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the University of Tizi-Ouzou

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Dedications

To my beloved parents, Arezki and Malika. My Brothers and sister; Abdenour, Sofiane, and Malak.

And all my friends and acquaintances.

KHELIFATI SAMIRA

To my beloved parents, Fatiha and Mohammed. My brothers and sisters; Adel, Amin, Lamia, and Celia. My little stars; Wissam, Mayas, and Ilyan. To my friends and all who supported me.

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Abstract

The development of ICT has introduced creative ways for English language learning. Among them, podcasts gained attention for their potential pedagogical benefits. Nevertheless, podcasts' educational value remains underexplored in Algeria, particularly when it comes to cultural awareness. Thus, this quasi-experimental study aimed to explore the impact of podcasts on enhancing the cultural awareness of EFL second-year Master's students in the Department of English at the University of Tizi-Ouzou. The study has three main objectives: (1) to assess students' levels of cultural awareness before and after listening to podcasts, (2) to determine if there are any statistically significant changes in their cultural awareness levels, and (3) to explore students' perceptions of podcasts as a tool to learn about different cultures. To achieve these objectives, a mixed-methods approach was adopted, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. Three research instruments were used to collect data. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used to analyse the quantitative data, while thematic analysis was used to analyse the qualitative ones. The findings were interpreted through the Intercultural Awareness Model developed by Baker. The findings showed that following podcast exposure, students' cultural awareness increased noticeably and significantly, moving from a basic level in the pre-test to a more advanced level in the post-test. In addition, students expressed positive opinions about podcasts, describing them as an effective means to learn about new cultures.

Keywords: Cultural awareness, EFL students, podcasts, quasi-experimental study

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List of Abbreviations

CA: Cultural Awareness

C1: First Culture

C2: Second Culture

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ICA: Intercultural Awareness

MMUTO: Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou

PC: Personal Computer

P-value: Probability value

TED: Technology, Entertainment, Design

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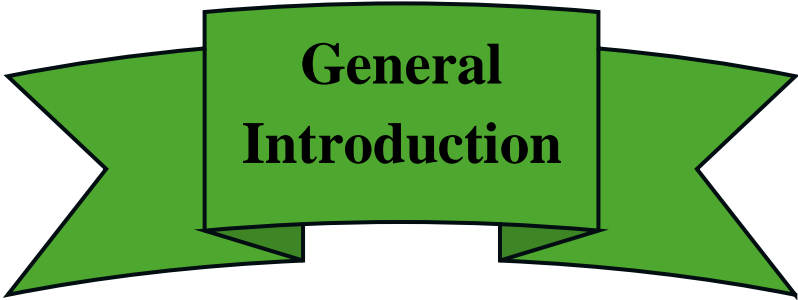
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**General
Introduction**

Statement of the Problem

In today's modern interconnected world, where globalization promoted communication and interaction among various cultures, cultural awareness was more essential than ever. Al-Sofi (2015) defined cultural awareness as “the ability of becoming aware of our cultural values, beliefs, and perceptions and that of others. It is an essential skill of cultural competence” (p. 10). As people found themselves in multicultural environments, they needed to be aware and capable of managing cultural differences, promoting collaboration, and establishing meaningful intercultural communication and relationships. Indeed, Al-Sofi (2015) highlighted that understanding cultural differences plays a key role in achieving effective intercultural communication. This skill was particularly crucial for students. Especially those learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), where cultural awareness played a crucial role for both mastering the language and communicating successfully. Language goes beyond just grammar and vocabulary; it is deeply connected with cultural expressions, idioms, and societal norms.

Additionally, cultural awareness fosters empathy and open-mindedness, enabling students to value different viewpoints. This has a particular importance in language learning, where the objective was not only to understand the technical aspects of a language but also to engage respectfully and thoughtfully with its speakers. In essence, cultural awareness was not merely an extra aspect of language learning; it was a fundamental component that allowed students to succeed in an increasingly diverse and interconnected landscape. Achieng (2023) emphasized that individuals who are more conscious are able to appreciate cultural diversity, overcome stereotypes, and embrace different cultures with greater openness and acceptance.

Even though cultural awareness is important, traditional teaching methods, such as textbooks, often lacked the depth students need to fully understand cultural differences.

Indeed, Astaifi and El Kirat El Allame's study (2024) revealed that "the textbooks did not integrate culture effectively to enhance learners' intercultural awareness" (p. 18). Textbooks frequently present an oversimplified view of cultures, relying heavily on generalizations and stereotypes. Astaifi and El Kirat El Allame's study (2024) found that "not all textbooks present the cultural content in a balanced and inclusive manner; they do sometimes include content reflecting bias, stereotypes, or an ignorance of the complexity and diversity of cultures" (p. 19). As cultures are not static, the static nature of textbooks can make them outdated and disconnected from current realities.

While textbooks had their place in education, they often failed to provide students with the depth of cultural awareness necessary for effective communication and engagement in today's globalized society. As a result, there was a growing need for more interactive, immersive, and diverse teaching approaches that reflected the realities of the interconnected world. Digital media, including podcasts, have gained significant popularity in educational contexts, allowing students to engage with diverse content. Podcasts were considered as a dynamic format that promoted storytelling and dialogue, permitting for the exploration of varied cultural settings in a way that textbooks often could not. This auditory medium helped humanize complex cultural concepts and encouraged listeners to think critically on their own cultural assumptions.

Despite their potential, there is a gap in research regarding the impact of podcasts on cultural awareness, especially in Algeria. Previous studies, such as *Raising EFL Students' Intercultural Awareness through Movies in English Language at MMUTO* conducted by Lakhdari and Iazourene (2023) at the University of Tizi-Ouzou, assessed how watching movies influenced learners' understanding and attitudes toward different cultures. However, research on the impact of podcasts in enhancing cultural awareness among EFL students has never been conducted at the University of Tizi-Ouzou. This gap highlighted

the unique contribution of this research, which aimed to measure the impact of podcasts on cultural awareness among learners using a quasi-experimental pre- and post-test design.

Aims and Significance of the Study

The general objective of the current research is to explore the impact of podcasts on enhancing the cultural awareness of EFL Master's students in the department of English enrolled at the University of Tizi-Ouzou during the academic year 2024-2025. This study is guided by three sub-objectives. The first objective is to measure students' cultural awareness before and after listening to podcasts. The second objective is to compare students' cultural awareness before and after listening to podcasts with the aim to identify any changes. The third objective is to explore students' perceptions of podcasts as a tool to enhance their cultural awareness.

This study is significant as it explores how podcasts can serve as an innovative tool to enhance cultural awareness in EFL students. By using a pre- and post-tests, the research aims to provide insights into how podcasts can be used as a new learning tool to bridge cultural gaps, and improve students' understanding of different cultures. The results may help educators integrate podcasts into their curriculum to improve their students' cultural awareness.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

In order to reach the above-mentioned objectives, the study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the level of EFL Master 2 students' cultural awareness before and after listening to podcasts?

General Introduction

2. Are there any changes in EFL Master 2 students' cultural awareness as a result of listening to podcasts?
3. How do EFL Master 2 students perceive the use of podcasts as a tool to enhance their cultural awareness?

To answer the above-mentioned research questions, the following hypotheses are formulated:

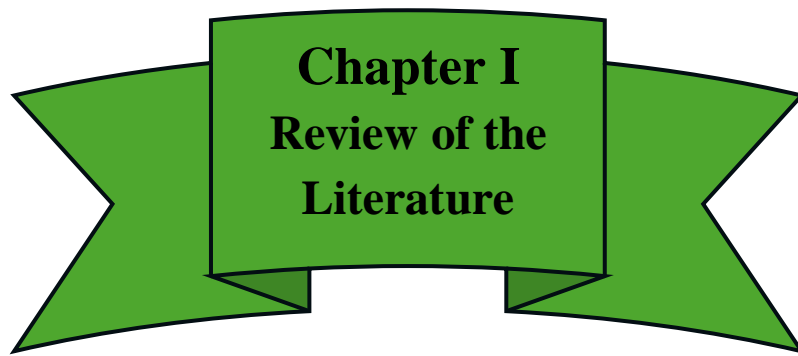
1. Listening to podcasts will contribute to the enhancement of EFL Master 2 students' cultural awareness.
2. There will be a significant increase in students' cultural awareness after listening to podcasts.
3. EFL Master 2 students will perceive podcasts as an effective tool to enhance their cultural awareness.

Research Techniques and Methodology

The present study is quasi-experimental in nature and involves a pre-test and a post-test to assess the effect of podcasts on cultural awareness among twenty-nine (29) EFL Master's students in the department of English enrolled at the University of Tizi-Ouzou during the academic year 2024-2025. First, the participants completed a pre-test to assess their initial level of cultural awareness. Afterward, they listened to five podcasts covering different English-speaking cultures. After finishing the listening task, the students completed a post-test to assess any changes in their cultural awareness. In addition to the pre- and post-tests, the participants answered a questionnaire about their perceptions of podcasts as a tool to enhance their cultural awareness. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to analyse the obtained results.

Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation follows the traditional simple model. It consists of a general introduction, four main chapters, and a general conclusion. The general introduction states the research problem, highlights the significance of the study, presents the research questions and hypotheses, gives brief descriptions of the methodology, and outlines the structure of the dissertation. The first chapter is named “Review of the Literature”; it defines key concepts and discusses the theoretical framework of the study. The second chapter is called “Research Design and Methodology”; it provides information about the study participants and the tools which were used. The third chapter is named “Presentation of the Findings”; it exhibits the results of the study. The last chapter is entitled “Discussion of the Findings”; it is concerned with the discussion and interpretation of the results. It also provides answers to the research questions and tests the validity of the hypotheses. Finally, the general conclusion summarises the main findings of the study. It also includes its limitations and suggests new areas for research.

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Chapter I
Review of the
Literature

Introduction

The present chapter aims to review the relevant literature of the study, which explores the impact of podcasts on enhancing EFL students' cultural awareness. First, it starts by defining culture, highlighting its various forms, and emphasizing its significance in language education. Then, it explains cultural awareness, differentiates it from intercultural awareness, stresses its significance in language education, and presents the challenges facing development. After that, it shifts to present podcasts, their characteristics, types, advantages, and their significant role in promoting cultural awareness. Finally, it ends with a presentation of the theoretical framework of the study.

I.1.Culture

I.1.1. Definition of Culture

Culture is one of the hardest concepts to define. The term does not have a single fixed definition and often changes over time. According to Duranti (1997), culture is “something learned, transmitted, passed down from one generation to the next, through human actions, often in face-to-face interaction and of course through linguistic communication” (p.24). In other words, culture is acquired, shared and passed on from one generation to the other through direct interaction and language between individuals, so that it is maintained over time. While Duranti's definition indicates that culture is transmitted, other scholars like Spencer-Oatey (2008) describes culture as a “fuzzy set” of values, beliefs, and behaviours that influence, but do not determine “each member's behaviour and his/her interpretations of the ‘meaning’ of other people's behaviour” (p.3). This means that even if culture influences how people act, it does not exactly decide what each individual will do or think. In addition, Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov (2010) define culture as “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others” (p. 6). They claim that culture creates a common mindset

between people of the same society. It helps set one group apart from another by shaping their beliefs and behaviours, and this is what makes each society unique.

I.1.2. Types of Culture: Big ‘C’ versus Small ‘c’ Culture

Culture is generally divided into two major types, which are big ‘C’ culture and small ‘c’ culture. For Lee (2009), big ‘C’ culture “represents a set of facts and statistics relating to the arts, history, geography, business, education, festivals and customs of a target speech society”, whereas small ‘c’ culture is “the invisible and deeper sense of a target culture” (p.78). According to Tomalin & Stempleski (1993), small ‘c’ culture or ‘behaviour culture’ includes “culturally-influenced beliefs and perceptions, especially as expressed through language, but also through cultural behaviours that affect acceptability in the host community” (p.6). Based on these definitions, big ‘C’ or surface culture represents the visible elements of culture like language, art, customs and history, while small ‘c’ or deep culture includes the invisible cultural characteristics such as values, beliefs, habits and communication patterns. Edward Hall’s Cultural Iceberg Model depicts the contrast between big ‘C’ and small ‘c’ cultures. In his model, Hall (1976) compared culture to an iceberg, demonstrating that only 10% of culture is visible whereas the other 90% remains invisible beneath the water surface. The awareness of both cultural factors is essential because visible and hidden cultural aspects may be acquired through education or by listening to podcast.

I.1.3. Importance of Teaching Culture in Language Education

Language and culture are interrelated and each one completes the other. Language plays an important role in transmitting and preserving culture, serving as a means to convey cultural thoughts, beliefs, values, and attitudes. As Byram (1989) states, “language pre-eminently embodies the values and meanings of a culture, refers to cultural artefacts and signals people’s cultural identity” (p.41). In addition, Sun (2013) says that “if there is

no culture, language will be like water without a source or a tree without roots” (p.371), demonstrating the relation between language and culture. This close connection between them indicates that acquiring a new language also requires learning a new culture. As a result, teaching culture should be an important part of the language learning process.

The teaching of culture has always been an area of interest among different researchers and teachers in foreign language education because of its great importance. The teaching of culture helps the students understand and appreciate other cultures; that is to say, it makes them value different lifestyles, thoughts, beliefs, and perspectives. As stated by Qu (2010), studying a foreign culture is a liberating experience because it encourages students “to develop tolerance of other viewpoints and other forms of thinking and behaving while understanding those of their own society or culture better” (p. 59). In other words, learning about different cultures helps students understand different points of view, be tolerant toward cultural differences, and have a deeper understanding of their own culture. For Tomalin & Stempleski (1993), culture is taught for two reasons: “to increase cultural awareness, and to promote cross-cultural interaction” (p.11). That is to say, culture teaching aims to develop students’ cultural awareness and their cross-cultural communication skills, helping them avoid any misunderstandings and communicate effectively when interacting with people from the target culture.

I.2. Cultural Awareness in Language Education

I.2.1. Definition of Cultural Awareness

According to Tomalin & Stempleski (1993), cultural awareness is defined as “sensitivity to the impact of culturally-induced behaviour on language use and communication” (p.5). That is to say, cultural awareness is the ability to understand how a person’s culture influences the way they speak, act, and communicate. It is about understanding the differences that exist between cultures and how they affect language use

and interactions. Another definition was introduced by Cortazzi & Jin (1999), stating that cultural awareness means “being aware of members of another cultural group: their behaviour, their expectations, their perspectives and values” (p.217). This means that cultural awareness involves being conscious that people from different cultures act and think differently.

I.2.2. Cultural Awareness versus Intercultural Awareness

Cultural awareness and intercultural awareness are two related but different concepts. According to Djafri (2021), cultural awareness “involves the ability of being conscious and able to recognize that people have various values, perceptions, and beliefs that result from their diverse cultural backgrounds” (p.345). In addition, he defines cultural awareness as being aware “of the similarities and differences between cultural groups which leads to showing respect towards the others and accepting their opinions, feelings and rights even if they are different to our own culture” (p.345). That is to say, cultural awareness is about understanding, appreciating and being conscious of cultural differences.

Intercultural awareness goes beyond understanding different cultures. As Djafri (2021) states, “Intercultural awareness appears when people meet others from different cultures and start to interact with them in order to build productive relationships and operate effectively in a world of globalization” (p.346). In other words, intercultural awareness refers to the ability to effectively communicate and establish relationships with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. Instead of basically understanding and acknowledging cultural differences, it necessitates actively engaging with individuals from diverse backgrounds.

I.2.3 Importance of Cultural Awareness in Language Education

Cultural awareness plays an important role in language education. According to Tomlinson (2001), cultural awareness helps learners appreciate and value different cultures, including their people and their languages, and enables them to have a better understanding of

both their own and others' cultures. Tomlinson (2000) explains that “an increased cultural awareness can help us to achieve cultural empathy and sensitivity” (p.9). This means that cultural sensitivity, which is recognizing and valuing the differences between cultures, and cultural empathy, which is the capacity to understand and feel what other people go through in their lives, are both facilitated and promoted by cultural awareness. Similarly, Tomlinson & Masuhara (2004) maintain that cultural awareness enhances tolerance and open-mindedness in students, helping them develop both cultural sensitivity and empathy. Moreover, Djafri (2021) highlights the dual impact of cultural awareness by saying that “On one hand, they [students] gather knowledge about different cultures and on the other hand, they learn how to develop their empathy to deal with the cultural diversity” (p. 345). This demonstrates that cultural awareness achieves two main goals: it provides students with valuable information about other cultures and develops the required empathy to understand and value cultural differences. Furthermore, Boudjelal (2023) emphasizes that “Such well-developed cultural awareness will help learners overcome stereotypes and prejudices about their own as well as the target culture” (p.382). That is to say, having an advanced cultural awareness enables the students to avoid making negative assumptions or judging both their own and other cultures. To sum up, cultural awareness is very important in language education because it develops empathy, sensitivity, tolerance and open-mindedness, promotes respect for cultural differences, and challenges stereotypes and prejudice.

I.2.4. Challenges in Developing Cultural Awareness

The development of cultural awareness is important but faces several challenges. The first challenge is stereotypes and prejudice. Stereotyping means making negative generalizations about a particular group and prejudice means judging individuals based on stereotypes (Byram et al., 2002). This can lead to misunderstandings between different cultures and disrespect for them and their people. The second challenge is limited exposure to

diverse cultures, which refers to the absence of interaction with individuals from various cultures. This lack of exposure and interaction increases the possibility of cultural misunderstandings (Brown, 1987). Resistance to change is another obstacle to the development of cultural awareness. Resistance to change involves unwillingness to embrace and accept new situations, opinions, or practices. This hinders cultural awareness by causing conflicts between people from different cultural backgrounds, lower productivity, and isolating individuals socially.

I.3. Podcasts as an Education Tool

I.3.1 Definition and Characteristics

The word podcasting “was declared the 2005 word of the year by the New Oxford American Dictionary” (Johnson & Grayden, 2006, p. 206). This shows the significant development of podcasts as a medium. According to Patterson (2006), the term podcast is “a combination of ‘iPod,’ Apple’s well-known portable media device, and ‘broadcast’ (p. 103). The combination of technology and traditional media made it easier to access audio content. In addition, the ability to share knowledge with people around the world made content creation and distribution more accessible than ever before.

Many scholars have defined podcasting in different ways. For example, Meng (2005) defines podcasting as recording an audio event, song, speech, or mix of sounds and sharing it online. Patterson (2006) provides a more detailed definition, stating that the term podcast has two meanings:

First, podcasting is the transmission of multimedia files over the Internet. Rather than being received and opened with different plug-ins, podcast files are ready for viewing on either a PC or other devices, such as an iPod...Second, ... podcast also refers to their content. Frequently, podcasts are files that are sent at regular intervals. For example, many of the morning news programs are available as podcasts on a daily basis to download for listening or viewing at an individual’s convenience. (p. 103)

This indicates that no additional software is needed to view podcasts on a computer or other devices. Users have the choice to listen to them immediately or to keep them for later. In addition, podcasts are published regularly, so that people can download them and have access to watch or listen to them at any time.

Patterson's definition highlights two core features of podcasts. The first feature is that podcasts are digital audio or video files that can be downloaded from the internet. The second characteristic is that people can access podcasts anytime and anywhere, making it convenient for users with busy schedules. Other characteristics of podcasts include variety of content, cost-effectiveness, and availability. As stated by Patterson (2006), podcasts cover many different topics. Indeed, by May 2006, "Apple's iTunes offered more than 67,000 podcast topics, including 21 general categories ranging from science to religion, radio to movies and TV, business to comedy, and food and health to politics" (Patterson, 2006, p. 103). In addition, Patterson (2006) indicates that podcasts are free to access due to the availability of free tools like Audacity. Moreover, podcasts can hold a significant educational value, particularly in the academic sector, where they make "course content, lectures, notes, supplemental materials, available for student use 24/7" (Patterson, 2006, p. 105).

I.3.2 Types of Podcasts

Podcasts can be categorized into three different types. The most popular type of podcasts is audio podcasts. As their name suggests, they are basic podcasts containing only audio content with no visuals. These are the simplest podcast to create and listen to, and they are available in MP3 format. Audio podcasts are often referred to as "podcast novels," which are similar to audio books. They allow chapters to be shared online as a series of audio recordings (Fernandez, 2009).

In contrast, video podcasts, also known as vodcasts, contain both video and audio files. This type is more complex, time-consuming, and often more expensive to produce. MP4

is the most common format for video podcasts (Salmon & Edirisingha, 2008), which are primarily accessed through platforms like YouTube or websites.

A newer and more special type is enhanced podcasts, also known as mixed-media podcasts. These podcasts include both audio and visual elements such as slides, images, photographs, short videos, and chapters to make the podcast more interactive. This type of podcast allows users to increase their perception about the topic. Enhanced podcasts are usually in MP4 format and can only be played on personal media players with video capabilities or on a computer with iTunes (Rosell-Aguilar, 2007).

I.3.3. Popularity and Benefits of Podcasts in Language Education

In the field of language education, podcasts have gained significant popularity as a dynamic tool for enhancing learning experiences. In the past, radio and TV broadcasts were the primary sources before the internet to be used in language learning (Ramirez, 2024). However, thanks to technological advancements, podcasts gained popularity. Technology has revolutionized the field of education (Mohammed Al Muhtadi, 2013), and podcasts are now considered one of the most important tools in teaching languages. When podcasting first gained popularity, researchers became curious about how to use it for educational purposes. They noticed that podcasts are a suitable and simple tool that can be motivating for students. They provide learners with real-life listening practice, exposure to diverse accents, and cultural insights, making learning more enjoyable and flexible.

As Ramirez (2024) states, podcasts are “a widespread and relevant technical tool in modern language learning, especially for English language learners. Their flexibility and on-demand accessibility resonate strongly with the younger generation, enabling access to language-learning resources anytime and from any location” (p. 47). Ramirez (2024) further explains students can enhance their listening comprehension skills by listening to podcasts that expose them to authentic language use in various. In addition, regular exposure to fluent

speech and helps learners improve their pronunciation and speaking abilities. Moreover, listening to podcasts helps students learn new vocabulary and expressions (Ramirez, 2024). Furthermore, as Kidwell (2023) notes, “podcasts help students gain insight into a wide variety of global cultures and offer them the opportunity to experience a new culture through their mobile devices” (Kidwell, 2023, p. 9). In other words, podcasts help students learn new facts and information about different cultures, which makes them an important tool to enhance cultural awareness.

I.3.4. The Role of Podcasts in Promoting Cultural Understanding

As McBride (2009) notes, “authentic podcasts are a rich source of cultural and pragmatic information” (p. 154). In this sense, podcasts have emerged as an effective medium for fostering cultural understanding by offering accessible platforms for diverse voices, enabling listeners to comprehend opinions that differ from their own. By allowing people from different cultural backgrounds to share their personal experiences, stories, and traditions, these audio platforms help to break down cultural boundaries. In addition, “Listening to a social group’s podcasts can allow students to feel more a part of that culture” (Craig et al., as cited in McBride, 2009 ,p.158). This means that podcasts promote understanding and emotional connection with other cultures.

In the context of language learning, podcasts offer students access to online audio and video materials that help them become more involved and familiar with the target language cultural context. Podcasts are recognized as a useful resource for learning about the history and culture of regions where the target language is spoken (Hoon & Hasan, 2013; cited in Ramirez, 2024). By exposing students to authentic cultural content, podcasts open the gateway to discover both the foreign language and the foreign culture, all while helping them develop their autonomy in assessing their linguistic skills and cultural awareness. Students

can learn and understand the language and cultural variations that affect its usage, due to this immersive approach.

I.3.5 Research on the Use of Podcasts in the Algerian EFL Context

Some studies have already been conducted on the educational role of podcasts in the Algerian EFL context. For instance, Guettaftemam (2016) investigated the effect of podcasts on developing second-year EFL students' pronunciation using a quasi-experimental study with two groups at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra. The first group learned word stress using British English podcasts, while the second group learned through traditional phonetic classes. Both groups were tested before and after the experiment to see if podcasts caused any changes. The tests revealed that the integration of podcasts aids learners in improving their pronunciation better than the traditional method used with the control group.

Another study was conducted by Bendjeddou & Bakouche (2017) who examined the effectiveness of using podcasts to enhance third-year EFL students' listening comprehension skills. The study used a quasi-experimental design that involved two groups of sixteen students at Mila University. The experimental group practiced listening with extra podcast sessions (TED Talks, documentaries, songs), while the control group had normal listening classes. In addition to the pre-test and post-test, questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data. The results showed that before the experiment, both groups scored similarly. However, after the treatment, the podcast group improved, while the scores of the regular class group decreased. From the questionnaires, 62% of students enjoyed podcasts, while a few of them faced problems like poor audio quality and anxiety. In addition, the interview findings revealed that teachers agreed that podcasts are useful for listening skills, but suggested that schools need better equipment (headphones, audio quality) and more listening practice for better outcomes.

A third study was conducted by Rehouma (2019) who investigated the use of podcasts to enhance third-year EFL students' speaking skill at the University of Eloued relying on questionnaires and interviews as data collection instruments. The results revealed that the majority of students (87%) found podcasts helpful for speaking, listening, and pronunciation, though some struggled with fast speech and poor audio quality. In addition, teachers agreed that podcasts could be useful, but faced some challenges. The results showed that podcasts help students practice speaking naturally, learn new vocabulary, and improve pronunciation through listening to native speakers. However, for better results, schools need better technology (good internet and audio equipment) and both teachers and students should be trained on how to use it effectively. The author concluded that podcasts are a valuable tool for English learning when supported with the right resources.

A more recent study was conducted by Bounab & khalat (2022) who investigated the effect of using podcasts on first-year EFL learners' speaking performance at the University of Jijel. Two groups were involved in the study. The experimental group was exposed to podcasts for four weeks while the control group had regular lessons. The results showed that before the experiment, both groups had similar speaking performance, but after, the podcast group improved much more than the regular class group. The results showed that podcasts help enrich vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. In addition, the teachers agreed that podcasts are useful but noted a few challenges, like student anxiety and technical problems in language labs. The study suggests that schools should use podcasts more in speaking classes, and fix equipment issues. In summary, podcasts proved effective for improving speaking skills when properly implemented.

While these studies explored the impact of podcasts on various aspects of EFL learning such as speaking performance, listening comprehension, pronunciation, and speaking skills, none of these studies focused on the impact of podcasts on cultural awareness in the

Algerian EFL context. This creates a research gap for further investigation. Thus, this study will address this gap in literature by providing new insights into how podcasts can develop cultural awareness among EFL learners in Algeria.

I.4. Theoretical Framework

I.4.1. Baker's Model of Intercultural Awareness (2011)

The current study relies on Baker's Intercultural Awareness (ICA) model, first introduced in his 2011 article entitled *Intercultural Awareness: Modeling an Understanding of Cultures in Intercultural Communication through English as a Lingua Franca*. In his article, Baker introduced three levels of intercultural awareness. He states that "three levels have been proposed moving from basic cultural awareness to advanced cultural awareness and finally intercultural awareness" (Baker, 2011, p. 10). In other words, the stages of basic cultural awareness, advanced cultural awareness, and intercultural awareness, progress from a simple understanding of cultural facts to deeper insights, and finally to the ability to adapt and communicate effectively across cultures. Each level builds upon the previous one (Baker, 2011). Therefore, Baker's model explains how people develop intercultural awareness over time by learning how to navigate and respect diverse cultural perspectives.

I.4.1.a. Basic Cultural Awareness

According to Baker (2011), basic cultural awareness is the first step toward a deeper cultural understanding. He further explains that "Level 1, basic cultural awareness (CA), shows aspects of CA which are related to an understanding of cultures at a very general level, with a focus on the first culture (C1), rather than specifically oriented to intercultural communication" (Baker, 2011, p. 11). This means that at this level, people are aware that other cultures have different traditions and social norms, but they may lack detailed knowledge about them.

1.4.1.b. Advanced Cultural Awareness

Baker (2011) explains that the basic level of cultural awareness leads to “level 2 of CA, which involves a deeper and complex understanding of cultures” (p. 12). Unlike basic cultural awareness, where awareness of other cultures may be based on general knowledge, advanced cultural awareness entails learning more particular information about different cultures.

This involves awareness of various cultures’ traditions and communication styles and how these cultural differences impact communication (Baker, 2011).

According to Baker (2012), cultural awareness is “related to developing an understanding of and comparisons between a C1 and a C2 or a number of C2s, for example, the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia” (p. 65). This means that cultural awareness involves understanding and comparing different cultures. However, intercultural awareness goes beyond cultural awareness.

1.4.1.c. Intercultural Awareness

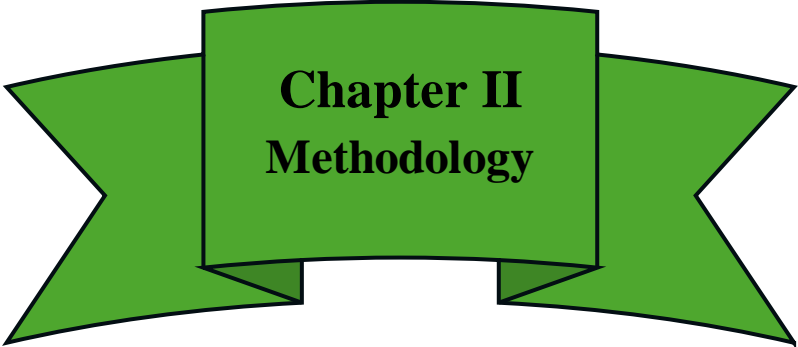
Intercultural awareness goes beyond the idea that cultures are fixed and unchangeable. It involves applying knowledge about cultural differences to communicate smoothly with people from different cultures.

This study focuses on cultural awareness rather than intercultural awareness. Therefore, only the first two levels of Baker’s Intercultural Awareness model are taken into consideration. To be more specific, this model is particularly useful in evaluating whether podcast exposure helps learners move from basic to advanced cultural awareness by immersing them in authentic cultural content.

Conclusion

The present chapter has covered the main concepts and theoretical framework of the study. It first explained what culture means and why it is important in language education. Then, it defined cultural awareness, differentiated it from intercultural awareness, highlighted

the importance of developing cultural awareness, and presented some challenges in developing cultural awareness. Afterwards, it introduced podcasts and their types, pointed out the benefits and role of podcasts in promoting cultural awareness, and summarized studies related to the use of podcasts in the Algerian EFL context. In the end, it explained the theoretical framework upon which this study is based, which is Baker's Intercultural Awareness model. The next chapter will explain the research design and methodology of the study.

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Chapter II
Methodology

Introduction

This chapter presents the research design of this study. It first explains the research method and study design. Then, it describes the research participants, sampling technique, the five podcasts, and data collection tools, including a pre-test, post-test, and a post-podcast questionnaire. Afterwards, it clarifies the data collection and data analysis procedures. Finally, it highlights the ethical considerations of the study.

II.1. Research Method and Design

The study employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods to assess the impact of podcasts on students' cultural awareness. As stated by Dawadi et al. (2021), "A mixed-methods approach is a research methodology in its own right." (p. 27). It is regarded as a unique methodology because it "might be superior to a single method as it is likely to provide rich insights into the research phenomena that cannot be fully understood by using only qualitative or quantitative methods." (Dawadi et al., 2021, p. 27). In other words, to have a more complete understanding of the research problem, a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods in a single research study is necessary, rather than using qualitative or quantitative methods alone. In this study, quantitative data are collected from a pre-test, post-test, and the closed-ended questions in the questionnaire, while qualitative data are obtained from the open-ended questions in the questionnaire. This mix of qualitative and quantitative methods provides statistical results, as well as students' perceptions of podcasts.

The research design for this study is quasi-experimental with pre-test and post-test measurements to evaluate changes in cultural awareness level after exposure to culturally themed podcasts. The study is quasi-experimental with no control group because it aims to examine the effects of podcasts on all the participants. This approach allows to identify changes in cultural awareness resulting from exposure to podcasts, rather than comparing

the results between different groups. According to Chiang et al. (2015), “In a pretest-posttest design, the dependent variable is measured once before the treatment is implemented and once after it is implemented.” (p. 149). In the current study, the dependent variable is cultural awareness, which is measured before and after exposure to podcast in all the participants.

II.2. Research Participants and Sampling Technique

The participants of the present study are EFL Master 2 students enrolled at the University of Tizi-Ouzou during the academic year 2024-2025. The sample consists of twenty-three (23) students who are currently specialising in Foreign Language Didactics, while some come from various other specializations, including Literature and Interdisciplinary Approaches, Language and Communication, and Comparative Literature.

The sampling method used in this study is convenience sampling, where participants are selected based on their availability and proximity to the researcher. As explained by Golzar et al. (2022), “convenience sampling is frequently utilized in education and social sciences where researchers have ready access to existing target populations.” (p. 73). Since our research participants are easily accessible and willing to participate, they form a convenient group for the present study.

II.3. Description of the Podcast

In this study, five podcasts were carefully selected, each focusing on distinct cultural aspects, with consideration for accents, language complexity, and length comprehension. Each podcast features different, easily understandable accents, allowing students to experience a range of English dialects. This helps students learn about other cultures without confusion. As well as the length of each podcast ensures that students can focus and retain information effectively. The first podcast, “*Politeness, Mind Your P’s and Q’s*” from *The British Culture Club*, is an interview discussing British politeness norms

like queuing, polite language, over-apologizing, and avoiding conflict. The second podcast, “*History of Canadian Thanksgiving*” from *Canadian Citizenship Podcast*, is a narrative explanation of the differences between the United States and Canada’s Thanksgiving. It explores historical roots dating (back to 1578) and modern traditions (including turkey and pumpkin pie). The third podcast, “*Embracing Christmas in Australia*” from *New Life in Australia*, hosted by Karen Bleakley explores the unique experience of celebrating Christmas in Australia and highlights summer holiday adaptations like beach barbecues and “Christmas in July”. The fourth podcast, “*Do Not Bring This Up to Americans*” from *Speaking American English Podcast*, explores the cultural taboo around discussing salaries with Americans. This podcast explains why such a topic makes Americans uncomfortable. The fifth podcast, “*Saint Patrick’s Day*” from *The Irish Accent Podcast*, offers a cultural overview on the global celebration of Ireland’s national holiday. This podcast discusses the origins of Saint Patrick’s Day, its global celebrations (parades, green-dyed rivers), and connection to pub culture. These podcasts were chosen for their relevance to cultural norms and varied formats (interviews, narratives). All the episodes were sourced from Spotify, with direct links provided for reference in Table 1.

Table 1

Overview of the Selected Podcasts

Podcast	Format	Duration	Link
Politeness, mind your P’S and Q’S (the British culture Club)	Interview	~14 minutes	https://open.spotify.com/episode/2D7c2tsaMXcjcFrHEsMJew?si=42554e95608d40ea
History of Canadian Thanksgiving (Canadian	Narrative	~9 minutes	https://open.spotify.com/episode/3zhITfhKrNLOeyS2Fzo4v8?si=12b0604b5a574320

 citizenship)

Embracing Christmas in Australia (new life in Australia)	Narrative	~14 minutes	https://open.spotify.com/episode/4sU0WXVrTWdlh9inTtWrMQ?si=90aa352430074cf9
Do not bring this up to Americans (speaking American English podcast)	Narrative	~8 minutes	https://open.spotify.com/episode/6iQ1DgwFW1vnXQoQnbmTPU?si=5f5dd5d9817d41da
Saint Patrick's Day (The Irish Accent)	Narrative	~5 minutes	https://open.spotify.com/episode/6N3P5eZg43b46mGwODbvP9?si=7c21de2e02b349ce

II.4. Data Collection Instruments

II.4.1. Pre-Test/Post-Test

To check the students' cultural awareness baseline, a pre-test was used before engaging with podcasts. It includes different types of questions and is divided into four sections (See Appendix A). The first section has three multiple-choice questions, where the participants are asked to tick or select one option. The second section includes four true or false questions, where participants must determine the accuracy of each statement and correct any false ones. The third section consists of two open-ended questions, allowing the participants to answer based on their prior knowledge before engaging with the podcasts. Finally, the fourth section uses a Likert-scale questions designed to assess students' attitudes toward cultural differences.

Before administering the pre-test, it was first piloted with five EFL Master 2 students who are not involved in the main study to ensure clarity and avoid confusion. As Dźwigoł

(2020) explains, “In order to avoid confusion with an erroneously devised data collection tool, a pilot study should be carried out.” (p. 6). The piloting phase took place on Wednesday, April 9th, 2025, and all the participants agreed on the clarity and the reasonable length of the questions, with each participant taking around 5 to 7 minutes to complete it. Additionally, during the piloting phase, some participants expressed interest and curiosity in certain cultural topics covered in the test, mainly Saint Patrick’s Day and the Australian Christmas traditions. The same test was used as a post-test to measure students’ cultural awareness after podcast exposure.

II.4.2 Questionnaire

To explore students’ perceptions of podcasts as a tool to learn new cultural aspects and enhance their cultural awareness, a questionnaire was designed using Google Forms and https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfzz4dRF8JJnK_lIzxZuigK_iUhD-0DLIZXDEEPuCpLJGzFg/viewform?usp=header link was sent to the participants via Messenger. According to Taherdoost (2022), a questionnaire “is based on a set of questions to gather data from respondents. Questions are the translated form of what researchers need for their study, which can be addressed using the answers of the respondents.” (p. 8). In simple terms, a questionnaire is a collection of questions designed by the researcher to gather answers from the respondents. It can be conducted online, sent via email, or simply administered in person (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

The designed questionnaire contains seventeen questions and is divided into four sections (See Appendix B). The first section, *General Information*, contains two questions aiming to gather basic participants’ details, including gender and academic specialization. The second section, *Students’ Previous Podcast Listening Habits*, consists of three closed-ended questions designed to assess how often and what types of podcasts participants listen

to. The third section, *Students' Perceptions of Podcasts for Cultural Learning*, explores students' perceptions of podcast as a tool for cultural education using seven Likert questions. The fourth section, *Podcasts' Impact on Cultural Awareness and Future Use*, contains five open-ended questions designed to check if podcasts influence cultural understanding and whether students intend to continue listening to them.

Before distributing the questionnaire to the actual participants, it was first piloted with five EFL Master 2 students who are not part of the main study to refine clarity. The piloting phase was conducted on Thursday, May 8th, 2025. Since the pilot study did not reveal any problems with the questions' clarity, it was administered online to ensure anonymity, with an introductory paragraph emphasizing voluntary participation and academic use of data. The combination of close-ended and open-ended items allows for both quantitative analysis and qualitative insights into students' experiences.

II.5. Data Collection Procedure

Before administering the pre-test to the participants, it went through a piloting phase first. This phase was conducted to verify and confirm the quality, clarity, and effectiveness of the test questions and identify any ambiguities in them before they are officially distributed to the actual participants. After the pilot phase, the pre-test was administered to the participants, electronically via a Messenger group which was created specifically for this purpose, and in return, they were required to submit their answers via email to track individual responses and facilitate comparison with the post-test results. This pre-test was sent on Tuesday, April 15th, 2025, before the participants listened to any of the selected podcasts.

After collecting students' pre-test answers, the podcast listening phase started. During this process, each student listened individually to the online episodes. The links to the podcasts' episodes were sent to them via the Messenger group that was created for the study,

allowing the students to access them easily and directly. Every three days, a podcast link was sent to the participants until the end of the five podcast episodes.

After students listened to all the podcasts, a post-test was administered on Monday, May 5th, 2025. This test was sent to them through the same Messenger group that was used during the pre-test distribution stage, as well as the podcast listening phase. The participants were required to send their responses via email, just as they did in the pre-test phase. In order to assess if there were any changes in the students' cultural awareness after their exposure to podcasts about various cultures, the post-test included the same questions as the pre-test.

At the end, the participants were required to complete a questionnaire to gather input on their opinions and experiences with the podcasts. It was administered to the students on Sunday, May 11th, 2025. This questionnaire's main goal was to gain insights about the participants' perceptions of the role of podcasts in improving their cultural awareness.

II.6. Data Analysis Procedures

In order to analyze the gathered data from the pre-test, post-test, and questionnaire, both quantitative and qualitative data analysis procedures were employed.

II.6.1. Quantitative Analysis

To examine the quantitative data, both descriptive and inferential statistical methods were employed. Descriptive statistics, including the mean, minimum, maximum, and percentages, were used to analyze the pre-test and post-test results, as well as the closed-ended questions from the questionnaire. The pre-test and post-test were graded out of ten points to determine the mean, minimum, and maximum scores. Google Forms made it easier to determine the percentages by automatically creating graphs that display the percentages of answers for each of the questionnaire's closed-ended questions.

Inferential statistics were used to compare the pre-test and post-test results using a paired t-test. This analysis allowed to identify any significant changes in the participants' cultural awareness before and after exposure to the five podcasts covering different cultures. According to Ross et al. (2017), "A paired-samples t-test compares the mean of two matched groups of people or cases, or compares the mean of a single group, examined at two different points in time." (p.17). In the current study, the mean scores of the same group of participants were compared before and after listening to podcasts through the paired-samples t-test. In order to administer this test, each student's pre-test and post-test results were initially entered in Microsoft Excel 2016. After that, the Excel options were used to activate the Data Analysis Toolpack, which enables the operation of statistical tests, as it was not yet active. In order to perform the test, the Data tab was opened, Data Analysis was selected, t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means was chosen, pre-test and post-test scores were entered, a location for the results was chosen, and the test was started by clicking OK.

II.6.2. Qualitative Analysis

For the qualitative data obtained from the open-ended questions, thematic analysis was applied. This process involves reading the participants' responses several times to become familiar with the data, followed by coding significant statements, and then classifying them into key emerging themes. As Jowsey et al. (2021) explain, "Thematic analysis is a popular method for systematically analyzing qualitative data, such as interview and focus group transcripts. It is one of a cluster of methods that focus on identifying patterns of meaning, or themes, across a data set." (p. 472). In the present study, thematic analysis is perfect for investigating students' perceptions of podcasts as it allows the identification of themes in their opinions and experiences.

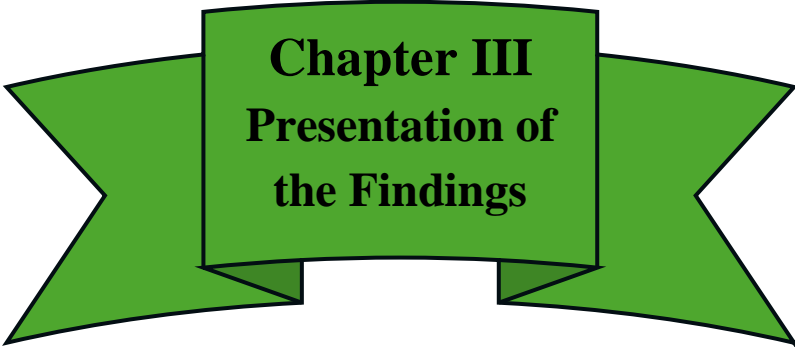
II.7. Ethical Considerations

Before starting the study, the participants were informed about its purpose and process. This was done through a face-to-face conversation with most of them, while those who were not available in person were contacted via Messenger. The purpose of the study was explained, emphasizing that it aimed to investigate how podcasts influence cultural awareness. To maintain clarity and transparency, the participants were also informed about the various steps of the study. These steps involved taking a pre-test as a first step, followed by listening to five podcasts about different cultures, then taking a post-test, and completing a questionnaire as a last step. In addition, they were informed about how long this process would take, so they participated with full awareness of it. Furthermore, it was emphasized that their personal information and responses will be kept private and will be used only for research purposes. For instance, they were reassured that even if their names would be initially included in the pre-test and post-test to facilitate the comparison of their scores, their names would be replaced by codes during data analysis to ensure their anonymity. Moreover, the participants were informed that their participation was voluntary, and they had the complete right to leave the study at any time.

After explaining all this, twenty-nine (29) participants agreed to participate, but three left the experiment without participating at all. Therefore, twenty-six students answered the pre-test; however, three students did not take the post-test resulting in their exclusion due to the impossibility to compare between their pre-test and non-existent post-test scores, reducing the number of participants to twenty-three (23). Additionally, only twenty-one (21) students responded to the questionnaire. Their withdrawals could be justified by their lack of time and busy schedules, since they are occupied with their dissertations.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the research design and methodology adopted in this study. It began by clarifying that the research adopts a quasi-experimental design, justifying the reasons behind choosing this kind of design. The chapter then described the participants involved in the study and explained the sampling technique used to select them. In addition, the data collection tools were outlined, followed by a description of the data collection procedure. Finally, the chapter outlined the procedures of data analysis and highlighted the study's ethical considerations. The following chapter, Presentation of the Findings, presents the gathered results from the pre-test, post-test, and questionnaire.

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Chapter III
Presentation of
the Findings

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings obtained from the pre-test, post-test, and the questionnaire administered to the study participants. It is divided into four parts. The first two sections are devoted to the presentation of the pre-test and post-test findings. The third section deals with the comparison of the pre-test and post-test findings. The fourth part is concerned with the presentation of the results obtained from the post-podcast questionnaire. The findings of the quantitative data are presented in tables and diagrams (pie and bar charts), followed by short commentary passages. The qualitative findings are presented thematically.

III.1. Pre-Test Results

In order to determine the level of students' cultural awareness before their exposure to podcasts, a pre-test was administered. This test was scored out of 10 points, with scores from 0 to 5.99 indicating basic cultural awareness and scores from 6 to 10 representing advanced cultural awareness. The limit at 6 is used because it is 60% of the total score (out of 10), so scores less than 6 show that there is still a need for improvement.

The pre-test was initially distributed to 29 participants; however, 26 responses were collected. Since the post-test was completed by only 23 students, responses from those who did not complete the post-test were removed from the pre-test analysis to allow accurate comparison. Table 2 presents the participants' pre-test scores with their cultural awareness level.

Table 2

Students' Pre-test Scores

Student	Score	Cultural Awareness Level
Student 1	6.75	Advanced
Student 2	4.25	Basic

Student 3	5.25	Basic
Student 4	4.00	Basic
Student 5	6.75	Advanced
Student 6	6.00	Advanced
Student 7	6.25	Advanced
Student 8	6.00	Advanced
Student 9	6.75	Advanced
Student 10	4.75	Basic
Student 11	4.00	Basic
Student 12	4.25	Basic
Student 13	2.00	Basic
Student 14	5.00	Basic
Student 15	3.00	Basic
Student 16	2.50	Basic
Student 17	3.50	Basic
Student 18	4.00	Basic
Student 19	7.50	Advanced
Student 20	7.00	Advanced

Student 21	4.50	Basic
Student 22	4.50	Basic
Student 23	4.25	Basic
Overall Average Score	4.90	Basic

Table 2 displays the participants' scores obtained in the pre-test, as well as their cultural awareness level. Their scores range from 2.00 (minimum score) to 7.5 (maximum score), with cultural awareness classified into two categories (basic or advanced) based on students' scores. As shown in the table, 15 out of 23 students have basic cultural awareness, scoring less than 6, and 8 students have advanced cultural awareness with scores above 6. The overall average score for all the students is 4.90, suggesting that students' overall level of cultural awareness before listening to podcast is basic.

III.2. Post-Test Results

The same test was administered as a post-test after podcast exposure. Table 3 shows the participants' post-test scores, as well as their cultural awareness level.

Table 3

Students' Post-test Scores

Student	Score	Cultural Awareness Level
Student 1	7.00	Advanced
Student 2	5.75	Basic
Student 3	8.00	Advanced
Student 4	8.50	Advanced

Student 5	8.00	Advanced
Student 6	8.00	Advanced
Student 7	8.50	Advanced
Student 8	9.25	Advanced
Student 9	8.25	Advanced
Student 10	8.00	Advanced
Student 11	8.50	Advanced
Student 12	6.25	Advanced
Student 13	5.75	Basic
Student 14	8.50	Advanced
Student 15	9.00	Advanced
Student 16	7.25	Advanced
Student 17	8.25	Advanced
Student 18	7.50	Advanced
Student 19	9.00	Advanced
Student 20	9.00	Advanced
Student 21	8.00	Advanced
Student 22	7.00	Advanced

Student 23	9.00	Advanced
Overall Average Score	7.92	Advanced

Table 3 shows students' post-test results with their cultural awareness level. Their scores range from 5.75 (minimum) to 9.25 (maximum), with most students (21 out of 23) scoring above 6, indicating that they have advanced cultural awareness. Only two students scored below 6, classifying them in the basic cultural awareness category. The overall average score is 7.92, showing an overall advanced cultural awareness after exposure to podcasts.

III.3. Comparison of the Pre-Test and Post-Test Results

In order to determine whether students' cultural awareness improved after listening to podcasts, each student's score difference between the pre-test and post-test was calculated. This difference was calculated by subtracting the pre-test score from the post-test score for each student. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Score Differences between the Pre-test and Post-test for Each Student

Student	Score Difference between the Pre-Test and Post-Test
Student 1	0.25
Student 2	1.50
Student 3	2.75
Student 4	4.50
Student 5	1.25
Student 6	2.00
Student 7	2.25

Student 8	3.25
Student 9	1.50
Student 10	3.25
Student 11	4.50
Student 12	2.00
Student 13	3.75
Student 14	3.50
Student 15	6.00
Student 16	4.75
Student 17	4.75
Student 18	3.50
Student 19	1.50
Student 20	2.00
Student 21	3.50
Student 22	2.50
Student 23	4.75

As it is presented in Table 4, the students did better in the post-test than in the pre-test. The table reveals that most students' scores increased, and the differences in scores varied from a minimum of 0.25 to a maximum of 6 points. Only few students (five of twenty-three) had smaller improvements, with score increases between 0.25 and 1.5 points. The

differences between the pre-test and post-test scores for each student are better shown in Diagram 1.

Diagram 1

Differences between the Pre-test and Post-test Scores of Each Student

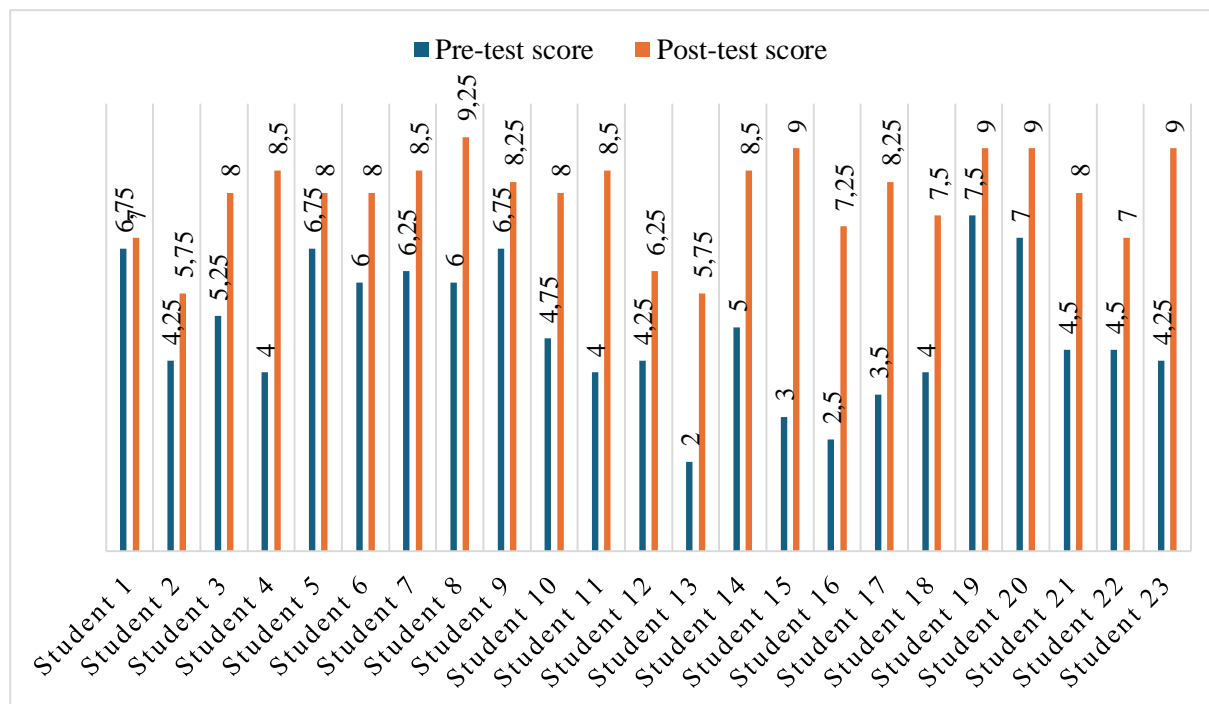


Diagram 1 shows the differences between the pre-test and post-test scores of the students, visually showing the progress that each of them has made in terms of cultural awareness. This graphic presentation makes it easy to compare the pre-test and post-test scores, demonstrating how much each student has improved in the post-test over the pre-test. Some students demonstrated small improvements; however, others showed significant increases.

To verify whether there is a statistically significant difference between students' pre-test and post-test results, a paired t-test was performed using Microsoft Excel 2016. This statistical test allows to measure the statistical differences in the pre-test and post-test scores for the same group of participants. The results of this test are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5

Paired t-test: Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Scores

Statistic	Pre-Test Score	Post-Test Score
Mean	4.90	7.92
Observations	23	23
P-value	5.11E-10	
	0.000000000511	

Notes. p-value < 0.05: The result is statistically significant.
 p-value \geq 0.05: The result is not statistically significant.
 p-value = probability value

Table 5 reveals that twenty-three (23) participants took both the pre-test and the post-test. The mean score in the pre-test was 4.90, whereas the mean score in the post-test increased to 7.92. The increase in the mean score from 4.90 to 7.92 indicates that students obtained cultural knowledge after listening to podcasts about different cultures. Furthermore, the p-value is 5.11E-10, which is approximately 0.000000000511. This small value is far below the significance level of 0.05, which is used to establish statistical significance. This small p-value demonstrates that the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores is statistically significant, confirming the effectiveness of podcasts in enhancing cultural awareness.

III.4. Questionnaire Results

In addition to the pre-test and post-test, a questionnaire was administered to the students with the aim to collect data about their perceptions of using podcasts as a tool to improve their cultural awareness. Out of the 23 students who completed both tests, 21 answered the post-podcast questionnaire.

III.4.1. Section One: General Information

The first section of the questionnaire aims to collect background information about the students such as gender and specialty.

Question (1): Gender?

The first question aims to gather data about students' gender. The results are presented in Diagram 2.

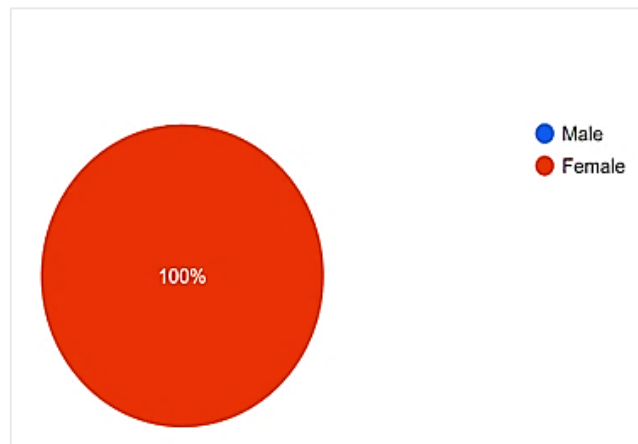
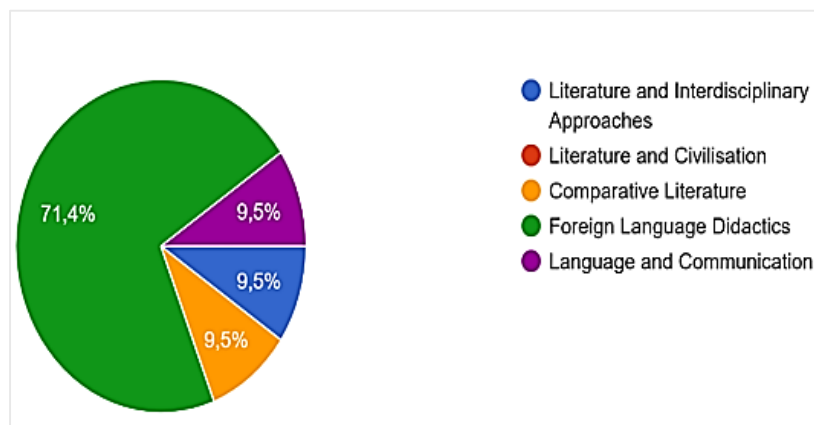
Diagram 2*Students' Gender*

Diagram 2 displays the gender of the participants. As it can be seen, among the 21 students who completed the questionnaire, the totality (100%) are females. In other words, no male (0%) students answered the post-podcast questionnaire.

Question (2): What is your specialty?

The second question aims to gather information about the specialty of the participants. The results are shown in Diagram 3.

Diagram 3*Students' Specialty*

According to the findings presented in Diagram 3, the majority of the students (71.4%) are enrolled in Foreign Language Didactics. Other students are from Language and Communication, Literature and Interdisciplinary Approaches, and Comparative Literature, with an equivalent percentage of 9.5%. It can be noted that no students from the Literature and Civilization specialty answered the questionnaire.

III.4.2. Section Two: Students' Previous Podcast Listening Habits

The second section of the questionnaire seeks to collect data about students' previous podcasts listening habits through three questions.

Question (3): Have you ever listened to podcasts in English before this study?

The third question aims to investigate whether students have already listened to English podcasts before the present study or not. The results are displayed in Diagram 4.

Diagram 4

Students' Previous Experience Listening to English Podcasts

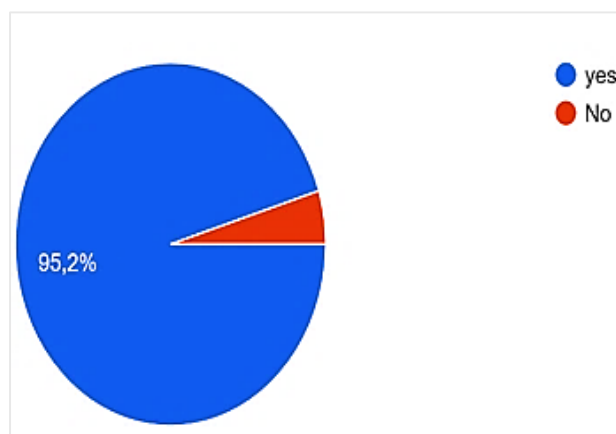


Diagram 4 shows that the majority of students (95.2%) have already listened to English podcasts before taking part in this study, while a few of them (4.8%) have not.

Question (4): If the answer is 'yes', how often do you listen to podcasts in English?

The fourth question is a follow-up to the third question, which is about how often students listen to podcasts in English. The findings are exposed in Diagram 5.

Diagram 5

Students' Frequency of Listening to English Podcasts

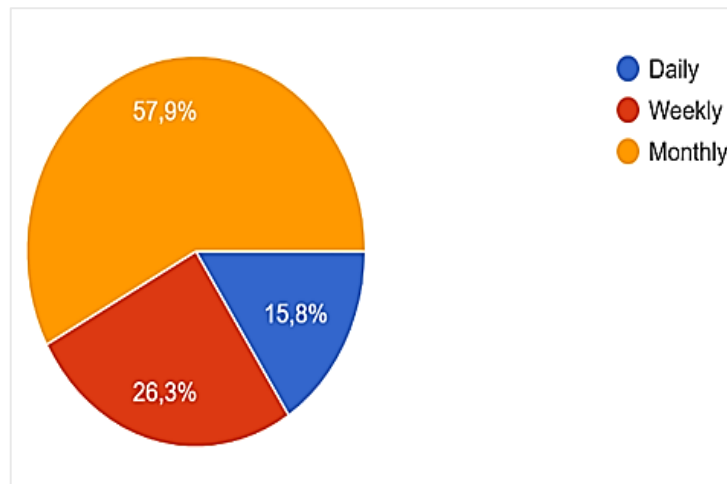


Diagram 5 shows how often students listen to English podcasts. According to their answers, 57.9% of them listen monthly, 26.3% listen weekly, while only 15.8% listen daily.

Question (5): If the answer is ‘yes’, what type of podcasts do you usually listen to?

The fifth question is also a complementary follow-up to the third question, which is about the type of podcasts students usually listen to. The findings to this question are revealed in Diagram 6.

Diagram 6

Podcast Preferences among Students

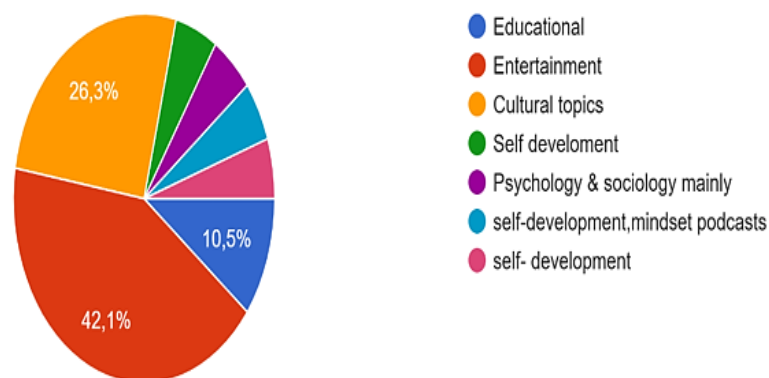


Diagram 6 shows the types of podcasts students usually listen to. A majority of 42.1% prefer listening to entertainment podcasts, while 26.3% listen to podcasts on cultural topics. Educational podcasts are preferred by 10.5% of students. When asked if there are other types of podcasts they listen to other than the three options provided, some students mentioned

other types like psychology and sociology, self-development and mindset podcasts as shown in the diagram.

III.4.3. Section three: Students' Perceptions of Podcasts for Cultural Learning

The third section of the questionnaire aims to determine students' perceptions of podcasts as a tool for cultural learning. It includes seven Likert-scale questions with the options "Agree", "Neutral", and "Disagree".

Question (6): I find podcasts more effective to learn about different cultures than traditional methods like textbooks.

The sixth question seeks to measure students' agreement on whether podcasts are more effective than traditional methods, like textbooks, to learn about different cultures. The results are found in Diagram 7.

Diagram 7

Effectiveness of Podcasts Compared to Traditional Methods for Cultural Learning

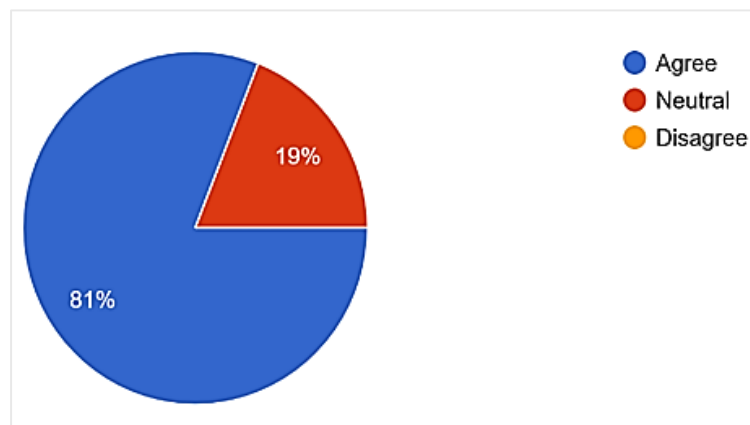


Diagram 7 reveals that a significant number of students (81%) agree that podcasts are more effective than traditional methods like textbooks to learn about new cultures. Meanwhile, a small number of students (19%) are neutral about that.

Question (7): I find podcasts more effective than other media, like documentaries and films, to learn about different cultures.

The seventh question aims to determine whether students find podcasts more effective than other media, like documentaries and films, to learn about different cultures. The findings are exhibited in Diagram 8.

Diagram 8

The Efficacy of Podcasts Over Visual Media for Cultural Learning

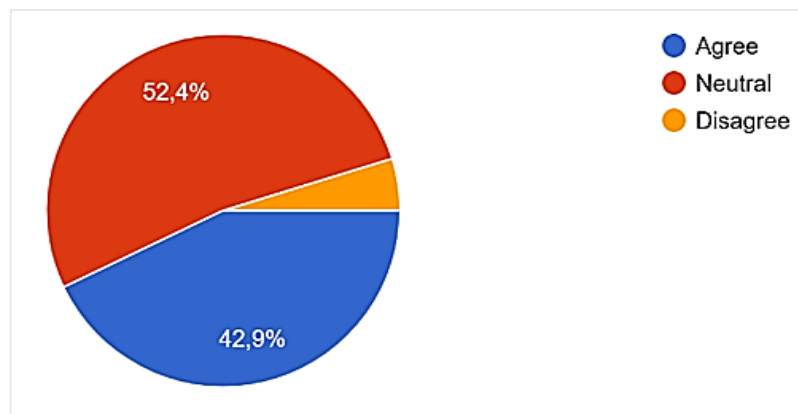


Diagram 8 shows that 52.4% of participants are neutral about podcasts as a better tool than visual media (documentaries and films) to learn about different cultures, while 42.9% find podcasts more effective. A small number of students, representing 4.7%, disagree with the statement.

Question (8): Podcasts make it easier to learn about different cultures.

The eighth question asks students to determine whether podcasts can be considered an easy way of learning about cultures. The findings are revealed in Diagram 9.

Diagram 9

Podcasts: as an Easier Way to Learn About Different Cultures

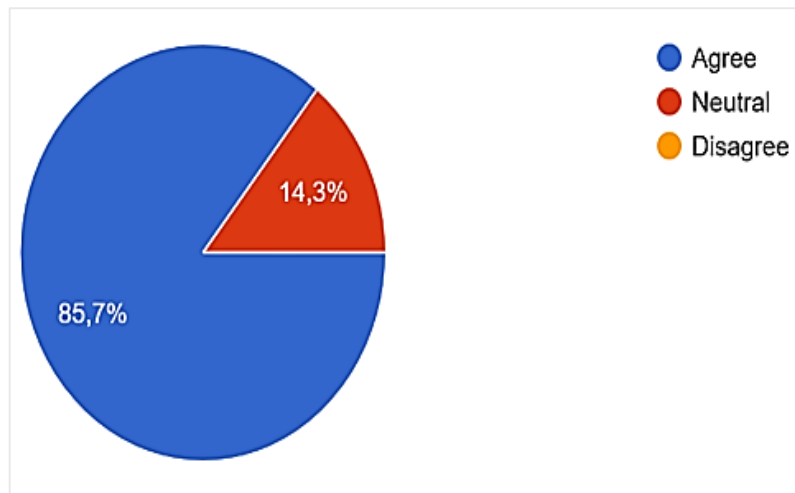


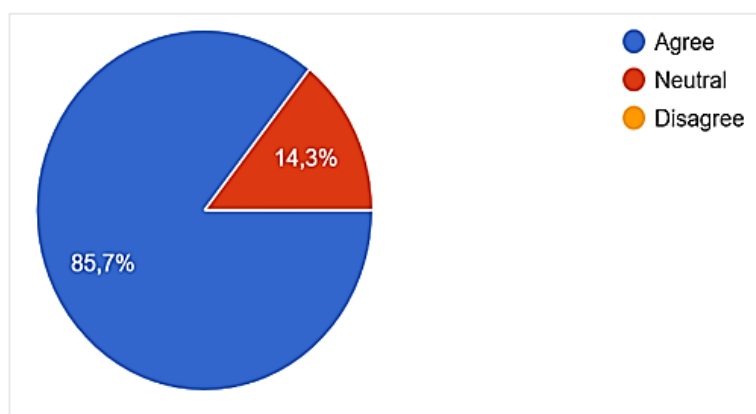
Diagram 9 depicts students' opinions on the ease of using podcasts as a cultural learning tool. The results demonstrate that 85.7% of the participants agree that podcasts make it easier to learn about different cultures, while 14.3% remain neutral.

Question (9): Podcasts make learning about different cultures more interesting and enjoyable.

The ninth question aims to assess students' impression of podcasts as an enjoyable and interesting way of cultural learning. The results are found in Diagram 10.

Diagram 10

Podcasts as the Most Enjoyable Way to Explore World Cultures



As indicated in Diagram 10, the majority of participants (85.7%) agree that podcasts make learning about other cultures more interesting and enjoyable. Only a few of them (14.3%) remain neutral.

Question (10): The podcasts I listened to helped me to learn new facts about cultures that I was unfamiliar with.

This question seeks to determine if the podcasts students listened to during this study brought any further changes in their cultural knowledge.

Diagram 11

Students' Learning New Cultural Facts through Podcasts

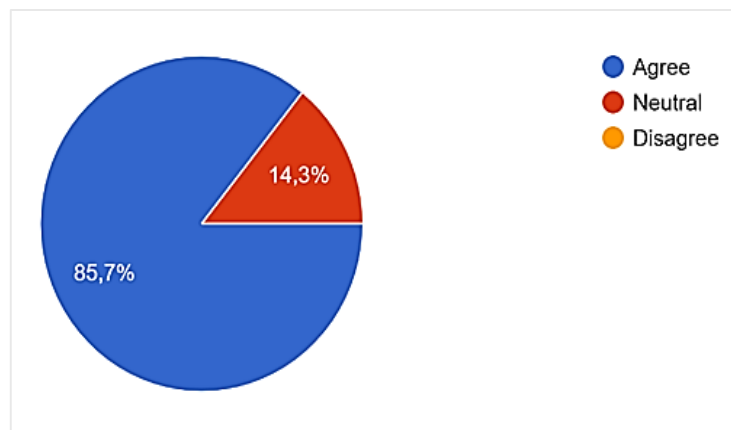


Diagram 11 shows that 85.7% of the participants agreed that listening to podcasts helped them learn new facts about cultures they were unfamiliar with. However, 14.3% are neutral.

Question (11): After listening to the podcasts, I became more curious to learn about cultures other than my own.

The aim of this question is to assess students' increased curiosity about learning new cultures different from their own. The results are presented in Diagram 12.

Diagram 12

Students' Curiosity about Learning New Cultures after Listening to Podcasts

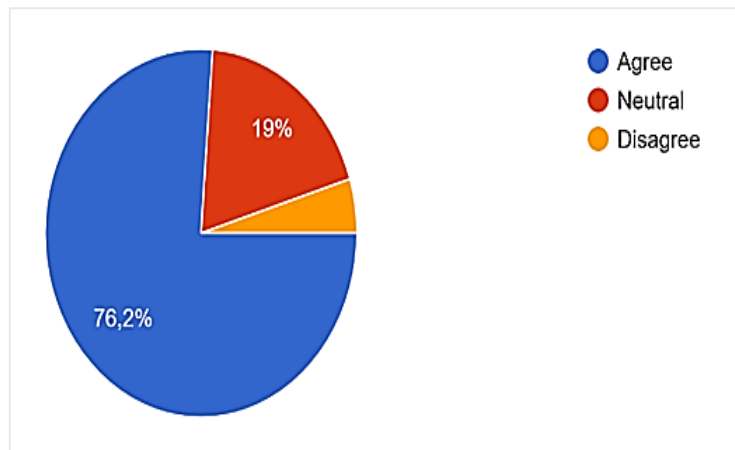


Diagram 12 shows that the majority of the participants (76.2%) agree that they become more curious about learning cultures different from their own, while 19% claim to be neutral.

Question (12): After listening to the podcasts, I feel more aware and respectful of cultural differences.

This question tries to determine if podcasts enhance students' level of awareness and respect for cultural differences. The findings are displayed in Diagram 13.

Diagram 13

Impact of Podcasts on Students' Awareness and Respect for Cultural Differences

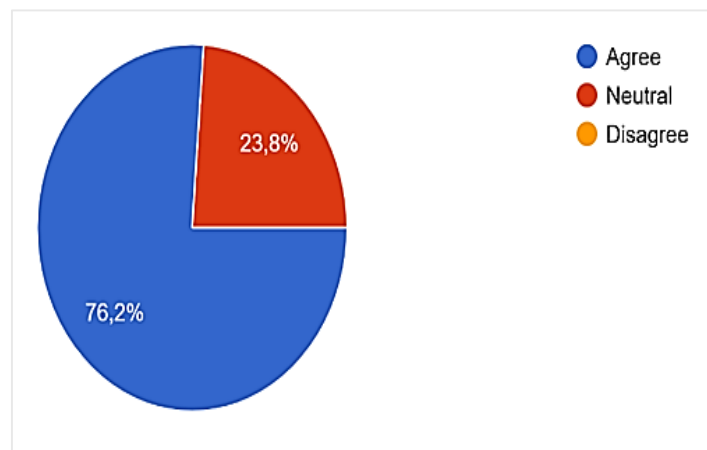


Diagram 13 shows that 76.2% of students feel more aware and respectful of cultural differences after listening to the podcasts. The rest 23.8% have a neutral standpoint about this.

III.4.4. Section Four: Podcasts' Impact on Cultural Awareness and Future Use

Question (13): After participating in this study, do you think that your cultural awareness has improved? Please explain why or why not.

Finding out if students feel that the study has increased their cultural awareness is the aim of the question. All the students' answers were positive meaning that they all think that their cultural awareness has developed. When asked to explain the reasons behind their views, they provided answers that can fall into three major themes, which are as follows.

Theme 1: Cultural Learning:

The first theme that emerged is that listening to podcasts allowed them to learn new facts and ways of thinking. For instance, one of the students stated, "Yes of course, because I learned new things about other cultures". Another student said, "Yes, my cultural awareness has improved because I learned about different ways of thinking".

Theme 2: Respect and Appreciation for Cultural Diversity

The second theme that emerged from the students' answers is that listening to podcasts helped them appreciate and respect cultural differences. As one participant reported, "Yes, I believe that my cultural awareness has improved. I learned to appreciate different perspectives and traditions. This experience helped me become more open-minded and respectful of diversity".

Theme 3: Cultural Adaptability

The third theme is about adaptability. More specifically, listening to cultural podcasts improved students' cultural awareness in terms of knowing how to act in new cultures. Students learned new cultural information and this new knowledge can help them adapt and adjust their behaviour. For example, one of the students said, "Yes, because participating in this study did taught me new things about other cultures that may help me in knowing how to act or behave in these cultures".

Question (14): What cultural aspect have you learned from the podcasts that you were unfamiliar with before?

The aim of this question is to find out the specific cultural elements the students learned from podcasts. Three major themes emerged from their answers.

Theme 1: Traditional Cultural Aspects

The first theme that emerged from the participants' answers is learning about traditional cultural components like traditions, food, and clothing that they were unfamiliar with before. For example, students talked about gaining insights into "the culture of food when celebrating something".

Theme 2: New Celebrations

The second theme is about learning new celebrations and festivals that are unique to other cultures. Students reported learning about "The different celebration days in other countries", and noted specific events like "Saint Patrick celebration, for example".

Theme 3: Interpersonal and Social Norms

Learning about cultural interpersonal norms, such as communication styles, social norms, and values, is the third theme. This is highlighted in the students' responses, such as "I learned about different communication styles, social norms, and values in various cultures that I wasn't familiar with before".

Question (15): Do you think that you will continue listening to podcasts to further improve your cultural awareness? Please explain why or why not.

The goal of this question is to discover if students intend to keep listening to podcasts in order to increase their cultural awareness and to understand their reasons. Their answers revealed four key themes.

Theme 1: Convenience and Efficiency

The first theme focuses on how effective and convenient podcasts are as a learning tool. A lot of students appreciate podcasts due to their simplicity, convenience, ease of use, and efficiency to learn new aspects of culture. This is demonstrated in students' statements like "Yes, I will, because it's an easy tool to improve our cultural awareness."

Theme 2: Engagement and Enjoyment

The second theme that emerged from the participants' answers is engagement and enjoyment. Students find podcasts interesting and rich in information. For example, one of the students said, "Yes, I will because it's funny, new, and enriching."

Theme 3: Cultural Representation

The third theme is about cultural representation. One student stated, "They give a very honest type of cultural representation.", demonstrating the authenticity that podcasts can offer.

Theme 4: Reliable Medium

Another theme is about the reliability of podcasts as a medium, highlighting students' trust in them as an effective tool for cultural learning. For example, a participant declared that: "I experienced a new type; I will for sure add it to my future plans because I did like it a lot, and I can even recommend it to my relatives and friends". This describes the students' positive personal experience and suggests confidence in podcasts as a medium and a desire to recommend it to others.

Question (16): Would you recommend podcasts to others as a tool for improving cultural awareness? Please explain why or why not.

Building on question 15, this question seeks to determine whether students would recommend podcasts as a tool for enhancing cultural awareness. All the participants responded positively. Three main themes emerged from their responses when they were asked to explain why.

Theme 1: Podcasts as an Entertainment Tool

The fact that podcasts are entertaining is one of the primary reasons provided by some students for recommending their use as a tool to enhance cultural awareness. They described podcasts as interesting, funny, spontaneous, enjoyable and entertaining resources for cultural learning. For instance, one of the participants stated, "Yes, because it allows to have this

funny way of learning and exploring the subject”, while another one added, “yes, I will recommend them because it’s enjoyable”.

Theme 2: Ease of Use of Podcasts

The second theme that emerged is the ease of use of podcasts, which makes them appropriate for beginners. This is shown in the students’ responses, for example: “Yes, they are easy to use and help you learn about other cultures”.

Theme 3: Cultural Knowledge Enhancement

The third theme involves the educational importance of podcasts in improving cultural knowledge, such as learning new facts about other cultures. One participant noted, “Yes, because it helps you to understand more about other cultures, customs, and traditions”.

Question (17): In what ways do you think podcasts could be used as a teaching tool to enhance cultural awareness in English classes?

The focus of this question is to investigate students’ perceptions on how podcasts can be used as a teaching tool to improve cultural awareness in the classroom. There are three themes that emerged from their responses.

Theme 1: Classroom Integration

According to some students, podcasts are helpful resources that can be integrated into class activities to help students learn about various cultures while also enhancing their English skills. As one student stated, “It can be used as a classroom activity to enhance their cultural awareness and learning English.”

Theme 2: Enjoyable Cultural Learning

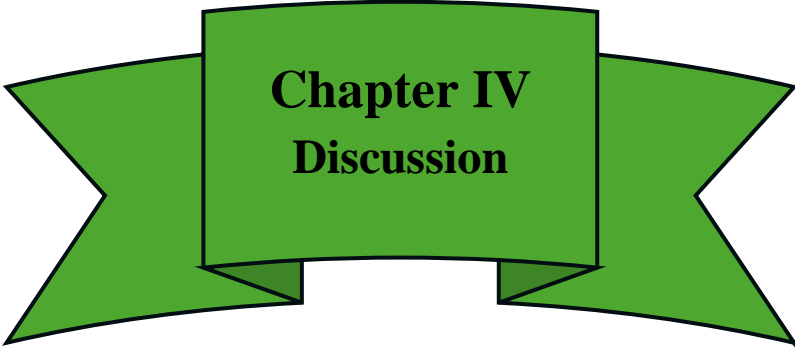
Another theme that emerged is the enjoyment that podcasts provide concerning learning about culture. Students said that listening to podcasts makes learning about culture fun, interesting and engaging, which can motivate them to participate more in the classroom. One participant commented, “Podcasts help students to learn about other cultures in a funny way.” When students have fun when learning, they can understand cultural information better.

Theme 3: Cultural Awareness and Language Skills

The students also emphasized the double function of podcasts in developing both cultural awareness and language proficiency, including speaking and listening, pronunciation, and vocabulary acquisition. For instance, a student pointed out, “Listening practice for example students can practice listening skills while learning about other cultures.” This shows that podcasts do not just teach about culture, they also help students practice and develop their skills like listening.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the results of the study, which were collected from a pre-test, post-test, and questionnaire. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the quantitative results, which were then displayed in tables and diagrams. Qualitative findings were analysed using thematic analysis. The overall results showed a clear improvement in the students’ cultural awareness. The next chapter discusses and interprets the obtained results, provides answers to the research questions, and tests the validity of the research hypotheses.

A green ribbon graphic with a black outline, featuring a central rectangular section and two side flaps that curve downwards.

Chapter IV
Discussion

Introduction

The present chapter aims to discuss and interpret the results presented in the previous chapter. It strives to answer the research questions asked in the general introduction and verify the validity of the suggested hypotheses. This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section discusses cultural awareness levels before and after listening to podcasts about various cultures. The second section is concerned with the discussion of podcasts' effect on students' cultural awareness. The last section deals with students' perceptions of podcasts as a tool for enhancing their cultural awareness.

IV.1. Discussion of Cultural Awareness Levels Before and After Listening to Podcasts

In order to assess the effectiveness of podcasts in enhancing students' cultural awareness, a pre-test and a post-test were administered to the study participants. The participants' scores in the pre-test ranged from a minimum score of 2.00 to a maximum score of 7.50, indicating a variation in their cultural awareness levels. The majority of students (15 out of 23) obtained scores between 2.00 and 5.25, demonstrating that they have a basic cultural awareness level. This means that they recognized the existence of various cultures but lacked deeper cultural awareness and understanding of cultural differences. Conversely, a minority of the participants (8 out of 23) scored between 6.00 and 7.50, demonstrating an advanced level of cultural awareness. In addition, the overall average score for all the students in the pre-test was 4.90, indicating a general basic cultural awareness with limited understanding of cultural aspects. Overall, the study participants' pre-test results showed that they possessed general and limited cultural knowledge, in which the majority faced difficulties answering the pre-test questions, and this is reflected in their pre-test scores (See Table 2). That is to say, their knowledge was mainly shallow, and this is consistent with Baker's description of basic cultural awareness (Level 1). Indeed, according to Baker's (2011) theory, early cultural awareness is usually about simple recognition rather than deep cultural understanding.

After taking the pre-test, the study participants were exposed to five podcasts covering American, British, Canadian, Australian and the Irish cultures. After the podcast listening phase, they took a post-test including the same questions as the pre-test. The participants' scores in the post-test ranged from a minimum score of 5.75 to a maximum score of 9.25. Most of the participants (21 out of 23) scored between 6.00 and 9.25, indicating an advanced cultural awareness. However, only two students obtained 5.75, showing little improvement and remaining in a basic cultural awareness level. In addition, the overall average post-test score for all the students was 7.92, demonstrating significant progress. The increase from the pre-test average score of 4.90 to the post-test average score of 7.92 indicates a significant improvement in cultural awareness. Overall, the findings suggest that the students' cultural awareness level after listening to podcasts was notably advanced.

The participants' post-test results improved compared to their pre-test scores, with score differences ranging from a minimum increase of 0.25 points to a maximum of 6 points (See Table 4). The scores differences between the pre-test and post-test indicate an enhancement in students' cultural awareness, showing a clear shift from a basic level to an advanced level of cultural awareness. In the pre-test students generally exhibited a limited perspective, demonstrating a lack of awareness of cultural differences. However, after their exposure to cultural podcasts, their post-test answers indicated a deeper awareness of cultural diversity, including knowledge of traditions, celebrations, behaviors and communication styles. The findings showed that students progressed beyond simple recognition of cultural diversity and this is reflected in their responses and post-test scores (See Table 3). This shift from basic to advanced cultural awareness aligns with Baker's theory that suggests that cultural awareness develops progressively from basic recognition (Level 1) to advanced understanding of cultural differences (Level 2). This progress in the participants' cultural awareness demonstrates the transition from Level 1 to Level 2 Baker describes in his

Intercultural Awareness Model, meaning that this model helps in explaining how learning, like listening to the podcasts, can help students move from a basic to a more advanced understanding of culture.

While the majority of participants showed progress in their cultural awareness after listening to podcasts, it is important to highlight that some participants showed little improvement. Several factors could explain this minimal improvement. The first reason could be lack of motivation, which may be caused by outside factors such as, exhaustion, anxiety and academic pressure, particularly since participants were Master's students working on dissertations. Another reason could be a lack of personal connection or interest in the cultural topics discussed in the podcasts, leading to reduced attention and retention. Another possible reason could be the existence of the external distractions during the podcast listening sessions, such as noisy places or multitasking with social media, possibly leading to limited focus and understanding. So, these are some of the possible factors that could explain why some participants showed little improvement in their cultural awareness.

Nonetheless, the overall findings showed that listening to podcasts helped the majority of the students to move from basic to advanced cultural awareness levels. That is to say, the findings clearly demonstrated the positive impact of listening podcasts to enhance students' cultural awareness. This supports Kidwell's (2023) statement that podcasts accessible through mobile devices give students the chance to experience new cultures and gain valuable insight into a wide range of global cultures. Based on these findings, the first research hypothesis that "Listening to podcasts will contribute to the enhancement of EFL Master 2 students' cultural awareness" is confirmed.

IV.2. Discussion of the Impact of Podcasts on Students' Cultural Awareness

The findings obtained from the pre-test and post-test scores showed a significant increase in students' cultural awareness. The overall average score increased from 4.90 in the pre-test, which reflects a basic cultural awareness level, to 7.92 in the post-test, indicating an advanced level. This improvement is not only substantial but also statistically significant. Indeed, the paired t-test analysis produced a p-value of 5.11E- (approximately 0.00000000511), which is much less than the standard level of 0.05. In other words, there is little chance that the improvement happened randomly, suggesting that the increase in cultural awareness is attributed to the use of podcasts. The nature of these score differences demonstrates how effective podcasts are as an educational tool, suggesting that exposure to podcasts and listening to them may significantly cover gaps in cultural knowledge. Such findings suggest the possibility of using modern media like podcasts in the current teaching methods, especially in the area of cultural studies. These findings are supported by students' answers to the closed-ended questions in the questionnaire. Indeed, 81% of the students found that podcasts are more effective to learn about different cultures than traditional methods like textbooks (Question 6); 85.7% reported that listening to podcasts helped them to learn new facts about cultures they were unfamiliar with (Question 10); and 76.2% felt more aware and respectful of cultural differences after listening to the podcasts (Question 12).

Besides numbers or quantitative data, rich insights that reinforce the statistical findings were provided through the qualitative data gathered from open-ended questionnaire responses. Question 13 sought to uncover students' points of view on how their cultural awareness improved after taking part in the current study. Students showed different insights and attitudes toward this experience. For instance, *Cultural Learning* was one of the main themes that emerged from students' responses where they reported learning new facts about some cultures that they were unfamiliar with before, broadening their perspectives. This is

shown in one of the students' answers, "Yes, I think that my cultural awareness improved in some ways through your study. In fact, it allowed me to become familiar with certain cultural aspects that I did not know about before." This suggests that podcasts offered more than surface knowledge or superficial information but provided participants with a deeper understanding of cultural variations and traditions. This supports Kidwell's (2023) findings, which showed that students benefited from exposure to podcasts, as one student said, "The experience of listening to podcasts can help us get to know the culture of other countries and the experiences of others." (p. 9). Another theme was *Respect and Appreciation for Cultural Diversity*. Students developed a stronger respect for cultural diversity due to the podcasts they listened to, reflecting their role in fostering open-mindedness and a positive attitude toward cultural diversity. A third theme, *Cultural Adaptability*, shows how students learn to conduct themselves in different cultural contexts and acquire practical skills, all through the podcasts. These themes not only provided qualitative data to support scores, but also reflected the cultural backgrounds students gained from listening to podcasts.

These findings clearly showed that students enhanced their cultural awareness by moving from basic to advanced level. Before students listened to podcasts, the majority of them were aware of the existence of distinct cultures but with insufficient knowledge about them. That is why they scored an average of 4.90, which indicates that they were at the basic cultural awareness level. When students listened to podcasts, they switched to the next stage of Baker's Model, which is advanced cultural awareness. This means that students learned specific details about other cultures, such as their traditions, and ways of communicating, as reflected in the open-ended questionnaire responses. As a result, their average score increased to 7.92, indicating a major improvement as proven by the statistical significance.

Based on the overall statistical analysis of the findings, it is clear that the noticeable increase in average scores on the pre-test and post-test, along with the statistically significant

p-value, highlight the effectiveness of podcasts in fostering appreciation and understanding toward cultural diversity. Overall, the results of this study provide support for the second research hypothesis, “There will be a significant increase in students’ cultural awareness after listening to podcasts.”, resulting in its confirmation.

IV.3. Discussion of Students’ Perceptions of Podcasts as a Tool for Enhancing Cultural Awareness

From the questionnaire’s data, a great number of students (95.2%) have already listened to podcasts before participating in this study (See Diagram 4). This suggests that students were familiar with the podcast medium and were probably comfortable with it. This familiarity may have positively affected their openness to using this medium as a learning tool, especially to enhance their cultural awareness. Regarding their frequency to podcast listening, 57.9% of students reported listening to podcasts monthly, 26.3% weekly, 15.8% daily (See Diagram 5). This indicates that although not all the students listen to podcasts daily, many of them do it regularly, demonstrating that they value them for both educational and entertainment purposes. Indeed, when asked what kinds of podcasts they usually listen to, 26.3% of respondents reported that they typically listen to podcasts about cultural subjects, highlighting their interest in cultural podcasts. This pattern indicates a generally positive support for podcasts, which probably helped explain why they were highly effective at raising students’ cultural awareness in this study.

In addition, students expressed strong viewpoints on the effectiveness of podcasts for learning about cultures. A significant number (81%) agreed that podcasts can be considered a better tool for learning about different cultures than traditional instructional methods like textbooks (See Diagram 7). These perceptions emphasize the benefits of auditory learning and suggest that podcasts could engage students in ways that visual media might not, like through personal stories and narratives, which would make cultural content more interesting and

accessible. Many students also declared that podcasts are really easy and enjoyable to listen to. In fact, 85.7% argued that podcasts make the learning process much easier, particularly about different cultures (See Diagram 9). These auditory tools are considered casual and helpful mediums to listen to due to their informal nature. Because students can listen and have access to them while they are traveling or doing other tasks, it is beneficial for those who have busy schedules for example. So, this is a good motivational point for people who want to learn but may not have a lot of time to do so, making them an appealing choice. Furthermore, the majority of students 85.7% agreed that learning about other cultures is more engaging and stimulating when listening to podcasts. Similarly, Kidwell's (2023) research revealed that the students seemed to value the use of podcasts, as one student confirmed, "Listening to podcasts was very fun, and I really enjoyed it." (p. 10). The fact that podcasts include many features such as storytelling and exposure to real-world experiences, make the content more enjoyable leading students to become more engaged and involved with cultural content, unlike learning from the traditional teaching materials like textbooks which is considered, boring by some of them. Students may become more interested and motivated to find out about other cultures when they find themselves enjoying the learning process.

Moreover, podcasts had a significant impact on students' understanding of different cultures. This was evident when 85.7% of the students said that they learned new facts about the cultures that they were unfamiliar with before (See Diagram 11). This means that podcasts served as a source of new knowledge and contributed to the enhancement of students' cultural awareness. This finding is further supported by the results obtained from questions 13 and 14.

All the students in question 13 declared that they became more culturally aware due to the study. They claimed that listening to podcasts taught them new facts and ways of thinking, improved their respect and appreciation for cultural differences, and helped them to learn how to behave in foreign cultures. According to these responses, podcasts helped students develop

an open-minded and respectful attitude toward other cultures and fostered their understanding of them. Additionally, all the participants (100%) reported discovering new cultural aspects in their responses to question 14. Through listening to the five podcasts, students learned about several cultural topics, including customs, communication styles, social norms, food, and traditional clothing. As an example, the two podcasts dealing with the Canadian culture and Australian culture gave the students insights into how these cultures generally celebrate holidays like Christmas and Thanksgiving. For instance, they discovered that Australians often celebrate Christmas in an informal manner, sometimes wearing summer-themed Santa outfits. Students' cultural knowledge developed beyond British and American cultures as they learned about new holidays like St. Patrick's Day, which many had never heard of before. Students also learned about communication styles in addition to customs. Overall, the podcasts expanded students' cultural awareness by helping them better understand other cultures and see how people live and behave.

Besides learning new cultural facts, 76.2% found themselves more curious and motivated to learn about cultures after they listened to the five podcasts. This shows students' interest to keep looking into cultural topics independently after listening to podcasts. Therefore, podcasts motivate students to learn more about other cultures in addition to assisting in their learning experience. This leads to a positive cycle: learning leads to curiosity, and curiosity leads to continued learning.

In addition to increasing curiosity, many participants expressed strong intentions to keep using podcasts in the future. They highlighted several reasons for this, including convenience and efficiency, engagement and enjoyment, cultural representation, and reliable medium. The first reason is that many students found podcasts a convenient and efficient way for learning about cultures. Unlike traditional methods like textbooks, podcasts are easy to access and can be listened to anytime and anywhere. A second reason is engagement and

enjoyment. students preferred listening to podcasts over reading textbooks because they were entertaining and interesting, and they enjoyed the cultural topics discussed in the podcasts. This demonstrates how podcasts captured their interest and prompted their curiosity. That is why students see podcasts not just as a temporary educational tool but as a long-term resource for cultural learning. Moving to the third reason, the role of podcasts in increasing cultural representation, gives students realistic insights into how people from different cultures celebrate and communicate. This demonstrates that exposure to rich, culturally diverse podcasts aids students in gaining authentic insights into different perspectives. It suggests that the content offers a more accurate understanding of how people from various backgrounds live, celebrate holidays and communicate. This demonstrates that exposure to rich, culturally diverse podcasts aids students in gaining authentic insights into different perspectives. It suggests that the content offers a more accurate understanding of how people from various backgrounds live, celebrate, and interact.

As podcasts represent a positive experience, a participant declared that: “I experienced a new type, I will for sure add it to my future plans because I did like it a lot, and I can even recommend it to my relatives and friends.” Starting from this quote, we can say that podcasts not only educate but also create an engaging learning experience, which leads a positive reception. Feedback like this indicates that podcasts created an enjoyable and memorable educational experience that students wanted to recommend and share with others. These themes all together demonstrate that podcasts are more than just informational; they also serve as an engaging and a highly recommended learning resource while fostering cultural awareness through real representation. The feedback provided above aligns with the results of question 16, where all students said that they will recommend podcasts to others as a tool for enhancing cultural awareness, especially for beginners. In their answers, students characterized podcasts as more engaging than reading from a book, funny, entertaining, easy

to use, and enjoyable. Students also recognized that podcasts can be a useful resource for discovering new information about different traditions and customs. This leads students to showcase their active engagement, demonstrating their desire to share these findings with others and their active use of pertinent resources.

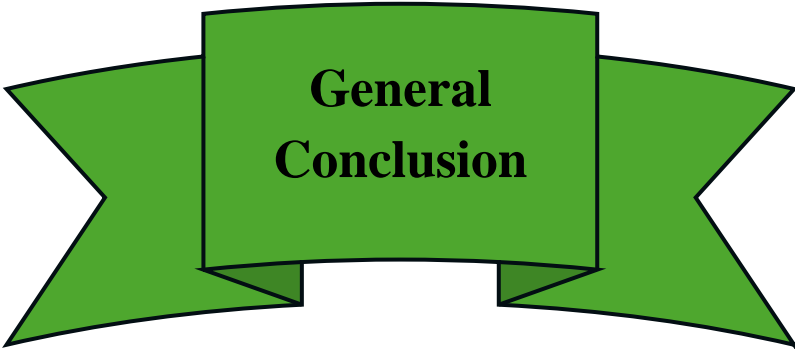
Besides recommending podcasts, students offered valuable suggestions for incorporating podcasts into English classes. One of the suggestions was to use podcasts for assignments, tasks and classroom activities. This means that the teacher could give students tasks by sending them a podcast links to listen individually, take notes, and then discuss the content in class. This will help them understand the lessons better in a funny and enjoyable way and increase their level of involvement and participation in the classroom rather than just reading from the textbooks which some students find boring. Another suggestion was to use podcasts in speaking and listening classes, exposing students to diverse accents and varieties of English. In addition to learning about various cultures, this would help them become more confident speakers of English and enhance their listening abilities and pronunciation. According to some students, podcasts would be particularly helpful in classes that focus on studying culture, such as literature and civilization. Compared to simply reading from textbooks, podcasts offer authentic voices and stories which make cultural subjects easier to understand and more relatable than just reading from textbooks.

The findings demonstrated that EFL Master 2 students perceived podcasts as a useful medium to raise their level of cultural awareness. After the exposure to the different cultural podcasts, all students reported that their understanding of various cultures had improved. They gained knowledge of different cultures' traditions, celebrations, communication styles and social norms. Additionally, the majority of students felt more curious and inspired to learn more about other cultures. Based on these findings, the last research hypothesis that

“EFL Master 2 students will perceive podcasts as an effective tool to enhance their cultural awareness” is confirmed.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the findings of the pre- and post-tests as well as the questionnaire, including both closed-ended and open-ended questions, in order to address to the research questions and test the hypotheses previously mentioned in the general introduction. First, it examined students’ cultural awareness levels before and after listening to cultural podcasts. The impact of podcasts on students’ cultural awareness was then discussed. Finally, it covered students’ perceptions of podcasts as a tool to improve their cultural awareness. The findings validated the three research hypotheses: that podcasts contribute to the enhancement of cultural awareness, that students’ cultural awareness increases significantly following podcast exposure, and that students perceive podcasts as an effective learning tool for cultural understanding.



**General
Conclusion**

General Conclusion

The present study examined the impact of podcasts on enhancing EFL Master 2 students' cultural awareness in the Department of English at the University of Tizi-Ouzou during the academic year 2024-2025. More precisely, the research addressed three main objectives. The first objective was to assess students' level of cultural awareness before and after exposure to podcasts. The second aimed to compare students' level of cultural awareness before and after listening to podcasts to identify any significant changes. The last objective sought to find out students' perceptions of podcasts as a tool for enhancing their cultural awareness.

The study used a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods to gather relevant data. As a part of the quantitative component, a quasi-experimental design with pre-test and post-test measurements was employed to measure changes in students' cultural awareness levels before and after listening to five culturally themed podcasts. Twenty-three Master 2 students participated in the study selected through convenience sampling. Quantitative data were collected through the pre- and post-tests as well as the closed-ended questions in the questionnaire, while qualitative data were gathered from the open-ended questions included in the same questionnaire. To ensure clarity, the instruments were piloted before administration. This dual-method approach enabled statistical analysis of changes in cultural awareness as well as a more thorough understanding of students' experiences and points of view.

Quantitative data were analysed using both descriptive statistics, such as means and percentages, and inferential statistics, particularly paired t-test to find out whether there were statistically significant differences in students' levels of cultural awareness before and after listening to podcasts. Students' responses to the open-ended questions in the questionnaire were analysed, coded, and categorized into main themes as a part of the thematic analysis of qualitative data. Baker's (2011) Model of Intercultural Awareness guided the interpretation

General Conclusion

of the results and provided insight into how students progressed from basic to advanced cultural awareness.

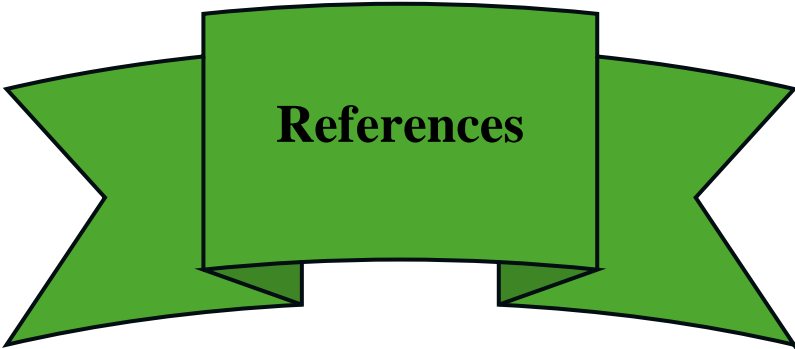
The analysis of the data gathered from the pre-test, post-test and questionnaire revealed that students' knowledge of different cultures improved due to their exposure to five culturally themed podcasts, demonstrating an improvement in their cultural awareness. Indeed, students' cultural awareness level in the pre-test was basic with an overall average score of 4.90. However, after listening to five cultural podcasts, their cultural awareness level became advanced with a post-test average score of 7.92. Besides, paired t-test showed that the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores was statistically significant, indicating that the improvement in students' cultural awareness was due to the podcast intervention. These results provided answers to the first and second research questions and validated the first hypothesis that "Listening to podcasts will contribute to the enhancement of EFL Master 2 students' cultural awareness", as well the second hypothesis that states that "There will be a significant increase in students' cultural awareness after listening to podcasts". In addition, the questionnaire findings revealed that students perceived podcasts as a useful, interesting, easy and enjoyable tool for learning about various cultures than traditional instructional methods. Students' answers addressed the third research question and confirmed the third hypothesis that "EFL Master 2 students will perceive podcasts as an effective tool to enhance their cultural awareness".

Several limitations were encountered when conducting this study. The first limitation is related to time. It took a lot of time to find suitable cultural podcasts that were short to keep students interested and engaged. In addition, listening to the podcasts and completing the pre-test, post-test, and then questionnaire was time-consuming. The second limitation is related to the students' withdrawal from the study. At the beginning, twenty-nine (29) participants accepted to take part in the study, but three of them removed themselves without

General Conclusion

participating at all, reducing the number of students to twenty-six (26). The study participants' number was further reduced when three of them left after completing the pre-test. At the end, only twenty-three (23) students completed the pre- and post-tests, and only twenty-one (21) answered the questionnaire. This was mainly due to students' lack of time to participate in the study and work on their dissertations at the same time. This small sample size makes it difficult to generalize the findings. The last limitation is linked to the lack of a control group where students were not exposed to podcasts. It is difficult to determine whether the increase in students' cultural awareness was entirely caused by listening to the podcasts or whether other factors might have affected the outcomes.

Based on these limitations, future studies should include a control group to effectively assess the impact of podcasts on cultural awareness by comparing students who listen to podcasts with those who learn through traditional methods like reading textbooks or attending classes on culture. Future studies should also compare the efficacy of podcasts versus other media like movies in raising EFL students' cultural awareness, by using a larger and diverse sample size.



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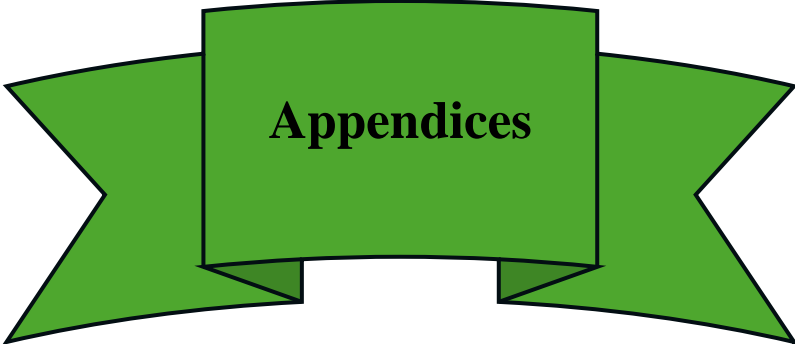
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Appendices

Appendices

Appendix A: Pre/Post-Test: Measuring Cultural Awareness Before and After Exposure to Podcasts

Instructions:

Please answer the following questions based on your understanding of cultural aspects. This test is designed to assess your level of cultural awareness. Kindly answer the questions honestly. Your responses will remain confidential.

Please do not Google the answers, as this may affect our research findings.

Section A: Multiple Choice (3 points)

Instructions: Choose only **ONE** answer for each question by ticking the box next to the option you select.

1. In Canada, Thanksgiving is celebrated with which of the following dishes?

- a) Spaghetti and meatballs
- b) Roast beef and potatoes
- c) Turkey and pumpkin pie
- d) Chicken Parmesan and Salad

2. Which of the following is a key characteristic of British politeness?

- a) Following strict rules and being formal
- b) The use of language such as “please” and “thank you”, along with considerate actions like helping others
- c) Being too apologetic and polite all the time
- d) Always agreeing with others to avoid conflicts

3. Why is it uncomfortable to ask “How much do you make?” in the United States?

- a) Americans prefer discussing politics over money
- b) It violates a cultural norm about privacy and salary

Appendices

c) Employers legally prohibit such conversations

d) Americans believe that discussing salaries is seen as bragging

Section B: True or False (2 points)

Instructions: Say whether the following statements are true or false. CORRECT the false ones.

1. Saint Patrick's Day is celebrated only in Ireland.

.....

2. Australians celebrate Christmas in July to imitate winter holiday traditions.

.....

3. People often wear blue clothing to celebrate Saint Patrick's Day.

.....

4. In American culture, people often exaggerate or minimize their salary when asked.

.....

Section C: Open-ended Questions (2 points)

Instructions: Please answer the following questions honestly based on your current knowledge.

1. What is Saint Patrick's Day, and when is it celebrated?

.....

.....

2. Mention two key aspects of politeness in the United Kingdom?

.....

.....

Section D : Likert Questions (3 points)

Instructions: Please read each statement carefully and indicate your response by ticking one of the options in the table

Appendices

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
I am familiar with the customs, traditions, and celebrations of cultures other than my own.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am curious to learn about different cultures such as trying new food and learning about their traditions and celebrations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I respect cultural practices and celebrations even if they seem strange to me and differ from my own culture.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendices

I believe the stereotype of the “English gentleman” is still present in the British society today.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think Thanksgiving is celebrated similarly in the United States and Canada.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I believe the summer season in December has a strong impact on how Christmas is celebrated in Australia.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix B: Post-Podcasts Questionnaire: Students’ Perceptions

Dear fellow students,

This questionnaire is part of a research study entitled “Exploring the Impact of Podcasts on Enhancing EFL Master 2 Students’ Cultural Awareness: A Pre- and Post-Test Design at the University of Tizi-Ouzou”. It is designed to explore your perceptions of podcasts as a tool to enhance cultural awareness. Your sincere and thoughtful participation is vital, as your responses will directly contribute to the success of this study. We kindly ask you to dedicate a few minutes of your precious time to complete the questionnaire. We guarantee that all the collected data will be used exclusively for academic purposes. We deeply value your time, efforts, and contribution to this study.

Ms. Samira Khelifati

Ms. Melyssa Kaci Amer

Master 2 Students in Foreign Language Didactics

Section 1: General Information

1) Gender

- Male
- Female

2) What is your specialty?

Appendices

- Foreign Language Didactics
- Language and Communication
- Literature and Interdisciplinary Approaches
- Literature and Civilisation
- Comparative Literature

Section 2: Students' Previous Podcast Listening Habits

3) Have you ever listened to podcasts in English before this study?

- Yes
- No

4) If the answer is 'yes', how often do you listen to podcasts in English?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly

5) If the answer is 'yes', what type of podcasts do you usually listen to?

- Educational
 - Entertainment
 - Cultural topics
 - Other, please specify
-

Section 3: Students' Perceptions of Podcasts for Cultural Learning

6) I find podcasts more effective to learn about different cultures than traditional methods like textbooks.

- Agree

Appendices

➤ Neutral

➤ Disagree

7) I find podcasts more effective than other media, like documentaries and films, to learn about different cultures

➤ Agree

➤ Neutral

➤ Disagree

8) Podcasts make it easier to learn about different cultures.

➤ Agree

➤ Neutral

➤ Disagree

9) Podcasts make learning about different cultures more interesting and enjoyable.

➤ Agree

➤ Neutral

➤ Disagree

10) The podcasts I listened to helped me to learn new facts about cultures that I was unfamiliar with.

➤ Agree

➤ Neutral

➤ Disagree

11) After listening to the podcasts, I became more curious to learn about cultures other than my own.

➤ Agree

➤ Neutral

➤ Disagree

Appendices

12) After listening to the podcasts, I feel more aware and respectful of cultural differences.

- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree

Section 4: Podcasts' Impact on Cultural Awareness and Future Use

13) After participating in this study, do you think that your cultural awareness has improved? Please explain why or why not.

.....
.....

14) What cultural aspect have you learned from the podcasts that you were unfamiliar with before?

.....
.....

15) Do you think that you will continue listening to podcasts to further improve your cultural awareness? Please explain why or why not.

.....
.....

16) Would you recommend podcasts to others as a tool for improving cultural awareness? Please explain why or why not.

.....
.....

Appendices

17) In what ways do you think podcasts could be used as a teaching tool to enhance cultural awareness in English classes?

.....

.....

Appendix C: Student Pre-test and Post-test Grades

Sample 1: Pre-test

4.5
10

Full Name: Student 21

Pre-Test: Measuring Cultural Awareness Before Exposure to Podcasts

Instructions:

Please answer the following questions based on your current understanding of cultural aspects. This pre-test is designed to assess your initial cultural awareness before you engage with the podcasts. Kindly answer the questions honestly. Your responses will remain confidential.

Please do not Google the answers, as this may affect our research findings.

Section A: Multiple Choice (3 points)

Instructions: Choose only ONE answer for each question by ticking the box next to the option you select.

1. In Canada, Thanksgiving is celebrated with which of the following dishes?

- a) Spaghetti and meatballs
- b) Roast beef and potatoes
- c) Turkey and pumpkin pie (A)
- d) Chicken Parmesan and Salad

2. Which of the following is a key characteristic of British politeness?

- a) Following strict rules and being formal
- b) The use of language such as "please" and "thank you", along with considerate actions like helping others (A)
- c) Being too apologetic and polite all the time
- d) Always agreeing with others to avoid conflicts

3. Why is it uncomfortable to ask "How much do you make?" in the United States?

- a) Americans prefer discussing politics over money
- b) It violates a cultural norm about privacy and salary (A)
- c) Employers legally prohibit such conversations
- d) Americans believe that discussing salaries is seen as bragging

Section B: True or False (2 points)

Instructions: Say whether the following statements are true or false. CORRECT the false ones.

1. Saint Patrick's Day is celebrated only in Ireland.

.....

2. Australians celebrate Christmas in July to imitate winter holiday traditions.

.....

3. People often wear blue clothing to celebrate Saint Patrick's Day.

.....

4. In American culture, people often exaggerate or minimize their salary when asked.

.....

Section C: Open-ended Questions (2 points)

Instructions: Please answer the following questions honestly based on your current knowledge.

1. What is Saint Patrick's Day, and when is it celebrated?

.....

.....

Appendices

2. Mention two key aspects of politeness in the United Kingdom? D

Section D : Likert Questions (3 points)

Instructions: Please read each statement carefully and indicate your response by ticking one of the options in the table.

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
I am familiar with the customs, traditions, and celebrations of cultures other than my own.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I am curious to learn about different cultures such as trying new food and learning about their traditions and celebrations.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I respect cultural practices and celebrations even if they seem strange to me and differ from my own culture.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I believe the stereotype of the "English gentleman" is still present in the British society today.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think Thanksgiving is celebrated similarly in the United States and Canada.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I believe the summer season in December has a strong impact on how Christmas is celebrated in Australia.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Sample 2: Post-test

8
—
10

Full Name: student 21

Pre-Test: Measuring Cultural Awareness Before Exposure to Podcasts

Instructions:
Please answer the following questions based on your current understanding of cultural aspects. This pre-test is designed to assess your initial cultural awareness before you engage with the podcasts. Kindly answer the questions honestly. Your responses will remain confidential.

Please do not Google the answers, as this may affect our research findings.

Section A: Multiple Choice (3 points)

Instructions: Choose only **ONE** answer for each question by ticking the box next to the option you select.

1. In Canada, Thanksgiving is celebrated with which of the following dishes?

a) Spaghetti and meatballs

b) Roast beef and potatoes

c) Turkey and pumpkin pie 1

d) Chicken Parmesan and Salad

2. Which of the following is a key characteristic of British politeness?

a) Following strict rules and being formal

b) The use of language such as “please” and “thank you”, along with considerate actions like helping others 1

c) Being too apologetic and polite all the time

d) Always agreeing with others to avoid conflicts

3. Why is it uncomfortable to ask “How much do you make?” in the United States?

a) Americans prefer discussing politics over money

b) It violates a cultural norm about privacy and salary 1

c) Employers legally prohibit such conversations

d) Americans believe that discussing salaries is seen as bragging

Section B: True or False (2 points)

Instructions: Say whether the following statements are true or false. **CORRECT** the false ones.

1. Saint Patrick’s Day is celebrated only in Ireland. 1

⇒ False

⇒ It is also celebrated in US, Canada, and Australia

2. Australians celebrate Christmas in July to imitate winter holiday traditions. 1

⇒ True

3. People often wear blue clothing to celebrate Saint Patrick’s Day. 1

⇒ False

⇒ When people celebrate saint Patrick’s Day, they wear green clothing

4. In American culture, people often exaggerate or minimize their salary when asked. 1

⇒ True

Section C: Open-ended Questions (2 points)

Instructions: Please answer the following questions honestly based on your current knowledge.

1. What is Saint Patrick’s Day, and when is it celebrated?

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⇒ It is a cultural and religious celebration that is held on to honor the patron Saint Patrick of Ireland. In this Day, people conventionally wear green customs to celebrate Irish heritage. 0,1

2. Mention two key aspects of politeness in the United Kingdom?

⇒ Frequently saying please, thank you and sorry.

⇒ Queuing

1

Section D : Likert Questions (3 points)

Instructions: Please read each statement carefully and indicate your response by ticking one of the options in the table.

1,5
3

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
I am familiar with the customs, traditions, and celebrations of cultures other than my own.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I am curious to learn about different cultures such as trying new food and learning about their traditions and celebrations.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I respect cultural practices and celebrations even if they seem strange to me and differ from my own culture.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I believe the stereotype of the "English gentleman" is still present in the British society today.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think Thanksgiving is celebrated similarly in the United States and Canada.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I believe the summer season in December has a strong impact on how Christmas is celebrated in Australia.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix C: Summary of Cultural Podcasts

1. Politeness, mind your P'S and Q'S (the British Culture Club)

Format: Interview

Link: <https://open.spotify.com/episode/2D7c2tsaMXcjcFrHEsMJew?si=42554e95608d40ea>

Summary

The podcast takes the form of an interview between Ollie and Callum during which they share their insights into what it means to be polite in the UK. Ollie explains that politeness involves showing respect through actions like saying “please” and “thank you”, holding doors open, and observing good table manners. He emphasises the cultural significance of queuing, where people respect each other’s personal space in public settings. Ollie also highlights that politeness in the UK is often linked to behaviour towards older generations, and notes that while the stereotype of the “English gentleman” still exists, it is becoming less common. Additionally, he points out that excessive politeness, like over-apologizing, can reduce its sincerity.

Callum, a bookseller, adds that British politeness is often seen as excessive compared to other cultures, particularly in the way people apologize and thank others. He explains that British people, especially in formal settings like schools, workplaces, and dining situations, are taught to follow etiquette and show respect through language and behaviour. For him, politeness in the UK involves not just language (like using “please” and “thank you”) but also actions, such as helping people with their bags or being mindful of personal space. He also observes that British people sometimes hesitate to ask people to move, as politeness aims to avoid conflict and make others feel comfortable.

2. History of Canadian Thanksgiving (Canadian citizenship)

Format: Narrative

Link: <https://open.spotify.com/episode/3zhITfhKrNLOeyS2Fzo4v8?si=12b0604b5a574320>

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Summary

This episode discusses the origins of Canadian Thanksgiving, in which it was noted that Canada's Thanksgiving has a unique history, distinct from the US celebrations. The first recorded European Thanksgiving in Canada occurred in 1578, when English explorer Martin Frobisher celebrated his crew's safe arrival in Newfoundland with a meal of salt beef, biscuits, and mushy peas, 43 years before the first American Thanksgiving. While Canadian Thanksgiving has deep historical roots, modern traditions were influenced by the US customs, such as turkey, squash, and pumpkin dishes. At the end of the episode, it was mentioned that today's Canadian Thanksgiving menu includes turkey in some homes, but sometimes replaced by ham, gravy, and pumpkin pie.

3. Embracing Christmas in Australia (new life in Australia)

Format: Narrative

Link:

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/4sU0WXVrTWdlh9inTtWrMQ?si=90aa352430074cf9>

Summary

In this episode, host Karen Bleakley explores the unique experience of celebrating Christmas in Australia, particularly for newcomers accustomed to colder winter festivities. She highlights the stark contrasts, such as the hot summer weather, Santa in board shorts and flip-flops, beachside carols, and barbecue, while encouraging listeners to embrace these changes rather than compare them to traditions back home. Karen shares her family's new customs, like annual summer Santa photos and festive seafood lunches, and offers practical tips, such as preparing a turkey in advance if desired or opting for lighter dishes like pavlova. She also touches on the relaxed dress code (think swimwear instead of winter sweaters) and the long school holidays that help make Christmas an extended family celebration. While acknowledging the initial strangeness, Karen reassures listeners that adapting can lead to a refreshing, low-stress holiday, especially with the option of celebrating "Christmas in July"

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for those missing cozy winter vibes. Ultimately, she emphasizes the freedom to create new traditions while staying connected with loved ones abroad through technology, making the Australian Christmas a joyful and unique experience.

4. Do not bring this up to Americans (speaking American English podcast)

Format: Narrative

Link:

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/6iQ1DgwFW1vnXQoQnbnmTPU?si=5f5dd5d9817d41da>

Summary

This episode explores a topic that often makes Americans uncomfortable, which is asking them the question “how much do you make?”. While Americans are generally open to discussing any topic, salary and income remain cultural taboos. Talking openly about personal earnings is widely considered inappropriate or even rude. The episode explains that responses to such questions are usually evasive or humorous, people might say, “Oh, I make a million dollars,” or simply reply with “I make minimum wage.” These reactions serve as social cues, reflecting a broader cultural understanding that discussing income is off-limits. The host also referred to Joe Pinsker from *The Atlantic* who noted that Americans love to talk about how much Americans hate to talk about money, highlighting that only 17 percent of parents have told their children how much they earn or revealed their net worth.

5. Saint Patrick’s Day (The Irish Accent)

Format: Narrative

Link:

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/6N3P5eZg43b46mGwODbvP9?si=7c21de2e02b349ce>

Summary

The episode discusses Saint Patrick’s Day, celebrated on March 17th, which is Ireland’s national holiday, honoring the country’s patron saint, who is credited with introducing

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Christianity to Ireland 1,500 years ago. On this day, schools and businesses close, and people wear green clothing, greeting each other with “Happy Paddy’s Day.” Cities come alive with green decorations, Irish flags, and lively parades featuring music, dancing, and colourful costumes. Dublin’s parade is the largest, drawing thousands of spectators. Many people celebrate in pubs, drinking Guinness (over 13 million pints are sold on this day). The holiday is also celebrated worldwide, with significant events taking place in cities such as Chicago (where the river turns green), New York, Japan, and Argentina. Tourists fly to Ireland, filling Dublin Airport with festive energy. Overall, Saint Patrick’s Day is a joyful celebration of Irish culture and pride, uniting people globally.