



## The Problem:

Listening practice is essential to learning a foreign language. However, research shows college students do not have sufficient listening practices in and out of classes, thus their listening proficiency often lags behind other skills such as reading. Besides the shortcomings with listening materials (too difficult or irrelevant to course content), my surveys reveal another problem: students do not have the habit of listening to audio materials in the target language.



## Description of the innovation:

To address the above issue, teachers must think outside of the box – looking for ways beyond the traditional textbook-type listening assignments. We believe podcasts can become an innovative learning tool to realize the following purposes.

1. Listening practices can be easily incorporated into students' increasingly mobile and always-connected lifestyles.
2. Authentic and current listening materials will help engage students and make them realize the importance of spending time on listening.
3. Student-centered and student-led episodes will not only create opportunities for learning but also alter students' roles from passive consumers of information to active producers of the language.



## Rationale:

There has been growing research suggesting podcasts provide numerous pedagogical benefits for language learners. For example, podcasts can break classroom boundaries and increase students' learning time by providing them with convenient access to course-related listening materials anytime and anywhere (Aldrich, Bell & Batzel, 2006). Second, podcasts can promote autonomous learning by allowing students control of how they engage with materials. Research also suggests that podcasting has positive effects on students' study habits (Abdous, 2009), and their interest in the language they are learning (Dennen & Myers 2010).

## Two subseries

- Real BizTalk
- Textbook Audio

## Learning aids

- Self-check questions
- New words
- Transcripts

## Release frequency

- Weekly
- Bi-weekly

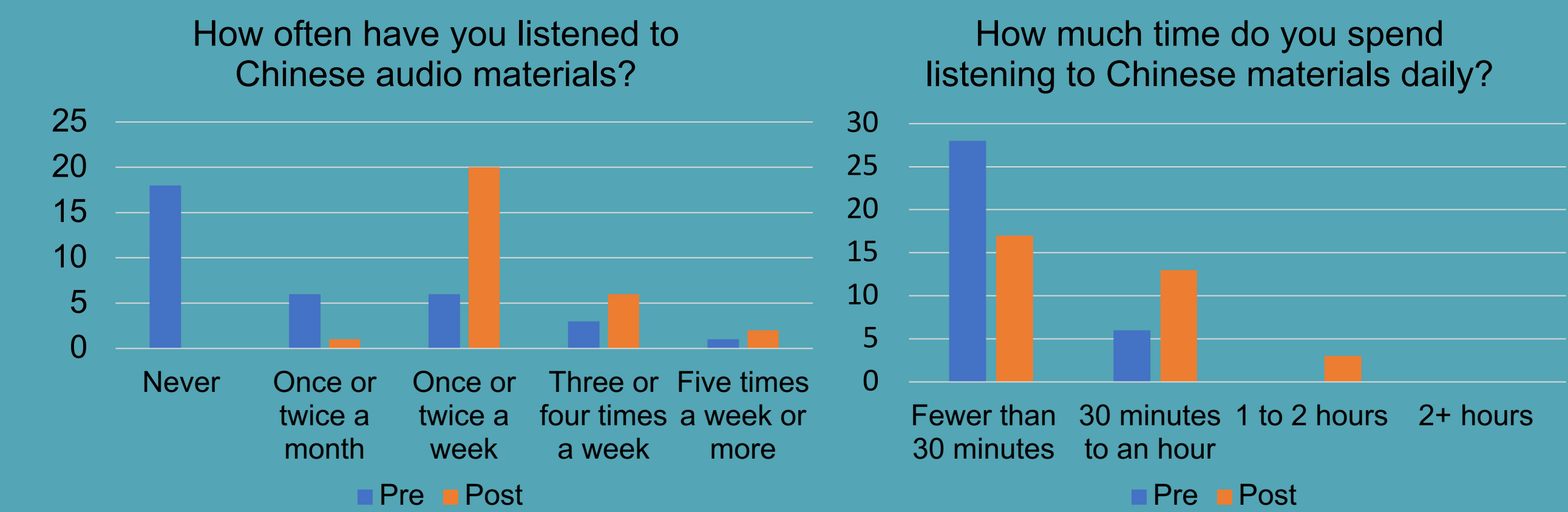


# PODCAST

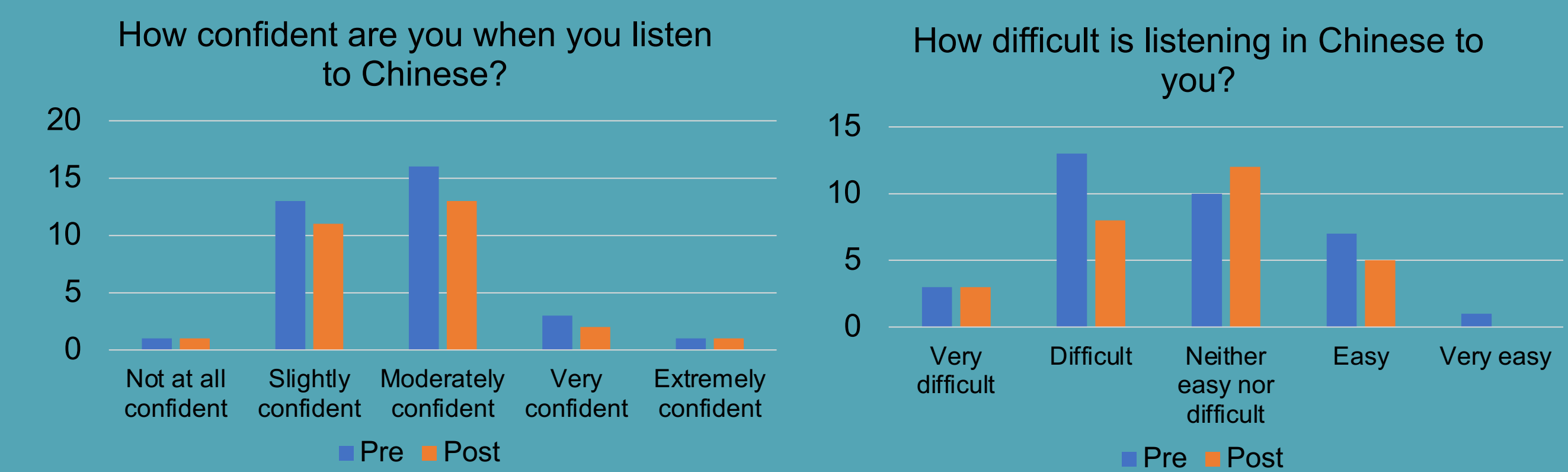


## Impact:

### 1. Students' listening habits

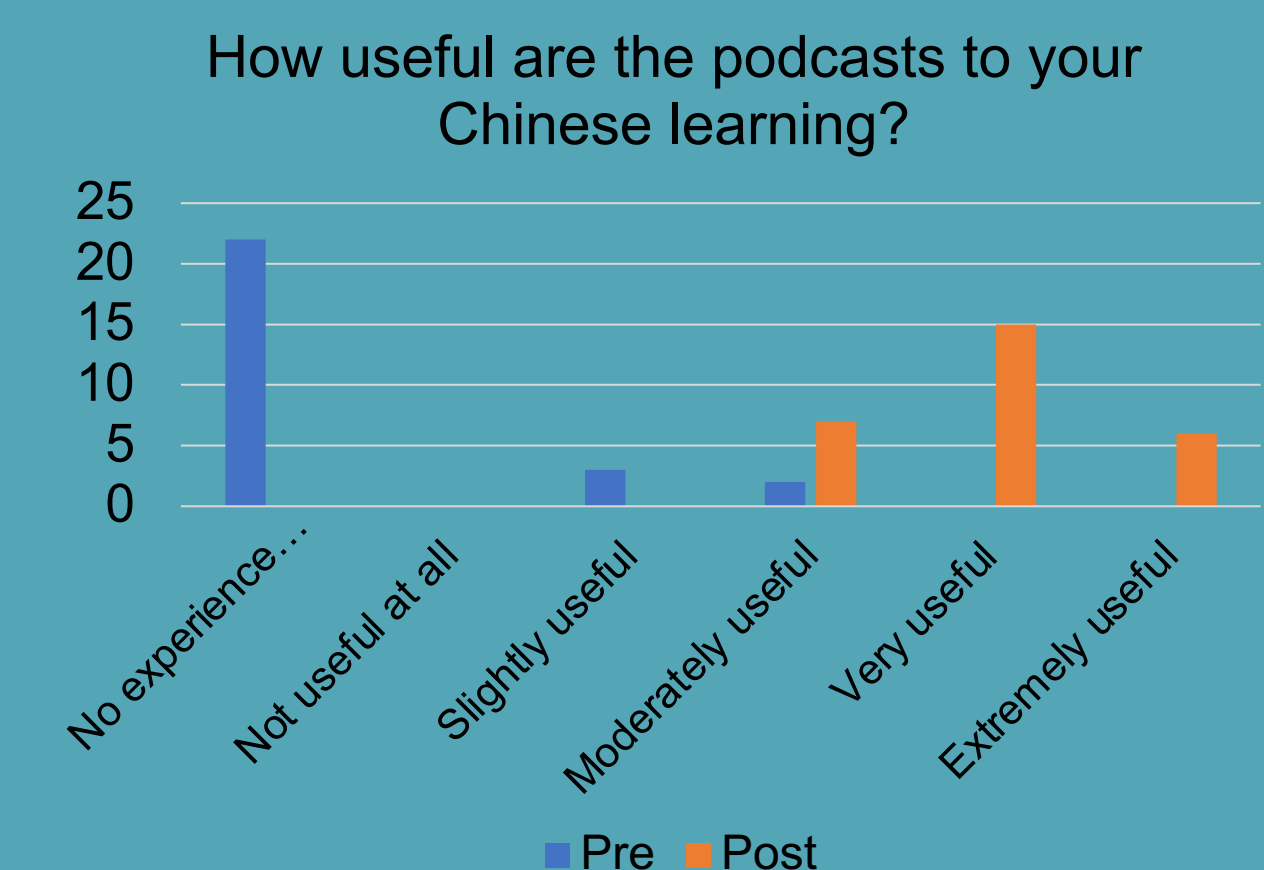


### 2. Students' perceived difficulty of and confidence in understanding Chinese audio materials



### 3. Students' perceived usefulness of listening to Chinese podcasts

- I really liked how the podcasts were understandable but there were still quite a lot of vocabulary words that I learned from them. Furthermore, the textbook audio podcasts helped me figure out the intonations of the sentences.
- They have allowed me to improve my listening understanding by focusing on comprehension to new topics.
- They are useful in connecting the spoken to the written.
- I think they really help our listening skills. I find them useful.



### 4. How do students evaluate their experience of participation in making podcasts?

"I greatly enjoyed working on this podcast about DiDi with Shi Laoshi. First, we converted the research I gathered for my final class presentation into a podcast script, then we worked together to record the podcast. I found recording the podcast to be a challenging but valuable experience to practice my spoken Chinese because it forced me to be very attentive with my tones and pronunciation. It is also especially rewarding that my recording can now be shared with other students who also want to improve their Chinese." - Philip Shen

"My experience working on this podcast with Shi Laoshi gave me an opportunity to apply what I learned in our Chinese classroom to a real-world, professional setting. With this recording, I transformed what I prepared for my final oral class presentation into a 6 minute-long interview. This experience motivated my further study of the Chinese language, as it represented a tangible achievement of my language studies. It was definitely encouraging to realize the outcome of my language-learning this past academic semester through this episode and has given me the confidence to further push myself linguistically moving forward." - William Yee



## Lessons learned:

- Teacher-led and student-led podcasts are equally important to students.
- Common interest and course relevance are the keys to keeping students engaged and motivated to spend time consistently listening to them.
- Assessment of students' progress in listening proficiency remains a challenge to teachers.



## Acknowledgements

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