

## PODCAST IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LISTENING SKILLS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

### Podcast en el desarrollo de la habilidad de escuchar en el idioma inglés

### Podcast sobre o desenvolvimento de habilidades de escuta em inglês

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#### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** This study aims to determine the effectiveness of using podcasts as an educational tool to improve English listening skills among upper elementary school students at the “5 de Mayo” Educational Unit in Chone. Many students find it difficult to understand spoken English, largely because traditional teaching and lack of exposure to the target language are to blame. **Materials and Methods:** Emerging from this problem of obfuscation, a mixed-methods research has emerged: it combined quantitative data analysis (using pre- and post-tests) and qualitative data collection through teacher interviews and observation checklists. Several pedagogical interventions were implemented using educational podcasts, along with activities aimed at activating students' attention and ensuring their understanding of the content. **Results:** The main results of this study tell us that students' listening comprehension has improved significantly, increasing their motivation to learn English and making them more willing participants in the classroom. **Discussion:** This practice not only fosters students' academic growth but also adapts to the different learning patterns of those who use it. In this sense, this software offers a level of quality far superior to that offered by the current educational environment. **Conclusions:** As a teaching resource, the conclusion of this study is that the use of podcasts will not only improve English listening comprehension but will also bring about a renewal of teaching methods and offer tailored resources to meet the real needs of students in the foreign language classroom.

**Keywords:** listening comprehension, English teaching, educational podcasts, meaningful learning.

#### RESUMEN

**Introducción:** El presente estudio pretende determinar la efectividad del uso de podcasts como herramienta educativa para mejorar la habilidad auditiva en inglés en estudiantes de educación básica superior de la Unidad Educativa “5 de mayo”, en el cantón Chone. Muchos estudiantes encuentran difícil entender el inglés hablado, en gran medida porque la enseñanza tradicional y la falta de exposición al idioma objetivo son las culpables. **Materiales y métodos:** Surgiendo de este problema de ofuscación, ha surgido una investigación con una metodología mixta: combinó el análisis de datos cuantitativos (utilizando pretest y postest) y la recopilación de datos cualitativos a través de entrevistas a profesores y listas de verificación de observación. Se implementó varias intervenciones pedagógicas utilizando podcasts educativos, junto con actividades destinadas a activar la atención de los estudiantes y asegurarnos de que comprendan el contenido. **Resultados:** Los principales resultados de este estudio nos dicen que la comprensión auditiva de los estudiantes ha mejorado significativamente, aumentando su motivación para aprender inglés y haciéndolos participantes más dispuestos en el aula. **Discusión:** La práctica no solo favorece el crecimiento académico de sus estudiantes, sino que también se adapta a los diferentes patrones de aprendizaje de quienes la utilizan. En ese sentido, este software ofrece un nivel de

calidad muy superior al que ofrece el entorno educativo actual. Conclusiones: Como recurso didáctico, la conclusión de este estudio es que el uso de podcasts no solo mejorará la comprensión auditiva en inglés, sino que también traerá una renovación en los métodos de enseñanza y ofrecerá recursos adaptados para satisfacer las necesidades reales de los estudiantes en el aula de idiomas extranjeros.

**Palabras clave:** comprensión auditiva, enseñanza del inglés, podcasts educativos, aprendizaje significativo.

## RESUMO

**Introdução:** Este estudo tem como objetivo determinar a eficácia do uso de podcasts como ferramenta educacional para melhorar as habilidades de compreensão auditiva em inglês entre alunos do ensino fundamental II da Unidade Educacional "5 de Mayo" em Chone. Muitos alunos têm dificuldade em compreender o inglês falado, em grande parte devido ao ensino tradicional e à falta de exposição à língua-alvo. **Materiais e Métodos:** Emergindo desse problema de ofuscação, surgiu uma pesquisa de métodos mistos: ela combinou análise quantitativa de dados (usando pré e pós-testes) e coleta de dados qualitativos por meio de entrevistas com professores e listas de verificação de observação. Diversas intervenções pedagógicas foram implementadas usando podcasts educacionais, juntamente com atividades destinadas a ativar a atenção dos alunos e garantir sua compreensão do conteúdo. **Resultados:** Os principais resultados deste estudo nos dizem que a compreensão auditiva dos alunos melhorou significativamente, aumentando sua motivação para aprender inglês e tornando-os participantes mais dispostos na sala de aula. **Discussão:** Essa prática não apenas promove o crescimento acadêmico dos alunos, mas também se adapta aos diferentes padrões de aprendizagem daqueles que a utilizam. Nesse sentido, este software oferece um nível de qualidade muito superior ao oferecido pelo ambiente educacional atual. **Conclusões:** Como recurso didático, a conclusão deste estudo é que o uso de podcasts não apenas melhorará a compreensão auditiva em inglês, mas também promoverá uma renovação dos métodos de ensino e oferecerá recursos personalizados para atender às reais necessidades dos alunos em sala de aula de língua estrangeira.

**Palavras-chave:** compreensão auditiva, ensino de inglês, podcasts educacionais, aprendizagem significativa.

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## INTRODUCTION

In today's educational environment, one of the main difficulties encountered in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is the development of listening abilities. This is a requisite capability for effective communication (Chacon, 2011). However, many upper basic education students face difficulties in understanding spoken English due to their limited language proficiency, lack of practice, and the use of traditional methodologies that do not consider different learning styles. Students' progress would be temporarily retarded, and they may also become demoralized in the process of learning.

Most of the traditional methods concentrate simply on mechanical repetition or an over-reliance upon textbooks. They do not draw pupils' interest, and they also fail to provide any possibility for flexible adjustment. Some students need visual or kinesthetic aids in order to help them remember; others learn English better through contact with real conversation or any exposure to meaningful context. In light of this fact, it is necessary to develop some new, approachable, and easily adapted teaching tools which will help people learn English listening comprehension. (Carlos Parra & Astrid Ramírez, 2021).

One emerging proposal that has shown benefits in this area is the use of educational podcasts. (Facer, Abdous y Camarena, 2009). This resource, being flexible, varied, and available on multiple platforms, allows students to access authentic English content adjusted to their level of proficiency. Moreover, it promotes autonomous learning, enables repetition of audio as many times as necessary, and offers an auditory experience close to real communicative situations. The last trait has already been discussed in this blog post, and further encouragement of it will be useful for avoiding clichés or redundancy.

The study at hand aims to investigate podcasts as an educational tool in the EFL field that can cultivate listening skills in English. To this end, it is being carried out in the "5 de Mayo" Educational Unit, Chone Canton. The primary target audience for this project is upper basic education students of 8th grade. This allows us the unique opportunity to explore a teaching methodology that offers interaction and is adapted to current educational needs.

The present study focuses on the use of podcasts as an educational tool to develop listening skills in English within the EFL teaching field. It will be conducted at the "5 de mayo" Educational Unit in the canton of Chone, specifically targeting upper basic education students. This situation provides an excellent chance to analyze the execution of

alternating person-centered and philosophic pedagogy that recognizes the needs of our own time. We are replacing old modes (e.g., paper) with digital tools for new teaching modes, and so this research is essential.

For new teaching modes, we will be using digital tools in place of old modes, so this research is essential. I hope that day comes quickly for English language training and education. User figures are insufficient, making this author the provider of aspirational teaching methods, questioning traditional practice. Especially meaningful in this respect are those teaching methods which could fit into each and any class that teaches photography, or any context.

The result is produced step by step. At the same time, this result constitutes the groundwork for further research in other times and places. In order to measure the impact of podcasting on English listening comprehension scores, we are going to use a mixed mosaic of methodological work with or maybe experiments. In the future, this could produce hard data about how students are performing while at the same time indicating what kind of programming, they find interesting. The design of this piece of research naturally adopts a mixed research method, which combines quantitative and qualitative approaches into one model. It aims to provide more than one layer's worth of insight into how teaching and learning happen.

From the quantitative approach, the results of the pre-test and post-test applied to the students will be analyzed in order to diagnose their initial level of listening comprehension and assess the impact of using the podcast after the pedagogical intervention. This comparison will allow for the identification of improvements and possible areas for reinforcement. From the qualitative approach, students' and the teacher's perceptions and experiences regarding the use of the podcast will be considered, using observation sheets during the sessions and interviews with the teacher. These techniques will help identify attitudes, motivations, levels of participation, and possible difficulties in the process.

The intervention will consist of the application of educational podcasts adapted to the students' linguistic level, accompanied by pedagogical activities designed to stimulate active listening, information retention, and both general and specific comprehension of auditory content. This methodology aims not only to evaluate the effectiveness of the resource but also to generate useful information for the implementation of new teaching practices that integrate technological tools in the classroom, thus promoting a more interactive, motivating, and relevant learning experience in line with current needs.

An illustration of the effectiveness of podcasts in educational surrounds is the study by (Morales y Castillo, 2021) who linked this audio format as one of the most generally used coffers in their design. Thanks to its ease of use, portability, and thematic variety, podcasts eased the integration of educational content, allowing scholars not only to pierce new knowledge but also to embrace it, engage with it, and enhance their critical thinking skills. Besides, the study conducted by (Carrillo, 2021) aimed to demonstrate how the use of educational podcasts supports the development of oral expression and listening appreciation in English classes. The results showed that scholars were not only motivated. Beltran (2016) states that educational podcasts can be used as a interceding tool that strengthens the link between the scientific and educational fields. In his study, he uses podcasts to claw into ecological content aimed at both preceptors and scholars. From this perspective, the podcast becomes a pedagogical resource that not only facilitates.

(Stanley, 2005) classifies the use of podcasts in foreign language tutoring into three main orders. First, the authentic podcast, which consists of original recordings produced by native speakers of the language and, although not designed for pedagogical purposes, are particularly useful for advanced scholars due to their verbal uproariousness. Second, the schoolteacher podcast, which is specifically created by the schoolteacher for their scholars to support listening appreciation or review content covered in class. Eventually, there's the pupil podcast, which is produced by the scholars themselves under the schoolteacher's guidance and aims to enhance both harkening and speaking chops.

### Frequency of Podcast Use

According to (Ruiz, 2017), the use of podcasts helps foster confidence and invention in the educational process, as it's an accessible resource that's easy to understand when entering information. It also supports the development of oral chops and new capabilities thanks to the perpetration of colorful methodological strategies that open new literacy possibilities and strengthen communication.

Several studies have shown that one of the causes of difficulties in English listening appreciation is related to traditional tutoring styles, which frequently fail to engage scholars or encourage active participation In this

regard, (Gholami, M., & Mohammadi, 2015) in their study Podcast- interceded Language Learning situations of Podcast Integration and Developing Vocabulary Knowledge, punctuate that teacher increasingly use podcasts to support language knowledge and to present content in a dynamic way. Podcasts are often used as a tool for educating to help with perfecting listening in English, so the more people listen, the higher their chances of success. Colorful studies suggest that the more frequently scholars engage in English language content, the better they can understand and remember audible information.

### **Content type**

In the classroom, the application of technology has opened up many ways for teaching foreign languages, allowing the teacher to offer further meaningful gestures in literacy beyond what he can achieve with oral language alone (Barrios & Llinás Torres, 2021) With these added resources, students' mental capacity is not only carved deeper and more fully grown but also expands into learning technological applications themselves, including hybrid communications. Multimedia packages like videos, podcasts, digital tools, and educational software have become an essential counterpart in today's curriculum that has opened new teaching niches for both instruction and testing at the same time.

Likewise, the value of peer commerce through apps like WhatsApp and Messenger is emphasized, as they promote cooperative work, idea sharing, and real- life language use through turn- taking, therefore strengthening communication chops. A notable illustration of the impact of educational software on English tutoring is Burlington English, an innovative platform with voice recognition that allows scholars to exercise pronunciation and oral product directly. This tool provides automatic feedback, corrects crimes, and tracks progress, contributing to a nonstop and effective language literacy process.

### **Platforms used**

The use of specific platforms for podcast distribution also plays an important part in their effectiveness as an educational tool. Platforms similar as Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and BBC Learning English allow scholars to pierce a wide variety of English content, easing independent and harmonious practice. The availability offered by these platforms, along with their capability to organize content by position or content, allows scholars to choose and hear to accoutrements that match their preferences and language abilities (Solano Fernández & Sanchez Vera, 2010). This increases scholars' provocation and engagement with harkening conditioning. harkening chops in English

### **Listening skills in English**

According to (Palmer, 2011) Listening comprehension is the essential skill to cultivate in English as a foreign language classes. Its development precedes speaking, reading comprehension, and writing. Its production comes before spoken language, reading comprehension, and writing ability. Listening is to understand the spoken word, as pointed out by (Masoumeh, 2016) y (Abreus, 2019), Not only does listening involve grasping sounds, but it also comes to involve them in a broader picture; attention shifts to diverse aspects of discourse and understanding the message.

These sub-skills include:

- Listening mainly for the gist
- Listening specifically to pick up some details that are important for understanding a given article of speech
- Listening both intensively and extensively for overall comprehension of what is being said.

One trickle awake hummingbird, the world's most skillful musicians. Sweet-smelling flowers are strewn across the plain. Through the still air wafts the smell of wildflowers, damp earth, and moisture...Where once was the forest floor plunged in obscurity, now there lies a gentle light that reveals in fashion to know embroidery the many delicate ferns and mosses thriving underneath.

### **Teaching Listening Comprehension**

Listening comprehension is not simply a matter of hearing but involves a series of elaborate processes that include understanding and interpreting spoken language. These processes include sounding out words spoken, interpreting word meanings, and grasping the syntax of sentences (Golchi, 2012). Besides this, the listener has to do things like convert declarative to interrogative sentences and take advantage of context and prior

knowledge or such social-psychological features as finding out who someone is talking about or what they might have said. When dealing with extended speech, listening comprehension also demands considerable memory capacity to follow causal links between ideas. This skill is not merely about hearing words, but about understanding them and making meaningful connections.

Key components of this process include:

- Ability to identify sounds differently, variations in tone, and recognize pauses and patterns of emphasis in speech.
- Recognizing sounds as words also involves accessing the lexicon, but at this time writers also retrieve grammatical, semantic, and lexical data.
- Analyzing the structure of sentences, parts of speech, and sentence parse tree.
- Short-term memory to store relevant data in.
- Detecting connections within the discourse.
- Interpreting what is indirectly communicated.
- What to do in reply (Morley, 1991).

### **Information Comprehension**

Information Comprehension Listening Comprehension As reported by (Antich de León y Rosa, 2013), listening comprehension is carried out through the following processes:

- The perception of linguistic signs as a result of listening.
- The interpretation of the linguistic sign.
- The establishment of conceptual connections based on grammatical structure.
- Understanding the meaning of the statement.
- Conscious control over one's own comprehension process.

By analyzing these elements, it can be concluded that there should be no separation between listening and the development of appropriate pronunciation in students. Furthermore, when these processes are carried out automatically and fluently, it can be considered that students have truly acquired listening comprehension skills.

According to (Fitria et al., 2015) in their study titled "The Use of Podcasts to Improve Students' Listening and Speaking Achievement", the results obtained from various instruments demonstrated that:

Podcasts provided authentic, relevant, and engaging activities, tasks, and resources. These elements captured students' attention, increased their interest, and enhanced their understanding. Therefore, the study concluded that the use of podcasts constitutes an effective and innovative technological tool for English learning, especially in developing listening comprehension skills (p. 1).

On the other hand, (Albán Benavides, 2021) states that listening is an active process of understanding that requires activating different types of knowledge. Since it is one of the fundamental language skills for communication, its development should be supported by effective strategies such as the use of podcasts. However, some students may perceive listening comprehension as a difficult skill to achieve, especially when traditional teaching methods are used in which the teacher plays a central role and the student remains a passive receiver of knowledge (p. 11).

### **Vocabulary Recognition**

Like other communication skills, listening comprehension has purposes and goals that guide both teachers and students. These objectives enable teachers to design lessons with greater clarity and allow students to grasp what is expected of their learning.

Among these objectives are:

- Listening to understand the speaker.
- Identifying and demonstrating attentive listening.
- Showing the ability to reflect on what was heard.



According to research by (Martínez Molina et al., 2020), citing (Chang & Millet, 2013) to teach this skill, specialized literature suggests following a series of stages. The list theory breaks this down into three basic stages: pre-, during, and post-listening. A good lesson for listening comprehension must include these three steps, which offer the student the opportunity to prepare (pre-listening), act during the spoken discourse (while-listening), and access the speech of others (listening).

- Pre-listening: The intention is to get students ready for what they are going to hear. The teacher must convey enough relevant information to make the real-life experience meaningful, but should then successfully guide the students back into applying their own background knowledge to spur motivation and interest.
- While-listening: At this stage, students should be interpreting messages from the listening, confirming or correcting if needed their predictions. Repeat listening may be beneficial, such as reducing anxiety (anxiety-induced freeze of brain function...) and manifesting comprehension.
- After listening (post-listening): Learning activities, which are aimed at widening and deepening the understanding of the given task. Here is where issues like new vocabulary arise and students react to hidden content with other oral or written responses.

### **Meaning inference**

Morales y Moses (2006) defined the podcast as an online radio program or any type of audio content, such as narrations, lectures, or individual or group presentations, accessible via the Internet. The term podcasting comes from the combination of Apple's "iPod" and the concept of "broadcasting" (p. 3).

Thanks to the use of podcasting, it is possible to strengthen essential communicative skills—reading, writing, listening, and speaking—which students need to develop more thoroughly. This tool can be produced either by teachers or experts, or by the students themselves, which adds complexity to the process and connects it to metacognition. In this regard, Jaramillo y (Simbaña, 2014) assert that virtual teaching and learning environments are essential for a better understanding of knowledge. By integrating these technologies, the active participation of so-called "digital natives" is encouraged, and the development of metacognitive skills is significantly enhanced when digital tools are used appropriately (p. 12).

In this sense, there are currently various studies that explore how the use of podcasts positively influences learning, reading comprehension, and overall student communication, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels. These studies highlight the effectiveness of podcasts as a resource to improve oral and written language skills (Palacios, 2020).

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The study is a mixed method (quantitative and qualitative research) on how podcast utilization affects the improvement of English listening comprehension in English. Here, in order to be able to quantify differences between student performance before and after their education, a pre-test and post-test quasi-experimental design is used with only one group. At the same time, data is collected qualitatively through an observation sheet and teacher interview. This methodical combination is seeking to do more than just count results; it seeks to understand the real-life experiences which students can have in education.

To carry out the study, various instruments were used specifically for the purpose of measuring such intended aims. One of these instruments, designed for the quantitative part, was a pre-test concentrating on listening activities: sentence completion, multiple-choice questions (correcting errors after listening), etc. This served as an index for establishing basic competence in listening comprehension. Later, several classes were held using educational podcasts on topics suitable for grammar-level students, accompanied by structured pedagogical activities aiming to stimulate active listening and further develop listening skills progressively.

The participants of this study were 27 ninth-grade students from the public "5 de Mayo" school, in Canton Chone. This group, aged between 13 and 15 years, marks a halfway point in Ecuador's basic education stage: a critically important time to develop communicative skills in English. There is little exposure to the language abroad for students; they are brought in from school only. Therefore, they were selected as a convenience sample—ease of access and cooperative informants.

In the first intervention class, the theme of interest, a podcast for the students, was used. Although unfamiliar

with the medium and therefore initially struggling, students were able to better grasp general ideas by playing the repeated audio a number of times. When it came to the second class, listening comprehension showed a slight improvement. They've persisted vocabulary difficulties, however. The next session concentrated on film. This attracted students' interests and thus made it easier for them to get into the material.

Prediction strategies were applied before listening, and the audio was paused at key moments. As a result, students showed greater understanding, confidence, and participation, demonstrating steady progress in their listening skills. On the other hand, in the qualitative component, a teacher interview and a class observation sheet were applied during one of the sessions. Both instruments made it possible to identify the methodological strategies used, as well as the level of student engagement and response to the use of audio resources.

In this way, the intervention was structured around the use of podcasts as the main didactic resource, considering their potential to offer an authentic and contextualized listening experience. The podcasts were selected based on linguistic appropriateness and thematic relevance and were complemented with worksheets focused on both global and specific comprehension of the content. This methodological proposal aimed not only to evaluate the impact of the resource on levels of listening comprehension but also to foster motivation, active participation, and the development of autonomous learning strategies among students.

## RESULTS

### Results obtained from the Pre-test

The diagnostic assessment used on 27 students clearly revealed a wide range of successes and failures. A striking final 22.22% of students scored low (11 to 17 out of a possible 30 points) in this section, which suggests that a significant number of individuals severely struggle with the information comprehension, the evaluated content and calls for pedagogical action. The highest proportion (44.44%) scored 18.5 to 20.5 points, which corresponds to the low-intermediate performance levels of students. These students have made some learning of vocabulary recognition, but there remain areas of pretty big mismatch that need to be closed with pragmatic strategies and support from teachers.

The other part, 33.33%, falls in the range between 21. and 28, which is a low level of understanding but needs improvement in meaning inference. At the end, only 16.66% scored high (between 25 and 28), a downright minority which seems to have complete understanding of the content evaluated.

Overall, 66,66% of the students are at low or low-intermediate levels, highlighting the need to implement differentiated pedagogical actions, academic reinforcement, and personalized follow-up to improve the general performance of the group before moving on to more complex content.

Table 1. Students' pre-test scores

Score Range	Students	Percentage	Information Comprehension	Vocabulary Recognition	Meaning Inference
11 – 17	6	22.22%	4,70	4,75	4,90
18.5 – 20.5	12	44,44%	6,6	6	6,50
21 – 28	9	33,33%	8,3	8,3	8,00
Total	27	100,00%			

### Results During Interventions

The interventions within the project were carried out on a weekly basis. Therefore, a constant follow-up of the students' evolution was maintained, allowing us to monitor progress class by class and obtain more accurate results. By maintaining this process, it was possible to evaluate the students more adequately as they improved their listening skills.

#### Intervention 1 – My Hometown (9th grade Week 1)

During this first intervention, the topic My Hometown was addressed using a podcast as the main resource. Students demonstrated some initial understanding of the content, however they had difficulty perceiving key ideas due to a lack of confidence with the audio format. It was necessary to repeat the audio several times and reinforce prior vocabulary to facilitate comprehension. Activities such as multiple-choice and sentence completion were implemented. However, the absence of visual support and the speed of the audio negatively impacted overall performance. This case drives home the importance of preparing students with pre-listening strategies and placing content into context wherever possible.

## Intervention 2 – Daily Routine (9th grade Week 2)

In the 2nd lesson, the children approached Daily Routine more easily than they had done already. They had done podcasts, and their confidence rose: they could apply this to everyday life structures. Prior to listening to the tape, the key vocab used visual aids (word sheet, pictures) and flashcards so as to facilitate overall understanding. Active listening improved, and some students were able to complete tasks without repeated listening. Participation increased, and the learning environment became more dynamic. This session reaffirmed the effectiveness of combining pre-activation strategies with audio input for realistic language practice.

## Intervention 3 – Dogs (9th grade Week 3)

The third intervention was on Dogs, an interesting and relevant subject to get attention and engagement from the students. By playing the podcast in a more informal way and at too high speed, students also got the message to kick their communication skills into overdrive so that they could get all of what was being said! This study integrated strategic pauses and audio-facilitated group discussions to ensure comprehension. Dog breeds are visualized and matched with action verbs to assist in connecting the audio to pre-learned vocabulary. More students were able to infer meaning from context in their writing with less support. This class advocated that thematic interest was the biggest driver of learning.

## Intervention 4 – Movies (9th grade Week 4)

On the fourth session, the subject on Movies received a very enthusiastic reaction from students. They then listened to a podcast in which two average guys discussed well-known films, genres, and actors, allowing students to connect topics from the sources back to their interests. Before listening: predict — looking at some images and titles for the learner to generate a prediction, engagement activity for them (activating schemata) and priming everyone else in this reading/listening class to begin being on the listen-out for those key vocabulary. Pausing for comprehension checks in the audio and then completing matching tasks followed by personal opinions of where this traditional practice exists today. Significant progress in student oral fluency and willingness to participate was evident. That was a rather clear progress in all these (listening, speaking-comprehension, and confident expression).

Table 2. Scores from worksheets during the interventions

Dimension/Intervention	My hometown	Daily routine	Dogs	Movies
Understanding information	5.1 / 10	6.4 / 10	7.3 / 10	8.5/10
Vocabulary recognition	4.8 / 10	6.1 / 10	7.2 / 10	8.4/10
Understanding inference	4.2 / 10	5.7 / 10	6.9 / 10	8.2/10

Results from the four thematic interventions (My Hometown, Daily Routine, Dogs, and Movies) suggest significant understandings in listening comprehension focusing on information comprehension, vocabulary recognition, and meaning inference. Because the first session average was 5.5 out of 10 which showed that at the beginning, participants' comprehension and control over language was low. However, over time, and through the sessions, they gradually improved. With the second session, they soared up to averages more than 6 points. According to them, in the third session students' scores were 6.9–7.3, hinting that they started using better strategies for reading and began learning new words. In the first three trials, these results ranged from 7.2 to 8.0, however, in the fourth session, the maximum outputs were achieved, which varied between 8.2 and 8.5, that reflects the stability of given skills.

That gradual progress in all areas shows that the implemented activities led to significant learning: students are not only getting better at understanding texts as a whole (global), but also have become more competent at inferring meaning and identifying words they know or can understand from context. These data are all consistent with the approach working, and they show that the pedagogical intervention itself has improved outcomes by most metrics.

## Post- test results

With respect to the end-of-year test results, there was a significant knowledge gain in 27 students underwent evaluation. There was no dot placed which means there were no students getting less than 20 points, it demonstrated that an improvement had been made compared to the pre-test. A further 22.22% scored within the range of 22 and 23 points indicating a level of performance adequate for information comprehension, an improvement from the historically low results recorded previously. 13 students (48.15%) scored 24 to 27,



which is the mid-range with a good vocabulary recognition on the content: There are also 29.63% that scored between 28 and 30; in other words, students with greater expertise in terms of the meaning inference. Finally, 14.81% got 30 marks out of 30, which was described as outstanding performance and complete mastery of the units behind the score.

In general, the post-test results show the positive effect of the pedagogical intervention implemented since most students improved their performance significantly. These improvements indicate that although the strategies that were used did not effectively work for all of our students, they were enough to support real learning and carried this group on to an overall higher level of understanding and competence in covered material.

Table 3. Students' post-test scores

Score Range	Students	Percentage	Information Comprehension	Vocabulary Recognition	Meaning Inference
22 – 23	6	22.22%	9,00	5,00	7,80
24 – 27	13	48,15%	9,00	7,00	8,20
28 – 30	8	29,63%	12	8,00	10,00
Total	27	100,00%			

## DISCUSSION

The evaluation process—comprising a pre-test, four themed interventions, and a post-test—revealed a progressive and significant improvement in the listening comprehension skills of 9th-grade students. The initial pre-test results suggested varied performance distribution initially, but 66,66% of the students scored in the low or mid-low area (scoring between 11–20/30), indicating poorly developed understanding of the contents evaluated. The diagnosis indicated that differentiated pedagogical and academic psychosocial strategies were necessary to improve the contents of the area for this population.

Podcasts were used in all of the themed interventions (My Hometown, Daily Routine, Dogs, Movies) and as central instructional material—providing a piecemeal increase in listening skills. Comprehension, vocabulary recognition, and inference of meaning started at an average maximum score of 5.5/10 in session one. However, the individual sessions clearly improved and finally scored above 8 points in the last session.

The implementation results of this methodology are favorable for the development of listening skills, since there was growth in the number of participants with a less than regular level in listening comprehension. Quantitative post-trial results confirmed this same instructive effect literally as well. This improved significantly over the pre-test where no student scored more than 20 points. Breaking it down by score, 22.22% scored 22–23, 48.15% 24–27, 29.63% — 28–30, and scores of the highest levels (28.5–30) were achieved by just 14.81%.

It is more than obvious that this is not only to help understand but translated into confidence, motivation, and action which are the activities based on the audio material. In sum, the results of this study suggest that integrating podcasts as a pedagogical tool is an important means to improve listening comprehension. A 77.78% gain in correct responses is reflected by the dramatic transformation shown between pre-test and post-test results; no student scored above 23 points initially, all students did by the end.

The above supports the importance of authentic listening materials to boost language input, a feature that most other methods will not provide abundantly. This finding confirms the results of previous research in connection with the necessity to use true sound materials within the process of second language acquisition. (Zambrano, Saltos, Loor, Mendoza y Zambrano, 2024).

Earlier teaching and post-listening activities (phased) and use of scaffolding strategies enhanced the processing of the auditory information as well. This improvement is reflected in better identification of general ideas and concrete details, consistent with (Martínez Molina et al., 2020), who cited (Chang & Millet, 2013) on the significance of constructing listening teaching into stages. While not all students scored very well, 77.78% of the post-test was graded as high or excellent, reinforcing the formative relevance of this approach (Table III).

Finally, according to the students' perception, low exposure to the language beyond the classroom became an obstacle in listening skills development, which was also corroborated by (Albán Benavides, 2021). Use of podcasts during the intervention, however, lowered affective filters and created a more interactive, accessible learning environment. The important increase in student confidence and participation suggests that these digital tools not only improve students' language skills but also promote their self-efficacy and motivation in learning English as a foreign speaker.

## CONCLUSION

After all, the use of podcasts has turned into a really useful tool that helps improve listening to English upper school students' capacity greatly. Moreover, students did not only listen to authentic audio several times with appropriate scaffolding techniques (before-listening activities, vocabulary activation tasks, audio segmentation, etc.); they also reached the point where they could distinguish main ideas from details. In addition, the persuasive rhetoric of this content caused students to bootstrap context for meaning, as well as combining critical thinking and increased self-directed learning.

Moreover, as these aspects improved, the students felt a greater sense of motivation and confidence. It was this that kept them going when they experienced a lack of input or experiences in listening that could turn into English data on the whole. Podcasts could also provide a different, interactive learning mode while serving to slow learners down, and metacognitive strategies were introduced through follow-up listening. It is an interesting and all-round approach to multimedia English learning—even students engaged in this kettle of fish may still find information they do not fully understand, words that are new to them, or implied meanings throughout the context. The practice is not only conducive to the academic growth of its students, but it also customizes itself in response to different learning patterns on the part of those who use it. In that sense, this software is of a much higher standard than the present-day educational environment can afford.

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### **Conflict of interest**

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

### **Declaration of responsibility of authorship**

We, the authors of the aforementioned manuscript, DECLARE that we have directly contributed to its intellectual content, as well as to the genesis and analysis of its data; therefore, we are able to take public responsibility for it and accept that their names appear on the list of authors in the order indicated. Furthermore, we have complied with the ethical requirements of the aforementioned publication, having consulted the Declaration of Ethics and Publication Malpractice.

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