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The Effect of Using Podcasts on Enhancing EFL Speaking Skill of Secondary School Students

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Abstract

The aim of the current study is to investigate the effect of using podcasts on enhancing EFL speaking skill of first-year secondary school students. There are four main sub-skills that were the main focus of this study: fluency, accuracy, comprehensibility, and pragmatic competence. The participants of the present study were first-year secondary school students. Two intact classes were chosen at random from Hest Berma Secondary School in El-Gharbia Governorate in the school year 2021/2022. The sample of the study was assigned into two groups: one experimental group and one control group. The tools of the study were a pre /post-speaking test that was administered to measure first-year secondary students' speaking skills and audio portfolios. The data collected were statistically analyzed using the T-test in addition to the ANCOVA test. The results of the study assert the effect of using podcasts on enhancing EFL speaking skill of first-year secondary school students.

Keywords: Podcasting, EFL Speaking Skill, Secondary School Students.

1. Introduction

Speaking is one of the four major skills required for active communication in all languages. Without speech, we are not able to interact with each other. The importance of speaking lies in the fact that without speech a language is changed into a mere script. Consequently, Developing learners' communicative competence and the capability of learners to express themselves precisely and properly in various situations remains the fundamental aim of teaching speaking (Al-Mahrooqi, Coombe, Al-Maamari, & Thakur, 2017; Boonkit, 2010; Qureshi, 2007). Thus, speaking is "an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information" (Al-Mahrooqi et al., 2017, p.137).

As a result, learners usually estimate their success in language learning on the basis of how well they are satisfied with the level they have reached in their spoken language competence (Richards, 2008). As Kassem (2006) explains, Egyptian students have problems expressing themselves fluently in oral English. Torkey (2006) also demonstrates that EFL secondary school students suffer weaknesses in their speaking performance and she attributes these weaknesses to the dominant traditional methods of teaching speaking. So if students practice the appropriate speaking activities, English language classrooms will be entertaining, active, and full of highly motivated students (Nunan, 1999).

Therefore, a possible solution that may help to enhance students' speaking skills and overcome speaking problems among EFL learners may be the use of podcasting. Previous studies assert the efficacy of this application in foreign language learning and teaching contexts: podcasts may enhance academic achievement, increase motivation, and promote learning (Hasan & Hoon, 2013). Rosell-Aguilar (2013) points out that podcasting has been widely considered an effective way to enhance students' learning capability in and out of language classrooms. Similarly, Gromik (2008) claims that podcasting may provide learners with a connection to free, genuine, and inaccessible resources. In addition, using podcasts can

assist learners to acquire the language in a real, useful, genuine context.

1.1 Statement of the problem:

Some Egyptian secondary school students face serious speaking problems when practicing English as a foreign language. Long pauses, hesitation, repetition, mother tongue interference, grammatical errors, pronunciation errors, inability to speak for an extended period of time, and inability to express oneself correctly are among the most common problems that affect speaking.

This study aims at helping general secondary school students overcome their speaking problems by using podcasting. Thus, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the effect of using podcasts on enhancing speaking skill among EFL secondary school students?

Sub-questions:

1-a) What is the effect of using podcasts on enhancing speaking fluency among EFL secondary school students?

1-b) What is the effect of using podcasts on enhancing speaking accuracy among EFL secondary school students?

1-c) What is the effect of using podcasts on enhancing speaking comprehensibility among EFL secondary school students?

1-d) What is the effect of using podcasts on enhancing speaking pragmatic skills among EFL secondary school students?

2. Previous studies:

The previous studies are divided into two main sections: Podcasting and speaking.

2.1 Podcasting

It can be said that podcasting attracted the attention of many researchers. Among others, Holtz and Hobson (2006) explained that podcasts are audio files that include recordings of any form of sound (speech or music) that has been stored on the internet in a format that is identifiable and usable by a computer or other digital media device (like an MP3 player). These recordings are available for learners. They can listen to these recordings online and

they can download them on their personal devices to listen to them any place and any time.

Sze (2006) indicated that there are two main types of podcasts: 1) Radio podcasts that are mainly general radio programs that changed into podcasts later, for example, the podcasts produced by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and 2) Independent podcasts that are made by members and organizations. These podcasts can be adjusted and adapted to meet the interests and needs of all learners so they are important for English language teaching.

There are some standards that should be taken into consideration when selecting podcasts for EFL learners. Relevance is a main factor that should be taken into consideration. Relevance implies that the content of the podcast must be relevant to the learner. When a topic is familiar to the student, it can gain his attention and this can increase learner's motivation (Constantine, 2007). Transferability is another factor that is important to be stressed. Transferability implies that there must be a strong emphasis that what students learn can be stratified to other similar situations at school or in the outside world (Constantine, 2007). Moreover, Cultural appropriateness should be regarded when selecting the podcast. The selected material should mirror learners' beliefs, attitudes, ethics, and values and any topic that attacks these trends should be excluded (Fox, 2008). In addition, Students' levels, needs, abilities, and individual differences should be taken into consideration.

Al Fadda and Al Qasim (2013) supported the notion that the usage of podcasts had positive and significant effects on listening comprehension skills for EFL higher education students. Bradley and Thouèsny (2013) investigated learners' attitudes and expectations towards the usage of podcasts to improve English pronunciation in the Igbo speech community. Abdulrahman et al. (2018) highlighted the effectiveness of using podcasts in improving EFL students' listening comprehension.

2.2 Speaking Skill

Speaking usually seems to be the core skill in language learning. As one of the four skills, speaking is considered the most essential. Those who have knowledge of a language are described as speakers of that language. So, mastering the speaking skill in English is a priority for EFL learners as they estimate their evolution in learning a language in terms of the level of proficiency they have achieved (Wolff & Qiang, 2012; Richards, 2008; Al-Mahrooqi et al., 2017). However, many EFL students are not competent English speakers. They are considered poor participants in English classrooms and this may be due to inefficient methods of teaching speaking (Goh & Burns, 2012). There are some barriers that cause speaking deficiency in general among EFL learners. They are inhibition, linguistic difficulties, ineffective methods of teaching, lack of speech content, inadequate opportunities for practicing speaking, and mother-tongue use. Consequently, the need for integrating new teaching methods is critical for improving learners' proficiency to be able to express themselves precisely and appropriately in different situations (Ammar, 2017).

Speaking skill attracted the attention of many researchers. Among others, Torky (2006) clarified the efficacy of a task-based instruction program in developing the English language speaking skills of secondary-stage students. Shehata (2008) evaluated the effectiveness of using the structural discussion–debate technique on enhancing the speaking skill of first-year secondary school students. Mursy (2016) studied the effect of using an interactive whiteboard on developing fourth-year AlAzhar university students' speaking skills in English as a foreign language and their attitudes towards speaking skills. Ismail (2016) used educational blogs to develop second-year preparatory school students' speaking skills. Ammar (2017) investigated the effect of meaning negotiation strategy instruction on enhancing speaking proficiency of first-year secondary school students in addition to anxiety reduction.

3. Method

This section tackles three major points: study design, participants, and instruments.

3.1 Study Design

This study was conducted using a quantitative/qualitative research method with a quasi-experimental design.

3.2 Participants

The participants of the present study were first-year secondary school students. Two intact classes were chosen at random from Hest Berma Secondary School in El-Gharbia Governorate in the school year 2021/2022. The sample of the study was assigned into two groups: One experimental group and one control group, forty students each. During the experiment, seven students dropped out from each group due to frequent absences. Thus, the number of students in each group was 33 students. The participants were between fifteen and sixteen years old and they have been studying English for nine years.

3.3 Instruments

The current study made use of the following instruments which were utilized to evaluate the effect of using the proposed podcasting program on the participants speaking skill: Pre /post-speaking tests were administered to measure first-year secondary students' speaking skills, a rating scale for the speaking tests, a speaking portfolio, and a speaking portfolio rubric.

4. Implementation

The current study focused on the following procedures of practices for introducing podcasting. Each lesson plan followed the same sequence of steps which are as follows:

After identifying the specific objectives, the teacher presents some brainstorming questions in order to help learners to activate their prior knowledge about the intended topic. After answering the brainstorming questions, the teacher introduces the intended podcast. Then the teacher writes some questions on the

board to create classroom tasks. The teacher discusses the questions with the learners. The teacher asks them to explain what they understand in pairs or small groups. The teacher assigns some speaking activities such as storytelling for podcasts and oral presentations. After teacher feedback, Learners are asked to upload their presentations on the what's app groups to create online discussions.

The teacher uploads the podcast- that the teacher introduced before in class- on the classroom what's up groups to help students to listen to it outside the classroom. Then the teacher uploads learners' audio portfolios on the classroom what's up groups as podcasts of the students. The main aim of this stage is to evaluate learners' progression, to check students' oral production through their podcasts, and to motivate students to practice English freely inside and outside the classroom.

Each student is asked to prepare an individual summary about the intended topic for example as a kind of assignment. In addition, Learners recorded podcasts will be used as learners' portfolios to follow learners' development in speaking. Learners were informed about the role of portfolios as a part of their assessment system.

4.1 Results

The main aim of this study was to improve students' speaking skills in terms of fluency, accuracy, comprehensibility, and pragmatic competence through using podcasts. So, the researcher utilized the t-test in addition to the ANCOVA to statically analyze students' scores on the pre and post-tests to examine the effect of using podcasts on enhancing the students' speaking skills.

4.1.1 Descriptive Statistics of Students' Speaking Skills on the Pre-test:

To check whether the experimental and control groups are almost equivalent in speaking skills before conducting the study, independent samples t-test was used. Table (1) shows the mean scores, the standard deviation, the degree of freedom, the t value,

and the t significance of the speaking skills of both the experimental and control groups on the speaking pre-test.

Table (1): The t-values for the experimental and control groups on the pre-test:

| Speaking Skills | Group | N | Mean | SD | df | t | Sig |
|-------------------------|-------|----|-------|-------|----|-------|------|
| Fluency | Exp. | 33 | 2.55 | .506 | 64 | 1.400 | .166 |
| | Con. | 33 | 2.36 | .549 | 64 | | |
| Accuracy | Exp. | 33 | 2.73 | .674 | 64 | 2.342 | .022 |
| | Con. | 33 | 2.33 | .692 | 64 | | |
| Comprehensibility | Exp. | 33 | 2.70 | .529 | 64 | 1.573 | .121 |
| | Con. | 33 | 2.48 | .566 | 64 | | |
| Pragmatic Competence | Exp. | 33 | 2.61 | .556 | 64 | 1.099 | .276 |
| | Con. | 33 | 2.45 | .564 | 64 | | |
| Overall Speaking Skills | Exp. | 33 | 10.61 | 1.657 | 64 | 2.177 | .033 |
| | Con. | 33 | 9.64 | 1.950 | 64 | | |

As shown in table (1), the t-test value of the speaking skills pre-test was not significant at the 0.05 level for fluency, comprehensibility, and pragmatic competence, but the t-test value was significant at the 0.05 level for accuracy and overall speaking skills. These findings indicate that the two groups were not equivalent in some speaking skills before the experiment. As a result, the effect of the pre-test was excluded as an accompanying variable. Consequently, the researcher utilized the analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) because of the heterogeneity of the experimental and the control group in some skills (Accuracy and overall speaking skills) in the speaking skills pre-test.

4.1.2 Descriptive Statistics of Students' Overall Speaking Skills on the Post-test:

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference between the experimental and control groups' mean scores of the overall speaking skill on the post-test.

To verify this hypothesis, the ANCOVA test was administered. Results are presented in table (2). Table (2) shows the sum of squares, the degree of freedom, the mean squares, the F value, the significance of the overall speaking skills in the post-test, and the partial Eta Squared that represents the effect size.

Table (2) Descriptive Statistics of Students' Overall speaking skills scores on the Post-test: Dependent variable: Overall speaking skills post

| Source | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Partial Eta Squared |
|--------|----------------|----|-------------|---------|------|---------------------|
| Groups | 578.910 | 1 | 578.910 | 379.432 | .000 | .907 |
| Error | 96.121 | 63 | 1.526 | | | |
| Total | 723.000 | 66 | | | | |

Table (2) shows that there is a statistically significant effect of podcasting on the overall speaking skills after controlling for the pre-test, $F(1, 63) = 379.432, p < .05$. Thus, the first hypothesis was rejected. As for the effect size, the result obtained showed that podcasting had a large effect on learners' fluency as the effect size was (.907).

4.1.3 Descriptive Statistics of Students' fluency on the Post-test:

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference between the experimental and control groups' mean scores of speaking fluency.

To verify this hypothesis, the ANCOVA test was administered. Results are presented in table (3). Table (3) shows the sum of squares, the degree of freedom, the mean squares, the F value, the significance of the fluency component in the post-test, and the partial Eta Squared that represents the effect size.

Table (3) Descriptive Statistics of Students' fluency scores on the Post-test: Dependent variable: Fluency post

| Source | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Partial Eta Squared |
|--------|----------------|----|-------------|---------|------|---------------------|
| Groups | 28.067 | 1 | 28.067 | 184.969 | .000 | .803 |
| Error | 9.560 | 63 | .152 | | | |
| Total | 723.000 | 66 | | | | |

Table (3) shows that there is a statistically significant effect of podcasting on the fluency component after controlling for the pre-test, $F(1, 63) = 184.969, p < .05$. Thus, the second hypothesis was rejected. As for the effect size, the result obtained showed that podcasting had a large effect on learners' fluency as the effect size was (.803).

4.1.4 Descriptive Statistics of Students' Accuracy on the Post-test:

Hypothesis Three

There is no significant difference between the experimental and control groups' mean scores of speaking accuracy.

To verify this hypothesis, the ANCOVA test was administered. Results are presented in table (4). Table (4) shows the sum of squares, the degree of freedom, the mean squares, the F value, the significance of the accuracy component in the post-test, and the partial Eta Squared that represents the effect size.

Table (4) Descriptive Statistics of Students' accuracy scores on the Post-test: Dependent variable: Accuracy post

| Source | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Partial Eta Squared |
|--------|----------------|----|-------------|---------|------|---------------------|
| Groups | 19.925 | 1 | 19.925 | 126.157 | .000 | .816 |
| Error | 9.950 | 63 | 1.526 | | | |
| Total | 660.000 | 66 | | | | |

Table (4) shows that there is a statistically significant effect of podcasting on the accuracy component after controlling for the pre-test, $F(1, 63) = 126.157, p < .05$. Thus, the first hypothesis was rejected. As for the effect size, the result obtained showed that podcasting had a large effect on learners' accuracy as the effect size was (.816).

4.1.5 Descriptive Statistics of Students' Comprehensibility on the Post-test:

Hypothesis four

There is no significant difference between the experimental and control groups' mean scores of speaking comprehensibility.

To verify this hypothesis, the ANCOVA test was administered. Results are presented in table (5). Table (5) shows the sum of squares, the degree of freedom, the mean squares, the F value, the significance of the comprehensibility component in the post-test, and the partial Eta Squared that represents the effect size.

Table (5) Descriptive Statistics of Students' Comprehensibility scores on the Post-test: Dependent variable: Comprehensibility post

| Source | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Partial Eta Squared |
|--------|----------------|----|-------------|---------|------|---------------------|
| Groups | 45.951 | 1 | 45.951 | 236.656 | .000 | .832 |
| Error | 12.233 | 63 | .194 | | | |
| Total | 806.000 | 66 | | | | |

Table (5) shows that there is a statistically significant effect of podcasting on the comprehensibility component after controlling for the pre-test, $F(1, 63) = 236.656, p < .05$. Thus, the fourth hypothesis was rejected. As for the effect size, the result obtained showed that podcasting had a large effect on learners' comprehensibility as for the effect size was (.832).

4.1.6 Descriptive Statistics of Students' Pragmatic Competence on the Post-test:

Hypothesis five

There is no significant difference between the experimental and control groups' mean scores of speaking pragmatic competence.

To verify this hypothesis, the ANCOVA test was administered. Results are presented in table (6). Table (6) shows the sum of squares, the degree of freedom, the mean squares, the F value, the significance of the pragmatic competence component in the post-test, and the partial Eta Squared that represents the effect size.

Table (6) Descriptive Statistics of Students' Pragmatic Competence scores on the Post-test: Dependent variable: Pragmatic Competence post

| Source | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Partial Eta Squared |
|--------|----------------|----|-------------|---------|------|---------------------|
| Groups | 59.706 | 1 | 59.706 | 160.371 | .000 | .753 |
| Error | 23.455 | 63 | .372 | | | |
| Total | 776.000 | 66 | | | | |

Table (6) shows that there is a statistically significant effect of podcasting on the pragmatic competence component after controlling for the pre-test, $F(1, 63) = 160.371, p < .05$. Thus, the fifth hypothesis was rejected. As for the effect size, the result obtained showed that podcasting had a large effect on learners' pragmatic competence as for the effect size was (.832). In conclusion, these results revealed that podcasting had a large effect on improving students' speaking skills in terms of fluency, accuracy, comprehensibility, pragmatic competence, and as a result learners' overall speaking skills.

4.1.7 Data Analysis of students' Speaking Portfolios

To investigate the way podcasting affected the experimental group's speaking skills, the Repeated Measures ANOVA test was used to compare learners' scores on the eight

lessons of the speaking portfolio (1,4,7,10,13,16,19,&22). Data analysis of learners' audio portfolios revealed a gradual growth in their speaking skills. This analysis was also confirmed by the analysis of learners' oral interviews that will be reported later. Results presented in table (7) compare learners' scores on the speaking portfolio.

Table (7): Results of Students' Scores on the Speaking Portfolio

| Source | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-----------|----------------|----|-------------|----------|------|
| Intercept | 20794.125 | 1 | 20794.125 | 4769.978 | .000 |
| Error | 139.500 | 32 | 4.359 | | |
| Total | 20933.625 | 33 | 20798.484 | | |

Results in table (7) indicate that there was a statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level among learners' scores of the speaking portfolios. This indicates a gradual development of learners' speaking skills throughout the recordings of the eight speaking portfolios. The gradual development of learners' speaking skills throughout the experiment is introduced in figure (1).

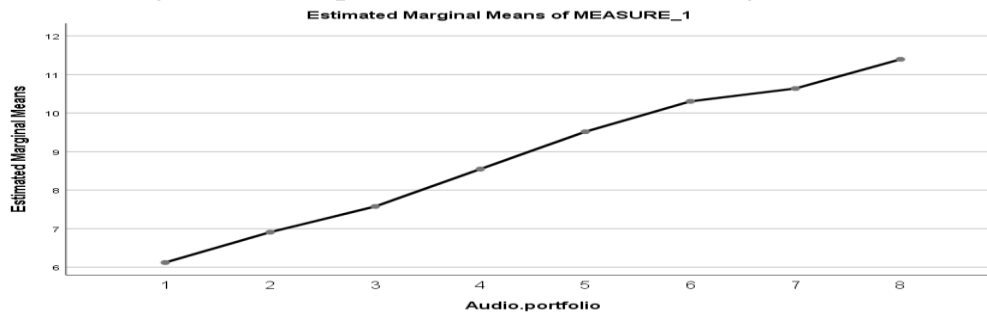


Figure (1): Development of Learners' Speaking Skills on the Speaking Portfolios

4.2 Discussion

In this section, the study results will be discussed. This means that this part will investigate the results related to the overall speaking skill and its components (fluency, accuracy, comprehensibility, and pragmatic competence)

4.2.1 The Effect of Podcasting on Learners' Overall Speaking Skills

The ANCOVA test results revealed that there was a statistically significant difference at 0.05 level between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups' post-test on the overall speaking skills in favor of the experimental group. Results revealed that the experimental group that utilized podcasting became more successful speakers than those of the control group. Thus, podcasting has a positive effect on enhancing the experimental group members' speaking skills.

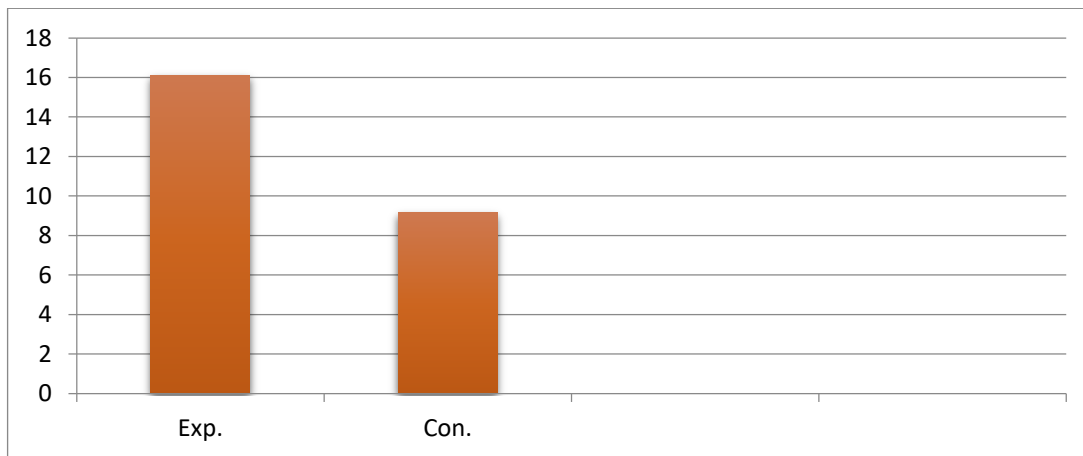


Figure (2): The mean scores for the overall speaking skill on the post-test.

The current study results are consistent with the researchers' findings. For example, Farangi et al. (2015) shed light on the effect of podcasting in language classrooms as it had a positive effect on EFL learners' speaking skills in the experimental groups. Bustari, Samad, and Achmad (2017) also concluded that podcast media could be used as an efficient way of teaching English, especially speaking skill in EFL classes.

Improvements in learners' overall speaking skills may be due to many factors. The method of teaching, the podcast activities, the authentic material of all podcasts, practicing English inside and outside the classroom through in-class and online activities, the relevance of the content of the selected podcast, classroom atmosphere Continuing feedback, and pair and group work are

among the most important factors that helped to improve learners' overall speaking skills. Asking learners to make their own audio portfolios was another reason that helped to provide more opportunities for learners to practice English inside and outside the classroom.

4.2.1.1 Fluency

The ANCOVA test results revealed that there was a significant improvement in fluency at 0.05 level between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups post-test in favor of the experimental group. Thus, podcasting was effective in enhancing the fluency skill of the experimental group. The difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group is manifested in figure (3).

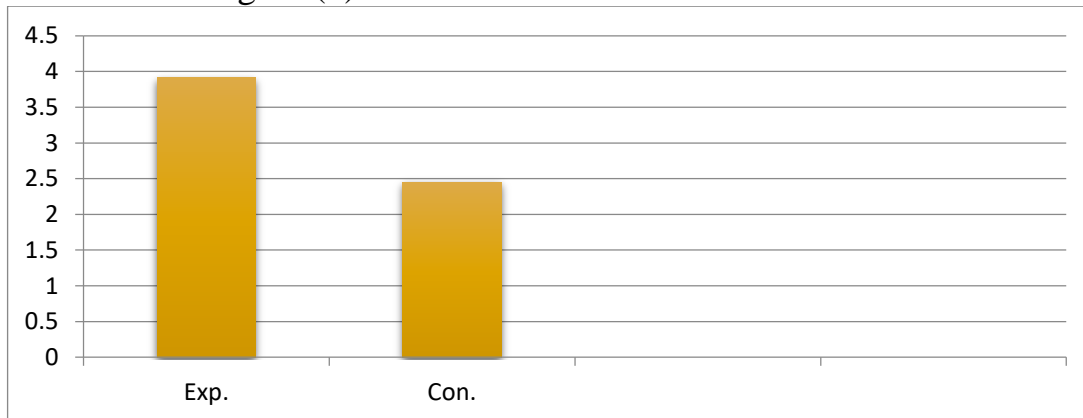


Figure (3): The mean scores for fluency on the post-test for the experimental and control groups.

This result is in line with the results of other researchers. Baehaqi (2015) reported that Podcasting was successful in this study in that it led to considerable improvement in fluency and vocabulary size consistency during oral performance. Moreover, Bustari et al. (2017) showed that podcasting helped in achieving significant improvements in both aspects (fluency and pronunciation) for the experimental group. This change may come due to some factors. During the experiment, Learners were encouraged to practice English inside and outside the classroom through in-class and online activities with continuous feedback. Utilizing different types of

feedback implicit and explicit supported the learning process and developed learners' fluency skill.

Providing adequate time for learners to prepare their oral productions (learners' podcasts that were used as a base for the audio portfolio) with plenty of feedback give them the opportunity to organize their thoughts and improve their fluency.

4.2.1.2 Accuracy

The results of the ANCOVA test indicated that there was a statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level in the mean scores of the post-test in favor of the experimental group. This means that podcasting was effective in enhancing the experimental group members' accuracy skill. The difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group is manifested in figure (4) below:

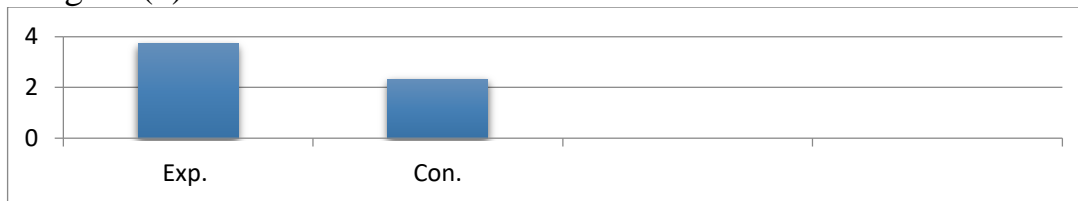


Figure (4): The mean scores for fluency on the post-test for the experimental and control groups.

The results of the present study are in accordance with other research findings. Bamanger and Alhassan (2015) added that podcasting has a positive effect on enhancing learners' accuracy, English grammar, and vocabulary. Baehaqi (2015) reported that Podcasting has a positive effect on improving vocabulary acquisition during oral performance.

This improvement in learners' accuracy including grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary may be ascribed to several factors. The authentic material helped learners pronounce words correctly and helped them to learn a wide range of vocabulary, and to concentrate on features such as stress, pitch in addition to intonation. The continual feedback during the experiment helped learners to be aware of their own mistakes regarding word order, fragments, grammatical mistakes, pronunciation, and the correct use

of vocabulary till they were able to correct these mistakes themselves.

4.2.1.3 Comprehensibility

The results of the ANCOVA test revealed a significant difference at the 0.05 level in the post-test mean scores on comprehensibility in favor of the experimental group. This means that podcasting was effective in enhancing comprehensibility of the experimental group. Figure (5) shows the difference in the mean scores of the post-test between the experimental group and the control group on comprehensibility.

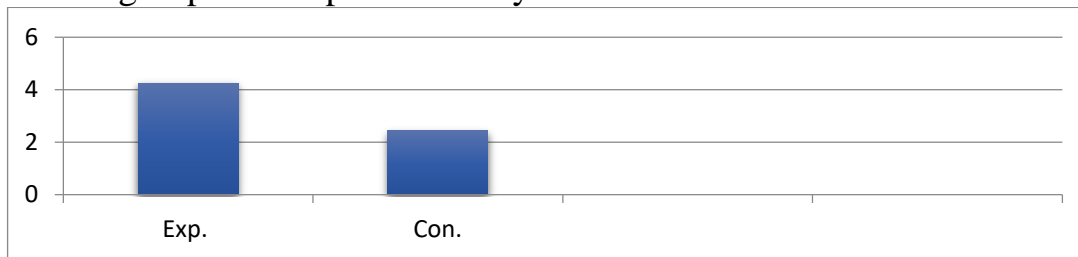


Figure (5): The mean scores for comprehensibility on the post-test for the experimental and control groups.

These results are in agreement with other studies which found significant differences in students' comprehensibility when they were exposed to podcasts. Al Fadda and Al Qasim (2013) clarified that podcasts were effective in enhancing learners' comprehension. Similarly, Farangi et al. (2015) asserted that podcasting has a positive effect on enhancing learners' comprehensibility level and speaking skills in general.

Learners' ability to produce fluent and accurate utterances without unnecessary pauses and hesitations qualifies them to convey more comprehensible messages. Learners' development in comprehensibility may come due to the comprehensible input that was introduced to the learners through different authentic podcasts. In addition, the normal speed of the selected podcasts that was convenient to the level of the learners helped to achieve more understanding of the content that led to more comprehensible output. In addition, the relevance of the content of the selected podcasts to the school material helped to achieve a better understanding of the

content of the topics and as a result, improved learners' oral productions that were more comprehensible. Similarly, different debate activities helped to achieve a deep understanding of the selected topics and learners were able to defend their points of view.

4.2.1.4 Pragmatic Competence

The results of the ANCOVA test revealed a significant difference at the 0.05 level in the post-test mean scores on comprehensibility in favor of the experimental group. This means that podcasting was effective in enhancing pragmatic competence of the experimental group. Figure (6) shows the difference in the mean scores of the post-test between the experimental group and the control group on pragmatic competence.

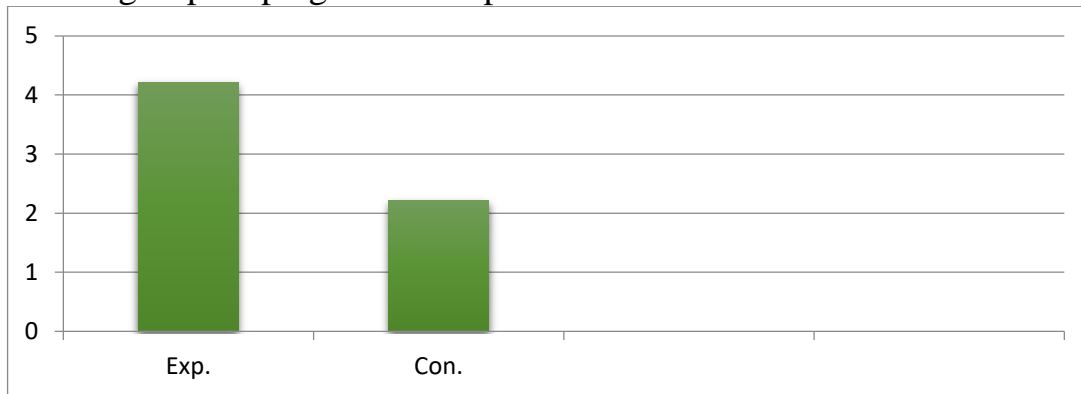


Figure (6): The mean scores for pragmatic competence on the post-test for the experimental and control groups.

These results are in agreement with other studies. Iamsaard and Kerdpol (2015) emphasized the major role of dramatic activities in helping learners to communicate more effectively using the target language. Ismail (2016) asserts that combining face-to-face instruction with online learning (using blogs as an educational tool) has a positive effect on helping learners to use language appropriately in different contexts.

This improvement in learners' pragmatic competence was clear in learners' ability to use English properly in different social situations and contexts. Learners were able to use the target language appropriately in communication in terms of formality, politeness, and directness.

This improvement in learners' pragmatic competence may come due to several factors. The authentic material, the varied activities, and the adequate time that was given for learners' speaking portfolios helped learners to concentrate on using functions appropriately. In addition, combining face-to-face instruction with online learning through using podcasts also helped learners to concentrate on using functions properly.

4.2.2 Speaking portfolios

As shown before in figure (1), Learners showed a gradual development in their speaking skills throughout the recordings of the eight speaking recordings. Similarly, using audio portfolios improved learners' affective and technological skills.

This improvement in learners' speaking skills through learners' portfolios was clear in learners' development in fluency, accuracy, comprehensibility in addition to pragmatic competence.

Utilizing audio portfolios also improved learners' affective skills. At the beginning of the recordings, most learners were afraid of making mistakes, shy, anxious, less confident, and less motivated. Then they progressively began to speak easily without thinking about possible errors. They gradually become no more shy or anxious. At the end of the recordings, they were highly motivated and more confident.

As for the results of learners' audio portfolios, these improvements may be ascribed to several factors. The competitive atmosphere that overwhelmed the classroom, continuing feedback, and Pair and group work stressed cooperation among learners. By the end of the experiment, each learner had his own speaking portfolio for the eight lessons (1, 4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 19, &21) in order to follow up and monitor his/ her own progress.

These results are in accordance with the results of other researchers. Safari and Koosha (2016) indicated that students in the experimental group performed better in terms of speaking skill than students in the control group after the treatment of speaking portfolios. Daphni (2012) indicated positive changes in students' attitudes towards English as a result of using the oral portfolio.

Özdemir-Çağatay (2012) explained that learners could more effectively compensate for their mistakes and monitor their progress in speaking through speaking portfolios than they can in the traditional achievement exams. Yoshida (2001) emphasized that audio portfolios help in monitoring individual student progress and achievement.

5. Conclusion:

The current results provided evidence that podcasting is effective in enhancing EFL secondary school students speaking skill. Using authentic material, authentic activities, plenty of feedback, and providing numerous opportunities of practicing the target language helped to create a more real and meaningful competitive learning environment and helped learners to participate in their own learning. The cooperative learners' work with classmates while creating podcasts enhanced learners' effective and social skills. Learners were deeply interested as the topics covered by the podcasts were relevant to their school materials. Through utilizing podcasts learners changed from passive listeners to active participants who are able to express themselves freely without fear or embarrassment. So podcasts could be implemented as a motivating teaching tool that could be used anywhere and anytime. The present study is limited to two classes of general secondary school first-year students and to a limited period of time for applying the program (the first school term, 2021-2022). Therefore, Results can hardly be generalized due to limitations of time participants and other exigencies.

5.1 Suggestions for further research:

Yet, there are several research issues to be explored:

- 1-Further research is needed to investigate the effect of using podcasting on listening, reading, writing, and oral skills at different stages (primary, preparatory, and college).
- 2- Further research is needed to investigate the effect of using podcasting on learners' motivation, attitudes towards language learning, and academic achievement.



- 3-Further research is needed to investigate the effect of using podcasting on learners' vocabulary acquisition and use.
- 4- Further research is needed to investigate the effect of using vodcasting on enhancing different language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) may be an explored area.

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