



Improving extensive listening engagement through podcast production

Introduction

Extensive reading is well accepted as a beneficial activity for language students. But what about those students who are not readers in their L1? Asking them to do “more leisurely reading of longer texts, **primarily for pleasure**” (Thornbury 191, emphasis added) seems unrealistic. So I allow my students the option to do extensive listening (EL) as well. However, for many low level students, the level appropriate materials are aimed for younger learners. and the topics the students are interested are aimed at higher level speakers. So what to do?

My answer: Make a podcast **for them**.

(Thornbury, S. (2006). An A-Z of ELT: A dictionary of terms and concepts. Macmillan)

The podcast: Listen Up! with Mr. I

I average about one episode per week. Three overarching topics have emerged:

- ① About me personally
- ② Comparisons between Japan and the US (my home country)
- ③ Language points

Students can request topics through the podcast website (bit.ly/LUWMI)

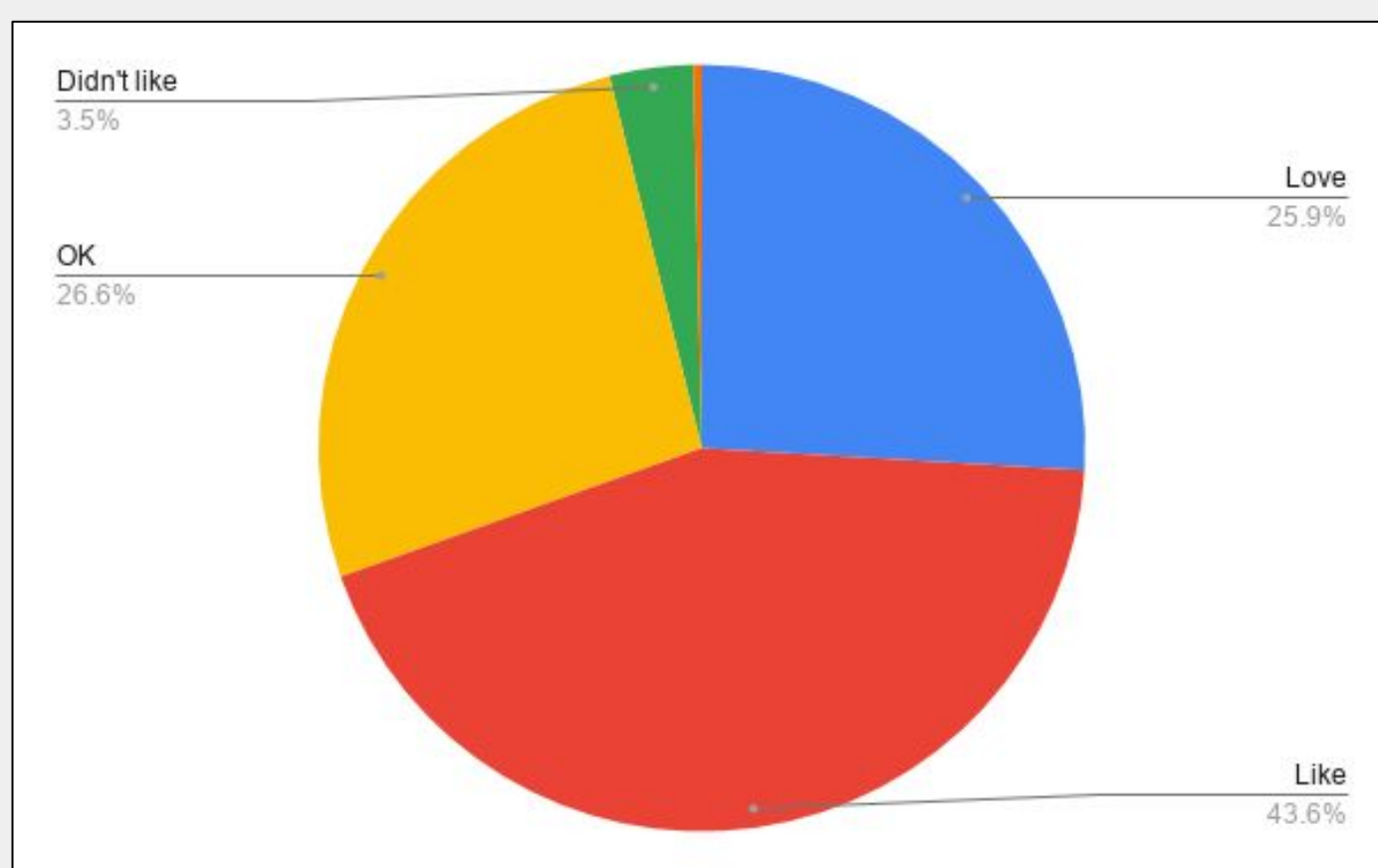
ER/EL assignment

- Weekly assignment
 - 1 book (graded readers)
 - 20 minutes listening (free choice)
 - Podcasts
 - Recommendations list
 - Original podcast (Listen Up! With Mr. I)
 - YouTube videos
 - Etc.
- ER/EL homework assignment Google Form
 - ER or EL, title, length (for listening), brief summary, **Did you like it? (5 point Likert Scale)**

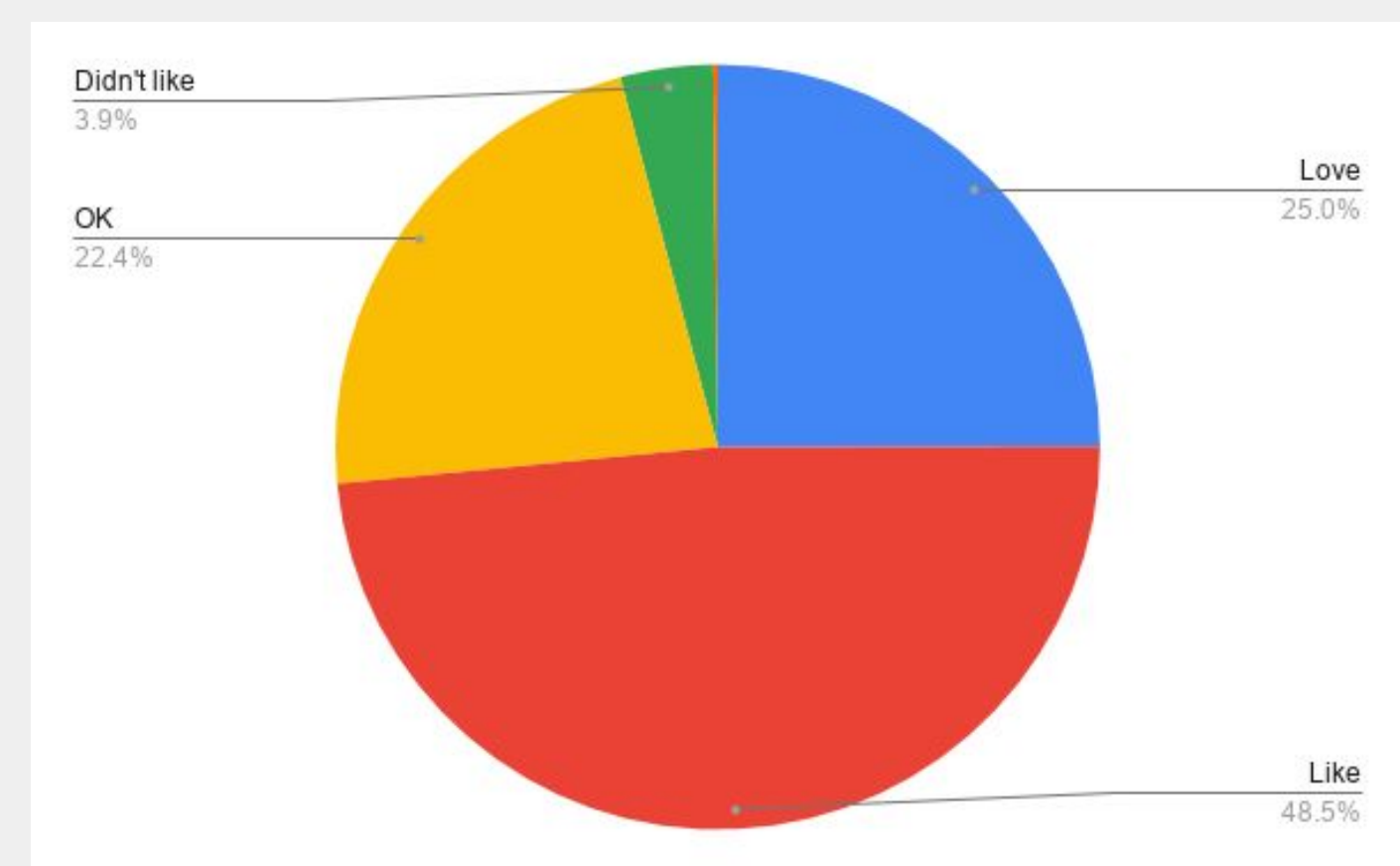


Data table for the graphs below

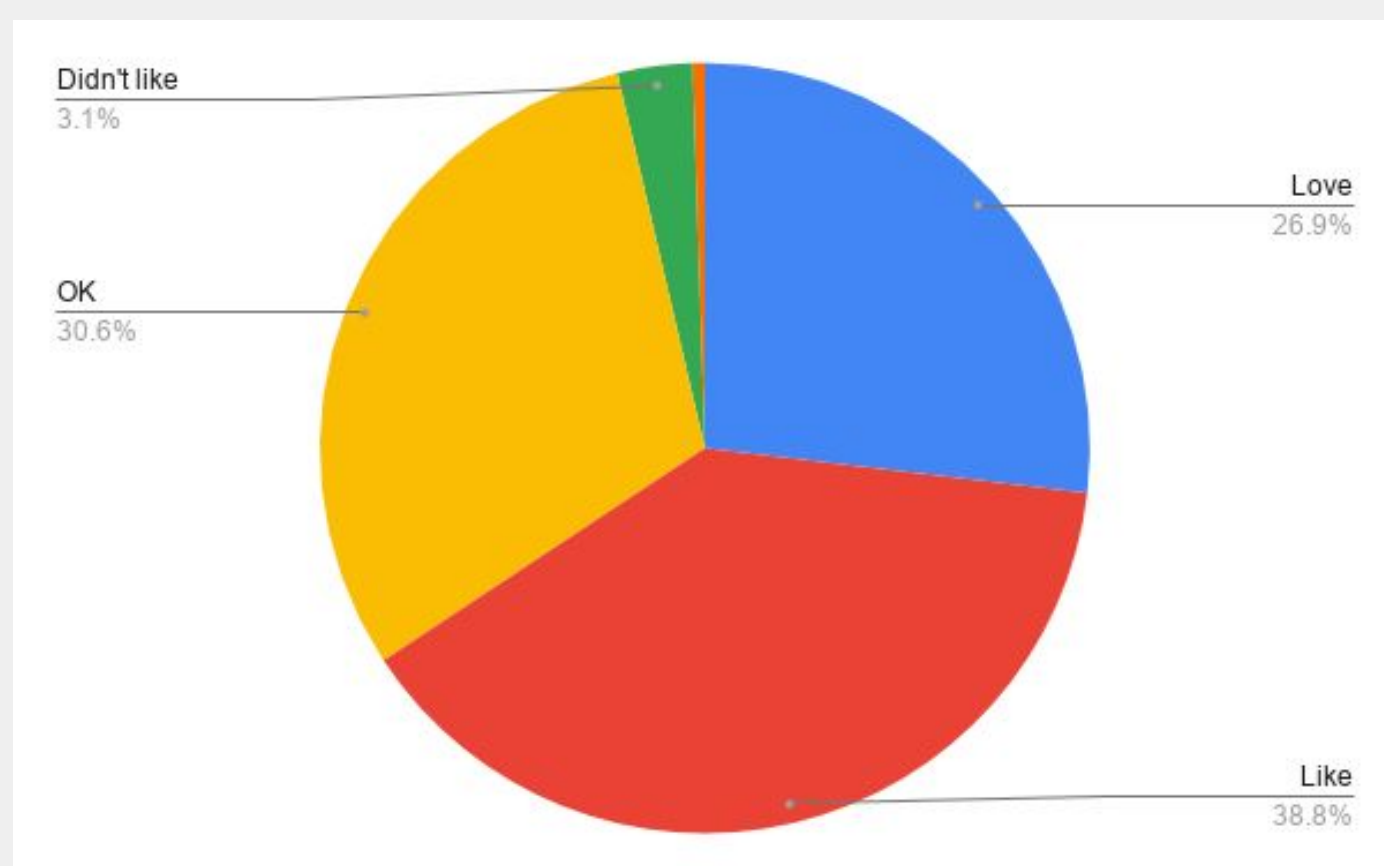
Student response; orange = “I hated it” responses (see PDF for data)



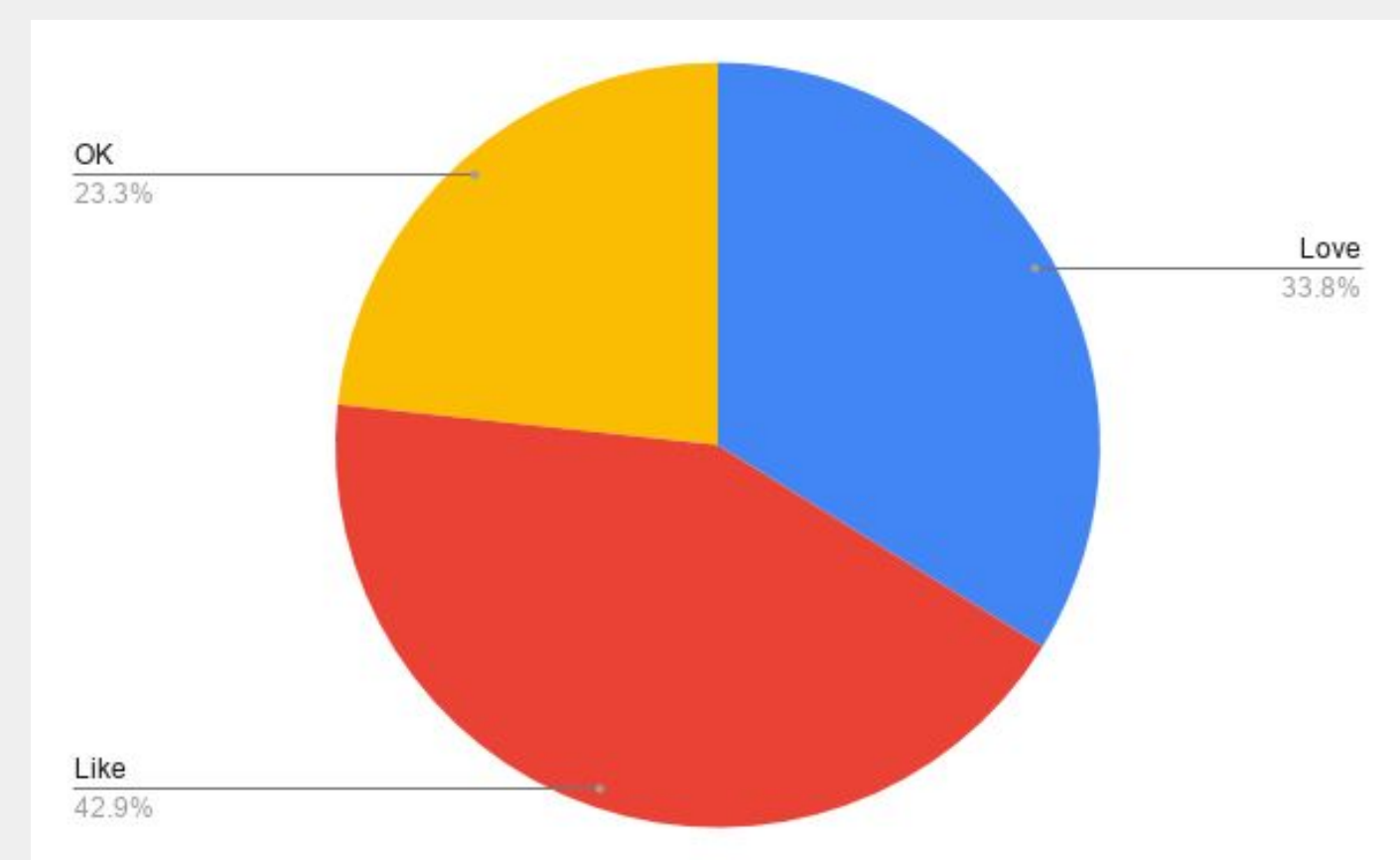
All responses (reading & listening) (3094 responses)



Reading only (1534 responses)



Listening only (including Listen Up! podcasts) (1560 responses)



Listen Up! podcast only (133 responses)

Discussion

Students chose listening 50.4%, but only chose Listen Up! 4.2% of the time, accounting for 8.5% of the listening assignments. This was smaller than I had hoped. However, the answers to the question “Did you like it?” were better for my podcast. Of course, a lot of possible confounding factors - creator of the podcast was also their teacher perhaps being the greatest one. Also, in the first year of creating podcasts (when this data is from), only one topic request was made. However, in the current school year, 13 requests to date.

Changes in the future: Google Forms “quizzes” as listening guides? Eliminate videos from listening option?