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The Use of Podcast in Learning the Form Four Short Story

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Melor Md Yunus[1], Ida Ruhidiba Bakhtiar[1,*]

[1] Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 Bangi, Selangor Darul Ehsan

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Teaching the literature component especially the short story to the generation of the millennials has proven to be a challenging task as most of them do not favour the conventional method of teaching the literature component. This study focuses on the use of podcast as a learning tool in learning the form four short story. A class of 23 form four students from a boarding school in Penang has been the subject of this research. The study reveals that the students enjoy using the podcast in the learning of the short story as the podcast helps them in their understanding of the short story as well as helping them remember the plot of the story and the characters which are essential in the learning of a short story. Though there are challenges that the students encountered in the use of the podcast, it can be concluded that the use of podcast could be used widely in the Malaysian classrooms for a more creative and effective approach.

1. Introduction

The form four Literature Component is part of the Malaysian English language syllabus that focuses on poems and short stories. The implementation of the Literature Component began in 2000 as a form of language for aesthetic use [21]. The current students are in the third set of the prescribed texts starting from the year 2016. For the purpose of this research the short story entitled "Leaving" by M G Vassanji had been chosen as the text to study on the use of podcast in the learning of short story. Podcasting in an ESL classroom had been widely acknowledged in the effectiveness of teaching the language skills among non-native speakers. In a research done by Al-Qasim and Al-Fadda [1] on the effectiveness of using podcasts to improve the listening comprehension of foreign university students, Al-Qasim and Al-Fadda [1] concluded that podcast technology did have a significant impact in helping these students improve their understanding through listening. Apart from that, podcasts also helped in creating awareness that podcasts could also be utilized as part of a learning strategy that could provide students with a different approach to learning language. This had been suggested

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* Corresponding author.
E-mail address: idaruhidiba@smskb.edu.my (Ida Ruhidiba Bakhtiar)

by Yunus and Suliman [30] in which the use of ICT tools in teaching the Literature Component could ignite the students' interest and improve the students' attitudes in learning literature. Sidhu *et al.*, [25] stated that literature played an important role in language learning for students could apply the forms of expressions used in the literary context to express themselves in the targeted language whereby in this case, it is the English language.

However, in a study conducted by Aziz and Nasharudin [2], most students did not fully grasp a good understanding of what they learned in class which inadvertently causing the students to display a lack of appreciation towards literature. Ghazali *et al.*, [8] suggested that the cause of the lack of interest was due to the reason the methods or strategies used in teaching the literature component. Students these days are not in favour of discussing the plot, characters, themes and moral values as these are the contributing factors to the students' lack of interest towards literature which cause them to lose their attention in the learning process of learning literature. Learning literature in English is not easy as Chacko [4] pointed out that students need to grasp not only the language but the content of the lesson as well. Literature in its complexity treads on the appreciation towards the literary texts and not just comprehending the text [30].

Therefore, the objectives of this research are to:

i)   explore on the use of podcast in learning the form four Literature Component and

ii)   determine the students' perceived benefits and challenges of podcasting in the learning of the Literature Component.

The research conducted by Yunus and Suliman [30] focused on the use of ICT tools in the teaching and learning of the Literature Component in Malaysian secondary schools. On the other hand, the research organised by Al-Qasim and Al-Fadda [1] revolved on the effectiveness of using podcasts to improve on the listening comprehension of foreign university students. Both these research provided the basis on the gap between the integration of ICT in the teaching and learning process of the Literature Component and the use of podcast in learning the form four Literature Component. Yunus and Suliman [30] concluded that ICT tools were a great tool to help enhance the learning experience in a classroom setting. Moreover, a research done by Al-Qasim and Al-Fadda [1] on foreign university students indicated that the use of podcasts had helped in the improvement of the students' listening comprehension which provided the basis of this research in improving the students' understanding and interest in learning the short stories.

2. Literature Review
2.1 Introduction

In accordance to the teaching and learning process for literature component, a suitable tool to attract the students' attention and interest is the use of podcast. According to Glisksman [10] there are several reasons podcast is suitable for education. Among the reasons are the use of podcast might help to develop the students' ability, encourages students to share their work with their peers and finally podcasting calls for integration of skills such as the skills needed for research, planning and presentation. Cooper [6] stated that podcast is a good prospect in an online classroom where it could help to differentiate learning. Mayes and de Freitas [19] regarded learning as a way to help in understanding by making discovery, communicating and to collaborate. According to Hasan and Hoon [12], research studies on podcasting had recognised its capabilities and verification of podcasts being able to assist in improving the learners' speaking and listening skills had been recorded [31, 33]. The benefit of utilizing podcasts in the classroom is that it is aligned with the Constructivist approach where the implementation of the theories of scholars such as Dewey, Piaget and Vygotsky [23] are being implemented in the learning process. Social constructivist approach comes from

different views that consist of the different aspects of learning that involves the aspects of being active, socially and students' creativity as podcast is regarded as a learning tool to actively engage the students.

These chosen articles focused on the findings on the perceived effects in the students' participation, interaction, peer feedback and the quality of the students' personal response towards the use of podcasts. A review on other contributions and research findings on the use of ICT tools in the teaching of the Literature Component had been carefully reviewed and compared. These articles provided the base of this research in order to address a gap between the use of ICT tools in the teaching and learning of the Literature Component and the use of podcast in learning the form four short story. The word podcast is coined from the terms pod (from the Apple iPod) and the word broadcast. Podcasts are recordings of digital audio and video which are produced and then uploaded on the Internet by using the RSS [15]. According to Hasan and Hoon [12] podcasting pedagogy can be interpreted as a tool that combines theories and methods to be put into practice. Ashton-Hay and Brookes [31] went on to say that podcast could assist in the development of learners' skills in language. Since language skills are made up of listening, speaking, reading and writing, podcasting somehow could cater to the different styles of learning among students and indirectly could help improve the students' language skills. Based on most research on podcast and its features, podcasts offer learners of language with examples of real language and original materials [32]. In an ELT classroom, podcasts could be utilized to help students with the learning of the English language apart from using their textbooks [26]. The usage of podcasts promotes the approach of constructivism in learning whereby a learner expands his knowledge through his participation in active exploration, observation, processing and interpretation [24]. Hasan and Hoon [12] also pointed out that podcast might also aid in the learning of language among learners that allowed them to experience real-life situation tasks (Warschauer & Healey, 1998) that gave the learner meaning and authenticity of any given situation.

2.2 ICT Tools in Teaching and Learning Literature Component

The use of ICT tools in the teaching and learning of Literature Component provided positive feedbacks from both the teachers and students in terms of their attitudes [29,30]. Both studies suggested that despite the students not utilizing the ICT tools in language learning, they did however use ICT to search for information or to fulfill their leisure time such as accessing their Facebook account and watching the videos on YouTube. This clearly suggested that the students are competent in the use of ICT tools though the usage is directed towards retrieving the information from the Internet. Yunus and Suliman [30] also stated that on the teachers' part, the majority of them do possess the ICT skills which are necessary in today's teaching and learning process. However, most of them tend to use the ICT tools as the means to do their clerical work or to prepare their Power Point presentation. Despite not fully implementing the ICT tools in their lesson, these teachers were hopeful and had a positive outlook towards the integration of ICT tools in their lessons.

Ghazali *et al.*, [8] stated that teachers play a crucial role in teaching and learning process of the literature component and by implementing attractive teaching strategies in the lesson, it could help to improve the students' attitude towards learning the Literature Component. By applying these interesting approaches in the lesson especially through media literacy may attract these "digital natives" or the millennials to read [8,5]. Since the current generation is more exposed to the digital world than their predecessor, the approach that needed to be applied should be within the boundaries of multimedia and other forms of ICT tools. Reading conventional books just does not bring them any pleasure any more than reading literary texts which these students may find them

boring. Therefore, the use of ICT tools is highly crucial if we were to ignite their interests in reading. As a way to compromise to their affinity in all things technology, teachers should consider on the aspects of the students' skills, attitudes and knowledge in order to satisfy the demands of the conventional curriculum and all the while maintaining the technological skills that the students should acquire [5].

Another factor that we could ponder on in the use of ICT tools in the teaching and learning of the Literature Component is the use of technology in the learning of language skills and culture [17]. The learning of language skills cover the aspects of listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary. All these skills are essential in the learning of the targeted language. Podcast is one of the tools that could be applied in the teaching of listening skills. The component of the pedagogy centered on the students' motivation and engagement which the students are able to learn on their own accord. This is in line with the social constructivism theory that focuses on the learner's creativity and productivity to become an autonomous learner.

It could be concluded that the use of ICT tools in the teaching and learning of the Literature Component had a positive impact on the students' attitude. Students of the net generation are more interested in the use of technology and multimedia to help promote their interest to learn [5,16,17]. As educators, we need to be more innovative and proactive in encouraging these students so boredom will not struck them easily. As they tend to rely on Google for information, we need to be able to entice them with our interesting lesson to lure them into being interested in the traditional curriculum that may lack in appeal.

2.3 Podcast in Learning Language skills

Previous studies have revealed that there was a positive effect in the usage of podcasts in the teaching and learning process of language learners. Foreign language learners are able to acquire the listening skills by utilizing the podcasts as a tool to help them study independently [7,22]. A study done by Cross on a Japanese student who is a learner of the English language shares the same similarity trait as the 54 female respondents in Iran where Naseri and Motallebzadeh [22] revealed that the integration of podcasts as part of an educational tool can bring a positive effect on the foreign learners' ability to learn the language on their own where it enhances the listening skill as well.

Another positive effect that could be derived from these studies was the design of the podcasts could assist in the improvement of the learners' vocabulary knowledge and the contextual use of the language in motivating these learners to learn the language [27,9,11]. According to Ting [27], the types of podcast chosen by the students mostly had the theme of ESL learners which mostly covered the aspects of English language skills. Most of the podcasts were highly authentic where they were read by the native speakers which proved to be a real help in improving the students' grammar and vocabulary. The study also suggested that there was a correlation between using podcasts and improving the English language skills. This was also supported by Gholami and Mohammadi [9] and and Green [11]. The integration of podcasts had helped boost improvement in the learners' vocabulary knowledge [9] whereas Green [11] suggested that the use of technology motivated the 6th Grade students to learn the language by focusing on the contextual use of the language.

The use of podcasts could also further enhance in learning English short stories as part of the curriculum. Digital storytelling could greatly affect the learners' ability to learn and focus on the usage of the language in context independently [11,22]. When producing the short film based on the novel learnt in school, it not only promoted the students' ability to understand but to create a digital story that was entirely their own. By integrating stories through podcasting, it could help the learners to

be more involved in the storyline. When they listened to narrators telling them of the story or by turning the story into a form of an audio, it not only enabled the learners to relate to the story on a personal level, but it could also turn them into good listeners [11].

To cultivate the use of podcasts among the students is not a barrier that can be a hindrance in the usage of podcasts in an ESL classroom. Students' attitudes and perceptions toward the use of podcast is favourable as it is an effective tool in helping them learn the English language that also brings them joy in learning the language [18,12]. Attitudes and perceptions are vital factors in commanding an ESL classroom since learning a language that is not entirely their own is a difficult feat that most educators faced. With a positive mindset, students are able to embrace the learning process as they feel that learning the English language can be fun and less taxing. When the use of podcast is fun, it can attract the students' interest to use the podcasts further to improve on their pronunciation as well as enforcing the students' understanding by listening [12,20,1]. Though the impact of podcasts have positive effects on certain types of language learners' beliefs [3] but the fact remains that podcasts do indeed have an astounding impact on students' behaviour and perceptions [18,12].

3. Methodology
3.1 Research Design

This research applied the mix method approach in using both quantitative and qualitative data. The data collection is based on the questionnaire and structured response answered by the respondents followed by an interview of six students.

3.2 Respondents

The respondents for this study consisted of 22 form 4M students in which the total should be 23 but a student was absent from school. These students are from a boarding school in Penang in that they were the focus group since the students share the same demographic background. The class was made up of 11 boys and 12 girls.

3.3 Research Instrument

For the purpose of measuring the variables this study adopted and adapted the questionnaire items from Kwan *et al.*, [14] and the Likert Scale was the chosen scoring scale for this research. The questionnaire was divided into two parts which were Section A and B.

Section A consisted of the profile of the respondents, students' use of podcasts and the effectiveness on the use of podcast in learning the short story. Each statement was assessed using a five-point scale ranging from '1 = Strongly Disagree (SD)', 2=Disagree (D), 3=Neutral (N), 4=Agree (A) to '5 = Strongly Agree (SA)'.

Section B of the questionnaire was a structured response to gather the students' perceived benefits and challenges of using podcast in learning the form four short story. Another set of questions for the interview contained 17 questions in which the questions were grouped under group participation, interactivity and the benefits and challenges of using podcast in the learning of the short story.

4. Data Analysis and Procedures

The data gathered from the respondents were analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively using the descriptive statistics and the responses were grouped under the appropriate themes. For the interviewed candidates, all the 6 interviewees had agreed to have their names changed to remain anonymous. Names such as Sabirah, Umairah, Hanis, Bella, Ain and Farah were chosen to protect their identity. The interview was later transcribed to search for the common theme.

5. Findings

To answer the first question on the use of podcast, this aspect was analysed under group participation in which the students' participation in their group to come up with the podcast script that was adapted from the short story, "Leaving".

Table 1
Distribution and frequency on the students' participation in groups

Group Participation					
ITEM	SD	D	N	A	SA
Our group had a leader.		1 (4.5%)	4 (18.2%)	8 (36.4%)	9 (40.9%)
Our group had clearly defined roles for each member.		1 (4.5%)	3 (13.6%)	11 (50%)	7 (31.8%)
Our group divided the workload amongst ourselves.			2 (9.1%)	15 (68.2%)	5 (22.7%)
All members of the group did their share of the recording				8 (36.4%)	14 (63.6%)
Our group worked well together on the podcast.			1 (4.5%)	8 (36.4%)	12 (54.5%)

In order to carry out this study, the students were divided into groups of 4 with two groups consisted of 5 students while the others had 4 members in a group. The first item under group participation focused on the appointment of a group leader in that only 40.9% of the students strongly agreed that they had a leader in their group. According to the social constructivist approach, it comes from different views that comprised of different learning aspects that involved the aspects of being active, socially and students' creativity as podcast is regarded as a learning tool to actively engage the students. Therefore, podcasting could be considered as a form of authentic material that could help students engage in language learning to help them interact and communicate with the other students as research had shown that many students lose interest in learning literature due to the fact that the approaches the teachers applied in the classroom were a real bore and lacked appeal. By participating in a group than reading the short story alone, the 4M students learned to work together by defining the roles of each member where 50% of the 4M students agreed while 68.2% of them agreed to have divided the workload among themselves and 63.6% of 4M students strongly agreed that they did their share of the recording. These findings supported the approach outlined by the social constructivism theory in the importance of active participation of students as

the writing of the script for the podcast encouraged the students to work with others namely their peers for a more meaningful learning experience and they could interact with each other socially as the script was being prepared together as a group. This further substantiated the theory of social constructivism as the use of podcast could establish a collaborative experience and students could interact with one another to produce a podcast that could be meaningful to them as portrayed in Table 1 as 54.5% of the students of 4M worked well together in creating the podcast.

Mayes *et al*., [19] regarded learning as a way to help in understanding by making discovery, communicating and to collaborate. Students of the net generation are more interested in the use of technology and multimedia to help promote their interest to learn [5,16,17]. These aspects are essential in which they provide the students with the necessary skills to develop their critical and creative thinking skills which in turn foster the way they think and in giving their opinions [2]. Learning literature in English is not easy as Chacko [4] pointed out as students need to grasp not only the language but the content of the lesson as well.

Based on the analysis in Table 2, 77.3% of the students in 4M strongly agreed that through the interactions of creating the podcast, they learned the plot and the name of the characters in the short story. This could be further substantiated by the responses given by 5 students who all agreed that the podcast helped in their understanding of the short story. Sabirah* and Umairah* shared that when using the podcast, they could understand the story better than reading the book individually. When interesting methods are implemented in the lesson in the use of media literacy, these may arouse the interest of the current generation to read [5,8]. Creating an interest is important as literature is a text-based lesson that students of today's generation did not find appealing despite being a compulsory text in the Malaysian English language syllabus. Through the use of podcast in the learning of the short story, it had been revealed that students could understand better for before the scripts were written, the students had to plan and discuss on how the podcast for the short story would turn out to make the podcast more interesting (Umairah*). By writing the script for the podcast and producing a podcast, the students were able to give the cooperation that they needed to understand the story better (Bella*).

With the 21st century teaching skills in mind, the medium which was the podcast, encouraged students to learn together. This enforced further their understanding of the short story through the discussion and sharing of opinions as well as cooperation with the group members (Umairah*, Bella*). When the short story was able to be understood clearly, this could help the students with the answering of their exam questions (Bella*). Mayes and de Freitas [19] regarded learning as a way to help in understanding by making discovery, communicating and to collaborate. Based on the findings in both the questionnaire and interview, it could be said that podcast promoted students to create a learning material that enabled them to get together as a group to share their ideas. Producing a podcast not only that it could be shared within the group members, the students were able to share with the other classmates too. When these students shared their podcast with one another, they learned from each other which was beneficial in the way they learn the short story. By using the podcast, it was discovered that 72.7% of the 4M students strongly agreed that they could learn the sequence of events of the short story while 63.6% of the students strongly agreed that they learned the moral values of the short story. Farah* pointed out that through script writing of the podcast, it helped her in the sequence of events of the story while Ain* shared that through the use podcast, she was able to learn the moral values of the short story as the need to interact with the other students to write the script for the podcast. Learning the sequence of events and the moral values of the short story through podcast (Farah*, Ain*) proved that students of the new millennium preferred the usage of technology and multimedia to ignite their interest to learn [5,16,17]. In reference to Table 2, 45.5% of the students in 4M agreed that they enjoyed the interactions when

producing the podcast while 40.9% of the students had the preference of doing their group work online rather than offline. As indicated by Considine *et al.*, [5], Levy [17], Larson [16] and (Farah*, Ain*) the learning experience of using a podcast was the students' preference in learning the short story as a material that could help them learn the sequence of events and moral values.

Table 2
Distribution and frequency of the students' interaction in using podcast

ITEM	Interaction				
	SD	D	N	A	SA
From interactions together in creating the podcast, I learned the plot of the short story.				5 (22.7%)	17 (77.3%)
From interactions together in creating the podcast, I learned the name of the character(s) in the short story.	1 (4.5%)			4 (18.2%)	17 (77.3%)
From interactions together in creating the podcast, I learned the sequence of events of the short story.				6 (27.3%)	16 (72.7%)
From interactions together in creating the podcast, I learned the moral values of the short story.				8 (36.4%)	14 (63.6%)
I enjoyed the interactions in producing the podcast.	1 (4.5%)	1 (4.5%)	2 (9.1%)	10 (45.5%)	8 (36.4%)
I would have preferred to do group work offline than online.	2 (9.1%)	9 (40.9%)	5 (22.7%)	5 (22.7%)	1 (4.5%)

Table 3 below shows the benefits and challenges of using the podcast in learning the short story based on the 4M students' responses.

Table 3
The benefits and challenges of using podcast in learning the short story

BENEFITS	CHALLENGES
1. Useful in learning about the short story	Difficult to use
2. More enjoyable than reading a book	Script writing process and producing the podcast is time consuming
3. Helps to remember the short story	Problems with the computers
4. Easy to understand the plot	Need to have proper equipment
5. Helps to improve on pronunciation	Need to re-record several times

The first benefit that most students of 4M responded was that they were able to learn the short story when using the podcast. This point was also shared by the 6 girls who had agreed to do the interview. Umairah* suggested that doing the podcast was more effective than just reading the story

in which the podcast helped with the understanding of the short story (Umairah*, Bella*) as the students could listen to the story and relate themselves to the characters and gained moral values from using the podcast in learning the short story (Ain*). Bella* stated that using a podcast made her appreciate the short story as she could see through the character's eyes the feelings that he or she felt towards a certain situation. In the case of "Leaving", Bella* was able to put herself in Aloo's mother's place when Aloo was to pursue his studies in America. She mentioned that she could relate to Aloo's mother's feeling to that of her own mother since Bella* is studying in a boarding school. Though the situation is different, nevertheless, she could place herself in the character's shoes and related that to her own experience which was essential as it could help her to appreciate the short story further. Hanis* also stated that podcast could help the students improve on their pronunciation as they could listen to their own voice and could make improvements when they hear that the words pronounced are wrong.

Using podcast in the learning of the short story was more enjoyable than reading a book and Umairah* agreed that when reading the book alone, the experience was not the same as listening to the podcast in which the students could listen to the story read out to them (Ain*) and that it brought the whole new learning process of learning literature to a different level whereby instead of just presenting the story in class as in a conventional classroom, using a podcast gave students a new learning experience that they could enjoy in learning the literature component (Ain*) especially, the short story. Another benefit that the students could gain from using the podcast in learning the short story was podcast helped them to remember the short story as the process of producing a podcast for the learning of the short story required them to write a script that was adapted and adopted from the short story, "Leaving". It was through this process of script writing in groups that they needed to know the plot of the story and then discussed on the delegation of the task of writing out the script and sharing their opinions and ideas to make the podcast interesting (Umairah*, Bella*, Farah*). This process helped them to reinforce their memory in helping them remember the short story.

Next, the students mentioned that using podcast made it easier for them to understand the plot of the short story as the preparation of the podcast required them to work in groups to discuss on the script for the recording of the podcast. Umairah* and Sabirah* mentioned that when reading the short story individually, they could not understand the plot of the story at first. It was when they produced the podcast that they were able to understand the story better as they needed to discuss in coming up with the script for the podcast. The final benefit of using podcast in the learning of the short story was podcast helped the students to improve on their pronunciation. Hanis* expressed that through the use of podcast, she was able to learn how to pronounce the words correctly as another positive effect that could be derived from these studies is the design of the podcasts could assist in the improvement of the learners' vocabulary knowledge and the contextual use of the language in motivating these learners to learn the language [27,9,11]. Students not only could understand the short story better, podcast could also help with their language skills. Digital storytelling could greatly affect the learners' ability to learn and focus on the usage of the language in context independently [11,22]. Therefore, it is an effective tool in helping them learn the English language that also brings them joy in learning the language [18,12]. When the use of podcasting is fun, it can attract the students' interest to use the podcasts further to improve on their pronunciation as well as enforcing the students' understanding by listening [12,20,1]. Learning literature is not just about learning a story or reciting poetry, but it acts as a supplementary tool to help enhance the language [25].

Despite the numerous benefits that podcast could provide for the students, there were also challenges that the students faced during the preparation and use of podcast. The first challenge that the students faced in using the podcast was the difficulty of using the podcast as 54.5% of the

students in 4M strongly agreed that this was their first time in using a podcast. Considering that this was their first time in using the podcast, it proved to be a challenge as they needed to learn how to operate the podcast software. This led to another challenge that the students faced in producing the podcast which was the use of proper equipment. In order to record the podcast, students must be brought to the computer lab as the process in producing a podcast required the use of a computer and the software installed in the computer along with the headphones that had a microphone attached to it. Although they have access to computers and laptops outside of the school's computer lab, the school's cyber café does not provide any headphones for recording. Furthermore, when there were certain students who were absent during the time of the recording, the students had to change their roles in order to replace the absent students (Bella*). Since recording the podcast requires a proper equipment, this was one of the challenges that the students had to face in the learning of the short story. Another challenge that the students faced was the script writing and producing the podcast proved to be time consuming as stated by Bella* as the writing of the script called for them to delegate their work to write the script according to their role and the recording process. This setback as suggested by Bella* was why producing a podcast for the learning of the short story was time consuming. The final two challenges that the students faced in the midst of using the podcast in the learning of the short story were the use of the computers and having to record themselves several times in order to produce a perfect podcast. Farah* mentioned on the use of the computer in which she had difficulty in getting her way around the computer. Hanis* and Umairah* suggested that the podcast was difficult at first to use which was the reason that they had to record themselves several times to ensure the podcast was perfect so that the others could listen to it as well.

Note: *names have been changed

6. Conclusion

Based on the data analysis, it was revealed that students did enjoy using podcast in learning the short story as it gave the students of 4M an enjoyable and interesting experience to arouse their interest to read the short story while at the same time, helped them to remember the plot and understand the short story better. When creating the podcast, the students were required to collaborate in writing out the script for the recording of the podcast. This process had helped the students to share their ideas and opinions in creating their podcast according to their own creativity. Apart from that, podcast is a form of ICT tool that could bridge the gap between the use of ICT tools in the teaching of the literature component [30] and the use of podcast in the teaching and learning of the form four short story. The use of podcast provided students with a positive attitude in the learning of the short story for when the students' interest is ignited, learning and teaching would be easier on both parties. Students did not feel bored or lacked enthusiasm in the learning of the short story when the podcast was produced for their own listening and learning pleasure. Learning literature should be fun as literature is the heart and soul of language learning and it should be carried out in an enjoyable manner for the students to appreciate the real beauty of language.

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