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*The Use of Podcasts as a Teaching Strategy to Improve Speaking Skills on Sixth  
Graders at Calle Mesén School during the third Quarter of 2022*

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# Chapter I

## Introductory Framework

Teachers of English as a foreign language often deal with the dilemma of the appropriate integration of speaking in the process of learning because of the isolated skill methodology in the traditional approaches. This lack of integration obstructs students' oral communication performance in real situations. Therefore, this research paper proposes the use of authentic audios (podcasts) supplemented by post and pre listening activities in a group of 32 sixth graders to improve their speaking skills.

### 1.1 Problem Statement

Speaking is the means through which learners can communicate with others to achieve certain goals or to express their feelings, opinion, intentions and hopes. More specific, speaking English allows people to broaden their world, from job opportunities to the ability to relate to people from almost every country. English is the language of international communication, *in all* media, and *on* internet. Since 2017, the Costa Rican Ministry of Public Education (henceforth, MEP) has implemented programs approved by the Superior Council of Education (CSE), which aim for students *at obtaining* a B1 level of English according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Diaz, 2021). This indicates that the students will conclude their secondary education with a level of English that, at a minimum, can use to understand the main ideas of a text, have the necessary fluency to communicate with native speakers, and produce simple and coherent texts.

Despite these curricular endeavors, the results from the Test of English for Young Learners conducted by MEP and Universidad de Costa Rica show that only 35% of the students

are within the B1 level of English (Universidad de Costa Rica, 2021). This test was held between September 18<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021 at a nation-wide level, in more than 150 public schools, to evaluate reading and listening comprehension skills. Based on that level of English, the students are able to perform a number of tasks such as identifying information in short texts and recognize expressions on a given audio with simple vocabulary. At the same time, specific weaknesses are shown in the terms of what real communications skills and authentic language usage should be.

Regardless of its importance in second language learning, speaking has been overlooked in public schools due to different reasons like emphasis on grammar or lack of time to carry one on one speaking tests in every classroom, there is still a tendency to use only pedagogical input, which refers to exercises created or adapted for classroom use that do not mirror authentic language use. Gilakjani (2016) expressed that if teachers want to encourage students to communicate in English, they (teachers) should use the language in real communication first and next, ask the students to do the same process. Based on this statement and after four observations of the sixth graders English class at Calle Mesén school, the researcher found that students find it challenging to speaking in the target language because the lack of practice in oral production and formulates the following research question: How can the use of podcasts as a teaching strategy improve the speaking skills on sixth graders at Calle Mesén school during the *third* quarter of 2022?

## **1.2 Objectives of the Investigation**

### *1.2.1 General Objective*

To analyze the extent to which using podcasts as teaching strategy can improve the speaking skills of sixth grades at a public school in Calle Mesén.

### 1.2.3 Specific Objectives

1. To identify possible difficulties faced by students in the process of building oral skills with the current approach and methodologies of the English classroom in the Calle Mesén school.
2. To observe the settings which encourage motivation to speak in the target language to students involved in the learning process.
3. To apply the use of authentic audios as learning strategy to promote oral production in sixth grade students.
4. To evaluate the teaching and learning scenarios where listening to podcasts, followed by post listening exercises can improve the speaking skills of sixth graders.

### 1.3 Justification of the Study

In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs the main goal is for learners to acquire the linguistic competences to speak with proficiency. As MEP states on their Educating for a New Citizenship program (2016) “speaking English fluently is one of the abilities a 21<sup>st</sup> century learner must develop to have access to better life opportunities” (p. 4). Hence, teachers and researchers should seek for alternative ways to improve the learning of speaking skills on Costa Rican students, with an emphasis of the language in a contextualized and meaningful manner.

One possible alternative is the use of podcasts for enhancing speaking skills. This type of audios provides plenty of input, which is created in real context situations giving students the opportunity to learn *based on* authenticity. As Samad et al. (2017) mentions: “the podcast has emerged as sources in academic filed, and it provides many kinds of materials in learning” (p. 98). This type of audios allows learners a better comprehension of a language in specific

situations related to the contents establish in the MEP's syllabus for sixth graders. In addition, podcasts have other advantages such as: they come in a variety of length to adjust to the time on of the lesson, offer discussion on current events, it helps teachers to bring authentic stories and primary sources to the students via audio, which can help to personalize information that might be difficult to connect to on written words.

Moreover, having a new mean of learning during the development of a class can increase students' motivation. According to Huang (cited in Ortega-Auquilla et al; 2020) "research findings highlight that motivation is one of the key factors and an important stimulus that influences the success of language learning; is considered as the impetus to develop linguistics skills and the driving force to maintain this process." Teachers from all subjects are aware that when learning materials are interesting and challenging, the student will be more open to the learning experience. But particularly for the English classroom, there are some advantages in using authentic materials, like podcasts. For instance, Peacock (cited in Nurlaily, 2020) found that authentic materials help learners prepare for real life and learner's enthusiasm, concentration, and persistence with the learning task increased significantly when authentic materials were used.

The proposed strategy aims to support the learning process of sixth graders at Calle Mesén school. During the first quarter of 2022 the researcher had the opportunity to make four observations of the group in an English lesson setting, consequently, to analyze the interactions teacher-students and student-student. Some of the challenges observed in the classroom are limitations of vocabulary, lack of confidence and motivation, and fear of making mistakes. These students, similar to the majority of Costa Rican middle and high school learners are experiencing the consequences of the educational lag caused by the Covid-19 crisis. On the

general overview, the Informe Estado de la Educación 2021 indicates that “the Costa Rican educational system is going through a serious crisis due to the combined shock of historical lags and the economic and social effects generated by the Covid-19 pandemic.” While the pandemic exacerbated issues, the report indicates that educational deficits cannot be attributed entirely to it but to the four years in row with school breaks that are keeping learning to a minimum. For example, the teachers’ strikes between 2018 and 2019 that extended for over 4 months.

#### **1.4 Antecedents**

This research paper has compiled background information from theses, books and articles from magazines specialized in education in which technology had been implemented to use authentic materials as didactic strategies for improving English proficiency in different students’ populations.

Integrating technology in education is not something new. Teachers have been using tape recorders, Power Point presentations, overhead projectors, computers with videos and internet for an extended period of time. More recently we have mobile phones with learning apps, and social networks as instructional tool to help students learn. As mentioned by Venkata (2017) though there has been an accelerating innovation in teaching tools, the classroom challenges continue. These technologies that are innovated will have only limited impact if the pedagogy behind their application does not keep pace. *Throughout* the times of innovation there has been a lot of conversations and studies about the number of options available to incorporate technology into learning.

Flippin-Wynn (2013) argues that “the target of the educational transformations seems to have been omitted from the discussion” (2013, p.23). Her research examines the student perception on technological tools integrated in the classroom, with the goal of determining how

students responded to them. The study found that students value technological tools in the classroom, but moreover that they believe teachers should consider student perspectives when incorporating new technologies into the curriculum to assure all students are familiar and proficient in working with them. On the other hand, it also showed that students continue to appreciate interpersonal interaction with teachers, in-class presentations, and, most importantly, real-world application to the course content. Students want teachers to interact with and make use of technology to supplement their expertise and exchange of ideas.

As mentioned by Goldman (2018) “the goal is not to have podcasts replace textbooks and quizzes, but rather to serve as supplement in learning. Podcasts do provide students with learning gains and numerous other benefits” (p. 5). In his article *The Impact of Podcasts in Education* Goldman explores the ways to *overcoming* the risk of podcasts becoming pure entertainment or a distraction and shows how podcasting does not only allow teachers to create new classroom assignment and activities, but also equip students with a digital learning tool. The author presents the case of an elementary school that began to create their own podcast called “kidcasts.” The school podcast allowed students to learn and develop a new skill and have fun at the same time. Goldman comments:

By creating podcasts, students learn the skills surrounding the recording, editing, publishing. They are also able to practice their speaking abilities, discuss topics they are interested in, and learn in a brand-new way. Additionally, this leads to learning outside of the classroom environment. Children are able to create podcasts for school curriculum purposes, as well as for themselves. (p. 9-10)

Goldman concludes the article with a correlation between textbooks and technology, if teachers are teaching with the most updated textbooks, and students are learning the most modern information, why should they not be using the newest technology?

In contrast to Goldman's application in elementary school, Sandoval and Díaz (2020) conducted a research study with students from a Chilean University. Their goal was to analyze the impact of using podcast-based lessons in order to improve descriptive oral skills. Their intervention lasted a month, with *once-a-week* frequency. They observed that one of the aspects the students appreciated the most is the fact that the methodology served as reinforcement of the content they reviewed on a previous face-to-face lesson. In addition, the students manifested that the methodology had created a surge in their motivation, mentioning factors such as collaborative learning that took place in the sessions, as well as the fact that they felt better when they or their peers noticed an improvement in pronunciation.

To extend on the motivation topic, Tolentino writes an essay that reflects on the use of authentic materials in the classrooms. It states that the choice of authentic materials "must be made considering the linguistic level of the students to maintain an understandable input and high motivation" (Tolentino, 2020). To stay motivated to persist on any tasks, such as oral fluency students must believe they can improve in that task, in a classroom setting is the teacher's assignment to set achievable expectations. The provision of authentic activities should be contextualized in situations as real as possible, with exercises that are challenging to the students but at the same time to allow them autonomy, so that each student can be self-sufficient in their learning and manage to develop according to their goals.

After some research analysis, it is important to include that some studies in Costa Rica have been carried out to explore the advantages of using podcast in the learning environment.

However, the researcher was not able to identify papers that apply the strategy in elementary or middle school.

Saborío (2018), a Costa Rican researcher, identifies the diverse options teachers have to use podcasting as *a* methodological option: recording of explanatory lessons, distribution of complementary material to the course, assignment, or explanation of work and post-class discussion. Her paper focuses on teacher training in relation to what a podcast is and how to create one. Saborío describes the benefits and advantages of podcasting, such as: encourages collaborative learning by building knowledge among participants, provides opportunities for greater cultural and linguistic expression in the classroom by creating scenarios for verbal exchange. On the other hand, Strommen and Bruce (as cited in Saborío, 2018) comment that new tools, like podcasts, do not create educational change on their own. The importance is in the educational practices focused on the skills of each student and those demanded by professional environments. And adds that it is advisable to establish a balance in the integrations of technology towards new pedagogical practices in order to achieve quality and relevance between both.

## **1.5 Scope**

The general intent of the study is to understand the uses of podcasts in a classroom environment in order to improve speaking performance. The learning environment is specific to a *sixth-grade* group in the Calle Mesén public school. It will assess the factors that currently intervene in the goal of speaking at a B1 level of English according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

The use of authentic media like podcasts talks and the creation of post-listening activities such as retelling, will be used to address some of the challenges already observed in the

classroom. Avoiding repetition drills and memorization of dialogues, as the traditional approaches, is expected to help the students with the limitations in vocabulary, lack of confidence and motivation, and fear of making mistakes.

## Chapter II

### Theoretical Framework

In Costa Rica, the process of being fluent when speaking English has been a constant challenge to the concerned governmental bodies, teachers, parents, and students. In spite of great efforts, time, energy, and money towards updating the syllabus and teachers' training, some learners fail to speak the language because of many reasons. One of these reasons is that English language is not part of their daily life. This section of the research paper describes concepts that are key for the study in order to conceptualize and understand how oral production is cultivated in the classroom.

#### 2.1 Literature Review

This section provides information about teaching and learning speaking skills on a English as a Foreign Language setting, including evaluation and learning styles in the speaking class. It also reviews previous literature as well as definitions regarding the strategy proposed for this study, podcasts. And a general view of the use of technology in education.

##### *2.1.1 Speaking skills in EFL learners*

When referring to speak, Burns (as cited in Lestari 2019) explains that speaking is an interactive process of constructive meaning that involves producing, receiving, and processing information. Speaking is an elaborate skill that involves the use of several simultaneous processes (cognitive, physical, and socio-cultural) but oral communication is something most people take for granted. For example, language production is a complex process, but most speakers are not aware of the complicated series of messages the brain sends to the various muscles that control speech. Speaking is a dynamic process that connects ideas between speakers

with a certain purpose. Gilakjani (2016) claims that speaking is considered the most difficult skill to acquire because it requires the command of both listening comprehension and speech production sub-skills in unplanned situations.

In language teaching, it is common to talk about the four language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) in terms of their direction and modality. Language generated by the learners is considered productive, and language directed at the learners is known as receptive. Modality refers to the medium of the language (Newton, 2021). Therefore, speaking is the productive, oral skill.

For years, English teaching was seen as helping learners master the sounds, words, and grammar patterns. The idea was that by studying pieces of the language students could eventually put them all together and communicate. In the 1980s however, the understanding of language learning experienced a shift in focus influenced by international developments in pedagogy and linguistics research and the increased number of immigrants and refugees (Wright, 2019). Linguistics and language professors realize that understanding grammar and isolated sounds was not enough to be able to communicate in English and the idea of communicative competence emerged.

For Savignon (2017) communicative competence refers to the ability of language learners “to interact with other speakers, to make meaning, as distinct from their ability to perform on discrete-point tests of grammatical knowledge and understanding sociocultural contexts of language use.” The author identifies three characteristics of the communicate competences, sociolinguistic competence is the ability to use language appropriately in various contexts, it involves register or degrees of formality and informality, appropriate word choice, and politeness strategies. Strategic competence is the application of language strategies to compensate for gaps

in knowledge and discourse competence refers to the correct use of distinct parts of the sentence to make the speech cohesive and coherent, for people speaking in a new language, the specific linguistic elements that make speech cohesive can be challenging to produce during the pressure of a conversation.

In addition to implication to learners, the three components have suggestions for EFL teachers. Because communicative language is a multidimensional construction, it is important for teachers to understand the complexities learners face when they are speaking English. Accuracy and fluency are the most common complications for students. Accuracy refers to the ability to select the correct words and expressions to deliver the message, including the grammatical patterns. Fluency is the capacity to speak fluidly, confidently, and at a rate consistent with the norms of the relevant native speech community. A proficient speaker is both fluent and accurate (Wright, 2019).

It is important for language teachers to understand that while students are at the beginning and intermediate levels of English, that is, while they are still developing their proficiency, fluency and accuracy often do not synchronize. Before grammar rules become automatic and while learners are still acquiring essential vocabulary items, applying the rules and searching in memory for the right words can be a difficult mental process, which slows the learner's speech and make them seem disrupted. Likewise, language learners can sometimes speak quickly, without hesitating to apply the rules they have learned, but doing so may decrease their accuracy, that is, the number of errors they make in speaking may increase.

### *2.1.2 Learning and Teaching Speaking Skills*

In order to understand the definition of learning better, it is important to establish the difference between acquisition and learning. Krashen (as cited in Bahruddin, 2020) considers

acquisition as “similar to the process children use in acquiring first and second languages. It requires meaningful interaction in the target language, natural communication, in which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying and understanding” (p. 822). On the other hand, the author agrees that learning is a conscious process based on error correction and the presentation of explicit rules. The second term is presented in the learning of English as foreign language EFL, which according to Bahruddin (2020) is when language is learned in a non-English speaking country, where the language is not used as a native language.

In addition, there are other aspects that will be followed in order to speak another language. Wright (2019) explains that oral production involves four processes. The first one is conceptualization; it refers to the planning of speech, the background knowledge about the topic and situation presented. A second process is formulation which involves the use of words and phrases to express the meaning with proper grammar. A third process is articulation; that is the production of the sounds for words to be used. A final process is self-monitoring, which refers to the ability of self-correct mistakes of a speaker. The author emphasizes that speaking is typically reciprocal: any interlocutors are normally all able to contribute simultaneously to the discourse, and to respond immediately to each other’s contribution.

Moreover, the learning process cannot be separated from teaching, especially in foreign language contexts where the chances for learning another language are reduced to the classroom instruction. Teaching plays a significant role for the development of speaking skills. According to Wallace et al (cited in Mulya, 2018) “teachers can enable learners to present ideas to individual peers, peer groups and entire classes of students. Students can learn how to speak on a subject by their own choosing or on teacher assigned topics.”

Although there are many different methods of language teaching, in the last decades three methods have overtaken the classrooms. Each method will be explained, focusing on how speaking is taught (Natsir, 2014).

In The Grammar-Translation Method students are taught to analyze grammar and to translate (usually in writing) from one language to another. Historically, the main goal of the method has been for students to read the literature of a particular culture. According to Natsir the characteristics of the Grammar-Translation Method are that it focuses on reading and writing, the vocabulary studied is determined by the reading texts, the sentence is the basic unit of teaching and language practice. The primary emphasis is on accuracy; teaching is deductive (grammar rules are presented and then practice through translating), and the meaning of instruction is typically the students' native language.

The Grammar-Translation method does not really prepare students to speak English so it is not entirely appropriate for students who want to improve their speaking skills. In fact, with the method, students “developed an intellectual understanding of the language structure and maybe the ability to read but instead of gaining oral fluency they suffered from what could be described as second language mutism” (Toppelberg et al; 2005). The method is not consistent with the goal of increasing English learners' fluency, oral production, or communicative competence. During the lessons speaking consists of reading translation at loud or doing grammar exercises orally there are a few opportunities for expressing original thoughts or personal needs and feelings in English.

With the Direct Method the lessons will focus on everyday vocabulary and sentences, with emphasis on speaking and listening and they are conducted entirely in the target language. Both skills are practiced in a carefully rated progression organized around questions-answers

exchanges between teachers and students (Wright, 2019). This method strongly influenced the development of the audiolingual method, where speaking is taught by having students repeat sentences and recite memorized dialogues from the textbooks. The method uses repetition drills to familiarize students with the sounds and structural patterns of the language. The basis of the Audiolingual Method is that students learn to speak by practicing grammar structures until producing those structures has become automatic. When this happens, it is hoped that the learners will be able to carry on conversations.

The foundation of the Communicative Language Teaching is that infants acquiring their first language and people acquiring second languages seemed to learn the components of language through interaction with other people (Natsir, 2014). The method, particularly from the high beginning to more advanced levels has more conversational based activities, such as role-plays and tasks in which learners must use English to transmit information known by them but not by their speaking partners.

As part of the teaching and learning process, language educators need to understand how to assess student's speaking abilities in the target language. Lestari (2019) agrees that speaking is not as straightforward as testing grammar and proposes three concept criteria to test speaking and pronunciation. The first one is validity; the concept is that the teachers have to make sure that what is evaluated is what they explained to make it fair and appropriate. It demonstrate the importance of preparing in advance for that is going to be measured.

Second aspect is practicality, it refers to the fact that a test or any other assessment procedure can only be useful if it does not make unreasonable demands on resources. The resources include time, money, and personnel. For example, if a teacher has several lessons during the day with large groups of students, interviewing all the students for thirty minutes each

can be considered impractical. The third criteria for assessing speaking is instructional impact, which refers to the effect a test has on teaching and learning. It can be positive or negative depending on whether it promotes the development of the skills or knowledge to be learned (positive) or obstructs that development (negative).

In addition to the previous criteria to assess speaking skills, teachers should consider the approaches of the evaluations of speaking skills. It can be a direct test, indirect test, or semi-direct test. A direct one involves a procedure in which the learners speak the target language, interacting with the test administrator or with other students and generating speech. For instance, an unscripted role-play or an oral proficiency interview can be considered direct tests of speaking.

The indirect test is one where the students do not speak. For example, the evaluation consist of a written text from an actual conversation, in which words have been deleted and replaced by blank lines. The student job is to fill in each blank space with a word that will be appropriate in the context of that conversation. Another form of indirect test is the phoneme discrimination tasks, in which the student hears a single word and must select the appropriate picture in the test. While students are not talking, indirect evaluations assess the enabling skills that are thought to trigger the speaking skills. This kind of tests can be practical and reliable, mainly because they are more time-efficient to administer. However, students can feel that their speaking skills were not fairly assessed because there was not production of sounds (validity concern). In addition, using indirect procedures may send the message to students that it is not important for them to practice speaking English since they will not be evaluated on their speaking (negative instructional impact).

Semi-direct tests have been applied in contexts where students produce oral language, but they do not interact in a conversation. In contrast, students will listen to prompts and tasks delivered by a recorded voice, and also respond by talking to a recording device. The advantage is that they are easy to administer to several students at once, and students know they will have to speak (positive instructional impact). There is no right approach when assessing speaking, the task for teachers is to choose the appropriate procedure based on context and the student needs.

#### *2.1.2.1 First Language use in the English Classroom.*

In an EFL context, all the students in the classroom speak the same native language, which means the students can easily understand each other without using English. On the contrary, ESL teachers will have students that speak different native languages, this diversity is an advantage since the learners will need to speak in English to communicate with one another.

To everyone is easier to communicate in a language that is well known than in one we are learning. As a result, in the classroom the need to communicate in the first language may seem especially strong to beginners and lower intermediate students. In some cases, the teacher forbids the use of first language during the English lesson, Ortega-Auquilla (2020) states that it can be frustrating for lower-level students not to be able to express themselves, especially if they are looking to help a classmate or ask for help or clarification about classwork to the teacher. The author also mentions the personal preference of not discouraging the students from using their first language up to a point, but to build their confidence in using English. The researcher Ortega-Auquilla identified four functions of first language use in the classroom. Task management as the discussion about how the task should be completed or how the written text should be constructed. Task clarification, discussion about the meaning of the task's instructions.

Vocabulary and meaning discussion about lexical choice and definitions of words. Grammar, deliberations about grammatical points.

Savignon (2017) research showed that learners using native language helped them to provide each other with difficult vocabulary and explanations of grammar, particularly when they did not have the required language. The author defines this concept as metalanguage, it refers to a language use to talk about language when referring to grammar categories such as subject, verb, and direct object.

On a similar note, it shows that students are often hesitant and anxious about speaking the target language in class. The author used the term language classroom anxiety to refer to the “situational triggered anxiousness that learners experience when they try to interact in the target language.” He also mentions five elements that contributed to language classroom anxiety: the student’s low English proficiency, the fear of making mistakes and the mockery they thought they would face as a result, the teacher’s intolerance of silence, the teacher’s uneven allocation of turns and comprehensible input from the teachers.

From the findings on the research, it is important to highlight the importance of the teacher’s approach to create the right conditions to deal with students’ shyness. Moreover, the fundamental role of the teacher is to create a learning environment where students learn the aspects of the language but also get exposure to the target language as many times as possible to be able to use it naturally and fluently. And to create opportunities for the classroom by encouraging them to use English not only during their lesson but also in the interactions with their classmates, or any other English-speaking people.

### *2.1.2.2 Learning styles in the speaking class and corrections*

As mentioned on the previous section, students in the same classroom and setting will have different ways to participating in the class and to reacting to the different opportunities to connect. In addition to personality factors, such as being shy or having an outgoing nature; and cultural differences, teachers should consider students' learning styles. Learning styles are the “way we learn things in general, they are natural, habitual, and preferred ways of absorbing, processing and retaining new information and skills” (Estrada, 2020 p. 397).

Estrada (2020) proposes that learning styles are relatively stable. For example, concrete learners enjoy using games, and audios. They like talking in pairs and practicing English outside the classroom, while analytics learners prefer working alone, reading, and studying grammar. Communicative learners like talking to friends in English, listening to native speakers, and learning through conversation. In contrast, authority-oriented learners want to learn by reading, to have their own textbook, and to have the teacher explain new concepts.

Learners with concrete learning styles use “direct and active means to process information. These learners are curious, spontaneous, and risk-taking. They hate routines and written works. But they like verbal and visual experiences.” (Nurhaedah et al; 2020). Estrada (2020) strengthens this idea and mentions that concrete learners like to ask why, and they learn mostly from experiences and reflection. They are interested in language use and language as communication rather than language as a system.

Analytical learners like problem solving and enjoy developing principles. They tend to be independent. Logical and systematic way of presenting new materials pleases them. However, “they are very serious, and prone to failure easily” (Nurhaedah et al; 2020). They like to learn grammar and read textbooks. They also want their teacher to let them find their own mistakes

and tend to avoid groups; but they are independent and confident with their abilities (Estrada, 2020). The third kind of learners are the communicative ones, they enjoy talking to peer students or watching TV in English They like personal interaction, group discussion, and they like personal feedback. Communicative learners are language-use oriented and are interested in social interaction with other language users, rather than with the analysis of language (Nurhaedah, 2020).

Authority-oriented learners are responsible, dependable, and learn best in traditional classrooms. They perceive teachers as source of authority. They like clear instructions but dislike discussions. They like their teacher to explain everything for them, and they want to write everything in their textbook (Estrada, 2020).

One learning style issue that influences learners' speaking in class is the contrast between reflectivity and impulsivity. Reflective learners prefer to think about their answers or comments before speaking in class. They are generally cautious, while impulsive learners tend to be more impetuous and may take a risk. They may respond immediately, often before they have thought through their ideas completely. Moreover, in an English-speaking class, impulsive learners are typically those who will speak out quickly, perhaps without much concern for accuracy. Reflective learners, on the other hand, will want to think through what they have to say before speaking out in class.

The notion of reflectivity-impulsivity is important for the teachers, as they avoid judging mistakes too harshly, especially in case of a learner with impulsive style who may be more willing than a reflective person to take risk at a correct answer. On the same note, teachers must be patient with more reflective students, who may need more time to produce utterances during speaking classes and never assumed that students who do not talk much in class are not learning.

With class structure, both the reflective and the impulsive learners can use speaking opportunities to their advantage. The key is to not only help both groups use their strengths, but also build on their weaknesses. For example, before the speaking part of an activity the teacher can ask learners to write down what they would like to say before they speak with a peer. This step gives the reflective learners time to plan what they want to say, and the impulsive learners time to focus on the accuracy of their responses.

Despite efforts from the instructor to give opportunities to all type of learners, errors are common in the language classroom. (Ortega-Martín et al, 2022) explains that learner's oral error present a dilemma for the teacher. First, they have to decide whether or not to respond to an error and treat it. Second, if a response is needed how should that be done. And who should give the correct answer?

Researchers in Ortega-Marín et al (2022) shows that teachers react to errors more often than non-teachers do. In addition, non-native speaking teachers react more often than native-speaking teachers. These findings suggest that teachers-especially non-native teachers-may be more sensitive to errors than other people. In fact, there are some good reasons not to react to learners' oral errors. Students should not be discouraged as they are trying to communicate their ideas and feelings; people often get their point across even when they make mistakes. In addition, the same research suggests that correcting grammar points which are too advanced for the learners' current level of linguistic development does not result in learning.

To answer the second part of the dilemma to teachers, (Heritage et al; 2018) proposes that students may learn more if they themselves correct problems in their speech. If the teacher simply supplies the correct form, the learner may not recall and internalize the learning. On the

other hand, if the learner has to work at producing the correct form, doing so may be memorable, and could promote learning, in addition to the sustaining conversation.

There are many ways teachers can help students correct their own speaking errors. For instance, if a learner says, "I go to the movies yesterday," the teacher can point backward over the shoulder to indicate that past tense is needed. Or can get the student to repeat the utterance, but the second time the teacher will raise the hand in a gentle cautioning movement, palm outward, at the point where he makes an error. Giving a simple hint may allow the learner to work out the problem on his own.

Heritage et al (2018) mentions that there are also times when peer correction can be very effective-especially if it is done in a positive, supportive way. If a learner is having trouble with an utterance, a classmate can often coach him or her and provide a missing word or structure. "The point is not to embarrass the students or set up a competitive environment. Rather it is to increase student participation and support." (Akhmedov, 2021).

In addition to the way of correcting errors, teachers should also analyze *when* the best moment is to point and correct the mistakes. The instructor can respond to errors immediately or can wait until the student has finished speaking. One alternative that Heritage et al (2018) mentions is to collect the example of mistakes made during the speaking practice and save time at the end of the lesson to deal correct them.

In general, the practice in Communicative Language Teaching is "not to interrupt a learner to react to an error if he is communicating his message successfully even with the error" (Akhmedov, 2021). Instead, teachers using this approach typically focus on oral errors if they disrupt communication. Another widely accepted strategy is only to treat those errors in

structure, vocabulary or pronunciation that have been covered in previous lessons. Heritage et al (2018) points that regardless of the strategy to make corrections, it is important not to treat errors in a punitive fashion, or to belittle the students when they are working hard to communicate in a new language.

#### *2.1.4 Podcasts*

In today's world, there are many categories of technology to help non-native English speakers. Many studies have shown (Mustapha et al; 2021) that new opportunities can be gained by using technology in education. In the case for language learning, podcasts are a source of authentic audio materials. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary the etymology comes from the trademark iPod, a portable media player and the word broadcast and it defines podcast as a program made available in digital format for automatic download over the internet. This means that it can be played on devices such as desktop computer, laptops, and cellphones.

In its initial stages, people found podcasts similar to radio on demand, but as technology advanced podcasting gave far more options in terms of content and programming than radio does. Chances are whatever people want to listen to can be found in podcast form, the website Apple Podcast Statistics shows a total of 2,461,758 podcasts by June 26, 2022 (Lewis, 2022). Lewis also explains that this form of media content was developed in 2004, when a former video jockey from MTV (a music channel), Adam Curry, and software developer Dave Winer coded the "iPodder." The iPodder was a program that let the user internet radio broadcast to their Apple iPod.

Nowadays, podcasts are an extremely popular form of audio entertainment and have progressed beyond being downloadable radio shows. Each podcast is a series created by a host and then published episode-by-episode online, where subscribers can then download and listen to

each episode when it is released. Unlike traditional methods of content production like TV and radio shows, podcasts are an accessible way for content creators to connect with an audience. They are not currently regulated, meaning you do not need a broadcasting license to publish podcast content. Anyone with basic podcast equipment like a microphone, recording software, and a membership to a hosting platform can create their own show.

To that end, podcasts can be as varied as the creator's imagination. Lewis (2022) mentions that podcasts can be qualified into four large categories:

**Conversational.** This is the most informal category, can have roundtable discussion with guests to solo hosts. Many are interview podcasts, where the participants will dive deep into the guests' personal history or expert knowledge in a topic.

**Narrative nonfiction.** It contains anything that covers a true event or topic in a narrative style, can be considered a long-form storytelling.

**Scripted fiction.** Similar to a TV show, with scripted fiction podcasts the user can subscribe to a weekly episode of anything from experimental sci-fi fantasies to historical fiction comedies.

**Repurposed content.** With the popularity of podcasts raising many content creators put their work into audio content. From bloggers to TV shows, one example of this kind of podcasts are the TED talks. The nonprofit organization features experts in technology, entertainment, and design to give short and powerful talks. The organization started posting their videos in the form of audio podcast also.

Given the popularity, the internet offers a considerable series of materials for user that want to create their own content. Researcher Robert Casares (2022) collected information and develop a 12-steps guide for creating a podcast:

- Identify the topic and goals. The creator should choose a podcast topic that suits their skills and write down the goals for making a podcast. Podcasters create content for a variety of reasons, including brand awareness, audience engagement, and sharing information about a topic that is important to them.
- Listen to other podcasts on the same topic. This step will help to understand what kind of content works for the subscriber's base as the creator will explore the best podcasts that center around your chosen topic.
- Develop the format. There are several types of podcasts, including interview talk shows, monologues, fiction, and nonfiction narratives. Before starting a recording, the author should decide how many podcast episodes want to produce and how long each episode will be.
- Choose a title. The researcher recommends keeping it simple and direct and to include keywords that will improve search engine optimization and help new listeners find episodes based on the name of the podcast.
- Write a script or outline. Regardless of the format and number of participants, a basic template of talking points can help to keep track of the duration and topic discussion.
- Gather the necessary equipment. The tools to create a podcast include a microphone, pop filter, and headphones. Access to audio recording and editing software to produce the audio content is also recommended.
- Prepare a space for recording. For home-based- creators the recording equipment should be set up in a quiet space. Rooms with cushions, curtains, and carpeting can help absorb echoing reverberations that can decrease vocal audio quality.

- Record your podcast. Caseres recommends the beginners to have patience as it can take time to get comfortable behind a microphone, to have a glass of water nearby and, to take breaks when necessary.
- Edit your audio. Postproduction is the time to remove or fix any sound quality issues. The episode should be focused on the selected topic by editing out sections that ramble and rearranging segments to make the narrative thread of the episode as clear as possible.
- Prepare the podcast for distribution by creating cover art or hiring a graphic designer to help. Podcast cover art can be as small as 1400x1400 pixels and as large as 3000x3000 pixels.
- Upload the audio files to a podcast hosting service. Podcast hosting platforms store audio files and provide an RSS podcast feed that links to the podcast.
- Submit the episode podcast directories. Using the podcast's RSS feed URL, submit it podcast directories like Spotify, Apple Podcasts and Google Podcasts.

The popularity of podcasts can, in part, be attributed to the fact that it is the listener's choice to select exactly what they want to hear. Moreover, podcasts are easy to access. With a computer the user can type the word "podcast" and the internet will provide free, easy to access content. Similarly, if the user has a smartphone or table with a podcatching app or premium listening apps. It is the free, easy to access that makes podcasting a popular option for entertainment and knowledge.

#### *2.1.4.1 Podcasts and language learning*

Rosell-Aguilar (as cited in Samad et al, 2017) states that a podcast is like a public library that provides materials or resources needed directly to the user hands and podcasts have given EFL educators numerous materials for teaching. Podcasting provides to English learners a mean

to get access to authentic material about the subject that may interest them. Teachers can take advantage of podcasts as a mean for listening comprehension exercises, and as material to improve oral skills by generating conversation based on student's reactions to the materials.

Another aspect that positively affects EFL learner's proficiency in terms of podcasting is the access to authentic materials, that is exposing students to real language use in the appropriate context. Nurlaly (2020) stated that using materials that have not been manipulated for classroom use have many advantages. Authentic materials provide exposure to real language, life-like scenarios and can be related to students needs since they include a wide variety of language forms and styles are not found in traditional teaching materials. The author also believes that authentic materials have a positive effect on increasing students' motivation and make learning more enjoyable as they genuinely find interest in the EFL class, expose students to cultural features, and generate a deeper understanding and interest in the topic. Authentic materials are realistic, relevant, and triggers the process of natural language acquisition. In other words, authentic materials provide a valuable support and become a bridge between the classroom and the real word.

According to Tolentino (2021) when audiovisual resources are implemented in a systematized way, oriented to achieve specific educative goals in the learning process, it results in an increase of the interest for acquiring knowledge from students. Consequently, a motivated student can learn more easily and fast within an appropriate academic environment, as he or she gains exposure to an active interaction with the media. For that reason, listening to videos originally produced as entertainment not only provides exposure to real language and cultural information but motivates students to interact.

The importance of using authentic materials is that they provide a realistic model and language input which shows a real context for language use, a purpose, and an audience. In addition, Harmer (2011) states that foreign language teaching should parallel first language learning and use by focusing primarily on meaning, purpose, and context of language use, not on linguistic forms. And justify that by saying “authenticity in learning design is central, creating learning opportunities for students from which they can benefit and upon which they can draw once they leave formal learning behind” (p.20).

Based on the previous description, it can be said that authentic materials, like podcasts, are learning resources from which students can take advantage even in their post-formal studies because authenticity in materials has the *real life* plus, what means that the students are stimulated with real language when they are exposed to an authentic audio. Nurlaily (2020) establish how situation and cognition are separated in many educative systems; as a result, students could not be able to accomplish tasks in real context, due to lack of real-life exposure. It reinforces how important the use of authentic materials is in order to empower students with the necessary tools for facing real situations since simple knowledge is not enough for inspiring them.

Explicitly, teaching English as a foreign language is primordial to engage students with real life situations, because the only contact they have with native English and the culture on an English-speaking country is within the English classroom. Teachers are obligated to show students, through authentic materials, the way in which the aspects to be learned are contextualized. Harmer (2011) state that learning is a complex process that depends on the ability of the learner to re-contextualize the knowledge and skills that they have acquired.

The teacher's role in this context is to facilitate authentic content and encourage students to find interest in natural communication. Teachers should seek for meaningful and authentic learning to accomplish the acquisition of a new language; Harmer (2011) mentions nine steps to design a strategy for providing the authenticity plus in education.

- Provide authentic context that reflect the way the knowledge will be used in real life
- Provide authentic activities
- Provide access to expert performances and the modelling of processes
- Provide multiple roles and perspectives
- Support collaborative construction of knowledge
- Promote reflection to enable abstraction to be formed
- Promote articulation to enable tacit knowledge to be made explicit.
- Provide coaching and scaffolding by the teacher at critical times
- Provide for authentic assessment of learning within the tasks (p. 16-17)

For language learning there are three basic models of activities for podcasting. The first one is that students are consumers so they can choose the content they want to listen, when teachers create materials specific for students, or students as publishers so teachers have students create material for others to listen. For the second and third models, users do not need to be experts in technology or a topic to create a podcast. If the teacher is creating the content, it is important to answer the following questions before recording: What is the format of the podcast? What is the outline of the talk? Will it be an interview with a guest, a report, or a discussion? On the contrary, if the student will be producing the audios Díaz (2021) recommends making the podcasting project collaborative, and to encourage students to take turns speaking and avoiding reading from a script.

Podcasts are a flexible classroom resource. Diaz (2021) recommend for EFL environments, that the material following the listening activity should focus on just one sub-skills at a time, for example, on fluency. For example, the students will practice listening for general meaning, but the podcast will be used for an opening discussion. For beginners, the educator will find a length-appropriate episode and play it at least twice. He or she can write the open-ended questions on the board, what is the episode about? Who is speaking and what are they talking about? Students can discuss answers to questions in partners, in small groups, or as a class.

Becoming a fluent speaker means constantly growing vocabulary, especially for beginner and intermediate levels. In the next example, the teacher will focus the lesson on vocabulary. They can start by teaching key target vocabulary and creating a glossary of the unfamiliar words, it guide the students to use as they listen to the podcast. The teacher will provide the transcript of the podcast as a cloze activity with blank spaces where the key words should be. Students will complete the blank spaces with the correct key vocabulary.

Listening for pronunciation also works for EFL students. The goal is to have students listen to particular aspects of pronunciation, intonation, register, or accent. Before reproducing the podcast, the teacher will introduce the aspect of pronunciation to the students. After playing the episode, the teacher will ask the students to try to repeat the sounds. Or have them compare the pronunciation or accent from a speaker in one podcast with that of a speaker in another podcast.

The activities shared above are a small sample of the kinds of lessons teacher can use while listening to a podcast as they are a resource that offers flexibility in subject matter, realism in presentation, and challenges in language for students.

The aspects on this chapter summarize general features to describe speaking skills, the learning of the skill and general information about podcasts. Speaking in another language with proficiency must be underlined as the primary goal on the EFL classroom. However, the other linguistic skills should not be considered less important because the integration of skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing work together for a higher goal, the command of the target language.

## **Chapter III**

### **Methodological Framework**

The primary goal of this research is to determine if the use of podcasts with post listening activities enhance speaking skills. This chapter discusses the methodology implemented during the research paper process. It presents the approach and discusses aspects such as place, participants, role of researcher and instruments.

#### **3.1 Research approach**

This study is based on the qualitative approach. According to Creswell (cited in Hu et al; 2017) the qualitative method explores and understand the meaning of individuals or groups associated to a specific social problem; also, this author states that this type of research requires an inductive data analysis; consequently, the researcher would make interpretations of the problem studied.

Creswell (cited in Hu et al, 2017) defines interpretation in qualitative research as the process in which the researcher “draws meaning from finding of data analysis. This meaning may result in lessons learned and information to compare to literature” p. 206. The author states that there are several strategies of inquiring depending on the approach selected for a specific study, in this case the one selected is the use of phenomenological research.

It refers to “the strategy of inquiry in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants.” Hu (2017) clarifies that on this process, the researchers put aside their own experiences, to be able to identify the reality of the

participants under study. The phenomenon investigated in this study is the enhancement of speaking skills foster by the use of podcasts.

This study is based on the paradigm of social constructivism, based on Creswell (cited in Hu et al, 2017); it is the assumption that individuals seek for understanding of the world in which they live and work, developing subjective meanings of their experience. Also, the author states that the purpose of research relies on the participants' views towards the aspect to be studied.

### **3.2 Research Design**

The study will be applied in Tres Rios, in a middle school public institution, specifically in Calle Mesén School. It is focus on the sixth grades program, which uses the academic syllabus of Ministerio de Educación Pública for the English subject, particularly to enhance speaking skills. The population selected for this research is one of the three sixth-grade classrooms in the Calle Mesén school. The original population is 32 students, 41% of the class are boys. The researcher interacts with the students and teacher to observe their attitude towards the use of podcasts in the EFL classroom, to gather information and, collect data to determine the activities in which the use of this type of audios may benefit learners' speaking skills.

The Calle Mesén public school was founded in 1972, it is located in 800 meters north and 15 west from the San Diego Square. In the district La Unión and is part of the Cartago Province. The school has 480 students and educates kids from preschool to sixth grade. The mission statements is to: "Promote actions that satisfy the interests of the educational community, based on ethical, civic, social and moral values to develop and obtain meaningful, comprehensive learning in the academic and technological area that allows the development of future citizens as responsible people that contributes to society and loves the country." (Dirección Regional de Educación de Cartago, 2022) Due to weather conditions and poor infrastructure the school had to

be relocated in 2016. In 2014, the Ministry of Public Education designated a 10.000m<sup>2</sup> land to the construction of the new building, the new facilities were built taking into consideration the geological factors of San Diego, so that floods do not affect the dynamic of the school again. The space has green areas for the kids to play, 16 classrooms, it is accessible to all the community, and it has a parking lot. These changes boosted the parents of the community to enroll their kids, and in 2017 they double the school population.

The community around the school is mid to low income, with access to basic necessities. Criminal acts, specifically assaults increased in the last 2 years however, this is dispersed and had not yet affect the school community.

The role of the researcher is an observant during the first stage, and researcher-teacher during the second phase of the study. The researcher designs a plan which contain two themes of the MEP syllabus for sixth grade and different mediation strategies for each lesson. Researcher will observe the learner's attitudes towards the use of podcasts in the classroom to enhance speaking skills and gather information through an observation guide. The researcher will analyze the collected data to determine the activities in which the use of podcasts may benefit the learner's speaking skills and others that do not.

### **3.3 Information Sources**

Bernal mentions two types of sources for collecting information: primary and secondary. The former is "all those from which direct information is obtained, that is, from where the information originates" (Bernal, 2010). During the research period the primary source in this paper is the sixth-grade students of the Calle Mesén school and the teacher Jessica Araya. As for secondary sources, they are those that are only referenced and which agree with what was

consulted during this investigation, that is books, magazines, education journals, and written documents in general.

### **3.4 Data collection instruments**

#### *3.4.1 Questions to assess the oral competence of the learners*

During the first phase of the project, the researcher uses a guide to observe ESL lessons adapted from The International Language Institute of Massachusetts, the guide compile questions to answers while “observing learners as they solve problems, model skills to others, think aloud during a sequence of activities or interact with peers in different learning situations” (Rivers, 2019). It allows the researcher to observe difficulties faced by students in the process of building oral skills in the classroom, in addition to identify what students do when they encounter difficulty with speaking and how the interactions with other affects their learning and concentration. The observation is scheduled over two different periods of time in the same learning context, meaning the researcher will observe the same sixth grade classroom twice while completing the questions.

#### *3.4.2 Students attitudes questionnaires*

A questionnaire used to determine the student’s strategies when listening and speaking. The same questionnaire to be administrated at the beginning and at the end of the course, with the purpose of comparing if there was a significant change in the use of strategies which would facilitate student oral communication performance after completing the activities on the lesson plan. Each student in the sixth-grade class will complete the questionnaire anonymously, to ensure all students fully understand the questions and context the items are written in Spanish. The questionnaire is an adaptation from the one on the Modern Language Journal (2017) that

identified the positive and negative strategies that enable students to integrate listening and speaking for successful oral performance.

#### *3.4.2 Observation guide*

Since the objective of the study is the enhancement of the speaking skills, the goal of the observation guide is to analyze and evaluate the student's behavior during the lesson when podcasts are played as part of the learning process, in order to identify which activities are more effective to promote speaking skills.

It is divided in three main aspects that are language in podcast, content in podcast, and student participation that complete twenty-one closed items. Those items are analyzed based on a likert scale which rates the items in: Always, often, almost never, never, not applicable.

The observation guide is scheduled to be applied each time the researcher has a new interaction with the students, a podcast is played, and the students proceed to complete the post listening activities on the lesson plan.

### **3.5 Collection data process and data analysis**

In the first section of the collection data process the researcher will observe the development of the different activities the population of the study is engaging with during two English lessons of 80 minutes each as diagnostic period. The gathering of information takes place in a natural setting in an unobtrusive manner to the sixth graders. The researcher collects information at the same time the students listen to the teacher, respond to questions, engage in evaluation activities, and interact with each other.

Along the diagnostic phase and in line with the specific objectives of the study, the researcher makes a preliminary observation to understand the main characteristics of the

population, including a deep analysis to the strategies public education uses to improve oral skills within the MEP's content.

During the second phase, a total of six podcasts are played to the population and a lesson plan is developed with post-listening activities designed according to the level of English suggested from the first phase. In this period, the researcher also plays as student-teacher to collect information and interact with the students during a period of 6 days, between 30 and 40 minutes each day.

Podcast stage was planned with two types of activities. First audio-time, where a podcast episode is played once, twice or three times, depending on the students' needs at the time. And second, post-listening activities are developed; these activities are planned for enhancing student's speaking skills, by using the information or following the model from the podcasts and audio materials.

The student-teacher selected the audios based on the interests of the students the teacher shared during the first phase and the unit 4 of the MEP syllabus for sixth grade. The times on the unit are: Are we saying "goodbye" to the rainforest? and ways to rescue it. In the tasks, students will carry-out listing, comparing, problem-solving, sharing experiences and creative tasks in relation to the podcasts.

The lesson plan is divided in six dates, based on each interaction with the students. The goals of the mediation strategies are to enable students to gain confidence when speaking English, improve oral production and expand their vocabulary. After each lesson plan is completed, the researcher will complete the observation guide in appendix D to evaluate student's behavior when podcasts are played as part of the learning process.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Data Analysis**

To analyze the data collected, the researcher intended to follow the three iterative recommended steps for analyzing qualitative that are: reading, describing, and classifying. The researcher carefully read all the information gathered: while doing this she took notes and highlighted sections which they viewed as relevant. This information was useful to see if there were any common patterns. After this stage, the researcher described thoroughly the setting, the participants, and the phenomenon that is the core of the study. Next, data were classified by themes. To complete this task, researchers read the data, examined it, and compared it. This process was necessary in order to form categories that were the basis for data analysis.

For the purposes of validation and reliability of the information, the researcher used three different data collection instruments to get information from the two data sources, a group of sixth graders and an English teacher, applied at different stages of the study.

To obtain the conclusion, the researcher made a final review of the most important aspects of the project through the identification of goals and objectives, comparing the initial proposal with the information gathered from literature review and the data collection instruments. In addition, the researcher looked for the concerns and limitations that emerged during the research process and was able to recognize the strengths and weaknesses evidenced throughout the study.

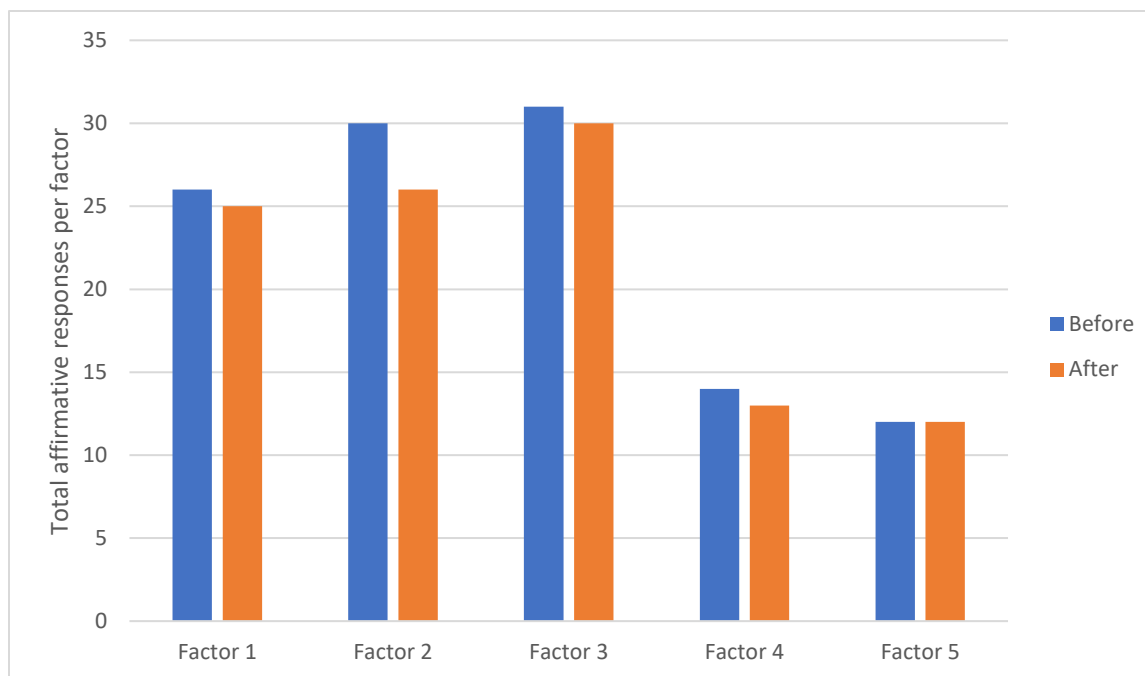
## **4.1 Analysis and Interpretation of the Results**

The information gathered from the students has been analyzed into graphics that evidence the amount of people who agreed on the effectiveness of podcasts as a tool to enhance speaking skills, or the people who disagreed with the implementation of podcasts and post-listening activities of this research study as a way to improve their knowledge of English.

### *4.1.1 The use of students' strategies at the beginning and at the end of the course*

This section presents the data collected from the questionnaires applied to students before and after they listen to the podcasts. The goal of the pre-teaching data is to identify difficulties faced by students in the process of building oral skills with the current approach and methodologies of the English classroom and to compare scenarios where listening to podcasts, followed by post listening exercises can improve the speaking skills. This analysis was drawn from comparing the data obtained through the survey completed at the beginning and at the end of the course. In the case of listening, five factors which encompassed related listening strategies were considered:

1. Negotiation of meaning strategies. 2. Fluency -Oriented Strategies. 3. Scanning strategies. 4. Getting the gist. 5. Less Active Listener Strategies (Nakatani cited in Chou, 2020). Figure 1 compares the strategies for listening comprehension used by students at the beginning and at the end of the course.



*Figure 1. Comparison of student strategies used while listening at the beginning and at the end of the study. Factors: 1. Negotiation of meaning strategies. 2. Fluency -Oriented Strategies. 3. Scanning strategies. 4. Getting the gist. 5. Less Active Listener Strategies.*

*Source: Questionnaire administrated to students at the beginning and at the end of the course*

Factor 4, getting the gist, refers to the strategies students used for getting the speakers main idea in spite of not understanding every single word. Paying attention to the general idea is beneficial for English learners since the same strategy is used in their native language. In fact, speakers do not pay attention to every word but to content words which carry meaning when they speak in their L1. Table 1 shows that in item 10 of the factor, there were no significant changes in how students reacted to the inability to understand every single detail, which is something positive in language learning. In fact, people do not pay attention to every word when they participate in a conversation. They pay attention to content words even in their L1.

Table 1. Students' responses to questions about strategies from getting the gist from listening at the beginning and at the end of the lessons.

Items regarding student strategies for getting the gist	BEFORE			AFTER		
	Never & almost never	Always & almost always	No response	Never & almost never	Always & almost always	No response
10. I do not mind if I cannot understand every single detail	17	12	0	16	12	1
11. I try to respond to the speaker even when I do not understand him/her perfectly	12	17	0	12	17	0
12. I anticipate what the speaker is going to say based on context	14	15	0	15	14	0
n: 29						
Source: Questionnaire administrated to students at the beginning and at the end of the lesson						

However, in item 11, the students stated that they attempted to reply even though they did not have a clear idea of what they had heard. This fact results in communication breakdowns, reduction of turn taking, and eventually, negative effects on students' self-confidence and initiative. This interruption of the conversation flow due to their inability to ask for clarification is negative in their learning process.

Factor 1, negotiation of meaning strategies, deals with how students ask for clarifications "by daring to show their difficulties in comprehension and implying a need for the speaker's help" (Nakatani cited in Chou, 2020) when they do not fully comprehend the message that the speaker is trying to convey. According to Nakatani (Chou, 2020), the opportunities of learning a

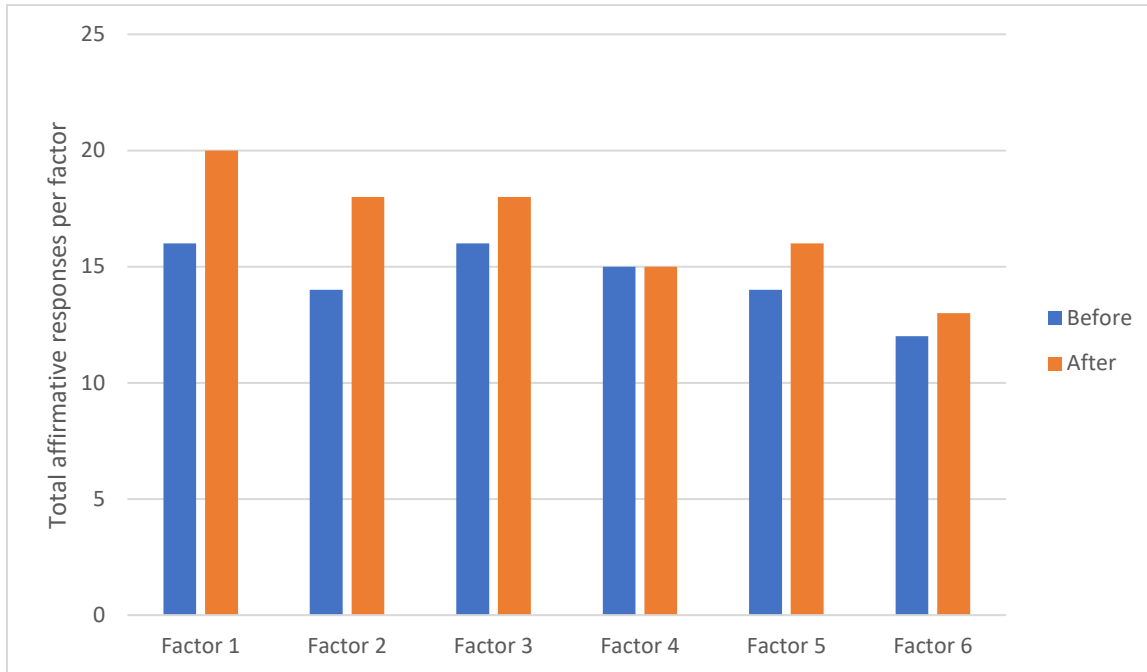
new language rely on how much students dare to show their difficulties in comprehension to prevent misunderstandings.

Table 2. Students' responses to questions about strategies for negotiation of meaning while listening at the beginning and at the end of the lessons.

Items regarding student strategies for negotiation of meaning while listening	BEFORE			AFTER		
	Never & almost never	Always & almost always	No response	Never & almost never	Always & almost always	No response
1. I ask for repetition when I cannot understand what the speaker has said	8	21	0	10	19	1
2. I ask the speaker to use easy words when I have trouble comprehending something.	19	10	0	13	16	0
3. I ask the speaker to slow down when I cannot understand what the speaker has said	10	19	0	12	8	0
4. I make clear to the speaker what I have not been able to understand	8	21	0	10	19	0
n:29						
Source: Questionnaire administrated to students at the beginning and at the end of the lesson						

At the beginning, most students never asked the speaker for simplification of language. This means that they used to play a passive role in listening when they were interacting with a proficient English speaker. In fact, there might have been important amounts of information they missed because of not daring to ask for simplification of language. However, at the end of the lesson plans, students took risks and asked for clarifications when they were not able to understand what the speaker said. This was evident in an informal interview with a student who at the beginning of the course would claim that she did not understand what speakers said, therefore, she barely participated in conversations. At the end of the course, she became a more active participant in conversations, class discussions and panels.

In the case of speaking six factors were considered to determine strategies used by the students when speaking to improve oral communications. Figure 2 shows the strategies that students used while speaking at the beginning and at the end of the course.



*Figure 2. Comparison of student strategies used while speaking at the beginning and at the end of the study. Factors: 1. Social-Affective strategies 2. Fluency-oriented strategies 3. Accuracy-oriented strategies 4. Message Reduction and Alteration Strategies 5. Message abandonment strategies 6. Thinking in English*

*Source: Questionnaire administrated to students at the beginning and at the end of the course.*

Interestingly, there was a positive change in factor 1, which is related to social and affective factors that have an influence on communication. It shows that students improved on tolerating anxiety in speaking tasks. Table 3 shows this change.

Table 3. Students' responses to questions about strategies for coping with social-affective factors at the beginning and at the end of the lesson plans.

	BEFORE	AFTER

Items regarding student strategies for copying with social-affective factors	Never & almost never	Always & almost always	No response	Never & almost never	Always & almost always	No response
1. I actively encourage myself to express what I want	10	19	0	11	18	1
2. I do not mind taking risks even though I might make mistakes	10	19	0	8	21	0
3. I try to use expressions that I have heard	7	22	0	6	23	0

In items 1 and 2, students stated that they took more risks in order to convey a message even though they made mistakes. According to Chou (2020) “language use provides great opportunities for learners to communicate with their own language for real purposes through experimenting and revising hypotheses.” Therefore, making mistakes represents a crucial part of learning a foreign language. On the contrary, item 3 is related to taking risks by using the authentic input as source of vocabulary and phrases to include in their speech. Chou (2020) explains that “simply focusing on meaning may not draw the attention of learners to the form in which meanings are encoded.” Thus, the exposure to podcasts does not ensure that every student at an intermediate level will reproduce what they have listened to even when they have understood the message. This fact has a close relation to factor 6 (attempt to think in English) since speakers must assimilate and accommodate new language forms and expressions in order to adapt their speech to the challenges presented in a conversation with an English speaker.

Factor 6, attempt to think in English evaluates students' effort to think in the target language. According to Nakatani (cited in Chou, 2020) it is useful for learners to think as much as possible in the foreign language during actual communication since it requires a quick response to interlocutors. Table 4 shows how students responded to the attempt to think in English.

Table 4. Students' responses to questions about the attempt to think in English

Items regarding the attempt to think in English	BEFORE			AFTER		
	Never & almost never	Always & almost	No response	Never & almost never	Always & almost	No response
16. I think of what I want to say in my native language and then construct the English sentence	15	14	0	17	12	1
17. I think first of a sentence I already know in English and then try to change it to fit the situation	17	12	0	16	13	0
n: 29 Source: Questionnaire administrated to students at the beginning and at the end of the course						

Item 16 shows that there are still several students that make use of the translation to convey a message which represents lowering the pace of the conversation and creating communication breakdowns. On the other hand, item 17 reflects that even though they claim to know some expressions in English they have studied or listened to, they are still unable to use them meaningfully.

Factor 3, accuracy-oriented strategies, expresses students' desire to speak in English accurately. In order to be proficient in the language students need not only fluency but also accuracy to get the message through with minimal interference. Consequently, this factor shows their capacity to notice grammar structures in real contexts and to reproduce them appropriately. Table 5 reflects students' strategies for accuracy.

Table 5. Students' responses to questions about accuracy-oriented strategies

Items regarding accuracy-oriented strategies	BEFORE			AFTER		
	Never & almost never	Always & almost always	No response	Never & almost never	Always & almost always	No response
7. I pay attention to grammas and word order during a conversation	19	10	0	17	12	0
8. I notice myself using an expression which fits a rule that I have learned	10	19	0	8	20	1
9. I correct myself when I notice that I have made a mistake	11	18	0	10	19	0
10. I try to talk like a native speaker	19	9	1	17	12	0
n:29						
Source: Questionnaire administrated to students at the beginning and at the end of the course.						

Items 8 and 10 show that there is not an ultimate need to speak English perfectly. The reason why this happens is that interaction they have had in the language has been merely with peers or with an English teacher. Indeed, the fact that the students have the same native

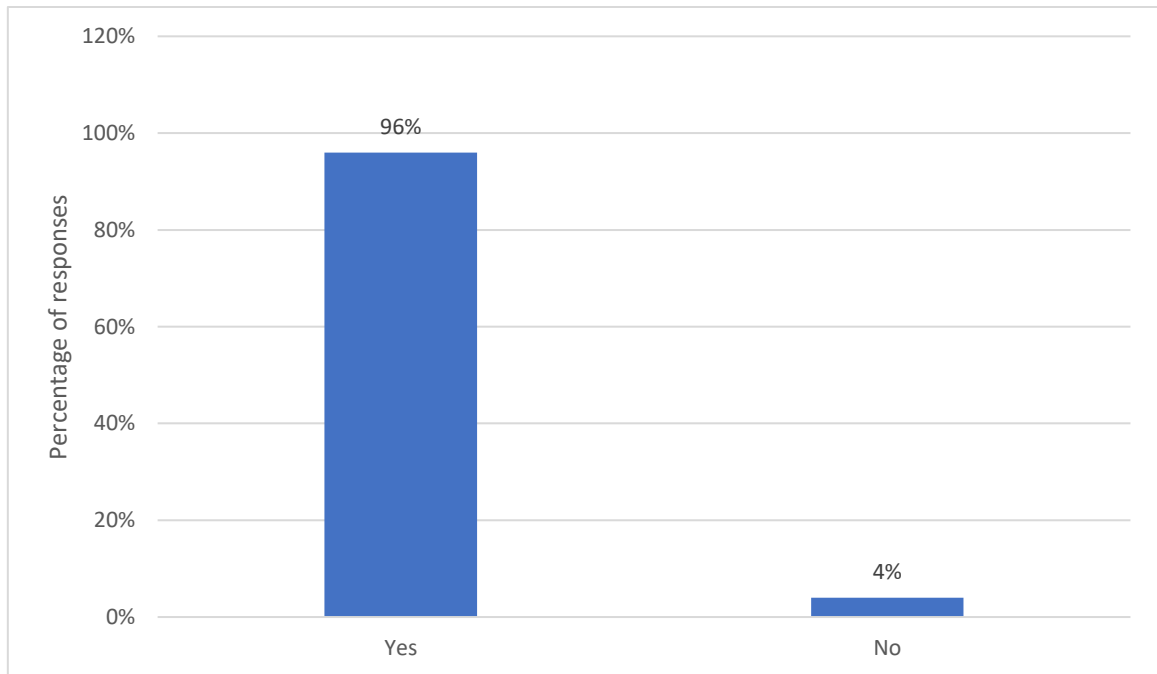
language, make similar mistakes, and interact with a teacher, who is used to understanding meaning in spite of incorrect form, demonstrates that understanding happened regardless of grammatical mistakes. Moreover, the challenges that are presented in oral communication with an English speaker outside the classroom are not common during the English lessons. Items 7 and 9 show that even though students notice their mistakes in grammar, they do not monitor themselves. Therefore, dominance of fluency over accuracy is evident in this area.

#### *4.1.2 Observation guides*

Observation guides were carried out to support the information from the questionnaires, the observational routines during each lesson showed that students' expectations increased in the way topics were presented, as well as their motivation to participate in the activities; those facts lead them to enjoy the speaking activities.

Each lesson followed the same pattern. First, the students listened to a podcast episode which served as model to the post-listening activities with the goal of increasing student's oral production. According to the methodology of this study, each lesson plan presentation and the corresponding activities were analyzed using a class observation form filled by the researcher. Each class observation contains specific aspects related to the behavior of the students.

For teachers, sometimes it is challenging to maintain the interest of the students; however, when the learners are interest in their learning process it is easier for them to learn a foreign language. Furthermore, during the development of the lessons, learners showed interest from the beginning to the end of the class. The interest in learning is an important factor that benefits the learners; if students are not interest in the topics, the learning process most likely will be disrupted.



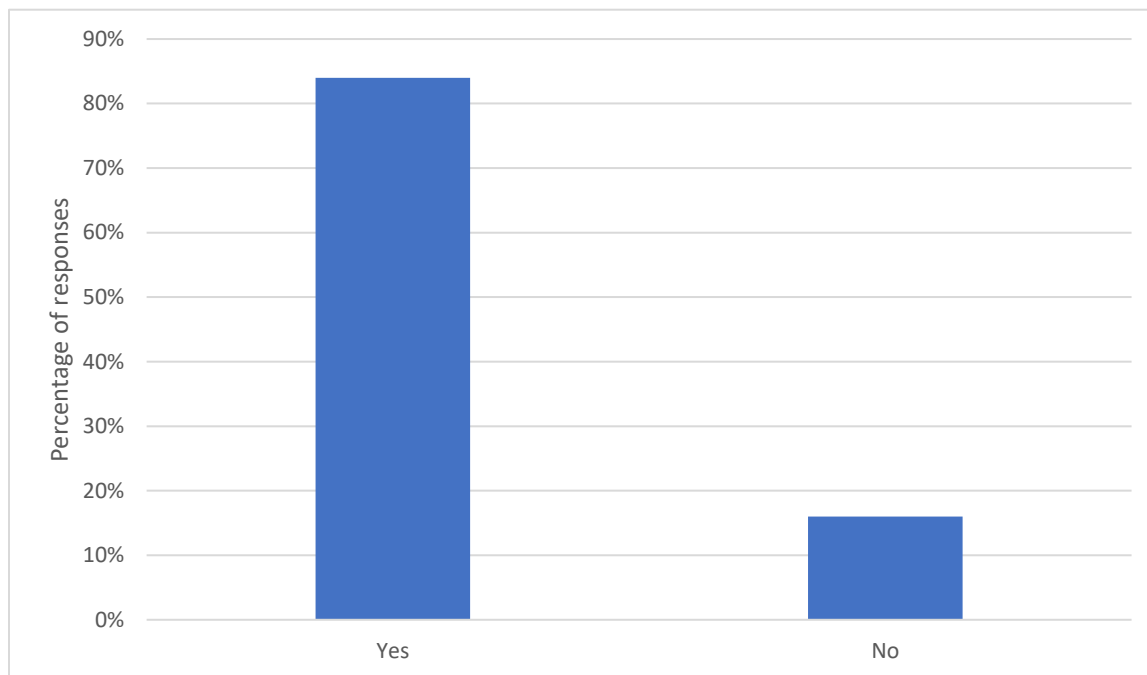
*Figure 3. Enjoyment of students in English lessons with the use of podcasts.*

*Source: questions in observation report at the end of each lesson plan.*

In class observations, during the research process, it was noticed that the learners enjoyed the interaction in class with a different methodology. The learners were willing to ask and answer questions, no matter if they were correct or not. Information gathered from the guides showed that most of the participants enjoyed the lessons in which audios were presented. Figure 3 shows that 96% of students stated that they enjoyed the lessons with podcasts, consequently, the audios reflected to be relevant as a source interest to the students, since they were not familiar to the activities during their regular lessons. As a result, numbers showed that students found the new techniques interesting.

It is equally important to analyze that authentic audios are beneficial materials to improve oral skills. When students enjoyed the activities in class, they were more likely to be motivated for learning and the participation in class increased. In addition, the class environment

was less tense as the learners participated in the different activities without feeling anxious about making mistakes. The post – listening activities promoted the use of English, native vocabulary applied in daily routines; this vocabulary was related to the one they studied in class and was appropriate for the student’s level however when the speaker pace was too fast, the speed of the podcast was reduced to 0.8x.

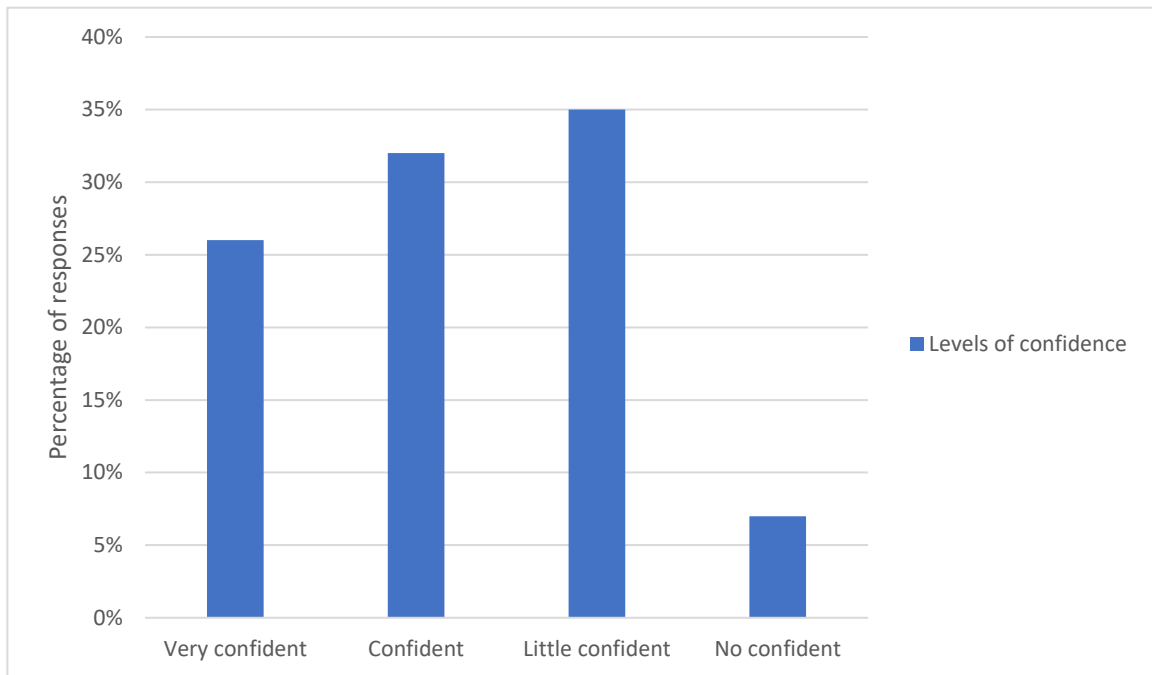


*Figure 4. Use of podcasts is beneficial to improve oral skills.*

*Source: questions in observation report at the end of each lesson plan.*

Information gathered on figure 4 indicates that 84% of the participants find the use of podcasts beneficial to improve oral competences. Only 16% of the students involved considered that the use of authentic audios in the class was not beneficial. Moreover, confidence during the activities was a factor that could have influenced the learning process during the post-listening activities. Figure 5 describes a variation of learners’ confidence during the development of the

tasks. Most of the participants felt little confidence during the activities. It is important to consider that more confidence pushed the participants to feel motivated; consequently, students practice the utterances from the audios.

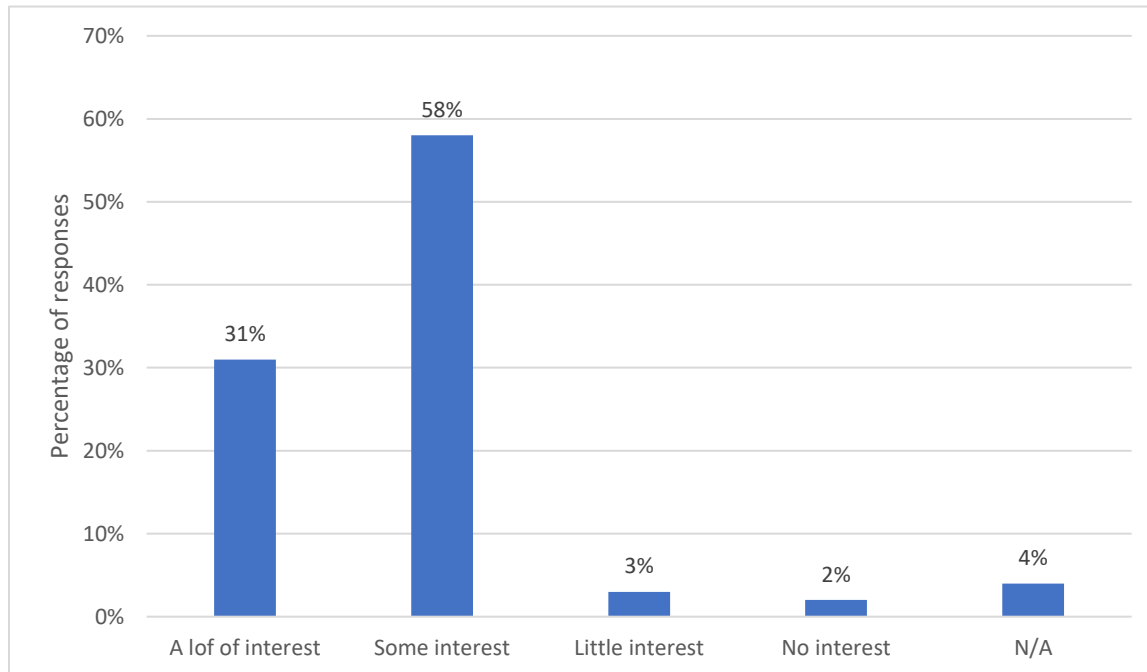


*Figure 5. The level of student's confidence when participating in post-listening activities. Source: questions in observation report at the end of each lesson plan.*

Based on the information obtained, 26% of students felt very confident, 32% confident, 35% little confident, 7% no confident at all. In other words, confidence can be considered an influential aspect in student's participation, and during the observation most of the learners presented little confidence during each lesson.

The interest of the students during the activities is vital when learning a new language; the graphic un figure 7 shows how the students get engaged in participating in some activities, increasing their knowledge on specific topics of English. The graphic presents relevant information on how these the population was interested in the activities performed after the

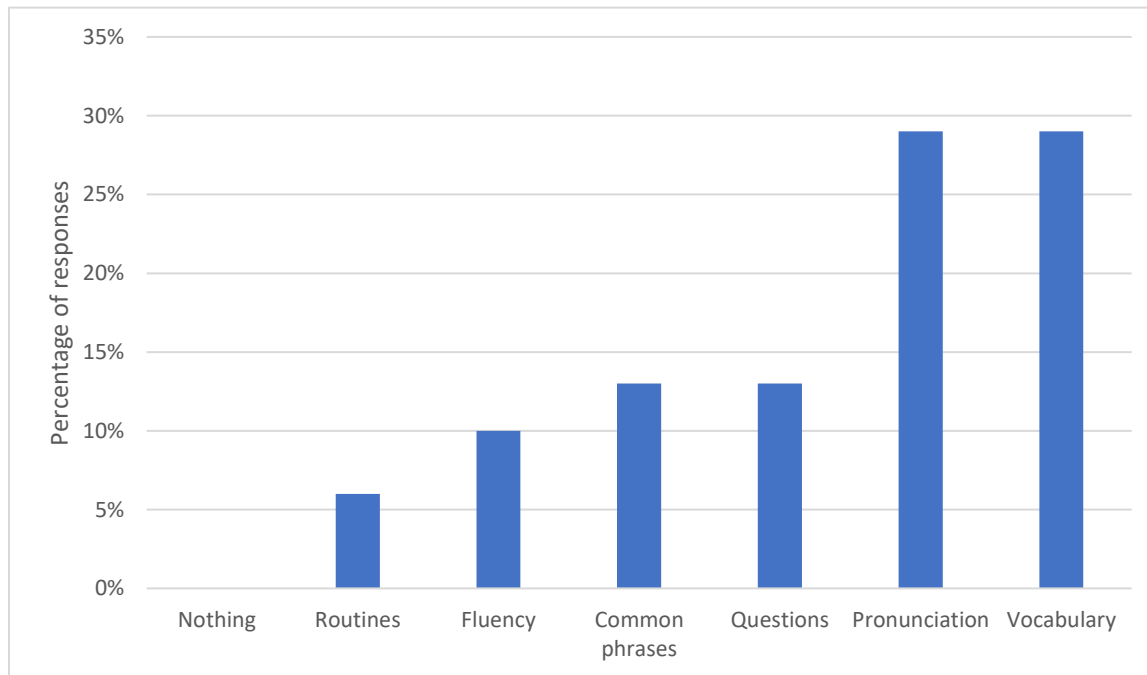
audios. This interest was used as triggered the desire of speaking in English, hence as a toll to improve oral production.



*Figure 6. The student's desire of participating during post-listening activities performed in class. Source: questions in observation report at the end of each lesson plan.*

In addition, the student's interest was observed during each class. It showed that they were often interested in the authentic audios presented as well as in participating in the assigned activities. Furthermore, innovations were a positive factor observed during the process, the podcasts in the lessons allowed the students to feel engaged to the topics which most of the time were presented as simple activities. As a result, they were able to be active participants of their own knowledge and they often showed will for interacting with the rest of the class because they we able to express most of their ideas and implement their speaking skills in order to participate.

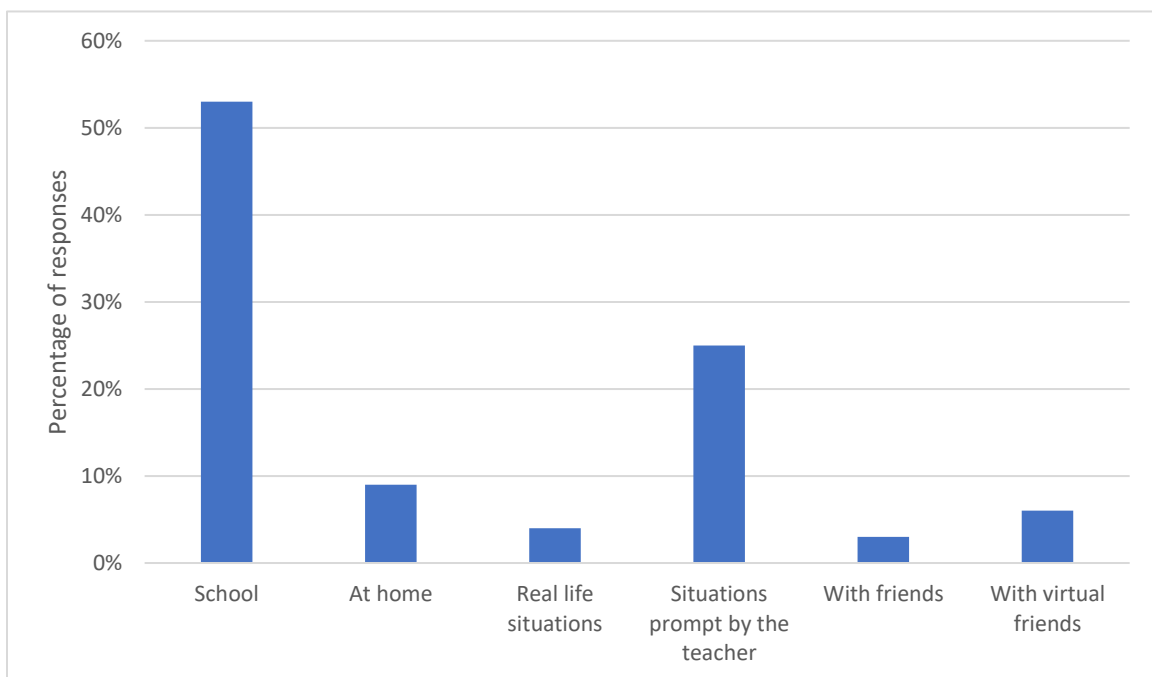
From the information presented in the podcasts, post-listening activities were developed in order to be related with the information on the audios, as showed in the lessons plans (appendix D). After the observation phase the researcher took into consideration the students'



*Figure 7. The most important aspects obtained from the audios and post-listening activities. Source: questions in observation report at the end of each lesson plan.*

interest to plan the development of the activities. The information in figure 7 shows the most relevant aspects students mentioned they obtained from the audios, these are vocabulary, pronunciation, questions, common phrases, fluency, and routines. From the responses is highlighted that 29% of the participants considered vocabulary the skill they improved the most, while another 29% considered it was pronunciation. While 13% of the students increased their ability to produce questions another 13% of them feel they enhanced their use of common phrases in English. All of the students evidence the significance of the audios.

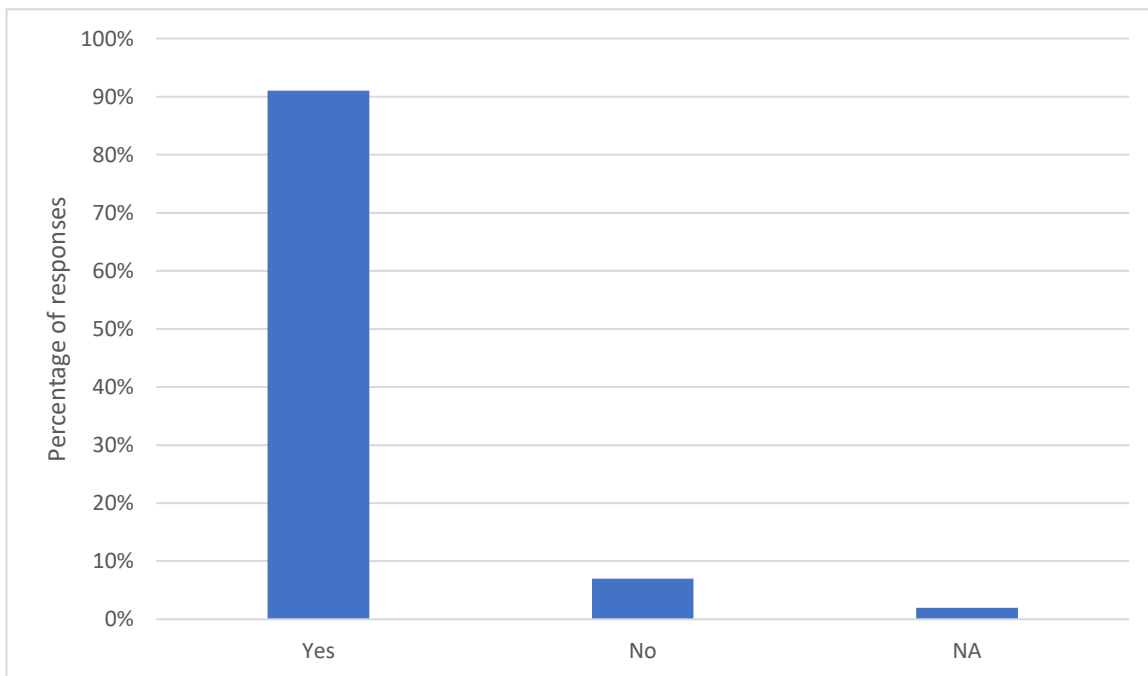
The previous results match the aspects observed during the lessons According to the questionnaire, students got more vocabulary and pronunciation than any other aspects. Also, in the development of the lessons, it was observed that the learners often incorporated new vocabulary learned from the words review after the audio was played. Despite the pronunciation was not accurate on most occasions, the learners could enhance their previous vocabulary with the new word and phrases they learned. The learner's little experience in lessons with oral skills as focus affects oral production but, the incorporation of new vocabulary and learning pronunciation features can be considered benefits from which learner can improve their speaking skills in the classroom context and situation outside the classroom.



*Figure 8. The most common areas in which students apply aspects such as vocabulary, phrases, pronunciation. Source: questions in observation report at the end of each lesson plan.*

English is used in different areas, and it is applied according to people's needs and environment. Figure 8 brings information from the students about the areas in which they apply the knowledge learned from the videos presented in the lessons. It shows most of the students expressed that they use the new information in high school, as well as situations prompted by the teacher, this represents 25% of the population. Only 9% said they use the new data at home and other 6% used it with virtual friends.

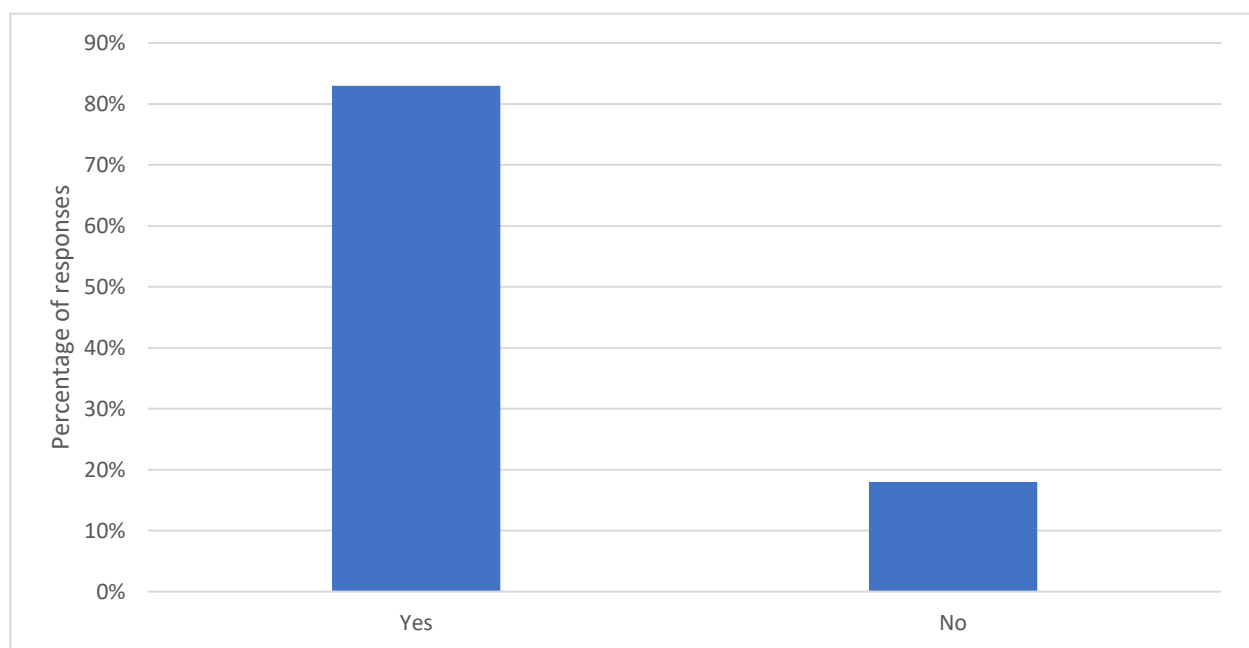
It is less common for students to use the learnings outside of the classroom, and only 4% used it in real life situations. It means that new information obtained from the audios was relevant for the students to enhance speaking skills in the studied areas inside the classroom. In addition to students' production the observation guide showed that students were not able to speak clearly, however, it was understood by the teacher, not because they have perfect pronunciation, but because they used understandable word order.



*Figure 9. Transcript in audios promote in students the use of new phrases in English.*

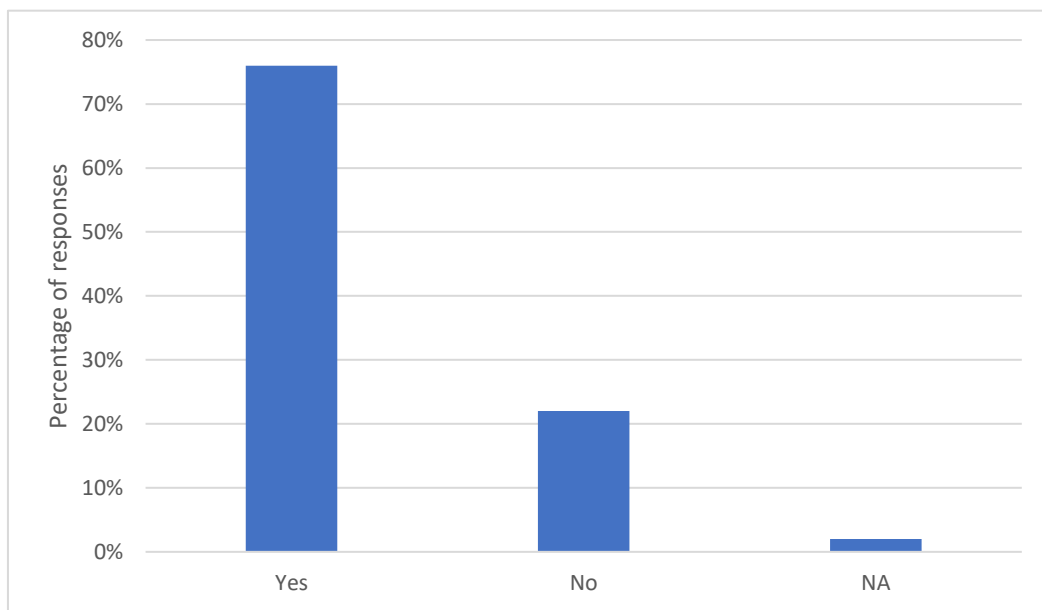
*Source: questions in observation report at the end of each lesson plan.*

To allow learners to have a more impactful benefit in their oral production, the researcher added the transcript to some of the podcasts during the listening phase. This provided more opportunities to comprehend the utterances in the audios, as students relate the written language with the pronunciation of words and phrases to repeat them and use them in context. This consideration was made after the diagnostic phase because the participants had little experience with oral and post-listening tasks in the classroom and were mainly exposed to written language, they experienced the need to have some transcripts of the podcasts in order to have a better understanding of the content. Nevertheless, it did not mean that the learners just read the information. Some beneficial characteristics of transcripts are that learners could increase vocabulary, they listen to stress patterns, pluralization, verb agreement, communicative functions according to situations and other micro skills necessary for oral production.



*Figure 10. The relevance of transcript in audios to have a better comprehension of the English language. Source: questions in observation report at the end of each lesson plan.*

The post-listening activities force the understanding of patterns such as vocabulary, fluency, intonation, and new phrases that can be used in the oral production of the students. Figure 9 shows that 91% of the participants agreed to the fact that transcripts were used as academic tool and encourage them to produce new phrases from the ones they saw and listen to during the podcast. From the information collected (see figures 9 and 10) most of the students felt comfortable, having transcripts as a way to develop their English communicative abilities. Most of the students strongly believed that transcripts were relevant and important in podcasts with a learning purpose.



*Figure 11. Benefits students got in their speaking skills after listening to podcasts.*

*Source: questions in observation report at the end of each lesson plan.*

Students were asked about the benefits received in their oral production from the podcasts after listening and watching them. Figure 11 shows that 76% of the participants felt they got benefits in their oral production after listening to the podcasts, and a small percentage of the students believed they did not receive any benefits. The objective of this research is to focus on that purpose, to provide students with some mechanisms for them to acquire knowledge of the new language and fulfill the production of the target language through the use of audios.

Another benefit from the authentic audios was language in context. The learning of a foreign language does not only imply the learning of grammatical rules and pronunciation patterns, but also the use of language for specific situations. In class, students distinguished that certain language or vocabulary is more specific for a determined situation based on the information listened in the podcasts.

## **Chapter V**

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

This study is developed in order to contribute to the English teaching field and consequently, changing the dynamic of traditional lessons based only on reading and writing skills by incorporating the authentic audios as alternative material to develop oral skills. The results determined that the use of podcasts as learning resource in a middle school context gave out important data that can be used for further research in similar environments. The analysis was conducted with the information depicted the development of oral skills in the participants, the effective audio activities to develop oral skills and the role of authentic materials to enhance oral production.

#### **5.2 Conclusions**

In the last trends in education, there has been a shift from teacher-centered classroom to student-centered classroom. However, this is not reflected in the level of independence and freedom students have to explore aspects of the language on their own in the classroom, specifically in listening and speaking. Teachers still use traditional teaching methods because they are timesaving and ensure that all the students will be familiar with target language items that are part of the curriculum. Therefore, English listening and speaking in the classroom differs to real communication in everyday settings.

The students in this study stated that even though they were not able to understand everything, they liked the methodology and would like to be exposed to more podcasts and post-listening activities. The audio input helped them gain knowledge on some vocabulary in context and pronunciation; however, some faced difficulties in dealing with the speaker's pace and

accents. During the diagnostic phase, it was concluded that the level of English on the first podcast was not appropriate for the sample of this study, so it was observed that student's level of English was very basic. However, as the activities on each lesson plan were presented the students showed a significant advance in their oral production, confirming their improvement, specifically on the sub-skills of fluency and vocabulary.

Moreover, students claimed that the podcast episodes were motivating as they relate to the podcasts hosts and the topics were current and relevant to young students. The application of different strategies in the post-listening activities was a motivational factor for participants to speak because it was a unique methodology for them. Despite the short period of time, there were positive results that in long term can become stronger, thus beneficial to the students' oral production.

After the application of the first lesson plan, the researcher decided to change to podcasts with more context to student's environment, interest, level of English and students' abilities. The process to identify the most effective activity to promote speaking skills revealed interesting results. The activities and audio on lesson plans 3 and 5 were identified as the most engaging, both audios discuss environmental facts about Costa Rica like green energy and the life of sloths. With this we infer that linking learning to real world and using authentic materials is beneficial to the students, learning in context can help students increase their motivation and engagement as it is more meaningful.

Another significant update after the observation phase was the use of transcripts. Almost all students expressed their preference to have a transcript if the audios. This way, the learners with different or lower proficiency at listening skills had the opportunity to relate the utterances from the audio with the transcript. It was observed that students had better comprehension of the

audios when the transcript was presented, which provided an advantage to comprehend more vocabulary to use in post-listening activities. As a result, students' oral proficiency on the post-videos activities improved significantly, the transcriptions instead of enhancing only reading helped the learner to understand the utterances on the audio to use them in oral simulated activities, close to real-life encounters as mentioned previously.

As for the limitations encountered throughout this study, the first one was time. In order to record a higher development in students' autonomy and oral proficiency, the teachers-observer required longer exposure of the students to the target strategies as well as more observation time. Moreover, it was difficult to develop the strategies given students' varying proficiency levels in English, which meant that not all of them showed a good grasp of the strategies and developed the activities at the same pace. All things considered; the activities selected were adequate for the design of the current study. At this stage of language learning, it is vital to work on developing self-confidence to achieve greater communicative competence. The activities increased student engagement during class, as their role went from passive to active due to the learner-centered orientation of the lessons. Therefore, the communication strategies implemented contribute to the goal of developing noticeably oral production.

This research study has provided an alternative strategy to reach different goals for learners speaking and listening skills regardless of their level of English proficiency. As it is mentioned in MEP's English curricular program (2016) in the different levels, a primary goal is the development of communicative skills in Costa Rica and outside contexts. Therefore, research should focus on searching alternative and innovative mechanism to accomplish that goal. The use of podcasts as a learning resource in young education provides this population of learners with the opportunity to change the traditional EFL classrooms into more interactive lessons that

incorporate technology and motivate students so they can really learn English in a meaningful way for communicative purposes, being immersed in realistic contexts depicted from the authentic videos and taken to practice in post-video activities.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

In order to prepare students for a real use of the language inside and outside the classroom, teachers should provide opportunities to gain access to real-world tasks regarding listening and speaking. As you would expect, in this technological era, there are many tools online to obtain this audio-visual input which allow students to interact with other English speakers. Hence, all teachers have to do as facilitators of the learning process is to be willing to fulfill students' needs as they change throughout time.

From the students' point of view, the use of the podcasts and post-listening activities was effective to a certain extent to fulfill oral communication needs of intermediate EFL learners. The following is a summary of the recommendations about the use of podcasts in the classroom.

Podcasts are a great tool, but as any other audiovisual component in the classroom it needs preparation. Teachers should always make sure the podcasts have a clear sound without background distractions or disruptive music. It is also important to work in a classroom with good quality audio system and test that all students in front and back rows can listen to the podcast. To avoid issues with internet or bandwidth teachers need to previously download the audio files into a computer to save time in case of connectivity problems.

All lessons should be well planned, in order to carry them out without disruption. This includes understand the students' needs. Sometimes students will ask to play the podcast for a second time or to provide the transcript of the audio if they are not familiar with the vocabulary.

In addition, the audios should be based on everyday conversations or related to interesting topics that catch student's attention.

Besides authenticity, the incorporation of the transcription to the activities performed in class provides opportunities for increasing vocabulary and other language skills, it is suggested to use transcripts of audios helping students to understand what it is presented in the audio, comparing the situation presented with the written language exposed. The use of captions was considered for students as very relevant according to the results reflected on the questionnaires. However, the use of the same audios without transcript is recommended to develop listening skills, considering those a complement for oral production.

The value of this research study could be considered for long term investigation, learning about further benefits of podcasts in the EFL classroom not only for middle school learners, but also for other populations in different contexts. Inclusion of innovative methodologies such as authentic audios in English as a foreign language classroom could result in the achievement of goals in the curriculum that are not near to be accomplished.

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# Appendix

## Appendix A - Questions to assess the oral competence of EFL learners

Level: _____	Grade: _____
Teacher: _____	Date/Time: _____
Instructions:  Choose 2 or 3 of the below points to reflect on while observing teachers.	
Teacher / Student interactions	
How does the teacher introduce the lesson?  Does every learner talk? For how long? When do the learners talk to each other?  How many learners are participating in the activity? For what length of time?  How does the teacher correct learner errors?	Observer notes:
Teaching interactions	
How does the teacher make transitions from one activity to another?  What is the ratio of learner/teacher talking time?	Observer notes:

<p>What is the ratio of skills practiced: (listening/speaking/reading/writing)?</p> <p>How much does the teacher check for learner comprehension?</p>	
<p>Lesson overview</p>	
<p>How much native language is used? When?</p> <p>What is the focus (goal) of the lesson?</p> <p>How many different ways is the focus presented and/or practiced?</p> <p>Does the teacher do feedback?</p> <p>How does the teacher conclude the lesson?</p>	<p>Observer notes:</p>

## Appendix B – Questionnaire: Student’s attitudes towards speaking skills

Directions: Mark with a cross (x) the box that corresponds to your performance when conversing in English.

Note: the answers to this questionnaire are part of an educational investigation and do not have any interference with the qualifications of the subject.

	Never	Almost Never	Almost Always	Always
Factor 1				
I actively try to express what I want				
I take risks, even if I make mistakes				
I try to use the English expressions that I have heard before				
Factor 2				
I change the way I say things so that they understand me				
I change the way I say things according to the context				
I take my time to express what I want to say				
Factor 3				
I pay attention to grammar and word order during conversation				
I use expressions that fit a rule I learned in class				
I correct myself when I notice that I have said the wrong thing				

Factor 4				
I reduce the message and use simple expressions				
I only use words that are familiar to me				
I replace the original message with a simpler one when I cannot express my initial intention				
Factor 5				
I cannot finish what I am saying due to lack of vocabulary				
I ask other people for help when I cannot communicate				
I give up when I cannot communicate what I want				
Factor 6				
First, I think what I want to say in Spanish and then I build the sentence in English				
First, I think of a sentence that I already know in English, and I try to change it to fit the situation I find myself in				

## Appendix C – Questionnaire: Student’s attitudes towards listening comprehension

Directions: Mark with a cross (x) the box that corresponds to your performance when conversing in English.

Note: the answers to this questionnaire are part of an educational investigation and do not have any interference with the qualifications of the subject.

	Never	Almost Never	Almost Always	Always
Factor 1				
1. I ask the speaker to repeat when I do not understand				
2. I ask the person to simplify the language when I have difficulty understanding				
3. I ask the person to speak slowly when I cannot understand what they are saying				
Factor 2				
4. I pay attention to the speaker's pronunciation				
5. I send verbal and non-verbal signals to show that I understand the message				
6. I paraphrase what the other person said when I am not sure what they meant.				
Factor 3				
7. I pay more attention to the first part of the sentence to predict the speaker's intentions				

8. I pay special attention to the questions that the speaker asks me				
9. I try to get the main idea of what the speaker tells me				
Factor 4				
10. I do not care if I do not understand every detail				
11. I try to respond, even though I do not understand everything the speaker is saying to me				
12. I anticipate what the speaker is going to say based on the context				
Factor 5				
13. I try to translate into Spanish everything the speaker is saying				
14. I try to understand every word the speaker is saying				
15. I focus only on expressions that sound familiar to me				

## Appendix D - Observation guide

Instructions: The researcher will observe the class; she will observe the details on the list below; next, will mark with “x” in the corresponding column according to the development of the students during the activities on the lesson plan.

Level: _____	Lesson #: _____
Teacher: _____	Podcast title: _____
Grade: _____	
Date/Time: _____	

	Not applicable	Never	Almost never	Often	Always	Notes
Language in Podcast						
Is the language used in the podcast exchangeable in real life situations which students are likely to come across?						
Is it “authentic” in the sense of being close to the language used by native speakers in their daily lives?						

Does the audio present clear vocabulary base on the student's level?						
Does the audio present language features that students are studying in class?						
Content in Podcast						
Is the subject of the podcast likely to be interesting to the students?						
Is the story or topic treated in an interesting way?						
Are there characters or situations presented which students are likely to encounter?						
Students' participation and interest towards the activities of the class						
Students show comprehension of the instruction for the development of the activities or tasks						
Students show confidence when participating in oral activities						
Students show will for interacting with the rest of the class						

Students seem to be interested in the topic studied						
Students are able to follow each procedure of the strategy in the designed time						
Students keep their attention from the beginning to the end of the lesson						
The majority of the students in the class achieved the tasks assigned						
Students' speaking performance during the activities						
Students ask questions and speak spontaneously						
Students respond to questions and statements						
Students are able to continue conversation						
Students incorporate old and new vocabulary in the activities						
Students speak clearly and imitate accurate pronunciation						
Students use/interpret cultural manifestations when appropriate to the task						

Students pronounce words in such a way  
that the listener understands the message

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Observations:

## Appendix D - Lesson plans

Institution: Escuela Calle Mesén	
Teacher: Pamela Jarquin	Grade: 6°
Unit: 4 Scenario: Rainforest Rescue	Themes: -Are We Saying “Goodbye” to the Rainforest? -Ways to Rescue It

Date: Monday October 17th, 2022 / Lesson 1 - 30 min			
Objective	Description	Materials	Time
<p>-Discuss alternative possibilities and their consequences</p> <p>-Expressing commitment towards sustainable practices</p> <p>Vocabulary: Going green Ecofriendly alternatives Eco-guilty</p>	<p>Audio time:</p> <p>Students will listen to the Podcast Rebel Girls, Episode: Climate Activist Greta Thunberg. The podcast is a short story about a young climate activist that found strength in talking about how global warming affects kids and grownups alike, and how together people can make a positive impact in the world.</p> <p><a href="#">Link</a> to the audio. Teacher will play the audio from minutes 0:40 to 9:47.</p> <p>Teacher will clarify any vocabulary on the audio that was not familiar to the students and review key points.</p> <p>Post listening activity:</p> <p>The teacher will start asking to the class: Why do you think Greta felt the need to protest? After 2-3 responses from different students, the class will take the quiz “Should you feel eco-guilty.”</p>	<p>Speakers</p> <p>Audio on teacher’s computer.</p> <p>Quiz worksheet Appendix E.</p> <p>Board, in case teacher needs to write new vocabulary words</p>	<p>Audio time: 15 minutes</p> <p>Post listening activity: 12 minutes</p> <p>Closing: 3 minutes</p>

	<p>Student and teacher will discuss their results, and each student will make a commitment to reduce waste in their house or in the school for the rest of the year. Students will voice their commitment, to complete the phrase: I commit to _____ until December.</p> <p>To finish the lesson, students will write down their commitment to the environment in their notebook and paste the “eco-guilty” worksheet.</p>		
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<b>Date: Tuesday October 18th, 2022 / Lesson 2 - 40 min</b>			
Objective	Description	Materials	Time
<p>-Making predictions.</p> <p>- Identifying key words related to the theme after listening to real-life conversations.</p>	<p>Audio time:</p> <p>Students will listen to the Podcast Tumble Science, Episode: What if oceans didn't exist.</p> <p>The podcast answers to the questions while explaining how water got on Earth, the plates moving, and why oceans are shaped the way they are. The audio conversation is between and “Earth” detective, Lucia Perez-Días and the host of the podcast.</p> <p><a href="#">Link</a> to the audio.</p> <p>Teacher will clarify any vocabulary on the audio that was not familiar to the students and review key points.</p> <p>Post listening activity:</p>	<p>Speakers</p> <p>Audio on teacher's computer</p> <p>Worksheet “How we will be living in 20 years' time” Appendix F</p>	<p>Audio time: 17 minutes</p> <p>Post listening activity #1: 8 minutes</p> <p>Post listening activity #2: 15 minutes</p>

<p>Vocabulary: Bubble-up Spot-on!</p>	<p>Teacher will start the discussion with the questions: Why are oceans important? and What causes harm to the ocean? To complete the exercise, 4 to 5 different students will give their opinion aloud.</p> <p>Next, students will be put in groups of 2-3 people to read some predictions that have been made about the next 20 years in the text: How we will be living in the 20 years' time." Each group will discuss the questions in the worksheet.</p>		
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<b>Date: Wednesday October 19th, 2022 / Lesson 3 – 40 min</b>			
Objective	Description	Materials	Time
<p>- Rephrasing information after listening a message</p> <p>-Describing experiences and sustainable practices.</p> <p>Vocabulary: Warning signs Park ranger Landmarks Wildlife</p>	<p>Audio time:</p> <p>Students will listen to the Podcast Part-Time Genius, Episode: 9 Sloth Facts Worth Clinging to.</p> <p>The hosts of the podcasts share facts about one of the internet's favorite creatures after their trip to Costa Rica.</p> <p><a href="#">Link</a> to the audio.</p> <p>Teacher will clarify any vocabulary on the audio that was not familiar to the students and review key points and, will introduce to the role of a moderator when they are having a group discussion.</p> <p>Post listening activity:</p>	<p>Speakers</p> <p>Audio on teacher's computer</p> <p>Cardboard</p> <p>Markers</p>	<p>Audio time: 11 minutes</p> <p>Post listening activity #1: 10 minutes to discuss in small groups, 6 minutes to present (2 minutes per group).</p> <p>Post listening activity #2: 13 minutes (including the</p>

	<p>The class will be divided in three small groups. Each group will assign a moderator and presenter. From the nine facts on the audio, every team will get three different facts. As a group they will choose the two more interesting and share with the team which one is it and why they choose it.</p> <p>The role of the moderator is to make sure all voices in the group are heard, and to keep them organized as each group will have around 10 members. The role of the presenter is to come in front of the class and share the facts the team found most interesting.</p> <p>When all presentations are complete, the groups will assign a new moderator. Each team will brainstorm ideas to protect wildlife in the rainforest and preserve nature. Each team will come up with at least 2 ideas that they can write or illustrate on the cardboard the teacher provided.</p>		time to illustrate)
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<b>Date: Friday October 21st, 2022 / Lesson 4 – 30 min</b>			
Objective	Description	Materials	Time
<p>-Learning to interview, listen actively and improvise.</p> <p>-Using questions and answers in a dialogue, information exchange,</p>	<p>Teacher asks the students to pay close attention to the format of the podcast as they will model a similar interview so this one is in preparation. What kinds of questions do hosts ask? How do they silence to compel the interviewee to speak?</p> <p>Audio time:</p> <p>Students will listen to the podcast: Stuff you missed in history class, Episode: A</p>	<p>Speakers</p> <p>Audio on teacher’s computer</p> <p>Cellphone to record interview</p>	<p>Pre-audio: 3 minutes</p> <p>Audio time: 8 minutes</p> <p>Post listening activity: 5 minutes to create questions. 14 minutes to</p>

<p>interview.</p> <p>Vocabulary: Question words (How often? Why? Where? Who? How many?)</p>	<p>conversation with Seneca women to hear winner: Lola Omolola.</p> <p>The hosts of the podcast interviews Lola Omolola, a podcaster winner of the “women to hear” award. Lola is a Nigerian journalist, that created a space for other women to tell their stories about challenges they faced in that country.</p> <p><a href="#">Link</a> to the audio.</p> <p>Teacher will clarify any vocabulary on the audio that was not familiar to the students and review key points.</p> <p>Post listening activity:</p> <p>Students will work in pairs to role play an interview. Each student should think about someone to interview, and the other student role play that person. This could be a friend, family member or person in their community they find interesting.</p> <p>Make a list of questions for the interview.</p> <p>Conduct and record the interview with the recording feature on their cellphones, next the students switch places to host a second interview.</p>		<p>conduct interviews.</p>
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<b>Date: Tuesday October 25th, 2022 / Lesson 5 – 40 min</b>			
Objective	Description	Materials	Time
-Describe events (e.g. sustainable practices at home	<p>Audio time:</p> <p>Students will listen to the audio: “Green energy in Costa Rica”</p>	Audio on teacher’s computer	Audio time: 10 minutes

<p>or school) using complete sentences that are connected to each other within expository paragraphs.</p> <p>-Brainstorming key words and Phrases and classifying them into a graphic organizer or chart.</p> <p>Vocabulary: Renewable sources.</p> <p>Hydroelectric, geothermal and, wind energy.</p>	<p>It takes about the efforts Costa Rica’s government did to become the first carbon-neutral country in the world, generating 97% of its electricity from renewable sources.</p> <p><a href="#">Link</a> to the audio.</p> <p>Teacher will clarify any vocabulary on the audio that was not familiar to the students and review key points.</p> <p>Post-listening activity:</p> <p>Teacher will have the students write a letter or email to the podcaster after listening to the audio. It can be in the form of a debate questioning the information on the podcast, or to write their reaction to what they heard (positive or negative).</p> <p>Next, students will form groups of 5. Each student will share their letters to the group (it can be reading aloud or paraphrasing what they wrote). Teacher will call one person on each group to share if they found similar or different reactions to the audio within their groups.</p>	<p>Speakers</p> <p>Student’s notebook</p>	<p>Post listening activity#1: 10 minutes</p> <p>Post listening activity #2: 12 minutes to share letters and 8 minutes to share with the rest of the group.</p>
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<b>Date: Wednesday October 26th, 2022 / Lesson 6 – 40 min</b>			
Objective	Description	Materials	Time
<p>-Use expression for debate: Giving opinion, conceding an argument, sequencing a list of arguments.</p>	<p>Audio time:</p> <p>Students will listen to podcast The Big Melt, Episode: Under the weather together.</p> <p>The host talks about all the places someone can get information from (sources) and how to use fact-checking to avoid getting misinformed</p>	<p>Speakers</p> <p>Audio on teacher’s computer</p>	<p>Audio time: 7 minutes</p> <p>Instructions for debate and organize</p>

<p>- Describing nature</p> <p>at local, national and global level</p> <p>Vocabulary: I agree/admit that..., but we must remember that.</p> <p>You also have to consider...</p> <p>Maybe I should also mention...</p> <p>To sum up, ...</p>	<p>on what’s going viral, using as example images related to wildlife.</p> <p>Teacher will clarify any vocabulary on the audio that was not familiar to the students and review key points. And review the vocabulary used to expression opinions during a debate.</p> <p>Post – listening activity: the class will be organized to form a debate on the topic: <i>Should Writing Fake News Be Considered a Crime?</i></p> <p>Each student will take a paper of a bag (previously prepared by teacher) with the words: yes, no or audience. To divide the class in 2 groups: pro, con, and the audience that will select the one with the winning arguments. In addition, the teacher will ask for two volunteers from the audience group to have a moderator and a timekeeper.</p> <p>Teacher will provide the instructions and ask for all students to engage and participant in the debate.</p> <p>During the debate only the moderator will be able to give permission to talk, and the timekeeper will announce when the teams need to move to closing arguments. At the end of that time, the audience will group to choose the winner of the debate.</p>	<p>Printed images of what is mentioned on the podcast (appendix F)</p> <p>Small papers with the word “yes” “no” or audience to create groups for debate.</p>	<p>teams: 5 minutes</p> <p>Debate: 22 minutes.</p> <p>Closing: 6 minutes</p>
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## Appendix E – Lesson 1 Worksheet.

Quiz: How eco-guilty are you?



I committed a crime last Tuesday, which just happened to be Earth Day, a day that invites people to think about their eco-sins. I turned on the shower, intending to get stright in even though the water takes a while to warm up. But then I decided to brush my teeeth, and suddenly the waster had been running for over two minutes. By the time I got in, I was drowning in eco-guilt! I had wasted water...

Should you feel eco-guilty, too?  
Take the test.

### SHOPPING BAGS

- A. I have a reusable shopping bag made of recyclable materials, which I always use when I'm shopping. (+4 eco-points)
- B. I own several reusable shopping bags, but I often forget to bring them with me (-3 eco-points)
- C. I always ask for plastic bags because they're convenient. They can be recycled, can't they? (-4)

### WASHING TOWELS

- A. I wash my towels immediately after use them. (-5)
- B. I use a towel for several days before I put it in the washing machine. (+1)
- C. That reminds me, I must wash my towels! (+3)

### RUNNING WATER

- A. I never leave the water running when I brush my teeth, nor before getting into the shower. (+2)
- B. I'm allergic to cold water, so I have to leave the shower to run for a while before I get in. (-2)
- C. I hate showers. I need a hot bath every day to relax. (-3)

### BUYING FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

- A. I never buy fruit and vegetables at supermarkets. I buy organic fruit and vegetables in markets or small shops. (+3)
- B. I buy some fruit and vegetables in a market, but the supermarket is more convenient. (-2)
- C. I shop at the cheapest places - who cares about eco-guilt, I feel guiltier if I spend too much money on food!. (-5)

### RECYCLING

- A. I throw everything in the same bin.(-6)
- B. I sometimes recycle glass bottles, especially after a party! But that's probably all. (-4)
- C. I recycle all my newspapers, bottles, and plastic containers. (+5)

### GETTING AROUND

- A. I walk, use public transport or cycle because cars pollute the planet. (+5)
- B. I walk, use public transport or cycle because I can't afford to buy a car. (-1)
- C. Vroom vroom here I come! (-5)

So how guilty should you feel?

- Below 0: You should feel very guilty.  
0-12 points: You should feel quite guilty.  
Above 10: You are too good to be true!

## Appendix F – Lesson 2 Worksheet

“How we will be living in 20 years’ time.”

Instructions: Read the predictions that have been made about the next 20 years and discuss the questions.

### How we will be living in 20 years’ time...

#### At home

Most people will have installed solar panels or wind turbines on their houses or blocks of flats to generate their electricity.

People will be recycling nearly 100% of their waste (and those who don’t will have to pay a fine)

#### Transport

Cars that use a lot of petrol (e.g. 4x4 cars) will have been banned and many people will be driving electric cars.

Low-cost airlines will have disappeared, and flights will be much more expensive.

#### The environment

Paper books will no longer be produced to save trees from being cut down, and all books will be electronic.

Fresh water will be running out in many parts of the world and we will be getting much of our water from the sea (through desalination plants).

#### The weather

Temperatures worldwide will have risen even further. Many ski resorts will have closed because of lack of winter snow and some beaches and holiday season will have disappeared completely.

We will be having even more extreme weather, and heatwaves, hurricanes, floods, etc. will be frequent occurrences.

1. Which predictions do you think...?

- Are already happening
- Are likely to happen
- Probably won't happen

Appendix G – Lesson 6, “fake news” images



Meh

@Spilling\_The\_T · [Follow](#)



While humans carry out social distancing, a group of 14 elephants broke into a village in Yunan province, looking for corn and other food. They ended up drinking 30kg of corn wine and got so drunk that they fell asleep in a nearby tea garden. 😂



3:21 PM · Mar 18, 2020



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@AurelBoriciBT · [Follow](#)



😬😬😬 #venice

An unexpected side effect of the pandemic: 💧 Water's flowing through the canals of Venice is clear for the first time in forever.

🐟🦢 The fish are visible, the swans returned



3:23 AM · Mar 18, 2020



❤️ 3.7K



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