Student-Generated Podcasting for Enhancing EFL Student-Teachers' Oral Performance and Lowering their Oral Communication Apprehension

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Abstract

The aim of the current study was to investigate the effect of student-generated podcasts on EFL student teachers' oral performance and oral communication apprehension. The group of the study included 25 EFL student teachers at the Faculty of Education, Fayoum University. Throughout the training program, participants were given the chance to produce their own podcasts, edit and publish them on a podcast hosting website. The application used for recording, editing and publishing students' podcasts was anchor; because it is the easiest and most famous podcasting app. Also, it is easy to publish podcasts directly from this app. The training program lasted for ten weeks, during this period the treatment group was given practice in how to produce and publish a podcast, and they created and published their self-generated podcasts. Data was collected through an oral performance test and an oral communication apprehension scale. The results of the study showed that the treatment group witnessed a clear development in their oral performance and a lowered level of oral communication apprehension after participating in the podcasting project. This emphasizes the effectiveness of the student-generated podcasting project in enhancing the study group's oral performance and lowering their oral communication apprehension level. Based on the study results, some recommendations and suggestions for further research were introduced.

Keywords: *student-generated podcast – oral performance-oral communication apprehension*

Introduction

English is considered the most widely used language in the world today, especially in the 21st century where communication in English

has become a necessity in the corporate world. So, it has become obligatory for universities and higher education institutions to motivate students to effectively and productively communicate in English. Mastering the English language, especially the speaking skill, is a requirement in the workforce as well; job interviews are always conducted in English. Applicants that are not communicating their thoughts in English are viewed as less potential employees. The corporate world requests an applicant who is sure about his abilities to communicate suitably in English. Additionally, speaking is used to communicate and convey information, and to make relationships among people around the world. Rahmasari, et al. (2021) asserted that speaking is an important skill that EFL learners have to master to be able to communicate in the global society. People who can speak English well are those who can communicate effectively in the wider community.

However, as stated by Jamshidnejad (2020), many language learners perceive speaking as the most challenging skills to master. This is because oral skills are usually employed as the first criterion for assessing the effectiveness of second/foreign language education programs. Students in second/foreign language education programs are considered successful if they can communicate effectively in that language. Aeni, et al. (2017) affirmed that in today's global context, a lack of comfort in communicating with others can be an inhibitor to success. It is sometimes found that many students have difficulty in producing a sentence in English without making mistakes despite their early exposure to the language at schools or university. Consequently, they graduate having problems communicating in English.

To speak English is not easy because the speaker should master several important elements, such as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Speaking is a complex interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving, and processing information (Sayuri, 2016). So, because of

its complexity and multi-faceted nature, speaking is considered as the most problematic language skill for EFL learners all over the world. Another factor that makes speaking a challenging skill is, as argued by Jamshidnejad (2020), that communicating in a language other than ones' mother tongue can constitute a real challenge for most language learners. Mastering oral skills in a new language, particularly in an environment where there is not enough input of the target language (L2), would take a long time. Even after learners master semantic and syntactic competences, they often become frustrated and reluctant to participate effectively in L2 oral communication. They frequently complain about the lack of opportunities and resources that help them to learn how to communicate their ideas. Even advanced language learners can suffer from a lack of sufficient preparation to communicate beyond the classroom.

Additionally, the difficulty of speaking results from several factors such as lack of exposure to language, lack of motivation, students' anxiety and lack of confidence, limited knowledge of English, and inefficient teaching methodology. This is affirmed by many researchers such as Al-Sobhi (2018), in his study about the difficulties Arab EFL learners face while trying to communicate orally in English. He found out that the factors affecting learners' speaking performance are: (a) lack of exposure to the English language outside the class and excessive use of Arabic, (b) (lack of self-confidence and negative attitudes towards speaking in English, (c) lack of linguistic knowledge, and (d) lack in the use of communicative teaching methods. Zainurrahman and Sangaji (2019) proved that psychological (self-confidence, self-esteem, anxiety) as well as linguistic factors are responsible for EFL learners' speaking difficulty at the university level. Abdelkarim (2020) found out that speaking is one of the most difficult language skills and its difficulty results from lack of practicing the language out of the class and lack of listening experiences. Sayuri (2016) proved that students face some problems related to pronunciation, fluency, grammar, and vocabulary. He also

found out that lack of self-confidence, shyness to speak, being afraid of making mistakes, feeling nervous, and having nothing to say are sources of speaking anxiety.

Rahayu, et al. (2020) examined the problems faced by EFL college students in speaking English. Results of their study showed that students have difficulties in the following areas: (a) English vocabulary and grammar (b) fear of others responses, and (c) lack of self-confidence. Seraj, et al. (2021) carried out a study to find out the problems facing EFL teachers while teaching oral communication skills. The results of his study showed that the most frequent problems that EFL teachers face are the use of mother tongue, inappropriate teaching methods, learners' passiveness and lack of motivation, lack of oral practice environment, lack of supporting tools, lack of authentic materials and large class size. Based on these results, they recommended that empirical studies should be conducted to provide teachers with methods that would integrate features of the smartphone, such as WhatsApp, call recorder, voice recorder etc. for teaching oral English communication skills.

Speaking anxiety, according to Ashraf (2019), is the most dominant obstacle in foreign language communicative competence. He concluded that learners' communication apprehension stems from insufficient exposure to English, poor vocabulary, test anxiety, concern over negative evaluation, and a lack of awareness of recent trends of EFL teaching. Al-Mukdad (2021) added that linguistic factors are demonstrated to be dominant in learners' oral performance, as a cause of speaking anxiety.

Consequently, speaking anxiety is a worldwide issue nearly for everyone. It may have an impact on ESL / EFL learning process and performance; it results in negative academic, cognitive, and social consequences for students. Speaking anxiety has lately, attracted the attention of researchers in the field of EFL instruction in higher education in the Arab world where English is used as a foreign

language. Toubot, et al. (2018) for example, investigated the level of speaking anxiety of EFL college students in Lybia. The findings of their study revealed that students experienced a moderate to high level of EFL speaking anxiety, and that the low self-confidence factor received the highest average followed by fear of negative evaluation, and communication apprehension factors. Sugiyati and Indriani (2021) conducted a study to explore the speaking anxiety level of university students, and he found out that 58.8% of students experienced public speaking anxiety. He added that fear of negative evaluation becomes the major anxiety-provoking factor followed by communication apprehension and test anxiety. Sulastiani (2018) found out that 82.5% students were indicated as having medium level of fear and anxiety in public speaking class. He also found out that the factors of speaking anxiety include fear of making mistakes, fear of being laughed at by friends, fear of facing the audiences, and lack of preparation.

Shamsuddin, et al. (2021) revealed that students are more anxious about having to speak in English in front of others. Another important factor is the audience size which seems to play a crucial role when students are giving a presentation in English. Fauzi, et al. (2021) investigated the speaking anxiety among college students and the causal factors that make students feel anxious when speaking English in public. Results of his study showed that the factors that make students feel anxious are lack of preparation, being afraid of making mistakes, and being laughed at by friends, nervousness when standing in front of people, and being afraid of making pronunciation mistakes.

So, it is clear that speaking in English is problematic for EFL learners at different levels, and that there are different factors leading to speaking problems. Some of these problems are related to linguistic factors such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and fluency. Other factors are related to how speaking is taught and the lack of student-centered approaches that provide learners with the sufficient

practice of speaking inside and outside the classrooms. Psychological factors play an important role in learners' oral performance. Factors like lack of self-confidence, fear of making mistakes, fear of facing an audience and speaking anxiety add to the difficulty and complexity of speaking. Accordingly, there is an urgent need to search for effective ways for overcoming these obstacles related to speech production.

Moreover, university courses often include communication skills as an integral component of course learning outcomes, yet students are rarely provided with opportunities to express their understanding of the course materials outside of the conventional essay or in-person presentation. University students need to be supported with ways to produce knowledge differently. One example of this is the production of a podcast (Starkman, 2020).

In the 21st century, digital technology has developed rapidly. The general public already has a device, laptop, or computer at home. Likewise, general internet access has become available because there are many sectors that carry out their activities online, such as business, social communication, and education. The development of this technology, especially information and communication technology has become a must in learning environments, especially with the availability of media learning (Tarmawan, et al., 2021). Podcasting is one of the most available web 2 tools that have lately attracted attention in the teaching and learning of foreign languages.

Podcasting is part of the paradigm of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL). The use of mobile devices provide learners with the opportunity to learn anytime and anywhere, alone or with others, and “has the potential to assist learners at the exact point of need and in ways that are suitable for learners’ mobile-connected lifestyles. In the context of higher education, the use of podcasts through mobile devices is considered to promote motivation and engagement, cognition and learning, learner autonomy and innovative opportunities for teaching and presenting information. Podcasts are

forms of personalized learning that can be tailored to learners' individual needs and can extend learning beyond the classroom (Phillips, 2017).

According to Nie (2008), there is a growing interest in using podcasting as a tool for supporting and enhancing student learning, but it has been introduced as a staff-produced material, with the student being a passive learner, rather than a tool to empower students and encourage active learning. Otherwise, podcasts have to be used as tools for the exploration of the human intellect, and they have gained popularity in recent years because of their accessibility and availability. They suit the modern fast lifestyles; because they do not require listeners to compromise time, they can listen to podcasts while doing other activities (Waardenburg and Brink, 2020). Podcasting has been widely used as a tool for teachers to record their lectures so that students could access them at a later date and repeatedly if desired, which is called "course-casting" (Brookes, 2010).

When produced by learners themselves, podcasting can be a great way to provide them with deeper learning and empower them to have their voices heard and shared with a wider audience. So, it can be a tool for removing the fears EFL learners always have when asked to speak in front of an audience. Moreover, podcasting is easy and fun to do, and it supports important 21st century skills for communication, critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration. Students may love podcasting as a medium to tell their stories and share their ideas, which motivate them to practice their speaking and writing skills. Kravcenko (2016) argued that, through podcasting, students could have in-depth engagement in idea generation, collective problem solving and reciprocal dialogue. In addition, they develop in-depth knowledge of the subject, critical thinking skills, professional skills such as public speaking, teamwork and presentational skills.

According to Waardenburg and Brink (2020), the advantages of student-generated podcasts are: (1) it is a fresh experience as it is an

original project totally planned and executed by learners, (2) a podcast forces students to explain their subject in a more understandable way because they have the chance to elaborate on their ideas, and edit and revise them, they also have the chance to search for more information to reinforce their understanding of the content, (3) podcasting helps learners master the skill of conveying a message effectively. This is because the absence of the element of non-verbal communication, so it is challenging to hold people's attention, (4), in podcasting, learners have to create persuasive content, so they learn to be creative and convincing.

Podcast assignments in higher education foster students' deep engagement in course content, knowledge construction, technical skills, and problem-solving abilities. This was emphasized by Mathany and Dodd (2018) who designed podcast assignments in a First Year Seminar course based on student-led interviews. The results of their study showed that the assignment allowed students to achieve learning outcomes, improve oral communication skills, and engage with course content. Additionally, Nie, et al. (2008), proved that learner-developed podcasts enable students to reflect on their learning through listening and improving their own oral performance as well as re-considering and modifying their ideas during content creation.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that speaking proficiency at the college level is a requirement for communication in different fields like business, media, travelling and for the job market. However, speaking is the most challenging and problematic skill in EFL classes. Speaking anxiety, especially oral communication apprehension, has recently attracted the attention of teachers and researchers of English as a foreign language all over the world, as an important factor of speaking difficulties. Moreover, many researchers called for the use of student-centered approaches for teaching speaking instead of the traditional teacher-centered instruction.

Podcasting is one of the mobile assisted learning tools that, when created by learners, would provide EFL learners with a sufficient opportunity to practice their speaking skill out of class and become more self-confident speakers of English. So, the current study attempted to find out the effect of student-generated podcasts on EFL student teachers' oral performance and oral communication apprehension.

Statement of the problem

The problem of the current study is that EFL students at the college level have a lot of problems in speaking proficiency as mentioned by many researchers in the field of EFL instruction (e.g., Al-Sobhi, 2018; Zainurrahman and Sangaji, 2019; Sayuri, 2016; Abdelkarim, 2020; Seraj, et al., 2021; Rahayu, et al., 2020; and other). Additionally, oral communication apprehension is another problematic area for EFL college learners (e.g., Ashraf, 2019; Al-Mukdad, 2021; Toubot, et al., 2018; Sugiyati and Indriani, 2021; Sulastiani, 2018; Fauzi, et al., 2021; Shamsuddin, et al., 2021). Additionally, the researcher, as an EFL teaching instructor, observed that students at the English department are suffering from a lot of weaknesses that prevent them from being able to express themselves and communicate their ideas orally. One of the courses the researcher has taught to these students is the micro-teaching class. During this class students were supposed to give a lot of oral presentations. Most of them have weak oral performance skills. The researcher had a lot of discussions with these students about the causes of this problem, and most of them mentioned that they feel frightened and anxious when asked to speak in English in front of others, and they forget what they want to say.

Questions of the study

The problem of the current study could be tackled through answering the following main question:

"What is the effect of a student-generated podcasting project on EFL student teachers' oral performance communication apprehension?"

This question could be branched out into the following sub-questions:

- What is the effect of a student-generated podcasting project on enhancing EFL student-teachers' oral performance?
- What is the effect of a student-generated podcasting project on lowering EFL student-teachers' oral communication apprehension?

Significance of the study

Throughout the current study, EFL student-teachers were guided to listen to a lot of podcasts in different topics. Additionally, they were encouraged to search for information about topics they have selected by themselves, and listen to more podcasts to create their own ones. So, it is supposed that the current study would help these student teachers to:

1. Enhance their oral performance including fluency, pronunciation, accent, range of vocabulary, grammar, idea generation and other oral performance skills.
2. lower their oral communication apprehension as a result of reinforcing their oral performance skills through producing their own podcasts.
3. Increase their awareness of the value of project-based learning, and encourage them to use it as an approach for enhancing their students' language skills.
4. Develop their skills as autonomous learners, as they could continue creating their own podcasts and publishing them to the internet for their audience.

Also, the current study may help researchers and teachers in the field teaching and learning English as a foreign language, as it has provided them with a project-based program that could enhance EFL learners' oral production skills. This is because being involved in learning and producing the language, and not just learning about the language is the most effective way for developing students' language production skills. Also, the current study would help researchers by providing them with instruments that would guide them in their

research (e.g., oral performance test and rubric, oral communication apprehension scale, a teacher's guide and student book for guiding students to generate their own podcasts). It would also provide researchers with theoretical background about podcasting, especially student-generated ones, as well as important recommendations and suggestions for further research.

Hypotheses of the study

The study aimed to test the validity of the following hypotheses:

1. There is a statistically significant difference between means of scores of the treatment group in the pre and post administration of the oral performance test, in favor of the post administration.
2. There is a statistically significant difference between means of scores of the experimental group in the pre and post administration of the oral communication apprehension scale, in favor of the pre administration.
3. There is a statistically significant negative relationship between the study group's scores in the oral performance test and the oral communication apprehension scale.

Delimitations of the study

1. The study was delimited to a group of (25) English language section student teachers at the Faculty of Education, Fayoum University, in the academic year (2021-2022 first semester).
2. The following oral performance skills:

   - ✓ Generation of ideas
   - ✓ Organization of ideas
   - ✓ Range of vocabulary
   - ✓ Range of grammar
   - ✓ Fluency
   - ✓ Pronunciation and accent.

3. The following dimensions of oral communication apprehension, as mentioned in the literature:

   - ✓ Personal apprehension
   - ✓ Interpersonal communication apprehension
   - ✓ Public speaking apprehension

Definition of terms

Student-generated podcasting

Podcasting is a means of publishing audio and video content on the web as a series of episodes with a common theme. These episodes are accompanied by a file called a "feed" that allows listeners to subscribe to the series and receive new episodes automatically (Deal, 2007).

A student-generated podcasting project is defined by the researcher as "the planning, production, and publication of podcast episodes by students, where the instructor functions as a facilitator, guide and prompter".

Oral performance

Speaking is a social activity where individuals build and share meanings in a given context. It has an expressive as well as a communicative function (Zainurrahman and Sangaji 2019). It includes the integration of many factors such as generating ideas, using knowledge of the language, and adopting strategies simultaneously (Islam and Stapa 2021).

It was defined by the researcher as the learners' skill of expressing themselves fluently in different contexts using appropriate language (grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation), and their ability to generate the adequate amount of ideas for a given topic and to organize these ideas appropriately.

Oral communication apprehension

Oral communication apprehension is a type of shyness characterized by anxiety about communicating with people, difficulty in speaking in groups (oral communication anxiety), in public ("stage fright"), and in listening to or learning a spoken message (receiver anxiety) (Horwitz, et al., 2012).

The researcher defined oral communication apprehension as the EFL learners' fear of/ anxiety about interpersonal communication (e.g., fear of participating in a group discussion), participating in public speaking situations (e.g., giving a speech to an audience), and their personal fears of participating in speaking tasks (e.g., feeling shy, lack of self-confidence and self-esteem regarding their speaking skills).

Review of literature

The Speaking skill

Speaking is one of the English language skills used to express ideas and communicate with other people in the entire world for a variety of reasons such as: relationships, business, networking, overseas travelling, etc. Speaking is a skill which is not only to be known or learnt, but also to be practiced. It is a comprehension as well as a production process (Abdelkarim, 2020). Speaking, according to Zainurrahman and Sangaji (2019), is a social activity where individuals build and share meanings in a given context. So, speaking has an expressive as well as a communicative function. Accordingly, the development of the speaking skill is a process of social interaction. It is a complex process that goes beyond the articulation of speech sounds or even producing grammatically correct utterances. Speaking is a thinking process and a social interaction one.

Components of speaking

The complexity of speaking, as stated by Islam and Stapa (2021), results from the speaker's need to synchronize a number of factors, such as generating ideas, using knowledge of the language, and adopting strategies simultaneously. Pawlak and Waniek-Klimczak (2015) maintained that speaking is a multifaceted skill that requires the speakers to coordinate linguistic resources, pragmatic consciousness, contexts of spoken discourse, and norms of conversation. During speaking, students are expected to coordinate many skills: a) knowledge of language and discourse (grammatical knowledge, phonological knowledge, lexical knowledge, and discourse knowledge), and b) core speaking skills (pronunciation, speech functions, interaction management, and discourse organization).

Harris (1974; cited in Fauzi, 2021), stated that speaking is a comprehension, communication, and linguistic process that includes five components: (a) comprehension for oral communication which incorporates responding to speech as well as initiating it,(b) grammar which is needed for students to arrange a correct sentence in conversation, (c) vocabulary which means the appropriate diction

used in communication. Without having sufficient vocabulary, one cannot communicate effectively or express ideas in both oral and written forms, (d) pronunciation which is the way for students to produce clearer language when they speak, and (e) fluency referring to the ability to read, speak smoothly and expressively.

Consequently, speaking is a functional skill that is used for transmitting information, and interacting with others in different social and cultural contexts. Burns (1998; cited in Zainurrahman and Sangaji, 2019) stated that speaking involves the following areas of knowledge:

- Mechanics (pronunciation, grammar, and voabulary): including the use of the right words in the right order with correct pronunciation.
- Function (transaction and interaction) which includes information exchange and relationship building.
- Social and cultural rules and norms (turn-talking, rate of speech, length of pauses between speakers, and relative roles of participants).

Factors of speaking problems

Because speaking is a complex skill and it involves various important components, it has been considered the most difficult language skill for EFL learners at all levels. The factors of speaking problems, as mentioned by Palijama (2020) are divided into linguistic and non-linguistic factors. Linguistic factors include difficulties with vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Non-linguistic factors include lack of self-confidence, anxiety, shyness, fear of making mistakes and fear of being laughed at.

Aljibali (2017) investigated the speaking problems that college students experienced during their study of English for Academic Purposes (PEAP 2). The results of the study showed that the students have different types of speaking difficulties. The most common difficult types were vocabulary, grammar and mispronunciation. Another problem which also has been raised during the research is that most of the students (87%) found it difficult to speak properly with native speakers.

The element of anxiety regarding learning and speaking is a very strong impediment for the majority of EFL college students. Language anxiety has a strong negative effect on the speakers' oral performance, and it acts as an obstacle of social communication outside the class. Speaking is considered the most anxiety-evoking situation for the majority of second language learners (Woodrow, 2006; cited in Aziz, 2017).

Tasmia (2019) carried out a research to find out students" problems in learning English speaking skill. Results of the study showed that the students have problem in speaking such as shyness, grammar, vocabulary and meaning, pronunciation, lack of confident, fear of making mistake, and anxiety. Most of the students reported that pronunciation is the most problematic area that causes them to avoid speaking.

According to Qasemi (2020), there are many factors that are considered as the causes of difficulty in speaking these are:

1. Inhibition, which means fear of making mistake and being criticized by peers and the teacher, and feeling shy.
2. Nothing to say and lack of interest is another source of speaking difficulty.
3. Low or irregular participation. Due to the large number of the students and tendency of some students to dominate, only a few of the students can participate in discussions, while others do not have the enough chance.
4. Native language use. Most of the students have a tendency to use their mother tongue because it is easier and they feel relaxed when they use it.

Nguyet and Thao (2019) carried out a study to investigate the four aspects of speaking difficulties, namely affective, social, instructional and linguistic difficulties encountered by English-majored students at one university in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Results of the study revealed that the affective factors (namely, speaking anxiety, lack of self- confidence, and fear of making mistakes) are at the highest level of difficulty followed by social factors (difficulty in finding opportunities to practice speaking English outside the classroom,

difficulty in having the chance to communicate in English with others in the speaking class). The third factor is linguistic problems including English vocabulary and grammar knowledge. Instructional factors were found to be the least affecting ones.

Suryani, et al. (2020) explored the factors inhibiting the students' speaking skills. The result of the study showed that the two main factors of speaking problems are affective (shyness, lack of motivation, self-confidence, self-esteem, feeling toward the topic, self-consciousness) and cognitive factors (grammar, pronunciation, and knowledge of vocabulary.

Oral communication apprehension

Communication apprehension is one component of language anxiety added to test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. Communication apprehension is a type of shyness characterized by anxiety about communicating with people. Difficulty in speaking in groups (oral communication anxiety), in public ("stage fright"), in listening to or learning a spoken message (receiver anxiety) are all manifestations of communication apprehension. Communication apprehension plays a large role in foreign language anxiety. People who typically have trouble speaking in groups are likely to experience even greater difficulty speaking in a foreign language class where they have very little control of the communicative situation and their performance is constantly monitored (Horwitz, et al., 2012).

Communication apprehension (CA) is a type of anxiety experienced in an interpersonal communicative setting where students have little control of the situation. Horwitz (2002, cited in Hasni, et al. 2019) described CA as the hidden communication disorder that many individuals face in similar anxiety-evoking conditions. Yet, there is little to none who recognizes, acknowledges or discusses the issue. Hence, it is common for a person to be apprehensive at least in one communication situation. Shanahan (2013) defined oral communication apprehension as ‘an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons’. Each individual has a unique level of apprehension concerning real or anticipated communication which

results in a number of individual differences regarding the effectiveness of communication or the desire to communicate.

Oral communication apprehension is an affective obstacle that is mostly seen to appear in speaking classes, where students need to process linguistic inputs and produce their thoughts at the same time **(**Çagatay, 2015). As argued by Faria and Vijaya (2021), people with high oral communication apprehension are likely to avoid public speaking situations, and consequently have insufficient opportunities to improve it. This is a really serious problem, especially for EFL teachers who are accountable for helping students to enhance their public speaking ability. If these teachers have high public speaking anxiety then nothing can be accomplished.

Communication apprehension is a form of real fear when communicating in front of people. In interpersonal communication, anxiety is aroused by the negative experience of communicating with people in groups or public in the listening and speaking activities. Meanwhile, in foreign language learning, communication apprehension also has a big impact on anxiety. People who have difficulties to deliver their speaking in groups have a little control of the speaking interaction and continuous monitoring of performance.

Factors of communication apprehension

Amara (2018) explored the factors attributing to oral communication apprehension, and he found out that there are various factors related to this problem. One of these is instructional factors including fear of making mistakes, time constraints, lack of exposure to English outside the classroom, translation from English to Arabic or vice versa, focusing only on the writing and reading skills, and being tested only in the written form. Human factors including (teacher-student relationships, motivation, and teachers' attitudes in the class) are other important factors contributing to oral communication apprehension.

Sugiyati and Indriani (2021) conducted a study on students of the English Department at Universitas Tidar to explore their oral communication apprehension level. Results of the study showed that 58.8% of students experienced a medium level of public speaking

anxiety and that fear of negative evaluation becomes the major anxiety-provoking factor and test anxiety. Additionally, Kho and Ting (2021), in their study about the factors of oral communication apprehension (including five factors, namely, personality traits, preparation level, audience factor, language proficiency, and confidence level), revealed that the audience factor caused the greatest oral communication apprehension, as respondents reported being affected by negative expressions seen on the audience members' faces. The factors causing a moderate level of oral presentation apprehension were preparation, language ability, personality traits, and confidence.

Jalleh, et.al (2021) explored the level of oral communication apprehension for Japanese EFL international students and the factors beyond this problem. Results of the study showed that these students have a high level of oral communication apprehension due to their culture, educational background, attitudes towards the role of English in their society, and lack of opportunities to practice speaking in English.

Overcoming oral communication apprehension

Amara (2018) proposed some psychological and instructional suggestions to reduce the learners' speaking anxiety as well as improving the quality of the students' speaking skills:

1- Promoting meaningful communicative exchanges in the EFL classroom.
2- Creating a high friendly and supportive classroom environment.
3- Using of gentle methods for error correction.
4- Increasing students' self- esteem and self -confidence.
5- Selecting interesting topics and activities for class discussion.
6- Increasing the spirit of "team work" and "cooperative learning" among the students.
7- Using appropriate methodology for teaching the four language skills (e.g., role-plays, information gap activities, surveys, group discussion…etc) should be made part of the course to improve the students' speaking**.**

Kho and Ting (2021) suggested that a practical way for instructors to reduce students' communication apprehension when making oral

presentations is to teach them about audience awareness. By doing that, the students may be able to tailor their oral presentations to their audience, and react accordingly to the audience situation. This includes interacting actively with the audience to control the audience mood. They also emphasized the importance of rehearsals for students who want to improve their verbal communication skills.

Student generated podcasts

Podcasting is a means of publishing audio and video content on the web as a series of episodes with a common theme. These episodes are accompanied by a file called a "feed" that allows listeners to subscribe to the series and receive new episodes automatically. Some people use the term "podcast" to refer to any distribution of audio/video content on the Web, but technically speaking, the feed and subscription model of file delivery is what differentiates podcasting from simply posting files on the Web (Deal, 2007).

Importance of student generated podcasts

Student-created podcasts, which is the primary focus in this study, have been proposed as a great technology to improve language learners' skills. As discussed in Sze's (2007), the benefits of podcasts especially the student generated ones are:

- They provide valuable content for EFL learners and teachers (i.e., listening comprehension activities, interviews, and vocabulary, Phonetics and pronunciation lessons, and stories).
- They are beneficial for enhancing listening comprehension skills as they can be used for intensive and extensive listening activities. Particularly, podcasts are suited for extensive listening, for the purpose of motivating student interest in listening to English, and providing them with exposure to native speakers' speech. This was also emphasized by Ghamry (2020), who found out that EFL listening comprehension skills could be improved significantly as a result of using podcasting.
- Podcasts are highly motivating when produced by students themselves; once placed on the Web, podcasts can be accessed by anyone around the world. This means that, for students producing their own podcasts, there is a real audience out there and this is a huge motivating factor.

- Students who produce a podcast will usually have to practice or rehearse their "show" first. This means undergoing plenty of practice and repetition, through which they will be able to improve their pronunciation.
- Students can be invited to produce podcasts in groups. So, they can enhance collaboration skills.
- A podcast is a permanent record of an oral performance, so, students producing a podcast will pay more attention to their pronunciation accuracy.
- Less confident learners may feel threatened when called upon to speak to an audience, even if the audience is a small one. These students will benefit from producing a podcast since it involves performing "behind the scenes.

Additionally, many researches have been recently carried out to explore the benefits of student created as well as student created podcasts. For example, Al-Ahdal (2020) conducted a study to find out the efficacy of podcasts in teaching speech communication skills to Saudi EFL students. Findings showed that, podcasting significantly led to the development in students' audio and speech abilities. The simplicity of uploading and making their own recordings ensures students' involvement in a number of listening and speech activities. Their ability to attract huge audiences in other areas of the world is a powerful motivation for students to make their own podcasts. He added that podcasts provide students with a great deal of practical usage of words.

Nuraeni (2021) concluded that the students' speaking skills such as grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and self-confidence could be promoted by using podcasts in English teaching and learning. This was also asserted by Rahmasari, et.al. (2021), who revealed that students had a positive perception of the utilization of podcasts in learning speaking. Students perceived podcasting as an interesting media because it has many contents and topics they can listen to, and practice their speaking whenever they want. They also reported that podcast is beneficial for speaking achievement, because it helps them to increase their vocabularies and word pronunciation. Also, Zapata and Larenas (2019), in his investigation of the impact of using

podcast-based lessons to improve descriptive oral skills for tertiary education students, agreed that this methodology was a valuable complement in EFL classes, especially in enhancing the participants' pronunciation and fluency.

Nie, Cane and Cashmore (2008), in their study about the benefits of podcasting for students' learning, found out that the cognitive benefits students obtain from creating their own podcasts include enhancing their understanding of the chosen topic through a number of ways such as broadening their knowledge by carrying out more research, relating new information to previously learned information, and being able to view the problem from different perspectives. Participants of the study described how they were pushed to research and learn more about the chosen topic by themselves because they knew their discussion would be podcasted and other students would hear it.

Stages of creating a podcast

According to Deal (2007), Justine, et al. (2012), there are three categories of activities and equipment involved in podcasting:

1. Pre-production. It includes brainstorm about possible content ideas for the podcast and discussing details such as: What is the purpose of the podcast? Who is the intended audience? What topics/themes should be covered? What is a logical structure for the script? Who will work on each portion? It also includes writing a draft of the podcast script and an outline (around 1000 words).

2. Production. In this stage the podcast producer decides upon any special effects such as music, designs the introduction, and holds recording sessions to produce the podcast adjusting the written script into spoken language where needed. Then he/she edits and mixes audio content as desired, and makes sure that the final version is close to 10 min in length.

3. **Post-production**. In this stage, the producer makes a brief summary of the podcast (show notes) to inform potential listeners, produces a written transcript of the podcast, includes the title and acknowledges any music or other sources used in its production. Then he/she downloads iTunes or other podcast directory software and submits audio file, transcript and show notes for assessment and publication to the e-learning site.

Types of podcasting

Deal (2007) mentioned that there are three types of podcasts:

- Creating audio or video archives of classroom lectures. This use of podcasting is very similar to (or is arguably the same as) lecture webcasting.
- Delivery of supplemental course materials. Supplemental materials might include pre-recorded lectures that must be accessed in advance of class time, summaries highlighting important information, or video reviews of homework problems.
- Student-generated podcasts. They are assignments that require students to produce and submit their own podcasts. This type of podcasting is most useful in classes where oral presentation and/or building technical competence in podcasting are closely related to course goals

In addition, Carvalho, et al. (2008) proposed taxonomy of podcasts according to six dimensions: type, medium, length, author, style and purpose:

1. **According to type**: there are four types of podcasts: (a) Informative which presents concepts, analysis, synthesis, description of tools or equipment, (b) Feedback / Comments (to students' assignments and group work), (c) Guidelines (to field work and to practical work; recommendations about studying, group dynamics, reflective learning etc.), and (d) Authentic materials, this means, materials created for the public and not for a specific course or students, such as interviews, news, radio programming, etc.
2. **according to medium**: audio or video (audio-cast, enhanced podcast, vod-cast and screencast). Audio podcast is the most common, and enhanced podcast is gaining popularity, which combines images and audio. Video podcast is also mentioned as vod-cast, and if it is a screen captured with audio, it is called screencast.
3. **according to length**: Short (1–5 minutes), Moderate (6–15 minutes) or Long (more than15 minutes).
4. **according to author**: Lecturer, Student, and other (experts, local community, and representatives). Lecturers can create their own podcasts for students, they may use authentic materials found on the

Internet, such as interviews, or they can also ask students to create their own podcasts to share with their classmates.

5. **according to style**: Formal or informal style is related to the degree of formality. To make podcasts more interesting, they may incorporate informal learning content such as people's experiences, and opinions.

6. **According to purpose**: podcasts can be used to (inform, analyze, develop, motivate, mediate for reflective learning, etc.).

Method

A. Participants

The participants of the study were a group of (25) third year English section student teachers at the Faculty of Education, Fayoum University (in the academic year 2021-2022). Participants of the study were purposefully selected for the study experiment; the researcher has taught three different courses to third year English section (general education), during this period, she noticed that these students' participation in oral discussions during their English classes was very weak in spite of the fact that a lot of them get high marks in their written examinations.

B. Instruments

Oral performance test

The oral performance test was intended to measure students' oral performance skills, and it was based on the speaking part of the ILETS speaking test. The test was composed of three parts. **Part one** was an introduction and in it students were asked general questions about oneself and familiar topics like family, friends and hometown. It lasted for about five minutes. **Part two** was aimed to test students' ability to speak at length on a particular topic, using appropriate language and organizing ideas in a logical way. The topics of part two were given to students on a card, and they were given the chance to use a piece of paper and a pencil, in one minute, to write down the ideas they would speak about. Students had about six minutes to do that task. The topics included in part two were 'memory' and 'money', with related questions. **Part three** was intended to measure students' fluency and coherence, lexical resources, length of ideas, grammar accuracy and pronunciation. Students were asked to talk at a deeper

length about a specific topic by answering a number of related questions. In this part students were expected to discuss the topic deeply providing a lot of details supported with examples, explanations, and experiences. The topic discussed in this part is "the teaching profession".

The original form of the test was shown to a jury of EFL specialists to verify its validity regarding clarity of instructions, the suitability of the test for the study participants' linguistic level, the overall goals of the test and how they are consistent with test topics. Some modifications were made in response to their suggestions (e.g., some topics were replaced because of unsuitability for the participants' linguistic level).

Reliability of the test

The test was administered to a group of (35) EFL student teachers similar to the study sample regarding their linguistic level, to examine its reliability level. The SPSS program (version 21) was used for this purpose. Reliability of the test was found to be (0. 81), which is an acceptable level of reliability.

Scoring of the test

An oral performance scoring rubric was developed by the researcher to assess students' responses to the oral performance test. The rubric was based on assessment standards used for assessing EFL adult learners' oral performance, and rubrics used for assessing students' performance on international tests like ILETS and TOEFL. The rubric included six domains of oral performance these are:

1. Idea generation and development
2. Organization and coherence
3. Grammar range and accuracy
4. Range of vocabulary
5. Fluency
6. Pronunciation and accent

The rubric in its original format was given to a group of experts in EFL teaching to test it for validity for assessing students' oral performance on the identified skills, its clarity, and ability of its indicators to discriminate between different levels of students' oral

performance. The rubric included five levels of students' performance, so the total score of the rubric was 30 marks:

5 indicates excellent performance
4 describes very good performance
3 refers to good performance
2 means average performance
1 shows below average performance

The reliability of the rubric was tested by calculating the inter-rater reliability (the correlation between the scores given by two raters using the rubric). It was found to be (0.78), which is an acceptable level of reliability.

The oral communication apprehension scale

The oral communication apprehension scale was designed with the purpose of assessing the participants' level of oral communication apprehension prior to and after the implementation of the podcasting project used in the study. The scale was composed of three dimensions of oral communication apprehension, these are: personal apprehension, interpersonal apprehension, and public speaking apprehension. The selection of these components was based on Young's (1991; cited in Young, 1994) identification of the primary sources of language learning anxiety as: 1) personal and interpersonal anxieties, (2) role-related beliefs about language teaching, (3) instructor-learner interactions, (4) classroom procedures, and (5) language testing. Also, the development of the scale was based on several scales used for measuring EFL learners' language anxiety, especially those used for measuring speaking anxiety. These scales are like Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS developed by Horwitz et al. (1986; cited in Toyama and Yamazaki,2018), the Public Speaking Class Anxiety Scale (PSCAS) developed by Yaikhong and Usaha (2012; cited in Sugiati and Indriani, 2021), The Social Interaction Anxiety Scale (SIAS), designed by Fergus, et.al (2014), the Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety scale (PRPSA), developed by McCroskey (2013). The current scale was a five-point Likert scale starting from 5 "always true of me" to 1 "never true of me". The first version of the scale was composed of 45 statements; statements (from 1 to 17) were

intended to measure students' interpersonal communication apprehension (i.e., the learners' fears and anxieties related to engaging with others and participating comfortably in oral discussions in social situations). Statements (from 18 to 30) measured students' fears and anxieties related to engaging in public speaking (i.e., speaking to an audience comfortably, being able to keep eye contact with an audience, answering audience's questions confidently…etc), and statements (from 31 to 45) were designed to measure learners' personal apprehension related to oral communication. This refers to the fears and anxieties resulting from the learner's self-perception and/or the beliefs he has about himself as a speaker of English (I,e., learners' self-image, self-esteem, and self-confidence).

Internal validity of the scale

The first version of the scale consisted of 50 items. It was given to a group of EFL experts to judge it regarding the relatedness of its items to the overall purpose of the scale, and to its sub-domains, clarity and suitability of its language for the study sample's linguistic level. Five of the items of the scale were removed because of redundancy. Other items were rephrased to be more readable for the participants. The scale was also tested for internal validity, for this purpose the scale was administered to a group of (98) EFL student teachers. The total score obtained from the pilot administration, was correlated with the scores obtained from each of the scale's domains. SPSS (version 21) was used for this purpose. The table below shows the matrix of the correlation between the scale's total score and the score obtained from each of the four domains of oral communication apprehension.

Domains	Correlation with the total
Interpersonal apprehension	**0.96****
Public speaking apprehension	**0.93****
Personal apprehension	**0.95****

All the above values are significant at 0.01 level. This indicates that the oral communication apprehension scale has an acceptable level of internal validity.

Reliability of the scale

The reliability of the scale was examined using Cronbach Alpha formula. The reliability co-efficient of the scale and its domains was found to be significant at 0.01 level. Reliability of the scale as a whole was **(0.87**), which is an acceptable level of reliability. (The table below shows the reliability co-efficient of the oral communication apprehension scale).

N	Domains	Reliability coefficient
1	Interpersonal apprehension	0.80
2	Public speaking apprehension	0.70
3	Personal apprehension	0.74
	Total	0.87

The training program

The current study was aimed to develop EFL student teachers' oral performance skills and to eliminate their oral communication apprehension. So, the training program focused on engaging students in a language-rich environment through exposing them to English language podcasts in interesting topics like "the key to happiness", " improving one's memory"," improving language" and other topics. They, then were engaged in producing their own podcasts in topics they selected by themselves. This encouraged them to search for more information about their topics, and listen to more podcasts, and listen again and again to get the technique of how a podcast is produced. The participants recorded and re-recorded their podcast episodes for

many times until they reached a satisfactory product, this helped them to practice and enhance their oral performance skills and overcome apprehension factors related to oral communication.

The training program included three units. **Unit one** was an introduction about podcasting and it was composed of three lessons for giving participants background knowledge about the meaning, types and steps of a podcast. . In this unit, participants were given detailed information about the stages of creating a podcast including (planning, recording, editing and publishing). **Unit two** "podcast reproduction", focused on exposing participants to real podcasts talking about familiar topics to help them get acquainted with the elements of a real podcast. In the same unit, students were asked to listen to the podcasts and have an in class-discussion about the topics, then as an out of class activity, they had to listen to the podcasts again and answer some comprehension questions, and send them to the instructor as recordings through whatsapp, they also were asked to reproduce the podcasts in their own way and send them to the instructor. **Unit three** was the production stage of the program. In this unit students applied the stages they studied in unit one for producing a podcast. They created their own podcasts and published them on the internet.

Training procedures

The study experiment lasted for nine weeks (starting from the 15th of August to the 21st of October, 2021). In the first week, students were pre-tested on their oral performance. The researcher interviewed the participants individually and examined them having their voices recorded for later analysis. They also were pre-tested on their oral communications apprehension level using a scale sent to them through Google forms.

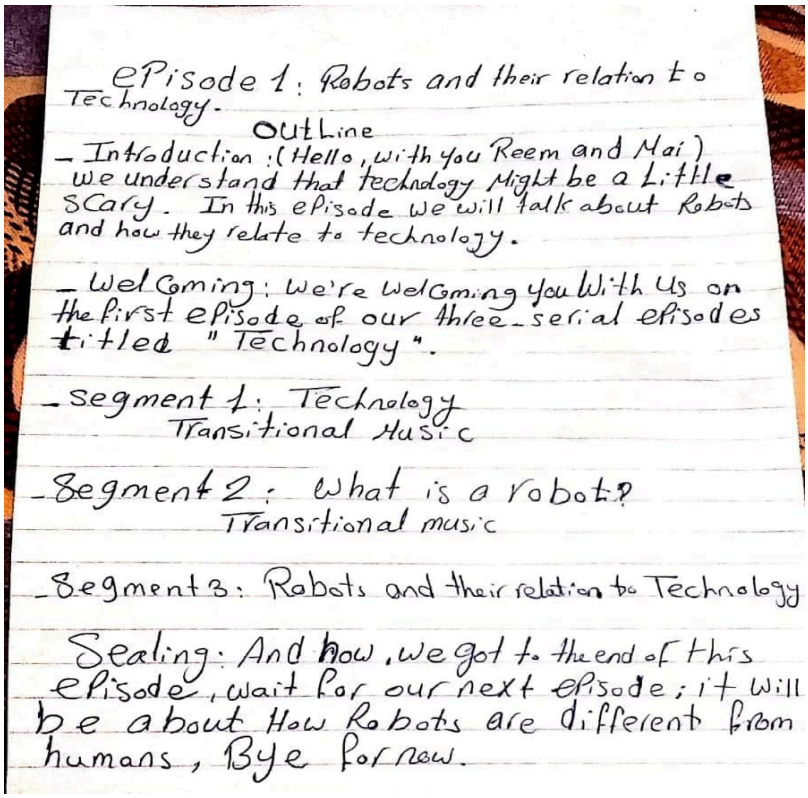
- In the second and third weeks, participants studied **unit one** in which they were given an introduction about podcasting, its meaning, formats, types and steps.
- **Unit two** (podcast reproduction), was taught in the fourth and fifth weeks. The unit was composed of three lessons giving three example podcasts with familiar topics. In each lesson, students

listened to a podcast following the steps of a listening lesson (starting from pre listening, during listening, to post listening). They had in class discussions about the podcasts, and at the end of each lesson, they were given the transcript of the podcast and they were asked to reproduce it in their own words. As an out of class activity, they were asked to record the podcast again in their own voices and send it to the instructor through whatsapp.

- **Unit three** was about podcast production, and its purpose was that students produce their own podcasts in topics they select by themselves. It was composed of three lessons. In **lesson one**, the instructor pointed out the idea of the whole unit that students had to produce their own podcasts. Then, a discussion was held about the different podcasting formats, types and topics that participants could select for their podcasts. The instructor helped participants with example podcast hosting websites to give them different podcast ideas to select from. In this lesson, participants discussed together the different topics they can work on. The instructor asked them to create an outline for their podcast and the episodes they would include. They started working on the outlines and discussing them with the instructor. As an out of class activity, students were asked to collect more information, and listen to more podcasts about their topics, and write a transcript for the first episode. For the rest of the unit, lesson two and three, participants worked on their own collecting information about their podcast episodes, writing transcripts and sending them to the instructor through the whatsapp group for revision. After students' transcripts were revised by the instructor and modifications were done, they were asked to start recording the episodes and sending them to the instructor, as well, for revising and giving feedback. After the revision and editing processes, participants were allowed to publish their podcasts on "anchor", the podcast production app used in the study. Participants took three weeks to produce their podcasts; they produced three episodes, an episode published each week. In the last week of the experiment, participants were re-examined on their oral performance and oral communication apprehension.

- **Examples of student-generated outlines and transcripts for their podcast episodes:**

1. Technology and robots



episode 1: Robots and their relation to Technology.

Outline

- Introduction: (Hello, with you Reem and Mai) we understand that technology might be a little scary. In this episode we will talk about Robots and how they relate to technology.

- Welcoming: We're welcoming you with us on the first episode of our three-serial episodes titled "Technology".

- Segment 1: Technology
  Transitional Music

- Segment 2: What is a robot?
  Transitional music

- Segment 3: Robots and their relation to Technology

Sealing: And now, we got to the end of this episode, wait for our next episode; it will be about How Robots are different from humans, Bye for now.

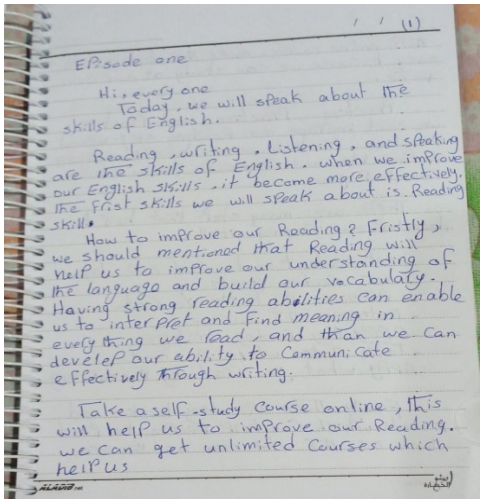
A: Hello, This is _ Minute Song from BBC learning English. I'm
B: Hello, I'm _
A: What are you doing?
B: I'm a Computer engineer, I like that wider field of technology
A: Do you think Technology is scary?
B: Yes, it might be a little scary.
A: Could you tell me more about technology and what is its advan
B: Technology refers to tools and Machines that may be used to solve real-world Problems and of course it has some benefits like learning, communicating and finally collaborating
A: Dr, _ you said that technology may be a little scary, could you explain how it is scary?
B: yeah, of course. a recent study found that the average Americans more afraid of Robotic technology than death.
A: excuse me, Dr _ What do you mean by Robotic technology
B: Robotics is an interdisciplinary sector of science and engineering dedicated to the design and use of mechanical robots.

Segment 1.

A: mmm, what is a Robot? Tell me more, Please!?
B: Robot is the product of the Robotic field, where programmable Machines are built that can assist humans
it is very strange, she looks incredibly scary, a bit like a dystopian Robots from the future.
A: Wait! What do you mean by dystopian??
B: I mean an imaginary future society where everything is bad like the movie "Robo OP"
B: You know, I have a friend spends more time with a Robot, he begins to see her Move and express herself. she smiles and uses facial expressions and hand gestures known as non-verbal Communication to appear more human.

Transcripts

Sports and games



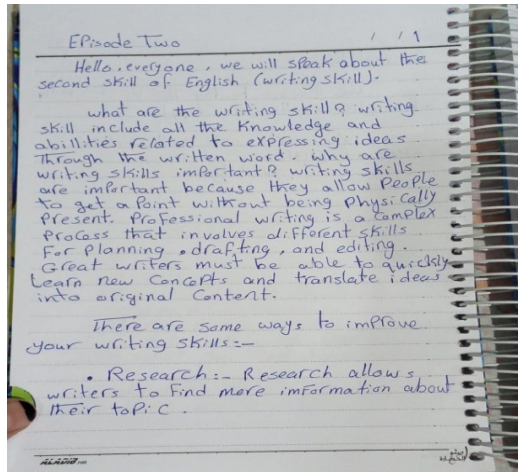
Episode one

Hi, every one
Today, we will speak about the skills of English.

Reading, writing, Listening, and speaking are the skills of English. when we improve our English skills, it become more effectively. The frist skills we will speak about is Reading skill.

How to improve our Reading? Fristly, we should mentioned that Reading will help us to improve our understanding of the language and build our vocabulary. Having strong reading abilities can enable us to interpret and find meaning in every thing we read, and than we can develop our ability to Communicate effectively through writing.

Take a self-study course online, this will help us to improve our Reading. we can get unlimited courses which help us



Episode Two

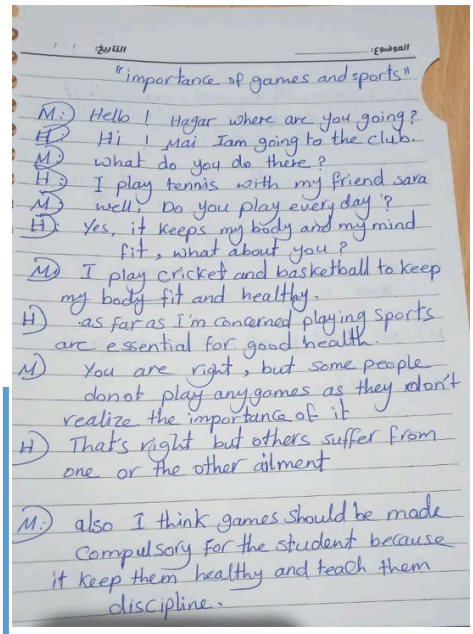
Hello, everyone, we will speak about the second skill of English (writing skill).

what are the writing skill? writing skill include all the knowledge and abilities related to expressing ideas through the written word. why are writing skills important? writing skills are important because they allow people to get a point without being physically present. Professional writing is a complex process that involves different skills for planning, drafting, and editing. Great writers must be able to quickly learn new concepts and translate ideas into original content.

There are some ways to improve your writing skills:-

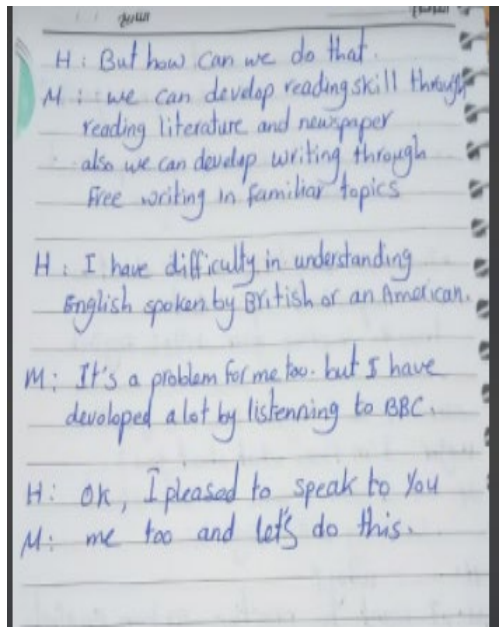
- Research:- Research allows writers to find more information about their topic.

Improving language skills



"importance of games and sports"

M: Hello ! Hagar where are you going?
H: Hi ! Mai Iam going to the club.
M: what do you do there?
H: I play tennis with my friend sara
M: well. Do you play every day?
H: Yes, it keeps my body and my mind fit, what about you?
M: I play cricket and basketball to keep my body fit and healthy.
H: as far as I'm concerned playing sports are essential for good health.
M: You are right, but some people donot play any games as they don't realize the importance of it
H: That's right but others suffer from one or the other ailment
M: also I think games should be made compulsory for the student because it keep them healthy and teach them discipline.



H: But how can we do that.
M: we can develop reading skill through reading literature and newspaper also we can develop writing through free writing in familiar topics
H: I have difficulty in understanding English spoken by British or an American.
M: It's a problem for me too. but I have developed a lot by listenning to BBC.
H: Ok, I pleased to speak to you
M: me too and let's do this.

Data collection procedures

Data for the current study was collected through a pre-post oral performance test and a pre-post oral communication apprehension scale. The duration of the experiment was 9 weeks. In the first week, participants were pretested regarding their oral performance skills and oral communication apprehension level. After pre testing, the treatment group was exposed to the student-generated podcasting project. After 7 weeks of training, the participants were post tested using the oral performance test and oral communication apprehension scale, to find out whether there was any improvement in their performance. Then the pre and post data obtained from the treatment group were compared to determine the differences.

Results and Discussion

Testing Hypothesis 1

For testing the first hypothesis, the data obtained from the pre and post administration of the oral performance test were compared using independent samples t-test, to find out whether the student-generated podcasting project had any effect on students' performance. Results showed that the mean score of the treatment group in the pre administration of the test was (19.52) with standard deviation of (2.75), while that of the post administration was (22.7) with standard deviation of (4.57). The calculated t-value was (24.81), which is bigger than the tabulated value at (0.05) and (0.01) level. The effect size is (9.92), which indicates the apparent development that took place in the treatment group's oral performance as a result of the administration of the study program. Accordingly, the first study hypothesis was affirmed. The table below shows the t-test results for finding out the difference between the pre and post administration of the oral performance test.

Table (1) results of the independent-samples T-test in the oral performance test

Group	N	Mean	St. dv.	Df	Tabulated T-Value		T-Value	Sig.	Effect size (d)
					0.05	0.01			
Pre	25	19.52	2.75	24	2.06	2.79	24.81	0.01	9.92
Post	25	22.7	4.57						

Additionally, the t-value was calculated for the difference between the pre and post administration of the oral performance test related to the speaking sub-skills measured. As for the first sub-skill "idea generation and development", results of the study showed the existence of a statistically significant difference between means of scores of the study sample in the pre and post administration of the oral test. Results showed that the mean score of the treatment group in the pre administration of the test regarding idea generation was (3) with standard deviation of (0.78), while that of the post administration was (3.4) with standard deviation of (0.71). The calculated t-value was (42.33), which is bigger than the tabulated value at (0.05) and (0.01) level. The effect size is (17.27), which shows that students' ability to generate and develop ideas enhanced as a result of the administration of the study program. The table below shows the t-test results for finding out the difference between the pre and post administration of the oral performance test regarding "idea generation and development".

Table (2) results of the independent-samples T-test in the oral performance test regarding "idea generation and development"

Group	N	Mean	St. dv.	Df	Tabulated T–Value		T–Value	Sig.	Effect size (d)
					0.05	0.01			
Pre	25	3.0	0.78	24	2.06	2.79	**42.33**	**0.01**	**17.27**
Post	25	3.4	0.71						

Regarding the second sub-skill" organization of ideas", the results of the study showed that there was a statistically significant difference between means of scores of the study sample in the pre and post administration of the oral test regarding "organization of ideas". Results showed that the mean score of the treatment group in the pre administration of the test regarding idea generation was (3.2) with standard deviation of (0.71), while that of the post administration was (3.5) with standard deviation of (0.82). The calculated t-value was (30.61), which is bigger than the tabulated value at (0.05) and (0.01) level. The effect size is (12.49), which denotes that students' ability to organize ideas enhanced as a result of the administration of the study program. The table below shows the t-test results for finding out the difference between the pre and post administration of the oral performance test regarding "organization of ideas".

Table (3) results of the independent-samples T-test in the oral performance test regarding "organization of ideas"

Group	N	Mean	St. dv.	Df	Tabulated T–Value		T–Value	Sig.	Effect size (d)
					0.05	0.01			
Pre	25	3.2	0.71	24	2.06	2.79	30.61	0.01	12.49
Post	25	3.5	0.82						

Investigation of the t-value for the difference between means of scores of the study sample in the pre and post application of the oral performance test regarding "grammatical accuracy", pointed out that there was a clear enhancement in students' performance in favor of the post application. Results showed that the mean score of the treatment group in the pre administration of the test regarding idea generation was (3.36) with standard deviation of (0.95), while that of the post administration was (4.04) with standard deviation of (1.02). The calculated t-value was (25.27), which is bigger than the tabulated value at (0.05) and (0.01) level. The effect size is (10.31), which denotes that students' grammatical accuracy enhanced as a result of the administration of the study program. The table below shows the t-test results for finding out the difference between the pre and post administration of the oral performance test regarding "grammatical accuracy".

Table (4) results of the independent-samples T-test in the oral performance test regarding "grammatical accuracy"

Group	N	Mean	St. dv.	Df	Tabulated T-Value		T-Value	Sig.	Effect size (d)
					0.05	0.01			
Pre	25	3.36	0.95	24	2.06	2.79	25.27	0.01	10.31
Post	25	4.04	1.02						

In addition, the t-value for the difference between means of scores of the study sample in the pre and post application of the oral performance test regarding "vocabulary range", pointed out that there was a clear enhancement in students' performance in favor of the post application. Results showed that the mean score of the treatment group in the pre administration of the test regarding vocabulary range was (3.32) with standard deviation of (0.47), while that of the post administration was (3.76) with standard deviation of (0.66). The calculated t-value was (40.82), which is bigger than the tabulated value at (0.05) and (0.01) level. The effect size is (16.66), which denotes that students' range enhanced as a result of the administration of the study program. The table below shows the t-test results for finding out the difference between the pre and post administration of the oral performance test regarding "vocabulary range".

Table (5) results of the independent-samples T-test in the oral performance test regarding "vocabulary range"

Group	N	Mean	St. dv.	Df	Tabulated T-Value		T-Value	Sig.	Effect size (d)
					0.05	0.01			
Pre	25	3.32	0.47	24	2.06	2.79	**40.82**	**0.01**	**16.66**
Post	25	3.76	0.66						

Investigation of the t-value for the difference between means of scores of the study sample in the pre and post application of the oral performance test regarding "fluency", pointed out that there was a clear enhancement in students' performance in favor of the post application. Results showed that the mean score of the treatment group in the pre administration of the test regarding "fluency" was (3.16) with standard deviation of (0.68), while that of the post administration was (3.96) with standard deviation of (.97). The calculated t-value was (27.08), which is bigger than the tabulated value at (0.05) and (0.01) level. The effect size is (11.05), which denotes that students' fluency enhanced as a result of the administration of the study program. The table below shows the t-test results for finding out the difference between the pre and post administration of the oral performance test regarding "fluency".

Table (6) results of the independent-samples T-test in the oral performance test regarding "fluency"

Group	N	Mean	St. dv.	Df	Tabulated T-Value		T-Value	Sig.	Effect size (d)
					0.05	0.01			
Pre	25	3.16	0.68	24	2.06	2.79	**27.08**	**0.01**	**11.05**
Post	25	3.96	0.97						

Furthermore, the t-value for the difference between means of scores of the study sample in the pre and post application of the oral performance test regarding "pronunciation and accent", showed that there was a clear enhancement in students' performance in favor of the post application. Results showed that the mean score of the treatment group in the pre administration of the test regarding "pronunciation and accent" was (3.48) with standard deviation of (0.51), while that of the post administration was (4.04) with standard deviation of (1.02). The calculated t-value was (31.40), which is bigger than the tabulated value at (0.05) and (0.01) level. The effect size is (12.81), which emphasizes those students' pronunciation and accent enhanced as a result of the administration of the study program. The table below shows the t-test results for finding out the difference between the pre and post administration of the oral performance test regarding "pronunciation and accent".

Table (7) results of the independent-samples T-test in the oral performance test regarding "pronunciation and accent"

Group	N	Mean	St. dv.	Df	Tabulated T-Value		T-Value	Sig.	Effect size (d)
					0.05	0.01			
Pre	25	3.48	0.51	24	2.06	2.79	**31.40**	**0.01**	**12.81**
Post	25	4.04	1.02						

Testing the second hypothesis of the study

For testing the second hypothesis, the independent samples t-test was used to compare the results of the study group in the pre and post administration of the oral communication apprehension scale.

Results showed that the mean score of the treatment group in the pre application of the scale was (126.44) with standard deviation of (30.75), and that of the post application was (90.76) with standard deviation of (12.73). The calculated t-value was (25.22), which is bigger than the tabulated value at (0.05) and (0.01) level. The effect size was (10.29). This shows that the oral communication apprehension level of the treatment group decreased as a result of the introduction of the student-generated podcasting project. The table below shows the t-test results for finding out the difference between the treatment group's scores in the pre and post administration of the oral communication apprehension scale.

Table (8) Results of the independent-samples T-test in the oral communication apprehension scale

Group	N	Mean	St. dv.	Df	T–Value tabulated		T–Value	Sig.	Effect size (d)
					0.05	0.01			
Pre	25	126.44	30.75	24	2.06	2.79	25.22	0.01	10.29
Post	25	90.76	12.73						

In addition, the difference between the study sample's scores in the pre and post application of the oral communication apprehension scale was calculated for each of the three components: public speaking apprehension, interpersonal apprehension and personal apprehension.

As for public speaking apprehension, results showed that the mean score of the treatment group in the pre application of the scale regarding public speaking apprehension was (33.16) with standard deviation of (9.09), and that of the post application was (25.4) with standard deviation of (6.86). The calculated t-value was (22.94), which is bigger than the tabulated value at (0.05) and (0.01) level. The effect size was (9.63). This shows that the oral communication apprehension level of the treatment group regarding public speaking apprehension decreased as a result of the introduction of the student-generated podcasting project. The table below shows the t-test results for finding out the difference between the treatment group's scores in the pre and post administration of the oral communication apprehension scale regarding public speaking apprehension.

Table (9) Results of the independent-samples T-test in the oral communication apprehension scale

Group	N	Mean	St. dv.	Df	T–Value tabulated		T–Value	Sig.	Effect size (d)
					0.05	0.01			
Pre	25	33.16	9.09	24	2.06	2.79	22.94	0.01	9.63
Post	25	25.04	6.86						

Regarding interpersonal communication apprehension, results showed that the mean score of the treatment group in the pre application of the scale was (51.04) with standard deviation of (12.61), and that of the post application was (37.00) with standard deviation of (7.56). The calculated t-value was (24.90), which is bigger than the tabulated value at (0.05) and (0.01) level. The effect size was (10.16). This shows that the oral communication apprehension level of the treatment group regarding interpersonal communication decreased as a result of the introduction of the student-generated podcasting project. The table below shows the t-test results for finding out the difference between the treatment group's scores in the pre and post administration of the oral communication apprehension scale regarding interpersonal communication apprehension.

Table (10) Results of the independent-samples T-test in the oral communication apprehension scale regarding interpersonal communication apprehension

Group	N	Mean	St. dv.	Df	T-Value tabulated		T-Value	Sig.	Effect size (d)
					0.05	0.01			
Pre	25	51.04	12.61	24	2.06	2.79	24.90	0.01	10.16
Post	25	37.00	7.56						

Also, results showed that the mean score of the treatment group in the pre application of the scale regarding personal apprehension was (42.24) with standard deviation of (10.35), and that of the post application was (28.72) with standard deviation of (8.45). The calculated t-value was (21.65), which is bigger than the tabulated value at (0.05) and (0.01) level. The effect size was (8.83). This shows that the oral communication apprehension level of the treatment group regarding personal apprehension decreased as a result of the introduction of the student-generated podcasting project. The table below shows the t-test results for finding out the difference between the treatment group's scores in the pre and post administration of the oral communication apprehension scale regarding personal apprehension.

Table (11) Results of the independent-samples T-test in the oral communication apprehension scale regarding personal communication apprehension

Group	N	Mean	St. dv.	df	T-Value tabulated		T-Value	Sig.	Effect size (d)
					0.05	0.01			
Pre	25	42.24	10.35	24	2.06	2.79	21.65	0.01	8.83
Post	25	28.72	8.45						

Testing the third hypothesis of the study

For testing the third hypothesis of the study, the correlation between the study group's scores in the post application of the oral performance test and oral communication apprehension scale was calculated. Results indicated that the correlation between the scores obtained from the post application of the oral performance test and oral communication apprehension scale was (-0.41). So, the third study hypothesis was affirmed.

Discussion of results

The results presented above emphasize that involving students in preparing and producing their own podcasts enhanced their oral performance and lowered their oral communication apprehension. The study group was exposed to listening to a lot of podcasts, especially as an out-of-class activity, they were provided with podcast hosting websites like BBC leaning English, six minute English, the English we speak, and other podcasts they selected by themselves. This exposure to authentic materials, through podcasts produced by native speakers, contributed to the enhancement of students' fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary and other aspects of speech. This is consistent with what was argued by Yoestara and Putri (2018), when they pointed out that materials introduced in podcasts always cover a wide range of topics with real life speech and are generally prepared by native speakers, which help learners get familiar with English pronunciation and get more fluent. The same idea was emphasized by

Alfa (2020) who stated that in order to improve the important aspects of speaking performance (namely, grammar, fluency, accuracy, vocabulary and pronunciation), learners have to be exposed to authentic listening materials. In the same way, Cárdenas (2020) pointed out that podcasting contributes to the development of learners' communication skills by keeping them engaged in their own learning and motivating them to learn through authentic audio materials.

Another important aspect of the training program that contributed to the development of speaking skills of the study group is their engagement in creating their own podcasts. Students worked actively in pairs and groups to collect information about their podcasting topics, and listen to more podcasts to get the accent and learn more about the topics. This enhanced their ability to speak fluently, acquire a lot of vocabulary words, feel more confident when they speak in English, and generate ideas easily, as a result of being exposed to a lot of podcasts in different topics. Previous research, e.g., Babak, and Monirosadat (2017), confirmed that EFL learners who were exposed to podcasts were better in recalling the learning materials, and had an enhanced vocabulary knowledge than those who were not. Similar results were reached by Hasan and Hoon (2013), who reviewed twenty journal articles to determine the effects of podcasting on ESL students' language skills and attitude levels. The analysis affirmed that podcasts greatly support learning not just in speaking and listening but also in other language skills and areas such as grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary.

Additionally, throughout the implementation of the current study, the participants worked collaboratively to produce an outline and a transcript for their podcasts, and recorded and re-recorded their own episodes. All these active learning processes increased their self-confidence as independent speakers of the language. Also, learners' motivation to practice their spoken language increased because they were allowed to do it independently in a free environment without being frightened of being criticized or evaluated by others. They had the chance to prepare for their podcast episodes, and rehearse their

transcripts many times and record, listen to themselves and edit their recordings. This helped them to be more confident and motivated speakers. This is consistent with the results reached by Rahmasari et.al. (2021) and Nuraeni (2021) who affirmed that students were motivated to learn speaking and became more confident speakers and podcasters when they were given the chance to plan for, and produce their own podcasts in a safe and stress-free environment.

Furthermore, the development of the study group's oral performance skills and the increase in their motivation to participate in oral tasks was because they had an audience targeted throughout the introduction of their podcasts. This encouraged and motivated them to search for interesting and important topics that attract a huge number of audience. In addition, they exerted a lot of effort to create an effective podcast that attract more audience to subscribe. This led them to listen to a lot of podcasts for many times, record and edit their episodes for many times to get the most effective podcast with accurate, fluent, and native-like language. This was emphasized by Al-Ahdal and Alkhalaf (2020) who found out that podcasting significantly led to the development of students' oral abilities. The results of their study affirmed that engagement of students in making their own recordings reinforced their participation in a number of listening and speech activities. In addition, students' attempt to attract huge audiences in other areas of the world was a powerful motivation for them to make creative and fluent podcasts.

Regarding oral communication apprehension, previous research (e.g., Hardi, 2017) affirmed that this problem results from lack of vocabulary, lack of motivation, and lack of practice in using the language. The use of student-generated podcasts, in the current study, contributed to the elimination of these factors by engaging participants in practicing the language in an active and productive way. Also, they were motivated by having the freedom to select their own topics, resources, and the appropriate place and time to produce their own podcasts, without being afraid of being criticized by others or directly evaluated by the instructor. They were given the chance to speak naturally and freely, which is, as mentioned by Gumartifa and

Syahri (2021), an important factor in eliminating oral communication apprehension. In addition, Saarahwati (2020), in her study about speaking anxiety coping strategies, found out that one of the strategies students use to lower their speaking anxiety is recording themselves while speaking. So, building on this result, it can be said that having students record, revise and edit their own podcasts, helped in decreasing their oral communication apprehension and building up their confidence.

The study participants, when asked about the experience of making their own podcasts, reported that they benefited a lot from the experience; listening to a lot of native-like conversations in the podcasts, and practicing a lot for producing their own podcasts, as well as trying to imitate the native-like accent, all these things helped them to build up their confidence as speakers of English. In addition, they reported that listening to podcasts and trying to produce their own ones helped them with enhanced pronunciation and a lot new expressions and vocabulary items as well as grammatical structures. So, as mentioned in previous research, this would help them to be less anxious when asked to speak English in front of others. Some of their comments on the experience are:

Student 1

"Of course s it's very rich and useful, I learned a lot of new words and many expressions. I also learn the good pronunciation of many words my speaking and listening are better now"

Student 2

"Yes, surely my speaking skills improved a lot as when I listened to podcasts I try to extract new vocabulary and the right pronunciation of the words and how to link words together. Also, when I record the tasks, I repeat it many times to take care about wrongly pronounced words and also learned how to use anchor in recording".

Student 3

"I think this course helped me to be more like a native speaker. The audios and new expressions we learned are very new and making podcasts on our own was very nice to listen to ourselves and notice our pronunciation mistakes and correct them. I also feel more confident to speak English out loud".

Recommendations

1. EFL instructors should put into their consideration the strategies that can be used to lower students' oral communication apprehension because it affects their oral performance in the negative way.
2. Instructors have to provide a safe and fear-free environment that encourages EFL students to participate freely in conversations in the English class.
3. Technology should be incorporated in a better way in the teaching of listening and speaking.
4. Students should be involved in task and project-based speaking activities, because this will give them the opportunity for more practice, and will increase their motivation and authentic participation.
5. Instructors should allow students to select the topics they like to speak about in their speaking classes and encourage them to search and listen more about these topics.
6. Authentic teaching and learning materials should be incorporated into speaking courses introduced to EFL learners.
7. EFL students have to be provided with communicative task-based activities like role plays, problem solving, the production of audio and video programs, and other communicative activities that help them to practice the language in context in realistic situations.

Suggestions for further research

1. A study can be carried out to investigate the self-coping strategies EFL students can use to reduce their speaking anxiety.
2. A study can be conducted to find out the effect of using authentic listening materials on EFL students' listening and speaking skills.
3. The effect of student-generated podcasts on EFL learners' argumentative writing skills can be explored.

4. Conducting a study to find out the effect of student-generated podcasts on EFL learners' persuasive speaking and negotiation skills.
5. Investigating the effect of student-generated podcasts on EFL learners' critical and reflective thinking skills.
6. An e-learning program can be introduced for enhancing EFL college students' oral presentation skills and lowering their oral communication apprehension.

Conclusion

The aim of the current study was conducted to investigate the effect of a student-generated podcasting project on EFL student teachers' oral performance and lowering their oral communication apprehension. Data collection instruments included an oral performance test, a scoring rubric, and an oral communication apprehension scale. Results of the study showed that the study participants' oral performance (including idea generation, organization, vocabulary, grammar, fluency and pronunciation) enhanced as a result of introducing the study program. Their oral communication apprehension was enhanced as well.

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