MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY AND TRADE
HANOI UNIVERSITY OF INDUSTRY

NGUYEN HAI LINH

EXPLOITING ENGLISH PODCASTS AS LEAD-IN ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE NON-ENGLISH-MAJORED FRESHMEN'S INTEREST IN LEARNING ENGLISH

MASTER THESIS IN ENGLISH LINGUISTICS

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SUPERVISOR: Dr. Nguyen Thi Huong

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DECLARATION

I, Nguyen Hai Linh, declare that the minor thesis paper "**Exploiting English podcasts as lead-in activities to enhance non-English-majored freshmen's interest in learning English**" is my own work. It is submitted to the Faculty of Post-graduate Studies, Hanoi University of Industry for the Degree of Master in English Linguistics only and has not been published anywhere else.

Date: Hanoi, March 22nd, 2024

Author's signature

Nguyễn Hải Linh

ABSTRACT

Technological advancements consistently influence pedagogical approaches in the dynamic field of foreign language education. As technology increasingly becomes a fundamental component of learning a foreign language, it is essential to investigate and utilize novel methods. This study explores the impact of integrating podcasts as lead-in activities in English listening and speaking classes for non-English-majored freshmen at Hanoi University of Industry. Mixed-methods approach combining surveys and semi-structured interviews was carried out to gather comprehensive insights into students' interest in learning English, perceptions, and attitudes toward the integration of podcasts into English speaking and listening lessons. The survey component involved a group of 119 non-English major freshmen who were requested to assess their overall interest in learning English before and after the podcast integration. The findings revealed overwhelmingly positive experiences, with students expressing increased interest and engagement in learning English. The thematic content of podcasts and real-life conversations emerged as key contributors to enhanced English language learning experiences. The study also highlighted the role of podcasts in overcoming language challenges, promoting cultural exploration, and fostering a student-centric learning environment. Pedagogical implications include the importance of incorporating authentic materials, providing pedagogical support, promoting student-centric approaches, and integrating cultural dimensions into language learning. The research suggests that podcasts serve as a versatile and accessible tool to enrich language learning experiences, connecting classroom instruction with real-world communication.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Af	after
AMTB	Attitude/Motivation Test Battery
Be	before
EOP	English for Occupational Purposes
HaUI	Hanoi University of Industry
ICT	Information and Communication Technology

INTRODUCTION

1. Rationale

In today's globally interconnected society, where English has become an official international language, acquiring a foreign language is an essential part of any higher education (Crystal, 2003). However, non-English-majored students often face challenges in maintaining interest and motivation in learning English, leading to suboptimal language acquisition outcomes (Lamb, 2017). Gardner (1985) claims that many students perceive language learning as tedious and irrelevant to their chosen fields of study, resulting in disengagement and lackluster performance. As language educators, it is imperative to identify innovative and effective approaches to address these interest issues and promote active engagement among students.

Podcasts have witnessed an exponential rise in popularity as a form of digital media, providing diverse content on a wide array of subjects (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010). Integrating podcasts into language learning presents a unique opportunity to enhance students' interest and motivation in English (Abdulrahman, Basalama, & Widodo, 2018). Despite the great deal of research on podcasts and their potential, limited research has been conducted on exploiting podcasts as lead-in activities to increase students' interest, particularly in the context of non-English-majored freshmen. Thus, this research aims to bridge this gap by examining the use of podcasts as lead-in activities in English listening and speaking lessons for non-English-majored freshmen.

The concept of integrating authentic and meaningful materials into language education has been advocated in pedagogical literature (Nunan, 1989). Podcasts, being an authentic medium of communication, align with this

principle, providing opportunities for exposure to natural language use and diverse linguistic features (Brown, 2007). Moreover, podcasts' audio format allows for focused listening, promoting the development of critical listening skills, and improving learners' understanding of spoken English (Hew, 2009). By incorporating podcasts as lead-in activities, language instructors can create an engaging and interactive learning experience that fosters a sense of curiosity, enthusiasm, confidence, and better understanding of the lesson's main concepts among students (Shahid & Ali, 2017).

Almost every part of modern life, from business to leisure to education, has been touched by a form of information and communication technology (ICT) (Kern, 2006). According to Prime Minister of Vietnam (2008), there is a supportive legislative framework for the integration of ICT in education in Vietnam, and the country's ICT development is happening at an exponential rate. ICT tools in foreign language education, particularly podcasts which are easily accessible through mobile devices and computers, can be seamlessly integrated into language lessons, allowing students to access content at their convenience and pace. According to Zhang (2022), benefits from the autonomy in learning have been linked to increased motivation and self-efficacy, as students feel a sense of ownership in their language learning journey. By exploiting podcasts as lead-in activities, this research aims to promote active learning and self-directed language acquisition among non-English-majored freshmen.

Recently, podcasts have been exploited in listening and speaking lessons at Hanoi University of Industry (HaUI). However, the integration is predominantly for English-majored students, leaving non-English-majored students without access to this resource. It is the author's own desire to carry

out a study on the influences of podcasts in listening and speaking lessons within a non-English-majored environment.

By exploring the influence of podcasts on student interest, this study seeks to contribute to the advancement of teaching and learning listening and speaking skills to non-English-majored students at HaUI and promote effective and engaging foreign language learning experiences in higher education settings.

2. Aims and objectives of the study

The study was conducted to examine the influence of podcasts utilized in lead-in activities on non-English-majored students' interest in learning English. This leads to uncovering the extent to which podcasts as lead-in activities stimulate students' engagement and curiosity for learning English.

Moreover, this study was carried out with a view to investigating the perceptions and attitudes of non-English major students towards the utilization of podcasts as lead-in activities in English listening and speaking classes. The objective of this study is to collect student feedback on their podcast experiences and their perceptions of the medium's impact on their language-learning journey. Understanding students' viewpoints can provide useful insight into the effectiveness of podcast integration as well as any perceived limitations or benefits.

Ultimately, the study strives to foster an inclusive and engaging foreign language learning environment for non-English-majored freshmen. In an era where digital technologies are revolutionizing education, the goal is to harness the potential of podcasts as lead-in activities in English listening and speaking lessons.

3. Research questions

With a view to achieving the study's aims and objectives, the questions are raised as follows:

1. What are the perceptions and attitudes of non-English-majored students towards the integration of podcasts into lead-in activities in English listening and speaking lessons?

2. How does the integration of podcasts as lead-in activities in English listening and speaking lessons affect the interest of non-English-majored freshmen in learning English?

4. Scope of the study

Despite the widespread usage of podcasts in the teaching and learning of English around the globe, this research emphasizes exploring the influence of podcasts as lead-in activities on non-English-majored freshmen's interest in English listening and speaking skills.

This study is conducted within an academic semester (10 weeks) and involves the active participation of 119 non-English-majored freshmen enrolled at Hanoi University of Industry (HaUI). The participants are selected from various majors in four distinct classes. Among these classes, one is instructed by the primary researcher, while the remaining three are taught by experienced and enthusiastic colleagues of the researcher. To ensure a comprehensive representation of non-English-majored students' interests and backgrounds, the majors of students are diverse, including *Thermal Engineering Technology, Electrical and Electronic Engineering Technology, Control and Automation Engineering Technology, Electronic and Telecommunications Engineering Technology, Computer Networks and Data Communications,* and *Computer Engineering Technology*.

These majors share the same English Courses during the first and second year at HaUI, named Basic English for Electrical and Electronic Engineering. The English Courses at HaUI adopt a blended learning approach, where 35 out of 75 periods focuses on vocabulary, grammar, reading, and writing components, and is delivered online through the university's English learning website, known as EOP (English for Occupational Purposes). The remaining 40 periods concentrate on speaking and listening skills and are conducted offline, in face-to-face classroom settings.

The study investigates the integration of podcasts solely as lead-in activities in English listening and speaking lessons. While other digital tools and technologies may contribute to language learning, the research focuses exclusively on the use of podcasts as a supplementary resource.

5. Significance of the study

The study holds significant implications for foreign language education. By investigating the impact of podcast integration on non-English-majored freshmen's interest, the findings of the research can guide HaUI's language educators in designing dynamic and interactive language lessons that cater to students' diverse interests and preferences, which may foster a more inclusive and personalized learning environment.

Moreover, by understanding the freshmen's attitudes and perceptions, the research can highlight the potential of technology integration in foreign language education. As a result, podcasts are recognized as a valuable tool for promoting innovative and student-centered language instruction.

The research's practical implications extend to non-English-majored freshmen, directly enhancing their language learning experiences. The findings have the potential to translate into tangible benefits for these students, including

heightened language proficiency, increased confidence, and improved communication skills. By uncovering the effectiveness of podcast integration as lead-in activities, students stand to gain a more engaging and interactive approach to English language learning. This, in turn, may contribute to their overall academic success and empower them with practical language skills that extend beyond the classroom setting.

The significance of this study lies in its unique focus on integrating podcasts as lead-in activities within language education, a novel approach not extensively explored in previous research. While previous studies have explored the use of podcasts in language education, the research specifically focuses on integrating podcasts as lead-in activities. This approach aims to cultivate engagement among students right from the onset of the lesson. By investigating the effectiveness of podcast in lead-in activities, this study provides novel perspectives on exploiting digital tools to improve students' interest in the classroom, thereby adding fresh insights to the field of language education and pedagogy.

6. Structure of the thesis

The thesis is organized into five sections:

Introduction presents the background and context for the study, such as the rationale, aims, research questions, scope, significance of the study, and overall structure of the thesis.

Chapter 1 Literature Review covers a review of theoretical background of interest and podcasts in language learning, and lead-in activities.

Chapter 2 Research Methodology demonstrates the detailed methodology used in the research including research context, research methods, data collection instruments, participants, data analysis and research procedures.

Chapter 3 Findings and Discussion reports and discusses the major findings of the study.

Conclusion acknowledges the implications and limitations of the study and suggests ideas for future research.

CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. LEARNERS' INTEREST IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

1.1.1. Definition of interest in foreign language learning

Interest is a multifaceted construct that holds significant importance in the field of language learning, especially in foreign language learning (Dörnyei, 2000). Researchers have approached the definition of interest from various angles which emphasize its role as a foundational element of interest and its positive influence on the learning process.

Dewey (1913) characterizes interest as a state of deep engagement or absorption in an activity, object, or topic. Meanwhile, Pintrich (1989) and Schiefele (1991) define interest as a positive emotional disposition toward specific subjects, topics, or learning activities. In the context of their research, interest is often manifested as happiness and eagerness when learners are actively involved in language-related tasks.

Specifically, according to Keller (2010), interest can be regarded as one of the primary components of motivation. It is characterized as a positive response to stimuli, rooted in existing cognitive structures, which arouses and sustains learners' curiosity. In essence, interest reflects learners' innate desire to engage with and acquire knowledge of the target language. This curiosity often translates into a heightened eagerness to communicate, share information, and actively participate in language learning activities.

Furthermore, Keller (2010) also highlights that interest flourishes when learners become self-directed and autonomous in their language learning journeys. Learners who possess the agency to set their own learning objectives, select personalized strategies for achieving these goals, and evaluate their progress tend to exhibit a strong inclination to engage in communication. They

are driven by a desire to learn, inquire, and interact, which makes meaningful contributions to their language development.

Various scholars have offered nuanced perspectives on interest in language learning. Hidi and Renninger (2006) identify interest as a distinctive motivational variable and psychological state that emerges during interactions between individuals and objects or activities that captivate their attention. This interaction is marked by a willingness to engage deeply with a particular object or activity that signifies the learner's investment in the learning process.

Moreover, Hidi and Baird (1986) emphasize the pivotal role of interest in the learning context. They contend that when students lack interest, they may struggle to maintain focus and active participation in reading and learning activities. Conversely, when interest is present, students are more likely to display behaviors conducive to effective learning, such as sustained attention, heightened engagement, and active involvement in various learning tasks.

In short, interest in language learning can be characterized as a positive emotional state that encompasses engagement, satisfaction, happiness, and a willingness to invest time and effort in the learning process, which was examined in the context of this research. Interest plays a fundamental role in shaping learners' engagement and performance, as students are more likely to excel and participate actively when their interest is piqued. Consequently, understanding and nurturing interest in language learning are crucial elements in promoting effective and meaningful language acquisition.

1.1.2. Types and aspects of interest

Podcasts, being a flexible medium, exist in different formats to suit different interests and goals. Gaining a comprehensive understanding of the many categories of podcasts is essential for accurately assessing their potential

in the field of language instruction.

Situational and individual interest

Interest in language learning is often categorized into situational and individual interest, each with distinct characteristics (Krapp, 2002). Situational interest arises in response to environmental or textual stimuli within the learning context. It is transient and is triggered by specific conditions or stimuli. Situational interest can be nurtured by factors in the learning environment, such as engaging teaching materials or interactive activities, and may endure for a substantial duration (Hidi & Renninger, 2006; Schiefele, 1991).

In contrast, individual interest represents a more enduring inclination to engage with language learning activities or objects. It is grounded in personal characteristics, encompassing knowledge, positive emotions, and values (Krapp, 2002). Individual interest develops over time and is often influenced by prior situational interests. This form of interest is deeply intertwined with learners' goals and values, making it a powerful driving force for sustained engagement in language learning (Hidi & Renninger, 2006).

Cognitive and affective aspects

Interest in language learning comprises cognitive and affective dimensions, both of which play pivotal roles in shaping learners' experiences and motivations (Krapp, 2002).

The cognitive aspect of interest relates to personal values and goals in language learning. Learners are more likely to develop a strong interest when they perceive the topic, object, or activity as personally beneficial and satisfying (Krapp, 2002). Cognitive interest thrives when learners find value and relevance in their language learning pursuits. Conversely, if learners

perceive no tangible benefits or satisfaction in their language learning experiences, their interest may diminish or wane.

The affective aspect of interest centers on emotions, personal experiences, and attitudes towards language learning (Krapp, 2002). This dimension underscores the role of feelings and attitudes in shaping learners' interest. Positive experiences, supportive interactions with influential figures like parents, teachers, and friends, and a sense of belonging to a language learning community can significantly contribute to the development and sustenance of affective interest. The affective aspect often holds great control in cultivating and maintaining learners' interest in language learning activities.

Interest in language learning manifests in situational and individual forms, with the former arising in response to immediate stimuli and the latter reflecting enduring personal engagement. The cognitive aspect of interest is grounded in personal values and satisfaction, while the affective aspect is linked to emotions, experiences, and social interactions. Since the research examined sustained changes in students' interest levels before and after the podcast intervention, which suggests a situational change in interest based on a specific intervention (integration of podcasts), the research was decided to incorporate both situational and individual interest to provide a comprehensive understanding of how the podcast intervention in lead-in activities impacted students' interest in learning English.

1.1.3. Factors affecting students' interest in foreign language learning

Interest is a fundamental element influencing students' engagement and motivation in the process of learning a foreign language. There have been some studies on the factors that influence students' desire to learn a foreign language. Some factors taken into consideration by several researchers are language level,

learner level, learning situation, prior knowledge, textual features, personality attributes, attitudes, learning styles, and the role of teachers.

Dörnyei (2000) emphasized the significance of language level, learner level, and learning situation in shaping students' interest in language learning. Language learners at different proficiency levels may have varying levels of interest, and the learning environment can either enhance or diminish this interest. Understanding and adapting to learners' specific needs and the context of their language learning can influence their interest positively.

In addition, Williams and Burden (1997) distinguished between internal and external factors affecting interest in language learning. Internal factors encompass individual attributes such as personality traits, attitudes, and learning styles. Students who exhibit flexibility, self-confidence, and positive attitudes tend to have higher interest levels (Le & Le, 2022). On the other hand, external factors involve classroom dynamics, teaching methods, and materials. Ryan and Deci (2017) argued that classrooms fostering student autonomy and choice increase intrinsic motivation and situational interest.

Several scholars have examined the influence of prior knowledge and textual features on interest (Alexander & Jetton, 1996; Hidi, 1990; Kintsch, 1980). Students' prior knowledge affects interest levels, with moderate amounts of knowledge enhancing interest, while too much or too little prior knowledge may decrease it. Texts that are well-written, interesting, concrete, and vivid tend to increase learning and maintain interest (Schraw, 1997). Unexpected information and engaging text structures also contribute to arousing and sustaining interest.

Students' personality attributes play a crucial role in their language learning journey. Various personality traits, such as extroversion, self-

confidence, passivity, and independence, influence learners' engagement and success (Dewey, 1913). Students with more flexible characteristics tend to have greater chances of success and exhibit higher levels of interest.

The relationship between attitudes and interest in language learning is widely acknowledged (Le & Le, 2022; Alexander & Wade, 2000; McWhaw & Abrami, 2001). Favorable attitudes toward the foreign language lead to increased attentiveness and achievement in the classroom. When students are interested in learning activities, they are more likely to be attentive, active, and engaged in their learning experiences.

Students' diverse learning styles influence their interest in language learning. Recognizing and accommodating these styles can enhance motivation (Dewey, 1913). Allowing students to choose their preferred learning styles and adapting learning materials accordingly can foster interest in the learning process.

Teachers play a pivotal role in determining the effectiveness of language learning (Nuttal, 1982). They provide suitable materials, create engaging learning activities, facilitate comprehension, and offer guidance. A teacher's ability to organize, observe, provide feedback, and prompt students significantly influences their interest and motivation.

Interest in language learning is influenced by a dynamic interplay of internal and external factors, including learner characteristics, classroom dynamics, attitudes, prior knowledge, and teaching methods. Paying attention to these factors can contribute to creating a more engaging and motivating language learning environment.

1.2. LEAD-IN ACTIVITY

1.2.1. Definitions and purposes of lead-in activities

Lead-in activities, positioned at the threshold of pedagogic interactions, have garnered substantial attention for their role in orchestrating engaging and motivational learning experiences. As scholars examine the intricacies of effective classroom teaching, the concept of lead-in activities has emerged as a strategic approach to initiating meaningful connections between educators, students, and the content about to be explored (Liu & He, 2020; Qin & Wang, 2021).

The essence of lead-in activities lies in their function as a pedagogic tool employed to "awaken" students within the first few minutes of a lesson, thereby cultivating a fertile ground for subsequent learning endeavors (Qin & Wang, 2021). Besides, Arendas (1998) characterizes lead-in activities as techniques wielded by educators to prepare students for upcoming content and establish communicative links that bridge learners and the subject matter. Additionally, Turney (1975) emphasizes the primacy of attracting students' attention and nurturing their eagerness to learn at the outset, which aligns with the belief that a robust beginning is foundational for successful classroom teaching (Liu & He, 2020).

The multifaceted purposes of lead-in activities encompass a spectrum of pedagogic intentions. Drawing from Turney's (1975) seminal work, lead-in activities serve functions such as gaining attention, arousing motivation, setting teaching targets, structuring the learning process, and facilitating cognitive links. These functions collectively contribute to students' psychological preparation, enabling them to navigate the learning journey with an orientation toward active engagement and understanding.

Scholars and educators collectively recognize the pivotal role of lead-in activities in cultivating an environment conducive to effective teaching and learning. Cooper (1992) underscores that the ultimate aim of lead-in activities is to stimulate students' interest and enthusiasm for learning, creating a trajectory toward meaningful class participation. Liu and He (2020) consolidates prior research, emphasizing that a successful lead-in activity should exhibit attributes of being interesting, relevant, student-centered, concise, authentic, and closely intertwined with students' everyday lives.

This research follows the definition of lead-in activities provided by Arendas (1998) and the purpose of lead-in activities mentioned by Cooper (1992), which refer the strategies to prepare students for subsequent content and establish communicative connections to connect learners with the subject matter and to improve students' interest in learning. Incorporating these activities into classroom practices is widely acknowledged as a gateway to set the tone for impactful learning experiences. By creating an engaging, captivating, and anticipatory atmosphere, educators lay the foundation for students' active involvement, curiosity, and motivation.

1.2.2. Role of lead-in activities in foreign language education

Lead-in activities, an essential part of effective teaching practices, play a crucial role in creating dynamic and engaging learning environments within the field of education. Multiple scholars and practitioners (Cooper, 1992; Turney, 1975; Slavin, 2004) recognize that a well-organized and carefully implemented lead-in activity establishes the foundation for a series of favorable results that go beyond mere involvement. Table 1.1 below is a synthesis of concepts and ideas from the studies of various authors that are Cooper (1992), Liu and He (2020), Turney (1975), and Slavin (2004).

Table 1.1: The multifaceted role of lead-in activities in foreign language
education

Aspects	Role of Lead-in Activities in Foreign Language Education
Stimulating interest and engagement	• stimulate students' interest and curiosity • ignite enthusiasm for learning and active participation
Creating a supportive learning atmosphere	• create a conducive learning atmosphere • be student-centered, authentic, and connected to students' lives
Establishing cognitive bridges	• set teaching targets • structure the learning process • create a roadmap for comprehending new concepts
Nurturing curiosity and inquiry	• nurture students' curiosity • prompt them to inquire further into the subject matter • foster a mindset of active exploration and critical thinking

A key role of lead-in activities lies in their power to stimulate students' interest and curiosity from the outset of a lesson. Cooper (1992) underscores that the ultimate goal of lead-in activities is to ignite students' enthusiasm for learning and participation. This initial engagement serves as a gateway to

channel students' cognitive and affective energies toward the subject matter, in order to prime them for active involvement in subsequent learning activities.

Moreover, an effective lead-in activity contributes to the creation of a conducive learning atmosphere. As noted by Liu and He (2020), a well-designed lead-in is characterized by attributes such as being student-centered, authentic, and closely tied to students' lives. By aligning with learners' experiences and interests, lead-in activities foster an environment where students feel valued, fostering a sense of belonging and empowerment that transcends the lead-in itself.

Furthermore, the role of lead-in activities extends beyond immediate engagement, encompassing the establishment of cognitive bridges that facilitate learning transitions. Turney (1975) identified functions of lead-in activities that include setting teaching targets and structuring the learning process. These functions establish a cognitive roadmap that guides students through the journey of comprehending and internalizing new concepts, ensuring a seamless connection between prior knowledge and forthcoming content.

An effective lead-in activity also nurtures students' curiosity and prompts them to inquire further into the subject matter. Slavin (2004) highlights the importance of lead-in activities in attracting students' interest and prompting them to question, fostering an environment where curiosity serves as a catalyst for deeper exploration. This spirit of inquiry cultivates a mindset of active exploration and critical thinking.

Another role of lead-in activities in effective teaching extends beyond mere engagement, encompassing the realms of motivation, atmosphere creation, cognitive bridging, and curiosity cultivation. By carefully embedding

designed lead-in activities into teaching methods, instructors are able to utilize their capacity to establish a path of engaged involvement, purposeful investigation, and enduring comprehension.

1.2.3. Lead-in strategies in foreign language education

The dynamic landscape of effective teaching has prompted educators to explore a repertoire of lead-in strategies and guidelines, tailored to captivate students' attention, foster engagement, and establish a receptive platform for learning. The diversity of strategies and principles underscores the multifaceted nature of lead-in activities as a conduit for meaningful pedagogical interactions.

Situational lead-in emerges as a strategy to evoke authentic and situated learning experiences by mirroring real-life contexts within the classroom. Halliday's (1964) notion that language acquisition occurs through understanding behavioral situations finds resonance in the situational lead-in. This strategy immerses learners in relatable scenarios, fostering communicative competence and social interaction akin to real-life encounters.

In the information era, the integration of technology into lead-in activities has gained prominence. Multi-media lead-in harnesses the power of visual, auditory, and interactive media to create immersive and engaging preludes to lessons. Modern learners, accustomed to multimedia-rich environments, find resonance in this strategy, which not only captivates but also facilitates the internalization of abstract concepts (Liu & He, 2020).

Dialogue lead-in emerges as an interactive strategy, emphasizing student-student and student-teacher dialogues on relatable topics such as campus life, hobbies, and holidays. Facilitating conversational interactions, this strategy aligns with Gardner and Miller's (1999) perspective on promoting social interactions as a foundational aspect of language learning. By engaging

learners in authentic dialogues, educators create a platform for meaningful language use.

The role of revision lead-in lies in bridging students' past knowledge to the current lesson, fostering meaningful connections. Ausubel's (1960) emphasis on meaningful learning through connecting new knowledge to existing frameworks resonates in the revision lead-in. By revisiting prior concepts and contextualizing them with new content, educators facilitate comprehension and deepen conceptual understanding.

Question lead-in emerges as a versatile and prevalent strategy, fostering engagement through thought-provoking queries. Slavin (2004) posits that well-crafted questions prompt students to take the next cognitive step, instigating curiosity and inquiry. This strategy not only draws students into the learning process but also lays the foundation for subsequent content exploration.

Hot topics and storytelling lead-in strategies resonate with students' interests and imaginations. While hot topic lead-ins initiate discussions on contemporary issues, storytelling lead-ins evoke narrative contexts that intrigue and inspire learners (Turney, 1975). These strategies harness relevance and narrative to establish an emotional connection, thereby amplifying engagement.

Lead-in strategies underscore the diversity of approaches educators can employ to initiate captivating and purposeful learning experiences. As guidelines converge on the attributes of being interesting, relevant, student-centered, brief, authentic, and closely intertwined with students' lives, educators are equipped to craft lead-in activities that resonate with learners' diverse needs and foster holistic engagement.

1.3. TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION IN ENGLISH EDUCATION

1.3.1. English education and technology integration

The intersection of technology and education has catalyzed transformative shifts in teaching and learning methodologies, particularly in the domain of English language education. English education, a cornerstone of global communication and cross-cultural exchange, has witnessed the assimilation of technology to enhance pedagogical practices, foster learner engagement, and cultivate language proficiency.

English education stands at the forefront of contemporary education systems, driven by the globalized nature of communication and the recognition of English as a lingua franca. The multifaceted role of English encompasses not only linguistic competence but also cultural sensitivity, intercultural communication, and cross-border collaboration. Proficiency in English has become a prerequisite for academic pursuits, career advancement, and participation in an interconnected world (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002).

The incorporation of technology in English education reflects an evolving pedagogical landscape. Traditional paradigms of rote memorization and passive knowledge consumption are being supplanted by interactive, communicative, and student-centered approaches. Technological interventions offer avenues to align English language pedagogy with the principles of communicative language teaching (CLT), emphasizing contextualized language use, collaborative learning, and real-life communication (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Technology bridges geographical divides, democratizing access to a plethora of authentic English resources. Online databases, multimedia platforms, e-books, and language learning applications provide learners with

immersive language experiences, ranging from authentic audiovisual content to interactive language exercises. The global accessibility transcends physical limitations, enabling learners to engage with diverse language inputs and cultural contexts (Warschauer, 1998).

The integration of technology into English education presents a dual landscape of opportunities and challenges. On one hand, technology offers adaptive learning environments, personalized learning pathways, instant feedback mechanisms, and interactive platforms that mirror real-life language use. On the other hand, challenges encompass issues of digital equity, the need for educator capacity building, and the judicious integration of technology to complement rather than replace pedagogical expertise (Levy & Stockwell, 2006).

The integration of technology in English education reflects a symbiotic relationship between language learning and the digital age. As English education seeks to empower learners with communicative competence and global citizenship, the infusion of technology emerges as a potent tool to augment pedagogical efficacy and engage students in meaningful language exploration.

1.3.2. Roles of technology in English language education

The confluence of technology and English education has ushered in a new era of language learning, reshaping pedagogical landscapes with innovative paradigms focused on engagement and personalized learning (Lien, 2022). The multifaceted role of technology within English education encompasses a diverse range of functions, synergistically enhancing language acquisition, communication skills, and cultural awareness.

The utilization of multimedia technology presents a dynamic and

multimodal avenue for language acquisition, accommodating varied learning preferences and cognitive styles. Platforms enriched with augmented reality, interactive interfaces, and online language laboratories afford learners the opportunity to engage with authentic audiovisual content, immersing themselves in genuine language contexts and diverse linguistic registers (Chapelle, 2001). Multisensory interactions bolster critical skills like vocabulary acquisition, listening comprehension, and accurate pronunciation.

Further extending the reach of technology, learners can now partake in genuine cross-cultural communication thanks to the dissolution of geographical boundaries. Virtual exchange initiatives, video conferencing, and digital discussion forums enable learners to engage in dialogues with English speakers of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, nurturing not only their linguistic abilities but also their intercultural competence (Thorne, 2003).

In this context, technology takes on a personal touch, crafting adaptive learning environments that cater to individual learning styles, progress, and areas of improvement. Leveraging artificial intelligence and data analytics, these platforms present tailored content, exercises, and feedback, creating a learning experience that aligns with learners' unique needs and pace (Oxford, 2017).

The integration of technology also empowers learners to navigate their language learning journey autonomously. Online resources, mobile apps, and learning platforms provide tools for setting goals, tracking progress, and engaging in self-directed learning beyond classroom confines (Kul, 2023). These benefits gradually cultivate autonomy, lifelong learning skills, and metacognitive strategies that extend well beyond language education (Vygotsky, 1978).

However, the promise of technology is accompanied by challenges. Digital divides and the lure of technological distractions necessitate a balanced approach to their integration. Educators play a crucial role in fostering digital literacy, critical thinking, and the discernment of credible online resources, empowering students to navigate the digital realm responsibly (Lien, 2022).

Ultimately, technology isn't a mere adjunct but a transformative catalyst, redefining language learning. With technology interwoven into pedagogy, educators wield a dynamic tool to foster linguistic proficiency, intercultural adeptness, and the digital competencies demanded by a globalized world.

1.4. PODCASTS

1.4.1. Definitions of podcasts

The digital age has heralded a transformation in the way information is disseminated and consumed, giving rise to innovative mediums such as podcasts. Podcasts, a portmanteau of "iPod" and "broadcast," have emerged as a versatile and engaging medium for sharing audio content across diverse genres, including education, entertainment, news, and storytelling (Drew, 2017).

Podcasts are audio recordings that can be streamed or downloaded from the internet, enabling listeners to access content at their convenience. Unlike traditional radio broadcasts, podcasts provide an on-demand listening experience, allowing users to subscribe to specific series or episodes. According to Llinares and Berry (2018), this democratization of broadcasting empowers individuals to create, curate, and consume content aligned with their interests.

Podcasts encompass a diverse range of formats, spanning from narrative storytelling and interviews to panel discussions and educational lectures.

Frequently, a serialized structure is employed, wherein episodes are released at regular intervals to maintain audience interest and foster a feeling of anticipation. The utilization of a serialized format promotes an engaging auditory experience and possesses the potential to function as a highly effective instrument for prolonged language immersion.

Within the field of education, podcasts offer an innovative avenue for disseminating educational content and fostering self-directed learning. Educational podcasts span diverse subjects and disciplines, catering to learners of all ages and backgrounds. According to Godwin-Jones (2011), the auditory characteristics of individuals enable them to engage in active listening, enhance comprehension, and foster the growth of critical thinking abilities.

Podcasts have been recognized as a valuable resource within language learning environments. Podcasts can be utilized by language learners as a means to augment their listening comprehension, broaden their vocabulary, refine their pronunciation, and acquaint themselves with genuine language usage across various contexts. Rachmaniputri et al. (2021) point out that the diversity of accents, linguistic registers, and cultural nuances presented in podcasts contributes to well-rounded language proficiency.

Podcasts, as conceptualized by Lafferty and Walch (2006), represent a dynamic and versatile form of digital media. The audio content formats within this category span a broad range, including narrative storytelling, interviews, informative lectures, and panel discussions. Lafferty and Walch assert that podcasts surpass the constraints of conventional broadcasting by affording listeners the ability to access content according to their preferences, thereby facilitating a customized and readily available learning encounter. In the present context, podcasts exhibit a distinctive serialized format, wherein

episodes are released at regular intervals to maintain audience involvement and cultivate a sense of anticipation (Lafferty & Walch, 2006).

Lazzari (2009) offers additional insights into the comprehension of podcasts. According to Lazzari, podcasts have a broader scope than just audio content, as they are increasingly being recognized as a pedagogical tool that can bring about transformative changes in higher education. In this particular context, podcasts serve as a medium for effectively distributing educational content through innovative means. Lazzari highlights that podcasts are not just a one-way communication medium; they empower educators to engage learners in immersive auditory experiences that facilitate active listening and critical thinking. According to Lazzari (2009), the integration of podcasts in higher education enables instructors to establish a learner-central atmosphere that surpasses the confines of conventional classrooms, thereby augmenting students' competitive agency.

While a variety of definitions and purposes of podcasts in educational context have been suggested, this paper uses the definition suggested by Rachmaniputri et al. (2021) who saw it as a tool to enhance learners' listening comprehension, expand their vocabulary, improve their pronunciation, and familiarize themselves with authentic language usage in different situations. The inclusion of a wide range of accents, linguistic and cultural nuances in podcasts plays a significant role in fostering comprehensive linguistic skills.

1.4.2. Types of podcasts

Podcasts, as a versatile medium, manifest in various forms that cater to diverse preferences and objectives. Understanding the different types of podcasts is crucial for contextualizing their potential in language education.

One prevalent genre is educational podcasts that delve into academic subjects, personal growth, and skill enhancement. As stated by Lazzari (2009), these podcasts offer structured content, often resembling traditional lectures or instructional materials. Educational podcasts hold promise in language education as they provide learners with structured language input and subject-specific knowledge.

Another significant category is conversational podcasts characterized by informal dialogues and interviews. These podcasts replicate genuine spoken interactions, providing exposure to colloquialisms, varied speech patterns, and authentic language use. Through this immersive approach, conversational podcasts bolster listening comprehension and familiarize learners with diverse linguistic nuances (Herrera & Ruiz, 2020).

Language Learning and Teaching Podcasts revolve around language instruction, grammar elucidation, and pronunciation guidance. Directly aligned with language education goals, these podcasts provide learners with targeted language input and pedagogical insights (Báez & Showalter, 2021).

Tse and Lo (2020) suggest a type of podcast called personal development podcasts, which concentrate on self-improvement, motivation, and life skills. While not exclusively language-oriented, these podcasts indirectly contribute to language education by nurturing positive mindsets, enhancing motivation, and encouraging continuous engagement with the language.

Podcasts available on the web can generally be classified into two principal categories: "radio podcasts" and "independent podcasts" (Man, 2006). Radio podcasts, often originating from established broadcasters like the BBC and RTHK, involve the transformation of existing radio programs into digital audio formats. These podcasts extend the reach of traditional

broadcasting by allowing audiences to engage with content at their convenience. On the other hand, independent podcasts, produced by individuals and organizations, offer a platform for diverse voices and topics (Man, 2006). They are not only reflective of the democratization of media but also present an abundance of options tailored to specific interests and preferences.

Within the realm of language education, the concept of "authentic podcasts" has gained prominence (Stanley, 2005). These podcasts, which are not specifically designed for language learners, encompass a wide range of topics and often involve real-world conversations, interviews, and discussions. Authentic podcasts are seen as valuable resources for enhancing language skills, offering learners exposure to natural language use, different accents, and idiomatic expressions. Despite their potential challenges for novice learners, authentic podcasts provide an authentic context for language acquisition.

In the educational context, podcasts have been further classified based on their intended purposes. Harris and Park (2008) delineate four key categories: teaching-driven, service-driven, marketing-driven, and technology-driven. Teaching-driven podcasts encompass those that enhance classroom instruction, offering summaries of lectures and supplementary academic content (Harris & Park, 2008). Service-driven podcasts act as informational resources for students, families, and the wider community, providing insights into institutional policies and events. Marketing-driven podcasts serve as promotional tools, offering prospective students a glimpse into campus life and academic offerings. Finally, technology-driven podcasts are concerned with the utilization of technology in pedagogical practices (Harris & Park, 2008).

The diversity of podcast types provides educators with a wealth of options for enriching language learning and communication skills. While authentic podcasts offer exposure to real-world language use, educational podcasts tailored to teaching methodologies provide structured learning opportunities. Moreover, the proliferation of podcasts across various domains underscores their potential to enhance interdisciplinary understanding and critical thinking.

1.4.3. Advantages and disadvantages of using podcasts in foreign language education

1.4.3.1. Advantages

Podcasts have gained significant attention as a valuable tool in language learning and teaching. The advantages of podcasts in fostering an engaging and effective language learning environment have been the focus of the studies conducted by several researchers (e.g., Ashton & Brookes, 2011; Chinnery, 2006; Rachmaniputri et al., 2021; Indahsari, 2020).

Table 1.2: Advantages of podcasts in foreign language education

Aspects	Advantages of Podcasts in Foreign Language Education
Flexibility and accessibility	● anytime, anywhere access for flexible learning schedules
Authentic audio materials	● features authentic conversations, exposing learners to diverse language use
Diverse language input	● offers a wide range of topics, genres, and speakers for comprehensive language

	exposure
Listening skills	• enhances listening comprehension and pronunciation through regular engagement
Supplementary role in language classrooms	• serves as a valuable supplement to traditional teaching methods, enhancing overall language learning experience
Sustained motivation through engaging formats	• captures attention with dynamic and immersive formats, sustaining motivation

Table 1.2 is a synthesis of concepts and theories from the studies of various authors that are Ashton and Brookes (2011), Chinnery (2006), Rachmaniputri et al. (2021), O'Bryan and Hegelheimer (2007), Ducate and Lomicka (2009), Indahsari (2020).

Podcasts provide learners with the flexibility to access language content anytime, anywhere, making them particularly suitable for students with varied schedules and learning preferences. As Ashton and Brookes (2011) note, this accessibility allows learners to engage in language practice during their commute, exercise routines, or other daily activities, thereby maximizing the use of idle time for language learning.

Podcasts often feature authentic audio materials, such as natural conversations, interviews, and real-world discussions, which expose learners to diverse accents, vocabulary, and language registers (Chinnery, 2006). This exposure enhances learners' listening comprehension skills by familiarizing

them with genuine language use in real-life contexts, contributing to improved overall language proficiency (McCreary et al., 1979).

Podcasts offer a wide range of topics, genres, and speakers, giving learners exposure to diverse language input. This exposure not only enriches learners' vocabulary but also exposes them to different linguistic structures and discourse patterns, contributing to the development of well-rounded language skills (Rachmaniputri et al., 2021).

Regular engagement with podcasts improves learners' listening comprehension skills by training them to decode spoken language quickly and accurately (Chinnery, 2006). Additionally, repeated exposure to authentic pronunciation models contributes to improved pronunciation and intonation (O'Bryan & Hegelheimer, 2007), facilitating more effective communication in spoken English.

Podcasts can serve as valuable supplementary resources in language classrooms, complementing traditional teaching methods. As Ducate and Lomicka (2009) emphasize, incorporating podcasts into lessons provides students with additional opportunities for exposure to language input beyond the classroom, enhancing their overall language learning experience.

The dynamic and immersive nature of podcasts captures learners' attention and maintains their interest, which is crucial for sustaining motivation in language learning (Chinnery, 2006). The engaging format of podcasts, often featuring storytelling, interviews, and discussions, keeps learners motivated and invested in their language learning journey (Indahsari, 2020).

1.4.3.2. Disadvantages

While podcasts present various benefits as a language learning tool, it is crucial to acknowledge the potential drawbacks they might entail. This section

provides an overview of the challenges and limitations that arise when incorporating podcasts into language learning. It specifically examines how these drawbacks may impact the level of interest among non-English major freshmen in developing their English listening and speaking abilities.

Podcasts predominantly disseminate auditory material, resulting in a potential absence of visual context. According to Kessler (2013), learners may encounter difficulties in comprehending the context, tone, and nonverbal cues that are essential for achieving comprehensive understanding. The absence of visual aids may present difficulties for students, particularly those with lower English language proficiency.

The auditory fidelity of podcasts exhibits considerable variability, thereby exerting an influence on the holistic auditory engagement. The presence of substandard audio quality, characterized by the inclusion of extraneous background noise, indistinct pronunciation, or technical malfunctions, has the potential to impede learners' ability to comprehend and maintain their motivation (Indahsari, 2020). The potential impact of this variability on students' interest in utilizing podcasts for language acquisition warrants consideration.

Podcasts frequently showcase a diverse range of accents, dialects, and speaking styles. The potential advantages of being exposed to a variety of language usage are counterbalanced by the potential difficulties that learners may encounter in comprehending accents or dialects that are unfamiliar to them. These challenges can have a negative impact on learners' self-assurance and motivation to utilize podcasts as a language learning tool (Chinnery, 2006).

Listening to podcasts requires learners to process spoken language in real time, which can be cognitively demanding (Ashton & Brookes, 2011). Learners

may struggle with processing complex sentences, identifying key information, and maintaining concentration, potentially leading to frustration and reduced interest.

1.4.4. Criteria for the selection of podcasts

In the pursuit of enhancing language learning experiences, the integration of innovative resources like podcasts has gained prominence. Particularly relevant to this research is the exploration of criteria for selecting podcasts as lead-in activities in English listening and speaking lessons, with a specific emphasis on fostering interest among non-English-majored freshmen. Scholars have contributed insights into the selection process, emphasizing the need to consider pedagogical objectives, learner characteristics, and content suitability.

Martinez (2002) underscores the importance of aligning authentic materials, including podcasts, with the intended learning objectives. When selecting podcasts as lead-in activities, educators must ensure that the content corresponds to the themes and topics covered in subsequent lessons. This alignment not only establishes a coherent learning trajectory but also enhances students' understanding and engagement with the material.

Spelleri (2002) highlights the significance of selecting podcasts that cater to the interests and proficiency levels of learners. In the context of non-English-majored freshmen, it becomes essential to choose podcasts that resonate with their diverse backgrounds and fields of study. Engaging content that is relevant to their academic pursuits can serve as a motivational tool, piquing their curiosity and enthusiasm for English language learning.

Dickinson's (2006) checklist covers a range of evaluation criteria, including meaningful language input, flexibility, and authenticity. In the

context of this research, authenticity becomes paramount. Selecting podcasts that present real-world language use, situational contexts, and authentic accents can enhance students' exposure to the nuances of spoken English. This aligns with the overarching goal of enhancing their listening and speaking skills.

To effectively exploit podcasts as lead-in activities, it's essential to consider diverse learning styles and preferences. Tomlinson (1998) advocates for materials that accommodate individual learning needs. When selecting podcasts, educators should seek variety in format, pacing, and interactive elements, catering to visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners alike. This diverse approach ensures that students connect with the material in ways that resonate with their preferred learning modalities.

Given the digital nature of podcasts, their integration inherently involves technology. Gardner and Miller (1999) highlight the importance of considering technology integration in materials. For non-English-majored freshmen, this integration not only enhances their digital literacy but also reinforces crucial communication skills in a modern context. Selecting podcasts with clear audio quality, engaging visuals, and interactive elements can enhance the overall learning experience.

In conclusion, up to now, far too little attention has been paid to the integration of podcasts as lead-in activities despite the great deal of research on podcasts and their potential. Besides, the selection of podcasts as lead-in activities in English listening and speaking lessons presents a unique opportunity to enhance non-English-majored freshmen's interest in learning English. Therefore, the research was conducted to figure out the effective exploitation of podcasts to create engaging and effective language learning experiences.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

2.1. RESEARCH CONTEXT

The research is situated within the dynamic and diverse environment of Hanoi University of Industry (HaUI), a prominent institution of higher education and training in Vietnam. The university's commitment to offering comprehensive education to students from various academic backgrounds provides a rich and varied landscape for exploring foreign language learning methodologies.

The study specifically focuses on a group of non-English-majored freshmen, selected from a range of disciplines including *Thermal Engineering Technology, Electrical and Electronic Engineering Technology, Control and Automation Engineering Technology, Electronic and Telecommunications Engineering Technology, Computer Networks and Data Communications,* and *Computer Engineering Technology*. This cross-disciplinary selection ensures not only a diverse representation of students but also captures the perspectives of individuals with varying degrees of exposure to English language learning. Besides, these majors share the same English Courses during the first and second year at HaUI, named Basic English for Electrical and Electronic Engineering, which assures the alignment of academic materials delivered to students. By encompassing students from different majors, the research context becomes a microcosm of the broader university population to enable a comprehensive understanding of the impact of podcasts as lead-in activities on English language learning interest.

Conducted within the confines of a semester (10 weeks), the research temporally aligns with the university's educational calendar. This temporal boundary provides a structured timeframe for the study, which facilitates the

collection of data and analysis of outcomes within a defined period. This academic timeline offers a realistic context for investigating the influence of podcasts among non-English-majored freshmen.

The research context also centers around the classroom settings where English listening and speaking lessons take place. Within these instructional spaces, podcasts are strategically integrated as lead-in activities designed to stimulate students' interest before embarking on the core lesson content. The classrooms become laboratories for exploring the efficacy of this pedagogical approach, which highlights the interaction between technology and teaching methodologies.

2.2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a mixed-methods research approach to comprehensively investigate the influence of podcasts as lead-in activities on the interest of non-English-majored students in learning English. This approach aligns with Creswell's (2014) recommendation that mixed methods allow for a comprehensive exploration of research questions by incorporating both numerical data and rich contextual insights.

The quantitative component of the research involves the administration of a pre- and post-intervention survey to gather quantitative data on students' interest levels before and after exposure to podcasts. The survey instrument includes Likert-scale questions adapted from the attitude/motivation test battery – AMTB by Gardner (1985), with additional questions specific to podcast integration to assess the extent of the change in students' interest. By measuring interest quantitatively, this component aims to provide statistical evidence of the influence of podcasts on students' engagement in language learning.

In addition to quantitative data, this study incorporates a qualitative component through semi-structured interviews with a subset of participants. These interviews are designed to explore participants' perceptions and attitudes towards the utilization of podcasts as lead-in activities. Through the interviews, participants have an opportunity to share their experiences, thoughts, and reflections regarding the impact of podcast integration. Qualitative data is gathered on factors that contribute to changes in interest, offering a deeper understanding of their experiences (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

To ensure the uniform integration of podcasts as lead-in activities across the study's four classes, a collaborative approach is adopted. The primary researcher, responsible for one of these classes, collaborates closely with three experienced and enthusiastic colleagues, each assigned to instruct one of the remaining classes. The collaboration is supported through a series of structured professional meetings and information sharing.

The primary researcher and the collaborating teachers convene a number of professional meetings before the study's start. These gatherings function as crucial platforms for the interchange of knowledge, approaches to instruction, and goals of research. During these sessions, the primary researcher provides comprehensive guidance and resources to ensure a consistent approach to podcast integration.

As part of the collaboration, the primary researcher equips the collaborating teachers with a curated selection of podcasts, lead-in activities, and accompanying worksheets. Importantly, these materials are thoughtfully prepared to align with the study's specific research goals and learning objectives. This approach ensures consistency in the content and structure of the podcast-based lead-in activities across all classes.

To maintain consistency and rigor, the primary researcher assumes responsibility for podcast and material selection, including lead-in activities and worksheets. This centralization ensures that all classes are exposed to the same podcast content and follow identical lead-in procedures. By alleviating the burden of content development from the collaborating teachers, this approach minimizes potential variations in instructional content and enhances the study's internal validity.

This mixed-methods approach allows for a comprehensive exploration of the impact of podcasts as lead-in activities on non-English-majored students' interest in learning English, while also ensuring the consistency of the intervention across all classes.

2.3. PARTICIPANTS

The participants in this study comprise 119 non-English-majored freshmen enrolled at HaUI. This cohort is chosen through purposive sampling, aiming to capture a diverse range of academic disciplines (Patton, 2002). These students are purposefully selected from various majors to ensure a diverse representation of non-English-majored students' interests and backgrounds. The participants are drawn from four distinct classes. Among these four classes, one class is instructed by the primary researcher conducting this study. The remaining three classes are taught by experienced and enthusiastic colleagues of the primary researcher, who are actively collaborating in this research effort.

To provide a comprehensive representation of the participant pool, students are enrolled in various majors, including Thermal Engineering Technology, Electrical and Electronic Engineering Technology, Control and Automation Engineering Technology, Electronic and Telecommunications Engineering Technology, Computer Networks and Data Communications, and

Computer Engineering Technology. These majors share the same English Courses during the first and second year at HaUI, named Basic English for Electrical and Electronic Engineering.

This diverse mix of participants not only captures a wide range of academic interests but also reflects the various degrees of exposure to English language learning within the non-English-majored student population at HaUI. It is through the active involvement of these participants that this study seeks to explore the influence of podcasts as lead-in activities on their interest in learning English.

The participants are informed about the purpose, procedures, and potential benefits of the study, with the option to withdraw at any stage. Their confidentiality and privacy are maintained throughout the research process, and pseudonyms are used during data analysis and reporting to ensure anonymity (Creswell, 2014).

The sample size of 119 participants is in agreement with the recommended size for mixed-method research to ensure that both quantitative and qualitative components are adequately powered to address the research questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Table 2.1: Distribution of participants by gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent
Male	100	84.03	84.03
Female	119	15.97	15.97
Other	0	0	0
Total	119	100.0	100.0

2.4. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

2.4.1. Questionnaires

To gather quantitative data on students' interest levels before and after exposure to podcasts, pre- and post-intervention surveys are administered. The pre-intervention survey assesses the initial level of participants' interest in learning English. The pre-intervention survey assesses the initial level of participants' enthusiasm in acquiring proficiency in the English language. The post-intervention survey evaluates potential changes in interest after exposure to podcasts. The survey items are adapted from existing scales measuring interest in language learning by Gardner (1985), with additional questions specific to podcast integration. Participants indicate their level of agreement with statements by Strong Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), and Strongly Agree (SA). By employing this instrument, the study aims to provide statistical evidence of how podcasts influence students' interest in language learning through both the initial interest levels and shifts that occur after experiencing podcasts as lead-in activities.

2.4.2. Interview

In addition to quantitative data, the study incorporates a qualitative component through semi-structured interviews with 10 participants. These interviews are designed to explore participants' perceptions and attitudes towards the utilization of podcasts as lead-in activities in English listening and speaking classes. The interview protocol includes open-ended questions about participants' experiences with podcasts, their perceived impact on their interest in English on their language-learning journey, and suggestions for improvement. The interviews are audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis. The qualitative insights provide a deeper understanding of the factors

contributing to changes in interest.

The combination of these data collection instruments ensures a comprehensive exploration of the influence of podcasts on student interest while also offering valuable insights into the students' lived experiences and perspectives. This mixed-methods approach aligns with the research's aim to provide both numerical data and rich contextual insights, allowing for a multifaceted examination of the research questions.

2.5. DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

The study follows a sequential explanatory mixed-method design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The research procedures encompass survey administration, and semi-structured interviews, in which the quantitative phase precedes the qualitative phase.

Table 2.2: Data collection procedures

Phase	Procedure	Time	Description
Quantitative phase	Pre-intervention survey	25th August, 2023	Prepare pre-intervention survey questionnaires
		25th September, 2023	Pilot the questionnaires
		28th September, 2023	Deliver to participants and then collect responses
Podcast integration		2nd October – 30th November, 2023	Integrate podcasts into lead-in activities
Quantitative phase		25th August, 2023	Prepare post-intervention survey questionnaires

		27th November, 2023	Pilot the questionnaires
	Post-intervention Survey	30th November, 2023	Deliver to participants and then collect responses
Qualitative phase	Semi-structured interview	28th November, 2023	Prepare open-ended questions for the interview
		30th November, 2023	Pilot the interview
		1st – 2nd December, 2023	Interview students individually

Table 2.2 above indicates procedures that the author follows in the study. At the beginning of the academic semester, prior to the introduction of podcasts as lead-in activities, the pre-intervention survey is administered to all 119 participants across the four classes. Before that, the researcher prepares the survey questionnaires using Google Form and pilots the questionnaires to a specific group of students. The survey includes Likert-scale questions adapted from existing scales measuring interest in language learning by Gardner (1985), with additional questions specific to podcast integration to quantify the extent of their interest. Over the course of a semester, podcasts are systematically integrated as lead-in activities in all four classes. The primary researcher ensures that the content and structure of these podcast-based activities are consistent across all classes. Immediately following the ten-week intervention period, the post-intervention survey is administered to the same 119 participants. This survey is prepared and structured similarly to the pre-intervention survey and aims to measure any changes in students' interest in learning English after exposure to podcasts as lead-in activities.

In semi-structured interviews, 10 participants, representing a diverse range of majors and interest levels, are selected for semi-structured interviews. The interview protocol includes open-ended questions about participants' experiences with podcasts, and perceived impact on their interest in English. The interviews, which are in Vietnamese, are audio-recorded, transcribed, and translated into English by experienced and qualified translators for analysis. The interview protocol is piloted with a subset of participants to ensure clarity and relevance. These interviews provide an in-depth exploration of their perceptions and attitudes towards the utilization of podcasts in foreign language learning. Semi-structured interviews are conducted individually, allowing participants to express their experiences and thoughts freely. Open-ended questions are employed to elicit qualitative responses, enabling participants to share their reflections on the impact of podcast integration.

Prior to the commencement of the study, a series of professional meetings are convened among the primary researcher and the collaborating teachers. These meetings serve as vital forums for the exchange of information, instructional strategies, and research objectives. During these sessions, the primary researcher provides comprehensive guidance and resources to ensure a consistent approach to podcast integration. Collaborating teachers receive detailed instructions on the content and structure of the podcast-based lead-in activities. Throughout the ten-week podcast integration period, regular check-in meetings are held among the primary researcher and the collaborating teachers. These meetings provide opportunities for ongoing collaboration, addressing any challenges, sharing successes, and ensuring the uniform implementation of podcast activities. In short, the inclusion of professional meetings in the research enhances collaboration and consistency among the primary researcher and collaborating teachers, further contributing to the

study's internal validity.

2.6. DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis in this study involves a combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques, employing a convergent mixed-method design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The quantitative data from the pre- and post-intervention surveys are analyzed using descriptive statistics to examine any significant changes in participants' interest levels before and after exposure to podcasts. This statistical analysis provides insights into the overall impact of the podcast intervention on interest in learning English.

The qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews undergoes thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Initially, the author becomes familiar with the data by thoroughly reading English transcripts and highlighting key passages. The author then generates initial codes, labeling segments of the text that capture important concepts or ideas. These codes are organized into potential themes, which represent recurring patterns or topics within the data. The author reviews and refines these themes to ensure they accurately reflect the data and are distinct from one another. Finally, the findings are reported, with each theme accompanied by supporting quotes and examples.

CHAPTER 3: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. FINDINGS

3.1.1. Students' initial interest in learning English and experience in using podcasts

The initial phase of the study aimed to assess non-English-majored freshmen's attitudes towards learning English and their existing practices in utilizing language-learning resources, particularly podcasts. The survey responses revealed a nuanced picture of participants' attitudes and behaviors.

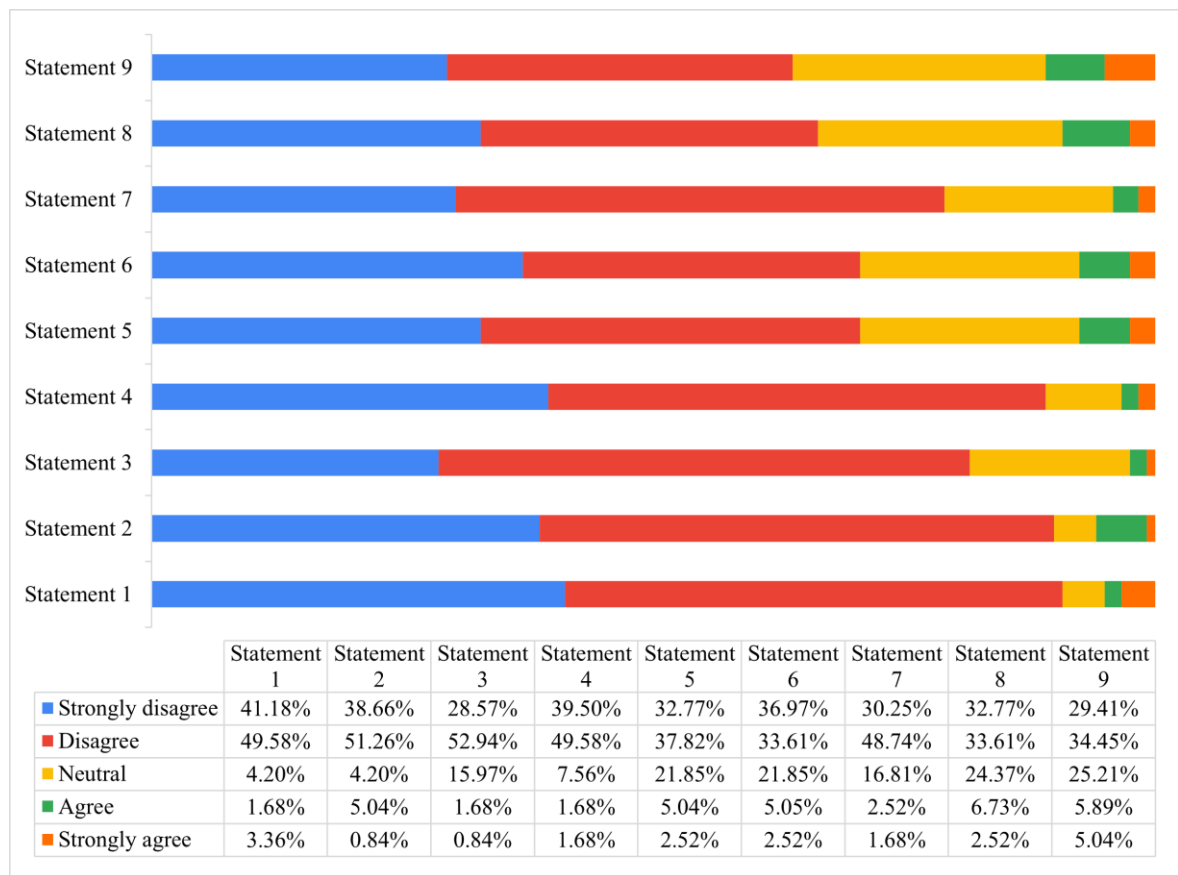|	Statement 1	Statement 2	Statement 3	Statement 4	Statement 5	Statement 6	Statement 7	Statement 8	Statement 9
■ Strongly disagree	41.18%	38.66%	28.57%	39.50%	32.77%	36.97%	30.25%	32.77%	29.41%
■ Disagree	49.58%	51.26%	52.94%	49.58%	37.82%	33.61%	48.74%	33.61%	34.45%
■ Neutral	4.20%	4.20%	15.97%	7.56%	21.85%	21.85%	16.81%	24.37%	25.21%
■ Agree	1.68%	5.04%	1.68%	1.68%	5.04%	5.05%	2.52%	6.73%	5.89%
■ Strongly agree	3.36%	0.84%	0.84%	1.68%	2.52%	2.52%	1.68%	2.52%	5.04%

Figure 3.1: Students' initial interest in learning English and experiences in using podcasts before the podcast intervention

Statement 1. *I am interested in learning English.*

Statement 2. *I am satisfied with my progress in learning English.*

Statement 3. *I often read English books, watch English movies, and listen to English music for the purpose of learning English.*

Statement 4. *I often use podcasts for the purpose of learning English.*

Statement 5. *I think the podcast intervention as lead-in activities will enhance my listening and speaking skills.*

Statement 6. *I think the podcast intervention as lead-in activities will improve my vocabulary and grammar.*

Statement 7. *I think the podcast intervention as lead-in activities will boost my enthusiasm and curiosity for English.*

Statement 8. *I think the podcast intervention as lead-in activities will increase my interest in learning English.*

Statement 9. *I think the podcast intervention as lead-in activities will make English lessons more enjoyable and appealing.*

In terms of general interest in learning English, a substantial proportion of participants expressed a lack of enthusiasm, with 41.18% strongly disagreeing and 49.58% disagreeing. Only a marginal percentage indicated a positive inclination, with 5.04% agreeing and 3.36% strongly agreeing. This underscores the presence of a sizable segment of students with initially low levels of motivation for English language acquisition.

According to Figure 3.1, it is evident that similar sentiments were echoed in participants' satisfaction with their progress in learning English. A significant majority, comprising 38.66% strongly disagreeing and 51.26% disagreeing, indicated dissatisfaction with their foreign language-learning achievements. Conversely, a mere 5.04% expressed agreement, and 0.84% strongly agreed that they were content with their progress.

Regarding participants' current foreign language learning habits, the

survey probed into the frequency of engagement with English media. A noteworthy 28.57% strongly disagreed that they often read English books, watch English movies, and listen to English music for learning purposes, while 52.94% disagreed. Moreover, a significant majority, 39.50% strongly disagreeing and 49.58% disagreeing, indicated infrequent usage of podcasts as a resource for learning English.

As the survey transitioned to participants' expectations regarding the forthcoming podcast intervention, responses revealed a degree of skepticism. A substantial proportion, encompassing 32.77% strongly disagreeing and 37.82% disagreeing, expressed reservations about the intervention's potential to enhance their listening and speaking skills. Similarly, doubts about improvements in vocabulary and grammar were evident, with 36.97% strongly disagreeing and 33.61% disagreeing.

Expectations regarding the intervention's impact on enthusiasm and curiosity for English were comparatively low, with 30.25% strongly disagreeing and 48.74% disagreeing. This signifies a prevailing sense of uncertainty among participants about the intervention's capacity to stimulate heightened interest and curiosity in the English language.

In considering the anticipated impact on English lessons, participants exhibited mixed expectations. While 24.37% adopted a neutral stance, a considerable percentage, 32.77% strongly disagreeing and 33.61% disagreeing, harbored pessimistic views. The survey also probed whether the podcast intervention would render English lessons more enjoyable and appealing. Responses indicated a substantial degree of skepticism, with 29.41% strongly disagreeing and 34.45% disagreeing.

These findings provide a comprehensive baseline understanding of

participants' initial attitudes, habits, and expectations, which is crucial for evaluating their interest in the subsequent podcast intervention.

3.1.2. Students' interest in learning English and experiences in using podcasts after the podcast intervention

The post-intervention survey illuminates the nuanced shifts in attitudes and practices among non-English-majored freshmen after the implementation of podcast interventions as lead-in activities.

	Statement 1	Statement 2	Statement 3	Statement 4	Statement 5	Statement 6	Statement 7	Statement 8	Statement 9
■ Strongly disagree	7.56%	5.04%	4.20%	5.88%	5.04%	5.88%	5.88%	5.88%	5.04%
■ Disagree	2.52%	14.28%	5.88%	7.56%	5.88%	4.20%	4.20%	5.04%	2.52%
■ Neutral	21.85%	23.53%	21.85%	18.49%	15.13%	24.37%	15.97%	14.29%	15.13%
■ Agree	38.66%	38.66%	44.54%	47.90%	48.74%	40.34%	48.74%	47.06%	47.90%
■ Strongly agree	29.41%	18.49%	23.53%	20.17%	25.21%	25.21%	25.21%	27.73%	29.41%
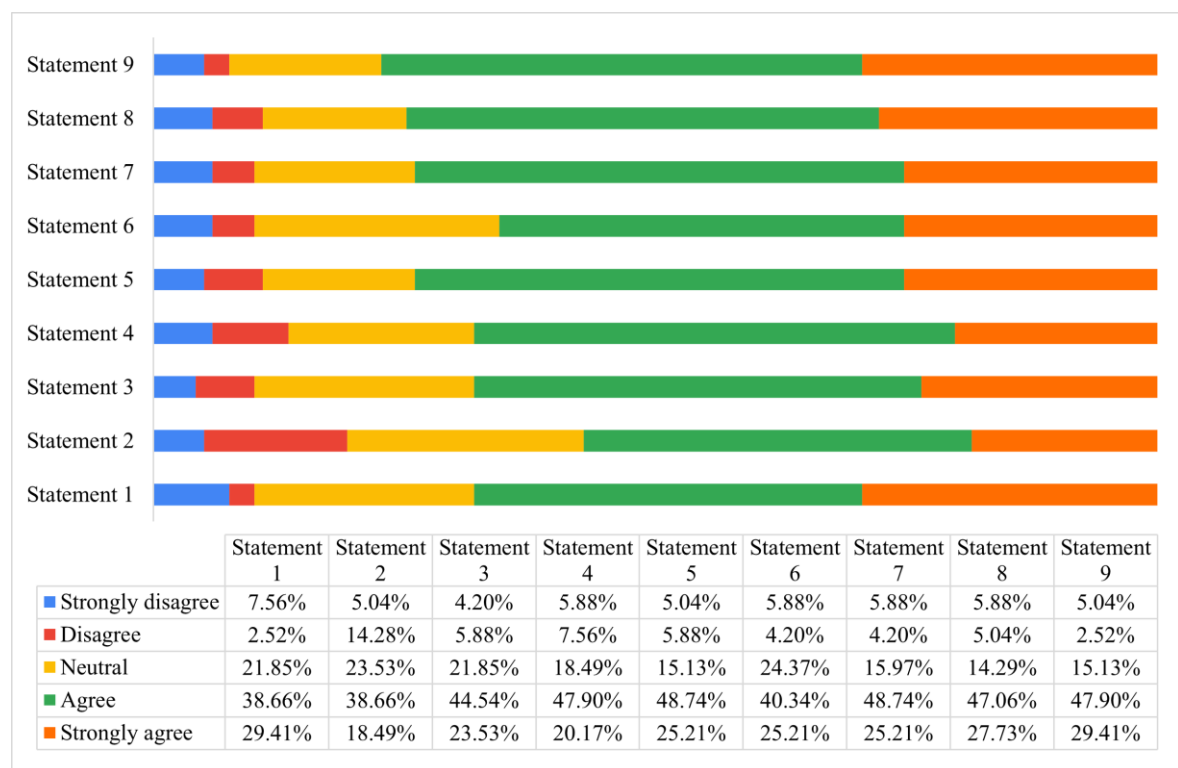
Figure 3.2: Students' interest in learning English and experiences in using podcasts after the podcast intervention

Statement 1. *I am interested in learning English.*

Statement 2. *I am satisfied with my progress in learning English.*

Statement 3. *I often read English books, watch English movies, and listen to English music for the purpose of learning English.*

Statement 4. *I often use podcasts for the purpose of learning English.*

Statement 5. *I think the podcast intervention as lead-in activities has enhanced my listening and speaking skills.*

Statement 6. *I think the podcast intervention as lead-in activities has improved my vocabulary and grammar.*

Statement 7. *I think the podcast intervention as lead-in activities has boosted my enthusiasm and curiosity for English.*

Statement 8. *I think the podcast intervention as lead-in activities has increased my interest in learning English.*

Statement 9. *I think the podcast intervention as lead-in activities has made English lessons more enjoyable and appealing.*

The data from figure 3.2 suggests a notable evolution in participants' interest in learning English, with 38.66% expressing agreement and 29.41% strongly agreeing. This contrasts with the pre-intervention survey, indicating a positive impact on overall interest in the language. Additionally, participants' satisfaction with their progress in learning English demonstrates a significant positive shift, with 38.66% in agreement and 18.49% strongly agreeing. This reduction in dissatisfaction suggests a potential improvement in perceived learning outcomes.

Engagement with English media, particularly podcasts, witnessed a substantial increase post-intervention. Notably, 44.54% now agree, and 23.53% strongly agree that they frequently read English books, watch English movies, and listen to English music for language learning purposes. This shift indicates a heightened utilization of diverse language-learning resources following the podcast interventions. Moreover, participants' use of podcasts for learning English has experienced a remarkable surge, with 47.90% in agreement and 20.17% strongly agreeing. This attests to the effectiveness of podcast interventions in fostering increased engagement with this specific medium.

Participants' perceptions of the impact of podcast interventions on their language skills reveal positive outcomes. A substantial majority, comprising 48.74% in agreement and 25.21% strongly agreeing, asserts that the interventions have enhanced their listening and speaking skills. Similarly, participants perceive improvements in vocabulary and grammar, with 40.34% in agreement and 25.21% strongly agreeing. These findings underscore the effectiveness of podcast interventions in contributing to language proficiency across various linguistic domains.

The positive impact of podcast interventions extends beyond skill enhancement, encompassing participants' enthusiasm and curiosity for English. A significant majority, 48.74% in agreement and 25.21% strongly agreeing, believe that the interventions have heightened their enthusiasm and curiosity, indicating a positive influence on motivational factors. Furthermore, participants express an improved outlook on English lessons, with 47.06% in agreement and 27.73% strongly agreeing that the podcast interventions have rendered lessons more enjoyable and appealing.

In short, the post-intervention survey findings provide compelling evidence of the transformative impact of podcast interventions on non-English-majored freshmen. The observed positive shifts in interest, satisfaction, engagement with language media, and perceived improvements in language skills underscore the potential efficacy of podcast interventions as valuable tools in foreign language education.

3.1.3. Changes in the students' interest in learning English and experiences in using podcasts

The comparison of pre- and post-intervention survey findings reveals substantial shifts in non-English-majored freshmen's attitudes and practices

towards learning English following the integration of podcast interventions. The pre-intervention survey highlighted a significant segment of participants expressing low interest and dissatisfaction with their progress in learning English. Contrastingly, the post-intervention survey demonstrates a marked improvement in both interest and satisfaction levels.

Table 3.1: Comparison between results from pre- and post-intervention surveys

Statement	SD		D		N		A		SA	
	Be	Af	Be	Af	Be	Af	Be	Af	Be	Af
1. I am interested in learning English.	41.18 %	7.56 %	49.58 %	2.52 %	4.20 %	21.85 %	1.68 %	38.66 %	3.36 %	29.41 %
2. I am satisfied with my progress in learning English.	38.66 %	5.04 %	51.26 %	14.28%	4.20 %	23.53 %	5.04 %	38.66 %	0.84 %	18.49 %
3. I often read English books, watch English movies, and listen to English music for the purpose of learning English.	28.57 %	4.20 %	52.94 %	5.88 %	15.97 %	21.85 %	1.68 %	44.54 %	0.84 %	23.53 %
4. I often use podcasts for the purpose of learning English.	39.50 %	5.88 %	49.58 %	7.56 %	7.56 %	18.49 %	1.68 %	47.90 %	1.68 %	20.17 %
5. I think the podcast intervention as lead-in activities has enhanced my listening and speaking skills.	32.77 %	5.04 %	37.82 %	5.88 %	21.85 %	15.13 %	5.04 %	48.74 %	2.52 %	25.21 %

6. I think the podcast intervention as lead-in activities has improved my vocabulary and grammar.	36.97%	5.88%	33.61%	4.20%	21.85%	24.37%	5.05%	40.34%	2.52%	25.21%
7. I think the podcast intervention as lead-in activities has boosted my enthusiasm and curiosity for English.	30.25%	5.88%	48.74%	4.20%	16.81%	15.97%	2.52%	48.74%	1.68%	25.21%
8. I think the podcast intervention as lead-in activities has increased my interest in learning English.	32.77%	5.88%	33.61%	5.04%	24.37%	14.29%	6.73%	47.06%	2.52%	27.73%
9. I think the podcast intervention as lead-in activities has made English lessons more enjoyable and appealing.	29.41%	5.04%	34.45%	2.52%	25.21%	15.13%	5.89%	47.90%	5.04%	29.41%

In the pre-intervention phase, a considerable percentage of participants strongly disagreed or disagreed with statements about interest in learning English (49.58%) and satisfaction with progress (51.26%). Post-intervention, these percentages decreased significantly, with only 7.56% strongly disagreeing or disagreeing regarding interest and 5.04% for progress satisfaction. This shift suggests a positive impact of the podcast interventions

on participants' overall attitudes towards learning a foreign language.

The engagement with language media, particularly podcasts, exhibited a substantial increase post-intervention. In the pre-intervention phase, there was limited utilization of podcasts for learning English, with 39.50% strongly disagreeing or disagreeing. This contrasted sharply with the post-intervention phase, where 47.90% agreed and 20.17% strongly agreed that they often used podcasts for learning English. The integration of podcasts as lead-in activities appears to have successfully encouraged participants to incorporate this resource into their language-learning repertoire.

Moreover, participants' perceptions of the impact of podcast interventions on various language skills demonstrate positive shifts. For instance, pre-intervention, skepticism prevailed regarding the potential enhancement of listening and speaking skills (70.59% combined strongly disagree and disagree). In contrast, post-intervention, 48.74% agreed and 25.21% strongly agreed that the interventions had indeed enhanced these skills. A similar positive trend is observed for improvements in vocabulary and grammar, indicating the efficacy of the interventions in contributing to comprehensive language proficiency.

The findings also highlight a notable increase in participants' enthusiasm and curiosity for English post-intervention. Pre-intervention, a considerable percentage expressed doubt about the podcast interventions boosting enthusiasm (79.99% combined strongly disagree and disagree). Post-intervention, 48.74% agreed and 25.21% strongly agreed that the interventions had a positive impact on enthusiasm and curiosity. This shift suggests that the podcast interventions not only addressed skill development but also positively influenced the affective domain of foreign language learning.

In summary, the comparison of pre- and post-intervention survey findings reveals a transformative impact of podcast interventions on various facets of non-English-majored freshmen's language learning experience.

3.1.4. Students' perceptions and attitudes towards the podcast integration in English listening and speaking lessons

The semi-structured interviews conducted with non-English-majored students at Hanoi University of Industry provide rich insights into their perceptions and attitudes toward the integration of podcasts as lead-in activities in English listening and speaking classes. The responses highlight a generally positive reception of podcasts, emphasizing their contribution to a dynamic and engaging learning environment.

A prominent theme that emerged from the interviews was the discernible increase in interest and motivation attributed to the incorporation of podcasts. All interviewees articulated how podcasts substantially contributed to their enjoyment of learning English, often citing specific instances where the real-life context presented in podcasts sparked their curiosity and enthusiasm for English language practice. For example, *"Podcasts really helped me enjoy learning English. I remember we listened to one about a man's daily routines, and it was interesting. I could understand his talk, and it urged me to practice talking more about my routines"*, participant 9 said.

Classroom engagement witnessed a positive transformation, marked by dynamic participation. Interviewees all agreed that the integration of podcasts not only revitalized the classroom atmosphere but also stimulated greater student engagement. Particularly, students 2 and 4 claimed that classes with podcasts in lead-in activities *"became livelier"* and made them feel more motivated to participate in the lessons. *"We were interested in the lesson topics*

right in the lead-in. They encouraged us a lot for the rest of the lesson", interviewee 5 added. The reported increase in students' engagement was attributed to the dynamic nature and authentic content of podcasts, which makes the lesson content more appealing and relevant to students. Participant 7 continued: *"The topics are linked to the lesson contents. That makes us curious about what we're learning on that day."*

Participants consistently expressed a favorable learning experience, describing podcasts as both enjoyable and beneficial to an improved learning environment. The majority of participants expressed a positive sentiment towards podcasts, which highlights their inherent attractiveness and effectiveness in creating an engaging and favorable environment for foreign language learning. According to several participants, with podcasts, the classroom felt more dynamic, meaningful, and motivating in lead-in periods, on account of *"actual and relevant content of podcasts suitable for discussion, which encouraged participation"*, student 2 revealed.

Another interesting finding is that the integration of podcasts played a pivotal role in transforming the learning environment into a more student-centric space. Participants described their classes as more interactive and engaging, signifying that podcasts contribute to creating a student-centric learning environment. Student 1 explained, *"It made me feel more confident in speaking English, especially when we did a role-play about a restaurant,"* and *"our classes became more interactive. [...] This encouraged us to participate actively."*

In addition, after the intervention, podcasts are considered a medium through which cultural exploration takes place, providing students with exposure to a wide range of accents and contexts. Several participants (#6, #3,

#4, #7, and #10) commented, "*It was like a cultural adventure*", "*it's like we were a team, exploring both the English language and other cultures*", and "*we looked up words, had discussions, and listened to other cultures.*"

Another finding that stands out from the results reported is the benefits of podcasts in expanding vocabulary and promoting practical language use. A number of participants expressed how podcasts introduced them to new words and practical language use. For example, interviewee 3 said, "*One way podcasts helped was with new words and useful phrases. [...] I started using it, and it helps me sound more natural.*" Participants additionally reported instances where podcast-acquired vocabulary proved useful in real-life situations, emphasizing the practicality of language skills developed through podcast engagement. "*One podcast was about shopping clothes, and it really helped me when I visited Thailand. I wanted to know more about daily topics and conversations in English*", participant 5 stated.

Lastly, almost all participants observed that podcasts proved beneficial in overcoming initial challenges, particularly those related to understanding native speakers. Student 5 shared, "*Understanding native speakers in some podcasts was tough at first. But we discussed it in class, and our teacher helped with transcripts, so that made it easier*". However, they additionally highlighted the importance of support and resources to address these obstacles, such as transcripts and discussions in the classroom.

These insights suggest that incorporating podcasts into English listening and speaking classes at Hanoi University of Industry has had a meaningful impact on students' perceptions and attitudes. The findings not only offer implications for educators but also highlight the importance of integrating authentic and culturally relevant content to enhance foreign language learning

experiences.

3.2. DISCUSSION

3.2.1. Students' initial interest in learning English and experience in using podcasts

The findings from the pre-intervention survey elucidate critical aspects of non-English-majored freshmen's initial attitudes towards English language learning and their engagement with language-learning resources, particularly podcasts. These insights are foundational to comprehending the potential impact of forthcoming podcast interventions. Notably, a substantial proportion of students are not only uninterested in learning the language but also dissatisfied with their learning progress. The results of this study are consistent with the claim made by Gardner et al. (1985) that a significant number of students view the process of learning a foreign language as tedious, resulting in less interest and poor academic performance.

Furthermore, participants reported limited engagement with English language media, including podcasts. This underscores the necessity of diversifying language-learning resources to accommodate varied preferences and learning styles. The identified skepticism towards podcast interventions suggests a need for clear communication regarding pedagogical goals and anticipated outcomes. Such discrepancies between expectations and perceived benefits highlight the importance of thoughtful intervention design.

Addressing skepticism requires an emphasis on authenticity and cultural relevance in podcast content. Incorporating interactive activities within the podcast framework can bridge the gap between expectations and outcomes (Brown, 2007). The varying degrees of skepticism also indicate the importance of tailoring interventions to individual needs, recognizing the diverse

expectations within the learner population.

The diverse responses to expectations regarding podcast interventions provide insights into the individualized nature of language acquisition. A flexible approach to podcast integration, accommodating varied expectations, is essential for overall effectiveness. Furthermore, the results suggest that interventions should be designed with consideration of individual preferences and learning styles to enhance learner engagement.

A wide range of academic studies have indicated that podcasts can enhance the language learning journey by providing authentic content, improving listening skills, and promoting engagement (Godwin-Jones, 2011). However, the effectiveness of podcast integration may be diverse depending on factors such as the target audience, teaching methods, and content selection. While the pre-intervention survey indicated limited interest, engagement, and prior use of podcasts for English language learning, these findings create an essential baseline for the study.

3.2.2. Students' interest in learning English and experiences in using podcasts after the podcast intervention

The results of the survey conducted after the intervention reveal a detailed and subtle change in the attitudes and behaviors of freshmen who are not majoring in English. This change occurred after the introduction of podcast interventions as lead-in activities. The observed positive changes in different aspects have important consequences for the field of foreign language education, leading to a detailed examination of the results within a wider theoretical and pedagogical framework.

The increase in participants expressing interest in learning English and satisfaction with their progress suggests a positive influence of podcast

interventions on intrinsic motivation. This aligns with foundational principles of educational psychology, specifically the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2017), which underscores the pivotal role of intrinsic motivation in sustaining engagement and promoting favorable learning outcomes. The interventions seem to have cultivated a more positive and self-driven orientation towards foreign language learning among participants.

The improvement of participants' enthusiasm and curiosity for English after podcast interventions aligns with the extensive literature on the role of interest in foreign language learning (Dörnyei, 2000). Beyond skill development, the interventions appear to have fostered a positive affective domain, which contributes to a more favorable attitude towards the language. This emotional engagement is considered crucial for sustaining long-term language learning motivation (Gardner, 1985).

Furthermore, the improved perception of English lessons, reflected in increased agreement that lessons are more enjoyable and appealing, suggests a transfer of positive experiences from podcast interventions to the broader learning context, which emphasizes the application of acquired skills and attitudes to related domains. Therefore, podcast interventions, serving as a lead-in to lessons, seem to have positively influenced the overall learning experience.

One of the most important results is that students are increasingly utilizing podcasts as a valuable tool for learning English. These findings concur with Liu and He (2020), who highlight the potential of podcasts for flexible and authentic language input. The adoption of podcasts in foreign language education also supports existing literature on the benefits of incorporating multimedia materials into language education (LeLoup & Ponterio, 2000).

In conclusion, the post-intervention survey findings contribute to the ongoing discourse on technology-enhanced language learning. The observed positive shifts in interest, satisfaction, and engagement highlight the potential of podcasts as valuable tools in contemporary foreign language education. These findings offer practical insights for educators seeking innovative approaches to engage and motivate foreign language learners, setting the stage for further research and exploration in this dynamic field.

3.2.3. Changes in the students' interest in learning English and experiences in using podcasts

The analysis of survey results before and after the intervention reveals a compelling story of change in the interest of non-English-majored freshmen in English. This highlights the significant impact of podcast interventions as lead-in activities. The noticeable changes in various aspects, such as interest, satisfaction, engagement with language media, and perceptions of skill development, offer valuable insights into the effectiveness of these interventions in shaping the language learning experience.

One of the most prominent changes observed is the substantial increase in students expressing interest in learning English. In the pre-intervention phase, a considerable portion exhibited low interest, while post-intervention, there was a marked reduction in pessimism and a significant increase in the percentage of students expressing agreement and strong agreement. This is consistent with research by Chester et al. (2011), which emphasizes that podcast interventions have not only mitigated skepticism but actively cultivated a more favorable attitude towards foreign language learning.

A substantial change is observed in students' engagement with English media, particularly podcasts. The pre-intervention phase indicated a limited

utilization of podcasts for English language learning, with a significant percentage expressing disagreement. In contrast, after the intervention, there was a remarkable increase in the percentage of students actively using podcasts, which reflected a successful encouragement of this resource into their language-learning experience. This shift aligns with a theory of multimodal learning by LeLoup and Ponterio (2000) to emphasize the benefits of varied media to cater to diverse learning styles.

The findings also highlight a substantial increase in students' enthusiasm and curiosity for English following podcast interventions. The pre-intervention phase was characterized by a considerable percentage expressing doubt about the potential positive impact on enthusiasm. Post-intervention, there was a significant shift, with a notable percentage expressing agreement and strong agreement, which indicated that the interventions not only addressed skill development but also positively influenced the affective domain of foreign language learning. This is in accordance with the claim of Dörnyei (2014) about the role of interest and motivation in language education that interventions appear to have fostered a more positive affective domain, contributing to a more favorable attitude towards the language. This emotional engagement is considered crucial for sustaining long-term language learning interest.

The changes in students' interest in learning English and their experiences in using podcasts demonstrate the significance of this study's focus on integrating podcasts as lead-in activities. The substantial increase in students' interest, engagement, and enthusiasm for English following the podcast interventions highlights the transformative potential of this approach. These findings contribute to the literature on technology-enhanced language learning and emphasize the importance of innovative pedagogical approaches,

like integrating podcasts as lead-ins, in enhancing students' engagement and interest.

In conclusion, the comparison of pre- and post-intervention survey findings reveals a transformative impact of podcast interventions on various facets of students' language learning experience. The positive shifts in interest, satisfaction, and engagement underscore the potential of these interventions as valuable tools in contemporary language education.

3.2.4. Students' perceptions and attitudes towards the podcast integration in English listening and speaking lessons

The semi-structured interviews conducted with non-English-majored students at Hanoi University of Industry provided valuable insights into their perceptions and attitudes towards the integration of podcasts into their English listening and speaking classes. The interviews offered participants an opportunity to share their personal experiences and effectively articulate the ways the utilization of podcasts influenced their learning progress.

Significantly, the interviews emphasized the enhanced interest among students due to the incorporation of podcasts. Participants reported increased enjoyment and engagement in learning English. As a result, the interviews further supported claims from the survey in the previous section, with participants expressing how podcasts made their learning English enjoyable and how the dynamic classroom environment increased their motivation to participate actively. According to the survey results, there was a significant increase in students' interest in learning English following the podcast intervention, which is consistent with research by Richards and Rodgers (2014) on the motivational benefits of using authentic materials in language education. This enhancement in interest and engagement can be attributed to the unique

nature of podcasts, which offer real-life context, varied accents, and culturally diverse content. This outcome corresponds with the idea from Joraboyev (2021) that authentic materials like podcasts can enhance motivation and interest among learners.

Furthermore, the positive transformation in classroom engagement is another noteworthy finding. Participants emphasized that podcasts not only increased their interest in learning English but also made them feel more motivated to participate in the lessons. They found that the podcast content brought real-world relevance to their foreign language learning, which made the lessons more engaging. This highlights the transformative power of podcast intervention in not only enhancing overall interest in English but also in making the lesson content more appealing and relevant to students. The connection between classroom content and real-world contexts highlighted in the interviews supports the idea that real-life materials align with language education principles (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Students' favorable learning experience further emphasizes the efficacy of podcasts in creating an enjoyable and positive learning environment. The excellent reception of podcasts, as evidenced by their inherent allure and efficacy, enhances an engaging and valuable educational environment. The perceived dynamism, meaningfulness, and motivation in the classroom are connected to the actual and relevant content of podcasts, creating an environment that promotes active participation and learning. The findings align with the research of Joraboyev (2021), who suggests that authentic materials, such as podcasts, can create a more dynamic and meaningful foreign language learning environment.

The transformation towards a more student-centric space is a significant outcome of podcast integration. Participants described podcasts as a contributor to creating an environment where students feel empowered and confident in their language learning journey. Besides, the utilization of podcasts as a medium for conveying thematic content has been found to facilitate discussions, role-plays, and collaborative activities, which is in agreement with the broader literature advocating for student-centered approaches (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). The participants' accounts highlight the transition towards a classroom environment that is characterized by increased interactivity and active student engagement with the subject matter. Therefore, the podcasts were recognized as catalysts for collaborative exploration, eliciting a sense of connection among students towards the content.

Moreover, cultural exploration emerged as an enriching dimension of the podcast experience. The exposure to different cultural elements (including diverse accents and contexts) within podcasts contributes to students' intercultural competence. Additionally, the participants' description of the experience as a "cultural adventure" illustrates the wider influence of podcasts beyond the context of language learning, thereby enhancing freshmen's overall cultural proficiency. The research, hence, corroborates the idea of Huynh and Dan (2022), who suggest the possibility of utilizing authentic materials to foster intercultural comprehension.

One notable finding from the data that has been released is the positive impact of podcasts on vocabulary expansion and practical language usage, which is in line with existing research emphasizing the effectiveness of authentic materials in language education by Richards and Rodgers (2014). The contextual use of vocabulary in podcasts, coupled with thematic content, not

only expanded participants' vocabulary but also facilitated a deeper understanding and application of language skills. The podcasts, additionally serving as a source of real-life language input, go beyond traditional vocabulary acquisition methods, which is also reported by Bueno-Alastuey and Nemeth (2022).

Regarding initial challenges faced by interviewed students, it is evident that comprehending native speakers in podcasts was realized as a great obstacle, which accords with existing literature on the challenges of real-life language exposure (Gass & Varonis, 1994). This difficulty is a common phenomenon faced by foreign language learners, particularly when transitioning from controlled language environments to authentic, unscripted speech. The authentic nature of podcasts, often featuring various accents, speaking speeds, and colloquial expressions, mirrors the linguistic diversity encountered in everyday communication. Nevertheless, the support mechanisms and resources, such as transcripts and classroom discussions, are advantageous to students, signifying the role of pedagogical strategies in mitigating initial obstacles (Afrin, 2013).

In summary, the intervention of podcasts as lead-in activities in English listening and speaking courses at Hanoi University of Industry has elicited predominantly positive perceptions and attitudes among non-English-majored students. The results of the study highlight the potential of podcasts to establish an engaging, stimulating, and learner-centered language learning environment. Although generalizations should be used with caution, the study context suggests that podcasts have the potential to significantly increase students' interest and engagement. It is critical to address initial challenges and thoroughly deliberate on content and pedagogical strategies in order to

maximize the educational benefits of this innovative language education approach.

CONCLUSION

1. Recapitulation

This thesis has unfolded a compelling narrative of the transformative impact of incorporating podcasts as lead-in activities in English listening and speaking classes for non-English major freshmen at Hanoi University of Industry. The study progressed from an initial landscape of disinterest and dissatisfaction to a post-intervention scenario marked by heightened interest, satisfaction, and enriched foreign language experiences.

The pre-intervention phase revealed a significant lack of interest among non-English majors. The majority of respondents were dissatisfied with their learning progress, which emphasized the perceived tedium associated with foreign language acquisition. The low participation in extracurricular activities and low use of podcasts suggested the need for novel strategies to energize the language learning journey.

Eventually, the intervention brought about a significant change. The use of podcasts emerged as a catalyst for sparking enthusiasm in studying English, which aligns with the primary goal of language instruction. Satisfaction with learning progress surging post-intervention indicated a positive correlation between interest and perceived achievement. Importantly, the utilization of podcasts witnessed a substantial increase, confirming their role as effective tools for foreign language learning.

In addition to statistical data, semi-structured interviews allowed better understanding of the student experience. The interviews were dominated by themes of increased interest, engagement, and motivation. The podcasts were not only educational tools but also useful channels for cultural exploration, confidence building, and dynamic, student-centric learning environments.

Real-life context, diverse accents, and thematic content emerged as critical components in fostering a meaningful connection between students and the English language.

2. Pedagogical implications

The findings of this study hold profound implications for the field of language education, advocating for a paradigm shift in instructional methods and curriculum design. The integration of podcasts as lead-in activities in English listening and speaking classes for non-English-majored students at Hanoi University of Industry not only yielded positive outcomes but also illuminated key considerations for future educational endeavors.

The success of the podcast intervention underscores the efficacy of innovative pedagogical approaches. Moving beyond traditional instructional methods, educators are encouraged to explore and integrate authentic materials like podcasts. The real-life context, varied accents, and thematic content inherent in podcasts align with the principles of communicative language teaching, which provides students with a more authentic and immersive language learning experience.

The study highlights the importance of pedagogical support in maximizing the benefits of podcast integration. Resources such as transcripts and classroom discussions played a pivotal role in addressing challenges related to understanding native speakers. Educators are urged to develop and utilize support mechanisms to enhance student comprehension and bridge potential gaps in understanding, ensuring that podcasts are accessible and beneficial for all learners.

The integration of podcasts facilitated a transition towards a more student-centric learning environment. The dynamic nature of podcasts, coupled

with their thematic content, encouraged active student participation and engagement. This suggests a broader shift in language education towards methods that empower students to take a more active role in their learning journey. Educators are prompted to embrace approaches that foster collaboration, interaction, and student-centered exploration.

3. Limitations and suggestion for further studies

The study exhibits several limitations that warrant consideration. Firstly, its confinement to a specific institutional context, Hanoi University of Industry, raises concerns about the generalizability of findings to a broader population. To enhance the external validity of results, future research endeavors should deliberately encompass diverse educational settings. Furthermore, the study's emphasis on short-term outcomes following the podcast intervention necessitates acknowledgment. For a more comprehensive understanding of the intervention's impact, longitudinal studies tracking students' language development and sustained interest over an extended period are imperative. The reliance on self-reported data introduces a potential source of bias, highlighting the need for future studies to incorporate objective measures like language proficiency assessments and classroom observations. Additionally, the demographic focus on non-English-majored freshmen limits the scope of insights gained. To obtain a more holistic understanding of podcast integration's impact, future investigations should deliberately include participants from different academic levels, disciplines, and linguistic backgrounds. Lastly, the assumption of a certain level of technological access and proficiency among participants underscores the need for caution. Future studies should systematically account for variations in technology access and skills, exploring strategies to mitigate potential disparities and ensuring a more inclusive analysis.

Several avenues for further research emerge from the current study, aiming to deepen our understanding of podcast integration in language education. First and foremost, adopting a longitudinal approach in future investigations is recommended. Such studies should track participants' foreign language proficiency, interest levels, and usage patterns over an extended period, offering valuable insights into the sustained impact of podcast integration. Comparative studies conducted across multiple institutions and diverse educational contexts would enhance the generalizability of findings. Exploring variations in the effectiveness of podcast integration based on institutional characteristics, cultural factors, and pedagogical approaches can contribute to a more nuanced understanding. Employing mixed-methods research designs that integrate quantitative and qualitative methods could provide a richer depiction of the complex dynamics involved in podcast integration. Combining survey data with in-depth interviews and classroom observations would offer a holistic perspective. Additionally, investigations into the impact of different podcast formats, delivery platforms, and interactive features are crucial in the rapidly evolving landscape of educational technology. Understanding how technological variations influence learning outcomes will inform the design of effective language learning interventions. To address potential disparities in technology access and proficiency, future research should explore inclusive approaches, such as providing technological resources, training sessions, or alternative methods for participants with diverse technological backgrounds. Recognizing the multilingual and multicultural nature of language education, studies should explore how podcast integration caters to the linguistic and cultural diversity of learners. Investigating the adaptation of podcasts to different languages and cultural contexts will contribute to more inclusive language education practices. Finally, the

integration of learning analytics tools to track students' interactions with podcast content can provide valuable insights. Monitoring patterns such as frequency of access, duration of engagement, and specific content preferences can inform instructional design and optimization strategies for future foreign language learning interventions.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: PRE-INTERVENTION SURVEY: Students' Initial Interest in Learning English and Experience in Using Podcasts *(Adapted from the attitude/motivation test battery – AMTB by Gardner)*

My name is Nguyen Hai Linh, an English teacher at the School of Languages and Tourism at Hanoi University of Industry. I am conducting a survey to collect data for my minor master's thesis. This survey aims to understand your initial level of interest in learning English and gather some background information to help me improve your language learning experience. Please answer the following questions honestly and to the best of your knowledge. Your support is highly appreciated to me. Thank you.

Gender

☐ Male

☐ Female

Statements 1-9 describe your initial interest in learning English and experience in using podcasts. Your responses are extremely precious for this thesis. I highly expect that you will read each given statement carefully, and then put a tick mark (v) in each statement if you Strongly disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), or Strongly agree (5). Thank you.

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1. I am interested in learning English.					
2. I am satisfied with my progress in learning English.					

3. I often read English books, watch English movies, and listen to English music for the purpose of learning English.					
4. I often use podcasts for the purpose of learning English.					
5. I think the podcast intervention as lead-in activities will enhance my listening and speaking skills.					
6. I think the podcast intervention as lead-in activities will improve my vocabulary and grammar.					
7. I think the podcast intervention as lead-in activities will boost my enthusiasm and curiosity for English.					
8. I think the podcast intervention as lead-in activities will increase my interest in learning English.					
9. I think the podcast intervention as lead-in activities will make English lessons more enjoyable and appealing.					

APPENDIX 2: POST-INTERVENTION SURVEY: Students' Interest in Learning English and Experience in Using Podcasts after podcast intervention *(Adapted from the attitude/motivation test battery – AMTB by Gardner)*

My name is Nguyen Hai Linh, an English teacher at the School of Languages and Tourism at Hanoi University of Industry. I am conducting a survey to collect data for my minor master's thesis. This survey aims to gather feedback on your experience with podcast integration in lead-in activities in your English course. Your insights will help us understand the impact of podcasts on your interest in learning English and improve our teaching methods. Please answer the following questions honestly and to the best of your knowledge. Your support is highly appreciated to me. Thank you.

Gender

☐ Male

☐ Female

Statements 1-9 describe your interest in learning English and experience in using podcasts AFTER PODCAST INTEGRATION into lead-in activities. Your responses are extremely precious for this thesis. I highly expect that you will read each given statement carefully, and then put a tick mark (v) in each statement if you Strongly disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), or Strongly agree (5). Thank you.

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1. I am interested in learning English.					

2. I am satisfied with my progress in learning English.					
3. I often read English books, watch English movies, and listen to English music for the purpose of learning English.					
4. I often use podcasts for the purpose of learning English.					
5. I think the podcast intervention as lead-in activities enhances my listening and speaking skills.					
6. I think the podcast intervention as lead-in activities improves my vocabulary and grammar.					
7. I think the podcast intervention as lead-in activities boosts my enthusiasm and curiosity for English.					
8. I think the podcast intervention as lead-in activities increases my interest in learning English.					
9. I think the podcast intervention as lead-in activities makes English lessons more enjoyable and appealing.					

APPENDIX 3: QUESTIONS FOR THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

1. What is your overall impression of the use of podcasts as lead-in activities in your English listening and speaking classes?

2. Can you describe your experience with the integration of podcasts as lead-in activities in your English course? How did it impact your learning experience?

3. In what ways do you feel podcasts contributed to your interest in learning English during this course? Can you provide specific examples?

4. From your perspective, how did the use of podcasts affect the overall atmosphere and engagement in your English lessons?

5. What were some challenges or difficulties you encountered while listening to podcasts in class? How did you overcome them, if at all?

APPENDIX 4: SAMPLE LEAD-IN ACTIVITY PLANS FOR A UNIT

Unit 4: MY FAVORITE SEASON

1. Link:

https://tofluency.com/learn-english-podcast/ or

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SBHD9UBiI0U

2. Duration of the chosen part from the podcast: from 0:54 to 3:40

3. Lead-in activity plan in 7 minutes:

Teacher's activities	Student's activities	Materials	Time
- Guide students to do the preparation task (Task 1) called "Match phrases in column A with their functions in column B". The phrases are useful for students to about their favorite season. - Give students one minute to complete the task. - Check and correct students' answers.	- Follow the teacher's guidance. - Do the task. - Check and correct answers.	Worksheet	1'
- Guide students to do the while-listening task (Task 2) called "Answer the questions with NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS from the podcast". - Play the podcast.	- Follow the teacher's guidance. - Do the task.	Worksheet	3'

- Check and correct students' answers.	- Check and correct answers.		
- Guide students to do an after-listening task (Task 3). - Give students 3 minutes to complete the task. - Check students' answers.	- Follow the teacher's guidance. - Do the task. - Check answers.	Worksheet	3'

4. Worksheet:

BEFORE LISTENING:

Task 1: Match phrases in column A with their functions in column B.

Column A	Column B
1. "My favorite season is..."	a. for expressing a dislike for hot weather in your favorite season
2. "It's just a little bit too hot to enjoy..."	b. for sharing the true feelings or opinion
3. "There's just something special about..."	c. to discuss specific activities or aspects of your favorite season that you find enjoyable

4. "What I enjoy about it..."	d. to convey that there is something unique or appealing about a particular season
5. "To be honest, …"	e. to introduce the topic and state one's favorite season

1-…   2-…   3-…   4-…   5-…

WHILE LISTENING:

Task 2: You are going to listen to a podcast featuring two people talking about their favourite season. Listen and answer the following questions with NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS from the podcast.

1. What was Jack's favorite season as a child? ………………………………

2. What can they do when it is not cold outside? ……………………………

3. Where do they live now? …………………………………………………

4. According to Kate, what is special about summer except for the light and outdoor activities? ………………………………………………………………

AFTER LISTENING:

Task 3: Discuss the following statement in groups then present your ideas to the class.

"Summer is the best season for outdoor activities."

APPENDIX 5: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

EXPLOITING ENGLISH PODCASTS AS LEAD-IN ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE NON-ENGLISH-MAJORED FRESHMEN'S INTEREST IN LEARNING ENGLISH

You will be given a copy of this information sheet.

The Researcher Team

Researcher: Ms. Nguyen Hai Linh (MA student)

Supervisor: Dr. Nguyen Thi Huong

Invitation

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

Description

This project is being carried out as part of the author's thesis. The main purpose of this research is to investigate the effectiveness of integrating podcasts as lead-in activities in language education, particularly for non-English-majored freshmen.

Participating Agreement

It is up to you if you take part in the research. When you decide to participate, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form attached below. You can withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without it affecting any benefits that you are entitled to. If you decide to

withdraw you will be asked what you wish to happen to the data, you have provided up that point. Your decision to participate in the project or not will be voluntary and not affect your relationship with the researcher or your university.

Participation

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

- Complete a pre-intervention survey conducted through Google Forms (https://docs.google.com/) to measure your initial interest levels in learning English.

- Engage in podcast-based lead-in activities as part of your language learning curriculum.

- Complete a post-intervention survey conducted through Google Forms (https://docs.google.com/) to measure any changes in your interest in learning English after exposure to podcasts as lead-in activities.

- Maybe participate in a semi-structured interview to share your perceptions and experiences regarding the use of podcasts in language learning.

Please note that the survey should take around 5-10 minutes to complete. If you are asked in the interview, it may take you 5-10 minutes.

While the project may not directly benefit you, it is expected to not only make an improvement in students' interest in learning English at HaUI but also enhance understanding of effective language learning strategies and contribute to the development of innovative teaching methods. Therefore, your participation is valuable to this project.

Privacy and Confidentiality

All your responses and audio will be kept confidential. The names of any individuals, which will only be accessible to the researcher, are not required in

any responses and interview data. We will collect non-identifiable data from you for this study only. The university will not be identified in any publications based on the data collected. The researcher will securely retain and use the gathered data solely for the project.

Consent to Participate

We kindly request that you sign a written consent form (enclosed) to confirm your agreement to participate in the project.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please do not hesitate to contact one of the research team members below.

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hailinhnguyen98.ulis@gmail.com   *huongnt.nn.haui@gmail.com*

Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering taking part in this research study.

APPENDIX 6: CONSENT FORM

I have read the Participant Information Sheet for the study titled "Exploiting English Podcasts as Lead-In Activities to Enhance Non-English-Majored Freshmen's Interest in Learning English" and understand the purpose and procedures of the research. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have received satisfactory answers.

I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary, and I have the right to withdraw at any time without penalty. I understand that my identity will be kept confidential, and my responses will only be accessible to the researcher and authorized members of the research team.

I consent to participate in this study and agree to the collection and use of my data for research purposes.

Participant's Name: _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please return this form to the researcher!