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# ENGLISH PODCAST TOURS AS INTERPRETATIVE MEDIA

RECORRIDOS PODCASTS EN INGLÉS COMO MEDIO INTERPRETATIVO

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# **English Podcast Tours as Interpretative Media**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

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One of the dynamic forms of the interpretive medium has involved podcast tours, which represent an innovative digital tool of engaging visitors with educational and cultural information in tourism. This paper discusses the use of podcasts as a means of delivering interpretive information normally provided for guided tours. Examines how podcasts improve accessibility, encourage deeper engagement through digital listening content, and how they compensate for the lack of use of English as a lingua franca for communication between foreign visitors and tour guides. To this end, the research aims to analyze the influence of podcast tours in English as digital tools in interpretive communication with foreign visitors in Nueva Loja Tourist Park, Sucumbíos province. An exploratory research method was used by changing guide written scripts into auditory information and measuring the results through interviews and surveys with tourist guides and foreign visitors in the park. The results suggest that podcast tours can never replace face-to-face experiences, yet they may be a necessary complement. The article concludes with a discussion of the potential for podcast tours to innovate and extend interpretive media in tourism in terms of technologies.

Keywords: podcasts, innovate, english, interpretative, tourism

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# Recorridos Podcasts en Inglés como Medio Interpretativo

#### **RESUMEN**

Una de las formas dinámicas del medio interpretativo ha involucrado los recorridos podcast, que representan una herramienta digital innovadora para atraer a visitantes con información educativa y cultural en turismo. Este artículo analiza el uso de podcasts como medio para entregar información interpretativa que normalmente se proporciona en visitas guiadas. Examina cómo los podcasts mejoran la accesibilidad, fomentan una participación profunda a través de contenido de escucha digital y cómo compensan la falta del uso del inglés como lengua franca para la comunicación entre visitantes extranjeros y guías turísticos. Para ello, la investigación tiene como objetivo analizar la influencia de los tours podcast en inglés como herramientas digitales en la comunicación interpretativa con visitantes extranjeros en el Parque Turístico Nueva Loja, provincia de Sucumbíos. Se utilizó un método de investigación exploratoria, transformando guiones escritos de guianza en información auditiva y midiendo los resultados a través de entrevistas y encuestas a guías turísticos y visitantes extranjeros en el parque. Los resultados sugieren que los tours de podcasts nunca reemplazarán las experiencias presenciales, pero pueden ser un complemento necesario. El artículo concluye con una discusión sobre el potencial de podcasts tours para innovar y ampliar los medios interpretativos en el turismo en términos de tecnologías.

Palabras clave: podcasts, innovar, inglés, interpretativo, turismo

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#### INTRODUCTION

With the advent of the digital era, the incorporation of technological advancements in the tourism industry has shifted from being an optional choice to an indispensable element in modern guidance systems. In particular, the ways in which language can be interpreted by the tourists have changed sufficiently because of the use of different active instruments which provide greater interactivity, individualization, and the opportunity to work out of advanced content. Internet sources such as these digital tools, the websites and the more advanced computer programs have been the major facilitators towards this transformation. Regardless of their mother tongue, travelers can now experience more meaningful and in-depth exploration of their trip destinations through lingua franca like English because to technological advancements that have enabled the construction of more dynamic and interactive simulation settings (Tukhtabayeva, Akhatova, Malik, & Howes, 2021).

As the tourism industry continues to evolve, it comes as no surprise that audio tours have become a popular way to explore new destinations. Because those stories perfectly interweave the narrative of local history, such an audio tour allows any interaction over the material presented at one's pace. Thanks to the cell phone, known as a guide in conventional views, a new profession, tour-podcast-a-realpodcast, is emerging in this age of technology, various places of interest are become virtual ones in the presentation of the tour guide. Podcast tours are more suited for how individual travelers wish to explore the respective places in detain rather than taking the general excursion provided. They can appeal to many different preferences. The development of podcast tours is changing the world order of tourism in the direction of an interesting combination of learning, well-told stories and travel. Their attractiveness is based on their ability to provide an engaging experience accompanied with ease of use. (Kang & Gretzel, 2012). On the other had, the term 'interpretative media' includes a variety of devices and efforts oriented towards information provision in a academic or cultural spirit in order to make a certain theme resonate more with the audience. The purpose is to make complex or odious subjects enjoyable and meaningful for the people, in short, to turn the uninteresting into the interesting. This sort of media is commonly used in the contexts of museums, national parks, heritage sites, zoos and so on, where there is a necessity to provide information about nature, history of mankind, art or science to people. (Wolf, Stricker, & Hagenloh, 2013)



In regard to the above details, this study aims to explore the impact of the use of English podcast tours as a form of interpretation for the Nueva Loja recreational park visitors. Moreover, the distinguishing feature of this park is its status as a city-based forest, coupled with its offering of thematic areas and services such as; children's games, ecological trail, exhibition of Amazonian wildlife species, and indigenous nationalities area. These services are facilitated by two naturalist guides who are official representatives of INMOBILIAR and also practicing students from Universidad Estatal Amazonica of tourism career, who have a B1 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) in the command of the English language (Reglamento de Régimen Académico, 2022). These guides possess a tourism background and exclusively employ the Spanish language for in-person information dissemination for foreing visitors. Consequently, the utilization of technology and English language in this communicative endeavor is minimal. Additionally, the guiding activities are based on written scripts, where usually the person in charge of taking the group through the park reads the information about its attractions. However, this information is often not understood correctly by foreign. Also, the absence of information about the activities and services offered by the park is noted, so, the creation of material with interactive and didactic information about the services and activities that can be carried out in this place is insufficient. Finally, raising awareness among tourists and visitors about the importance of natural attractions, promoting sustainable and sustainable tourism, has not been shared with foreign tourists who want to obtain information about the natural environment of the park. (Burbano, 2019).

With this in mind, our objective is to understand the interests, motivations, needs, and expectations that the implementation of podcast tours could elicit in local tourist guides and foreign visitors. At the same time, the importance of the present study lies in the impact of the use of digital tools as interpretive means. Recognizing the significance of a globalized world, internet access, and information distribution are paramount, this project seeks to engage visitors and tourist guides through podcasts, bridging the gap to the technological realm.





#### **Literature Review**

#### **Podcasts**

The term podcasting originated from the fusion of pod, meaning capsule, and broadcasting, meaning transmission or diffusion, signifying the transmission of encapsulated content. When viewed from this perspective, the podcast is a compact audio or visual content distributed online, whose value and usefulness depend on the user's auditory preferences or needs (Checa García, 2013). Podcasting was originally coined to describe a unique radio format that relied on iPod players. Its affordability and availability of captivating content motivated users to actively seek more information. Consequently, podcasts serve the purpose of facilitating communication through the Internet (Hammersley, 2004). From the above statements it is clear that a podcast is only an internet connection that transmits, distributes or allows to download multimedia material (audio & video). For the purpose of reaching this aim, concrete webpages have been created which enables users to look for and obtain the above mentioned knowledge with the aid of the positioned web page link. Eventually, this information is downloaded and replicated on technological devices like cell phones, tablets, or computers. These websites offer access through either subscriptions or free pages, allowing users to create and share multimedia content on the network.

Considering all of its benefits to viewers and content producers, podcasting has emerged as an essential aspect of contemporary digital media. The most important aim of podcasting is dissemination of information, stories, and views in an effective and interesting way. Podcasts are an extremely flexible form of media as people can listen to them while doing different activities such as working out, driving, or staying at home. Podcasts not only provide convenience but also create a sense of community around them. The topics of episodes are produced which range from strategies of marketing to a true crime. This kind of difference helps bring unity among the like-minded listeners. (Prescott, 2024).

Countless types of podcasts exist today. Among the formats that have enjoyed notable success are:

■ Interview Podcasts — In this case, a third party, or a guest is invited by the host to participate in the discussion. They can touch on such topics as science, politics, entertainment and many others. This pattern enables the audience to engage in extensive discussions of various issues by talking only.



- Solo Podcasts In this arrangement, there is only one host and he addresses the audience in this setup. From public speaking to personal storytelling to providing professional assistance, any subject will do. Solo podcasts are normally more personal in terms of the audience.
- Panel Podcasts These include a number of hosts and/or guests discussing particular topics. The
   style of depiction is often very lively and active scene with a lot of arguments and different opinions.
- Narrative Podcasts These tell stories that can be fictional or based on truth. To enhance the realism
  of the experience, they can also use music and sound effects among other elements. (Team Zorgle,
  2024).

Taking into account that one of the formats employed in podcasts permits narration and the inclusion of reality-based elements, such as ambient sounds, its efficacy has been recognized in the utilization of podcast tours. This is because scripts can be recorded in audio format and are employed to deliver information to visitors at diverse tourist destinations. Consequently, tourism podcast tours provide audio-guided experiences for travelers to explore destinations through the use of pre-recorded narratives. These tours provide comprehensive knowledge about landmarks, cultural sites, historical events, and local stories via podcasts, accessible through smartphones or other portable devices. Podcast tours offer a distinct alternative to traditional guided tours as they allow travelers the flexibility to explore at their own pace. Podcast tours enhance the traveler's knowledge and appreciation of the destination through curated audio content. Often, the tour is led by a local, a subject matter expert or a proficient storyteller, which adds to the personal touch of the immersive experience. (Liao & Bartie, 2022).

Utilizing podcastc tours as digital audio guides, like SmartGuide and its CMS, offers travel destinations a unique opportunity to enhance guest experience and showcase local exclusivity. The combination of an easy-to-use interface and a robust content management system have made creating and publishing digital guides easier than never before. This great empowerment because of technology enables travel destinations to increase visitor numbers, to reinvent their tourism industry in creative ways and gives travelers the freedom to explore their surroundings at their leisure. Digital guides also create the opportunity to promote not-your-traditional destination of places, places that travelers would never have heard of and are considered hidden gems that will help local economies and build relationships.

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The energy and enhanced value for both tourists and destinations with digital guides is made possible by the ease to update and share a global audience's worth of content. Realize the changing value of digital guides to expose new opportunities to share your community stories and cultural experience with the global community. (Wong, Shu Ju, & Lee, 2015).

In conclusion, digital guides allow the visitor to very much personalize their experience and provide more flexibility; there is also a wide variety of multimedia information, ranging from pictures and videos, to interactive maps and augmented virtual reality (VR) experiences provided by digital guides. An incredible advantage of digital guides is the ability to deliver total and layered content that is appropriate for the intended audience, including different content for children/adults. Digital guides also bypass network limits and provide access to full content even in locations that suffer from inadequate network situations. They welcome guests from diverse language backgrounds and provide support in multiple languages, although we will focus our attention on English in this paper.

## Interpretative media

Interpretative media are the various tools and techniques employed in the dissemination of data regarding some source that, further more, enables the audience to better comprehend it. Major intention-of interpretative media-is not just to state facts but to interpret the significance of the subject being presented. It brings meaning to the subject matter, placing it into context, narrative, and relation to the viewer. This can be done in several methods, such as audios, digital displays, videos, prints, mobile applications, and interaction with exhibits, to mention but a few (Sutrisno, 2023).

In the context of guidance, interpretive media will consist of various tools and methods through which information about an object is presented while at the same time creating an atmosphere that fosters further understanding of the subject. The primary goal of interpretive media is to interpret what the presented information means about the subject, rather than stating it. It adds meaning to the subject that can then be utilized to give context, a story, and deeper levels of engagement to the audience. The information can be communicated by using a range of different media, from mobile applications and interactive exhibits to digital displays, audio guides, and printed materials. Interpretive media create an experience to make passive observation active learning. Through interesting and relevant content, interest is sparked with the understanding of the subject deepened.



The approach commonly finds its use in such areas as tourism, education, heritage sites, museums, and environmental conservation, among others, where the visitor has to understand the importance of a location or concept. (Abdulrahaman, et al., 2020).

There are a lot of various interpretive media types, and each of them corresponds to certain function regarding the context and the needs of the audience. The following are among the most popular types:

- Audio Guides: These are common in historical places, galleries, and museums, as they serve to supply visitors with information as they go along. Audio guides provide a means of self-paced exploration and often supply in-depth commentary on specified exhibits, pieces of art, or historical sites. Podcasts can also serve similar purposes by providing interpretive content delivery in a much more adaptable and portable means.
- Printed Materials and Signage: Interpretive media traditional examples include brochures, maps, and informational signs, each of which has a degree of usefulness in many contexts today. These resources serve to help guide the guest through the experience and provide the background knowledge needed. Using effective signing can distill complex historical or environmental data into concise, understandable formats.
- Videos and Documentaries: One of the best ways to convey complex ideas and stories is through visual storytelling. Documentaries and videos can tell the stories behind a historical event, a cultural practice, or an environmental struggle through sound, sight, and emotion. Because of this, it allows for deeper engagement (Rodrigo-Ginés, Carrillo-de-Albornoz, & Plaza, 2024).

Taking into account that audio guides are popular with foreign tourists, the goal of interpretive media is to enhance the visitor experience by making the engagement with the subject matter more engaging, instructive, and enjoyable. It can turn what would be a rather banal visit into a journey of discovery, where people are better able to connect with the spaces they visit. Consider an audio guide that describes the ecosystem, the species that live in it, and conservation efforts-enhancing even a simple walk through a nature preserve. Interpretive media also addresses different learning styles, since whereas some would fare better with audio or visual, others might want to read about something in depth. In any case, interpretative media simply ensures a bigger audience for the message, since several avenues of engagement with the subject matter are availed to the audience.



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This enhanced experience translates into closer ties with the destination in tourism terms. Tourists are more likely to regard with respect and appreciate a place when they know that it is important for one reason or another, whether that be historical, cultural, or environmental. This may also have effects on more environmentally careful forms of tourism where tourists can help 'pay' to preserve the places they visit (Rasoolimanesh, Seyfi, Hall, & Hatamifar, 2021).

It has many disadvantages to balance out all of the advantages. First of all, there is an accessibility issue: because visitors vary in their experience with digital tools, some may find apps and interactive exhibits difficult to navigate. Secondly, there is a need to refresh the content constantly, especially in matters involving science and history where new discoveries are identified almost every day (Townley & Koop, 2024). This could be even further enhanced through future technological developments in the fields of virtual reality and artificial intelligence. These can now support the development of more immersive and personalized experiences, which can adapt to the visitor's interests and knowledge levels. Whatever the case, a balance between innovation with accessibility and inclusivity should be maintained to allow interpretive media to keep enhancing the experience of visitors (Rani, Jining, Xaba, & Ranjan, 2023). In conclusion, interpreting media in English language for tourism industry is a very relevant tool with which an experience for the visitor can be enriched by adding depth to knowledge, interpretation, and interaction with the rich history, culture, and environment of this region. The rich historical sites, large lands, and vibrant cultural scenes attract millions of international visitors to England every year. Interpretive media becomes an increasingly vital factor in turning traveler visits into educational experiences beyond merely seeing the sights, as more and more people seek to gain a deeper connection with the places they visit. For this reason, in real-life through interpretative media, which enables learners to practice English in a natural environment. While tourists are interacting with digital resources that explain something historical or cultural, they are also being exposed to what real English sounds like, and such things as sentence structure, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

Finalmente, para cerrar el apartado de la introducción se mencionarán las hipótesis (si las hubiera), y el o los objetivos que marcarán el propósito del estudio.



#### **METHODOLOGY**

Two basic strategies for collecting data for research are qualitative and quantitative approaches, each with specific goals and procedures. When used in conjunction with surveys, interviews can provide insightful information (Ugwu & Eze, 2023). The qualitative approach aims at gathering as much information as possible concerning people's attitudes, emotions, and experiences. It provides an indepth understanding of "why" and "how" human behavior is manifested with detailed, rich narratives. One of the most valuable tools in qualitative research is the interview. Since they are normally openended, the respondents have leeway to say anything. Such a method aims at gathering inclusive ideas that might not come through in formal questionnaires (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

On the other hand, quantitative approach seeks to gather data in a numerical format that can later be analyzed statistically. It aims at assigning numbers to tendencies, activities, or opinions and, as such, often answers questions of the form "how much," "how many," or "how often." One of the most frequently applied tools within quantitative research is the questionnaire. They are generally designed using closed questions that can, through categorical or numerical data analysis, test a hypothesis (Ghanad, 2023).

For these reasons, this paper uses an inductive, deductive, analytical, and synthetic descriptive cross-sectional design qualitative-quantitative study. Quantification will be obtained through surveys of foreign visitors and interviews with the park guides and students form Universidad Estatal Amzonica. These will be a mix of ages and experience levels so that various viewpoints can be shared.

For data collection, this research will be divided into four phases;

- The Spanish-language written guides in existence within the park will be reviewed and later transformed into English texts.
- 2. The texts will be recorded in audio format (Podcasts), both in English and Spanish, thanks to the collaboration of students from the Universidad Estatal Amazónica. Later, the audio files will be loaded into a data cloud platform so that a QR code can be assigned to each file.
- 3. The QR codes will be positioned at key places within the attractions of the park to enable the scanning for accessing the interpretive media describing every particular attraction.



4. At the end of the tour, foreign visitors will be asked to complete a survey of structured questions, and finally, guides and student practitioners will be interviewed about the experience of implementing the English podcasts.

#### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Podcasts represent an innovative, engaging, and easily accessible interpretative medium whereby tourists can work with cultural, historical, and environmental information at their own pace. In this section, we present the findings of our investigation into the effectiveness of podcasts as a form of guided tour medium while discussing their effects on visitor satisfaction, experience gained by tour guides, and engagement.

Key trends and insights emerge from an analysis of survey data and qualitative comments from visitors who undertook podcast audio tours. The benefits and challenges of guiding a tour with a podcast will be discussed here, putting them into perspective in relation to more traditional guided tour methods and how they might shape experiences of travel in years to come.

**Table 1.** Population

Population	Number	Percentage	
Students	4	4%	
Tour guides	2	2%	
Foreign visitors	84	94%	
TOTAL	90	100%	

Note: The distribution of participants throughout the park of Nueva Loja is displayed in this table.

## **Procedure**

#### **Tour Guides Interview**

As it was told before, after finishing the Podcasts tour in the park, two guides and four students who were managing the tourists were interviewed. It came out that:



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**Table 2.** Interview analysis

Question	<b>Tour Guides</b>	Students	Analysis and interpretation
How has the use of	The work as a tour guide	During the tour, we were	Podcasts improve the work
podcasts during	is facilitated since we can	able to reach all the foreign	of guides, since they can be
tours impacted your	present information in	visitors with information,	understood more easily with
	•		·
role as a tour guide?	Spanish in a traditional	since some were enthralled	foreign visitors and not get
	way and at the same time	with the exhibition in their	bogged down in
	information in English	native language.	presentations only in Spanish
	with the use of		
	technology.		
How did foreign	Foreign visitors enjoyed	By listening to podcasts	Podcasts can reach tourists
visitors react to the	using podcasts to	before arriving at the	before, during, and after their
use of podcasts	reinforce what they've	attractions, foreign visitors	visit because of the use of
during the guided	learned afterward	were more engaged and	English as lingua Franca
tour?	listening to the	better prepared for the in-	
	information in Spanish.	person experience.	
Do you feel that	Some foreign visitors	The sensory combination of	By combining the natural
podcasts effectively	listened to the podcasts at	mother tongue and	environment of the park with
convey the key	their own pace, it could	environment could deepen	the use of podcasts during the
information tourists	be helpful for those who	their understanding of the	tour, it makes the tourist
need to understand	want to explore parts of	park's significance.	effectively understand the
the park's	the park independently		information presented
significance?			independently
How would you	Since live tours are	While podcasts allow visitors	Podcasts are a valuable
compare the podcast-	usually time-	to explore independently,	feedback tool because guides
guided tour with	constrained, we as guides	they can miss out on the	do not have enough time to
traditional guided	might not be able to go	immersive atmosphere a live	do so, however this also
tours led by a live	into as much detail as a	guide can create through	reduces the interaction
guide?	podcast	storytelling about the park	between guide and visitor.
Would you	Yes, because podcast	Yes, however, there were	Podcasts are recommended
recommend the	tours can be a fantastic	some problems with visitors	for educational tourism
podcasts tours	option for many foreign	because they should be	development, however
experience to others?	or local visitors,	prepared for potential	technical problems during
	particularly those	technical issues like internet	their implementation could
	interested in educational	connection	limit proper dissemination of



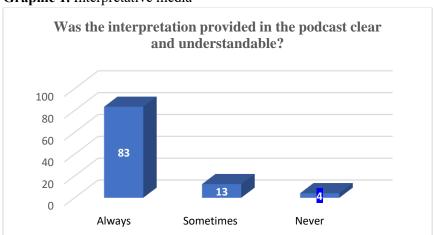


#### **Global Analysis**

The results obtained from the interviews demonstrate that podcast tours are digital tools that facilitate the reception of auditory information that comes from tourist guides to visitors, especially foreigners who use the English language as a lingua franca (interpretive media). In addition, these tools allow visitors to take tours independently. However, the use of these tools limits the interaction between visitors and park guides. In addition, sudden technological problems can affect the correct use of mobile devices during podcast implementation such as; low batteries of mobile devices, connectivity failures, etc.

## **Survey for foreing visitors**

In this section, the results of surveys of structured-based questions applied to 90 foreign visitors who listened to audio podcasts content through QR links were analyzed.

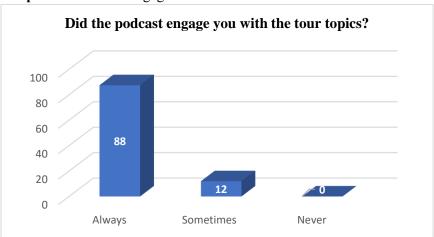


Graphic 1. Interpretative media

When analyzing the question about interpretive media, the following data is obtained; 83% of those surveyed think that the content of podcast tours always provides a clear and understandable interpretation of the shared listening content. On the other hand, 13% of participants believe that podcast content is sometimes clear. Finally, 4% of visitors claim that podcast content never transmits clear interpretive information or is not understandable. This result demonstrates that podcast tours in English as interpretive means of the Spanish language are understandable, taking into account that said content has been translated from the guide text of the Nueva Loja tourist park.

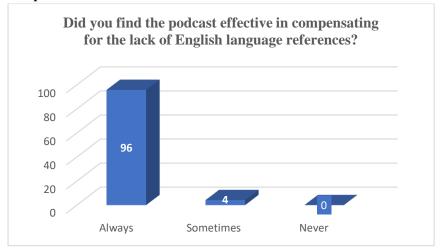


Graphic 2. Podcasts Engage



According to the data obtained in this questionnaire, it was observed that 88% of those surveyed mentioned that they felt involved with the content presented, that is, the written guide transformed into auditory content. In turn, 12% mention that sometimes the podcast's auditory content involves them with the guiding theme presented, and finally no respondent believes that the podcast content never involves them with the tour. Seen in this way, podcast tours help visitors feel involved with the tour in the Nueva Loja tourist park.

**Graphic 3.** Podcast Effectiveness

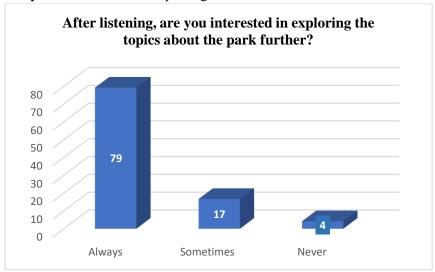


According to the data obtained and represented in graph 4, it is shown that 96% of respondents state that Podcast content is effective in English language in the absence of a written guide designed in that language. Additionally, 4% state that the listening content of podcasts sometimes helps to compensate for the lack of information in English. Finally, no respondent mentioned that this auditory content never



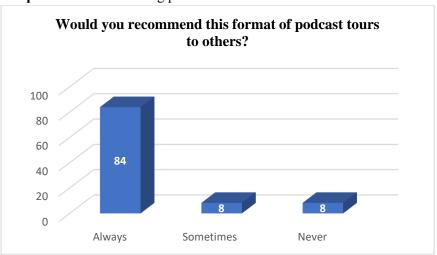
compensates for the lack of information in English. Therefore, podcast tours serve as a tool that compensates for the lack of content in a lingua franca. This is because the park only has guides written in Spanish language, and thanks to podcasts it has been possible to compensate for this deficit.

**Graphic 4.** Podcasts for exploring



According to the data established on graphic 4, it is established that 79% of foreign visitors are always interested in exploring the park in more depth thanks to the auditory information provided by the podcasts. On the other hand, 17% of visitors say that they sometimes become interested in exploring the park after having received digital auditory content. Finally, 4% of those interviewed say that they will never be interested in exploring the park despite receiving auditory information in podcasts. Consequently, the auditory content of the podcasts motivates foreign visitors to become more interested in exploring the Nueva Loja recreational park.

Graphic 5. Recommending podcasts





For the analysis of graph 5, it was observed that 88% of participants in the podcasts project would always recommend this type of digital tours, while 8% would sometimes recommend it. Finally, 8% of visitors would never recommend this digital material. Consequently, it can be stated that visitors who were exposed to the digital tool podcasts during their tour of the park would suggest implementing this type of material for other visitors.

#### **CONCLUSIONS**

With the analysis of data obtained through the collection instruments applied to determine the influence of tour podcasts tour as interpretive media of the English language in the Nueva Loja Tourist Park, it can be determined that; by transforming written material into auditory digital material, podcast tours provide flexible, accessible means for foreign visitors to engage with interpretative content, and, in letting listeners explore the tourist attractions of the park at a time and pace that suit them. It tends to break down barriers related to time, and accessibility, allowing more people to learn about and experience using digital tools.

On the other hand, it has been determined that Podcasts are potential powerful tools for storytelling. Because of the potency of audio descriptions, combined with soundscapes, create an immersive and emotive bond with tour content that should be significantly better remembered.

Additionally, podcast tours are great supplements to the traditional in-person tours, not a replacement. They can provide richer auditory information after a visit or better prepare visitors for on-site experiences. They also provide a vehicle for tour guides who cannot engage in a tour too deeply because of the time by engaging the tourists to get information feedback themselves with the same interpretive material.

Finally, the challenge for podcast tours is the balance between the depth of content and the span of listenership. While it can offer rich, in-depth insights, maintaining engagement over a longer period of a tour requires an overall balance in terms of pace, structure, and tone.

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