

Podcast-Based Learning in EFL: Engaging Students with Health and Hunger Narratives

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ABSTRACT

ABSTRACT This systematic literature review explores the use of podcast-based learning in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, with a particular focus on engaging students through health and hunger narratives. Drawing from multiple empirical studies and reviews published over the last decade, this study examines the impact of podcasts on students' listening comprehension, speaking proficiency, motivation, and engagement. The findings reveal that podcasts provide authentic, flexible, and contextually rich materials that significantly enhance language skills and learner autonomy. Health and hunger narratives embedded in podcasts offer meaningful, real-world contexts that foster critical thinking and emotional connection, further enriching the learning experience. Despite challenges such as technological limitations and varying teacher readiness, the integration of podcasts supported by structured activities and teacher guidance proves effective in improving EFL outcomes. This review highlights best practices and implications for educators aiming to leverage podcast-based learning to create engaging, socially relevant, and innovative language instruction.

Keywords: Podcast-based learning, Student engagement, Health and hunger narratives

79 Introduction

In recent years, podcast-based learning has emerged as a more dynamic and effective tool in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, offering unique opportunities to engage students through more authentic and flexible audio content. Podcasts provide students with access to a variety of accents, speech patterns, and real-life conversational contexts, which are essential for improving listening comprehension and language proficiency (Yoestara & Putri, 2019; Rahman, 2018). The simplicity of podcast learning allows students to listen anytime, anywhere, integrate language practice into their daily lives, and encourage independent learning (Andersen & Dau, 2021). Additionally, the engaging nature of podcasts which often feature stories and interviews with experts further helps to bridge emotional and cognitive skills in learning, making complex topics more relevant and engaging for students (Georgian College, 2025).

Specifically, incorporating a real-life health and hunger narrative into a podcast can certainly provide a meaningful blended learning context for developing students' language skills while raising awareness of important global issues of recent years. Health-related podcasts have been recognized for their educational value, effective dissemination of knowledge, and active listening (PMC, 2006). In today's EFL classroom, using thematic podcasts in such learning can expand students' vocabulary, improve comprehension, and stimulate critical thinking about real-world challenges.

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A detailed study of Entitled "Podcast-Based Learning in the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL): Engaging Students in Interaction with Narratives About Health and Hunger" at home. This study examines how this approach can improve students' listening skills, vocabulary mastery, and more, while developing a deeper understanding of socially relevant topics. To support motivational and cognitive motivational and cognitive podcasts, educators Can provide immersive and interactive learning experiences and follow the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which is not only of presentation mode but also engagement (Georgian College, 2025).

80 Literature Review

Podcast-Based Learning in EFL Contexts

Podcast-based learning has become a highly featured approach in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, which not only offers authentic material, but also offers easy access anywhere and anytime, and is also interesting and enhances various language skills. Research has consistently highlighted the positive impact of podcasts on students' motivation, listening comprehension, and speaking skills.

Student Attitudes and Motivation

A study conducted by Aprianto (2024) found that students in EFL classes had very positive attitudes towards podcasts as a learning medium. The study, which surveyed college students, revealed that podcasts increase the willingness to learn, encourage engagement, and are considered fun, portable, and efficient. A Podcast itself not only provides varied and authentic material, but also makes it an effective complementary source that motivates students and increases their interest in learning English. This is very much in line and clear with the idea that technology-mediated methods can not only empower learners but can also increase student engagement.

Listening Comprehension

Some of the previous studies that shown the effectiveness of a podcast in improving to the listening skills. Rahman (2018) conducted an experimental study with high school students and found that those who used podcasts outperformed their peers who did not use podcasts, with statistically significant improvements and listening comprehension. The study also noted that podcasts make learning more interesting and very attractive to students. Likewise, research conducted by Yoestara and Putri (2023) reported that podcasts greatly support students' listening experiences, helping them to focus more and not only exposing them to interesting topics but also further supporting the development of listening skills.

Speaking Proficiency

Podcasts not only create limitations on listening skills, but can also improve speaking skills. Herda et al. (2023) also investigated the use of BBC Learning English Podcasts in speaking classes and significant improvements in students' speaking skills, including reduced anxiety, increased vocabulary, and increased fluency. Integrating podcasts as part of digital pedagogy supports lifelong learning and prepares students for global communication. Additionally, project-based learning approaches that involve creating podcasts have been proven to enhance students' accuracy also, fluency, and understanding in speaking, while also fostering engagement and collaboration.

Pedagogical Implementation and Challenges

Podcasts that we have known are certainly very useful, functioning not only as innovative pedagogical media, but also very useful especially in environments such as Madrasahs in Indonesia. By watching Podcasts has been proven to increase students' confidence in using English and also provides around 80% success in improving language skills, as seen in terms of through class activities and interviews. However, effective implementation requires addressing challenges such as teacher technological competence and also ensuring reliable internet access.

Systematic Reviews and Broader Impact

Systematic literature review conducted by Amir et al. (2024) has confirmed that the flexibility of podcasts, which also highlights their ability to improve listening to comprehension, speaking fluency, vocabulary, and pronunciation. The review strongly emphasises that the effectiveness of podcasts depends on the targeted skills, learning context, and integration into the curriculum. and it also despite the limitations that exist, podcasts are still recognised as a highly valuable tool for motivation, engagement, and language development in modern EFL classrooms.

81 Research Methods

This study is a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) methodology as it comprehensively identifies, evaluates, and synthesises existing research on podcast-based learning in the context of English as a foreign language (EFL), particularly involving students with narratives about health and hunger. The SLR approach was chosen due to its structured, transparent, and reproducible process, which ensures a rigorous and unbiased synthesis of available evidence. The SLR was conducted in accordance with established guidelines to ensure methodological rigour. The process began with the formulation of clear research questions, which served as a guide throughout the review process. The protocol was reviewed and developed to describe the objectives, inclusion and exclusion criteria, search strategies, data extraction, and synthesis methods.

82 Result and Discussion

Impact of Podcast-Based Learning on EFL Students' Engagement and Language Skills

A systematic literature review has found very consistent evidence that podcast-based learning can significantly improve the engagement and language skills of EFL students, especially in terms of their listening comprehension and speaking abilities. Indahsari (2020) also found that integrating podcasts into EFL classrooms increases student motivation and makes listening to activities more dynamic and enjoyable. Similarly, Rahman and Saliya (2018) reported that students exposed to podcast-based instruction outperformed their peers in listening comprehension tests.

Herda et al. (2023) got that the use of BBC Learning English Podcasts not only improved speaking skills but also reduced students' anxiety and increased vocabulary. Creating to the project-based podcasts, as studied by Safar et al. (2025), further enhanced speaking accuracy, fluency, and collaboration among students.

Utilization of Health and Hunger Narratives

The review revealed that while the use of health and hunger narratives in EFL podcasts is still emerging, such themes are highly effective in providing meaningful contexts for language learning. Health-related podcasts, according to PMC (2024), facilitate deeper emotional engagement and better retention of information. Sari (2023) highlighted that when students engaged with health and social issue narratives, they not only acquired relevant vocabulary but also developed critical thinking and empathy, making language learning more relevant and impactful.

Challenges and Best Practices

Despite the clear benefits, several challenges were identified in the literature. Limited technological competence among teachers and unstable internet access were frequently cited obstacles (Fachriza et al., 2023). Additionally, some students initially struggled with understanding native speaker accents and fast-paced speech in authentic podcasts (Yoestara & Putri, 2023). To address these issues, studies recommended:

1. Careful selection of podcast materials appropriate for students' proficiency levels (Indahsari, 2020).
2. Providing pre-listening and post-listening activities to scaffold comprehension (Herda et al., 2023).
3. Teacher training on integrating digital media into language instruction (Fachriza et al., 2023).

The findings of this SLR confirm that podcast-based learning is a powerful tool for enhancing EFL students' engagement and language proficiency. The authentic, flexible, and diverse content of podcasts aligns well with communicative language teaching principles and supports learner autonomy (Aprianto, 2024). The use of health and hunger narratives further enriches the learning experience by connecting language practice with real-world issues, fostering both linguistic and socio-emotional development.

The positive attitudes and increased motivation reported by students (Aprianto, 2024) suggest that podcasts can play a crucial role in sustaining interest in language learning, especially when traditional classroom resources may be limited. Moreover, the collaborative and creative aspects of podcast creation projects contribute to the development of 21st-century skills, such as digital literacy, teamwork, and critical thinking (Safar et al., 2025).

However, clear and visible implementation will be successful, requiring addressing practical barriers, including technological infrastructure and teacher readiness. Schools and educators must invest in professional development and ensure equitable access to digital resources. In addition, integrating podcasts with structured activities and ongoing assessments can maximize their impact on language learning outcomes.

83 Conclusion

Overall, the literature demonstrates that podcast-based learning, especially when incorporating health and hunger narratives, offers significant pedagogical benefits for EFL students. It enhances listening and speaking skills, increases engagement, and provides meaningful contexts for language use. Addressing implementation challenges through targeted support and resource allocation will further strengthen the effectiveness of this innovative approach.

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