

How to Improve English Oral Production through the Implementation of Podcast in English Classes?

Larry Peñaranda Gómez¹, Julián David Salcedo Mosquera²

¹Universidad del Valle (Regionalization System)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3493-0399>, larry.penaranda@correounivalle.edu.co

²Universidad del Valle (Regionalization System) – Unidad central del valle del cauca UCEVA:

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1600-5060>, julian.salcedo@correounivalle.edu.co

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Abstract

Introduction: The use of podcasts in the classroom represents an innovative strategy for improving oral comprehension and production in a foreign language. This research analyzes its benefits, highlighting its impact on students' motivation and confidence. Using a theoretical methodology, key approaches are explored that strengthen language skills without generating anxiety or fear of public speaking.

Method: This qualitative study employs a methodology that integrates podcasts into the classroom to strengthen oral production through six key stages: topic introduction, pre-listening with discussion, active listening, group analysis, reflective writing, and podcast creation. Platforms such as Moodle, Deezer, and Canva are used to manage content and stimulate critical thinking. Furthermore, virtual reality and social media facilitate the dissemination of final products, promoting effective communication in a foreign language.

Results: The findings show that integrating podcasts into the classroom fosters meaningful learning. Students show greater confidence when expressing themselves orally and reduce their fear of failure. Furthermore, the combination of digital tools and teaching strategies strengthens listening comprehension and verbal fluency, allowing participants to develop confident and independent communication skills in the foreign language.

Discussion: The analysis of the results confirms that podcasts not only facilitate language acquisition but also generate a dynamic learning environment. By eliminating barriers such as fear of making mistakes and anxiety, they foster more active participation. Furthermore, interaction with authentic content and the ability to create their own materials reinforce students' autonomy and critical thinking.

Conclusions: The implementation of podcasts as a teaching tool significantly improves oral production in a foreign language. Their use fosters confidence, active participation, and independent learning. Furthermore, by integrating digital platforms and innovative strategies, the teaching-learning process is optimized. Their continued use is recommended to strengthen communication skills and consolidate a more interactive and effective educational environment.

Keywords: Learning; teaching tools; podcast; oral comprehension; speaking skills.

1. Introduction

Oral production represents a challenge for students preparing to become foreign language teachers. This skill demands exposure and practice, where the speaker has to be spontaneous and demonstrate all the linguistic knowledge acquired in the classes.

Additionally, oral competence is the immediate and visible measure demonstrating a teacher's expertise.

For that reason, for students of the Bachelor's Degree in Foreign Languages with Emphasis in English in Colombian universities, there is a set of factors that hinder the development of oral competence. These are divided into logistical factors

– such as limited class hours, large groups, and insufficient planning and execution of activities that promote the skill- and the emotional challenges like anxiety, embarrassment, fear of ridicule and failure, and shyness. Moreover, individual traits that characterize each student.

Subsequently, there is a gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world language practice. The lack of hours assigned to English as a subject in the Bachelor's Degree program enlarges the issue. There are no English-speaking environments with the other subjects, and, as a consequence, students rely on translators and AI tools to do their assignments.

For this reason, it is essential to explore pedagogical strategies that foster oral production and technology as a learning tool to enhance speaking skills in the Bachelor's students. In this context, the implementation of podcast is an innovative resource that contributes to strengthening oral production in students and becomes an ally of the learning process.

The following research question is posed concerning the previously addressed problem: How does the integration of podcasts as teaching material influence the development of oral/speaking production in English of students of the Bachelor's Degree in Foreign Languages with an emphasis on English?

2. Methods

According to Martínez et al. (2022), qualitative research is characterized by its interpretive approach, based on a hermeneutic perspective. Its data collection methods facilitate access to data that allow for its observation, description, and analysis. Its use has been predominant in the social sciences, where it does not focus on the measurement of variables within a social phenomenon, but rather on their understanding and interpretation.

This qualitative study explores the impact of implementing podcasts in English classes to improve oral production. Using a subjective approach, it analyzes how this tool facilitates dynamic learning, builds student confidence, and reduces public speaking anxiety. It also highlights its potential to strengthen autonomy and fluency in language use.

The proposal aligns with several methodological strategies aimed at incorporating podcasts into the classroom and mixing them with other tools to

encourage active participation and speaking production. According to Prensky (2001), technology offers different possibilities that enable the personalization of the learning process. This perspective looks to focus on the use of creativity to foster commitment and participation in the learning experience while using technology to provide and ensure practice opportunities.

This way, the methodology implements a didactic sequence that articulates the use of the podcast and oral production through it. To achieve this task, six key moments are proposed. The first one is the introduction of the topic related to current topics, such as new viral beauty practices, the controversy over a famous person, or a new movie. Then, there is a pre-listening stage where the teacher plays a fraction of the podcast for a short discussion and brainstorming. The students agree on some questions that will be resolved on the second listen. The third stage is fully listening to the podcast, paying attention to the information to solve the previous questions. At this point, the students have only received information, fostering their listening comprehension skills. For the fourth stage, there is a group discussion about the content of the podcast with the perspectives of the group. After the discussion, the students do a based writing, which means making a counterargument of the content worked on. As the last stage, the students have to generate a podcast with a similar topic, this encourages the production of oral and written content.

Following the previous structure and incorporating complementary tools for the use of podcasts, the action plan is implemented in the classroom. At the beginning, this approach integrates learning platforms such as Moodle, Deezer, and Canva to manage content, access different sources of information, and use podcasts for other activities. From this point, tasks such as designing questionnaires, tests, discussion prompts, and forums are developed to encourage analytical thinking and debate on the pre-selected materials. These topics range from everyday situations to trending issues related to culture, social media, sports, and daily life.

Furthermore, the plan includes that students create their podcasts using tools like GarageBand or Adobe Podcast. This activity wants to familiarize them with editing software and give specific themes for

production with scheduled deadlines. It is essential to tailor this content to the students' interests, ensuring oral production. The plan also incorporates elements of virtual reality (VR) and interviews with classmates to enrich the activity, fostering immersive learning experiences that enhance social skills and facilitate the exchange of diverse perspectives.

Virtual spaces are also necessary for sharing the materials used during the process and the final products created by the students. To achieve this, social media platforms are proposed for disseminating content, connecting with audiences, and involving the student community. This strategy looks to develop effective communication in a foreign language, ensuring that the speech is clear and meaningful when it is shared on platforms like Instagram or TikTok. This approach not only fosters the content creation and speaking practice but also introduces new topics for discussion in the semester. Additionally, it is an innovative alternative to traditional written assessments.

3. Theoretical Overview of the Main Concepts:

This research emphasizes several aspects that strengthen the theoretical foundations of the proposal. The first one is classroom interaction, which is crucial for ensuring consistent practice and enhancing social skills due to communicative competence developed within a community. Hernandez and Lopez (2022) argue that classrooms should incorporate contemporary resources, such as podcasts, which foster authentic interaction. Through these tools, students experienced an authentic immersion in a foreign language with real scenarios that break down learning barriers.

Although various theories and proposals exist, the interaction and its presence in the classroom remains important. The teacher plays an important role in proposing these situations with strategies that encourage the students to have a more active role in the classroom than mere recipients of theories and vocabulary. Furthermore, Martinez (2019) states that the use of original materials supports the development of communicative skills grounded in real-life situations rather than imaginary scenarios. This approach enables a comprehensive understanding of Anglo-Saxon culture.

With the generation of scenarios to communicate, the teacher is also expected to have a leadership role by creating discussion scenarios that engage students' attention. This is especially important when social networks hinder face-to-face interactions and affect oral production. Abt, G and Barry, T. (2021) address this issue, highlighting podcasts as a dialogic tool for language learning. They emphasize its focus on narration and memory, as well as its ability to enhance creativity and attention, making it a more effective resource than traditional lectures.

Several factors hinder oral productions. According to Perez and Martinez (2018), speaking skills represent a challenge for students since they feel anxiety about evaluation and lack of practice in real-life contexts and communicative strategies. In addition, English is constantly present in social networks, but the students tend to ignore it, which means that there is no meaningful immersion with the language. Besides, social pressure in the schools leads to complicate the acquisition of the foreign language due to low confidence in oral productions and fear of mockery.

With this context, the podcast can transform the linguistic obstacles and provide new perspectives in oral productions from students. This is important since the students are exposed to the variability of accents, forms, and styles. This facilitates a holistic understanding of the linguistic codes that allows the listening practice from real materials without standardization, as usually happens with publishing houses.

The discussion also highlights the benefits of encouraging schoolchildren to create podcasts to foster creativity and autonomy. This involves tasks that promote teamwork, participation, and the active generation of language. García and Pérez (2019) state that incorporating podcasts into foreign language learning not only enhances motivation and teamwork but also strengthens active language skills, such as comprehension and listening. The use of these tools must be analyzed beforehand, taking into account the students' level and the accuracy of the topics taught. That is why it cannot be imposed or isolated; it must be integrated into the curriculum and the development of the classes to engage participation and discussion.

This research seeks to develop strategies that ensure podcasts capture students' attention and act as an effective tool for improving speaking skills rather than overshadowing the teacher's role. According to Smith and Brown (2019), the integration of podcasts has multiple stages and tasks, ranging from foundational projects where the students can create educational content by themselves. They view podcasts as essential resources for fostering listening skills through pre-listening tasks, active listening exercises, and follow-up discussions. Besides, Johnson and Ellis (2018) describe podcasts as "engagement" tools where the potential should be used to enhance listening comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, student autonomy, and pronunciation practice.

From both perspectives, podcasts are dynamic resources that are born from scripts and standards, emphasizing real communication, diverse idea expression, and meaningful practice instead of repetitive exercises. Martinez (2019) states the importance of selecting materials that match the group's skill level and the podcast's content with students' abilities. The activities should avoid challenges that are difficult for most learners. Additionally, the topics in the podcast should connect with students' interests, be relevant, and foster motivation and attention. The learning objectives should be aligned to the material, avoiding a sense of imposition. Finally, the cultural relevance of the podcast should ensure its alignment with contemporary issues, avoiding topics that are far from current events.

4. Result and Discussion

The technique used to discuss the research results was triangulation state by Denzin (1970) as the mix of theories and data sources in the study of a phenomenon or situation. Taking into account the results, the implementation of podcasts as a tool was effective in enhancing oral production. As Garcia and Perez (2019) state, incorporating podcasts into foreign language learning enhances the oral production of the students and motivates them to participate in discussions related to the podcast's topic. Likewise, Johnson and Ellis (2018) support that the podcast potentially enhances the development of speaking skills, allowing the students to acquire new vocabulary, autonomy, and pronunciation practice.

On the other hand, Johnson and Ellis (2018) also declare the importance of socio-emotional aspects and that podcasting allows the students to self-assess their abilities, overcome their fears, and build their self-confidence. This is a crucial factor, taking into account that oral production is often a challenge for learners of a foreign language. According to Hernandez and Lopez (2022), the use of technological resources such as podcasts helps the students to achieve a real immersion with authentic interaction with the language that helps them to overcome learning barriers like lack of self-confidence, fear of ridicule, and mockery.

Synopsis of the main Research Outcomes

The position regarding the podcast as a valuable tool for integration into the Bachelor's Degree in Foreign Languages program was effectively presented. This comes from the different challenges students presented, including curricular demands, emotional factors, and difficulties in foreign language comprehension. Podcasts, as teaching tools, have the potential to enhance students' oral English skills by promoting the development of fluency, vocabulary, and confidence in speaking English.

A key factor in podcast implementation is its ability to foster students' confidence in communicating in English, taking into account the anxiety when speaking in front of people. Social pressure and fear of mockery often inhibit oral expression, and anxiety is a significant obstacle to learning a language. Podcasts provide a controlled and secure environment for students to practice, reducing the stress associated with speaking. Moreover, podcasts empower students by allowing them to record and edit their work, giving them control over their performance. Johnson & Ellis (2018) highlight that podcasting offers opportunities for self-assessment, helping students confront their fears and build self-confidence.

Exposure to authentic materials such as interviews, discussions, and narrations helps in improving students' pronunciation and vocabulary. These materials introduce a variety of accents and speaking styles while it provides language in contextualized examples. Additionally, students began to incorporate advanced expressions into their speech. Smith and Brown (2019) argue that actively listening to and reproducing language elements plays a vital role in developing language skills.

Creating podcasts proved to be a motivating activity for students, who appreciated the opportunity to work on creative projects related to their interests. This is because tasks involving original content production promote active participation. Furthermore, the podcast topics explored not only linguistic elements but also cultural and social dimensions. This is evidence that using authentic materials in the classroom fosters meaningful learning experiences. Martinez (2019) emphasizes that authentic materials allow the students to explore rich cultural aspects, which is often difficult with traditional resources.

5. Conclusions

This study demonstrates that incorporating podcasts as a pedagogical resource meaningfully enhances the development of communicative competence between students in the Bachelor's Degree in Foreign Languages program. The primary findings are summarized as follows:

The incorporation of podcasts has proven to be an effective tool for fostering active participation and learning. By integrating them into various tasks, from listening and analysis to content creation and production, they encourage the development of transversal skills such as critical thinking and creativity.

The success of this approach depends on a well-structured pedagogical framework that considers factors like students' English levels, learning objectives, and the relevance of the materials used. Martinez (2019) emphasize, the integration of podcasts requires planning to ensure their efficacy.

Additionally, using podcasts helps students overcome emotional barriers, such as anxiety and fear of ridicule or failure. This method creates a healthy learning environment where students feel empowered to practice and learn from their errors.

Finally, the role of the teacher as a facilitator in this process is important. They are not only responsible for selecting materials and designing activities but also for motivating and helping students to use language. To sum up, podcasts represent a powerful tool for enhancing oral English skills. However, their successful implementation depends on thorough planning and the thoughtful selection of appropriate materials.

Limitations, implications, and further directions of research.

The most important limitation identified in this research is the few hours of English class that the students have per week. This hinders continuous practice and learning due to time is not being enough. This is linked with the insufficient planning and execution of activities that promote oral production skills during different subjects. Nevertheless, the students would only practice during the English class hours. An alternative for this issue is to encourage students to practice at home. They can use social networks as a tool to create a bilingual environment for them, however, it has been evidenced that the use of social networks as a tool for learning foreign languages is insufficient due to students focusing on the content and not the linguistic advantage.

Another complication observed is related to emotional challenges. The students constantly feel inhibited to communicate and even participate in the class activities due to lack of knowledge and weak skills in English. This cause embarrassment and fear for talking in public, also, shyness and anxiety are factors that work against the students and their capabilities. For this reason, teachers must be aware of the kind of students they have and observe and recognize those individual traits that can be an obstacle for learning. Moreover, learn about the students' interests to select not only the material accurate to their level and knowledge but also that ensure their attention.

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