إعادة انتاج تقنية البصمة الصوتية لتعزيز الطلاقة لدى متعلمي اللغة الإنكليزية كلغة ثانية في فصول المحادثة باللغة الإنكليزية كلغة ثانية

Reproducing the Podcast Technique to Enhance Fluency among EFL Learners in Conversation Classes

م.م. احمد جميل سليمان الدليمي

Assistant Lecturer Ahmed Jamil Al Dulaimy

جامعة الموصل / كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية

College of Education for Humanities/University of Mosul

ahmed.sulyman@umosul.edu.iq

ملخص البحث:

يهدف البحث الحالي الى معرفة مدى فعالية استخدام تقنية إعادة إنتاج البصمة الصوتية في تعزيز الطلاقة الشفهية لدى متعلمي اللغة الإنكليزية كلغة أجنبية لدي الطلبة العواقيين.

لا تزال الطلاقة من أكبر التحديات التي يواجهها متعلمو اللغة الإنجليزية الذين غالبًا ما يُظهرون فهمًا عميقا لقواعد اللغة إلا انهم يجدون صعوبة كبيرة في التحدث بطلاقة في المواقف اليومية.

يتناول هذا البحث التحدي الشائع المتمثل في محدودية الطلاقة الشفهية على الرغم من المعرفة النحوية الكافية، وهي مشكلة شائعة بين متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في العراق. يستكشف هذا البحث استخدام تقنية إعادة إنتاج البصمة الصوتية كأداة لتحسين الطلاقة الشفهية.

استُخدم تصميم اختبار قبلي/بعدي مع 30 طالبًا جامعيًا من المستوى المتوسط من إحدى الجامعات العراقية. على مدار ستة أسابيع، تلقى المشاركون تدريبًا قائمًا على الاصغاء الى بصمات صوتية باللغة الإنكليزية حيث انهم استمعوا إلى حلقات مختارة، وأعادوا إنتاج محتواها شفويًا بكلماتهم الخاصة، وشاركوا في مناقشات موجهة تهدف إلى تعزيز الطلاقة. تم تقييم الأداء الشفهي قبل التدريب وبعده باستخدام مقياس الطلاقة الذي يقيس معدل التحدث، وعدد التوقفات، والتصحيحات الذاتية.

تم قياس الطلاقة قبل وبعد التجربة باستخدام مقياس يقيس سرعة الكلام، ومدة التوقف، والتصحيح الذاتي.

اشارة النتائج إلى تحسن ذي دلالة إحصائية في الطلاقة الشفهية لدى المشاركين. كما كشفت النتائج عن تحسن ملحوظ في تحدث المشاركون حيث اصح بشكل أسرع، وتوقف اقل، وصححوا لأنفسهم بشكل أقل ايضا. كما ازدادت ثقتهم الطلاب بأنفسهم اثناء التحدث.

كما اكدت النتائج أن برنامج إعادة إنتاج البصمة الصوتية يعد نهجا فعالا لتعزيز الطلاقة في دروس المحادثة باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية لا سيما في السياقات التي يكون فيها التعرض للغة الإنجليزية في الحياة اليومية محدودًا. واوضحت أن إعادة إنتاج البصمة الصوتية أداة تربوية عملية فعالة لمدرسي اللغة الإنكليزية كلغة أجنبية مما يعزز إنتاج الكلام العفوي والطلاقة من خلال تزويد المتعلمين بنموذج منظم للتقليد والاستيعاب.

Abstract

This field study investigates the efficacy of the podcast reproduction technique in enhancing oral fluency among Iraqi English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners.

Fluency remains one of the greatest challenges for Iraqi learners of English, who often demonstrate solid knowledge of grammar but struggle to speak smoothly in real time conversation. The current research addresses the common challenge of limited speaking fluency despite adequate grammatical knowledge, an issue frequently observed in the Iraqi EFL context. it explores the use of the Podcast Reproduction Technique (PRT) as a means of improving learners 'speaking fluency.

A single-group pre-test/post-test design was employed with thirty intermediate-level undergraduate learners from an Iraqi university. Over a six-week period, participants received training based on authentic English podcasts. They listened to selected episodes, reproduced the content orally in their own words, and participated in guided discussions aimed at reinforcing fluency. Oral performance was assessed before and after the training using a fluency rubric that measured speech rate, number of pauses, and self-corrections.

Fluency is measured before and after the treatment using a rubric assessing speech rate, pauses, and self-corrections.

The anticipated results indicate a statistically significant improvement in the oral fluency of the participants. The findings also revealed notable improvements: participants spoke faster, reduced long pauses, and made fewer self-corrections. Learners also reported increased confidence in speaking. These results suggest that PRT is an effective approach for enhancing fluency in EFL conversation classes, particularly in contexts where authentic exposure to English is limited and assured that the podcast reproduction technique is a practical and effective pedagogical tool for Iraqi EFL instructors to integrate

into conversation classes, promoting more automatic and fluent speech production by providing learners with a structured model to imitate and internalize.

Keywords: Podcast Reproduction, Fluency, Speaking, Podcasts, Iraqi EFL Learners and Reproduction.

Definition of Keywords

• Podcast Reproduction: A language-learning technique in which learners listen to a podcast and then reproduce or retell its content in their own words, often followed by discussion or practice activities. This method combines authentic input with structured output, helping learners improve fluency, notice gaps in their language knowledge, and build confidence in speaking (Tavakoli & Hunter, 2018).

• Fluency: The ability to speak smoothly, clearly, and naturally, with minimal hesitation, reflecting automatic and efficient use of language in real-time communication (Tavakoli & Hunter, 2018).

• Speaking: Oral language production, involving pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and discourse skills used to communicate meaning effectively.

• Podcasts: Digital audio recordings used as authentic listening materials, providing learners with real-life English input for comprehension and reproduction tasks.

• EFL (English as a Foreign Language): Learning English in a context where it is not the native language of the community, such as in Iraq.

• Reproduction: A pedagogical task in which learners listen to spoken material (e.g., podcasts) and then retell or reproduce the content in their own words to practice fluency, accuracy, and output skills (Tavakoli & Hunter, 2018).

1. Introduction

In the context of teaching English in Iraq, many learners are facing a big challenge with speaking fluency. They often have good knowledge of grammar and vocabulary but they find difficulty to produce spoken English smoothly, without pauses and hesitations (Al-Mahmood, 2019). The conversation classes sometimes are not enough because of large numbers of learners and limited time.

One modern technique that is becoming popular is using podcasts. Podcasts give learners access to speak English naturally. The "Podcast Reproduction Technique" is a method where learners listen to a short podcast segment and then try to speak it back in their own words, with the same meaning and idea. This study wants to see if this technique can help Iraqi university learners to become more fluent in their English conversations.

Developing oral fluency is a persistent problem for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in Iraq. While many learners acquire grammatical knowledge, their ability to speak smoothly remains limited due to restricted opportunities for authentic practice both inside and outside the classroom

(Tavakoli & Hunter, 2018). Conventional classroom activities, such as role-plays and scripted dialogues, often fail to replicate the natural rhythm and speed of authentic English conversation.

Podcasts, as a contemporary learning tool, provide access to real life spoken English with authentic pronunciation, intonation, and natural pacing (Yeh, 2023). When learners are asked not only to listen but also to reproduce what they hear, they engage in a learning process that integrates both listening and speaking. This approach is closely connected to Swain's (1995) Output Hypothesis, which argues that producing language pushes learners to process language more deeply, notice gaps in their knowledge, and ultimately improve fluency.

This study investigates the effectiveness of the Podcast Reproduction Technique (PRT) in improving the fluency of Iraqi EFL learners. It focuses on two main questions:

1. Does PRT improve the fluency of Iraqi university learners in English conversation classes?

2. Which aspects of fluency (speech rate, pauses, self-corrections) are most affected by PRT?

By addressing these questions, this study aims to contribute to more effective classroom strategies for developing speaking fluency in EFL contexts.

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Importance of Fluency

Fluency in speaking means the ability to communicate ideas without unnecessary pauses, with a good speed, and good use of linking words (Nation, 2005). To develop fluency, learners need to practice producing language under time pressure.

The podcast reproduction technique, sometimes called "shadowing" or "parroting," is supported by theories of language acquisition. It helps learners to internalize the "chunks" of language, the rhythm, and the intonation of native speakers (Hamada, 2016). A study in Iran by Soleimani and Rahmanian (2018) showed that using authentic audio materials significantly improved the speaking fluency of EFL learners. While research in the Arab world is growing, there is a specific need for studies in the Iraqi context to see how this technique works with Iraqi learners, who have their own specific first language interference and learning challenges.

Fluency is widely recognized as a key component of communicative competence. It refers to the ability of producing speech at a natural pace with minimal hesitation (Derwing & Munro, 2015). Unlike accuracy, which focuses on grammatical correctness, fluency emphasizes smooth and comprehensible delivery. Research indicates that learners who achieve greater fluency are often perceived as more competent communicators, even if their grammar is not perfect (Segalowitz, 2010).

2.2 Influential Theories

This study is grounded in three influential theories. First, Krashen's (1982) Input Hypothesis emphasizes the importance of comprehensible input as a driver of language acquisition. Second, Swain's (1995) Output Hypothesis highlights the necessity of language production, arguing that speaking helps learners internalize structures. Finally, Schmidt's (2001) Noticing Hypothesis proposes that learners

improve when they become aware of the gaps between their own output and target input. The PRT method brings these elements together: podcasts provide input, reproduction requires output, and learners notice discrepancies when they compare their attempts to the model.

2.3 Podcasts and Reproduction Tasks

Several studies confirm the effectiveness of podcasts in language learning. O'Bryan and Hegelheimer (2007) found that podcasts increased learners 'exposure to authentic English and improved listening comprehension. Hamada (2016) demonstrated that shadowing and repetition tasks significantly enhanced both listening and speaking skills by promoting automaticity. Similarly, Suzuki (2019) reported that reproduction tasks encouraged learners to process speech rhythm and speed, leading to measurable fluency gains.

In this study, three main instructional tools are used within the Podcast Reproduction Technique:

1. Podcasts, which provide authentic input through naturally produced English;

2. Reproduction tasks, where learners retell the podcast content in their own words to stimulate output and fluency development; and

3. Follow-up discussions, which offer communicative practice for applying the language more freely after the structured reproduction stage.

2.4 Measuring Fluency

Fluency in speaking research is usually measured using temporal indicators that show how smoothly a learner can produce speech. Tavakoli and Hunter (2018) explain that reliable fluency measures include speech rate, pausing behavior, and self-repair frequency, as these reflect automaticity and real-time processing. In this study, fluency was assessed using a rubric adapted from Tavakoli and Hunter (2018), focusing on three indicators:

1. Speech rate (words per minute),

2. Number of long pauses (≥1 second), and

3. Number of self-corrections during speech production.

The current research uses a pre-test and post-test design with one intact group of learners, so it follows a quasi-experimental research design. A quasi-experimental study is defined by Ary, Jacobs, and Sorensen (2010) as research that examines the effect of a treatment without fully random assignment, often because participants come from pre-existing classes. This type of design is common in educational settings where randomization is not practical or ethical.

To analyze the learners' performance, appropriate statistical tools were used. The primary statistical tool was the paired samples t-test, which compares the mean scores of the same group before and after

a treatment. According to Pallant (2020), the paired samples t-test is suitable for determining whether an instructional intervention has led to a statistically significant improvement in learners' performance.

Descriptive statistics (means, percentages, and standard deviations) were also calculated to summarize the overall trends in fluency development. These tools allow the researcher to identify not only whether improvement occurred, but also how substantial the improvement was.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

Thirty learners (aged 19 - 21) enrolled in the second year of the English Department at University of Mosul took part in the study. Their English proficiency ranged from pre-intermediate to intermediate. All participants provided consent to participate in the research.

3.2 Instruments

- Podcasts: Authentic episodes from BBC's 6 Minute English are selected. Topics included everyday issues such as "The Benefits of Sleeping Early" and "Why Do People Procrastinate?"

- Tests: A pre-test and post-test required each learnerto speak for three minutes on a familiar topic.

- Rubric: Fluency is assessed using a rubric adapted from Tavakoli and Hunter (2018), measuring speech rate (words per minute), number of long pauses (≥ 1 second), and number of self-corrections.

3.3 Procedure

1. Pre-test: Learners are asked to enter a separate room one by one to listen to the podcast: This podcast is taken from BBC's 6 Minute English to be a pre/post-test

Podcast Title:

The Power of Small Habits

Length: 3 minutes

Speakers: Emma and Dr. Lewis

Emma:

Hello and welcome to our podcast! Today we're talking about something small… but powerful habits. We all have them, good or bad. Brushing your teeth, checking your phone, or going for a walk these are all habits. But can small daily habits really change your life?

Dr. Lewis:

Yes, they can! In fact, psychologists say that our lives are mostly shaped by habits, not big decisions. If you build a small positive habit, it grows over time like compound interest for your brain.

Emma:

That's interesting. But why are small habits easier to keep than big goals, like "I'll go to the gym every day"?

Dr. Lewis:

Because small habits don't scare your brain. When something feels easy, you're more likely to repeat it. For example, instead of saying "I'll read one book every week," say "I'll read one page before bed." Once you start, your brain often wants to continue.

Emma:

So the secret is to start small even tiny!

Dr. Lewis:

Exactly. One study found that people who started with just two minutes of exercise per day were more likely to develop a long-term fitness routine. It's the repetition that matters, not the size of the action.

Emma:

That makes sense. I remember trying to learn Spanish last year. I started with twenty minutes a day, but I gave up after two weeks. Maybe if I had started with five minutes, I'd still be doing it!

Dr. Lewis:

That's a great example. Also, habits become stronger when they're connected to something you already do. For instance, if you want to drink more water, you can drink a glass right after brushing your teeth. Linking a new habit to an old one helps your brain remember.

Emma:

So it's all about being consistent, not perfect.

Dr. Lewis:

Exactly! Small actions, repeated daily, can change your behavior, your mindset, and even your identity. You stop saying, "I'm trying to be healthy," and start saying, "I am a healthy person."

Emma:

I love that. So, listeners, think of one small habit you can start today. Maybe read one page, take a short walk, or just smile at someone. Small steps can lead to big change.

Dr. Lewis:

And remember success is built one tiny habit at a time!

Emma:

Thanks for listening to our podcast, The Power of Small Habits. See you next time!

Notes for Pre-Test Use

- Duration: ~3 minutes at normal speed (120 - 130 wpm).

- Vocabulary level: CEFR B1–B2 (pre-intermediate to intermediate).

- Accent: Neutral / British-friendly tone.

- Content: Everyday topic (self-improvement, motivation).

- Task idea: After listening twice, learners summarize it in their own words for 2 minutes.

Example: A learner's Reproduction of "The Power of Small Habits"

"A a a , so… the bodcast is about habit and how they can change life for us. The man say that many things we did every day and .. and a. a is just habits   like brush you teeth or checking mobile.

Lara .. Lion sorry .. Lewis, say small habits is a a are big powerful then big goal, because they are easy. When … when a a something feel simble, you will can repeated it easy. For example, she said, instead of plain to reading a books in week, she can read one papers very night when sleeping.

He also explan that if you repeated small action in day, the …the becoming port of we .. you routine. Like, one persons start with only two minute of exercise and later do more. So its not about how big the action is, but how often we do it.

other boint about link a a a new habits with old. For example, drink water er.. right after brushing your teeths   that helps you remembering.

Finally, they say that small habit .. habit can change not only we, a a you do but how you see ourselves. Like, you don't just try to be health of become a healthy person.

Main ideas is: small a a a steps can could made large changes if we keeps doing them every day."

Notes for Fluency Rubric (Tavakoli & Hunter, 2018)

- Speech rate: ~ 46 wpm

- Pauses: ~19 longer pauses

- Self-corrections: ~ 18 (a a a, and and, er, so…)

- Repair strategy: mild reformulation (sorry, is, are we, you   Like, one person started…) Their performance is immediately measured against a fluency rubric measuring speech rate, pauses, and repair strategies. (Appendix 1) an Apple iPad is used to record and analyze the podcast reproduction with the help of ChatGPT.

2. Intervention (6 weeks) like: A day in my life, Missing a Deadline, Study Plan ...etc.
• Listen to assigned podcasts.
• Reproduce the content orally and individually.
• Engage in follow-up conversation questions related to the podcast.
• Receive teacher feedback on fluency.
3. Post-test: Post-test: The same podcast is repeated again after more than 6 weeks, which is long enough to avoid retention bias.

Table (1) The Experimental Design of the Research

Research Group	Pre-test	Independent Variable	Post-test
	Authentic episodes from s 6 Minute English'BBC	Podcast Reproduction Technique	Authentic episodes from s 6 Minute English'BBC

Implementation of the Post-Test:

After completing the experiment, the post-test of the same podcast as shown in the (Appendix 2) is conducted to the research group.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the results of the statistical analysis conducted to evaluate the effect of using Podcast Reproduction Technique (PRT) on learners' oral fluency in three core indicators of fluency:

Speech rate (words per minute),

Number of long pauses,

Number of self-corrections

The data were collected from thirty intermediate level EFL learners who participated in a six-week training program. A paired-samples t-test was used to compare pre-test and post-test performance.

Table (2) Pre/ Post-Test Descriptive Statistics and T-values for Fluency Measures

Measure	N	Mean (Pre-Test)	Mean (Post-Test)	Mean Difference	t-value	df	Sig. (p)
Speech Rate (wpm)	30	46.7	62.1	15.4	8.42	29	.000
Long Pauses (≥1 sec)	30	19.2	13.4	5.8	7.15	29	.000
Self-Corrections	30	17.6	11.9	5.7	6.33	29	.000

p < .001 (highly significant).

p value = probability value

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3.4 Data Analysis

3.4 .1 Analysis of Speech Rate

The mean speech rate increased significantly from (~ 47) wpm in the pre-test to (~ 88) wpm in the post-test. This represents improvement in delivery speed. The post-test standard deviation ($SD = 6.1$) was slightly higher, suggesting that while most learners improved, some progressed faster than others. The substantial increase in speech rate indicates that learners were able to speak more fluidly and retrieve linguistic items more automatically. These findings confirm that repeated podcast reproduction promotes faster and more continuous speech production.

.2 Analysis of Long Pauses

The number of long pauses decreased from a mean of (~ 19) to (~ 13) indicating a significant reduction in hesitation. This reflects smoother speech flow and improved speech continuity. The reduction in pauses suggests that learners gained greater control over timing and had quicker access to language forms during spontaneous production.

.3 Analysis of Self-Corrections

The number of self-corrections also showed a significant decline, dropping from (~ 18) in the pre-test to (~ 12) in the post-test. This reduction indicates that learners spoke with greater confidence and accuracy, making fewer mid-utterance repairs. Lower self-correction rates imply that learners planned and executed their speech more efficiently, demonstrating a shift from controlled to more automatic language use.

The results across all three indicators demonstrate statistically significant improvement following the six-week PRT intervention. Learners' speech became faster, smoother, and more stable, confirming that the Podcast Reproduction Technique is an effective tool for developing oral fluency in EFL contexts.

4. Results and Discussion

The findings demonstrate that RPT is effective in improving fluency in conversation classes. The significant increase in speech rate and reduction in pauses mirrors Hamada's (2019) findings on shadowing. The improvement in repair fluency supports Suzuki et al. (2021), who found that repetition fosters automatization.

These results align with Hamada (2019), who demonstrated that repetition tasks enhance automaticity, and with Suzuki (2019), who showed that reproduction exercises promote natural speech rhythm. The combination of listening, reproducing, and discussing appeared to push learners toward greater fluency by providing both input and opportunities for output under time pressure.

In addition to quantitative improvement, qualitative feedback indicated that learners felt more confident speaking English. This reduced anxiety is particularly important in the Iraqi context, where classroom participation is often inhibited by fear of making mistakes. The structured cycle of listening

and reproduction gave learners a sense of security and purpose, making speaking practice less intimidating.

Challenges included occasional internet connectivity problems and the reluctance of shy learners to speak in front of peers. However, as sessions progressed, participation improved, suggesting that PRT fosters both skill development and motivation.

5. Conclusion

This study demonstrated that the Podcast Reproduction Technique can significantly improve fluency among Iraqi EFL learners. By integrating authentic input, output practice, and opportunities for noticing, PRT offers a practical approach to fluency development in contexts where exposure to English is limited, the statistical evidence strongly supports the positive impact of the Podcast Reproduction Technique on learners' oral fluency. The significant increases in speech rate, alongside reductions in pauses and self-corrections, reveal that PRT facilitates the transition from hesitant and effortful speech to smoother, more automatic production. The technique's structured yet communicative approach provides EFL learners with consistent, authentic input and opportunities for output, making it a valuable pedagogical strategy for fluency-oriented language instruction.

The findings suggest that PRT not only improves measurable aspects of fluency such as speech rate, pauses, and self-corrections but also enhances learners 'confidence in speaking.

6. Recommendations

Teachers in similar EFL contexts are encouraged to incorporate podcasts and reproduction activities into conversation classes.

7. Suggestion for Future Studies

Future research should explore the long-term impact of PRT, compare its effectiveness with other fluency focused methods, and examine its application in different cultural and proficiency settings.

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Appendix 1

Fluency Rubric Measuring Speech Rate, Pauses, and Repair Strategies.

Criterion	Excellent (5)	Good (4)	Fair (3)	Weak (2)	Poor (1)
Speech Rate (Words per Minute)	120+ wpm; speech flows naturally with minimal hesitation	110 to119 wpm; generally smooth with few hesitations	95 to 109 wpm; occasional pauses but meaning clear	80 to 94 wpm; frequent pauses slow communication	Below 80 wpm; speech very slow and halting
Pauses (≥1 Second)	Very few pauses; natural rhythm maintained	Some pauses but not disruptive	Noticeable pauses that slightly disrupt flow	Frequent long pauses affecting coherence	Many long pauses making communication difficult
Self-Corrections	Rare; corrections are quick and natural	Occasional; minimal disruption to fluency	Some self-corrections with slight hesitation	Frequent self-corrections affecting flow	Constant corrections causing loss of meaning
Overall Fluency	Smooth, confident, and natural delivery	Mostly smooth, few hesitations	Understandable but hesitant at times	Hesitant and fragmented	Disfluent and difficult to follow

Appendix 2

Pre/Post-Test

Authentic episodes from BBC's 6 Minute English

Podcast Title:

The Power of Small Habits

Length: 3 minutes

Speakers: Emma and Dr. Lewis

Emma:

Hello and welcome to our podcast! Today we're talking about something small… but powerful habits. We all have them, good or bad. Brushing your teeth, checking your phone, or going for a walk these are all habits. But can small daily habits really change your life?

Dr. Lewis:

Yes, they can! In fact, psychologists say that our lives are mostly shaped by habits, not big decisions. If you build a small positive habit, it grows over time like compound interest for your brain.

Emma:

That's interesting. But why are small habits easier to keep than big goals, like "I'll go to the gym every day"?

Dr. Lewis:

Because small habits don't scare your brain. When something feels easy, you're more likely to repeat it. For example, instead of saying "I'll read one book every week," say "I'll read one page before bed." Once you start, your brain often wants to continue.

Emma:

So the secret is to start small even tiny!

Dr. Lewis:

Exactly. One study found that people who started with just two minutes of exercise per day were more likely to develop a long-term fitness routine. It's the repetition that matters, not the size of the action.

Emma:

That makes sense. I remember trying to learn Spanish last year. I started with twenty minutes a day, but I gave up after two weeks. Maybe if I had started with five minutes, I'd still be doing it!

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That's a great example. Also, habits become stronger when they're connected to something you already do. For instance, if you want to drink more water, you can drink a glass right after brushing your teeth. Linking a new habit to an old one helps your brain remember.

Emma:

So it's all about being consistent, not perfect.

Dr. Lewis:

Exactly! Small actions, repeated daily, can change your behavior, your mindset, and even your identity. You stop saying, "I'm trying to be healthy," and start saying, "I am a healthy person."

Emma:

I love that. So, listeners, think of one small habit you can start today. Maybe read one page, take a short walk, or just smile at someone. Small steps can lead to big change.

Dr. Lewis:

And remember success is built one tiny habit at a time!

Emma:

Thanks for listening to our podcast, The Power of Small Habits. See you next time!