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**Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of English
Section of English**

**Investigating the Use of Podcasts as an Innovative Medium
to Enhance EFL Students' Oral Proficiency: Case of 1st year
at Tlemcen University**

Dissertation submitted to the Department of English as a partial fulfilment of
the requirements for Master's degree in Didactics of Foreign Languages

Presented by

Ms. Nour El Houda MEKKEDER

Supervised by

Dr. Youcef MESSAOUDI

Board of Examiners

Prof. Nawel BENMOSTEFA

Professor

President

Dr. Youcef MESSAOUDI

MCA

Supervisor

Prof. Faiza HADDAM

Professor

Examiner

2024 - 2025

Declaration

I, Nour El Houda MEEKEDER, hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise acknowledged through proper citations and references. I also affirm that this work has not been submitted before for any degree, diploma or qualification at this or any other university.

Date: 16/06/2025

Dedication

To my mother, and only my mother

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Abstract

Oral proficiency is a critical skill in language education that reflects the learners' ability to express their thoughts and ideas appropriately in real-life interactions. In EFL teaching and learning, this skill is one of the most challenging skills for learners to master due to psychological, linguistic and contextual issues. Lately, the development of ICTs has brought innovative tools used to enhance the educational field. In this regard, the present study aimed to explore the effectiveness of these tools, particularly podcasts for improving learners' English oral proficiency alongside examining the impact of the latest trend Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI) on podcasts production activities in the Department of English at the University of Tlemcen. In order to fulfil the intended purpose, an exploratory sequential mixed-methods case study was conducted where two research instruments were employed. First, an interview was administered to six (06) Oral Expression module teachers, followed by a questionnaire with First-year EFL students. The findings revealed positive attitudes towards the use of podcasts as a pedagogical tool among participants. The study highlighted the usefulness of this tool in improving oral proficiency in terms of: fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar along with improvement in oral performance. While Gen AI simplifies the creation of educational podcasts and help learners take ownership of their spoken output which leads to fostering their confidence to speak and engagement. Yet, the integration of podcasts in EFL classrooms is still limited due to technical issues and a lack of teachers' ICT training. Based on the findings, this work affirmed the potential of adopting these emerging technologies in teaching oral English and enhancing the learners' learning experience.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACTFL: American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

AI: Artificial Intelligence

CEFR: Common European Framework of Reference

COE: Comprehension and Oral Expression

DL: Deep Learning

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

FL: Foreign Language

Gen AI: Generative Artificial Intelligence

ICT: Information and Communication Technology

IELTS: International English Language Testing System

L1: First Language

ML: Machine Learning

MPITC: Ministry of Post and Telecommunications

NLP: Natural Language Processing

NSDO: National System of Documentation Online

OPI: Oral Proficiency Interview

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

TOEFL: Test of English as a Foreign Language

General Introduction

By the turn of the 21st century, the world has witnessed rapid technological development that has led to major transformations across various domains, including the field of education. This transfer has brought in innovative media to share knowledge, often influenced the learners and the teaching-learning process as a whole.

Teaching and learning a foreign language, particularly English is often challenging due to the significant differences between the learners' mother tongue and the target language. Learning a language means mastering its four skills which are reading, writing, listening and speaking. Importantly, among these, oral skills play a crucial role in EFL learning as they give students the opportunity to express themselves in real-world situations. The ability to understand the spoken form is considered as a fundamental element of effective communication. Currently, learners who cannot speak in a fluent and accurate way are not considered adequate language users (Hajjej, 2024). In this context, many EFL students are struggling to develop their oral communication skills because of different factors like the lack of practice and engagement, in addition to reliance solely on traditional resources to present a course. Thus, traditional methods are still vivid and somehow useful; it is essential to pave the way for the tolerance of novelty.

Nowadays, especially after the COVID 19 pandemic experience, it is trendy for EFL learners to use technology in education. In fact, the current generation has grown surrounded by a variety of technologies and multimedia resources that help them to learn how to communicate. The integration of technology in education refers to solving educational problems through the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Although it is challenging to incorporate ICTs by teachers, many studies have argued that their use in EFL classes can enrich the students' learning experience and ameliorate their different abilities in case of choosing the right alternative. Among numerous innovative ICT tools, podcasts can serve as a suitable source that teachers can implement as a part of their pedagogy (Mohammed & Khadawardi, 2024).

Podcasts contribution in foreign language learning is significant. They have successfully remained prominent amidst on-going technological advancements such as AI technologies. This status has been achieved through their adaptability with different new trends. For example, recently, the advent of Gen AI has revolutionized the way content is created and delivered which allowed podcasts to be defined by continuous renewal that meet learners' needs (Sheikh *et al.*, 2025). However, in the Algerian context, the use of podcasts as an educational booster to overcome English students' obstacles in developing oral skills is still under investigation. In fact, awareness among EFL Algerian teachers and learners about podcasts benefits on both speaking and listening skills remains a timely area of study. In response, the current research work aims to explore the effectiveness of using podcasts to enhance learners' oral proficiency and to understand effects of Gen AI on EFL podcasts production in the Department of English at the University of Tlemcen.

This exploratory study is conducted to achieve the following objectives:

- To investigate perceptions of teachers and learners towards effectiveness of podcasts in enhancing English oral proficiency.
- To identify the different challenges faced by EFL teachers and learners when using podcasts as a pedagogical aid.
- To explore the impact of AI- generated podcasts on improving learners' confidence and engagement to develop their oral skills.

In this vein, the following research questions were raised:

Q1: How do EFL teachers and learners perceive the use of podcasts in fostering oral proficiency?

Q2: What challenges do EFL teachers and learners encounter when using podcasts as a pedagogical aid?

Q3: How do AI- generated podcasts impact EFL students' oral skills not least confidence and engagement?

Accordingly, these questions were hypothesized as follow:

H1: English teachers and learners may find that podcasts have positive impact on oral proficiency development in terms of fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar as well as listening comprehension

H2: English teachers may face challenges in using podcasts to enhance learners' oral proficiency due to limited technological access, pedagogical concerns, and lack of engagement.

H3: AI may promote learners' confidence in speaking and enhance their engagement through personalized podcasts content creation, voice recording and editing.

While conducting this research, an exploratory case study has been adopted to accomplish the above-defined objectives focusing on First-year English students and English Oral Expression teachers at Tlemcen University. The researcher opted for a triangular approach where two research instruments were employed to collect accurate data. A teachers' interview was first conducted then followed by a students' questionnaire. Accordingly, this case research embraces both quantitative and qualitative data coming from distinct tools and analysed relying on the principles of a mixed-methods approach.

Furthermore, the present work is divided into two chapters. The first chapter provides the readers with a review of existing literature concerning the main variables of the topic: Oral Proficiency, Podcasts and Artificial Intelligence. While the second chapter is devoted to establish the practical foundation related to this study, including a detailed description of the research design and instruments. Then, it provides an analysis of the data collected and a discussion of the main findings. The chapter ends with a set recommendations based on the obtained results to make the use of these trendy ICTs more visible in the EFL context.

CHAPTER ONE: Literature Review

1.1. Introduction

Within the framework of EFL learning, oral proficiency development remains a critical aspect that many students are eager to achieve for communication purposes. Various studies highlighted this issue from different perspectives; for instance, many researchers have unified their focus towards exploring the role of ICTs in developing this skill. In this respect, the current chapter serves as the theoretical section that covers this topic, and sheds light on certain variables considered to be the foundation of this study. First, it provides the readers with an in-depth overview of oral proficiency by defining it in relation to its key features, factors affecting its outcome and mentioning common ways used to assess it. Since this skill requires learners to be proficient listeners and speakers, the researcher discusses the relationship between receptive listening and productive speaking skills. Next, the focus moved to the notion of podcast, in which the researcher examines the application of this tool in EFL context as well as its impact on oral proficiency. The novelty of this study lies on presenting the current technological trend Gen AI as an aid to facilitate the podcasting process. In this matter, a part of this work is dedicated to discover how AI assists podcast production and the impact of those generated works on students' engagement. Finally, the chapter concludes with addressing the status of ICTs within the Algerian higher education.

1.2. English Oral Proficiency

Many scholars like Iwashita (2010) and Ogawa (2022), to name a few, have discussed oral proficiency as one of the core communication skills to master in foreign language (FL) education. In English language education particularly, oral proficiency is considered a critical skill that involves the verbal articulation of thoughts and ideas (Reyes *et al.*, 2024). The term oral proficiency, as defined by Olivier (2002) refers to the extent to which a person can speak a language in an effective and appropriate way. That is to say, it demonstrates learners' ability to express themselves meaningfully through speech in distinct contexts which supports the use of English in real-life. In this regard, it is simply described as “the validity

and accuracy of information and knowledge received during language interaction” (Haryanti, Indah, & Wahyuni, 2021, as cited in Yao *et al.*, 2022).

The significance of oral proficiency lies in the achievement of an effective communication. It reflects learners’ overall mastery of the foreign language learning. In the same line of thoughts, Lin (2022) said it is related to learners’ ability to ensure communicative objectives in real-life settings. Therefore, it is one of the key issues to identify oral proficiency features; for instance, Iwashita (2010) asserts that it is difficult to know what this skill entails but what is certain is that a proficient speaker is fluent, competent and knowledgeable. In fact, for the development of proficiency in oral English, learners are required to go through different levels of communicative competence such as: fluency, vocabulary acquisition, grammatical accuracy and clear pronunciation. Among all these components, fluency and accuracy are the cornerstones of oral proficiency.

1.2.1. Fluency versus Accuracy Dichotomy

The debate between fluency and accuracy has long been a central issue in language education. The dichotomy reflects the tension between producing speech that is smooth and easy “Fluency” versus speech that is correct and precise “Accuracy”. Many studies were conducted by prominent figures in the realm of language education to address this issue. However, this debate continued where some scholars, including Brumfit (1984) advocated fluency, others such as Ellis (2005) showed a bias towards accuracy. Cherrad (2023) argued that in the context of EFL, attaining oral proficiency requires a careful balance between fluency and accuracy as this process goes beyond mere error correction. On this matter, a previous study by Nikolov and Krashen (1997), aimed to see if a focus on fluency compromised grammatical correctness, in which they compared two groups of Hungarian children learning EFL through using two distinct approaches. Consequently, the findings suggested that fluency can be developed without neglecting accuracy.

Notably, these two constructs embody distinct notions. On one hand, fluency refers to the ability to speak at a normal speed or a natural flow without unnecessary pauses or hesitations (Sabat, 2024). Although it is a crucial aspect of oral proficiency, it has no widely agreed-upon definitions. In speech language pathology, the term “fluency” describes the smoothness with which sounds, words and syllables are combined during speech (Boukhari, 2014). It reflects a higher level of linguistic competence where learners are able to use the spoken language confidently and spontaneously. According to Sabat (2024), those learners are expected to produce the language in real time without false starts or repetitions; and in order to achieve this an on-going practice and development of language skills through conversation, reading, and writing is required (Klingner, 2024). Thus, fluent speakers often care less about grammatical accuracy and focus only on producing a quick speech.

On the other hand, accuracy in teaching English refers to “the ability to make correct use of the language, including intelligible pronunciation and the correct use of grammatical structures” (KO, 2023). Olivier (2002) also considered it as a significant part in oral speech production that requires a good knowledge of vocabulary as well as correct pronunciation, grammar and even punctuation. Since it emphasizes constructing a language that follows the accepted rules, it is crucial to be attentive while teaching it. Accuracy errors often lead to misunderstandings and suggest a lack of professionalism and attention (Chong, 2019, as cited in Sabat, 2024); therefore, providing students with clear instruction on grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation in addition to practice opportunities where they are able to apply their knowledge and receive constructive feedback can improve this skill over time (Sabat, 2024). To conclude, English oral proficiency is defined by these two debated aspects without any bias to one of them. They are interlinked because accuracy serves as the basis of fluency. To substantiate this claim, De Jong and Van Ginkel in a discussion about the significance of oral proficiency, they highlighted that effective second language speakers must develop automaticity in both dimensions which means strong grammar and vocabulary knowledge, along with fluent and well-pronounced speech (as cited in Verhoeven & De Jong, 1999).

1.2.3. Variables Impacting Oral Proficiency Development

Previously stated, for EFL learners, to achieve oral proficiency is the only way to be able to use English both effectively and accurately in communication, especially in this age where English is widely regarded as the global language of communication. Thus, the journey towards oral proficiency navigates a sophisticated process shaped by numerous interconnected factors. Many learners encounter challenges to develop this skill, not only inside but also outside classroom setting; they always fail in speaking activities and social interactions. In order to overcome this issue, it is crucial to figure out the variables that hinder the development of oral proficiency. According to Bhattacharya (2017), there are various factors that inhibit learners to speak, among them:

- **Poor listening ability:**

Listening is essential in achieving proficiency in speaking skill. Due to the fact that learners cannot improve their oral ability unless they develop their listening skill (Doff, 1998, as cited in Bhattacharya, 2017). That is to say, the information is received through listening then understood by the listeners to have a successful dialogue. In relation to FL education, it is one way for a learner to learn how to speak the language in a near-native speaker way (Okey-Kalu, 2018). Here, learners need to fulfil the role of both speakers and listeners which is often neglected by the majority nowadays.

- **Topical knowledge:**

When speakers have limited knowledge or interest concerning a particular topic, they will not engage in the discussion which can lead later on to communication avoidance and diminish their oral performance. In contrast, familiarity with the tackled topic and its register can enhance learners' self-confidence and engagement. (Bhattacharya, 2017)

- **First language interferences:**

First Language (L1) interferences, also called “language transfer” refer to the influence of the learners’ mother tongue on the learning of a target language which emphasizes that errors stem from the users’ native language. Krashen (1981) argued that L1 is the source of most errors in the target language. Accordingly, learners tend to use L1 structure when they lack sufficient proficiency in the target language. As a result, these learners have an inadequate vocabulary repertoire and poor sentence building skills (Bhattacharya, 2017).

- **Classroom environment:**

Bhattacharya (2017) points out that a supportive and motivating classroom environment fosters better communication skills among students. For instance, small classrooms tend to be more effective, as teachers can control students and give them more attention which encourages them to participate in speaking activities. Also, Innovative teaching approaches and strategies that involve dynamic activities can significantly reduce anxiety and enhance engagement (Jin, 2023). As it is the duty of teachers to make learning more meaningful and turn the learners’ fears into success through monitoring and shedding light on their mistakes without leading them to experience “psychological inhibition” (Bhattacharya, 2017).

- **Linguistic factors:**

There are learners who cannot maintain the interaction going because they lack the necessary terminology to convey their thoughts and ideas (Dela Cruz, 2025); this displays a constraint in grammar and vocabulary. It is quite difficult for them to produce meaningful and coherent sentences using their vocabulary repertoire. Mispronunciation also can lead to misunderstandings which discourage learners from using the target language as they seem to be more secure to speak their mother tongue (Okey-Kalu, 2018).

- **Affective factors:**

This includes several features such as: anxiety, shyness, inhibition, self-esteem, fear of making mistakes, lack of motivation and interest. Olson (1997, as cited in Bhattacharya, 2017) stated that motivation is probably the most important factor targeted by educators to improve learning, especially when it comes to second or foreign language learning. Since the majority of learners are motivated to use the language only within classroom environment, without any additional real-life interaction. Also, anxious and shy learners always worry about being judged and feel nervous to speak without readiness which makes them tongue-tied or lost for words (Kang, 2002). This lack of confidence prevents them from enhancing the needed oral proficiency.

1.2.3. Assessment of Oral Proficiency

Second or foreign language instruction mainly focuses on the development of the learners' overall language proficiency through targeting the four skills: writing, reading, listening and speaking; unlike the three first skills which are evaluated through formal assessment, spoken language evaluation is such a tricky task (Swanson & Nolde, 2011). The assessment of oral proficiency is a complex yet essential part that encompasses various frameworks aimed at evaluating learners' outcomes. According to Apelgren and Oscarson (2011), assessing oral proficiency poses a significant challenge when there is a lack of awareness about the appropriate measurement methodologies aligned with the demands of the curriculum (as cited in Meghnine, 2023). Among the common assessment methods, classroom observation is frequently used by educators to assess learners' oral abilities. This indicates a lack of diversity in assessment techniques due to a gap in sufficient educators training (Apelgren & Oscarson, 2011); and as a result, "teachers can only assess a certain number of features" (Smit, 2019). That is to say, effective oral language assessment requires addressing all its aspects, namely: fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and comprehension in addition to broader cognitive and communicative skills such as critical thinking, coherence and interactional competence.

Assessing proficiency of oral English involves measuring a person's ability to understand the spoken form and to engage in conversations and in discussions; this often includes exposing EFL learners to variety of performance tasks such as answering questions, role-plays, pictures-description and spontaneous conversations (Li & Mohamad, 2023). Additionally, Malone and Montee (2010) stated that the major approach to assess this skill is the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI). According to them, the OPI is either a face-to-face or a telephonic assessment approach that relies on a qualified examiner to evaluate spoken language from the examinee. It focuses on how well a person can speak rather than merely having an amount of knowledge about the language. Then, the examinee performance will be compared to the provided criteria in the rating scale (Swender, 1999, as cited in Malone & Montee, 2010). In this context, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) scale is the one used in the OPI, in which it rates learners' ability to speak from "novice" to "superior" (ACTFL, 1999). In the same vein, TOEFL and IELTS tests are commonly used as speaking proficiency measurement techniques. They follow the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) standard which is primary intended to overcome the barriers to communication among learners and workers in the field of languages (CEFR, 2001). Last but not least, adopting the right methodology to assess learners speaking ability in the target language is crucial to address their weaknesses and highlight areas that need to change.

1.3. The Correlation between Listening and Speaking Skills

In fact, listening and speaking are interrelated skills. These two variables are considered as the basis of oral language where listening serves as the cognitive process that involves the interpretation of auditory codes and speaking is all about the speakers' performance (Demir, 2017). Kang (2002) emphasizes that social interactions occur between two interlocutors where one assumes the role of a speaker and the other one responds through attentive listening. Here, it can be said that interactions do not exist without active involvement from both sides. In this process, every single person is in charge of playing a double role both as a speaker

and a listener which is referred to as "turn taking" process (Ykhlef & Chebbah, 2023).

The listening-speaking correlation has been the subject of numerous research works in EFL countries. They emphasize that listening supervises the development of oral ability. That is to say, most of EFL learners who do not exposure themselves to aural material have a poor English oral proficiency (Kang, 2002, as cited in Bouradji & Hattab, 2022). However, in EFL classes listening skill often receives the least attention by learners, especially in their early stages of university studies; this population of unskilled listeners are marked also as non-proficient speakers because they were accustomed to traditional methods of learning and assessment (Abu-Snoubar, 2017). In this respect, Abu-Snoubar (2017) and Zhang (2009) investigated the strong relationship between listening comprehension and speaking proficiency in EFL context. Both literatures drew invaluable conclusions that underscore the positive influence of listening on oral language development. The findings align that these two variables complement each other; yet, it is significant to integrate listening comprehension in systematic way into speaking instruction to enhance oral proficiency. To exemplify, during active listening, learners comprehend the spoken language which expand them to new vocabulary and a variety of pronunciation models so they become more proficient (Ykhlef & Chebbah, 2023).

1.4. Podcasts in EFL Classrooms

In this age, the use of digital tools in education holds significant importance in assisting both students and teachers in order to enhance the teaching-learning process. In EFL classrooms particularly, students often struggle to improve their oral skills which made it challenging for teachers to deliver oral courses. In order to resolve this issue, integrating authentic resources into EFL teaching practices is appreciated. For instance, podcasts have proven to be invaluable in enhancing language learning environment. The present section is dedicated to introduce this trendy tool and its pedagogical applications as well as its impact on EFL students' oral proficiency.

1.4.1. The Notion of Podcasts

The term “podcast” is a combination of iPod and broadcasting. It is a form of digital media that delivers recorded audio and video content organized into various program categories (Bouradji & Hattab, 2022). Similarly, McGarr (2009, as cited in Tümen Akyildiz, 2024) defines it as the act of distributing audio or audio-visual files online. It is characterized by its episodic nature, in which content is released in a series of episodes uploaded on the internet with the help of Rapid Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds (Lafferty & Walch, 2006, as cited in Hasan & Hoon, 2013). These feeds are empowered to allow users to subscribe, download and receive new episodes as they become available. Podcasts are not a product of recent technological advancement as they have been in existence before the 21st century. At that time, this medium emerged as a convergence of several technological developments, including audio blogs, RSS feeds and editing tools (Feinglos, 2005, as cited in Meghriche & Djezari, 2022). By 2004, the notion “podcast” was officially established and used in tech circles. This term is credited to Ben Hammersley as the first one who mentioned it in his article for The Guardian journal. Subsequently, this medium became wildly popular as a form of audio entertainment. This rapid advancement can be attributed to the following factors:

- Audio devices (iPods, MP3 players) have become a mainstream.
- Internet became globally accessible with fast speeds.
- Streaming and downloading are merging into one experience.

(Campbell, 2005, as cited in Al-Harbi, 2019)

Altıntaş (2024) viewed a podcast as a novel tool that have a unique set of features; it is a flexible and easy to use, create and publish. Moreover, this tool is crucial in bringing diversity since the majority of podcasts are made by many different types of people known as “broadcasters” and organizations which contributes to the production of a variety of distinct content genres and flourishes the industry. All the above-cited aspects of podcasts have paved the way to its use in educational settings (Ducalc & Lomicka, 2009).

1.4.2. Podcasts Applications in EFL Classrooms

Podcasts are considered one of the latest based-web resources that have significant contributions in the EFL field (Farangi *et al.*, 2015, as cited in Mohammed & Khadawardi, 2024). Numerous investigations have highlighted the effectiveness of this tool pedagogically based on the principles of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories. The SLA theories assert that language teaching and learning must be done in communicative setting through the use of different authentic material like “podcasts” (Tümen Akyildiz, 2024). In other words, learning a second or foreign language occurs when learners are actively engaged in real life communication as it goes beyond merely grammar rules and vocabulary memorization.

Isanto (2011) points out the urgent need of integrating podcasts in EFL instruction as an additional material that help teachers deliver their course. This can back to the fact that “podcasting gives students full access authentic resources even in non-English speaking environments” (Tümen Akyildiz, 2024). The use of this tool represents a highly effective approach to expose students to a wider range of language learning opportunities which leads to engage them with diverse classroom activities (Mohammed & Khadawardi, 2024). Similarly, Bakla (2018) discovered that listening to podcasts offered valuable input since students reported their enjoyment concerning the listening experience. Since podcasts offers various benefits to teachers and students, Rosell-Aguilar (2007, p. 473) divided its use into:

- 1) The use of available podcasts resources
- 2) The creation of new podcasts

The following table summarises the different applications of podcasts in EFL, according to (Tümen Akyildiz, 2024):

Table 1.1: *The Use of Podcasts in EFL Classrooms*

	The use of available podcasts resources (Receptive)	The creation of podcasts (Active)
By students	- Listen to lectures for review or catch up on missed lectures. - Improve listening, speaking, vocabulary and pronunciation. - Enhance their independent learning experience through listening to interest-based podcasts.	- Create their own podcasts to practice language skills - Practice public speaking and presentation skills through recorded audio formats. - Improve team work skills through engaging them in collaborative projects.
By teachers	- Share instructional podcasts with students to supplement classroom instruction. - Provide targeted podcast content to support oral skills practice. - support flipped classroom models.	- Record lectures or what is known as “course casting” for student to access anytime. - Create educational content for language learning. - Convert traditional text-books into podcasts to boost learners’ motivation to study.

No one can deny that podcasts are very efficient when it comes to delivering educational content. Countries all around the world have started to embrace this modern form of knowledge sharing. For instance, the UK educational system has adopted this tool in its framework and offer accessibility to a wide range of educational content through establishing podcast libraries at University of Oxford and London School of Economics (Mehboob *et al*, 2024) .However, its application in EFL context can be limited due to certain factors extracted from the latest findings of Mehboob *et al*. (2024) and Abubakar *et al*. (2024) and Che (2024):

- Lack of teacher training when it comes to podcasts integration in EFL classrooms.
- Limited access to technology and internet.
- Shortage of relevant podcasts content that match the course objectives.
- Students absorb information differently based on their preferred learning styles so podcasts cannot be efficient for all students.
- Engagement issues due to difficulties in understanding podcasts content, accents and advanced vocabulary which often lead to decrease motivation to study.
- Podcasts length and classroom time constraints.

1.4.3. Impact of Podcasts on English Oral Proficiency

Researchers dealt with the use of podcasts in EFL field have demonstrated its effectiveness in enhancing oral proficiency among learners. Based on the principles of Krashen Input Hypothesis, this tool is able to improve not just auditory comprehension abilities but also spoken proficiency. Similarly, Miller (2013) stated that listening to podcasts provides learners with authentic input while the output would be reached only through creating them.

Exposing learners to different podcasts forms can expand all critical aspects of oral proficiency. Accordingly, Hasan and Hoon (2013) investigated this through analysing various related articles to finally determine that they contribute to the development of:

- **Fluency:** learners who engage with podcasts whether actively or just passively demonstrate fewer pauses and improved smoother and more coherent speech, as they provoke them to think quickly and structure their sentences properly.
- **Pronunciation:** through regular listening to native speakers, learners are able to mimic their accent and to know how to pronounce words with correct intonation and stress patterns which lead to development in pronunciation.

- **Vocabulary:** students get acquainted with the new vocabulary every time they listen to a new podcast episode.
- **Grammar:** Extensive listening to educational podcasts help learners make fewer grammar mistakes because they unconsciously absorb correct verb tenses and ways to structure a sentence.

(Tümen Akyildiz, 2024; Al-Harbi, 2019; Hasan and Hoon, 2013)

1.5. Artificial Intelligence (AI) in EFL Podcasts Production

The 21st century has witnessed the emergence of Artificial intelligence as a transformative force that has reshaped the modern world. This phenomenal technology is rapidly revolutionizing the way people live and work. Through simplifying daily tasks and enhancing human interactions, AI becomes a lifestyle trend embraced by today's generation. The multi-purpose nature of this tool has facilitated its integration into educational contexts which has led to modernize teaching-learning process across various disciplines. For instance, in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, this invention seems to be beneficial in podcasts production. Yet, setting what it entails and how it contributes to EFL podcasts activities is crucial.

1.5.1. AI Defined

The story started with “can machines think?” an inquiry raised by Alan Turing in 1950 had the power to propel humanity towards establishing theoretical frameworks to define Artificial Intelligence (Zitouni, 2022). In order to address the philosophical inquiry, Alan Turing (1950) proposed the turing test approach. The latter, was primarily designed to figure out whether a machine is able to exhibit human-like intelligence or not. From this, AI refers to a set of computer systems used to perform tasks that require human intelligence (Zitouni, 2022). Similarly, Russell and Norvig (2009) stated that AI is accomplished by studying how human minds work, including, reasoning, problem-solving, perception, and language learning.

The term Artificial Intelligence was officially introduced at Dartmouth College in 1956, at a conference that gathered researchers from diverse fields to study the potential of using computers to simulate human intelligence (Triantafyllou, 2024). Accordingly, John McCarthy, who is credited as the father of AI, defined it as “The science and engineering of making intelligent machines”, which means that AI goes beyond theory to actual application of systems and software that can demonstrate intelligence because it is simply “a science” (Bouzid, 2023).

Nowadays, AI becomes more significant in various disciplines which led to the development of many sub-technologies (see **Figure 1.1**). These subsets contribute to form the basis of AI. Machine Learning (ML) is branch of AI that emphasises making predictions with computers (Tan, 2022). It is based on the development of algorithms and statistical models that enable machines to carry out different tasks by leveraging on data to make decisions (Batta, 2024). Here, it can be said that ML work relies on acquiring knowledge from experiences without any instructions. In this vein, a prior knowledge of Deep Learning (DL) is a key element before proceeding to the next sub-field. It is known as part of a larger family of ML that is concerned with learning abstractions from raw data using neural networks; however, this process is sophisticated because data is processed through multiple layers made up of nonlinear units and these units are used to extract and manipulate patterns into meaningful representations (images, texts, sounds, etc.) where each layer output is considered as the next one input (Polamuri *et al.*, 2022).

Second, NLP which stands for Natural Language Processing combines linguistics with Artificial Intelligence. A computer requires clear understanding of human language; as a result, it relies on NLP to learn, analyse and manipulate that language. This subset of AI reflects the ability of that machine to interpret the programming language used for everyday applications (Jayaprada, 2024). Additionally, Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI) encompasses various tools that are able to produce novel and fresh content in different formats, for instance, texts, audios, videos and pictures (Noroozi *et al.*, 2024). It refers to a set of

algorithms used to create new data that replicates similar patterns from the provided datasets (Yuk & Wenjie, 2023, as cited in Chadli, 2024). Also, it resembles human-like creativity as it is based on users' diverse prompts. Gen AI is the recent trend in this age of Artificial intelligence and proves its usefulness in a short amount of time. The outputs of this tool have exceeded expectations and continue to be recognized as a success in various disciplines. Then, it has evolved to the level of generating educational content. Huang (2021) mentioned that Gen AI is efficient in terms of enhancing the learners' learning experience by designing material that fits their needs and current performance (as cited in Noroozi, *et al.*, 2024). As noted above, Gen AI includes different useful tools but the famous one among them is "Chat Generative Pre-trained Transformer (ChatGPT)" which has been a game-changing phenomenon since November 2022 and was appreciated by many people, especially students (Altıntaş, 2024). It is followed by Claude and Monica as a Large Language Models (LLMs) that offers more structured help to its users so they are simply academic-friendly tools. Accordingly, Gen AI is a crucial variable in the current study. To conclude, there many others subsets but the previously are the frequently mentioned ones

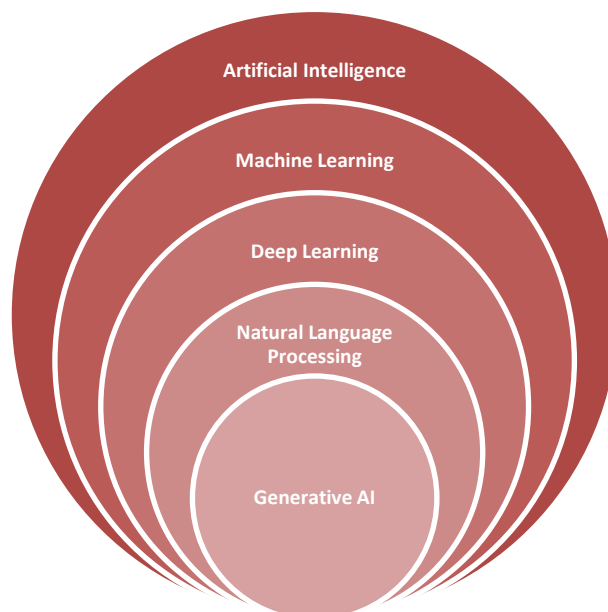


Figure 1.1: *AI-related Technologies*

Note. **Figure 1.1** is the researcher's own visualization of the AI sub-technologies discussed above.

1.5.2. AI Applications in EFL Podcasts Production

As mentioned before, podcasts creation has become a popular activity in EFL classrooms. This creative activity allows learners to produce what is known as “intelligible output” that refers to the ability of achieving a clear spoken language (Swain, 1985, as cited in Altıntaş, 2024). Produced podcasts are considered as a specialization within content creation industry. Nowadays, this industry has revolutionized the world and the credit for this goes to Generation Z (GEN Z) who reshaped the way content is created with their own mind-sets. Yet, this process is vivid and requires continuous renewal to keep up with the society needs. Lately, Gen AI gained prominence in this industry, particularly in podcasting. To exemplify Podcastle and Beyondwords have started incorporating AI into podcast production. (Ku *et al.*, 2024). Although it is a novel field, it has the ability to transform educational content to be more efficient (Do *et al.*, 2024). Recently, studies are interested in exploring how AI technologies contribute to this. For instance, Altıntaş (2024) observed that involving Gen AI in EFL podcast projects is beneficial as it helps to save time and energy. Similarly, Sheikh *et al.* (2025) points out that “The use of generative AI in educational podcast production is changing the game...making it easier, faster, and more intuitive to create meaningful learning content”.

According to them, before the appearance of AI the process of producing a single high-quality podcast requires the involvement of writers, narrators and editors; and as a result, the creation can take a significant amount of time but the issue can be solved with AI assistance. First, it helps in content generation by offering structured scripts or just an outline to follow depending on the user’s needs. This stage is often characterized by the use of models like ChatGPT and Monica. The second one is audio generation that lies on text-to-speech technologies (TTS) to convert the provided scripts into human-like narration with high-quality sounds and background music. This is not only in favour of learners but also educators can benefit from it. For instance, they can convert the traditional textbooks into

generated podcasts and modify them to suit learners' needs and wants (Do *et al.*, 2024).

Third, Sheikh *et al.* (2025) also mentioned that visual content is important to introduce each podcast episode. This step lies on creating eye-catching cover images with the use of AI to reinforce the concept of the tackled episode. Four, NLP technologies contribute to make podcasts more accessible by creating relevant summaries and episode titles, which is commonly introduced as “Metadata Stage”. Finally, AI is trained to ensure the quality of the final work through checking for errors in pronunciation, content, and audio quality and detecting if visuals are related to the content or not. Therefore, users should be aware that AI can assist EFL podcasts but its application revealed several ethical issues concerning authorship and ownership, especially when it comes to sensitive field like education (Baskara *et al.*, 2024).

The following **Figure 1.2** is the researcher's own representation of the key stages discussed above by Sheikh *et al.* (2025):

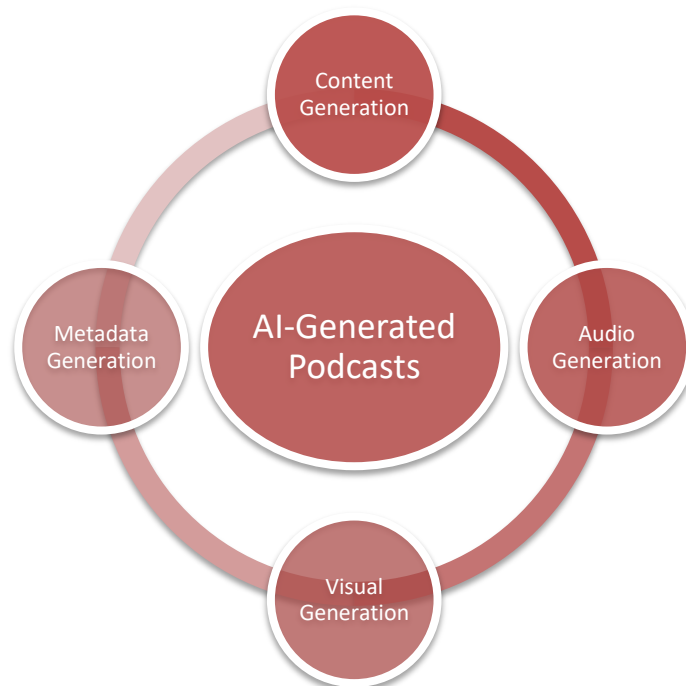


Figure 1.2: Artificial Intelligence (AI) Applications in Podcast Production

1.6. AI-Generated Podcasts Impact on Students Engagement and Oral Development

Notably, both podcasts and AI technologies have proven their effectiveness in educational context separately. On one hand, traditional podcasts are empirically validated to enhance students' engagement and motivation to study as well as to target their aural-oral skills (Gagoshidze & Tavkhelidze, 2024; Indriana & Saori, 2024). Similarly, Duarte *et al.*, (2023) and many other researchers agreed that AI is increasingly used to help personalize learners' learning experience. However, there is a gap when it comes to the impact of these generated podcasts on students. Do *et al.* (2024) conducted an exploratory experimental study with 180 US College students to measure the impact of AI-generated podcasts that are primarily designed to match learners' profiles on learning outcomes and engagement specifically. The findings suggest that students engaged with this podcast format more than reading a basic textbook. Here, it can be said that learners benefit from content that is both engaging and easy to follow.

In the same line of thoughts, Gen AI has the ability to polish EFL learners' creativity and language production for their podcasts which in turn increased their confidence (Baskara *et al.*, 2024). Furthermore, a Turkish investigation entitled "Effectiveness of the Use of Podcasts Made with Artificial Intelligence in EFL for Primary School Students" aimed to overcome pupils' anxiety to speak through creating curriculum-aligned audio content that pupils could access outside the classroom and were accompanied with worksheets and follow-up tasks. Consequently, Altıntaş (2024) noticed that young learners' engagement increased and their anxiety to speak started to disappear. One more thing, they wanted to continue using podcasts in the future and even creating their own projects to practice their oral skills. According to these studies, AI produced podcasts are valued in EFL instruction to aid both educators and learners. They offer individualized learning experience to attract learners' attention, regardless their levels and backgrounds. Hence, there is a need for further research to ensure AI

effectiveness in tailoring in organizing podcast content and how students engage with it (Sheikh *et al.*, 2025).

1.7. ICTs in the Algerian Higher Education

The acronym ICT stands for Information and Communication Technology. The term itself was coined in the late 20th century as an evolution of Information Technology (IT) when “E-mail” became mainstream and accessible to the population. It is an umbrella term that covers a wide range of applications, devices, and platforms that can help people. According to Blurton (1999), it is “a diverse set of technological tools and resources used to communicate and to create, disseminate, store, and manage information” (as cited in Bizi & Shittu, 2014). In particular, ICT is tool used to communicate and share knowledge with others (Postholm, 2006, as cited in Oussou, 2020). Information technologies consist of digital and interactive resources that can be used to increase human interactions which are well-suited for numerous purposes (Naciri, 2019).

In recent years, the world witnessed increased interest towards the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in various domains, including education. The latter, has revolutionized the teaching-learning process as it provides learners with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in the modern world. Tools like e-learning, e-communication and e-Recordkeeping has transformed the way students learn and teachers teach contributing to more efficient and innovative learning environment (Naciri, 2019). Furthermore, Naciri claimed that ICT is catalysts for change as it use improves content delivery, access to data and students’ memory retention, motivation to study and preparedness for employment. Numerous studies highlighted the importance of integrating ICTs in teaching-learning in order to offer:

More opportunities for communication between peer learners: they can exchange information in real time, they can participate in blog discussions, work in teams on different projects, exchange emails, search for information, etc. By using the authentic material

provided by the Internet, we will have a better insight into the culture of the country and people whose language we study. (Padurean & Margan, 2009, p. 98)

The 21st century is regarded as information age where novel tech-tools are appreciated in all domains. Nations worldwide are competing to integrate latest ICTs into educational framework. In the Algerian context, Ben Hammadi (2016) unveiled that the government permitted the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications (MPITC) to manage the national ICT policy in the educational field (as cited in Meghnine, 2023). Back to 2015, the ICT development in Algeria ranked three in the Maghreb countries and 113 in the world (ITU statistics, 2015). The statistics reported that major investments are required to bridge the technological gap with neighbouring countries. The government dedicated a portion of three billion dinar in 2002 to integrate ICTs within the educational system. It can be said that the country moved from an industrial age to more a networking one. However, the Algerian stakeholders of education still worry about the position of technology use, especially in higher education (Ben Saad Hadj & Neggaz, 2019).

From 2002, Algeria adopted the LMD (Licence-Master-Doctorate) system. This change happened because of globalization and resulted in a huge digital transformation. According to Ameer *et al.* (2024), The Ministry of Higher Education designed a strategy to elevate the system to meet the current international standards. The strategy was formulated to enhance the Algerian ICT framework where UNISECO supported proper integration initiatives and Japan contributed \$750,000 for training teacher programs to use these facilities (Bensafa, 2015). Among the adopted initiatives Hamdy (2007) pointed the following:

- Facilitate the development of e-learning resources and sharing them with institutions.
- Promote both distance and virtual learning programs.
- Promote public-private partnerships and establish national ICT centre of excellence.

- Build awareness of the opportunities offered by ICT as a pedagogical aid.

This transformation marked a major shift in the post COVID-19 pandemic where all Algerian universities established e-learning systems. Therefore, the adoption still lacks enough support due to the Algerian infrastructure and the need for professional development (Ameur *et al.*, 2024). If the matter were limited to merely providing financial support in order to expand digital accesses to different resources may make the process easier; but lack of teachers training remained a real issue. A previous literature done by Ladaci (2017) aimed to explore the status of ICTs integration in EFL classrooms and the challenges faced by teachers when using them. The finding highlighted that technology is used ineffectively in classroom instruction due to numerous difficulties, including lack of training, insufficient infrastructure, and resistance to change by old teachers who consider these facilitates as burdensome and a threat to their classroom management.

Despite the challenges impeded the Algerian teachers from integrating ICTs into their teaching practices, the majority of them did not receive enough training. It is well-known that providing educators with both technical and pedagogical support is a priority to renewal the educational field (Lebrun, 2004 as cited in Ben Saad Hadj & Neggaz, 2019). However, the ICT training programme in Algeria was limited to basic ICT knowledge such as Windows-based software and Web browsing (Bensafa, 2015). Consequently, some teachers revert to traditional methods and the others adopt an eclectic approach to achieve diversity and balance as well as overcome the technical barriers. All in all, the country is working on enhancing the status of ICT in this field through introducing different projects, for instance, it facilitate access to the National System of Documentation Online (NSDO) and it connected the majority of universities with the internet and lately it launched virtual exchange projects by East Carolina University (ECU) (Meghnine, 2023). This indicates the good intentions of Algeria to keep up with modernization. Yet, the stakeholders need to put extra efforts to offer adequate ICT programmes

that cover complex skills like conducting online classes, creating interactive websites and using novel tools as podcasts and AI pedagogically.

1.8. Conclusion

To conclude, chapter one has covered the theoretical framework of the current study. It has begun with an overview on oral proficiency and investigating some sub-related titles. Due to the fact that large amount of research works has acknowledged the importance of oral proficiency in EFL education, the chapter has highlighted first the correlation between aural-oral skills since it is very important. Then, it has moved to introduce podcasts as one of the factors that can improve English oral proficiency. After that, the researcher discovered how AI assists podcast production and how it impacts students' engagement and oral development. Finally, a respectful section has been dedicated to present the status of Algerian ICT in general. Here, it can be said that technology is becoming more widespread and revolutionized the instructional process. Podcasts and Artificial intelligence are a good combination to innovate teaching a foreign language since they have shown good outcomes at the students' speaking proficiency level.

CHAPTER TWO: Research Methodology, Data Analysis and Discussion

2.1. Introduction

After tackling the theoretical background in the previous chapter, this chapter is dedicated to delve deeper into the methodological framework of the study. It highlights the main practical steps followed by the researcher to gain a thorough understanding of the objectives of this study, which focused on exploring the effectiveness of podcasts in enhancing learners' oral proficiency and deriving insights into the impact of generative AI on podcasts production among teachers and students in the Department of English at the University of Tlemcen. Therefore, the current chapter begins with outlining the research design and the methodology applied. It also includes a description of the sample population, the research instruments for data collection in addition to the study proper. Furthermore, the data obtained through interviews and questionnaires will be analysed using qualitative and quantitative methods. Once the analysis is complete, the findings will be discussed in relation to the three research questions to draw meaningful conclusions. At the end, this chapter concludes by mentioning key limitations encountered throughout the research process and finally providing a set of recommendations to inform future investigations regarding this topic.

2.2. Research Design

Research design is a systematic framework that guides the researcher to properly conduct any research project. It encompasses set of procedures and plans from broad theoretical assumptions to more precise data collection and analysis methods (Creswell, 2009). It serves as the blueprint that ensures the study has effectively addressed its core questions (Bhattacharjee, 2012). In this vein, there are several research designs, including case research.

While conducting this research, an exploratory case study has been adopted to accomplish the defined objectives focusing on First-year English students at Tlemcen University. The goal behind this method is to gain nuanced insights into the tackled subject as it allows researchers to break down complex phenomena into

manageable items. To be more precise, a case study is an in-depth investigation of an individual, group or events within its real life context (Heale & Twycross, 2018).

Moreover, the researcher followed a mixed-method approach to construct the major strengths of this piece of work. Such an approach involves collecting both qualitative and quantitative data. In this case, two research instruments were used to provide valid and reliable results that can represent the effectiveness of podcasts on EFL students' oral proficiency and the impact of AI in this process. The researcher started with collecting data through carrying out an interview then moved to a questionnaire. This method is commonly known as "Exploratory Sequential Mixed Approach" since the qualitative method was followed by a quantitative one (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

2.3. Sample Population

In any undertaken research, the process of selecting representative segments from an entire population, called sampling (Ajithakumari, 2024). The choice of an appropriate sampling method is equally vital in ensuring the research quality as choosing suitable methodology and tools (Morrison, 1993, as cited in Cohen *et al.*, 2007). In fact, the sampling paradigm can directly impact the validity of the inferences drawn from the data. Kumar (2011) mentioned different types of sampling paradigms, including probability sample design, non-probability sample design and mixed sample design. Unlike the other types, in a non-probability sampling the likelihood of inclusion for each member of the wider population is unknown. It involves selecting participants based on convenience and judgment rather than random selection which are suitable for the researchers who are constrained by limited time, budgets and workload (Ajithakumari, 2024). Accordingly, in this study the researcher opted to use a non-probability purposive sampling.

2.3.1. Teachers' Profile

A sample of six (06) Comprehension and Oral Expression (COE) teachers at the English Department of Tlemcen University were the main participants in this

study. They were a mixed gender group, with one male and five females each having their respective qualifications and teaching various subjects along with the oral module. These participants were selected purposively to enrich and validate this piece of work since podcasts are often used in Oral classes as they primarily address the students' oral skills. Also, these teachers have an experience in teaching such module and are familiar with the students' needs and the challenges they encounter in enhancing certain skills.

The following table displays the current levels assigned to each participant concerning the Oral classes.

Table 2.1: *Oral Module Teaching Levels per Teacher*

Teachers	Current Teaching levels
T1, T3, T5	1 st year
T1, T2	2 nd year
T4, T6	3 rd year

2.3.2. Students' Profile

The researcher has invited First-year students in the Department of English at Tlemcen University for the academic year 2024-2025 to contribute in this study. The sample is composed of ninety (90) students; males and females who voluntarily participated in the study by providing valuable answers to the provided online form. This population was chosen because at this level students face challenges in enhancing the needed communication skills. Also, they are more likely to feel lost and often struggle to adapt to the field especially those coming from a scientific stream. Yet, it is important to explore the impact of integrating these novel ICTs in classroom practices to treat this issue.

2.4. Research Instruments

Research instruments are the backbone of any conducted study. There are several tools that can drive the data collection phase; indeed, it is difficult to figure out which one to use, as no single method is superior (Monday, 2020). The present

research work employed two different instruments: an interview and a questionnaire, in which the researcher can collect both qualitative and quantitative data. This choice is primarily intended to produce a more valid and reliable work. Moreover, this mixed-methods technique is commonly introduced as “Triangulation” (Messaoudi, 2017). In research methodology, triangulation is used to minimize the weaknesses of one research method by linking it to another one, to provide a thorough understanding of the phenomenon under study and to enhance its rigour (Messaoudi & Sakale, 2023). In pursuit of this, the application of triangulation in this study followed the lead of the model illustrated in (Messaoudi, 2017).

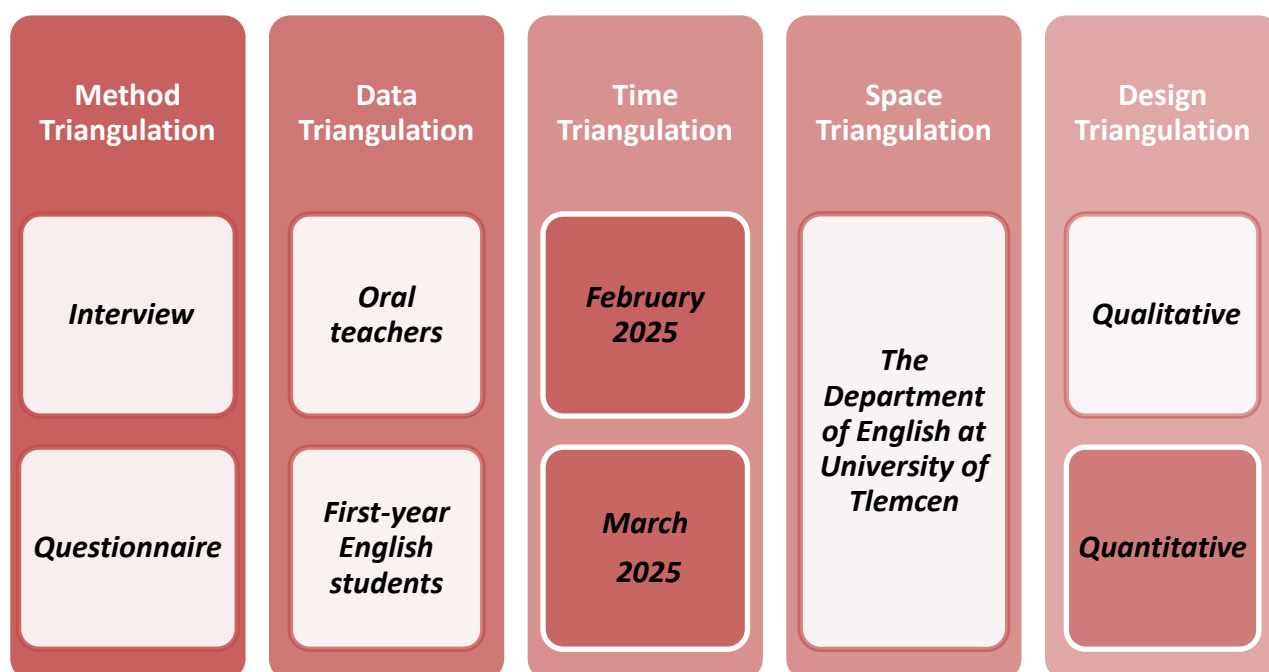


Figure 2.1: *Triangulations Followed in the Current Study (adapted from Messaoudi, 2017).*

2.4.1. Teachers' Interview

The interview is a flexible tool for data collection, particularly in qualitative research such as exploratory and descriptive studies. It is a dialogue used to collect information through different forms of interaction with people. For Cohen *et al.* (2007), it is not solely an instrument used to gather data; it is a part of life itself

because it is shaped through human interactions. According to Monday (2020), interviews are categorized into distinct forms: semi-structured, unstructured and structured interview. In the present investigation, the researcher used a predetermined structured interview form, in which all participants were asked the same set of questions in a fixed order with the intention of maintaining consistency across interviews. It was developed based on the core questions that guided this study, which aimed to collect the teachers' attitudes, experiences and perceptions regarding podcasts as a learning alternative, their learners' requirements to develop oral proficiency and the use of AI technologies. For this sake, the investigator administered seven (07) questions, with a set of followed-up questions in the 3rd one depending on the participants' response. (See **Appendix A**)

For the purpose of ensuring transparency and clarity, the table below presents the conducted interviews setting and format:

Table 2.2: *Details of the Conducted Interviews*

Interviews	Setting			Format
1	10-02-2025	11:30 am	Onsite	Handwritten
2	12-02-2025	09:00 am	Onsite	Recorded
3	12-02-2025	09:30 am	Onsite	Recorded
4	12-02-2025	11:30 am	Onsite	Recorded
5	21-02-2025	06:00 pm	Online	Recorded
6	26-02-2025	11:30 am	Onsite	Recorded

2.4.2. Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire is a widely used tool for data collection. It serves as a structured tool that can cover any research topic. Bhandari (2023) defines it as a set of questions used to provide the researcher with numerical and non-numerical data related to the respondents' different experiences and opinions about a specific area of study. These set of questions can reach a large number of people without the presence of the researcher. Therefore, it is less expensive and offers anonymity

which can lead to obtain more honest responses (Kumar, 2011). The researcher administered an online questionnaire to First-year English students at Tlemcen University via Email. It consisted of sixteen (16) questions including close-ended, multiple choice and open-ended questions, carefully designed to match learners' level (see **Appendix B**). The selection of an online form aimed to minimize time and financial costs as it allowed participants to answer the questions at their convenience.

2.5. Study Proper

This investigation went through two main phases. The first phase, spanning between November 2024 and February 2025, was primarily dedicated to establishing the foundation of this work. During this period, the researcher spent an extensive amount of time in exploring various topics related to the impact of novelty in the domain of language education. This progress took a decisive shift when the researcher engaged in a casual conversation with a professor from the English Department. The teacher's insights steered the research focus toward ICTs. Later on, the researcher narrowed the study scope to podcasts. Although podcasts have been known for years ago, they become popular among youngsters in the Algerian society during the Covid-19 pandemic. Notably, this evolution reflects a broader trend of youth-driven media where many podcasting channels were created and hosted by young Algerians to treat relevant issues and to deal with numerous subjects. The nature of this tool has driven the researcher to explore its effectiveness for educational purposes, particularly in the development of EFL students' oral proficiency. This study also sought to examine the impact of AI on EFL podcasts creation and how it facilitates the process. Following the conceptualization of the topic and the settlement of the research design, the researcher moved directly to the second phase.

The teachers' interview was launched on February 10th, 2025. This phase began after sending a group email invitation for interviews to five (05) oral teachers. Thus, only three (03) teachers accepted the invitation which prompted to send additional calls to several teachers in order to reach the required number. In

this way, the researcher was able to reach a sample of six (06) Oral Expression teachers to contribute to the current study. Meanwhile, conducting the interviews and relying on the collected preliminary data, the investigator started to prepare the students' questionnaire. By February 22nd, the questionnaire draft was ready; however, the distribution was challenging due to post-exams chaos. The second semester schedule was not revealed yet; and as a result, there were many absences among students. Also, students do not really know each other which led the researcher to visit the Department multiple times just to collect the eight (08) delegates' contacts. Finally, the online form link was sent to First-year English students with a polite message. Accordingly, it can be said that the students' questionnaire was officially administered on March the 1st.

2.6. Data Analysis

Data analysis refers to the process of transforming the raw data into understandable facts and ideas through breaking down complex elements and rearranging them in way that help with the interpretation (Dibekulu, 2020). This section is concerned with the analysis of the data collected from the triangulation method used in the present study. Further, In order to draw meaningful conclusions the data are analysed through using a qualitative analysis on the teachers' interview and a descriptive analysis on students' questionnaire.

2.6.1. Teachers' Interview Analysis

Question 1: *Teaching experience and digital tools integration*

The question was administered to investigate whether teachers with diverse experiences use technology in teaching the module of Oral Expression. The table below displays the collected data concerning this question:

Table 2.3: *Teachers Experience and TECH Integration Regarding Oral Module*

Teacher's Reference	Years of Experience	Digital Tools Integration
T1	10	Sometimes
T2	04	Yes
T3	17	Yes
T4	01	Sometimes
T5	10	Yes
T6	05	No

The table 2.3 above indicates that most of EFL teachers in the University of Tlemcen have substantial teaching experience in instructing the COE sessions. Those teachers not only indicated their years of experience but also shared with the researcher their teaching journey in-depth. They described their experience with such module as both fulfilling and challenging journey. In light of the significance of oral skills in developing the overall language proficiency, it was stated that it is a must to be careful in the way of presenting this subject. Educators often struggle and put extra efforts in designing a syllabus that matches learners needs and addresses both speaking and listening skills. For instance, teacher 1 said that *“years ago this module was based on solely speaking but now it relies on both listening and speaking which makes it more difficult to deliver”*. The fluid nature of this course enables teachers to be eclectic in terms of using different teaching methods and techniques to deliver knowledge. Among the common used activities in the classroom setting according to the six participants are: role plays, storytelling and presentations. All these attempts are for the sake of engaging EFL students into the learning process through targeting their interests, as an example, teacher 2 summarised her experience by saying: *“it a very nice course because you can share different experiences with your students and know their interests and sometimes it gets to be much personal because we talk about themes that are social and more human so the pedagogy turns to be humanised.”*

Furthermore, the interviewees show varying levels of technology integration in their teaching practices. Three instructors integrated ICTs in their classroom practices regularly such as YouTube videos, recordings, podcasts and mobile applications for quizzes. Two other teachers mentioned that their use of digital alternatives is limited because they were following the instructional syllabus; therefore, they integrated them only when there was a need. On the other hand, teacher 6 reported *“no, I don’t use digital tools in my pedagogy but my students do while presenting.”*

Question 2: *Perceptions towards podcasts in enhancing English oral proficiency*

The second question aimed to collect the EFL teachers’ perceptions regarding the use of podcasts in developing learners’ English oral proficiency. According to the provided answers, all the participants have a positive attitude towards this tool. This positive impression came as a result of observing how this generation of learners is enthusiastic about listening to podcasts. In this vein, teacher 3 commented as follow: *“nowadays we notice that what attracts most of students is podcasts because they are really what speak to them”*. Teacher 2 also demonstrated a favourable response by describing podcasts as an efficient method to achieve an *“exclusive course where students learn to read, listen, speak and write”*. Accordingly, learners can practice both productive and receptive skills simultaneously and perform better through relying on podcasts for learning, especially those taken *“from native speakers”*. Moreover, the researcher has noticed a shared perspective that emphasises the importance of adapting the teaching practices to the current facilities that are giving by technology. This idea was further explained by teacher 6 when he mentioned that podcasts are an effective way to help students and described it *“like a gift to today’s teachers, I mean novice teachers who are very knowledgeable about this kind of technological tools.”*

Question 3: *Frequency of using podcasts in COE classrooms*

As for this question, it covered various items based on the respondents’ answers, including frequency of using podcasts, purpose, challenges and future

prospects. Unfortunately, among all the interviewees only one teacher used this tool. The teacher besides presenting podcasts in the classroom, she gave her students an assignment where they were requested to generate their own podcasts. The purpose was mainly to *“enable students to be creative, to enhance their problem solving....and to make them reflective and experiencing new way of learning instead of just sitting in the classroom following instructions”*. Consequently, the teacher had noticed good improvement in the students’ learning outcomes, including enhancements in oral and problem solving skills with a comment as *“they shared with me something that I could not see in class that is their ability to think of solving life issues through their own mind-sets”*. The difficulties encountered by both learners and teacher 2 were limited to technical issues, time constrained and podcast length. Since presenting a long podcast is somehow boring for students and challenging for the teacher to share it as a full version. Here, teacher 2 mentioned that *“time is not always good so I have to think of podcasts that they do not exceed 12 minutes of listening or I have to cut it at home and prepare my questions.”*

On the other hand, the remaining participants stated that they never used this tool in their pedagogy although they appreciated it in the realm of language learning. According to the obtained answers, there are several factors that prevented them from adopting podcasts in teaching Oral Module, involving technical issues such as: lack of internet connection in labs as cited by teacher 5. The same teacher said *“the content of podcasts often is not adapted to learners’ needs and language points that I am targeting”*. An additional concern, teacher 1 and 4 said that it is because of the syllabus and instructional program, as well as, lack of experience and knowledge regarding the effectiveness of this tool. While teacher 6 seemed to be more comfortable with traditional methods *“I’m still sticking to traditional ways of teaching oral production and I’m not seeing this opportunity of using this novice ways”*. Furthermore, the idea of integrating podcasts is welcomed by all the respondents if the difficulties are resolved. In regard to this, teacher 3 started examining the possibility of incorporating this tool through delivering an assignment about designing a podcast or a TED talk to her First-year students.

Finally, even though those teachers did not rely on podcasts for teaching, they always advise their students to do; for instance, teacher 5 said *“I always tell them to expose themselves to authentic materials like listening to podcasts as much as they can.”*

Question 4: *learners’ oral proficiency aspects targeted by podcasts*

This question was designed to figure out which aspects of oral proficiency are influenced by podcasts-based language learning. The six respondents agreed that podcasts could develop different levels of oral proficiency. Three teachers said all of them would be enhanced because the nature of podcasts will lead students to learn unconsciously. For teacher 2 who had an extensive experience with this tool in teaching oral skills, she believed that not only oral proficiency is targeted by podcasts. The teacher mentioned that *“creativity, critical thinking and problem solving. Also, the soft skills that students need for their career and life development process not only language”* is affected by the use of podcasts. Teacher 1 and 6 focused on fluency due to the fact that *“the more you listen to native speakers the better your fluency becomes”*. For teacher 5 who noticed that most of students using podcasts *“have rich vocabulary and make less mistakes in grammar.”*

Question 5: *AI impact on podcasts production*

The question was primary dedicated to know teachers familiarity with the use of AI in podcasts activities. Three participants did not answer this question as they said that they had no idea. While teacher 6 pointed out that *“if it can help why not I’m not against using AI by students to generate content or edit their work”*. Additionally, teacher 2 saw it beneficial for brainstorming ideas and organizing thoughts because *“some students feel shortage in creativity and ideas bringing”*. Along with this, AI might reduce the effort needed to produce a single podcast since it provides the users with clear outline, sample and various suggestions, to be more precise, teacher 3 said *“before the appearance of AI we had to search for samples to follow in different resourcesin order to deliver you final work you will generate a lot of drafts and you don't know if you are right or wrong”*.

Question 6: *AI-generated podcasts impact on students' oral skills, engagement and confidence*

In reference to this question, the researcher opted to gather the participants' thoughts concerning if students who created podcasts with the help of AI are actively engaged in the process and more confident to speak. Two teachers did not answer this question due to lack of information; for instance, teacher 4 said *"maybe I need a study to measure this"*. However, both of them see traditional podcasts activities effective in motivating and engaging learners. Moreover, three teachers agreed that it increases students' confidence and engage them positively only if they used it in a right way. That is to say, there are two categories of students: first those who fully rely on the AI; according to teacher 3, these students *"do not really trust themselves and for them AI does not do something wrong so they follow it blindly"* in this way their confidence is misplaced. Second, those who use AI for inspiration while being eclectic to choose and search more about what suits them the best, as teacher 2 stated *"we should not all the time rely on our heads, if I use AI I will get inspired and I will learn new things this is how learning happens"* in this way learners will engage deeply, in which they will be more confident concerning their work. In contrast, teacher 5 cited that AI is destructing students rather than benefit them.

Question 7: Recommending podcasts activities to other teachers

In regard to this, five participants supported the integration of podcast in EFL classrooms. For instance, teacher 3 said *"definitely yes, it would be my first and I'm pretty sure it won't be the last"*. While teacher 5 was against it and said *"we are not ready yet to use them as a classroom material"*. One common point is that those teachers believed podcasts can be used in all modules and across various disciplines due to their adaptable nature. Finally, this acceptance can be rooted to the reality that using technology is a must nowadays as teacher 2 argued *"we have to be updated and we have to leverage our course design with novelties and test all approaches to know what is best for our classes"*.

2.6.2. Students' Questionnaire Analysis

Question 01: *As an EFL student, how do you assess your English proficiency level?*

Table 2.4: *Students' English Proficiency Level*

Level	Participants	Percentage
Excellent	8	8.9%
Average	23	25.6%
Good	55	61.6%
Weak	4	4.4%
Total	90	100%

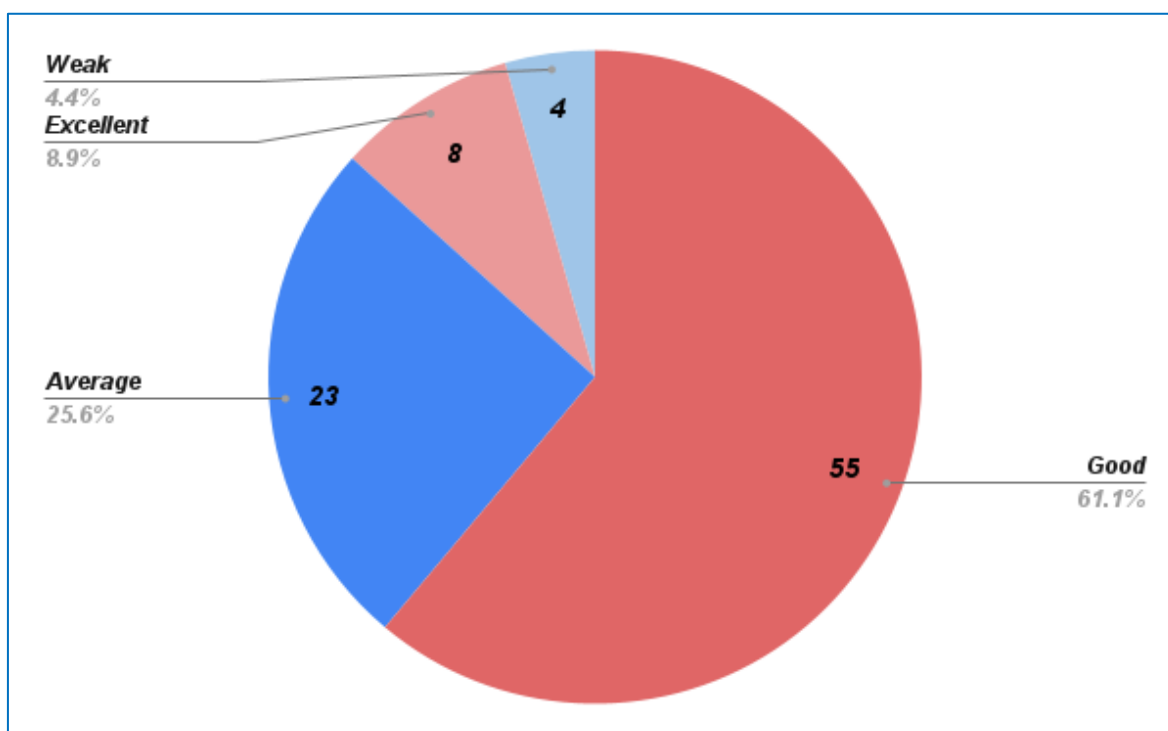


Figure 2.2: *Students' English Proficiency Level*

This question was primarily designed to measure First-year students' English proficiency level. The table 2.4 and the figure 2.2 above show that the majority of the participants (61.1%) have a good English proficiency level, while 25.6% have an average level. Additionally, 8.9% possess an excellent level and only 4.4% have a weak level among all the participants.

Question 02: *Among the four language skills, which skills you are interested to develop further?*

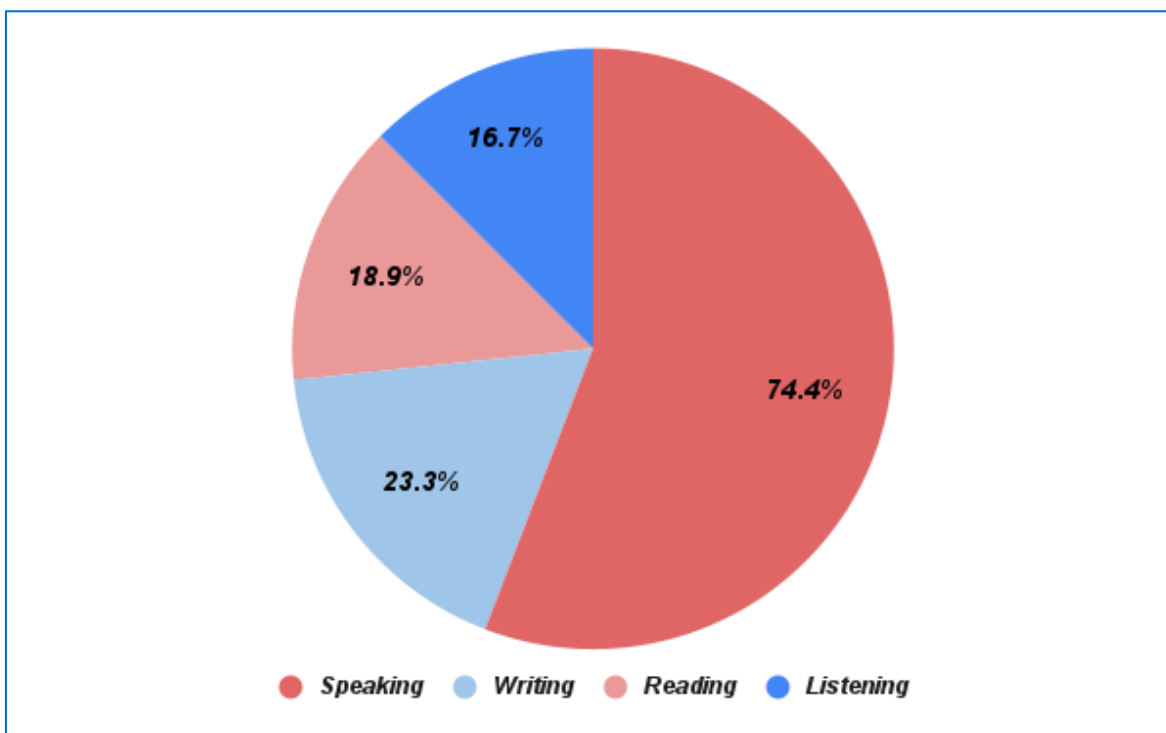


Figure 2.3: *The Skills Students Seeks to Develop Further*

The second question was administered to determine the students' preferences regarding the skills they want to develop more. The data revealed in the figure 2.3 above show that speaking is the most dominant skill for 74.4% of the participants. Writing and reading skills came next in close proportions with percentages of 23.3% and 18.9%. Listening, however, was the least prioritized skill (16.7%). Unfortunately, First-year students do not give the listening skill a great importance although it is very crucial to develop their overall language proficiency.

Question 03: *Nowadays, it is more crucial for EFL learners to develop their oral skills.*

Table 2.5: *Students' Perceptions towards the Importance of Oral Skills*

Options	Participants	Percentage
Agree	73	81.1%
Neutral	17	18.9%
Disagree	0	0%
Total	90	100%

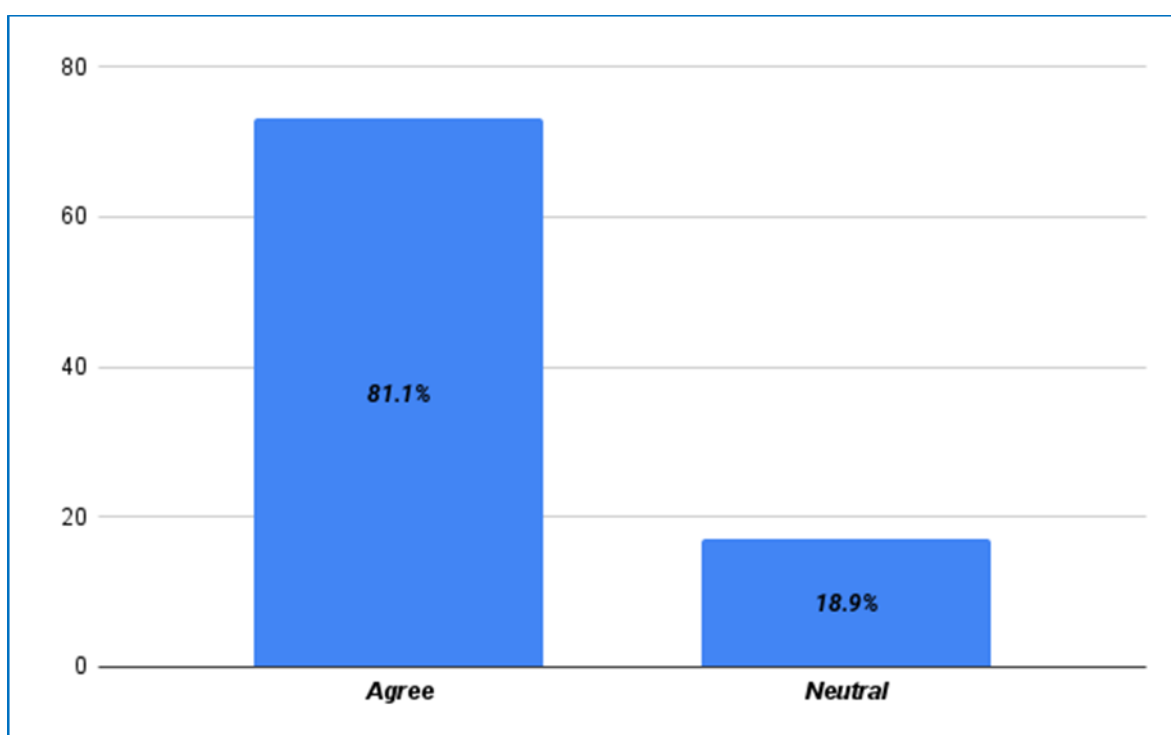


Figure 2.4: *Students' Perceptions towards the Importance of Oral Skills*

Nowadays, to be a good communicator is significant in facilitating both personal and professional life. Due to the importance of oral skills in fostering effective communication, the investigator attempted to see whether students shared the same view or not. As a result, the table 2.5 and the figure 2.4 above demonstrate a total absence of disagreement where the majority of the participants agreed (81.1%) with the statement and the rest 18.9% were neutral about it.

Question 04: Which specific tools or resources do you frequently use to develop your English oral skills?

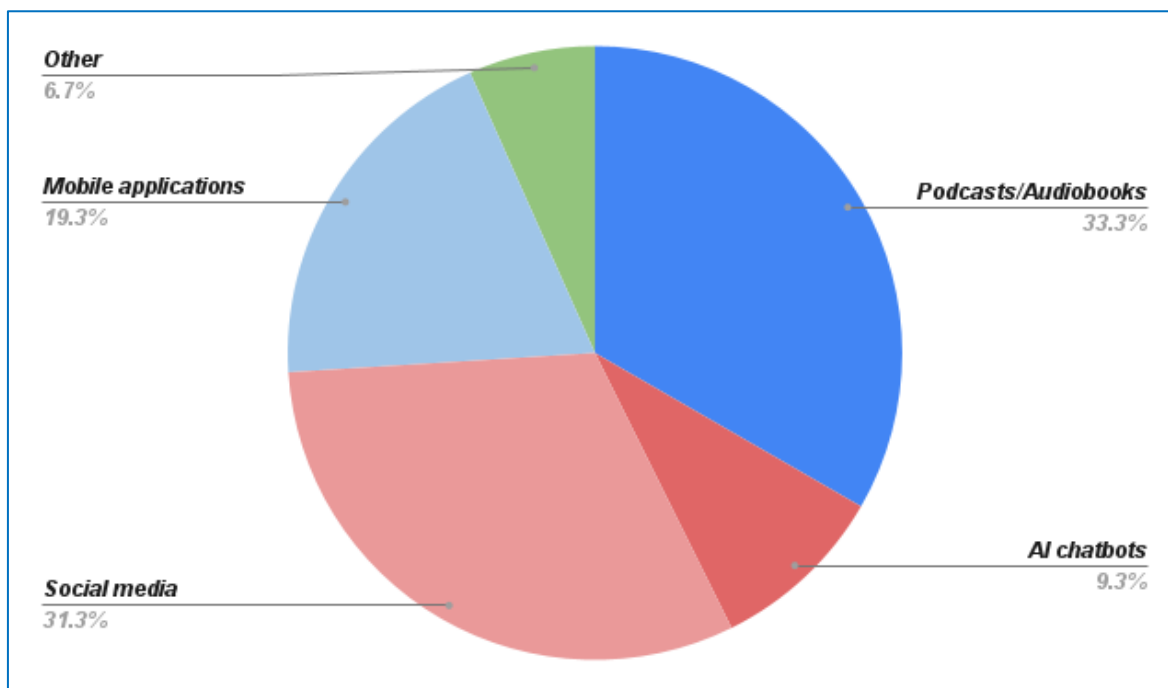


Figure 2.5: The Common Tools Used By EFL Students

The fourth question aimed to know the most commonly resources used by today's students to support their oral skills development. According to the figure 2.5 above, the participants tended to use podcasts and audiobooks the most (33.3%), followed directly by social media platforms (31.3%), in which they easily interact with people and engage with the language informally. Mobile applications such as "ELSA SPEAK" and "DUOLINGO" were cited by 19.3% of students and 9.3% went for AI chatbots. Furthermore, the students mentioned different resources they often use, such as: movies, music, YouTube videos and even gaming. Noticeably, these frequently cited tools offer an opportunity for students to acquire the language in an unstructured and entertaining environment.

Question 05: *Do you use podcasts in learning English?*

Table 2.6: *Podcasts Usage among Participants*

Options	Participants	Percentage
Yes	75	83.3%
No	15	16.7%
Total	90	100%

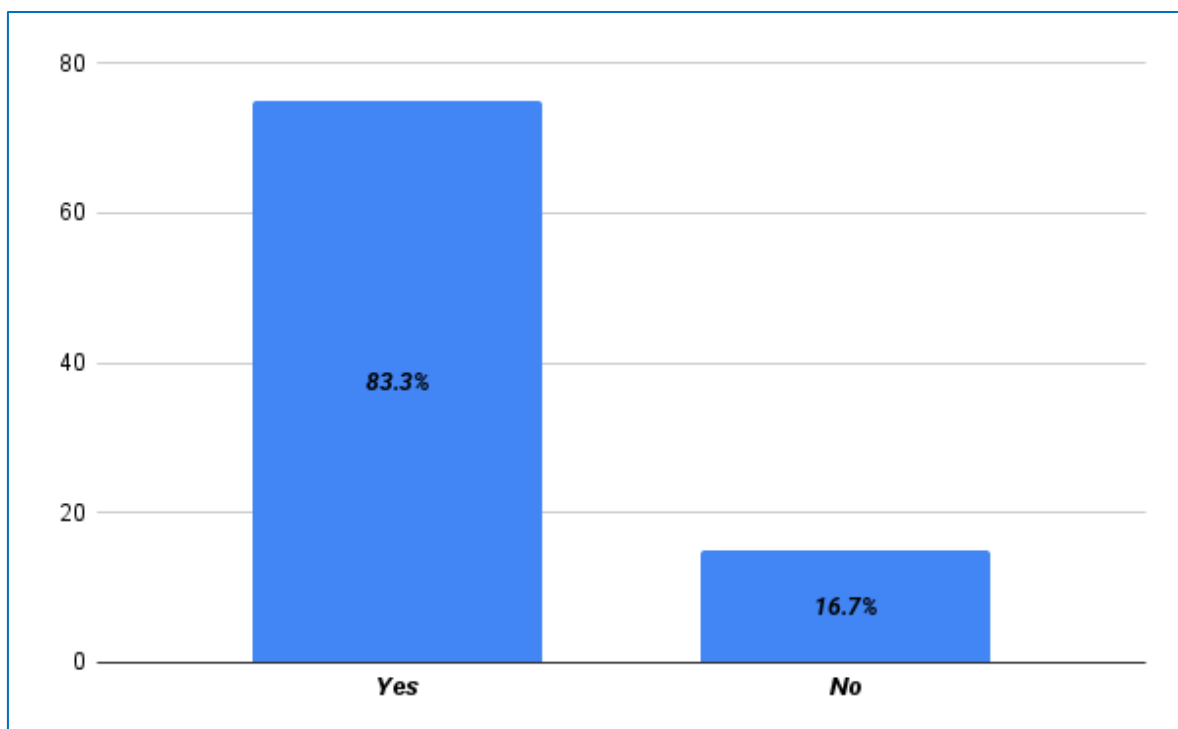


Figure 2.6: *Podcasts Usage among the Participants*

This is a simple closed-ended question with yes and no options used to find out if the participants use podcasts. The results in both table and figure 2.6 show that 83.3% of students used podcasts to enhance their learning experience and the remaining 16.3% did not use them.

If yes, how often do you use them?

This sub-question aimed to show the frequency of using podcasts among the students who answer with yes. The figure 2.7 below displays that more than half (58.2%) of the respondents said they sometimes listen to podcasts, and 19% said

they often do it, while 16.5% mentioned that they rarely use them. Unfortunately, there were only 6.3% who use them regularly.

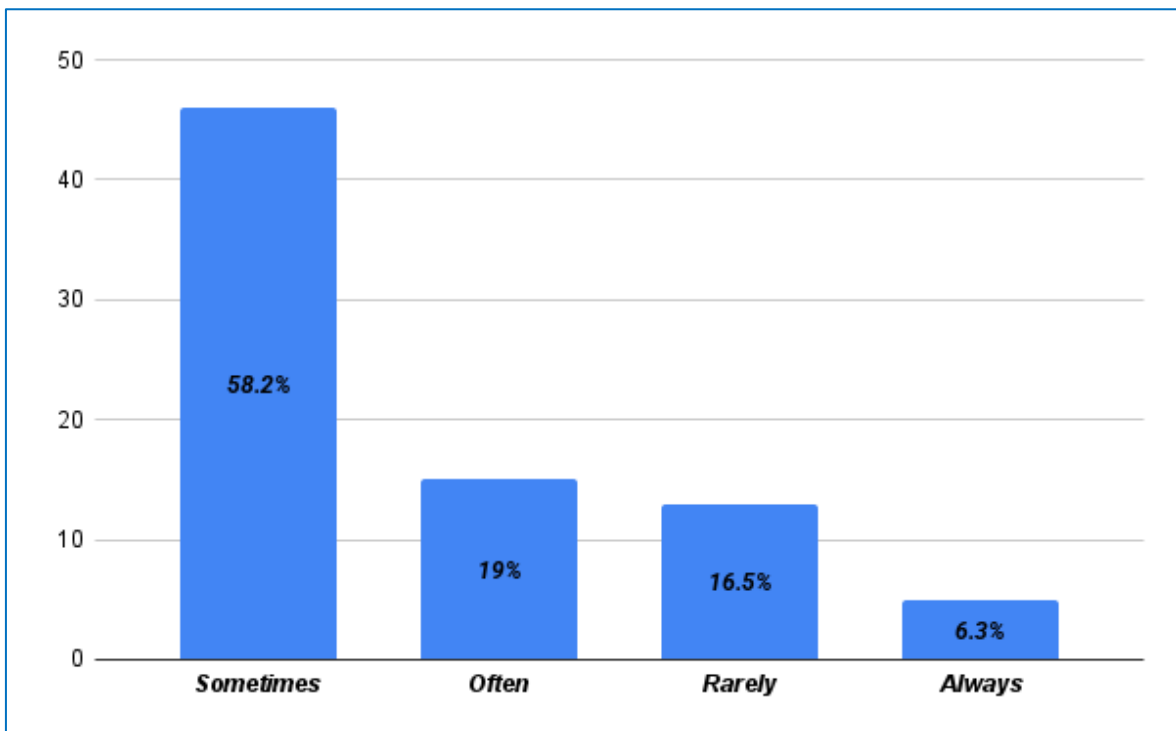


Figure 2.7: *Frequency of Using Podcasts*

Question 06: *What type of podcasts do you prefer?*

The sixth question is directed to provide insights into the students' preferences concerning the type of podcasts. The figure 2.8 shows that 38.6% of participants tuned to lifestyle content which is very common today. In fact, many youngsters are into this type because it inspires and helps them to build habits. The second type is storytelling with 29%, where students' are drawn into different world full of fictions and experiences. Further, 20% of them tended to educational podcasts in order to increase their knowledge and to be used to the structured form of the language. Surprisingly, Only 8.3% of the sample population were interested to Tech and Science content although technology is transforming and dominating the modern life. However, there were some students who mentioned that they do not care about the content has been treated because, anyway, they will gain an amount of knowledge in the end.

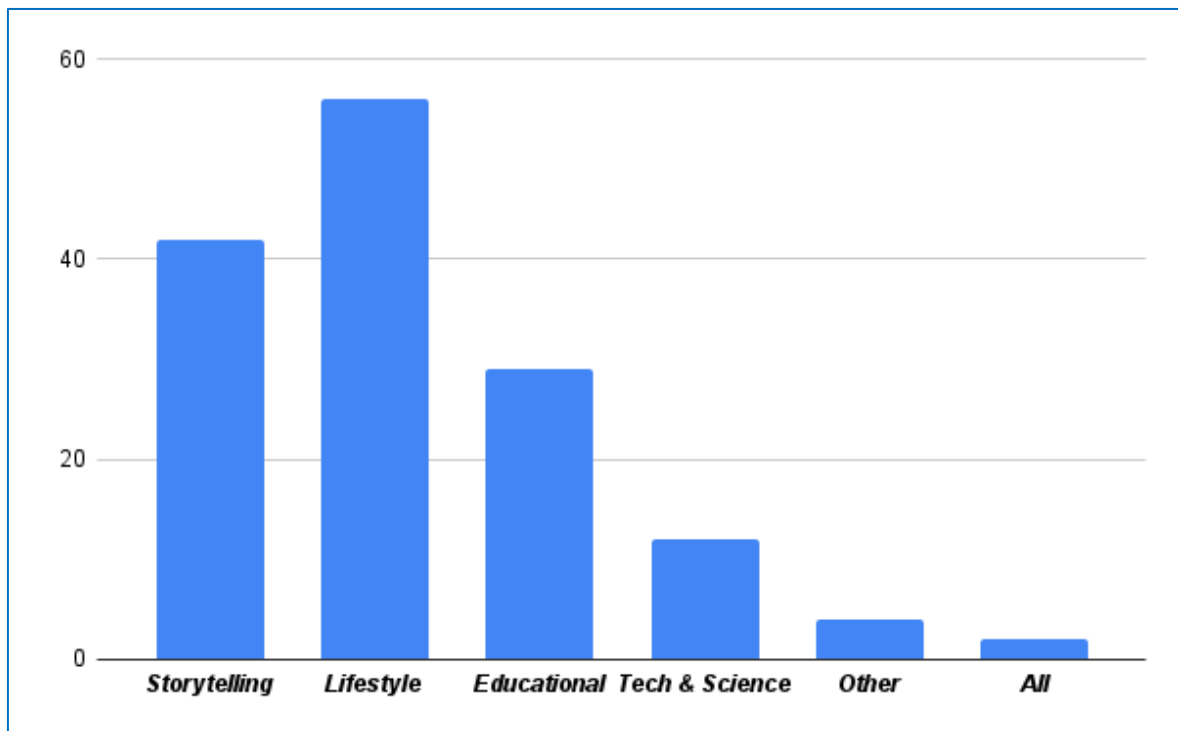


Figure 2.8: *Types of Podcasts*

Question 07: *How much do you think podcast are effective to enhance English oral proficiency?*

Table 2.7: *Students' Attitudes Regarding the Effectiveness of Podcasts*

Options	Participants	Percentage
Extremely effective	16	17.8%
Very effective	50	55.6%
Somewhat effective	22	24.4%
Slightly effective	2	2.2%
Total	90	100%

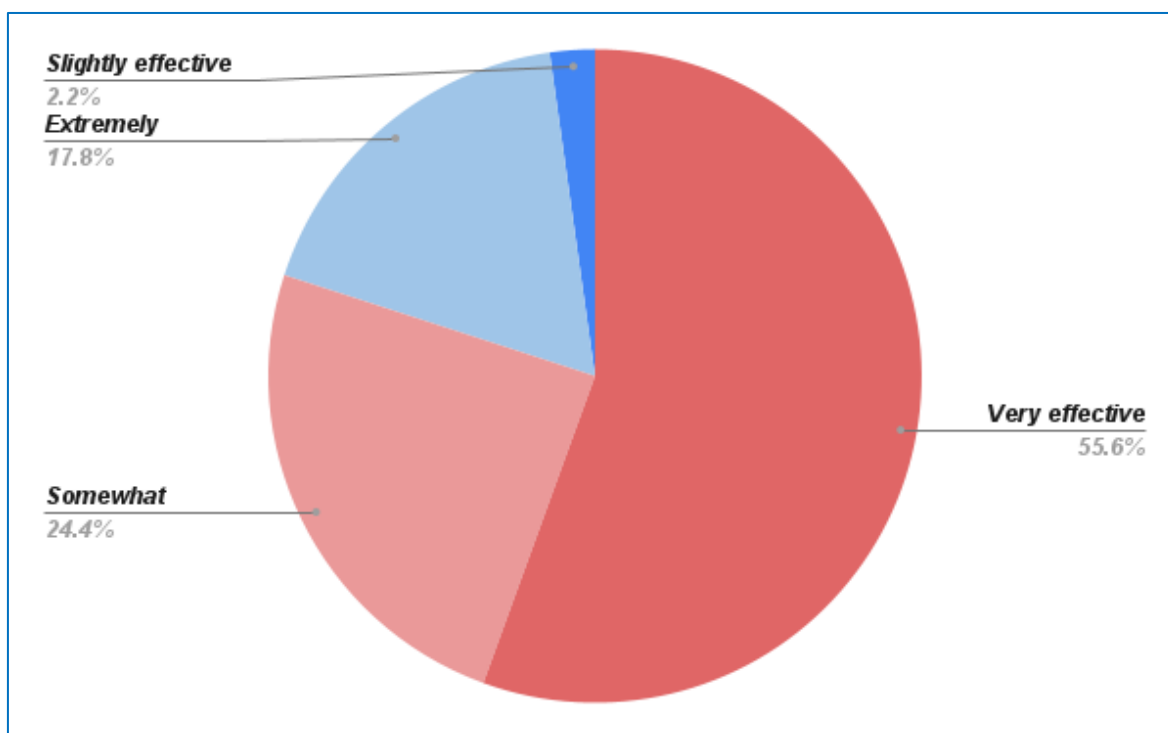


Figure 2.9: *Students' Attitudes Regarding the Effectiveness of Podcasts*

This question measures the students' attitude towards the effectiveness of podcasts in enhancing English oral proficiency. The table 2.7 and the figure 2.9 indicate that only 2.2% considered podcasts slightly effective and 24.4% considered them somewhat effective. While the participants who saw podcasts to be very effective and extremely effective are 55.6% and 17.8% respectively. It is noticeable that the majority of the students have a positive attitude concerning this tool effectiveness. Participants' justified their response by stating that using podcasts help them to be used to the English language and to improve their listening skills, vocabulary and pronunciation. Through regular listening to native speakers, the learners' absorb correct pronunciation and every day vocabulary by which they became more fluent and confident while speaking. Participants also mentioned that many podcasts treat interesting topics that engage them to learn automatically. To be more precise, even without constantly analysing the mannerisms of the people talking, the mind will get accustomed to it and automatically adjust itself; as a result, listeners will find that their oral skill improved. Additionally, there were some respondents who appreciate the nature of this tool as it is convenient and easy to access so that people can learn while doing their daily tasks.

To support the analysis, the researcher opted to state some participants' responses below; however, for reasons of confidentiality, the participants were coded as P1, P2, P3, etc.

P1: "Because it helps you to get used to the language especially if they are from natives."

P2: "Because it develops listening skills and acquires a large number of vocabularies."

P3: "It's a fun yet beneficial way to learn new vocabulary and statements; also it helps you develop good listening skills."

P4: "Because the speakers mainly use everyday vocabulary which helps learners a lot in developing their oral skills."

P5: "Because it helps us to understand words and their way of pronunciation."

In the same vein, there were a minority who argued that podcasts are not that much useful. The analysis of the answers shows that it is hard to concentrate when listening to a long podcast. It also lacks interaction which makes it somehow boring and leads the listeners to practice the speaking on their own. This is understandable as podcasts provide their users with the needed listening skills in addition to a large amount of vocabulary and accents without the real life practice. There were also participants who kept podcasts just for acquiring the correct pronunciation while they used other tools to learn English. The following are some respondents' perceptions:

P1: "It's boring for me to listen to much podcasts."

P2: "Lots of people when they listen to podcasts they don't focus with them, and I am one of them actually, so that is why I prefer other tools."

P3: "They are not very effective because you need to practice speaking more and more to improve your oral proficiency."

P4: “To be honest I only listen to podcasts to get that British accent because I like to use other platforms.”

P5: “Reading is better than listening for me.”

Question 08: *Which aspect of English oral proficiency do you think podcasts will help you improve?*

The question was devoted to know the students’ thoughts regarding which part of oral proficiency is influenced by the use of podcasts. The results reveal that 35.6% of students believed that all aspects of English oral proficiency could be enhanced through regular listening to podcasts. Pronunciation and vocabulary acquisition were frequently backed with close percentages 28.9% and 26.7%. On the other hand, fluency reached only 6.7% whereas grammar was the least cited (2.2%) by students. See figure 2.10 below:

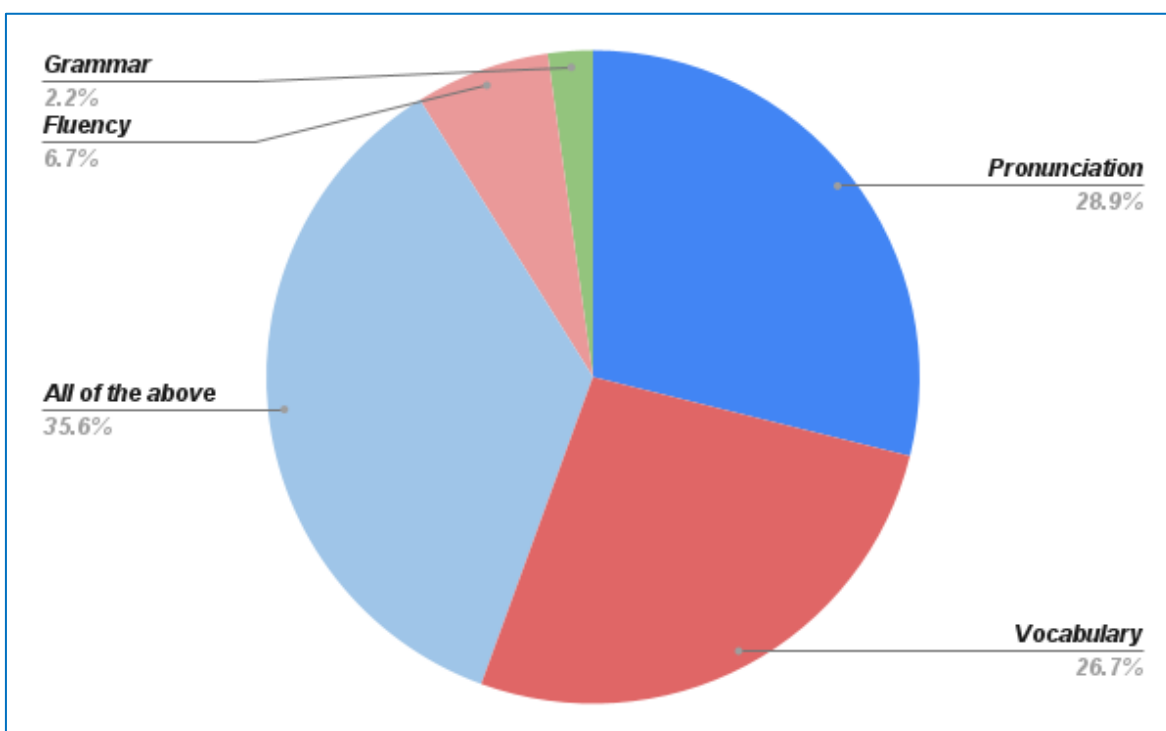


Figure 2.10: *Oral Proficiency Aspects*

Question 09: *Does your COE teacher use podcasts in the classroom setting?*

Table 2.8: *Use of Podcasts in Oral Classrooms*

Options	Participants	Percentage
Yes	60	66.7%
No	30	33.3%
Total	90	100%

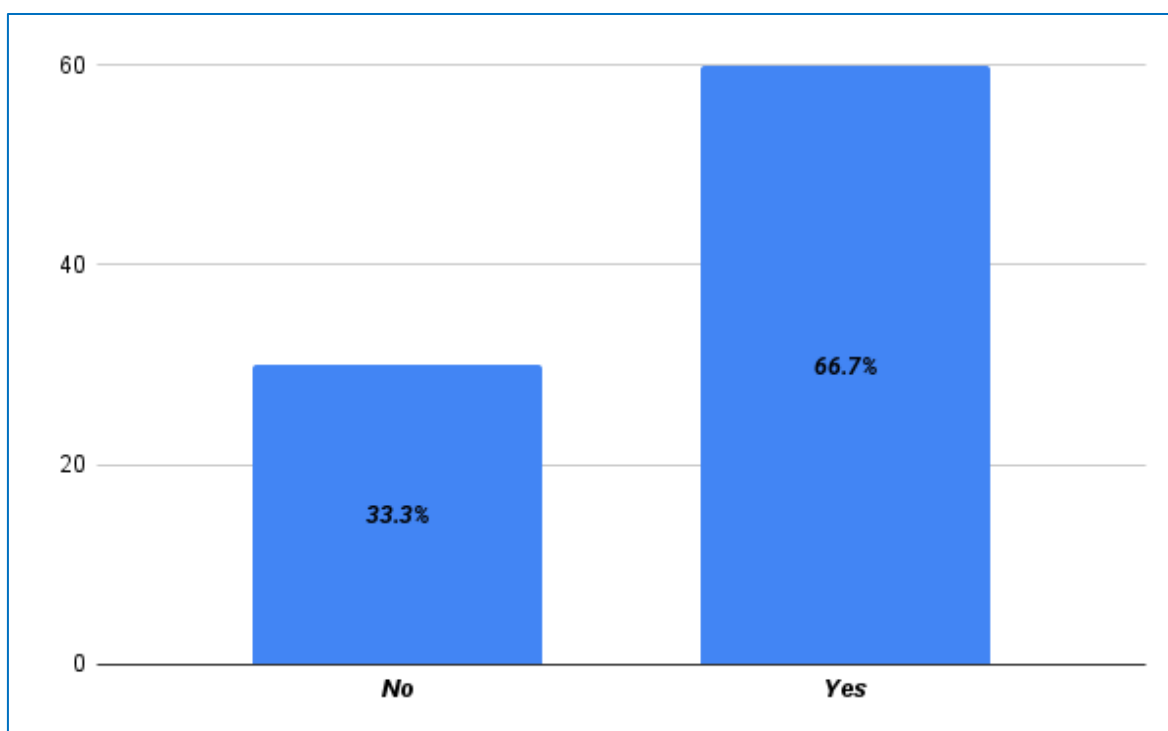


Figure 2.11: *Use of Podcasts in Oral Classrooms*

In regard to this question, the data illustrated in table 2.8 and figure 2.11 point out that some EFL teachers in Tlemcen University are doing their best to bring diversity in oral classes. Since 66.7% of the participants were imposed to podcasts-assisted languages learning in the COE module and 33.3% were not.

If no, would you like teachers to use podcasts in their teaching practices?

With respect to those who answer with yes, this sub-question is dedicated to collect the remaining students' insights regarding the possibility of integrating podcasts pedagogically. The results show that the majority of students were in

favour of integrating this tool into teaching practices. They found it beneficial for oral skills development more than traditional methods because it deals with various topics and increase engagement; with comments such as:

P1: “Yes, I love diversity in oral classes.”

P2: “Yes simply because podcasts cover more aspects of English learning that traditional method of reading and writing from books is lacking.”

P3: “Yes of course podcasts is a very helpful tool to learn English and ameliorate speaking and listening.”

P4: “Podcasts are truly different; they have great vibes, words and advices.”

While a significant minority did not accept the idea, they were either unconvinced or refused it due to the challenges they have encountered, such as the lack of engagement because of the passive listening. Also, the language labs in the department of English at Tlemcen University are not well equipped which can hinder focus and distract students easily. Others stated that they prefer classroom discussion and natural interaction with the teacher more. To sum up, the findings suggest that podcasts are valued among students but it is preferable to use them with additional activities to fully benefit from them and to save their complementary nature rather than replace the dynamic classroom interactions. For more clarification, the following are the respondents’ thoughts:

P1: “No, it would be awkward; the Oral session should be talking and listening is not only one aspect.”

P2: “I said no because for me when listening to a podcast you should be alone so you can focus and in COE session I prefer to discuss different topics.”

P3: “It seems that half the time when you are listening to an audio in class, you cannot focus on what is being said; maybe because of the setting and the environment.”

P4: “I would not like teachers to use podcasts in their teaching practices because I may not enjoy listening to some topics and I may feel bored.”

Question 10: *What are the main challenges you have encountered when using podcasts for learning?*

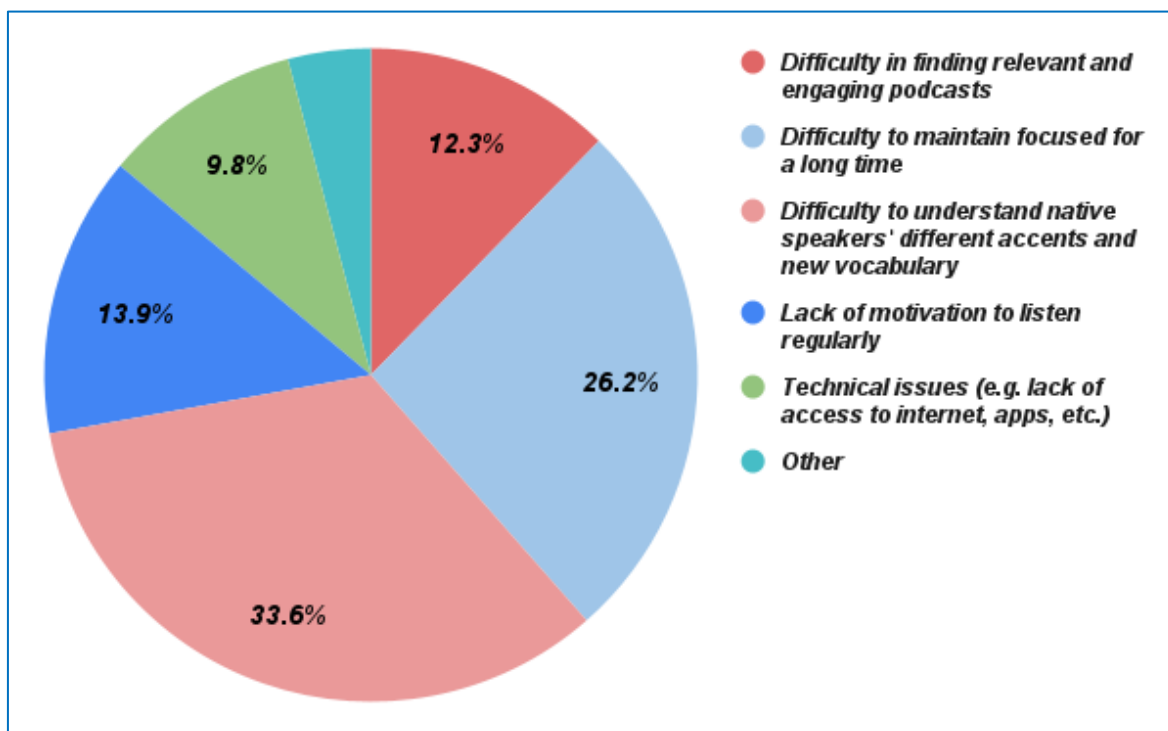


Figure 2.12: *The Challenges Encountered While Using Podcasts for Learning*

For the sake of exploring the challenges encountered by First-year students, the researcher designed this question. The figure 2.12 above shows that the difficulty to understand native speakers' different accents and new vocabulary dominated the issues faced by the students (33.3%). The remaining 26% found it hard to maintain focused for a long time. A respectful number (13.8%) were demotivated to listen regularly, and about 13% were struggling to find interesting topics that catch their attention. The lowest percentage went for technical issues (9.8%).

Question 11: *Are you interested in creating your own podcasts to practice oral skills?*

Table 2.9: *Students' Interest in Podcasts Creation*

Options	Participants	Percentage
Yes	65	72.2%
No	25	27.8%
Total	90	100%

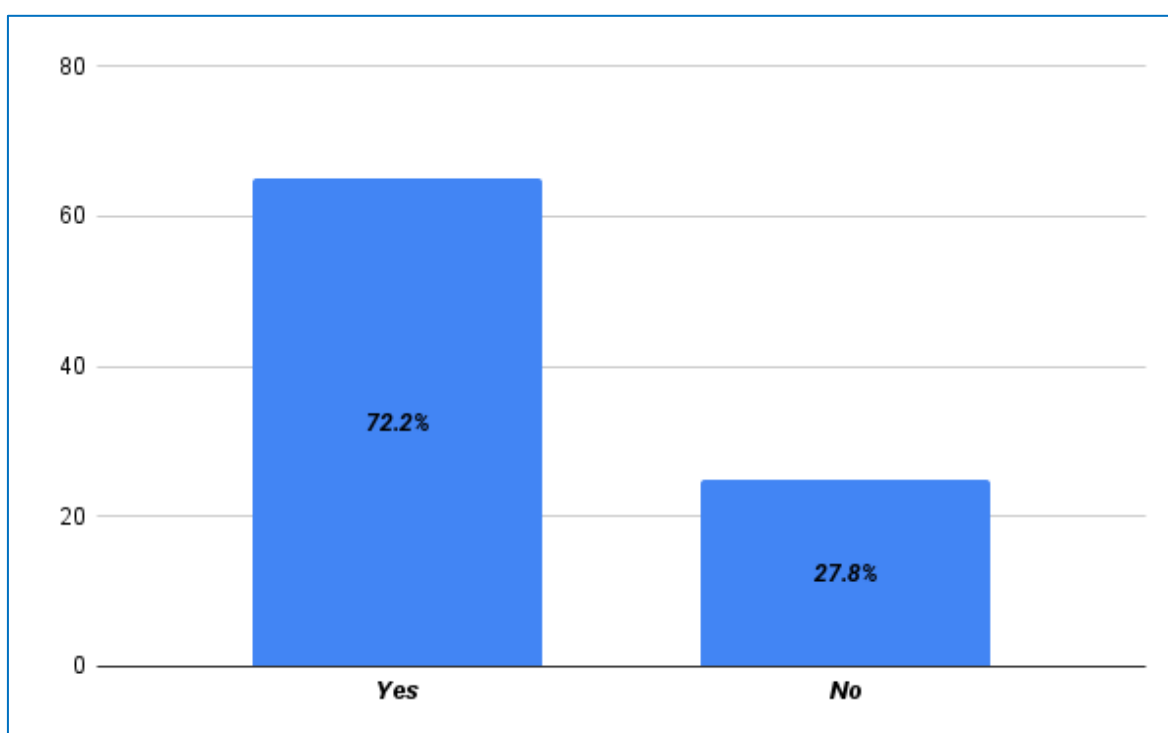


Figure 2.13: *Students' Interest in Podcasts Creation*

The current question is a basic close-ended question that seeks to gather the participants' views concerning the podcasts creation process. The results point out that the larger portion (72.2%) was open-up to the idea, and only 27.8% did not accept it. The participants explained their choice by indicating that they were motivated to do so because this will help them improve the oral skills, and break their language and psychological barriers. It is also beneficial for self-development and expressing thoughts clearly. It was mentioned that they desired to overcome shyness and fear of public speaking where many students said they just want to

challenge themselves since learning without real practice is not very useful. On the other hand, those who were not interested in creating their own podcast project justified their decision by admitting that they were feeling uncertain about their abilities and were not adequately prepared as they often doubted themselves and their proficiency level. Limitations such as time constraints, unfamiliarity with the process, and lack of interest took a great part for this rejection. Here are some examples from the provided respondents' answers:

P1: "I don't think I'm in that level yet."

P2: "I'm a yapper so it's a good chance to practice my language."

P3: "Most of the time, I have other things to do."

P4: "Lack of information."

P5: "In order to overcome the fear of speaking and improve my accent."

P6: "It's also a great way to track my progress over time."

P7: "Podcasts help me speak my mind freely without any stress or panic."

P8: "Learning process will be achieved with the practice."

Question 12: *What challenges would you face in producing a podcast?*

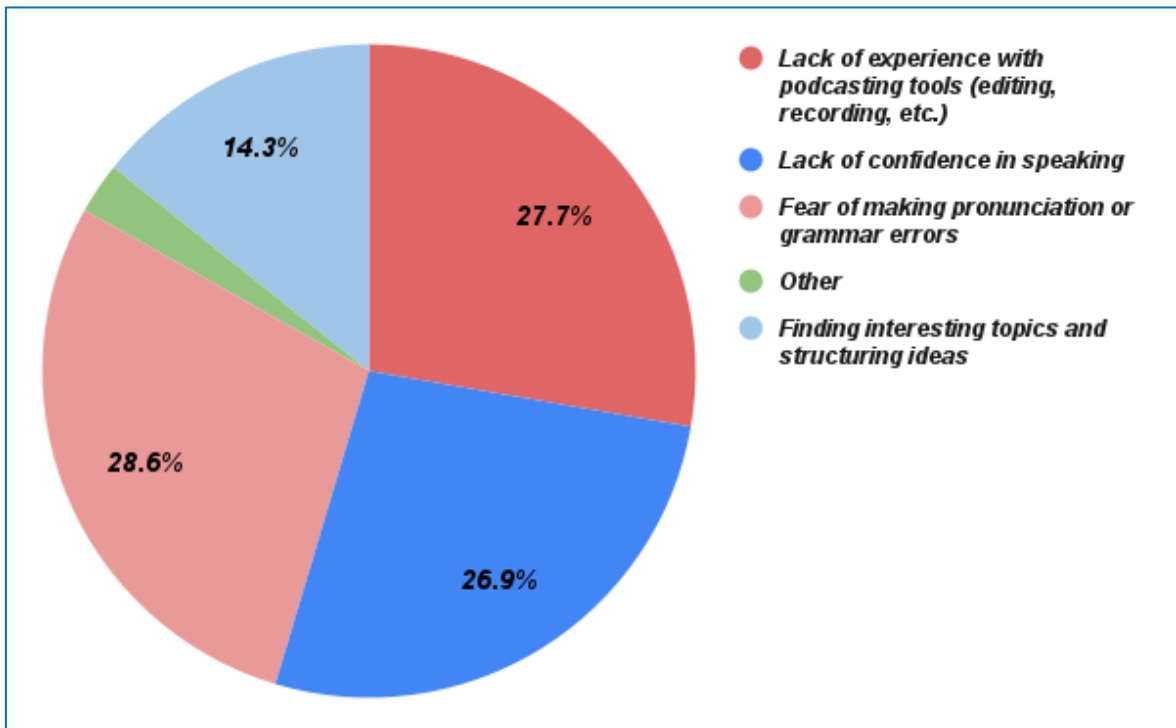


Figure 2.14: *The Challenges Anticipated by Students to Create a Podcast*

This question aimed to figure out the common challenges anticipated in creating a podcast. The figure 2.14 displays that 28.6% of the participants were afraid to make errors and 27.7% stated that they are unfamiliar with the tools needed to edit and record the podcasts. Also, lack of confidence in speaking (26.9%) was a significant barrier to those students. However, it is felt that the participants did not face many troubles in finding topics as this choice was cited by (14.3%).

Question 13: *In your opinion, can AI make the podcasts creation process easier and more engaging for students?*

Table 2.10: *Students' Opinion about AI integration in Podcasts Creation*

Options	Participants	Percentage
Yes	80	88.9%
No	10	11.1%
Total	90	100%

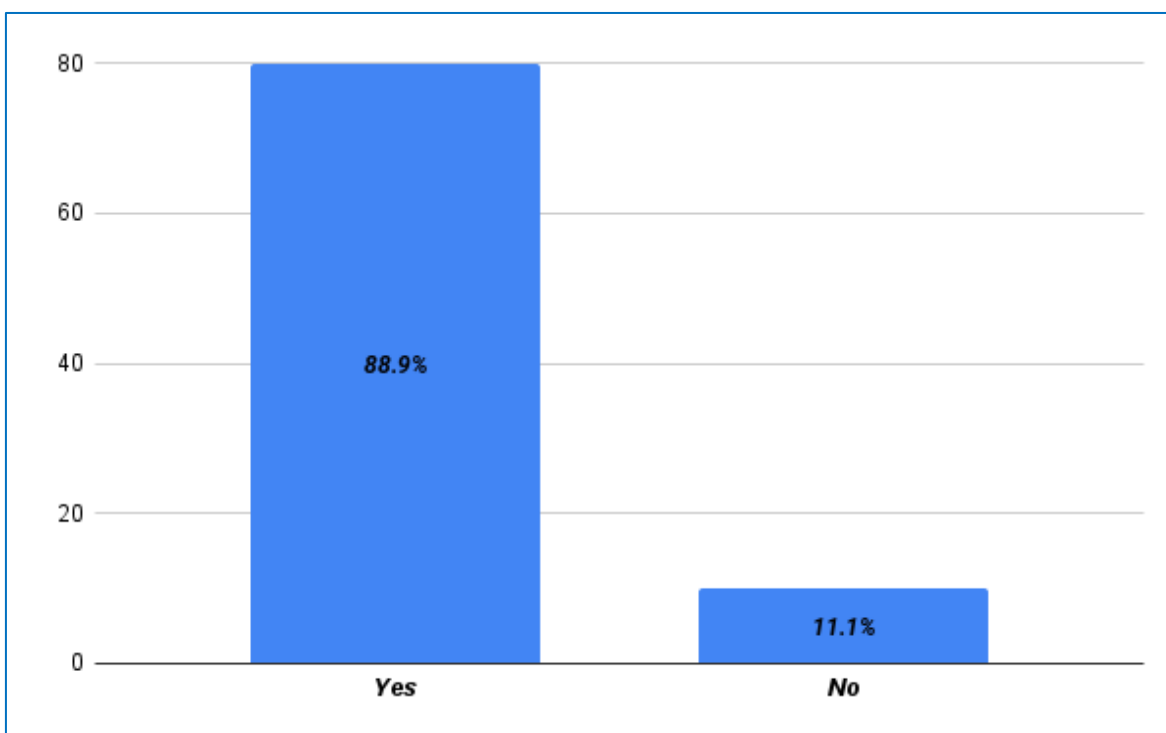


Figure 2.15: *Students' Opinion about AI integration in Podcasts Creation*

The primary purpose of this question was to assess the different perspectives that participants might have on Artificial intelligence (AI) integration in podcast activities. The vast majority said yes (88.9) whereas only (11.1%) were against using AI. The data illustrated in table 2.10 and figure 2.15 reflects the power of this growing trend.

Question 14: *In what ways can AI assist EFL podcasts production?*

This question attempted to explore how AI can help students produce a podcast. Among all the participants, 28.8% said that with AI the process becomes easier since it reduces the efforts needed to record and edit a podcast. It helps to brainstorm new ideas (24%) and outline the content (23.3%). Only 21.9% stated that it can assess fluency and pronunciation which leads to produce an appropriate work free from errors.

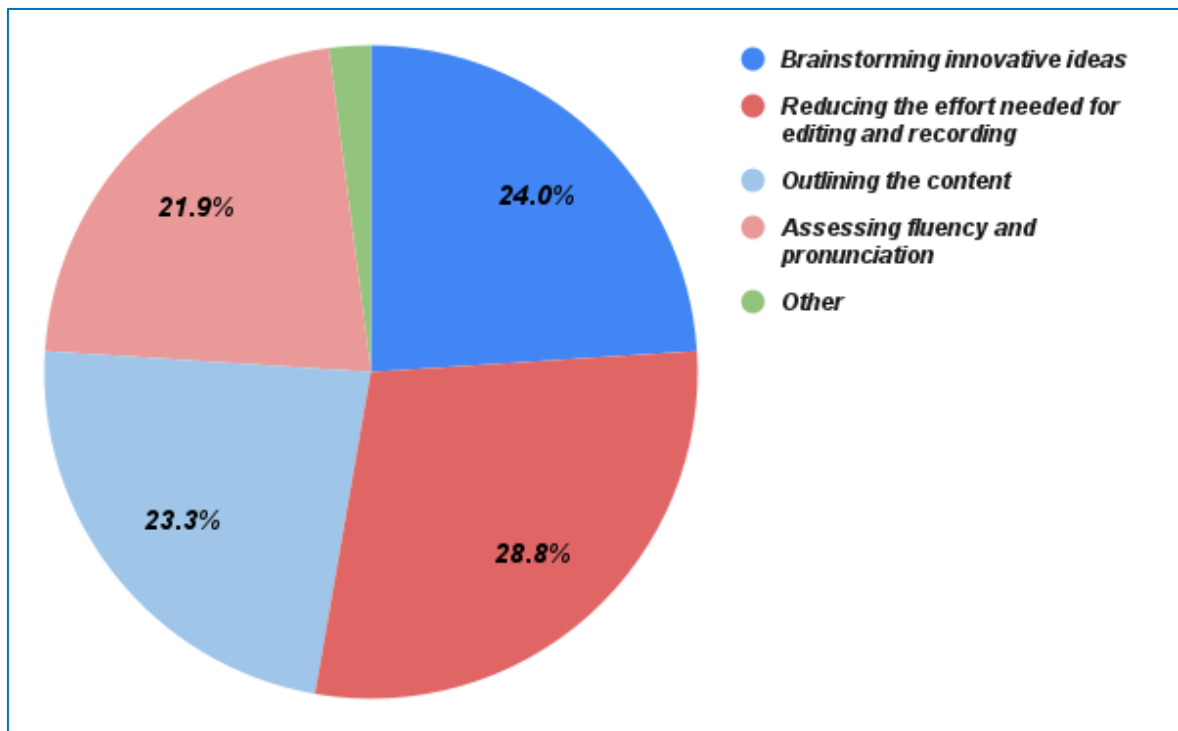


Figure 2.16: *AI Role in Podcasts Production*

Question 15: *Do you feel more confident to create a podcast with the assistance of AI?*

Table 2.11: *Perceived Confidence in Using AI to Assist Podcast Activities*

Options	Participants	Percentage
Yes	72	80%
No	18	20%
Total	90	100%

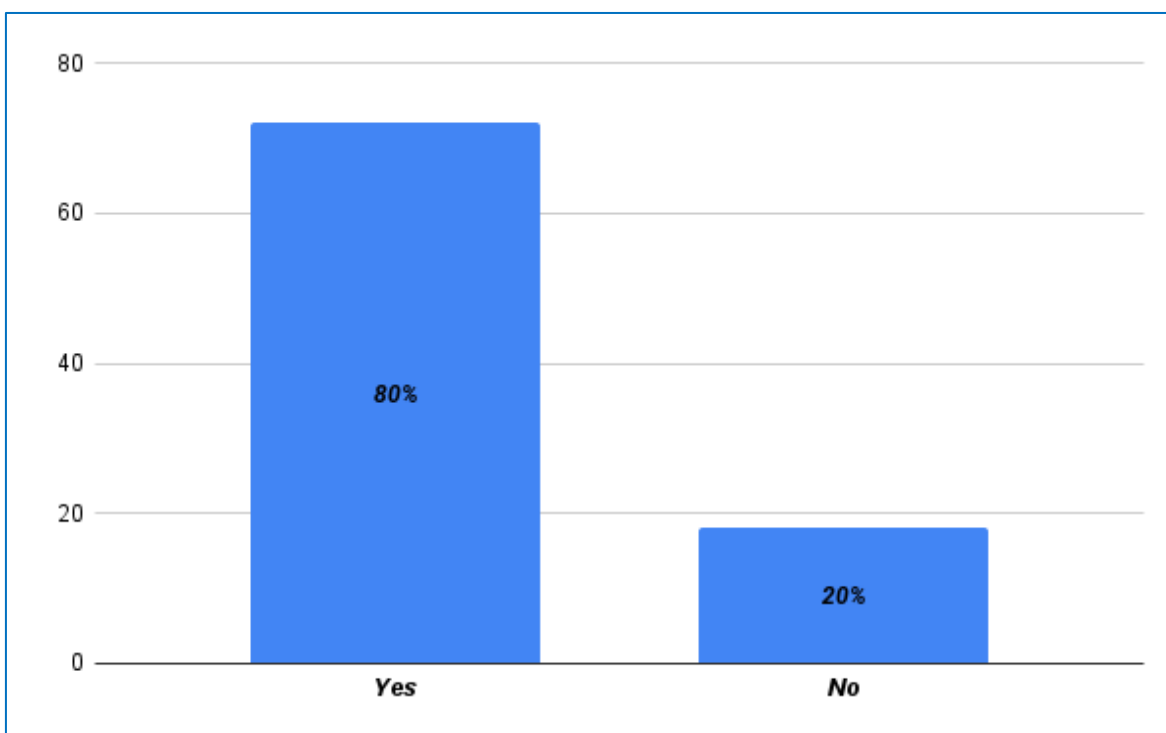


Figure 2.17: *Perceived Confidence in Using AI to Assist Podcast Activities*

The question attempted to see AI usage impact on students. The findings revealed that the majority (80%) of students are confident when they use AI as an alternative because it simplifies the work and checks the errors while 20% said no; maybe they are more confident with self-produced work.

Question 16: *What suggestions do you have for improving the use of podcasts in EFL teaching and learning?*

For the sake of enhancing Podcasts in the realm of English teaching and learning, the participants have shared various suggestions. First, Language Labs should be equipped with advanced technology to facilitate integrating such alternatives by teachers. It is widely acknowledged that university role relies on offering accessibility to different resources in order to improve the learners' learning experience. Second, it is much appreciated if the department consider launching an institutional podcast application or platform where students are free to publish their own podcasts there to share knowledge and inspire others. This is because not all podcasts are free to listeners. Also, educators should pay attention to the podcasts they adopt in their teaching practices since it is important to prioritize

the students' level and choose engaging and trendy content, as well as, those podcasts that contain transcripts. In this way, the learners will be used to the language and their vocabulary acquisition and listening accuracy will be supported. Third, podcasts should be embedded meaningfully into the curriculum, complemented by other activities to boost comprehension and interaction. Additionally, learners need to use this tool regularly both in and outside the classroom to promote autonomy and fluency. Finally, educators can adapt podcasts creation as an assessment method since this can foster learners' speaking practice, confidence, and creativity, especially when it is supported with AI tools for feedback and reduce efforts needed by students to design a single podcast.

2.7. Discussion of the Main Findings

The present section is devoted to discuss the main findings obtained from the teachers' interview and the students' questionnaire. The gathered data from these two instruments have contributed to draw conclusions concerning the effectiveness of podcasting in enhancing EFL oral proficiency in addition to understand the role of AI technologies in the process of producing a podcast. Below, the research questions are examined in relation to this study results:

How do EFL teachers and learners perceive the use of podcasts in fostering oral proficiency?

The first research question was designed to capture the varied perspectives of EFL teachers and students concerning the use of podcasts in fostering oral proficiency. This question was hypothesized to reveal positive attitudes towards podcast integration, with both teachers and students recognizing the potential benefits of podcasts for improving overall oral proficiency. Results from the two instruments show that both EFL teachers and students have a positive attitude towards podcasts in enhancing English language skills. From the question 07 in the questionnaire, the use of this tool is regarded as very effective in the development of oral proficiency which align with (Tümen Akyildiz, 2024). The gathered interview data highlighted the significant support offered by this tool in helping students

practice both productive speaking and receptive listening skills simultaneously. This is particularly important because students cannot improve their oral proficiency if they are poor listeners, which aligns with previous studies that investigated the correlation between listening-speaking skills (Abu- Snoubar, 2017; Zhang, 2009). From question 4 in the interview, teachers emphasized the impact of using podcasts on different aspects of oral proficiency. Similarly, the majority of the questionnaire participants indicated that all aspects of oral proficiency are targeted by podcasts (Hasan & Hoon, 2013), including fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation (Al-Harbi, 2019) and even grammar (Istanto, 2011). These findings confirm the first hypothesis and address the first research question.

What challenges do EFL teachers and learners encounter when using podcasts as a pedagogical aid?

The second research question aimed at identifying the challenges that hinder EFL teachers from effectively incorporating podcasts into their classroom instruction and students from using podcasts for their learning. The second hypothesis indicates that teachers and learners may face challenges due to limited technological access, pedagogical concerns, and lack of student engagement. To ensure the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process in this age of technology, it is important to treat the challenges encountered by both teachers and learners when using digital alternatives like podcasts for instructional purposes. One teacher among the interview participants pointed out that technical issues and unequipped language labs are the main challenges faced and often prevent EFL teachers in Tlemcen from adopting this tool. Additionally, the lack of ICT skills among the majority of teachers can negatively affect the integration of podcasts in classroom practice. The results obtained from the interviews are in line with Ladaci (2017) and Abubakar (2024). The students also encounter some difficulties when they use podcasts for learning (see question 10 in the questionnaire). This includes limited access to technology and lack of relevant content (Mehboob *et al.*, 2024) in addition to difficulties in understanding different accents and vocabulary (Che, 2023). Consequently, students become disengaged from podcast-based learning which

creates a cycle where they avoid podcast discussions and miss collaborative learning opportunities, limiting their educational benefits from this medium. The discussion of the obtained results confirms the second hypothesis and provides accurate answers to the second research question.

How do AI- generated podcasts impact EFL students' oral skills not least confidence and engagement?

The third research question opted to investigate the effects of AI-generated podcasts on students' oral skills, engagement and confidence. In this respect, AI-generated podcasts may improve students' oral communication skills by increasing their confidence in speaking and enhancing engagement through personalized content creation, voice recording and editing. The teachers' interview findings revealed that Gen AI is appreciated in podcasts projects to save time and efforts needed to edit and record voice (Altıntaş, 2024). Students engage actively in the production process and with the help of AI they become confident about their work which is demonstrated in question 13 and 15 in the questionnaire. Accordingly, Do *et al.* (2024) and Baskara *et al.*, (2024) findings are similar to the current study. According to question 6 in the interview, when learners engage in podcast projects with the assistance of AI, they become familiar with each single aspect, word or concept included in their works. In this case, they become more confident and do not hesitate to speak (Altıntaş 2024). Thus, it can be said that the third hypothesis and research question are effectively examined and approved.

2.8. Recommendations

Based on the analysis and discussion of the results obtained in this study, the researcher opted to formulate a set of recommendations. These suggestions are intended to address observed challenges and to promote effective implementation of podcasts in EFL education in addition to facilitate its applications in this field with the help of Gen AI. Accordingly, the following points aim to inform educators, learners, policy-makers and future research.

For EFL teachers:

- They should benefit from the facilities provided by technology to enrich the teaching-learning experience.
- Use podcasts for listening and discussion activities in the classroom and encourage learners to practice their speaking through podcasts creation projects.
- They should inform their learners on how to use Gen AI properly.

For EFL learners:

- Listen to English native speakers' podcasts regularly to improve English oral proficiency.
- Use AI technologies to support the podcast creation process, rather than to complete the entire task.

For policy makers:

- Universities should be well-equipped with advanced technological material, including internet, computers and headphones to facilitate integration of pedagogical alternatives.
- Provide teachers with a comprehensive ICT training program to strengthen their digital skills and improve the integration of the tackled novel ICTs in classroom practices.

For future research:

- Since the current research adopted an exploratory case study, it is preferable for future research to try a different methodology, such as an experimental design to measure the tackled topic precisely.
- Lately, the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research has encouraged students to create a start-up as their graduation project. In this case, students can investigate this topic from different dimensions; for instance, launching an institutional podcast application or platform where

both students and educators are free to publish their own podcasts or designing a training program for effective podcast use in EFL instruction.

2.9. Limitations

There is no doubt that the current investigation yielded meaningful findings concerning the use of novel ICTs, specifically podcasts and AI technologies for enhancing EFL students' oral proficiency. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that there is no research free of flaws, and this undertaken study is no exception. Certain limitations were encountered throughout the research process and are summarized as follows:

- Due to post-exams period, the interviews were postponed multiple times and it was difficult for the researcher to get in touch with more teachers who had experience in integrating podcasts into classroom practices.
- The analysis was delayed because of the difficulties anticipated in collecting the questionnaire responses, as students completed the form after many attempts from the researcher to resend it.
- Some participants have used AI tools to answer the open-ended questions in the questionnaire, as a result, the data received from those students did not reflect their personal thoughts which could lead to bias and raise questions about the authenticity and validity of the findings.
- The study was conducted with only First-year English students in Tlemcen University; hence the findings cannot be generalized to other levels and to all universities.

2.10. Conclusion

To conclude, chapter two is purely practical which has thoroughly covered the procedures and techniques used to carry out this study. A significant part of the chapter was devoted to the analysis of the data collected from the teachers' interview and students' questionnaire, which was guided by the principles of a mixed methods approach. Then, the obtained results were carefully interpreted and discussed to address the research questions and test the validity of the proposed

hypotheses. Accordingly, the researcher was able to draw conclusions regarding perceptions of both EFL students and teachers of oral module on podcasts as an aid for enhancing English oral proficiency. It has been observed that they have a positive attitude towards podcasts in the realm of language learning although they encounter many challenges to use them pedagogically. Moreover, the findings highlighted that the integration of AI in podcast activities are welcomed among teachers and students as it is a multi-purpose tool that can serve any purpose nowadays and increase engagement and confidence. Simply, the investigation underscores the growing interest towards using these novel ICTs for academic purposes. Finally, recommendations in favour of EFL learners, educators and stakeholders were provided; alongside limitations to be considered in future research.

General Conclusion

The 21st century is widely recognized as the era of technology. New technologies are emerging every day to transform the way people live, learn and interact. Lately, these advancements can be observed through the lens of education. In EFL education, the use of digital tools becomes increasingly important where many facilities are being introduced to teach the Oral Expression sessions as improving the students' oral proficiency has always been a thorny task. For this sake, the present study aimed to explore the use of podcasts as a pedagogical tool to develop English oral proficiency and to highlight the impact of the latest trend AI on EFL podcast projects in Tlemcen University.

The current study was divided into two main chapters. Chapter one was concerned with introducing the theoretical basis that guided the study as a whole. It provided an in-depth overview of the main three tackled variables: Oral proficiency, podcasts and Artificial Intelligence (AI). While the next chapter focused on the practical side of this study, including the research methodology, instruments and data analysis and discussion. Furthermore, the researcher opted for an exploratory sequential mixed-methods case study where two research instruments were employed: an interview and a questionnaire. The research was characterized by the participation of a sample of ninety (90) students and six (06) Oral Module teachers at the Department of English at the University of Tlemcen. The data collected from those participants were analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively to address the intended research questions.

Consequently, the results obtained from the triangulation method highlighted the EFL teachers' and students' supportive attitude towards the integration of podcasts in instruction. They found this tool very effective in terms of enhancing English language proficiency, particularly the oral proficiency. The study proved also the importance of being skilled in both listening and speaking activities since listening to authentic material contributes in developing the spoken language. The findings underscore the potential of incorporating AI technologies in podcasts production process for scripting content, enhancing audio quality, generating visuals and checking errors. This advancement is sought to improve the learning

General Conclusion

environment as it enables both educators and students to create personalized learning material.

Overall, podcasting and AI represent a fundamental shift in EFL learning content creation and delivery alongside effective improvement in learners' oral proficiency. This study concludes by offering pedagogical recommendations for integrating these emerging technologies while acknowledging the limitations that have been observed throughout the research journey.

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Appendices

Appendix A:

Teachers' Interview

Dear teachers,

This interview is a part of a research work conducted for a Master's degree fulfilment entitled: "Investigating Novel ICTs as a Medium to Enhance EFL Students' Oral Skills". It aims to explore the effectiveness of podcasts to enhance learners' oral proficiency and to understand the effects of generative AI on podcasts production among teachers and students in the Department of English at the University of Tlemcen.

Your cooperation, with no doubt, will provide the researcher with valuable insights about the topic.

Question 01: *As an EFL teacher, what is your experience in teaching oral expression and do you incorporate digital tools in your pedagogy?*

Question 02: *What is your perception towards using podcasts to enhance students' English oral proficiency?*

Question 03: *Have you ever used podcast-assisted language learning in your teaching practices?*

If no:

- *What do you think about podcasts in teaching oral expression and production?*
- *What prevents you from adapting podcasts in your teaching and do you intend to use them in the future?*
- *Do you advice EFL students' to watch or listen to podcasts for educational purposes?*

If yes:

- *What is your purpose for using podcasts?*

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○ *Did you notice any improvements in your students' learning outcomes when using podcasts as an aid, and what difficulties did they face?*

○ *What challenges do you have encountered when incorporating podcasts in the classroom setting and how did you overcome them?*

Question 04: *In your experience, which aspects of learners' oral proficiency are the most influenced by podcast-assisted language learning (fluency, grammar, vocabulary or pronunciation) and why?*

Question 05: *Do you have an idea about how AI- generated technologies can help with EFL podcasts production? If yes explain*

Question 06: *In your opinion, do you think creating podcasts using AI can impact students' confidence and engagement to develop their oral skills?*

Question 07: *Would you recommend using podcasts activities in EFL classes to other teachers?*

Thank you for your time

Appendix B:

Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

You are kindly invited to fill in this questionnaire, which is a part of a research work conducted to explore the effectiveness of podcasts in enhancing learners' oral proficiency and to understand the effects of generative AI on podcasts production among students and teachers in the Department of English at the University of Tlemcen.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Questions

Appendices

1. *As an EFL student, how do you assess your English proficiency level?*

☐ Excellent

☐ Good

☐ Average

☐ Weak

2. *Among the four language skills, which skills you are interested to develop further?*

☐ Speaking

☐ Listening

☐ Writing

☐ Reading

3. *Nowadays, it is more crucial for EFL learners to develop their oral skills.*

☐ Agree

☐ Neutral

☐ Disagree

4. *Which specific tools or resources do you frequently use to develop your English oral skills? (you can select multiple answers)*

☐ Podcasts and audiobooks

☐ AI chatbots

☐ Mobile apps (e.g. ELSA speaks, Duolingo, etc.)

☐ Social media platforms

☐ Other:

5. *Do you use podcasts in learning English?*

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☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, how often do you use them?

☐ Always

☐ Often

☐ Sometimes

☐ Rarely

6. *What type of podcasts do you prefer?*

☐ Educational

☐ Tech & Science

☐ Lifestyle

☐ Storytelling

☐ Other:

7. *How much do you think podcasts are effective to enhance English oral proficiency?*

☐ Extremely effective

☐ Very effective

☐ Somewhat effective

☐ Slightly effective

Why?.....

Appendices

8. *Which aspect of English oral proficiency do you think podcasts will help you improve?*

- ☐ Fluency
- ☐ Pronunciation
- ☐ Grammar
- ☐ Vocabulary
- ☐ All of them

9. *Does your COE teacher use podcasts in the classroom setting?*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If no, would you like teachers to use podcasts in their teaching practices? (Justify your answer please).

10. *What are the main challenges you have encountered when using podcasts for learning? (You can select multiple answers)*

- ☐ Difficulty to understand native speakers' different accents and new vocabulary
- ☐ Difficulty in finding relevant and engaging podcasts
- ☐ Difficulty to maintain focused for a long time
- ☐ Lack of motivation to listen regularly
- ☐ Technical issues (e.g. lack of access to internet, apps, etc.)

11. *Are you interested in creating your own podcasts to practice oral skills?*

- ☐ Yes

☐ No

Why?

12. *What challenges would you face in producing a podcast? (Choose all that apply for you).*

☐ Lack of confidence in speaking

☐ Fear of making pronunciation or grammar errors

☐ Finding interesting topics and structuring ideas

☐ Lack of experience with podcasting tools (e.g. editing, recording, etc.).

☐ Other:

13. *In your opinion, can AI make the podcasts creation process easier and more engaging for students?*

☐ Yes

☐ No

14. *In what ways can AI assist EFL podcasts production? (Choose all that apply for you).*

☐ Brainstorming innovative ideas

☐ Outlining the content

☐ Assessing fluency and pronunciation

☐ Reducing the effort needed for editing and recording

15. *Do you feel more confident to create a podcast with the assistance of AI?*

☐ Yes

☐ No

16. What suggestions do you have for improving the use of podcasts in EFL teaching and learning?

Thank you so much

الملخص

يدرس هذا البحث فعالية استخدام البودكاست في تحسين الكفاءة الشفوية في اللغة الإنجليزية، ودور الذكاء الاصطناعي في أنشطة إنشاء البودكاست بين مدرسي وطلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في جامعة تلمسان. أظهرت النتائج أن البودكاست يساهم في تحسين الطلاقة والنطق والمفردات والدقة بالإضافة إلى مهارة الاستماع، كما أن أدوات الذكاء الاصطناعي تعزز التفاعل والثقة في التحدث وتقلل من الجهد المبذول لإنتاج البودكاست. ومع ذلك، لا تزال هناك عوائق تقنية وتعليمية وبعضها مرتبطة بالطلاب تعيق تنفيذ هذه التقنيات الحديثة في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: البودكاست المنشأ بالذكاء الاصطناعي، الذكاء الاصطناعي، المهارات السمعية-الشفوية، تعليم الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، الكفاءة الشفوية، البودكاست.

Summary

This study explores how podcasts enhance English oral proficiency and the role of AI in podcast creation among EFL teachers and students at Tlemcen University. Findings show podcasts improve fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, accuracy, and aural skills, while AI tools in podcast projects boost engagement, confidence, and reduce effort. Yet, technological, pedagogical, and student-related barriers hinder their implementation in EFL instruction.

Key words: AI-generated Podcasts, AI, Aural-Oral Skills, EFL, Oral Proficiency, Podcasts.

Résumé

Cette étude examine comment les podcasts améliorent la compétence orale en anglais et le rôle de l'IA dans la création de podcasts parmi les enseignants et étudiants d'anglais langue étrangère (ALE) à l'Université de Tlemcen. Les résultats révèlent que les podcasts améliorent la fluidité, la prononciation, le vocabulaire, la précision et les compétences auditives, tandis que les outils d'IA dans les projets de podcast renforcent l'engagement, la confiance et réduisent l'effort requis. Cependant, des obstacles technologiques, pédagogiques et liés aux étudiants entravent leur mise en œuvre dans l'enseignement de l'ALE.

Mots clés: Podcasts générés par IA, IA, Compétences orales-auditives, ALE, Compétence orale, Podcasts.