Integrating podcasts in the EFL classroom. A case study in 1º E.S.O.

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Abstract. This paper aims to report a podcasting study case while interrogating how useful it can be in the makings of an EFL classroom with positive learning outcomes. It is applied research in 1º E.S.O that operates on the main working hypothesis that there is a significant positive correlation between the use of podcasting and student’s engagement. Likewise, it seeks to preclude the notion that podcasts are a cure-all practice to undesirable learning outcomes. I shall draw from two sources of data to identify this possible correlation. First, an initial recollection of student’s attitudes through qualitative data, namely, questionnaires on two bilingual and a non-bilingual group of 1º E.S.O to comprehensively illustrate the state of the subject. Second, a final teacher’s assessment of the process-performance tasks to ponder grades as quantitative data helpful to uphold the avowed success. Within the field of social constructivism, this case is undergirded by previous literature recommendations on how to use podcasts, which the best integration scenarios are and some pedagogical considerations concerning information processing and how to enhance students’ output in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom.

Keywords: podcasting, integration, EFL, qualitative research, secondary education.

[es] Integrando podcasts en el aula de inglés como lengua extranjera. Estudio de caso en 1º de E.S.O.

Resumen. Este artículo se propone presentar un estudio de caso con podcasts mientras cuestiona su utilidad y resultados del aprendizaje positivos en la configuración del aula de inglés como lengua extranjera. Se trata de una investigación aplicada en 1.º E.S.O que funciona sobre la principal hipótesis de trabajo de que existe una correlación positiva significativa entre el uso de los podcasts y la participación de los estudiantes. Del mismo modo, intenta evitar la falacia de que los podcasts sean la panacea para los resultados de aprendizaje indeseables. Para identificar dicha correlación recogeré datos de dos fuentes distintas. Primero, una recolección inicial de las actitudes de los estudiantes a través de datos cualitativos, específicamente cuestionarios de dos grupos bilingües y uno no bilingüe de 1.º E.S.O para ilustrar el estado de la cuestión. Segundo, una evaluación recabada por el profesor del rendimiento del alumnado en las actividades con vistas a ponderar las notas como datos cuantitativos útiles para constatar el éxito de la experiencia. Enmarcado en el campo del constructivismo social, este caso se apoya en las recomendaciones de estudios anteriores sobre cómo usar los podcasts, cuáles son los mejores escenarios de integración y algunas consideraciones pedagógicas en torno al procesamiento de la información y cómo aumentar la producción de textos, orales y escritos, en el aula de inglés como idioma extranjero.

Palabras clave: podcasting, integración, inglés como lengua extranjera, investigación cualitativa, educación secundaria.

Contents. 1. Introduction. 2. Literature review. 2.1. Listening habits. 2.2. Strengths. 2.3. Weaknesses. 2.4. Integration scenarios. 2.5. Pedagogical considerations. 3. Case Study. 3.1. Research methodology. 3.2. Objectives. 3.3. Context. Participants. 3.4. Results. 3.5. Discussion. 4. Conclusion.

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1. Introduction

The Internet has given rise to a different contextualization and redefinition of our social networks and academic research. Prensky (2001) coined the much-heated term ‘digital natives’ to address those persons whose upbringing has been inextricably bound with technologies and the Internet. The use of technologies has been either downgraded or exalted at the mercy of stakeholders, thus requiring a major overhaul in the EFL classroom, especially. It is telling that although many studies have been carried out in higher education or with advanced learners (Al Fadda et al. 2013, Al Shehri 2011, Anusienė 2009, Berlanger 2005, Chacón 2011, Clark et al. 2009, Kies et al. 2011, Lane 2006, Lonn 2009, Mcminn 2008) findings suggest that there is an underdeveloped field of study in K-12 podcasting research. More broadly, applied research is needed to determine the best material for each high school level and to find out which types of activity can transform the teaching-learning process actively on the long run, particularly when integrating podcasts as part of the curricula rather than lecture-reduplicated podcasts and traditional course settings.

A challenging problem which arises in this domain is how teachers resort to their sociocultural understanding of m-learning and its pedagogical considerations. By calling attention to issues of motivation, podcasting can lead to a greater bonding between the student body and the syllabus in the EFL classroom. Even if children do not learn how to understand the spoken word, Durbridge (1984) points out that the “spoken word can influence a learner’s cognition (adding clarity and meaning)” and motivation because many learners prefer putting their skills into visible practice. Thus, teachers would have to delve into the intricacies of podcasting in favour of a sense of rapport, realism and motivation (Barron 2004). There is a growing field of research in current efforts to reinforce bilingualism or ICTs as the standard practice and one way to be addressed this challenge is that of podcasting as a learner-centred tool. For this study, it was of interest to investigate whether the ascription to both podcasting input and output tasks brought about positive learning outcomes. This project aims to develop an overarching framework based on the premise that “our social and cultural understanding of tools and complex digital technologies affect our ability to use them for learning” (Kies et al., 2011: 1). In fact, it all comes down to raise awareness of the emancipator nature of education and underscore how befitting podcast come into the limelight of teaching practices, abridging the gap between traditional listening activities and self-paced podcasting. The distinction hence implies that the latter promotes an action-oriented class whereby students have their say and are geared into self-directed work.

2. Literature review

The term “podcast” has come to be generally used to refer to the blending of the words iPod and broadcast, appearing to be that digital content that can be downloaded, mostly through Really Simple Syndication (RSS) or compressed data online.
Spanning across diverse fields of interests, podcasts can either deal with sciences, technologies, arts and so on, boasting the capability of omnipresent access, anywhere and anytime. “The distinction between streaming and downloading of media content has begun to blur” hereby allowing an expanding circle of online content that can be easily accessed domestically (Fernandez et al., 2009: 386).

To date, there has been little agreement on what boundaries may be overstepped with the reduced dependence on physical material, (Berlanger, 2005). Nonetheless, podcasts are chiefly grounded as a learner-centred resource that enhances autonomy, language and digital competence owing to their empowering ability on the selection of content to students.

2.1. Listening habits

Based on Lonn’s paper “76 % of surveyed students listen/watch content on their laptop computers” while “only 9% on portable audio devices” (2009: 90). Thus far, the premise of mobility when using iPods glosses over formal educational contents in favour of desktop computers. This statement is supported by the habit formation theory (Lee, Miller, & Newham, 2009). Arguably, people “demarcate boundaries between their personal and leisure time” because attending to multiple information sources leads to split attention to our limited working memory (Hew, 2008: 348). Although podcasts may have somewhat proven to be scarcely heard on the move, we can assert that their accessibility cannot be undermined since we are dealing with a push technology that can be downloaded either intuitively or through RSS, which allows us to subscribe to a feed and receive their content regularly (Kies, 2011).

It could be argued that their length should be tantamount to a song (Walsh, 2004) since “students value the succinctness of the podcast episodes and appreciate that they only contain information important to their learning” (Clark et al., 2009: 230). Although different studies do not coincide particularly with this view, videos and podcasts under 5 minutes long are quite recommendable for lower levels. This can be shown through teaching in any beginners’ SL class, since learners may lose attention promptly if the stimulus is in anyway unsatisfying. Kay (2012) points out that “viewing patterns may be partially related to innate cognitive ability. For example, if a student has a relatively weak short-term memory, then he/she might have to review a video clip more often than a student with a stronger short-term memory”.

2.2. Strengths

Overall, three main aspects are classified as the most relevant, as Fox argues: “content choice, portability and time shifting” (2008). Podcasts give learners control over their exploration processes and allow them to search for and discover motivational, educational material independently (Anusienė et al., 2009), thus advocating for socio-constructivist theories and inquiry-based learning. Learning and self-access resources become the focus of the teaching practice, giving rise to a better comprehension of subject matter, enabling students to re-visit matter already learnt (Kies et al., 2011). It is precisely their self-paced manner what makes them qualify as flexible and non-threatening materials, providing that they can use them out of class. This promising feature helps student’s attitudes to capture course material including nar-
rative and visual media components in line with the cognitive theory of multimedia learning (Anusienė et al., 2009).

Podcasts can either qualify as supplemental material (PSM) or be integrated into the curriculum (PIC) (Nesi, 2016). Hence, assessment-focused podcast activities situated within context-based learning experience have proven to be the most effective (Clark et al., 2009). Thompson (2007) deems beneficial the use of podcasts as supplementing material bridging dull tasks, because it is in bolstering the integration of high student appeal (HSA) activities that we can surmount the hurdles of teaching phobia subjects like grammar, which, tellingly, bear low student appeal (LSA).

Furthermore, Lee and Chan (2007: 206) maintain that “short bite-sized audio clips cannot only fill dead-time moments […] but also coincide with these activities for pervasive learning that is interwoven into the learners’ lifestyles”, hereby justifying the convenience and time savings for the daily grind. Regardless of the subject and the needs analysis, podcasting has tremendous potential for positive learning outcomes and different educational purposes, because it increases control over their learning, either substituting lecture-based material or adding information that may broaden or deepen student understanding (McGarr, 2009).

Another asset of podcasting is that of student-created podcasts since this type of activity aims to promote a personalised learning experience. It develops collaborative environment enforced team building skills and the student’s sense of community and thereby their enjoyment in the task (Al- Fadda, 2013). Clark et al. (2009) also assert that podcasting bear prospective applications within the classroom as authentic assessment process-performance tasks. This is so due to the valuable creation of their own podcasts (Jonassen et al. 2008).

Students will, therefore, display an active role whereby they will monitor what they are going to say and how they will negotiate what the team wants to talk about. Poised as a low-risk activity, they can record themselves at will, because self-paced learning has proven to be effective in reducing isolation-induced anxiety and promoting a sense of belonging to a community of learners (Lonn, 2009: 89). Likewise, it is also an advantage of a blended approach in which students are encouraged to generate their own recordings (Edirisingha, Fothergill & Salmon, 2007; Burston, Song & Zhang, 2011).

2.3. Weaknesses

Tellingly, the main disadvantages of this methodology may be divided into two categories: first-order barriers like lack of time and technical problems, and second-order barriers, namely, obstacles intrinsic to the participant, such as unfamiliarity or not seeing the relevance of podcasting (Hew, 2008). Berlanger (2005) points out the quality of the recordings and the lack of awareness of accurate knowledge of iPod functionality.

A limitation gathered from previous literature is that there is a breach between leisure time and educational content, probably because “the Net Generation’s information competencies should not be confused with their confidence” (Oblinger et al., 2006: 12). It is worth noting that the general presumption of digital competence “digital immigrants” (Prensky, 2001) does not apply systematically to all students, but there is a blatant shift in the “role of the instructor […] gradually developing from monitoring and facilitating towards a mandate of assisting in the exchange of
knowledge by creating a mode of interaction among learners” (Beldarrain, 2006: 149).

Time pressures and the student’s level of English language skill and knowledge of the medium have been identified as time-consuming first-order barriers. Another limitation is the inability of podcasts to relay visual information, as it may represent an additional resource to those already utilising multiple resources of learning and give rise to cognitive overload (Walls et al., 2009). However, this can be counterbalanced with the aid of power point slides, visual gestures or a vodcast, more specifically, an RSS feed that brings about videos of your choice parallel to podcast subscription. As Clark et al. (2009) remark that “adding visual or meta information […] appeal to a range of student learning preferences” (220), equally, Mayer’s (2011) cognitive theory of multimedia learning also gathers that learning is obtained by integrating information of separate cognitive channels, the visual and the auditory. Incorporating podcasting in the EFL classroom implies the self-evident need for slides, images, appealing visual forms that contribute to the global grasp of a podcast in terms of accessibility for hearing impairment students. However, meticulous planning can anticipate and account for these barriers accordingly.

Concern upon students missing classes on previous studies is non-applicable for the study since the compulsoriness of high school classes satisfies this drawback. Lazzari (2009) reckoned three types of higher education students according to their behaviour: distal users who may use podcasts as a tool for distance learning, proximal users, and central users. This uncharted territory will hitherto wrangle with proximal and central users in terms that the focus of podcasting will be in delivering meaningful, engaging material to increase the likelihood of central users.

Another admonition of podcasting is that of promoting too much digital content, an issue that Lum (2006) seriously describes with the philosophical constraint that “podcasting merely spoon-feeds education to a generation that has grown dependent on entertainment-driven gadgets at the expense of reasoning, creativity and problem solving” (1). Yet again, the dread for technologies hinges on how technologies are employed, and to which extent the limits of our society are pushed, no longer as passive consumers but as active educational agents.

2.4. Integration scenarios

When it comes to select the best procedure to integrate podcasting, models that differ from traditional settings are widely recognised as the most useful in terms that allow more convenience, autonomy and enable students to show their creativity (Kies et al., 2011). It may be therefore the case that the reinforcement of basic concepts through the case-based teaching is wholly beneficial for students to hone their skills and thus, options like the flipped classroom can revert traditional “sage on the stage” to “scribe on the side” practices (Kalmey, 2013: 1054).

In the light of previous literature, O’Bryan and Hegelheimer (2007) suggest three scenarios models for their integration as illustrated with Fig.1. Firstly, a mere reduplication of class sessions, secondly, a supplementing podcast that adds relevant information to what was covered in class, and thirdly, most importantly of all, a scenario that builds on the second one, with the difference that the podcast is also an integral part of the subsequent class, thereby serving in a preparatory fashion. There-
fore, the focus of this applied research will be aspiring for the third model, thus ensuring a higher level of integration.

Figure 1. O’Bryan and Hegelheimer (2007: 166).

Apart from these current practices in podcasting, Plankis and Weatherly’s (2008) suggest that future stakeholders upload podcast material to the web and withal, ascribe podcasting to good teaching practices to collect empirical data for its usefulness.

Contrary to general considerations, it has been suggested that “the use of podcasts is relatively low in the language discipline since one might expect that the use of audio as an instructional medium would be self-evident in cases such as learning a foreign language” (Hew, 2008: 339). This raises the need for further applied research in high school contexts, there being English as a Second Language the focus of the study.

2.5. Pedagogical considerations

Podcasts have been proving positive language learning outcomes despite lacking a concrete pedagogical framework, albeit mostly interrelated to socio-constructivist theories. Although it is becoming apparent that the majority of today’s students co-construct a social reality and establish norms for participation through multiple online information sources (Lonn, 2009). Students want to be involved, to see that their efforts are advantageous and so learner’s self-direction and personalisation should be enabled, rather than current models that reinforce students as consumers (McLoughlin and Lee, 2008).

In the same breath, podcasting can be harnessed to good use as a learner-centred resource and a means to promote language and digital competence out of the EFL classroom. All in all, because it serves its purpose as authentic material that shows more bits of English, formal and informally speaking, bridging the gap age on the teacher-student relationship and resorting to mobile technology as a means “to enhance different student-centred practices, meaningful outside-classroom and contextualized language learning opportunities involve learning” (Al Shehri, 2011: 2).

Since young learners ageing eleven to thirteen constitute the experimental groups, their average level of English and Internet-user skills should be noted as a caveat.
Therefore, the selection of material and websites should positively be delivered by the teacher, matching their existing expertise, i.e. Vygotsky’s “zone of proximal development” (1962). Nevertheless, this can be easily handled with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the convenience of adaptable materials.

Kay (2012: 21) argues that “a number of suggestions for future research have emerged from the quality and content of previous studies” such as working on the methodology, quality, and design of video podcasts, instructor perspective and pedagogy. Below is an original easy-to-follow method for adapting podcasts to the classes that this study proposes:

1. Observation of the context, shifting the focus to student’s potential interests, desirable podcasts’ length and curricular level.
2. Find/design a podcast that matches their interest, and that bears a connection with the high school curriculum.
3. Prepare students for the podcasts activity accordingly.
4. Undertake the podcast activity.
5. Assessment of learning outcomes and long-term integration.

2.5.1. Information processing

Basing upon the social constructivist framework, this paper seeks to prove the importance of cognitive load for classroom planning by focusing particular attention to the pedagogical podcast design, whose content qualifies as a stimulus, that is, anything that has the capacity to hold student interest (Woodward, 2012). According to the findings of Ausubel (1960) and his deductive method, the material used in the classroom must be related to the previous knowledge of the class so that the student-teacher interaction increases. Ausubel suggests giving a lot of examples to structure the information. He distinguishes two kinds of content advance organisers: first comes the comparative organiser, which aims to activate the memory of our existing knowledge structures available and whose recognizable traits may help to incorporate forthcoming contents, and secondly, the expository organiser, which embodies new data within our cognition. Comparative organisers and expository organisers, when combined accordingly, help to guide students throughout their learning processes.

In this sense, establishing a common ground for making the most of our attention span seems of paramount importance whereas identifying ostensible peaks of attention help us link the students’ attention and short-time memory with the content. The primacy principle, for example, points out that the first words in a row are far easier to remember than those in the middle. Moreover, the recency principle states the same for the end of a string of words, notwithstanding, our memory cannot retain the middle of the message as easily. In a string of words somehow related per se, everything that shares a similar content may be unconsciously recognised as irrelevant, so it is hence our duty to provide a significant stimulus that will trigger a desirable response. This is so because the Von Restoff effect shows that we tend to recall the most significant elements within a list and by extension, contents need to be explained in an easy, engaging and thought-provoking way so that not only the student’s participation may be enhanced, but the content’s acquisition.
The image above represents the core idea for designing an easy-to-remember podcast session. Lessons may vary in the sense that many threads or task-based activities may structure class sessions with the aid of a stimulus, be it through the analysis, personalisation, alteration, transference or creation of additional content as long as the essential content is examined and controlled (Woodward, 2012).

As already mentioned, the third model of O’Bryan, A., & Hegelheimer, V. (2007). Fig.1 will be followed in our applied research so that listening-oriented podcasts are directly related to the student-produced podcasts. One day per week a cloze exercise with a short podcast of 1-5 minutes will be undertaken, previously chosen and edited to qualify as slightly challenging material related to curricular content.
Firstly, a vocabulary builder of the unit and brainstorming of ideas on the blackboard shall warm up students for the topic. Examples will have to drill the reception and short-time memory of students until previous concepts have crystallised into their Short-Term Memory (STM). Lu (2007: 93) underscores the need of a constructivist grounding declaring that “for lower-level learners, however, there may be a need for advance organisers and vocabulary supplementation or word-level transcription as committing too many mistakes may overwhelm and discourage the learner”.

Secondly, the primary and most important activity, the one involving the podcast. For instance, they would have to speculate about the content of the listening after reading the title, then listen for gist while taking notes. Then, with the aid of some gapped transcripts infer, deduce and place words in context according to what they hear, and think could be meaningful for verifying their hypotheses (Vandergrift, 1999). All these cloze exercises will be supported by follow-up activities which will act as a bridge between our lessons dealing with key concepts. When convenient, listening with a transcript prepared by the teacher can readapt the difficulty and set up a low-risk activity in line with accepted cognitive theories.

Thirdly, a class discussion or follow-up activity should lead to a better reflection and long-term data storage since a simple recapitulation helps to raise awareness about what has been taught and so enhance student’s retention.

2.5.2. SLA Theory

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) highlights the critical role of language input in language learning (Dunkel 1991, Feyten 1991). Vandergrift (1999) underscores from previous literature “a preliminary emphasis on listening” and that the “the limited attentional resources of Short-Term Memory to concentrate on meaning” lead to the conclusion that preventing our students from cognitive overload prepares them to a more efficient output, one that percolates into Long-Term Memory (168-69). In fact, by favouring listening comprehension, we are thus eliminating pressure and contributing to a better predisposition for internalising rules and motivation.

Textbooks, regular tape recordings, and other standardised materials are undeniably fair, but even these can fall short in conveying a proper contextualization and motivating interpretation of what English can offer learners. It should be remembered that dictation has long been used in the language classroom to train language learner’s listening ability while nowadays, a vast array of digital content is being underdeveloped along with the multitude of podcasts that cater especially to ESL/EFL learners (Stanley, 2006).

Although there is a strong tendency to gear language teaching towards vocabulary and grammar instruction (Chen & Wei, 1999), as Lu (2007:3) comments that “the lack of exposure to authentic-sounding materials may lead the learners to become very unaccustomed to real English usage”. In a sense, language teaching has always been inextricably bound to grammar instruction, praising perfection over the production of the language itself, but it has nonetheless rendered an inaccurate picture of the multilingual and flawed reality of learning English in Spain. Assuming thus, a nurture perspective towards the learning process this study prioritises the quality and quantity of input as the pinnacle of a great deal of interaction between the student and its SLA. Within the umbrella of task-based curricula, initial mechanisation of the information might as well be restructured unconsciously whereby knowledge becomes unique, personal and adapted to experience (Mclaren, 2006).
3. Case study

3.1. Research methodology

This study used different data collection methods attempting to confirm the central working hypothesis that podcasts can improve lesson planning by delivering positive learning outcomes. First, this study offers a survey of students to gather qualitative data on the research question on their means to connect to the Internet and use technologies as well as to define their attitudes towards English and brand-new teaching practices. Second, the research undertaken addresses the assessment of the student-produced podcast in response to the research question on whether students can show high rates of performance with the aid of podcasting. It was hitherto appropriate to set up the scene with the chosen groups before mandatory surveys, the selection of podcasts and the assessment carried out by the teacher. We can respectively define two sources of data, there being questionnaires on students’ attitudes the former and grades of their performance the latter.

3.2. Objectives

• To reflect on previous literature for the successful implementation of podcasting in high school education.
• To gather statistical data about student’s perceptions and attitudes towards using technologies.
• To use podcasts integrated into the curriculum (PIC) within the EFL classroom as input material focusing on the listening skills along with teaching strategies.
• To assess students’ performance in the creation of their dialogues situated within a context-based learning experience.

3.3. Context. Participants

This paper presents the findings gathered from 12-year-old students’ questionnaires within three groups of 1º E.S.O at the public high school I.E.S. Maestro Padilla, in Almeria. This study was conducted to report the overall perception towards technologies and enquire whether podcasting or using new technologies might be within their requests. Despite questioning three courses, only the two bilingual groups have participated in podcast related activities. The sum of the two bilingual groups participating in the whole experiment equals 67 people whereas 1º ESO A consists of 27 people and these were only surveyed since they needed to fill basic demands of the curriculum. Out from the sample selection of 94 students, there were 38 males and 56 females, there being ten students who were not Spaniards and that may be subclassified in three ethnic groups: Latin American, Arab and Eastern European. The average English level of the Bilingual groups was an A1-A2 (CEFR). Participants were first asked for informed consent about replying to the questionnaires and being recorded in the final task. No objections were made.

3.3.1. Instruments

• Mp3player or computer in the classroom.
• Cloze exercises from Breaking News English.
• Mobile phone for recording.
• A Learning Management System (LMS) platform where to upload the student-created podcast, if desired, privately or for public broadcasting. To date, Moodle is the standardised LMS in Andalucía.

3.3.2. Procedure

Three types of exercises are presented in this study: two involving listening activities and a student-created podcast. The former two perform essentially a purely scaffolding role, preparing the exposure of students to this technology and taking the cue of meta-strategic awareness to help them increase their selective attention (Vandergrift, 1999). The contents to be taught within the curriculum come from the book *Burlington build up: I E.S.O* McDonald, C. & Norcott, L. (2010). We looked at Unit 6 endeavouring ourselves to the student-produced podcast. However, it needs to be said that the curriculum should be flexible and henceforth adapt the podcast to contents embedded in the curriculum and so, the websites and feeds recommended by the teacher to peer groups were in their current A2 CEFR level.

3.3.3. Assessment

Assessment hence was undertaken and adapted out from two different rubrics from the “Centro Nacional de Desarrollo Curricular en Sistemas no Propietarios” (CE-DEC) that can be seen in the appendixes IV and V. These rubrics contribute to a detailed assessment of the student podcast production by the teacher, abiding by what has been said and requested previously. Given that these are process performance tasks, they were assessed as such, shifting the focus to the process and what has been worked through the sessions rather than judging the final product far too much. Final assessment data can be found in section 3.4.2. Results: Class sessions and it alone constitute a quantitative source of data where to identify the success of the study or lack thereof. It was carried out according to these four assessment criteria:

- **Language articulation:** Diction and pronunciation.
- **Language articulation:** Breathing, tone, and emphasis.
- **Script:** Follows the script, good improvisation, if any.
- **Kinetics:** Body position, peer closeness, eye contact between the speakers.

3.4. Results

3.4.1. Data analysis

After a short talk about the nature of podcasting, students were told about the podcast activities they would have to undertake and that it was compulsory to complete a questionnaire anonymously and then listen to podcasts one day per week in a preparatory fashion for the student-produced podcast. As soon as data from the questionnaires had been gathered, it would be the time to design or find a podcast that suited their level and interests. The graphics below illustrate the finding gathered out from the sample of the podcasting experiment, evaluating their attitudes towards technologies. Questionnaires were adapted from Li, H. (2010).
1 Considering the first question “Do you like learning English? Why?”

![Figure 4. Number of students giving reasons for learning English.](image)

Among the answers to the first question, English seems blatantly important for different purposes, and only a small number of students (6 out of 87) do not like English at all or see it as a difficult subject. The responses have been assembled considering their main ideas, and in general, there was a strong agreement that learning English is vital for finding a job in the future and for travelling purposes. The not so common refrain of seeing English as difficult or unimportant represents a small body of students (6) and proves a positive correlation in this case for teaching English. There is every likelihood that some of their answers might have been slightly dishonest to please the teacher and prevent themselves from negative attitudes.

2 Would you like to use more often new technologies for learning purposes?

![Figure 5. Percentage of students supporting new technologies within the classroom.](image)

When asked about their attitudes towards using technologies within the classroom, there was a collective agreement that technologies might be useful, especially for searching for extra information and accessing educational content. Many commented on the importance of looking up at online dictionaries, but this could be shortly offset with the proper use of dictionaries. This pattern suggests that among participants, only six people preferred traditional teaching methods in advance, perhaps
because of fear for a less valuable method, fear of a more difficult test or conformity with current teaching practices.

3 Do you have a computer or an mp3 player like a mobile phone?

4 Do you have an Internet connection in your PC or mobile phone?

![Figure 6. Table of resources: tools and Internet access.](image)

Results of questions 3 and 4 feature together in the chart above as they concern accessibility. Data gathered from the questionnaires proves that everyone can connect freely to the web except for one teenager who has no computer, no mp3 player neither Internet access, but in short, results have turned out positive. This pattern suggests that among participants the level of accessibility and resources does not tamper with major adaptations to the podcast project and that if they had to use their tools, they would be able to use them. Even those that did not have an mp3 player commented that they had a smartphone instead, where they listened to music. This misunderstanding might show a positive correlation between the number of students with smartphones at the expense of mp3 players.

5 How many hours on average do you use your computer?

![Figure 7. Student’s average hours using electronic devices weekly.](image)
A quarter of the students questioned (27) scarcely use electronic devices weekly whereas most of them use technologies regularly, there being 20 people who overuse it. To this graphic, it should be added that many did not specify the number of hours and commented on circumstantial variables such as “depending on the day” or “if my computer does not work I just use my phone”. The results might have somewhat been affected by the lack of understanding of students when making sums or calculating the number of hours. No previous study involving listening comprehension or podcasting has addressed the average hours that students devote to electronic devices, restricting the scope of their studies to the ‘whats, whys and hows’ but not ‘how long’ of using these tools. If a positive number of students dedicate such amount of time, then Prensky (2001) and Oblinger et al. (2006) genuinely confirm a bridge with the Net generation, namely, digital natives.

6 Where do you usually access the Internet?

![Internet access points](image_url)

Figure 8. Places of interconnectivity.

When it comes to outlining the places where students usually connect, some of these answers are overlapping between each other, not so clear-cut because some of them replied wrongly to the question by saying that they accessed the Internet with their smartphones or mentioning the websites where they entered. This incidental mistake has seldom occurred, but it could be asserted that home connectivity is trendier than on the move. The motivation for this question arose from the assumption of mobility directly correlated with Internet access, yet the results show a pervasive number of students connecting at home.

7 Recommendations for improving the lessons

![Number of students’ recommendations for the quality of teaching](image_url)

Figure 9. Number of students’ recommendations for the quality of teaching.
Regarding upon the last section of the questionnaire, students were given the option to write their own recommendations, there being four the main categories: using new technologies, collaborative work, to be in silence, and demanding more games or activities out of the book. 14 had no recommendations at all. 19 students did explicitly ask for activities directly related with new technologies while other options such as collaborative work (24) and games or activities out of the books (16) turned out to be quite significant for them. This proves that each class has different views and preconceptions towards certain types of learning and it should be noted too, that all these recommendations share the same desire of deviating slightly from the traditional curriculum. Given these results, the podcasts designed for the applied research embody a gradual shift towards more motivating practices where students get involved in activities of their fancy.

3.4.2. Results: Class sessions

The first activity undertaken with 1ºB1 and 1ºB2 is a listening gapped text that is not challenging for their A1-A2, save for those who have a lower level. This activity aimed to anchor some motivating expectations, thus setting inspiring content sympathetic to their interest. In the same vein, students had demanded sports and food habits to be the chosen podcasts, more specifically, one from Breaking News English (Appendix I) and no sooner had they listened to the recording twice, many commented on the appealing of the topic and that they would like to hear more about the football player.

As students asked for collaborative work, the second podcast listening activity aimed to make them cooperate and focus on the general meaning of the text. This one is a jumbled text, also extracted with the aid of Breaking News English (Appendix II). Students were told to take notes about keywords to focus on meaning and specific parts of the text that confer coherence and cohesion to the text. One complete session has been needed to ensure that almost all the groups had finished their rearrangement.

Out of sixteen peer groups from both bilingual classes, only five groups managed to get the whole text in perfect order whereas most of the groups had missed a sentence or two that were essential to keep the order. Student’s feedback was quite positive, and eleven peer groups were eager to repeat such an exercise; however, the others objected to the experience commenting that they would rather stick to their book activities, which seemed easier.

After being exposed to the podcasts, the next step was to embark upon the student-created podcast. Students were asked to join in groups of 2-3 people, browse podcast websites delivered by the teacher and come up with their own podcasting material. Thus, they had to write scripts based on the type of dialogue they have listened to and perform in front of the class if desired while being recorded. According to their autonomy level, it was decided that volunteers would be recorded during their live performance in front of their classmates. One session per class was enough to set some time aside for each group performing their dialogues. The central topics suggested for the experiment were ‘Food’ and ‘Sports’, namely, the units 5 and 6 in question for upcoming assessment McDonald, C. & Norcott, L. (2010). This included the possibility of a waiter-customer dialogue, team conversation, a presentation of curious aspects dealing with Internet material or whatever that they felt as motivat-
The teacher assessed the performance of two classes according to these standards: Language articulation (their pronunciation and ability to make it easy to be heard), their script content and fidelity, and their body language. The results showed a statistically significant positive reception with 92% of students completing the task satisfactorily. More specifically, we can see 13% of high flyers, 40% of very good students, 38% of passes and 7% of fail grades. Together, these findings hint that these results could be improved if

3.5. Discussion

The study conducted has contributed to support the previous hypothesis that an emphasis on listening input enhances favourable students’ attitudes. Briefly, the cloze exercises involving listening comprehension aimed to train cognitive, metacognitive and socio-affective strategies of achievement whereas the student-produced podcast targeted student’s production and the development of confidence in a relaxed atmosphere. Podcasts can be used with ease if their content is adapted to the student’s needs and, as a rule, should be central to the core of teaching for reflective practice (Thompson, 2007).

Reactions towards these exercises were those of sheer surprise and dismay at first, yet shortly vanished, and students started to participate with interest. Although not all students liked these activities, mostly due to a lack of English competence or interest, the results were positive, and even these students demonstrated a slight mark rise in their next in-tray exercises. Concerns about neutral learning outcomes in previous research have been dismissed since the activity has provided observable welcoming reception and good grades. Yet, long-term assessment seems overdue for future research in case that this was an accidental positive correlation. I am to dispel
such a perception by calling upon Lazzari’s comments (2009) on three phenomena that may have mediated in the results. One is the Hawthorne effect, which involves an increase in performance caused by the psychological stimulus of highlighting a new feature significantly (Gillespie, 1991). Another influential factor may have been the Rosenthal effect. It implies that teachers with high expectations usually lead to a boost in learners’ performance (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). In addition, a sense of cultural enrichment could have been ascribed to this intense learning experience, thus increasing the sense of auto-efficacy of the students (Bandura & Schunk, 1981).

4. Conclusion

This paper weighs up how podcasts can be integrated within the EFL classroom, considering the recent shifts in the syllabus and the needs of students. After examining the previous literature on the topic, it has given an account of the reasons for the widespread use of podcasting in education. The study case has proven to be useful for developing interventions aimed at state-of-the-art teaching practices, thus contextualising and enriching learning outcomes from curriculum delivery and motivation in high school. First, because podcasting experiences have scarcely taken place in secondary education. Second, because there is a clear advantage in following the methods of O’Bryan and Hegelheimer (2007) to promote instruction, SL comprehension tasks and in-class output opportunities whereby students engage with the subject. Third, because this teaching practice is sufficiently generic to be adapted for other stakeholders.

There is no gainsaying in highlighting that an initial observation of the experimental group should be prior to any podcast designed activities, especially if future research is to consider the potential effects of certain attitude variables more carefully, for example, the relationship between students asking for innovative technologies and students getting high marks.

The broad implication of the present research is that podcasting tasks can bring about positive learning outcomes that, ostensibly, hinge on the good reception of students to the project. In the main, we have drawn positive learning and effective outcomes which are derived from both qualitative and quantitative data. Our data suggests that the average level of Internet accessibility and technologies’ possession is high, that learners view technologies as positive and that these could be used more in high school education. One of the limitations of this small-scale study is that the sample of the experiment has been undertaken in the short-term of a month. Despite the limitations, these are valuable considering the overall good grades following the student-produced podcast.

Moreover, the final assessment reported a positive feedback meaning 92% of students passing the task. It would be advisable that future research considers other data collection and data analysis mean to interpret and define the state of the subject. For example, a post-survey to calculate more qualitative data or others assessment methods.

The facilitator and manager role of the teacher gives stimulating feedback for students who want to make the most of their untapped potential. It all depends on current teaching practices embracing tech-savvy methods to enhance positive learning outcomes in the EFL classroom. The use of PIC, podcasts integrated into the
curriculum, may be considered a promising aspect of prospective teaching practices as it has received a good reception in this case. However, further longitudinal studies are certainly required to determine whether podcasts be held as part of the official course syllabus. If so, we could expect far-reaching curriculum changes incorporating podcasting as a pedagogically positive teaching practice.

Acknowledgements

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Appendixes: podcast transcripts, rubrics and questionnaire model

Appendix I Podcast Best-selling videogame now has women’s teams. http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1509/150911-fifa-16-1.html

The best-selling FIFA video (1) _______________ women’s teams. Gamers (2) _______________ women’s teams for the first time. FIFA (3) _______________ top international women’s teams. The women’s teams (4) _______________ against each other, (5) _______________. Gamers who tested it said the games with women’s (6) _______________.

The game company (7) _______________ of the most important changes (8) _______________ 22-year history. It called the changes, “(9) _______________” that will bring millions (10) _______________ the game. U.S. player Alex Morgan (11) _______________. She said: “I always wondered what it would be like….It is (12) _______________ that it is now a reality.”

(Transcript)

A best-selling video game has more options to get more women players. In the incredibly popular FIFA 16 game, gamers can choose women’s teams for the first time. It has 12 top international women’s teams. They can only play against each other, not against men. A trial version of the game was put online on September 8th. Game players who tested it said the games with women’s teams were faster than games with men’s teams.

The FIFA 16 company is excited about the women’s teams. It is one of the most important changes in the game’s 22-year history. The company called having women’s teams, “a massive event”. It added: “We are equally excited about bringing millions of fans a new way to play.” U.S. player Alex Morgan was excited about being in FIFA 16. She said: “It is such an honour…I always wondered what it would be like….It is very cool to know that it is now a reality.”

(Transcript)

New research says a simple, easy way to help people who over-eat is to use smaller plates, knives, forks, and glasses. This is instead of going on a diet. Many people use their plate as a guide. If they use a large plate, they fill it with food. This means they eat too much. Cambridge University says British people could cut their calories by up to 16 per cent, while Americans could cut theirs by up to 29 per cent.

The researchers looked at a lot of data. Dr Gareth Hollands said there was not a lot of research on portion sizes and how much people eat. He added that it was wrong to think that people who ate too much had no self-control. Restaurants and shops can help people to stop over-eating by using smaller plates. People should also do this at home. This is a good way of helping lots of people to stop eating too much.
Appendix III  Student’s questionnaire adapted from Li, H. (2010)

Cuestionario:

1. ¿Te gusta aprender inglés? ¿Por qué?

2. ¿Te gustaría utilizar más las nuevas tecnologías para aprender?

3. ¿Tienes un ordenador en casa? ¿Y algún reproductor mp3?

4. ¿Tienes acceso a Internet en el ordenador o teléfono móvil?

5. ¿Cuántas horas promedio a la semana dedicas al ordenador?

6. ¿Dónde sueles conectarte a Internet?

7. Recomendaciones sobre cómo mejorar las clases:
Appendix IV Rubric CEDEC. http://es.slideshare.net/cedecite/cedecrubricapodcast

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORÍA</th>
<th>4 Sobresaliente</th>
<th>3 Notable</th>
<th>2 Aprobado</th>
<th>1 Insuficiente</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dicción</td>
<td>El estudiante articula claramente y el texto se entiende con claridad.</td>
<td>El estudiante articula las palabras un poco claro y el texto puede entenderse en su mayoría.</td>
<td>El estudiante algunas veces articula bien las palabras, pero el texto no se entiende.</td>
<td>El estudiante rara vez articula las palabras y el texto no se entiende.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tono</td>
<td>No hay errores. El tono es muy atractivo.</td>
<td>Algun error aislado, pero en su mayoría el tono es preciso y seguro.</td>
<td>Algunos veces el tono es preciso, pero hay errores frecuentes o repetitivos.</td>
<td>Hay muy pocos errores en el tono; el tono es siempre homogéneo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entradas y marcaciones articulatorias</td>
<td>Entradas seguras, las marcaciones son ejecutadas con precisión.</td>
<td>Las entradas son en su mayoría seguras. Hay algunos errores esporádicos. Las marcaciones son ejecutadas con precisión.</td>
<td>Las entradas rara vez son seguras, pero las marcaciones son generalmente ejecutadas correctamente.</td>
<td>Pocas entradas seguras. Las marcas son generalmente ejecutadas incorrectamente.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respiración</td>
<td>El estudiante respira adecuadamente y mantiene el tono lo mejor que puede.</td>
<td>El estudiante respira generalmente adecuadamente, pero en ocasiones no mantiene el tono hasta el final de la frase.</td>
<td>El estudiante algunas veces respira adecuadamente y sólo en algunas ocasiones mantiene el tono hasta el final de cada frase.</td>
<td>El estudiante rara vez respira correctamente y nunca mantiene el tono hasta el final de la frase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expresión y estilo</td>
<td>Habla con creatividad y desenvoltura en base al guión y sin ayuda del profesor u otro compañero.</td>
<td>En general, habla con creatividad y desenvoltura siguiendo las indicaciones del profesor/a o un compañero.</td>
<td>Su expresión y estilo es irregular y con cierta frecuencia no atiende las indicaciones del guión o del profesor.</td>
<td>No presenta expresión ni estilo.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Rubrica para evaluar una exposición oral

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>4 Sobresaliente</th>
<th>3 Notable</th>
<th>2 Aprobado</th>
<th>1 Insuficiente</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Habla</strong></td>
<td>Habla despacio y con gran claridad.</td>
<td>La mayoría del tiempo, habla despacio y con claridad.</td>
<td>Uras veces habla despacio y con claridad, pero otras veces se acelera y se entiende mal.</td>
<td>Habla rápido o se desfoca durante a la hora de hablar. Además su pronunciación no es buena.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocabulario</strong></td>
<td>Uso vocabulario apropiado para la audiencia. Aumenta el vocabulario de la audiencia definiendo las palabras que podrían ser nuevas para ella</td>
<td>Uso vocabulario apropiado para la audiencia. Incluye 1-2 palabras que podrían ser nuevas para la mayor parte de la audiencia, pero no las define.</td>
<td>Uso vocabulario apropiado para la audiencia. No incluye vocabulario que podría ser nuevo para la audiencia.</td>
<td>Uso varias (5 o más) palabras o frases que no son entendidas por la audiencia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comprensión</strong></td>
<td>El estudiante puede contestar con precisión todas las preguntas planteadas sobre el tema por sus compañeros de clase.</td>
<td>El estudiante puede contestar con precisión la mayoría de las preguntas planteadas sobre el tema por sus compañeros de clase.</td>
<td>El estudiante puede contestar pocas preguntas planteadas sobre el tema por sus compañeros de clase.</td>
<td>El estudiante no puede contestar las preguntas planteadas sobre el tema por sus compañeros de clase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Postura del Cuerpo y Contacto Visual</strong></td>
<td>La mayor parte del tiempo, hay una buena postura y el gesto son adecuados. Mira a todos los compañeros con total naturalidad.</td>
<td>La mayor parte del tiempo, hay una buena postura y el gesto son adecuados. Mira a todos los compañeros con total naturalidad.</td>
<td>Algunas veces, hay una mala postura y el gesto son inadecuados, y otras veces mira a los compañeros mientras habla.</td>
<td>No mantiene la postura y el gesto propios de una exposición oral y, la mayoría de las veces, no mira a sus compañeros.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contenido</strong></td>
<td>Demuestra un completo entendimiento del tema.</td>
<td>Demuestra un buen entendimiento del tema.</td>
<td>Demuestra un buen entendimiento de partes del tema.</td>
<td>No parece entender muy bien el tema.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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