AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF ARMENIA

Department of English Programs

The Effects of Podcasts on the Development of Listening Skills

A thesis submitted in

Partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

By

Irina Harutyunyan

Dr. Irshat Madyarov, Adviser

Mrs. Liliana Edilian, Reader

Dr. Alexan Simonyan, Statistics Consultant

Yerevan, Armenia

3 October 2012

We hereby approve that this thesis/paper

By

Irina Harutyunyan

Entitled

The Effects of Podcasts on the Development of Listening Skills

Be accepted in partial fulfillment for the requirements of the degree

Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Committee on the MA Thesis

………..…………………………
Irshat Madyarov, Ph.D, Adviser

………..…………………………
Liliana Edilian, M.A, Reader

………..…………………………
Catherine Buon, Ph.D.

Associate Dean of College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Yerevan, Armenia

3 October 2012

DEDICATION

To my Dear Sisters

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

ABSTRACT

The rapid development of modern technologies makes the language teachers find ways of implementing them in the teaching and learning process. One of the ways is considered to be the use of podcasts in listening enhancement, introduced in this paper.

The study reports on findings of research carried out in the department of computer graphic and web design at the vocational school in a small town of Armenia. The participants were 13 students at intermediate level of English language proficiency. The aim of the research was to investigate the effects of podcasts on the development of listening skills of Armenian EFL learners. The data for the related research questions were collected via pre and post tests and a questionnaire and were analyzed through the SPSS package.

The analysis of the data, obtained from the tests showed that podcasts may have effect on the improvement of learners' listening skills.

The analysis of the data of questionnaire showed that the students of the experimental group appreciated their experience of using podcasts for the development of their listening skills.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

A language learner needs to develop all the aspects of language, but in a non-native environment like Armenia, attention to the listening needs to be more stressed. Listening is an important interactive skill for language learners to develop. It serves as an input for the development of the other language skills. Taking into account this assumption, language teachers should find out new and interesting ways to improve listening skills. Nowadays Internet is an inseparable part of our lives, which is almost the main source of information and materials we need for different purposes. One of these information conveyors is podcast, which is becoming an advantageous tool for language teaching and learning despite its recent appearance. Being simple in use podcast enables the learners involve it in their learning process more and more frequently.

This paper presents an action research. Wallace (1998) defined that action research is different from other more conventional or traditional types of research in that it is very focused on individual or small –group professional practice and is not so concerned with making strong generalizations. The study aimed to find out the effectiveness of podcasts in the language learning process of EFL learners as well as their attitude towards using them for educational purposes.

The paper consists of the following sections: Literature Review, Methodology, Results, Discursion and conclusions, References and Appendices. Each of these sections involves sub-chapters that focus on specific areas of the research.

1. 1 Purpose of the Study

As it has been mentioned in the introduction, language should be improved in all its aspects: listening, speaking, reading, writing. Armenian Learners, who live in a nonnative speaking environment, can develop their listening skills by listening to different downloaded listening materials (podcasts). The present study was conducted to find out, whether podcasts are effective for the improvement of listening skills of students of the department of computer graphic and web design of a vocational school

1.2 Research Questions

1. Do podcasts have impact on the development of EFL learners' listening skills?

2. What are learners' perceptions about the use of podcasts?

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study is significant for two reasons.

- It aims to explore, whether podcasts are useful for learners' listening enhancement.

- It aims to investigate learners' attitude towards the use of podcasts in language learning procedure.

1.4 The Structure of the Thesis

This thesis includes four chapters.

- Chapter 2 contains the review of the literature reviling the background information about listening and podcast.

- Chapter 3 presents the methodology that conducts the research. It describes settings and participants of the study, materials that are using in the research, instrumentation for data collection and procedure.

- Chapter 4 reveals the analysis of the quantitative data, which tempts to find the answers to the research questions.

- Chapter 5 summarizes the findings, presents the implications of the study, introduces some limitations and delimitations, and gives suggestions for the further research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 What is Listening?

Listening like other aspects of language (speaking, writing, and reading) is the basic skill for learning English. Nunan (1997) cited in the Saricoban article entitled "Teaching 'listening' as an English Language Skill", listening is the "Cinderella Skill" which is overlooked by its elder sister "speaking" in SL learning. Some scholars, among them Wolvin and Coakly (1988), view listening as a cognitive process and define it as "the process of receiving, attending to and assigning meaning to aural stimuli" (cited in Dangerfield et al, 1996). The elements mentioned by Wolvin and Coakley, have been considered by others as well. The process of receiving, attending to and assigning meaning to aural stimuli, which is also called perception, means the learners' comprehension of provided oral input. Richards (1983) in his "script competence" theory described the process of applying knowledge to the incoming sound defining two processes: top-down and bottom-up. Top-down processing in listening comprehension assumes that different types of knowledge processing may occur concurrently. Bottom-up processing assumes that listening procedure takes place in a certain order starting with lowest level of details and moving up to the highest: from phonemes to syntactic level, to the analysis of the semantic content, ultimately to understanding linguistic meaning.

Buck (2003)refers to bottom-up processing naming it as "Understanding words" (p. 15). He describes this process dividing it into two parts: recognizing the word and then understanding its meaning" for which two kinds of information are used: the perceptual/acoustic information and knowledge of the context" He mentioned that usually

words are not recognized in isolation. The listener makes sense of the utterance only after the parsing process has taken place. Buck defines parsing as a process in which the listener combines the meaning of individual words and creates certain meaning, and as soon as "the idea unit is created the words and syntax are forgotten" (2003, p.16). Basically, It is assumed that during the comprehension process in order to understand the meaning of the provided information listeners use their existing knowledge, which can be subdivided into two categories: Linguistic knowledge, which involves phonology, lexes, syntax, semantics, discourse structure, and so forth; and non-linguistic knowledge, that is, knowledge about the context, about the topic and general knowledge about the world and how it works (Buck, 2003).

Listening has become a central issue to be investigated. It is now seen as an active skill that involves many processes. It is also considered as a significant facet of language learning (Morely, 2001), and as Byrnes (1984) states one of its distinctive characteristics is that it is a highly complex problem-solving activity. According to another scholar Richards (1985), a better understanding what listening comprehension constitutes itself, is to do research in "psycholinguistics, semantics, pragmatics, discourse analysis, and cognitive science (p. 189)."

Judging from Richards' words mentioned above while listening we deal with the information coming from a cluster of sources: lexical, phonetic, prosodic, phonological syntactic and semantic. Moreover, the listener is exposed to all of them simultaneously, which allows Celce-Murcia (1995) to describe listening as "complex, dynamic, and fragile" skill. Rost (1999, p. 200) claims listening is essential for the language learner as it supplies input for the learner.

Learning should be accompanied by clear and comprehensible input. Listen clearly, and you will be able to repeat or get a feel for pronunciation; hear correctly, and you are able to respond without getting it wrong, and feeling embarrassed. One of the important reasons for emphasizing listening to the development of language proficiency suggested by Rost (1999, p. 200) is that listening exercises help the learners to focus on new forms (vocabulary, grammar, new interaction patterns) in the language.

English teachers should be in charge of distributing among the language learners a variety of exercises stimulating their listening skills. One type of these exercises is dictation, which has long been used in the language classroom to work out the potential of language learners' listening (Stansfield, 1985; Lightfoot, 2006). Another type of exercise is the usage of podcasts as many writers have paid attention to the advantages of podcasting in language education, especially, in the development of learners' listening and speaking skills (Stanley, 2006; Pun, 2006).

2.2 What is a podcast?

The word podcasts entails two-word combination: iPod and broadcast (Kaplan-Leiderson, 2005; Campbell, 2005; Meng, 2005; Brenner, 2005; Feinglos, 2005). They are very rapid, free of computer platform, and cost-effective technologies (Duerst, 2006). Podcast is defined as "a digital recording of a radio broadcast or similar program, making it available on the Internet for downloading to a personal audio player" (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2006). Podcasts are usually in mp3 format; they are easily downloadable files, which contain audio and/or video materials, presentation of lectures,

images, PDFs, texts, and other file types (Wikipedia, 2006; Morris, 2006). Moreover, they are very convenient for using as they are free of charge, portable and the files can be taken away anywhere the user may desire (Blaisdell, 2006; Clark &walsh, 2005). Podcast users can access the information without any difficulty through their iPods and computers (Benno, 2006), download the files they are interested in or need, listen or view them whenever and wherever they wish and at their convenience (Morris, 2006).

2.3 How to find Podcasts?

Finding podcast is relatively easy thanks to many web applications that update information about most of the shows available on the Internet.

Searching for podcasts might be a wonderful experience as we can come across shows we would never thought we might be interested in. All learners' need is a computer with an Internet connection, a web browser (Mozzila, Explorer, etc.) or podcast client (podcatcher), headphones or speakers. Although finding podcast is relatively easy, to choose one that would satisfy learners' needs might be a matter of a few minutes or several days. It all depends on learners' taste and type of the show they are looking for. Fortunately most of the shows are well explored and exhaustively mapped. Invaluable tool for finding podcasts is "podcast directory". After detection of a new episode, since podcatcher knows where to find that audio file, the listener can simply download the audio MP3 file to the computer and further to a portable audio player or phone, and listen to it instantly or later. If the RSS feed is correct and valid the podcatcher will automatically search and load everything available on the subscribed web page. This

means all the podcasts, which you can immediately listen to, transcripts of the listening as well as exercises or complete lesson plans. The amount or additional materials you receive depends entirely on the creator of the podcast.

2.4 Types of Podcasts

Podcasts are divided into two types: "radio podcasts" and "independent podcasts" (Sze, 2007). Radio podcasts are the same radio programs shifted to podcasts. For instance, BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) and RTHK (Radio Television Hong Kong) are vivid examples of radio podcast production. As far as "independent podcasts" are concerned, they are Web- based podcasts which are created by organizations and individuals, which have great impact on generating and developing ELT (English Language Teaching) podcasts.

2.4.1 ELT podcasts

ELT podcasts can be produced by learners easily and little effort (Sze, 2007). ELT podcast in its turn encompasses the following content types:

1. Comprehensive - these types of podcasts involve vocabulary, interviews, as well as listening activities.
2. Whole lessons - these types of podcasts encompass audio lessons with texts that can be utilized in the classroom by the teachers.
3. Vocabulary, idioms, etc., these podcasts may contain some vocabulary items with their explanations.

4. Conversations with script-podcasts like conversations with script enclose native speakers' conversations with provided script to follow during listening.

5. Jokes - podcasts involving jokes in the target language.

6. Songs - podcasts that include genuine popular songs for teenagers, as well as traditional kid's song.

7. Phonetics, pronunciation - such types of podcasts may contain lessons specifically designed for teaching phonetics and pronunciation.

8. Stories - podcast stories with or without listening comprehension questions.

9. Listening comprehension - podcasts that aim to practice listening comprehension

2.5 Use of Podcasts in Teaching and Learning

Since 2005, podcasts have become widely utilized among educators and generally, among users; because of the greatest opportunities it encompasses (Barnett, 2005; Stelingo, 2006). Its rapid development and dissemination mainly depends on the following factors - great interest towards broadband Internet and free access to it, freedom to create audio/video files and download them, and use of MP3 players worldwide (Udell, 2005; EDUCAUSE, 2006; Rainie& Madden, 2005).

Podcasts were initially created for entertainment and conveying information. However, in addition to these functions, podcasts could also draw educators' attention in terms of teaching and learning (Warlick, 2005; Adams, 2006). As Adams (2006) and Warlik (2005) stated podcasts may have potential for teaching and learning. Nowadays, many educational institutions throughout the world use podcasts for diverse learning objectives. For example, Duke University utilized podcasts for recording lectures and

submitting them on its iTunes site making them easy and convenient for students to download (Belanger, 2005). Like Duke University, Stanford University also recorded and edited the materials, such as: faculty lectures, information about sports and music on its website, and created all the necessary conditions for students' easy and unproblematic access to all information they needed (Young, 2005). In addition to Duke and Stanford Universities, Wales and Coventry Universities also included the wide use of podcasts for teaching and learning purposes (Thomas, 2006). However, the use of podcasts are not only restricted to teaching and learning. Besides learning materials, audio and/or video files, pdfs, lectures, and so forth; podcasts may also serve as a means of informing students about the course objectives and assessments (Chan & Lee, 2005).

Thus, podcasts contain many possibilities that may bring education to a new platform in future (Jobbing, 2005). It may involve regularly updated news, lectures, tutorials, student-produced podcasts, language lessons, professional development audio/video files, as well as oral projects created and posted by students enhancing their motivation and increasing their output (The Office of Information Technology of the University of Minnesola, 2006; Barnett, 2005; Beldarrain, 2006; Thorne & Payne, 2005; Thomas, 2006).

Swanigan (2005) states that repetition is the key to learning. Podcasts allow the listener to repeat the same show over and over again (Kaplan-Leiserson, 2006). Podcasting is cheap to make and free to listen to. Delivery to listeners is free and easy. And the entire planet can get your podcast through Internet (Maikat, Martinez, &Jorstad, 2007).

ELT podcasts can be used for intensive and extensive listening activities. However,

ELT podcasts are particularly suited for extensive listening, for the purpose of motivating student interest in listening, and providing them with exposure to native speakers' speech (Rost, 1991).

Stanley (2006) points out that podcasts offer students a wide range of possibilities for extra listening activities both inside and outside of the classroom: "Supplementing the (often) scripted and stilted textbook listening materials with the real life authentic conversations you can find podcasts as an attractive option for language teachers.... Chosen carefully, extracts can ... bring a range of different voices and varieties into the classroom" (para. 1 under "Authentic listening extracts").

2. 6 Podcasts in Research

Podcasts, being a new educational tool are studied in different settings and have promising results.

The Chronicle of Higher Education (Reed, 2005) reported that in 2004, Duke University distributed iPods to all of their freshman class, introducing the notion of "course casting," encouraging faculty to make their lectures available as podcasts. At Purdue University, downloading digital audio files replaced the process of checking out cassette tapes from the college library. As podcasting of course lectures becomes much more widespread, it may become expected of a faculty member in the future, much in the same way that course websites have become the norm over the past ten years.

Morales and Moses (2006) note that podcasts are used for lecturing, tutoring, and remediation by providing up-to-date content, addressing multiple intelligences, and the anytime/anywhere delivery of instructional content. They also note that the podcasts

allow learners to proceed at their own pace, listening to the audio or video as many times as they need to grasp the materials. Beheler (2007) is studying best practices for the effective use of podcasting in postsecondary education and its impact on student engagement. In a survey of over 60 postsecondary educators involved in podcasting, unpublished results indicate that most agree (mean 4.8 / 5) that podcasts can be effectively used as review materials; all agree they are effectively used as supplemental learning materials (5 / 5).

Hargis and Wilson (2005) report that podcasting holds for educators as a tool for promoting conceptual learning. They believe that first a podcast allows learners to listen to others share their ideas, which captures their attention and can sustain this attention for transferring of these concepts into their long term memory. Secondarily, learners can create their own audio podcast, which enables them to reflect on their own learning verbally.

Brittain et. al (2006) describe how podcasts were used in a university biology course. They found that most students (65.7%) used the podcasts as a study tool for reviewing lectures that they already attended. 72.7% felt that listening to class podcasts had a positive impact on their grades.

Chan and Lee (2005) studied podcasting to address preconceptions and anxiety on student learning, and make the case for the use of audio technologies in teaching and learning in a first undergraduate information technology course at Charles Stuart University. Like the study by Brittain et. al, they raised several issues related to the podcasting of classroom lectures including the length of time that students will listen, whether or not students would skip class because they know a podcast will be available

afterward, and what media contents would be most suitable for podcasting. Although the obvious concern over the impact of classroom attendance still lurks, several (Chan and Lee, 2005, Beheler 2007) have found that if students are actively involved in the classroom experience, this is not a major issue.

While these studies refer to distributing an instructor's class lectures as podcasts, the study done in Armenia, examine the process of teaching students through podcasts that were chosen by the researcher and the teacher of one of the participant groups.

The research was conducted in EEC, Department of English Programs (DEP) at American University of Armenia. The groups that took part in research were students of Communication 4 and Communication 6 according to EEC level division, which corresponds to B1 and B2 levels respectively, according to Common European Framework of References of Languages (CEFR) standards. Participants were 22 and their age ranged from 12 to 16. The purpose of this study was to investigate possible changes in students' practices or habits over time and by proficiency level while using podcasts in their language learning process. It also aimed to explore the students' attitude towards using podcasts in language learning and to found out their perceptions about podcasts' educational value. To achieve this purpose, the following study was carried out over one EEC term (10 weeks). The data included the results of weekly survey, field notes and semi-structured interview. Although there were not a lot of differences in students' podcast listening practices between the two groups, it is important to note that Communication 6 group recorded more positive responses in the interview and survey than Communication 4 group learners. However, both group students highly appreciated podcasts' educational value. This finding supports the common perception on the

educational value of podcasts as a new learning and teaching tool.

Current study, which was conducted in Armenia, also aimed to investigate the Armenian EFL learners' perceptions towards the use of podcasts in language learning and find out the effects of podcasts on learners' listening skill enhancement.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether and to what extent podcasts influence the development of the learners' listening skills in English. Thus this part contains settings and participants, instrumentation of data collection, procedures and materials that were used during the research.

The research questions are:

1. Do podcasts have impact on the development of learners' listening skills?

2. What are learners' perceptions about the use of podcasts?

The hypothesis of the study is:

Podcasts do not have any effect on the development of Armenian EFL learners' listening skills.

To find answers to the research questions a quasi-experimental research was designed. The reason why quasi-experimental research methods were used is that the participants were not chosen randomly. This design was implemented in classroom settings where the students were already placed. (Mackey&Gass, 2005; Carol, 2001; Harhady&Hatch, 1981)

3.2 Settings and Participants

The research was carried out in the department of computer graphic and web design at a Vocational School. The Vocational School project aims to improve the quality of life, the psychological and physical wellbeing as well as the socio-economic security of disadvantaged youth. It imparts theoretical knowledge and practical skills in the following professions: culinary arts and restaurant service, computer design, electrical technology and plumbing. The establishment of a fully equipped language classroom will facilitate the educational process more effectively.

A. Goal

The goal of the language classroom where the study was conducted is to provide, 13 students from remote areas of Shirak region as well as anyone interested in learning a trade, to acquire English language skills and knowledge together with their chosen vocation in order to find employment and make a career.

B. Objectives

The activities planned for the language classroom are designed in accordance with the objectives:

- To impart theoretical and practical knowledge necessary for learners to become operational in a range of professional and social situations;

- To assign tasks adaptable for computer equipped classrooms;

- To help students develop skills to autonomously surf the World Wide Web for information relevant to their field;

- To provide a structured framework to practice their conversation skills through challenging, motivational and interactive tasks;

- To involve the students in computer projects that give them the chance to use their computers and the World Wide Web creatively;

- To develop work ethics and management skills through a series of appropriate trainings;

- To introduce the students types of business communication

- Technical colleges, enterprises, construction firms and repair service shops.

The number of the participants was 13, who were placed into two groups. The age of the students varies from 19 to 25. The groups had the same proficiency level. They used the same textbook and met twice a week. The chosen groups (students of the department of computer graphic and web design) were good at technologies and could easily handle the problems that may exist during the experiment. They had free access to the computer laboratory, where they had unlimited Internet connection and free computers any time they want. Both groups were taught by the same teacher. Researcher was responsible for the experimental part, which took 10-15 minutes of the lesson. Podcasts episodes used during the study, were chosen by the researcher.

3.3 Course Materials

The textbooks used in the research are:

1. International Express, intermediate Students and Work Books, Keith Harding & Liz Taylor, Oxford University Press, 2005

2. Internet English, Christina Gitsaki& Richard P. Taylor, Oxford University Press, www.oup.com/elt/internet.english

3. Fifty Strategies for Teaching English Language learners, Adrienne L. Herrel, California State University, Prentice Hall, Inc. 2000

4. Podcast episodes related to the topics existing in the main course book (International Express, intermediate Students and Work Books, Keith Harding & Liz Taylor, Oxford University Press, 2005) were authentic *(see Table 1)*.

The student also used technological tools: computers, phones and iPods.

3.4 Instrumentation

Instrumentations are three: Pre-Test, Post-Test, and Questionnaire (see in Appendixes A, B).

3.4.1 Pre- Posttests

Pre and Post Tests were used for collecting data for the first research question (Do podcasts have impact on the development of EFL learners' listening skills?). As pre and posttests 2 forms of PET (Preliminary English Test) practice tests were chosen. PET is the second level Cambridge ESOL exam. It is an intermediate level exam, at Level B1 of the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

PET covers the four main language skills – reading, writing, listening and speaking, using material from real life situations. It also develops practical skills, which will be of use in clerical, secretarial and managerial jobs, and in many industries, such as tourism, where contact with English speakers is required. That is the reason why the listening part of the test was chosen, which lasts 30 minutes.

It has four parts. The first part (7 points) of the test comprises seven short listening texts, each accompanied by a question and three images. Students listen to the text and then choose the corresponding image. Students indicate the correct answer by ticking the box beneath the appropriate image. The second part (6 points) requires longer text with questions that have six multiple-choice questions. Most questions require understanding of specific information from the text. The third part (6 points) includes longer text, which will take the form of an informational monologue. The text should is heard twice. For this part students have a text where from the context six pieces of information have been removed and they should fill the numbered gaps. The fourth part (6 points) includes longer text, which is in the form of a dialogue. Students should listen to the text and decide which of the six statements are true or false in the context they hear. Then they should tick the appropriate box. The text is heard twice in order to understand detailed meaning of the text. For the whole listening part test-takers get 25 points.

3.4.2 Questionnaire

The data for the second research question was collected through a structured questionnaire (Do podcasts have impact on the development of EFL learners' listening skills?) The questionnaire was in English. It consisted of teen items (See Appendix C).

19

The items in the questionnaire were related to the podcasts and students' practice in using podcasts. The students completed the questionnaire by highlighting one of the responses: Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly disagree. The reason why a structured questionnaire is that it is easy to fill in and analyze (Mackey &Gass, 2005).

3.5 Procedure

The study started on March 12, 2012 and finished on May 26, 2012. The experiment began with the Pre-test for both groups. Then the experimental group was given a brief explanation of podcast and its usage. After the group got the assignments connected to the downloading of required podcasts and listening to them. The control group didn't have the opportunity to use the podcasts for listening. The groups had the same amount of classes, same instructions and teacher. The only difference is that the experimental group used computers after classes and downloaded the required podcasts in the phones, iPods or MP3 players.

The Position of Podcasts in the Experiment

- Place of podcasts in syllabus

  Tool for developing listening (related to the topics existing in the book)

- Place of podcasts in the lesson

  Podcasts were assigned as homework

- Types of student activities that podcasts require

  Some interaction with technological tools (computers, iPods, phones)

- Types of student tasks:

    Listening comprehension; listening for specific information; listening for main idea; etc.

The experiment ended with the Post-test that measured the development of the learners' listening skills during the experiment. At the end the students' attitude towards using podcasts in the learning process was shown in the questionnaire.

3.5.1 Treatment

As mentioned above one of the groups received treatment. The difference was that controlled group had not an opportunity to choose the podcasts episodes from the series corresponding to the topic that they cover in the certain class. While the experimental group, subscribed or downloaded the required podcast episodes.

As mentioned before podcasts episodes (see *Table 1*.) were assigned as a home task, which means students had listened them out of class. Therefore the treatment also included the distribution of the daily check-lists, handouts related to the podcasts and classroom activities that can help the researcher to control the students' involvement in the experiment.

The experimental group spent 10-15 minutes in class on checking and examining whether they had listened the required podcasts. The process were done through the below introduced tools.

One of the above mentioned tools check list was distributed for each lesson. It has five or six questions for quick ticking (See Appendix D). It checks whether student have

downloaded or subscribed the podcasts, and listened them.

The other tool handout that contained tasks related to the daily podcast. The tasks included exercises connected to the identifying the main idea, specific and general information. The sample of the handout can be seen in Appendix E.

The third tool was classroom activity, which required spending 5-10 minutes in the beginning of the lesson and making the students to present the podcasts that they had listened. They had to make a group of two or tree and speak about one of their required podcasts that they had listened.

Table 1

List of Podcast Episodes

Week	Unit	Focus on Function	Podcast Episode	Title of Podcast	Duration
Week 1.	*Unit 9. Urban Living*	*Writing Emails*	203	Text Messaging	5:00
			532	Using and Online Email Program	5: 04
			154	Using Email	3:32
Week 2			316	Business Emails and Abbreviations	5:12
			248	Business Websites	4:40
			308	Formatting a Document	5:16
Week 3	*Unit 10. Getting Your Ideal Job*	*Describing a Process* *Interviewing Techniques*	94	Nervous at an Interview I	4:13
			95	Nervous at an Interview II	4:33
			408	Calling Someone You Haven't Met About a Job	5:25
Week 4			127	Answering Machine Messages	4:19
			448	Making Business Contacts	5:51
			724	Being Impolite in Contacts	4:41
Week 5	*Unit 11. A Tough Choice*	*Business Correspondence*	92	Types of Work	6:12
			800	Advertising Jobs on the Internet	5:02
			31	You've got mail. A day in the life of... a	2:33

				postman	
Week 6			162	Training a New Employee	4:43
			504	Training Inexperienced Employee	3:56
			752	Working with Unreliable People	4:18
Week 7	*Unit 12. News and Views*	*Social Responses* *Common Expressions*	472	Feeling Nervous About Public Speaking	4:19
			644	Giving a Successful Presentation	3:43
			190	Taking a Phone Message	4:39
Week 8			484	Getting a performance Evaluation	4:40
			188	Correcting Misunderstanding at Work	3:45
			170	Questions and Answers at Presentation	4:41

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

4.1. Test Result Analysis

As it is mentioned in the Analysis section, the data analysis was carried out from different perspectives. The following charts and interpretations will illustrate the results of the tests analysis.

The analysis for between group and within group comparisons was done with the help of two Mann-Whitney U tests and Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Tests.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pretest 1	6	9.6667	2.16025
Posttest 1	6	12.6667	2.58199
Pretest 2	7	8.2857	3.14718
Posttest 2	7	12.7143	1.60357

4.1.1 Mann-Whitney U Test

The between group comparison of pretest results can be seen in the *Table 2*.

Table 3
Pretest Rank

Group	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Control	6	8.00	48.00
Experimental	7	6.14	43.00
Total	13		

Looking at the *Table 3,* Mann-Whitney U test for comparison of pretests has a probability **p**=0.445 which is not less than the significance level of 0.05. It indicates that there is no significant difference between the two group pretests.

Table 4
Test Statistics- Pretest

Mann-Whitney U	15.000
Wilcoxon W	43.000
Z	-.862
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.445[a]

a. Not corrected for ties.
b. Grouping Variable: group

Table 5
Posttest Rank

Group	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Control	6	7.17	43.00
Experimental	7	6.86	48.00
Total	13		

Table 6
Test Statistics- Posttest

Mann-Whitney U	20.000
Wilcoxon W	48.000
Z	-.145
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.945[a]

a. Not corrected for ties.
b. Grouping Variable: group

As still **p** value is greater then 0.05, the result illustrates no significant difference in the

performances of the experimental and control groups' posttest results.

4.1.2 Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

Two Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Tests are implemented. In *Table 8, Table 9* and *Table 7* is carried out the comparison of listening performance of the experimental and control groups. The comparison reveals whether experimental group has significantly improved their listening performance.

Table 7
Ranks

Posttest 1 – Pretest 1	Group	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
	Negative Ranks	1[a]	2.00	2.00
	Positive Ranks	4[b]	3.25	13.00
	Ties	1[c]		
	Total	6		

a. posttest1< pretest1
b. posttest1 > pretest1
c. posttest1 = pretest1

Table 8
Test Statistics

	Posttest 1- Pretest 1
Z	-1.483[a]
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.138

a. Based on negative ranks
b. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

As *Table 9* shows that **z** value is -1.483 and the significance level (**p**) is .138, which is not less then 0.05 we can conclude that there is no significant difference between per and posttests. That means that the control group did not improve their listening performance. The following comparison is implemented to find out whether there is significant improvement in the control group listening performance due to zero instruction.

Table 9
Ranks

Posttest 2 – Pretest 2	Group	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
	Negative Ranks	0^a	.00	.00
	Positive Ranks	6^b	3.50	21.00
	Ties	1^c		
	Total	7		

a. posttest2 < pretest2
b. posttest2 > pretest2
c. posttest2 = pretest2

Table 10
Test Statistics

	Posttest 2- Pretest 2
Z	-2.207^a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.027

a. Based on negative ranks
b. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

Table 10 shows the results of the analysis of pretest and posttest of the experimental group, where **z** value equals to -2.207 and p=0.027. As we see **p** value is less then 0.05 and that means that there is significant difference between pre and posttests of experimental group.

4.1.3 Cohen's Effect Size

According Cohen's (1988) guidelines the value of small effect size r = 0.10; medium =0.30; large = 0.50

Table 11
Cohen's Effect Size

	Control Group	Experimental Group
r	0.43	0.59

As we see in the *Table 9* podcasts have more then large effect on the development of learner's listening skills.

4.2 Analysis of Questionnaire

This section will illustrate the results of questionnaire analysis showing the full picture of student's attitudes towards the use of podcasts in language learning process. Bellow calculated the mean and standard deviation for the answers of each question (see *Table 10).* As we can see the almost all answers have the average of 3.29 and higher, which are close to 4 (strongly agree). That means that participants mostly agreed that podcasts are useful for language learning, they help to develop listening their skills, they enjoy listening to podcasts and will use them in future.

Table 12
Mean, Standard Deviation

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
I enjoy listening to podcasts.	3.43	.535
Podcasts are useful for language learning.	3.71	.488
I think podcasts help me a lot in language learning.	3.86	.378
Podcasts are useful for developing listening comprehension.	3.71	.488
Podcasts are easy to use.	3.29	.488
I will listen to podcasts in future.	3.57	.535
Podcasts are new to me.	3.29	.488
I don't know how to handle this new technology.	2.43	.976
I don't think podcasts are interesting.	1.57	.535
I don't enjoy podcasts.	1.57	.535

Valid N (list wise)   7

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the summery of the findings and discussion and implications from the results of the statistic analysis of the collected data. It also contains delimitations and limitations of the research and gives some suggestions for further research.

This study was set up to try to find out the answers to the following research questions:

1. Do podcasts have impact on the development of EFL learners' listening skills?

2. What are learners' perceptions about the use of podcasts during learning process?

Through the above mentioned research questions was rejected the following null hypothesis:

"There is no positive effect between using podcasts and listening development".

5. 1 Discussion and Findings

The purpose of this study was addressed to two questions: first, to find out whether podcasts contributes to students' listening development, and second, to inquire the student's attitude towards using podcasts in language learning. A null hypothesis was formulated and two research questions were recommended based on the literature review. The data taken out of the study were quantitative from per and posttests and an attitudinal questionnaire.

The result analysis illustrated that there was no significant difference in terms of listening development between the experimental and control groups at the end of the

experiment, while there was a significant difference in terms of listening development within group. That means that using podcats in experimental group had some effect and developed their listening skills during the posttest they were given during 10 experimental weeks.

The analysis of the questionnaire administered in the experimental group at the end of the classes showed the learners' attitude towards using podcasts for listening development. The students of the experimental group highly appreciated their experience of downloading and listening to the podcasts that were required. They found beneficial them for the listening improvement. However, some of them found out that podcasts were new technology for them and had some difficulties connected to the downloading.

From the results of the current study, it can be implied that using podcasts as a tools for listening development is beneficial for learners and has a positive effect on the improvement of their listening comprehension skills. According to these results, the following answers are given to the before mentioned research questions. First, there is a positive effect between using podcasts and learners' listening development. Second, learners have positive attitude towards listening to the podcasts as a listening improvement tool. Based on these findings, the null hypothesis, i.e. using podcasts has a positive effect on EFL learners' listening development.

5.2 Implications

The results of this research suggest that, using podcasts were enjoying for the learners as they used them out of class and approached to them as useful tool to develop there listening skill, and as enjoying listening material. It also illustrate that the use of podcasts for improving EFL learners' listening comprehension may be an effective tool. This is the reason that Armenian EFL teachers are advised to integrate podcasts and podcasting in general in the language learning process, especially for listening development, as they are easy to subscribe and download. That means language learners are free to listen them any time and how many times they want.

5.3 Limitations

Limitations of the Study

They are as follows:

1. The participants were not selected and assigned to the two groups randomly.

2. The sample size is small with a total of 13 participants. The study is conducted with a small number of experimental group (n=7). Hence, the study cautions against generalizing the results to a lager EFL population.

3. The research is limited to available short period of time (10 weeks only).

4. This research only used limited number of podcasts (12 required episodes).

Delimitation of the study is that this study engaged students from a certain proficiency level, age group and settings

5.4 Suggestions

This study was conducted for a certain level of student and settings, and it is required to pay attention to the limitations of the study.

1. The results would be beneficial if further research include large amount of EFL participants.

2. It also may be interesting to conduct the same study with different of different language proficiency level.

3. The duration of the study should be long then 10 weeks.

REFERENCES

Anglu, J. *Podcating: A fresh Solution for Old Problems*.

Baker, R.; Harrison, J.; Yates, R. (2006).Podcasting in Higher Education: Toy or Tool?

Barnett, M. (2005), Tech Trends: Podcasting hits the mainstream, *U.S. News & World Report*,
Retrieved September 7, 2006 from http://www.usnews.com.

Cebeci, Z., Tekdal, M. (2006). *Using Podcasts as Audio Learning Objects.* Interdisciplinary
Journal of Knowledge and Learning Objects, Vol 2.

http://ijklo.org/Volume2/v2p047-057Cebeci.pdf

Miguel, R. (2009). *Using E-Tools to Enhance Learners'' Listening.*
http://www.uptc2010.com/USING_E-TOOLS_TO_ENHANCE_LISTENING.pdf

Gregory O'Toole, G (2007). *Colloquium Multimedia-casting syndication for educational
purposes Considerations of a Podcast for use in higher education*.British Journal of
Educational Technology, Vol.38, No. 5.

http://www.quantumedia.org or http://www.radio-qmx.org.

Gribbins, M. (2007). *The Perceived Usefulness of Podcastingin Higher Education: A Survey of
Students' Attitudes and Intention to Use.* Stanley, G. *Podcasting: Audio on the
Internet comes of age.* Retrieved August 20, 2008 from

http://www-writing.berkeley.edu/TESL-EJ/ej36/int.html

Huette, S. (2006). *Podcasting*. Retrieved July 17, 2008, from

http://tep.uoregon.edu/shared/blogswikispodcasts/Podcastin.pdf

Jobbings, D. (2005). *Exploiting the educational potential of podcasting.* Russel Educational
Consultancy and Productions

Kyureghyan, H. (2012). The Use of Podcasting in EFL Classroom: Armenian EFL Students'

Perceptions and Practices While Using Podcasts in There Language Learning Process.

American University of Armenia, p.25

Killian, K., & Lewis, D. (2006). *Use of Podcasting in Higher Education*. Case Study Report

Kelly at.el.(2002). *Effective Ways to Use Authentic Materials with ESL/EFL Students*. Retrieved

July 20, 2008, from http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Kelly-Authentic.html

Morisse, K. &Ramm, M. (2007). Teaching via podcasting: one year of experience with

workflows, tools and usage in higher education. *WorldConference on Educational*

Multimedia, Hypermedia & Telecommunications, pp. 2081-2088.

Morisse,K.; Ramm, M. (2007). *Teaching via Podcasting: One year of Experience with*

Workflows, Tools and Usage in Higher Education.

Nathan, P.; Chan, A. (2007). *Engaging undergraduates with podcasting in a business subject.*

Nunan, D. (2003). *Practical English Language Teaching.*The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

Ng'ambil, D. (2008).*Podcasts for Expansive Learning: A Case of Reflective Podcasts for*

Expansive Learning: A Case of Reflective Podcasts for Expansive Learning: A Case of

Reflective Podcasts for Expansive Learning: A Case of Reflective, SACJ, No 42.

O'Bryan, A. &Hegelheimer, V. (2007). *Integrating CALL into the classroom: the role of*

podcasting in an ESL listening strategies course. ReCALL, Vol. 19, No. 2.

https://netfiles.uiuc.edu/rsadler/shared/CMC/Integrating%20call%20into%20the%20classroom--

the%20role%20of%20podcasting--obryan2007.pdf

Podcasting for ELT. Retrieved July 07, 2008 from

http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/articles/podcasting-elt

Podcasting. Wikitech. Retrieved July 15, 2008, from

http://edutechwiki.unige.ch/en/podcasting pdf

Rost, M. (1991). *Listening in action : Activities for developing listening in language*

teaching. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.

Robson, N.; Greensmith, J. (2009).*Educational podcasts: Some early evidence and thoughts*.

Rostvold, A. (2006). *The use of podcast technology and other online visual media in graphic*

design education: the development of a web site to connect graphic design students and

researchers with global design knowledge and experiences.

Saeed, N., Yang, Y., &Sinnappan, S. (2009). *Emerging Web Technologies in Higher Education:*

Salmon, G. &Edirisingha, P. (2007). *Pedagogical Models for Podcasting in Higher*

Education.University of Leicester, UK.

Retrieved April 30, 2006,

Stanley, G. *Podcasting: Audio on the Internet comes of age.* Retrieved August 20, 2008 from

http://www-writing.berkeley.edu/TESL-EJ/ej36/int.html

SZE, P. M-M. (2007). *Developing Students' Listening and Speaking Skills through ELT Podcasts*

.Education Journa, Vol.34, No. 2.

http://hkier.fed.cuhk.edu.hk/journal/wp-content/uploads/2009/10/ej_v34n2_115-134.pdf

Thong, K. M., Ling, P. B., Chou, P. K. R, (2007). *English Language Pedagogy (Podcasting+*

Pedagogy) Proceedings of the Redesigning Pedagogy: Culture, Knowledge and

Understanding Conference, Singapore.

Woods, J.N. & Philips, S. (2009). *Podagogy: can podcasting enhance the quality of learning and teaching in higher education? Linking Research and Teaching in Higher Education,* Center of Excellence in Learning and Teaching, Special Publication, 1, 177-123

APPENDICES (if any)