation, whereas 11.7% of them were against this statement. As a support to this statement with the high percentage, Priya and Kumar (2020) claimed that phonetics primarily aims to improve speech fluency and pronunciation accuracy. Moreover, Henry Sweet, an English philologist and phonetician, stated that the field of phonetics is the critical foundation of all language studies. Furthermore, he proceeded to explain that understanding phonetics was the first crucial step in learning a foreign language, and until the language's sounds were mastered, no attempt should be made to advance in grammar and vocabulary (as cited in Priya and Kumar, 2020).

Apart from this and as strategies to overcome pronunciation-related problems, some of the participants suggested using new materials like podcasts and watching educational videos for better pronunciation learning methods. These findings are similar to the study conducted by Ahmad (2019) recommended using videos where students could practice their speech after watching native speakers or perform techniques to reproduce their lip and mouth

movements when pronouncing English words according to the instructions in the video. In the case of mistakes, the lecturer would give corrective feedback. In addition, it was also advised for students at the department of English to download existing applications such as the pronunciation checker app (Bluebird developers), the Oxford dictionary of English (MobiSystems), English Phonetics Pronunciation (Stavira VN), and Pronunciation English Daily (MS app) in order to reduce their mistakes in English pronunciation. Moreover, it was suggested to use them both inside and outside the classroom.

The first question of this research paper found out the common challenges that the first-year EFL students at the University of Bejaia face in regards to the skill of pronunciation. These challenges, however, are not only common among the students of this university but are also struggled with by the learners of English as a foreign language, as revealed by the studies mentioned above. Furthermore, this current research shared its participants' recommendations to overcome these problems, which were also advised in previous studies that tackled similar topics.

3.2. First-year EFL students' perceptions towards the integration of English podcasts as an educational tool to enhance their pronunciation

The majority of the students who answered the questionnaire expressed an agreement with the suggestion of using podcasts as a teaching tool for learning English; they said it is a good idea that may be an engaging, practical, educational, and enjoyable teaching material. For example; in previous studies, Almaqrn and Alshabeb (2017) and Hasan and Hoon (2013) found similar results in terms of the learners' positive views towards this material. Moreover, Hasan and Hoon's (2013) research results' were supported by the ability of podcasts to accelerate language learners' learning of pronunciation, in addition to other language areas such as vocabulary, grammar, speaking, and listening, and can also boost motivation and enhance academic performance.

Regarding the possibility of using these materials to enhance the skill of pronunciation according to participants of this study, 91.7% of them stated that they would, whereas 8.3% of them claimed that they would not. Likewise, Kafes and Caner (2020) achieved favorable results in their study in regards to the use of podcasts, with 85% of their participants agreeing on the usefulness of this material as it improved their pronunciation skills. In addition to many other researchers who supported these findings, such as Ducate and

Lomicka (2009), Gorjian et al. (2013), Lord (2008), and Tanner and Landon (2009), participants in Ducate and Lomicka's (2009) study stated that podcasting encouraged them to adopt favorable attitudes towards pronunciation (as cited in Kafes & Caner 2020).

Additionally, in a question that concerns the aspects that English podcasts could influence, 58.3% of the students chose sentence stress, whereas 48.3% stressed on the field of phonetics, which was in fact mentioned in a study conducted by Mbah (2014), who stated that podcasts are essential for learning and teaching phonetics. He then supported his statement with Knight's (2010) explanation that suggests that these materials help in facilitating the challenges that students face in the module of phonetics as they supply these learners with audio-based exercise materials rather than paper-based ones (as cited in Mbah, 2014). Finally, 33.3% of this study's participants selected the aspect of word stress.

Moreover, according to the teachers' perceptions towards this idea, the majority of them show a positive opinion, as they stated that it could be beneficial and interesting to both students and teachers because it is a concept related to technology; with the increased utilization of technology nowadays, the students are always open to things related to it because they see it as enjoyment. Hence, since podcasts are found online with different topics and themes, they could be very engaging, as supported by a study conducted by Ramli and Kurniawan (2017), who declared that podcasts may make students adapt their learning approaches and improve their pronunciation, as well as other language aspects such as vocabulary and intonation, while also practicing listening skills. As a result, this could increase their motivation and determination to apply their learning methods.

In regards to the idea of implementing English podcasts as a tool to enhance EFL learners' pronunciation, this question's answer uncovered the participants' positive attitudes. Likewise, already-conducted studies also revealed the same results in regards to this concept, in addition to the areas that these materials could influence.

3.3. The methods in which English podcasts would be applied effectively in a first-year EFL classroom to enhance their pronunciation

First-year EFL students who responded to the questionnaire of this present study said that they would use English as an example of how words are pronounced and how sounds are made during phonetics lessons. In addition to oral sessions to introduce topics, teachers can question or debate the themes with their students to motivate them to express themselves

more using the English language. Moreover, to make this idea practical, it is essential to have the appropriate accessible tools, such as computers, data shows, and media rooms. Likewise, in a study conducted by Bamanger and Alhassan (2015), it was suggested by the students that podcasts might be applied as a motivating educational resource that they could use anytime, anywhere, and even to help them study for exams. Meanwhile, participants in Evans' (2008) study confirmed the usefulness of podcasts in revising their subject matter, as well as integrating them as a supplementary tool where teachers could use them to keep students motivated even outside the classrooms (O'Bryan & Hegelheimer, 2007, as cited in Bamanger & Alhassan, 2015).

Concerning the results of the interview, the teachers claimed that English podcasts could be successfully applied in classrooms in a variety of ways, such as: first, by dedicating much time to the use of this material; and second, by taking the idea of integrating it seriously. Moreover, it is important to find out the students' needs and interests, which is also a key point supported by Rosell-Aguilar (2007), who stated that these podcasts should be interesting and of appropriate length. Besides, selecting adequate knowledge with precise learning objectives and outcomes within a specified syllabus is another suggestion that was further explained in the study done by Rosell-Aguilar (2007) by choosing authentic materials that could expose the learners to the language and its characteristics, as well as to the culture of the areas where the target language is spoken. Finally, two mostly similar methods are recommended in both the present study and the one of Rosell-Aguilar (2007): bringing speakers and data shows as well as considering the probability of the medium along with the screen size.

The last research question of this current study dealt with the effective methods by which English podcasts could be implemented, according to the participants. Equally, another study generally suggested the same strategies and criteria that these materials should have in order to be beneficial.

This section focused on the discussion of the results in regards to the three main questions of this research. Apart from this, a comparison was made between the present study and the previous research related to the issues faced by EFL students in the skill of pronunciation as well as podcasts and their integration in teaching a language, along with the methods in which they could be implemented. Additionally, this comparison highlighted the

potential importance of this study and its findings in showing the similarities between what has been found in prior studies and in the current one.

4. Section Four: Limitations of the Study and Recommendations

This study aims at exploring the EFL students' perceptions towards the use of English podcasts as an educational tool. More specifically, this study attempts to explore whether the students think that podcasts could be used in class to improve their pronunciation. That is to say, in this research, the idea of introducing English podcasts as a new teaching and learning method to help first-year EFL students improve their pronunciation skills is suggested, and the students' opinions towards this introduction would be important. To this end, exploratory design procedures are followed, employing both quantitative and qualitative tools to obtain hybrid data that can explain and prove the aims of this study.

This research was conducted on 60 first-year EFL students at the University of Bejaia who agreed to participate by answering the questionnaire designed to collect data about their perceptions towards the use of English podcasts to improve their pronunciation. In addition, a structured online interview was designed for the teachers at the department of English of the same university that sought to gather their opinions related to the issue under study.

After the discussion of the results, the study revealed that the students hold positive attitudes towards the implementation of English podcasts as an educational tool to target their pronunciation. Besides, the participants also shared their thoughts on the different areas that these materials could influence, as well as suggesting numerous methods in which they could be used effectively to reach the intended purpose. Similarly, the teachers of English were also open to this concept and thought positively of it, as the interview's answers discovered.

Therefore, this section reports the majority of the recommendations concluded in this study from the findings and the discussions of the results. While some of these suggestions are meant for students and teachers, others are meant for future researchers who might work on a topic related to the one studied in this research.

4.1. Recommendations for Learners and Teachers

This study explores the perceptions of first-year EFL students at the University of Bejaia in regards to introducing English podcasts as educational material to enhance their pronunciation of the English language. During the process of conducting this research, many key points have the potential to provide helpful advice for both teachers and students concerning the investigated topic. These recommendations are summarized as follows:

Despite the awareness of the majority of the students who participated in gathering the necessary data on English podcasts, there were a few of the others who did not know what these podcasts are and what they can serve for. For this reason, an introduction of the concept of podcasts before integrating them into classrooms as a means of teaching ought to be a main concern of the teachers. Therefore, it is recommended for teachers to introduce the suggested materials, like podcasts and other technological tools that cope with the new era, and give a brief explanation about them to the learners in case they are interested in using them for both teaching and learning purposes.

In spite of the agreement of many students on the idea of using English podcasts to improve their pronunciation skills, they were still not fully sure whether they would use them as main material or not. Hence, when implementing them in the classroom, it is advised that teachers only use them at the beginning of the session, for example, to introduce a topic or during it, not for the full lecture to avoid boredom. That is to say, these podcasts should be used only to trigger the students' interest or motivation to learn a specific topic or phonetic element, for example.

Moreover, the lack of technology use and the reliance on traditional teaching methods in oral and phonetic sessions could make this idea seem very new. Thus, it is advised for both teachers and students to take into consideration the implementation of technology during these two subjects of instruction, such as having debates on a certain topic and introducing native speakers' videos through data shows or other modern technological tools to help students be exposed to native speakers and, hence, learn from them accurate pronunciation.

Additionally, it is advised for students to try and use these authentic materials not only inside the classroom but also outside of it. This would increase their exposure to native speakers and hence accelerate their pronunciation learning process, as well as their vocabulary and grammar. To make this concept more enjoyable, students could choose any type of podcast with any topic according to their interests and not limit themselves to educational content.

Finally, the integration of these materials could be done in several ways. In phonetics, for example, teachers could select podcasts specific to the lesson where students could listen to how native speakers pronounce words and then make them repeat the sounds and their correct pronunciation. While correcting the mistakes that occur.

4.2.Recommarations for further Researches

The current research aims only at exploring EFL first-year students' perceptions towards the implementation of English podcasts as an educational tool to improve their pronunciation. Because of the time constraints, lack of materials, and lack of manipulation phase needed to prove whether these podcasts help in enhancing the students' pronunciation of English or not, this study focuses only on providing data that reports students' attitudes and teachers' points of view concerning the investigated issue. Consequently, other studies can be conducted in the following different related areas:

- The impact of English podcasts on EFL learners' pronunciation. The researchers should employ an experimental design to collect empirical data to prove the cause-and-effect relationship between these two variables.

- The effectiveness of English podcasts in the enhancement of EFL students' speaking skills.
- The role of English podcasts in enhancing EFL learners' pronunciation level.
- The role of podcasts in developing the vocabulary and grammar of students with advanced English.
- Investigating the impact of implementing podcasts in EFL phonetics and phonology classrooms on students' self-confidence.
- With the availability of both materials and the needed time to investigate the usefulness of these materials when teaching, further research could shed light on more aspects regarding this topic.

Additionally, if future researchers are interested in exploring such a topic, they have to be sure of the accessibility and availability of the necessary materials and the required time that are essential for these types of studies.

4.3.Limitations of the Study

Challenges in research are common, especially for novice researchers. This study faced several difficulties that changed its design from being experimental (to prove the cause-and-effect relationship between podcasts and pronunciation) to non-experimental, which seeks to investigate the students' attitudes towards the implementation of podcasts as teaching material to improve the first-year students' pronunciation. Along the investigation process, many factors changed the path of this current study, and there are numerous to mention; yet, they are mentioned shortly.

The first limitation was the limited time and the lack of sessions for experimentation. When it was time to do the experiment with first-year students in class during both oral and phonetic sessions, they had to take their exams, which lasted for approximately three weeks. After the exams, the student's absences before and during Ramadan made the possibility of conducting this experiment difficult. After Ramadan, because of the limited time assigned for implementing the intervention, especially during phonetic sessions, as the teachers had to finish the syllabus in time, the introduction of the podcasts was said to be impossible. Consequently, changing the topic entirely and omitting the concept of English podcasts was suggested. Finally, rather than carrying out an empirical investigation, the researchers began examining the attitudes.

Regarding the limitations of the study that prevented it from being implemented during the oral sessions, there was a lack of the necessary material, such as data shows and media rooms. However, it would have been somehow possible using students' phones, but if they did not finish the program early, before spring break.

After changing the design to non-experimental, which meant that there would be no manipulation in the process, the students had to answer the questionnaire designed for them, yet, at the beginning, it was difficult to find students who would volunteer to work with us; once the students' problem was solved, the answers provided were very narrow and short, especially the open-ended ones. This made the process of analysing the collected data challenging.

The final section of the second chapter of this research suggests different recommendations for both teachers and learners in regards to implementing English podcasts in the process of teaching and learning the skill of pronunciation to improve it. Besides, it also shares advice for future researchers conducting similar studies. Finally, researchers who performed this current exploration revealed the major limitations that they encountered during the process that hindered them from gathering more results as well as changed the plan of their investigation.

General conclusion

Pronunciation is an essential component of language proficiency, especially for EFL learners; it significantly impacts their ability to communicate effectively in English situations. Moreover, the mastery of pronunciation not only enhances learners' fluency but also helps in better comprehension and interaction with native speakers. Consequently, to effectively practice the pronunciation skills at the university, this study suggested the use of English podcasts as an educational tool to enhance English pronunciation. Hence, the aim of this research paper is to explore first-year EFL students' perceptions towards the integration of English podcasts as a new teaching material that can be beneficial for both teachers and learners; and to raise their awareness about the advantages of this new technology.

Therefore, to reach the aim of this present study, a non-experimental research was conducted with first-year EFL students at the University of Bejaia by employing the mixed method (both quantitative and qualitative). During the study, a questionnaire was distributed to the participants to collect the needed data to answer the research questions. After that, an online interview was designed for teachers of English at the English department of the same university to explore their perceptions towards the integration of such a new concept into the field of education, and seek their suggestions and recommendations on this concern.

Based on the data gathered in this study, the results conclude that both teachers and students generally have positive attitudes towards this new learning tool. They think that the idea of implementing English podcasts in the field of education will significantly contribute to the enhancement of learners' pronunciation, as they could benefit from regular exposure to native speakers. Additionally, according to them, these podcasts will boost the students' motivation and confidence. However, they should be carefully selected in order to correspond with the students' proficiency levels.

In light of the findings and their discussion with some previous literature related to this theme, the study developed several ideas and recommendations for EFL students and teachers who intend to use English podcasts as a teaching or learning technique. Additionally, future researchers who are interested in the subject of English podcast research were also the target audience for the recommendations. Finally, the study reviewed the limitations that the researchers experienced while performing the current investigation, which had negatively impacted the research method and/or the validity of the overall results. Additionally, the time provided for doing an experiment, as well as the absence of materials, are two of the highlighted issues that are regarded as the most difficult. Furthermore, while working on prior

works similar to this study, it was challenging to find a research that combines: enhancing university EFL students' pronunciation skills with using English podcasts. As a result, this study recommends the replication of the study through an experimental design and under better conditions.

This conducted research focused on the idea of using English podcasts as an educational tool to improve first-year EFL students' pronunciation. Moreover, the study's result revealed that first-year EFL students had positive attitudes toward these English podcasts and recognized numerous benefits that they could obtain from using them. Furthermore, it demonstrated the teachers' perspectives and comments on the concept of incorporating this technique and the ideal way to execute it at the University of Bejaia.

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Appendices

Appendix A**Students' Questionnaire**

This questionnaire is made by Sabrina Anes and Lynda Benamara to find out how first-year EFL Students at the University of Bejaia perceive the use of English podcasts as a tool for improving their pronunciation.

Dear students,

The purpose of our non-experimental study is based on investigating EFL students' perceptions towards the use of English podcasts and their role in enhancing their pronunciation. We would greatly appreciate if you dedicate some of your time to answer our questions. Moreover, we want to reassure you that your answers will stay completely anonymous and that they will only be used to gather basic data to our research.

Section 1: General information

Q1: What is your age?

18-20 21-25 More than 25

Q2: What is your gender?

Male Female

Q3: How well do you master the English language?

Very well Good Not at all

Q4: What is the skill that you are interested in developing the most?

Speaking Writing Reading Listening

Q5: What is your goal of studying English as a major?

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Section2: Students’ Attitudes towards pronunciation.

Q6: In addition to in class session, what are the other methods that you use in order to learn English?

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Q7: Do you think that you are fluent in English?

Yes No

Q8: Which of these issues affect your speech:

Fear of not having a decent accent

Fear of pronouncing words incorrectly

Q9: On a scale of 1 out of 10, how would you rate your pronunciation?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Q10: What are the main difficulties related to pronunciation that you struggle with?

Accent

Vowels

Consonants

Aspects of connected speech (stress, linking, elision...)

Others.....

Q11: How do you usually overcome them?

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Q12: Do you think that phonetic sessions are useful in teaching English pronunciation?

Yes No

Q13: What do you suggest for better pronunciation instructions?

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Q14: What are the strategies that you follow to improve your pronunciation skill?

Listening and repeating Listening and writing

Reading aloud and recording

Other ones.....

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Q15: Do you follow any native speakers' programs (documentaries, YouTube videos, real life stories, news...) in order to develop your pronunciation level?

Yes No

If yes, can you name them?

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Section3: Students' perceptions towards English podcasts.

Q16: Have you heard of podcasts?

Yes No

Q17: Have you ever used podcasts:

Yes No

If you have, how was your experience using them?

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Q18: What do you think about the idea of integrating podcasts as an educational tool for learning English?

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Q19: What do you think is the ideal way of using English podcasts in the classroom?

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Q20: If you find out that podcasts contribute to enhancing your pronunciation level, will you use them?

Yes No

Justify.....
.....

Q21: Which aspect of pronunciation do you think podcasts would influence more?

Phonetics (the individual sounds in a language).

Word stress (the syllables in a word and the appropriate position where to place the main stress or accent).

Sentence stress (the way of pronouncing words when they are put together in a sentence).

Others

Q22: Do you have any further suggestions concerning the use of podcasts to enhance EFL Students 'pronunciation? Feel free to write whatever you think in the space bellow.

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Thank you for your collaboration.

Appendix B

Teachers' interview Guide

Dear teachers

The aim of this study is to explore first-year EFL students' attitudes towards the use of English podcasts as an educational tool to ameliorate their pronunciation level. This open-ended interview is dedicated to teachers of English at the University of Bejaia "Abderrahmane Mira". In hope to gather teachers' point of views regarding the process of integrating English podcasts in the field of teaching English as a foreign language, specifically, to improve students' pronunciation.

We would appreciate if you dedicate some of your time, thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Q1: During your teaching practice, have you noticed that the designed teaching programs are neglectful towards the skill of pronunciation, in comparison to other skills?

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Q2: What do you think of the idea of integrating English podcasts as an educational tool in classrooms to target EFL students' pronunciation?

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Q3: According to your experience with first year students, would they be interested in implementing such method?

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Q4: Do you think that Algerian universities have the necessary materials to make this concept possible?

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Q5: If so, how can English podcasts be applied in classrooms effectively?

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Q6: According to you, what benefits can English podcast bring to first year EFL students in our department?

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Q7: If you have any further suggestions concerning the use of podcasts in classrooms to enhance EFL students 'pronunciation, Please, feel free to write them below.

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Thank you

Abstract

Learning a foreign language requires mastering its four main skills, including reading, listening, writing and speaking. This latter involves pronunciation which is a language aspect that is often regarded as a hurdle by many EFL learners. Having a correct pronunciation is considered crucial that is why many foreign language learners want to acquire it and improve it as much as possible. However, only a few teaching programs are included to target this skills. In light of this, the current thesis aims to explore first-year EFL learners' perceptions towards the use of English podcasts with the purpose of enhancing their pronunciation since it involves exposure to native speakers. In order to accomplish this goal, this study follows a non-experimental design, implemented with 60 first year BA students of English as Foreign Language at the University of Bejaia, Moreover, it employs a mixed method which bases on both quantitative and qualitative tools for the data collection; the study method employs a students' questionnaire as a quantitative research tool; while, it uses an online interview posted for teachers of English at the same university to investigate their perspectives concerning the issue under study. The findings disclosed positive attitudes of the participants regarding the implementation of this new material to enhance EFL students' pronunciation because it can be practical, enjoyable and interesting while creating opportunities to listen to native speakers in the educational field. The teachers' attitudes also were positive as the data revealed. The study entails some suggestion for an advantageous use of podcast in EFL classrooms.

Keywords: English as a foreign language, EFL Learners, Pronunciation, Native speakers, English podcasts, Language teaching and learning.

Résumé

L'apprentissage d'une langue étrangère nécessite la maîtrise de ses quatre compétences principales, incluant la lecture, l'écoute, l'écriture et l'expression orale. Cette dernière implique la prononciation, un aspect de la langue qui est souvent considéré comme un obstacle par de nombreux apprenants d'anglais comme une langue étrangère (EFL). Avoir une prononciation correcte est considérée étant cruciale, c'est pourquoi de nombreux apprenants de langues étrangères cherchent à l'acquérir et à l'améliorer autant que possible. Cependant, seuls quelques programmes d'enseignement incluent des activités ciblant cette compétence. Dans ce contexte, la présente thèse vise à explorer les perceptions des étudiants de première année EFL concernant l'utilisation de podcasts en anglais dans le but d'améliorer leur prononciation, car cela implique une exposition aux locuteurs natifs. Afin d'atteindre cet objectif, cette étude adopte un plan non expérimental, mis en œuvre avec 60 étudiants de première année de licence en anglais langue étrangère à l'Université de Bejaia. De plus, elle utilise une méthode mixte basée sur des outils quantitatifs et qualitatifs pour la collecte de données ; la méthode d'étude utilise un questionnaire pour les étudiants comme outil de recherche quantitatif, tandis qu'elle emploie une interview en ligne destinée aux enseignants d'anglais de la même université pour explorer leurs perspectives sur la question étudiée. Les résultats ont révélé des attitudes positives des participants quant à la mise en œuvre de ce nouveau matériel pour améliorer la prononciation des étudiants EFL, car il peut être pratique, agréable et intéressant tout en créant des opportunités d'écoute de locuteurs natifs dans le domaine éducatif. Les attitudes des enseignants étaient également positives selon les données recueillies. L'étude propose quelques suggestions pour une utilisation avantageuse des podcasts dans les classes EFL.

Mots clés: Anglais comme langue étrangère, Apprenants EFL, Prononciation, Locuteurs natifs, Podcasts en anglais, Enseignement et apprentissage des langues.

ملخص

يتطلب تعلم لغة أجنبية إتقان مهاراتها الأربع الرئيسية، بما في ذلك القراءة والاستماع والكتابة والتحدث. يتضمن هذا الأخير النطق وهو جانب لغوي غالبًا ما يعتبره العديد من متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية عائق. يعتبر الحصول على النطق الصحيح أمرًا بالغ الأهمية ولهذا السبب يرغب الكثير من متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية في اكتسابه وتحسينه قدر الإمكان. ومع ذلك، لا يوجد سوى عدد قليل من البرامج التعليمية التي تستهدف هذه المهارة. في ضوء ذلك، تهدف الأطروحة الحالية إلى استكشاف آراء متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في السنة الأولى تجاه استخدام البودكاست باللغة الإنجليزية بهدف تحسين نطقهم لأنه يتضمن التعرض للمتحدثين الأصليين. ومن أجل تحقيق هذا الهدف، تتبع هذه الدراسة تصميمًا غير تجريبي، تم تنفيذه على 60 طالبًا من طلاب السنة الأولى ليسانس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في جامعة بجاية، كما تستخدم الدراسة منهجًا مختلطًا يعتمد على أدوات كمية ونوعية لجمع البيانات؛ حيث تستخدم استبيانًا طلابيًا كأداة بحث كمية؛ في حين أنها تستخدم مقابلة إلكترونية نشرت عبر الإنترنت لمدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية في نفس الجامعة للتحقيق في وجهات نظرهم حول القضية قيد الدراسة. كشفت النتائج عن مواقف إيجابية للمشاركين فيما يتعلق بتنفيذ هذه التقنية الجديدة لتعزيز نطق طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية لأنها يمكن أن تكون عملية وممتعة ومثيرة للاهتمام مع خلق فرص للاستماع إلى المتحدثين الأصليين في المجال التعليمي. وكانت آراء الاساتذة إيجابية أيضًا كما كشفت البيانات. في الأخير تقدم هذه الدراسة بعض الاقتراحات للاستفادة الفعالة من البودكاست في فصول تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، النطق، المتحدثين الأصليين، البودكاست باللغة الإنجليزية، تعليم اللغة وتعلمه

