LA APLICACIÓN DEL PODCAST COMO RECURSO TECNOLÓGICO PARA MEJORAR LA HABILIDAD DE HABLAR
THE APPLICATION OF PODCAST AS A TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCE TO ENHANCE SPEAKING SKILL

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Resumen

Este artículo pretende demostrar que la tecnología y sus recursos tales como los podcasts pueden aportar grandes avances en el aprendizaje de un nuevo idioma, especialmente en el desarrollo de la habilidad oral que muchas veces supone un desafío para los estudiantes. Esta investigación sigue el paradigma cualitativo, ya que enfatiza el uso de datos contextualizados y significativos resultantes de la interacción de los estudiantes tanto en el aula y en casa, como de sus respuestas al uso del podcast y la intervención en el desarrollo de sus habilidades orales. Durante el desarrollo de esta propuesta, el podcast como recurso tecnológico ha demostrado tener características beneficiosas para adquirir habilidades de conversación en inglés, particularmente en lo que se refiere a los componentes de pronunciación y fluidez, los cuales son fundamentales para conseguir el mejoramiento en la habilidad previamente establecida. Esta investigación se produjo en un periodo de pre-test, el cual permitió conocer el nivel real de los estudiantes en la habilidad del habla, para después aplicar el post test como proceso en el uso de podcasts como recurso tecnológico alternativo para practicar constantemente la habilidad del habla. La investigación concluyó que los podcasts poseen características beneficiosas para mejorar la pronunciación y emplean métodos que influyen en la fluidez, mejorando significativamente este aspecto en los estudiantes con el tiempo que dedican usando este recurso tecnológico.

Palabras clave: Habilidades para hablar, Pronunciación, Fluidez y podcasts.

Abstract

This article aims to demonstrate that technology and resources such as podcasts can significantly enhance language learning, especially in the development of oral expression, which often presents a challenge for students. This research follows a qualitative paradigm, emphasizing the use of contextualized and relevant data derived from students' interactions both in the classroom and at home, as well as their responses to podcast use and interventions aimed at developing their oral expression. During the development of this proposal, podcasts, as a technological resource, have proven to have beneficial characteristics for acquiring conversational skills in English, particularly regarding pronunciation and fluency, which are fundamental for improving

previously acquired skills. This research was conducted during a pre-test period, allowing us to determine the students' actual level of speaking ability. Subsequently, a post-test was administered as part of the process of using podcasts as an alternative technological resource for the consistent practice of oral expression. The research concluded that podcasts have beneficial characteristics for improving pronunciation and employ methods that influence fluency, significantly improving this aspect in students with the time they dedicate using this technological resource.
Keywords: Speaking skills, Pronunciation, Fluency and podcasts.

Resumo

Este artigo visa demonstrar que a tecnologia e recursos como podcasts podem contribuir significativamente para o aprendizado de idiomas, especialmente no desenvolvimento da habilidade oral, que muitas vezes representa um desafio para os alunos. Esta pesquisa segue um paradigma qualitativo, enfatizando o uso de dados contextualizados e significativos resultantes das interações dos alunos tanto em sala de aula quanto em casa, bem como suas respostas ao uso de podcasts e à intervenção no desenvolvimento de suas habilidades orais. Durante o desenvolvimento desta proposta, os podcasts, como recurso tecnológico, mostraram-se benéficos para a aquisição de habilidades conversacionais em inglês, particularmente em relação à pronúncia e fluência, que são fundamentais para o aprimoramento de habilidades previamente estabelecidas. Esta pesquisa envolveu um período de pré-teste para determinar os níveis reais de habilidade oral dos alunos, seguido de um pós-teste como parte do processo de utilização de podcasts como recurso tecnológico alternativo para a prática consistente da habilidade oral. A pesquisa concluiu que os podcasts possuem características benéficas para o aprimoramento da pronúncia e empregam métodos que influenciam a fluência, melhorando significativamente esse aspecto nos alunos com o tempo que dedicam ao uso desse recurso tecnológico.
Palavras-chave: Habilidade oral, Pronúncia, Fluência e Podcasts.

Introduction

Education in Ecuador has advanced enormously in relation to the teaching of the English language in recent years. The proof of this is the English as a foreign language curriculum of the Ministry of Education in language teaching that indicates the level of English that high school students must have when they graduate from school. The current curriculum mentions that students need to get a proficiency level of B1 in the area of English as a foreign language, when they leave high school. The learning of the English as a second language has the four skills that establish a level to communicate with others. We refer to teaching English in high school to focus on receptive skills (reading and listening) and productive skills (writing and speaking), which would give the student the ability to apply the target language in their daily life. How it is mentioned in the following quote: "Spoken language production is still one of the most difficult aspects of language learning (Brown et al., 1983). In particular, it is necessary to take into account the ability to speak English because it is considered one of the most difficult skills since it requires obtaining a certain level of pronunciation, fluency and precision when speaking.

Alfa, (2020) stated that speaking is the oral practice in which someone employs a language and expresses their ideas, feeling, and thought in communication. Clearly, it is mentioned that speaking skills should be a priority in the

educational system because it pretends to get a real connection among students when they transmit their emotions, feelings. Teachers and students should worry about achieving great fluency, excellent pronunciation when practicing the target language. It is currently considering the use of many resources that could strengthen the learning of the English language such as methodological trends. English Language Teaching (ELT) has changed profoundly in the past decades thanks to the work of applied linguists, the developments in teacher training methodology, and the creative approaches of classroom practitioners (Richards, 2015; Herrell & Jordan, 2020). These methodological trends must also be considered for the meaningful learning of a new language. Nowadays, the application of many resources in the educational system has originated in the acquisition of the language with the goal to collaborate in its acquisition in a significant way.

For a long time, the usage of methods as a pedagogy to teach English language has been important in the educational process to teach and learn a new language. There are various methodologies that contribute to the acquisition of the English language such as communicative language teaching, the audio lingual method, task based learning, etc. According to Reena Chakraborty (July 15, 2024). "These methods are well designed with a strategy that is a highly interactive way of teaching students. This will help learners to understand, learn and enhance language skills. These methodologies can be used in a complementary way to achieve language learning in the skills that this learning requires. Similarity, technology has been mentioned a fundamental tool in learning a new language in recent years. For this reason, students use this technology to learn many things in many areas. Speck argued that (2019),

English language learners will benefit if they approach technology. This means that technology gives learners some apps to communicate with people who speak another language, tools to learn about a language doing different activities in an asynchronous way.

Ahmadi (2018) suggested that "Technology makes learners study smoothly, but we should be considered using it as a support tool in learning". It is important to reflect that technology can be applied differently, but the correct application has to be getting knowledge of a new language that can be considered so important in the learning of a language. The development and integration of information and communication technology (ICT) in the English classroom have the potential to revolutionize pedagogical practices by leveraging the benefits of emerging technologies (Aşık et al., 2020; Guillén et al., 2019). Recently, the rapid impact of technology has shifted the focu of education andlearning processes from traditional education to technology-based education (Rohner et al., 2021). During the time in the teaching profession, it is evident that students do not manage to develop all the communicative components in the practice of a new language, considering many limitations that do not create an effective space to speak English with good fluency and correct pronunciation inside and outside the classroom. Students lack resources that foster the balanced acquisition of the four English language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) to improve in these areas. Furthermore, it is very difficult to implement methodological techniques and strategies with so little classroom time, and it is also necessary to cultivate a culture of consistent practice that allows them to become independent learners.

This research follows the qualitative paradigm as it emphasizes the use of a contextualized and

meaningful data resulting from the interaction of students both in the classroom, their responses towards the use of podcast and the intervention in developing students' speaking skills. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2009), researchers focus on comprehending the situations and events from the viewpoint of the participants. It is necessary to capture of the perception and belief of students in the use of this technological resource – podcast - to know if using it influences to develop students' pronunciation and fluency competences in speaking skill. Among all research designs under the qualitative paradigm, action research in the classroom was employed as it allows the demonstration of the influence of an action or intervention in classroom setting following the four steps: planning, acting, observing and reflecting. This is how Stephen Kemmis and Robin McTaggart described it: "a spiral process of planning, action, observation and reflection" (Kemmis y McTaggart, 2000). Therefore, the research objective focused on establishing the degree of influence of the application of podcasts as an interactive resource in improving students' speaking skills.

Materials and methods

This proposal was implemented at a public high school located in Santa Elena province, whose sample was taken from students in a 1st BGU course that represents a quarter of the population. The data collection and the interpretation were applied through a classroom observation sample form and recorded video during the classes for 4 weeks, and doing a conversation with the students in the final through an interview about the application of the proposal that will give us relevant information about this research. The results of the classroom observation sample in which the progress that the students are obtaining during the process of preparation and development of

the evaluation activities are observed to establish that the pronunciation and fluency components are improving. These sources allow us to obtain a comprehensive understanding about the effectiveness of using podcasts as technological resources to improve English speaking skill, which gave us a clear criterion about the application of podcast in students. This format was used during class to establish the progress made by the students when they were involved in a dialogue related to the content of the podcast, which would allow the components of pronunciation and fluency to be evaluated.

It is worth mentioning that to carry out this test, it was necessary for the students to listen to the resource (podcast) over and over again, in order to practice with repetition and imitation techniques and then carry out this observation process with the activities established in the lesson plans. Then, it was necessary to use lesson plans in which the teacher could apply the processes of pre- test and post- test. The objective of this study is to establish the extent of influence of podcasts as a technological resource to enhance students' speaking skills in them. The application of this proposal considers the use of the podcast during class as well as independent work at home, where students will use strategies or techniques such as repetition and imitation to improve fluency and pronunciation components. Finally, it was necessary to confirm the students' acceptance of the use of podcasts through an individual interview, which allowed us to learn their impressions of this technological resource to improve speaking skills, specifically in the pronunciation and fluency components.

Results and Discussion

These results collected in a pre- test through a classroom observation sample form and a video recording clearly show that students are in an

A1 level in the speaking skill because even though they were exposed to talk about an interesting topic with short contents, they made mistakes in linguistic aspects of pronunciation, which denotes a lack of practice of the contents developed in the classroom in the speaking skill. The linguistic aspects where students demonstrate a regular level are vocabulary and grammar, knowing an acceptable amount of words and the grammatical rules in a good manner. Linguistic aspects such as pronunciation must be worked on, as many mistakes have been made in peer conversations. Furthermore, the paralinguistic aspect of fluency is considered essential, as students are unable to conduct a fluent conversation in the target language.

Improvement in pronunciation and fluency using podcasts

During the podcast application as a technological resource, lesson plans are developed in which the teacher gives the students podcasts to be practiced. In addition, teacher shows them techniques such as repetition and imitation to practice pronunciation and fluency in speaking skill, when they are exposed to this podcast. Applying podcast in four interventions, students were exposed to listen a short podcast at the beginning of this process, then listening an extensive podcast, in which they practiced it constantly trying to focus in the pronunciation and fluency components into the class. The process of these interventions permitted to focus on difficult words or phrases to pronounce and in the fluency with which words and phrases are mentioned. After students practiced repeated and imitating short segments in pair, they were able to record the same part in order to compare with the original part. In the other hand, before student record their voice on the podcast, the student can imitate how the native speaker speak English especially on the speaking aspect such as the pronunciation, intonation, fluency, etc. (Duong, 2014).

According to the four interventions in the demonstrative table, it was revealed that podcasts foster a realistic and engaging environment for improving speaking skills. Pronunciation was developed through repetition and imitation. Fluency was increased with interactive tasks that permitted to students to practice this important component, and vocabulary expanded through contextual learning. The integrated presentation in group and the role-play were the most effective activities to combine all three oral skill components. It was possible to observe that students starting the activity with little predisposition, to practice speaking skill using this technological resource (podcasts), because most of them did not practice at the beginning of this process in the time established in the planning. These interventions with their respective evidence (videos and transcripts). denote el process that students took in the practice using podcasts. To establish this transcription process, a recorded interview was conducted with the students, who were immersed in an interview on the use of podcasts to enhance their speaking skills, resulting favorable in considerations regarding the high percentage of influence of the use of this resource in improving speaking skills.

Table 1 presents a demonstrative overview of the pedagogical interventions implemented during the study, detailing their main activities, targeted oral skill components, instructional focus, and the observed enhancements in students' speaking performance. The table synthesizes how each intervention was systematically designed to address specific aspects of oral communication—namely pronunciation, fluency, and vocabulary—

through the use of podcast-based activities and communicative tasks. By organizing the interventions in a progressive sequence, the table allows for a clear understanding of how listening, repetition, collaborative speaking, lexical enrichment, and role-play activities contributed to the gradual improvement of students' oral skills. Additionally, it highlights

the relationship between the instructional objectives of each intervention and the qualitative changes observed in learners' spoken language, providing evidence of the effectiveness of the implemented strategies in fostering more accurate, fluent, and confident oral communication.

Table 1. *Demonstrative table of the interventions and components observed*

Interventions	Mainly activity	Oral skill component	Focus/ objective	Observed enhancement
Intervention 1	Listening to short podcasts and repeating key phrases.	Pronunciation	Practice pronunciation through repetition and imitation of native speakers.	Students enhance pronunciation accuracy and intonation considering a few students who do not pronounce all the words correctly.
Intervention 2	Group presentation after listening to podcast episodes.	Fluency	Encourage spontaneous speaking and idea organization.	Students spoke more naturally and with fewer pauses denoting a slight enhancement in fluency.
Intervention 3	Vocabulary extraction from podcast content and word-use practice.	Vocabulary	Identify and apply extensive vocabulary from authentic listening materials.	Students used a wider range of words during oral presentations.
Intervention 4	Role-play based on podcast topics.	Pronunciation, Fluency, Vocabulary	Integrate pronunciation, fluency, and vocabulary in communicative situations.	Students demonstrated better confidence, accuracy, and fluency in real-life speech situations.

Source: own elaboration

Student´s interview

The data was obtained through an interview with A1 level students, after using podcasts for 4 weeks. The interview focused on the students who were involved in the use of this resource to enhance pronunciation and fluency in each intervention, so their survey responses provide an important source of information for this research.

Categorization

The codes were analyzed taking into account the following categories for a better understanding of the results, taking into account the interviews conducted with the students. The following table is shown below:

Table 2. *Result obtained from the interview*

Category	Associated codes	Quote example
General Questions How often do you practice English outside the classroom?	Many difficulties in practicing at home.	"Sometimes when I have time" (2) "Only when I have English classes" (5) no at home. "I don't practice outside of class" (2) "Rarely, because nobody speaks English at home". (1) "I never do this activity at home". (3) "I do other activities". (2) " I have to work constantly" (1)
Perception about podcast Have you used podcasts in English classes before?	non-use of the technological resource in English area.	"No, this is new in the classroom". "This resource is innovative for learning English". "I had never heard of a podcast before". "Using this resource has been a new experience". "Very little use has been made of a resource like this in the classroom". " It is the first time using podcast".
Perception about podcast Do you feel podcasts make you feel more confident to speak English?	Benefits of using podcasts to get confidence in students.	"This resource has helped me gain more confidence speaking English". "I feel I need to practice more using podcasts to become even more confident". " I feel I still have a long way to go before I can speak English fluently, and I believe this resource will help me achieve that goal". "I hope to gain much more confidence to reach my objective; I think I will achieve it by applying what I've learned in class".
Perception about podcast What aspects of speaking do podcasts help you improve the most? Pronunciation fluency Vocabulary Confidence	Positive perception in the use of podcast to enhance pronunciation and fluency.	"I believe pronunciation is an area I need to improve significantly". "Fluency is another aspect I need to work on to speak like a true American". "I'm interested in pronunciation because I have a lot of trouble with it". "Pronunciation and fluency are important skills that should be addressed through podcasts". "I think both are important for improving English speaking".
Learning Experience During the practice using podcasts. Did you apply the techniques of repetition or imitation with the podcast to get pronunciation and fluency?	Repetition, imitation have been used in the process, although students used more repetition.	"Using these techniques has been important for improving my pronunciation and fluency". "Practicing these techniques has made me more interested in learning the language". "I've used repetition more than imitation because it's been difficult trying to imitate English people". "My pronunciation has improved considerably, but I still need to practice my fluency much more". "I think I've improved my pronunciation of words, phrases and this excites me".
Learning Experience Do you feel you have enhanced your speaking skills after using podcasts?	Obtaining pronunciation and some fluency as a process.	Not completely, but I feel like I'm starting to learn. I still have a long way to go, although I have noticed progress. This resource is allowing me to improve little by little. I struggle with the language, but I know I have to keep trying. I feel like I can get good results when speaking English. With more practice, I will achieve excellent results.
Reflection and Suggestions Would you recommend podcasts to other students to enhance their speaking skills?	Positive arguments to suggest podcast.	Of course, it's a very interesting resource. Yes, I've noticed improvements in my spoken English. It's a resource that should be used in all schools. Using podcasts, I'm sure we'll be speaking English soon. I highly recommend it because it's excellent for learning. It's recommended for its interactive format.

Source: Own elaboration.

Based on the information presented through several qualitative instruments such as the class observation form, student interviews, and the results obtained in the demonstration tables, the criteria have been interpreted as follows: Students show a positive attitude towards the use of podcasts as a technological resource for language learning, so they have opportunities to focus on practicing a specific skill for a while, which has allowed them to realize that they may feel predisposed to using a new resource with the aim of improving language skills. Most of the students who participated in this research acknowledge having significantly improved their pronunciation thanks to the techniques applied, although the focus was much more on repetition because, due to the level of the students, the use of this technique was more practical, since imitation is more complex due to the speed at which the speakers talk in the podcast. However, learners can greatly improve their speaking abilities by utilizing the potential of podcasts and modifying the phrases and sentences present in them (Lee &Mlynář, 2023). Although students consider speaking English with correct pronunciation and consistent fluency a great challenge, they mention that constant practice will lead them to achieve the desired results: improved English speaking skills.

Triangulation

It is important to establish a relationship between the classroom observation format, the recorded videos, and the bibliography that details the enormous influence of using podcasts on improving speaking skills. During the interventions, it was observed that the students' level of attention and motivation increased as they were exposed to and listened to a podcast. It is worth noting that they began with a short fragment of the podcast and gradually moved to a longer version, resulting in a positive relationship with this technological resource. Throughout the four sessions, most students expressed fear when attempting to participate in oral activities. By the end of the

final session, a significant change was observed after consistent exposure to the podcasts. The students' willingness to participate was highlighted in each intervention, as they were willing to actively participate in group and pair work before the development of their speaking activities. The level of confidence increased with each intervention; it was observed that most of them felt they should try a little harder, which means that their motivation was not fully active, since they had not had a more demanding job in speaking skills during the application of techniques of repetition and the speaking practice.

The recorded videos provided a clear view of the pronunciation criteria, as it was observed that most students struggled to articulate and pronounce the words in each podcast correctly. Initially, they made many mistakes, but with consistent practice at home, these gradually improved. It was also noted that they began to feel more confident speaking the target language more naturally and with fewer pauses after each intervention. So, for this reason the following quoted is cited "This improved confidence is a result of student´s enhanced ability to comprehend a topic´s rhetoric through repeat hearing and oral presentation (Samad et al, 2017). In addition, the students were able to pronounce new words that they initially found difficult and complicated because the podcasts seemed a bit fast to them, which they overcame through consistent practice. This allowed them to expand their vocabulary, particularly regarding the pronunciation of irregular verbs, compound nouns, and other related words. Since both topics were related (the simple past tense and the topic of "my weekend"), this allowed for a better understanding of the podcast, as they understood the content and were able to summarize it orally according to the practice in class and at home. According to

the previous bibliography, the application of podcast to enhance speaking skill might give students some models for speaking performance such as dialogues, conversation, etc. Furthermore, as podcast designed for English Language Teaching (ELT) have grown in popularity. They have supplied various resources both that can assist both teachers and students in improving their speaking abilities during the teaching and learning process (Syoflanis et al, 2015; Sze, 2006; Widiastuti, 2012).

Conclusions

During the development of this proposal, podcast as a technological resource has had beneficial features to get speaking skill English, particularly when it is referred to the components of pronunciation and fluency. Farangi et al. (2015) revealed that podcasting in the classroom was an appropriate interactive resource for learning English. These data agree with those found by other authors (Son, 2018; Zou et al., 2018), who revealed improvements in language skills, such as listening and speaking, when using podcasts in the EFL classroom. This means that the data obtained allows for an enhancement in speak skill. Podcasts have content of interest to students because they have a great diversity of topics that are addressed in periods of time according to the student's needs. These podcasts come from native speakers of the language, which is a great benefit as it ensures that students can obtain through repetition or imitation a correct pronunciation of the words and have common phrases used in the daily lives of these speakers. Their speech delivery abilities, including their pronunciation, fluency, intonation, and emphasis, can be improved in the first place (Putri et al., 2022). Several reviews on the application of podcasts in education provide positive benefits in learning (oral language) and

motivation toward EFL (Indahsari, 2020; Son, 2018; Zou et al., 2018). Students can practice inside the classroom as regular class, as well as outside of it as an independent homework at home, giving them the time required to practice the established components such as pronunciation and fluency. Students will be prepared to be able to think using the target language taking into account the contents of the applied podcast. The periodic use of this technological resource would help improve the components of speaking skills in students who have a low level of English Language considering these given characteristics of podcasts for learning a new language.

It could be established that using podcasts to increase students' speaking fluency will be achieved by taking into account the following aspects: Podcasts provide the opportunity to listen to native English speakers, it means the use of real English that permits students to practice using different accents and speaking styles, which will help improve language comprehension and production. This technological resource gives students the opportunity to learn natural phrases and structures which allows the target language to be more fluid. This article describes the development of speaking fluency through authentic oral production … results indicated that there was a significant increase of students' speaking fluency. Students will be more confident speaking because they will gain more confidence by constantly listening to the language, which will reduce their fear and increase their fluency. In addition, the use of podcasts helps in practicing rhythm, intonation, and pauses; this means that students learn how to sound more natural and not so "robotic" or slow when speaking. By regularly listening to short, engaging podcasts, students can stay motivated in their daily practice. It helps

accelerate language acquisition and improve fluency.

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