

LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS L2 VODCASTING TASKS IN AN E-LEARNING PROJECT

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Abstract

The Vodcasting technology has thrived as an auxiliary tool to support learners with supplementary materials. The current study aimed at exploring the use of vodcasting technology and the learners' perceptions and attitudes towards practicing L2 vodcasting tasks. For this reason, a sample of 120 Iranian EFL learners were selected and they received twelve weeks of treatment which included working on five different genres of vodcasting tasks. Participants received vodcasting tasks via Telegram application and were asked to do them in specific stages. In order to measure the participants' attitudes and perceptions, a learner engagement questionnaire was electronically distributed. The results revealed that the learners viewed the experience as significantly positive and constructive. It is concluded that the vodcasting technology can be executed independently as it can change the studying habits of learners, facilitate the monitoring process and the assessment system, maximize cooperation among the learners, and improve the relationship between the learners and the instructor.

Keywords: e-learning; listening comprehension; online learning; podcasting; video podcasts; vodcasting

1. Introduction

Recent technological improvements have drastically transformed the essence of pedagogical approaches in teaching skills and subskills. Listening, which plays a major role in second and foreign language acquisition, has undergone a metamorphosis of different changes regarding the way it has been implemented in both real and virtual classes. Several researchers (e.g., Baltova, 1994; Kellerman, 1990; Kellerman, 1992; Progoosh, 1996; Shin, 1998; Sueyoshi & Hardison, 2005; Wagner 2010b) worked on different aspects of analyzing learners' abilities in both proficiency and achievement tests of listening by using different technologies like multimedia devices. These studies predominantly focused on analyzing different modalities of listening comprehension, investigating learners' needs, and analyzing their results in different testing conditions. Likewise, the learners' engagement and the rate of involvement has also

been a subject of several studies (Takeda, 2014; Wagner, 2007, 2010a). All of the above-mentioned studies have been conducted in conventional classroom environments where language learners had to practice listening programs in traditional classes and take the listening exams in a paper and pencil style. The requirement of such programs was obviously the real presence of learners and instructors throughout the whole study.

Nonetheless, the instructional technology has brought about tremendous variations to the style of second and foreign language teaching and learning, which gained massive popularity among students and educators (Faramarzi & Bagheri, 2015). It is assumed that the interactive method of presenting the teaching materials in virtual communities can diminish the affective barriers of traditional classes since learners have more time and space for preparation and self-correction (Read, 2007).

Accordingly, the podcasting system of delivering pedagogical materials can be used to alleviate the available challenges. The educational podcasting technology is defined as a method of presenting teaching/learning resources which can include a variety of different forms such as audio, video, or a synchronized version of both, PowerPoint Presentations, online applications, etc., to learners via constructing accessible RSS feeds (Takeda, 2014). In other words, it provides learners with an opportunity to have permanent access to major and supplementary materials regardless of time and space.

This technique has the potential to change the studying habits of language learners and encourage them to be more independent i.e. learners should no longer be worried about missing any particular session that corroborates the inherent significance of distance language learning per se. Therefore, by implementing this approach, a major sense of flexibility is established: ensuring the delivery of language learning materials and practicing them as much as needed (Abt & Barry, 2007; Armstrong, Tucker, & Massad, 2009; Ducate & Lomicka, 2009; Facer, Abdous & Camanera, 2009; Lord, 2008; McCombs & Liu, 2007).

However, the complete application of this technology in a pure distance language learning program requires more research and experimental studies. This high-tech development provides an opportunity for educators to fully operationalize and integrate listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Another rationale for choosing such an online device is its great potential for creativity and innovation that had received acclamation from some scholars (Elekaei, 2018; Faramarzi, 2018). The present study predominantly focused on analyzing learners' attitudes and feelings towards implementing vodcasting tasks ('VTs') in L2 listening instruction via an online platform. Therefore, the major aim of the study was to find out the students' attitudes and feelings towards different aspects of receiving the VTs.

2. Literature review

Using language materials in authentic situations has become a focal point in many methodological approaches including Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). This method highlights the use of tasks that are meaningful, challenging and reasonable. These tasks can motivate learners to engage in collaborative classroom activities (Bowen, 2010; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2015; Willis & Willis, 2001). TBLT also encourages learners to develop critical thinking abilities. Similarly, technological advances which are popular nowadays can inspire learners to develop a cooperative spirit, minimize their affective barriers and, thus, facilitate the process of language learning (Faramarzi, 2018)

2.1. From podcasting to vodcasting in language learning classes

Different forms of visual modalities of listening comprehension have been previously investigated by different researchers (e.g., Abdous, Camarena & Facer, 2009; Berry, 2006; Chester, Buntine, Hammond & Atkinson, 2011; Copestake, 2006; Chan & Lee, 2005; Faramarzi, Elekaei, & Biria, 2015; Faramarzi, Elekaei & Koosha, 2015; Hargis, Schofield & Wilson, 2008; McGarr, 2009; O'Bryan, & Hegelheimer, 2007). Although different multimedia devices and file formats were used in these studies, the medium of instruction was the traditional classrooms in which students had to be physically involved in the language classes. Some researchers like McGarr (2009) believed that podcasting can be utilized as a substitutional device for learners to review the learning materials. In that research, 'creativity' and 'accessibility' were considered as the fundamental features of podcasting. The supportive supplementary feature of podcasting in instructional curricula was also investigated by Chi and Chan (2011). In this paper, the complementary use of podcasting was regarded as a great advantage during a three month-treatment of practicing podcasting by students of Korean.

However, some studies found that the use of podcasting does not lead to a higher performance in developing language skills. For instance, in a study on the effect of podcasting on vocabulary building, Palalas (2009) found that despite its overwhelming acceptability rate, the incorporation of this tool mostly resulted in rote memorization of words.

Nonetheless, some other studies underscored the positive effect of podcasting. Allan (2007) explored the adequacy of podcasting on vocabulary building by creating a podcasting website to provide a platform for students to internalize words. Moreover, the use of podcasting to develop grammar, listening comprehension, and cultural diversity was the focus of a study by Chan, Chen, and Dopel (2011). Students received a thirteen-week treatment period of getting 14 podcasting lessons. The results indicated the superiority of students' performance.

Increased performance of students was also demonstrated in a study by Ducate and Lomicka (2009). In that study, the use of integrated podcasting materials was investigated in real classrooms. It was concluded that students performed outstandingly better as soon as they started downloading the podcasts to their personal computers.

In a comparative study, Lowman (2014) compared the use of podcasts and vodcasts in vocabulary development. It was concluded that the vodcasts group significantly outperformed the podcast one in both receptive and expressive skills. Additionally, Litchfield, Dyson, Wright, Pradhan and Courtille (2010) highlighted the superiority of vodcasting tasks in improving multimedia communication skills and raising the students' awareness about the potentials of the vodcasting technology. Furthermore, Sadeghi and Ghorbani (2017) found that implementing TED vodcasts had a significant effect on oral proficiency of Iranian EFL learners. In a different study, Faramarzi, Heidari Tabrizi, and Chalak (2019a) investigated the effect of video podcasting tasks on listening comprehension progress of the Iranian intermediate learners. The results indicated the superior performance of the students which was supported by a statistically significant increase in listening comprehension scores from pretest to posttest.

Although the literature review provides a predominant compromise on the positive impact of podcasting, most of the above-mentioned studies have different inadequacies like following a single-shot design, a short treatment period and small population size.

2.2. Learner's attitudes towards podcasting

The supplementary use of podcasting has received mixed reactions in former studies. Different criteria have been investigated in former academic treatments. Chan, Chi, Chin, and Lin (2011) examined the motivating effect of podcasting on students' feelings and perceptions and significant positive results were found as regards the motivating role of podcasting. Students were unanimous about its constructive effects and demanded to continue the same experience.

Similarly, in another study which was carried out on the impact of podcasting on teaching Spanish, Martin and Beckmann (2011) examined the ongoing use of podcasting technology during a four-year longitudinal program. Major sense of satisfaction and high approval rate were vastly observed by the students.

Today's hectic lifestyle obliges people to be in rush all the time and the occupational concerns minimize the amount of quality time to be spent on language learning. Podcasting has changed the studying pattern of learners. Berry (2006) accredited podcasting with different features such as "its portability, intimacy, and accessibility"

Supporting pedagogical and academic purposes is also an issue of prime importance. According to Hargis and Wilson (2005), “podcasting can promise a unique approach in improving foundational pedagogical approaches to information processing and conceptual learning” (p. 6). As any new teaching/learning style can be threatening for learners, Hargis and Wilson’s study highlights the role of training language learners before introducing this method into the educational system.

The podcasting technology which involves a user-friendly approach to receive the instructional materials can be considered as one of the prime reasons why it removes the affective barriers. For example, Chan and Lee (2005) argued that podcasting can considerably minimize the level of anxiety. Similarly, William and Michael (2007) demonstrated that 71% of students who reviewed the podcasting materials regularly regarded this experience as comfortable and user-friendly. Their reasons are also worth mentioning. The majority of participants chose this method because of interference of language classes with other classes and, as a result, no class is to be missed by subscribing to a particular podcasting channel.

Problem-solving has also been reflected as an important aspect of podcasting technology. Muppala and Kong (2007) revealed that they received excellent feedback from the students concerning the areas that they experienced difficulty with. As a result, it can be considered as a nice strategy to screen the students’ progress.

Moreover, the online setting is a great asset for this innovation since it diminishes the physical distance between the instructor and the learners and also among the peers (Bolliger, Supanakorn, & Boggs, 2010). The interactive environment provided a great venue to negotiate meaning. Therefore, the students’ involvement and participation can be maximized when there is a simple procedure to do it in virtual communities.

Nevertheless, like any other pioneering method, vodcasting can be the target of criticism. As an example, Read (2007) mentioned that the starting point should be very easy and comprehensible for all learners. As far as foreign language learning is concerned, this kind of technology can be very rewarding for non-native students who cannot adapt themselves with the pace of instruction (Muppala & Kong, 2007).

All in all, the attitudes towards the podcasting technology in language learning programs have been mostly positive. As an example, Chester et al. (2011) compared podcast users with non-users and stated that those who spent time reviewing podcasts had a higher level of self-efficacy. Podcasting users referred to the usefulness and convenience of the presented materials as an adjunct tool to catch up with the pace of instruction. Nonetheless, the non-users

had their own reasons for evading the technology as many of them preferred real face-to-face interaction with their teachers and classmates in the classroom environment.

Unlike the above-mentioned studies which mainly focused on the supplementary use of podcasting technology without having a specific justification of adherence to a particular language learning theory, this study particularly focused on the use of video podcasting in a complete distance language learning program. In other words, the whole process of assessment, delivery of podcasting materials, interaction with the participants, distribution of the electronic version of the questionnaire, technical troubleshooting, and getting feedback from the participants were all conducted in an e-learning environment.

3. The study

3.1. Design, participants and setting

The present study employed a pre-experimental design to collect observational and attitudinal data. Since the long-term effect of the treatment was of prime importance, one homogenous group was chosen to measure the effect of treatment. For this aim, 120 undergraduate male and female students of English translation program, aged 18 to 30, from Karaj Branch of Azad University in Iran were selected. Since the intermediate learners were needed, the participants were selected based on the results of a TOEFL iBT placement test which required them to receive 60 points out of 120 according to the criteria of Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The TOEFL iBT test was chosen for the placement test mainly because it could be administered in a computerized version which was in accordance with the online nature of the study.

For this study, a nonrandom purposive sampling of participants was considered. This kind of sampling was preferred since the study had to focus on a particular group of students at the intermediate level of proficiency and test their development through the treatment period.

The participants were introduced to a teacher-made online group in Telegram application which had been initially established by the researcher. Furthermore, all the briefing sessions on how to contribute in that environment were explained in an online forum. Telegram is a free messaging service which works based on the cloud-based system and is capable of synchronizing encrypted data across a multitude of independent data centers. It is compatible with all major operating systems e.g. iPhone, Android, Mac, Linux, and Windows. Additionally, it can be easily used on Desktop computers.

3.2. Instruments and materials

The instruments which were used in this experiment comprised both learning instruments and the measuring devices.

Twenty video podcasting tasks together with their assigned exercises in form of question files were presented to the participants. The tasks were extracted from various resources including British Council's website, the Australian Network, and BBC documentaries. Each week the tasks comprised one grammar learning task, one vocabulary building task, two news tasks, one lecture task, and one documentary task. Therefore, a total of one hundred tasks was presented to the learners during the whole treatment. The number of tasks was considered to comply with the essential requirements of the ten-week treatment period. The video files and their exercises were designed to promote all major skills and sub skills. Besides, students had an opportunity to negotiate meaning in an interactive forum. The contextualized use of English was emphasized. The participants were also encouraged to practice note-taking in order to internalize the great aspects of vocabulary e.g. useful phrasal verbs, collocations, and idioms. The tasks were further designed to promote the informal aspects of English language as well as its academic use.

The process of sending and receiving the tasks was fairly simple. The students could receive them at any time and do the task in their convenient studying hours as the vodcasting files were ready to be downloaded and played at any time. Table 1 shows the frequency of these tasks in different weekdays.

Table 1. Timetable of different vodcasts during the week

Weekdays	Task type	Length in each week	Number of exercises	Sources
Saturdays	Grammar Vodcasts	10 minutes	20	British Council
Sundays	Vocabulary Vodcasts	10 minutes	20	British Council
Tuesdays	Documentary Vodcasts	20 minutes	10	Australian Network
Wednesdays	Lecture Vodcasts	10 minutes	10	Lecture Ready
Thursdays	News Vodcasts	10 minutes	10	CNN and BBC

The Telegram application was considered for this study because of many reasons. The first and the foremost determining factor is that since it is highly popular in Iran, people have access to many different channels through it. Moreover, it is fast and supports all major file formats. Above all, the security system is designed to exchange files without receiving any

spam from third parties. The useful telegram robots or 'bots' were considered to make many operations easier for the participants. Similarly, the researchers made the best use of data gathering robots like 'vote bot' to speed up the process of data collection. In fact, this environment cut down all the unnecessary paperwork, and the unnecessary participants' presence (Faramarzi, Heidari Tabrizi, & Chalak, 2019b).

The Learner Engagement Questionnaire was designed to discover students' precise needs and feelings which ultimately explored the potentials and challenges of the program. The classified version of the questionnaire enabled the researchers to find the required information. The learners filled out the questionnaire via an online robot with a fully computerized mechanism.

The participants' involvement and their attitudes and feelings towards the treatment were measured by a six-scale engagement questionnaire, which was distributed electronically via 'vote bot' in the main forum of Telegram. In this questionnaire seven major criteria were

1. the effectiveness of the vodcasting process in the treatment;
2. participants' degree of satisfaction in working with the vodcasting tasks;
3. participants' willingness to continue the process in a long term practice;
4. the presentation style of learning materials;
5. the degree in which the treatment made the participants independent;
6. the convenience and the accessibility of vodcasting tasks throughout the whole treatment process;
7. the appropriateness of the allotted time in doing the required assignments (see Appendix for the full tool).

For each criterion four different items were included which tapped the central measure of the required concepts. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was also measured using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. Instead of sending doc files, the researchers made use of a voting robot system in which questions were presented to the participants on the main page of the channel and the responses were available in form of transparent tabs. The only burden to participate in the survey was a single touch on one of those tabs. Unlike the traditional questionnaires which were organized under a certain time constraint, the vote bot is very smart to change the votes, i.e. if you choose an alternative by mistake, or if you want to change your mind about a point, you can change the vote by touching another alternative to reverse the results which is impossible in the traditional type of questionnaires especially after submitting it. Moreover, unlike the traditional questionnaires, the physical presence of the subjects was not

necessary which signifies the virtual sense of e-learning. The admin user could update and terminate the results in the assigned time.

3.3. Data collection and analysis

Different vodcasting tasks were considered for this study. The researchers played the role of the admin user of the vodcasting channel and acted as troubleshooters in case anything unexpected appeared. First, a placement test was administered before starting the assignment to ensure the homogeneity of subjects. Then, the selected participants were invited to the Telegram channel as the major venue of education, which took two weeks. As long as the focus of attention was entirely on the effect of the treatment, only one homogenous group was considered. During the treatment process, the participants worked on different vodcasting tasks collaboratively (which took twelve weeks). In order to understand the participants' intentions during the treatment, the learner engagement questionnaire was conducted via the vote bot in the main forum of the channel. The data collection was made easy by getting the information from the vote bot results which took three days.

The attitudinal data were collected by analyzing the results of the questionnaire. The Learner Engagement Questionnaire (LEQ) was presented to the participants. Participants' attitudes in the questionnaire section were gathered in numerical values. The subjects pointed out their opinions about different criteria targeted in the questionnaire. The mean and the standard deviation of every question group related to the seven major criteria were investigated in detail. The questionnaire is available in the index section.

4. Results

Table 2 demonstrates the scores of each of thirty two items of the questionnaire on a 6-point scale (1-stronglydisagree, 2-disagree, 3-slightly disagree, 4-partly agree, 5-agree, 6-strongly agree) similar to the 6-point Likert Scale with four as the center point. According to Table 2, the mean scores above four reveal positive attitudes of the participants and those below four indicate negative attitudes of the participants.

Table 2. Questionnaire results indicating the participants' attitudes

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	“Strongly Agree” Ratings	“Agree” Rating	“Partly Agree” Ratings	“Slightly Disagree” Ratings	“Disagree” Ratings	“Strongly Disagree” Ratings
1	5.09	0.94	32	30	11	7	0	0
2	4.95	0.91	25	31	19	4	1	0
3	3.81	1.05	4	14	36	16	9	1

4	4.76	1.25	29	22	16	8	4	1
5	4.81	1.04	23	29	21	5	1	1
6	5.14	1.08	37	28	8	4	2	1
7	4.33	1.22	17	17	28	12	5	1
8	4.54	1.04	18	21	28	12	1	0
9	3.38	1.44	6	11	24	15	14	10
10	3.49	1.23	3	11	32	16	12	6
11	4.56	1.48	28	21	12	10	5	4
12	5.14	1.09	36	31	6	3	3	1
13	4.71	1.09	20	30	22	4	3	1
14	5.40	1.03	49	24	2	1	3	1
15	5.49	0.84	52	19	6	2	1	0
16	4.99	1.08	33	22	19	4	1	1
17	2.29	1.27	0	6	8	19	17	30
18	4.94	1.01	25	35	13	4	3	0
19	4.99	0.98	28	32	12	7	1	0
20	4.91	1.23	31	32	14	2	1	0
21	2.49	1.33	1	4	18	11	22	24
22	4.35	1.22	17	17	30	12	1	3
23	4.86	0.86	20	33	24	2	1	0
24	2.76	1.40	0	11	18	12	19	20
25	3.90	1.21	9	15	27	18	10	1
26	4.58	0.99	14	30	27	6	3	0
27	5.06	0.95	32	27	16	4	1	0
28	5.01	1.07	32	29	9	8	2	0
29	3.36	1.33	3	17	16	19	20	5
30	5.40	0.77	43	28	8	0	1	0
31	4.34	1.40	22	18	15	17	6	2
32	5.50	0.84	52	20	6	0	2	0
Total response			741	715	551	264	175	114

The mean of the overall questionnaire was 4.47 and the standard deviation was 1.05. It was vitally important to verify the reliability of the questionnaire since it was devised by the researcher. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was $\alpha = 0.98$. Moreover, all of the items had item-total correlations greater than 0.4. Therefore, the questionnaire items were reliably measuring the same construct.

First, we are going to consider the questions related to participants' attitudes towards improving their skills (questions no. 1, 13, 14 and 16). The means of these questions were higher than the central point (mean = 5.09, 4.71, 5.40, 4.99 respectively) indicating that the attitude of the participants towards improving their skills was totally positive (overall mean = 5.04).

Next, if we consider the questions about participants' overall satisfaction towards the experiment (questions no. 11, 12, 26 and 31), we can see that the means of these questions were higher than the central point (mean = 4.56, 5.14, 4.58, 4.34) meaning that the participants' satisfaction towards the experiment was positive. Thus, the participants' satisfaction towards the experiment was totally positive (overall mean = 4.65).

In addition, the means for the questions about the participants' willingness to continue the project (questions no. 6, 15, 30 and 32) were also higher than the central tendency (mean = 5.14, 5.49, 5.40, 5.50) specifying that the participants' willingness to continue the project was totally positive (overall mean = 5.38).

Moreover, the questions about the participants' attitude towards the presentation style of the materials had higher means than the central tendency (mean = 4.33, 4.54, 4.86, 3.36) revealing that the participants' attitude towards material presentation was positive (overall mean = 4.27).

Next, the questions about the participants' attitude towards independence and interaction with other members (questions no. 2, 18, 19 and 28) also showed higher mean cores than the central tendency (mean = 4.95, 4.94, 4.99, 5.01) meaning that the participants' attitude towards independence and interaction with other members was totally positive (overall mean = 4.97).

A similar case was with the questions about the participants' attitudes towards the organization of materials (numbers 4, 20, 21 and 27). The means of three of these questions were also higher than the central tendency (mean = 4.76, 4.91, 2.29, 5.06) revealing that the participants' attitude towards the convenience of organization of materials was positive (overall mean = 4.97).

Finally, the questions about the participants' attitude towards the appropriateness of time (numbers 5, 10, 22 and 25) also reported higher means for two of these questions and the mean of one of the questions is slightly lower than the central tendency (mean = 4.81, 3.49, 4.35, 3.90) meaning that the participants' attitude towards the appropriateness of time was positive (overall mean = 4.13).

To wrap up, the participants' attitudes towards improving their skills, the presentation style of materials, independence and interaction with other members, the convenience of organization of materials, the appropriateness of time, the participants' satisfaction towards the experiment, and the participants' willingness to continue the project were the positive aspects yielded by the study.

5. Discussion

In any curriculum design and pedagogical approach, the learners' opinions outline the roadmap of any teaching learning program. Likewise, the success or failure of any program can be predicted from learners' perspectives.

The method of distributing the questionnaire which was done electronically made subjects more motivated and yielded more verifiable results. The Learner Engagement Questionnaire (LEQ) tapped into the features of the treatment which thought to be substantial in the final results of the treatment. The statistical analysis of the questionnaire demonstrated the predominant positive results for almost all the items.

The participants indicated that the vodcasting technology had enhanced their listening achievement as well as other skills such as pronunciation, note taking, and vocabulary use. These findings clearly support the results of the study made by Chan, Chen, and Doppel (2011), in which gains in terms of grammar, listening comprehension and cultural differentiation were observed. Students' feedback to lessons was positive and constructive.

In addition, the sense of satisfaction was also the topic of discussion as another major criterion. The learners talked about the user-friendliness of the application and the suitability of the electronic facilities. Furthermore, they had regarded the vodcasting experience as enjoyable and the presence of the instructor had also been a rewarding point. These conclusions support the results of the study made by Martin and Beckmann (2011), in which a great sense of satisfaction was observed. Moreover, it clearly corroborated the findings of William and Michael (2007), in whose study 71% of students who reviewed the podcasting materials regularly treated the experience as comfortable and smoothing.

Furthermore, a question which might be interesting for many scholars is whether the participants are willing to continue such a program so that the results of the research can be more justifiable. Almost all of the participants unanimously voted for the superiority of the long-term effect of the video podcasting technique. These concluding issues obviously confirm the findings of Facer et al. (2009), who showed the participants were very satisfied with their improvements in listening, reading, speaking, grammar, and vocabulary. In addition, these findings validated those of Khanghah and Halili's (2015) findings as they investigated the effectiveness of podcasting on vocabulary enhancement of Iranian students. The researchers emphasized the flexibility feature of podcasting and remarked that this is a tool which can assist the curriculum process more conveniently.

Also, the way the instructional materials were presented is worth mentioning. The participants were inquired about the presentation style of the podcasting tasks. The majority of the participants were satisfied with the number of video podcasting tasks during a week. Moreover, they confirmed that the tasks were challenging enough to cope with. The only item in this group which did not reach a consensus point was the compromise over the appropriate facilities for receiving the vodcasts. The sense of satisfaction goes in line with the findings of

Abdous et al. (2009), whose students were really confident about the incorporation of this technique since it made the materials more comprehensible.

Moreover, an integral point in many pedagogical approaches in distance language learning programs is to provide a path to make learners independent. Most of the participants acknowledged that the vodcasting tasks made them more independent. In fact, a student-centered atmosphere is only established when learners consider themselves as independent which fosters peer connection. These results are in accordance with the findings of Zarei and Ghasemi (2016), who focused on the suitability of podcasting technology on enhancing the collaborative spirit of students of psychology.

Furthermore, the students reported to be more confident and acquired a higher level of self-assurance, which was in line with Chester et al. (2011), whose students had developed a high level of self-efficacy. The results showed that students were more motivated and it confirmed the findings by Chan, Chi, Chin, and Lin (2011) in which significant positive results was found about the motivating role of podcasting.

One of the fundamental aspects of video podcasting is the flexibility in time and time management. Most of the learners strongly confirmed that the online environment made the learning process more comfortable. These results were in accordance with the findings of Chan and Lee (2005), who claimed that podcasting could considerably minimize the level of anxiety. Nonetheless, the integral issue of peer collaboration in this study rejected the findings put forward by Palalas (2009), who emphasized little peer connection among the participants in online environments.

6. Pedagogical implications for e-learning projects and curriculum developers

Participants' positive attitudes towards the program clearly demonstrated the superiority of this innovative technology, which indeed validated the appropriateness of using vodcasting tasks in a comprehensive e-learning platform. This kind of technology can change the presentation style of materials and consequently may influence the studying habits of the students. Considering the fact that podcasting technology has the capability of promoting integrative tasks, this technique can maximize the chances of having permanent access to online learning materials. Furthermore, the online tasks were designed to work on different skills simultaneously. Revision and making the best use of the online classes undeniably gave students the opportunity to work on all major skills and sub-skills. For instance, various online pronunciation checking applications and robots might significantly change the learners' opinions about language learning and also motivate them to achieve native-like pronunciation

ability. Students could check their understanding within a process-oriented approach and by getting help from each other. Additionally, the vodcasting tasks were designed to promote the cooperative spirit of the learners since they facilitated peer connection and highlighted the necessity of troubleshooting. While many people mistakenly assume that virtual societies undermine the role of the instructor, it was observed that it facilitated access to the instructor.

Working on vodcasting tasks can be considered as a unique approach which can change the curriculum design. As far as the mounting appeal over cyber education is concerned, this instructional design can easily demonstrate itself as a stress-free situation where everybody can express themselves clearly and without any trouble. Besides, the multimedia nature of the vodcasting tasks together with a wide range of assignments encouraged the learners to review the video materials frequently and thus maximize the amount of exposure to language learning materials. It can change the studying habits of the learners to make them more autonomous.

However, the process of working with podcasting technology in online environments is a time-consuming experience and it requires persistence. It is a reminder that instructors should be competent and trained to eliminate the potential problems. Additionally, it necessitates recruiting teaching assistants to solve the problems if a bigger population of learners is concerned. Also, positive results and a growing sense of satisfaction and confidence can only be obtained gradually. Likewise, care must be taken to choose the most appropriate types of tasks for the learners. In other words, the tasks must be motivating, challenging, logical and meaningful. Therefore, the mere selection of podcasting technology may not make any difference.

7. Final conclusions

It is remarkable that nowadays podcasting technology has become versatile and can be implemented over a variety of different devices e.g. laptops, personal computers, smartphones, etc. As far as evaluation is concerned, the process of dynamic assessment has been made much easier since devising and coordinating tests were made very convenient. Last but not least, learning is facilitated when students are satisfied with what they are doing. All in all, vodcasting technology has the potential to provide a better opportunity for learners to engage in different activities and learn new material in a creative manner.

In terms of promoting speaking, video podcasting technology can greatly change the spirit of how to speak in a communicative environment. Routine vodcasting materials may promote speaking fluency and such oral preparation steps as brainstorming. The effect of this

approach on fluency, accuracy, and the ongoing process of how learners can implement these things are also some potential sources for further examination.

Moreover, the dynamic computerized assessment can be measured and checked by getting help from video podcasting technology. Learners' progress can be examined by comparing the group of podcast users who undergo routine dynamic assessment system and those who might receive them in a traditional way. Finding different testing factors which might facilitate or inhibit the learning process in the podcasting environment can also yield interesting results by implementing different test types. Students can also make their own video podcasts, share them online, and get the feedback from the peers, which can be another interesting area to investigate.

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Appendix. Learner Engagement questionnaire (LEQ)

Questions:

1. Video podcasting experience could help me understand the listening skill in different situations better.
2. After following twelve weeks of practicing video podcasts, I feel more confident in listening tests.
3. Computers are better than any other device in language learning and other things.
4. In this experience I could manage my time to practice listening by listening to the files in my convenient hours.
5. To me, Twelve weeks of receiving online instruction was a good start.
6. Video podcasts motivated me to work on listening skill more.
7. I feel the number of video listening exercises were enough to practice during a week.
8. In my opinion, the tasks organized for these video podcasts were suitable and challenging.
9. Using Smartphones makes a lot of problems for people these days.
10. I believe, it took a long time to do the video podcasting tasks.
11. For me, downloading the video podcasts was easy and user-friendly.
12. I can say that the admin user was helpful throughout the experience.
13. As far as I remember about the experience, video podcasting exercises were helpful in practicing note-taking.
14. I think I could improve my pronunciation by watching and following the video podcasts.
15. I am interested in continuing the video podcasting experience in a long-term process.
16. According to my experience in this group, video podcasting materials were helpful in enhancing my vocabulary level.
17. Computer education is not necessary for people.
18. I suppose by following more of these video podcasting videos, I can improve my speaking ability by my own.
19. In my eyes, by watching the video podcasts, understanding the intonation and complicated speech patterns became easier.
20. I think practicing Listening skill by video tasks was easy to do at home.
21. I had a lot of problems with getting access to the video files and their tasks.
22. I think the length of video files were appropriate.
23. In my view, organizing the video podcasting materials in different days of the week made it easy to follow.
24. Video podcasts made me angry about myself.
25. Apparently, the time of doing some of the tasks were very short.
26. The available technological facilities were enough to get access to video podcasts.
27. The online environment was suitable to receive the podcasts.
28. The online environment provided a good opportunity to interact with other people.
29. I'm afraid we needed more facilities to get the video podcasts.
30. In my opinion, I can get better results in a long-term project by practicing video podcasts in an online environment.
31. Discussing the content of the video podcasts with my friends was an enjoyable experience.
32. I feel if I continue with this process, I can enhance my English abilities.