

## **Student-Generated Podcast: an Innovative Learning Tool to Develop English Speaking Skill in Higher Education**

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Received: July 1 2025

Revised: August 22 2025

Accepted: August 30 2025

### **ABSTRACT**

Speaking skill is the most essential aspect of English because it enables learners to communicate effectively in real-life situations. However, especially in Indonesian higher education context, many students struggle with fluency, pronunciation, and confidence when speaking in English. Therefore, this study discusses the use of student-generated podcast as an innovative learning tool to develop English speaking skill in higher education as well as benefits of student-generated podcast in EFL classroom and challenges encountered by students in podcast production. This study is a literature review that obtains data related to the topic from research articles and relevant books. This study reveals that student-generated podcast can be an innovative learning tool to develop students' speaking skill in which students generate their own podcast through scripting, recording, editing and publishing stages. Besides, this activity is also beneficial for students in increasing motivation and confidence, fostering collaborative learning, and developing transferable skills. Nevertheless, there are some challenges faced by students during podcast production including a lack of familiarity of podcasting tools and editing software, and a lack of technical skills. Therefore, students should be directed during the production process and given access to the right resources so that student-generated podcast can be an effective learning tool to develop students' speaking skill in EFL classroom.

**Keywords:** *Student-Generated Podcast, Innovative Learning Tool, English Speaking Skill, Higher Education*

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### **Introduction**

English as an international language has an important role in facing the current era of digital revolution 5.0. In this case, English is the key to communicating between nations, accessing information, developing careers, and participating in technological developments and innovations. Therefore, mastering English is needed to answer the challenges in this digital revolution era. Similarly, Stevens, Mills, & Kuchel (2019) suggested that 21<sup>st</sup> century graduates need to combine elements of digital literacy with their academic training in

research, critical ability and independent thought to accurately assess and evaluate the wealth of digital information available to them. In line with Azis (2022), he stated that English is considered the most widely spoken language in the world today, especially in the 21<sup>st</sup> century where communication in English has become a necessity in the business world. Thus, it has become mandatory for universities and colleges to motivate students to communicate effectively and productively in English.

Speaking is a crucial aspect of communication. Proficiency in English is essential for effective communication in a variety of settings, including social, professional, and academic. It includes the ability to communicate ideas, information, and concepts clearly and fluently in English (Sung & Chang, 2020). In short, speaking skill is the most essential aspect of English because it enables learners to communicate effectively in real-life situations.

Moreover, Yeh, et al. (2021) noted that speaking is regarded as the most difficult language skill for the majority of EFL students in countries in which English is not an official or widely used language. Pronunciation, intonation, vocabulary use, grammatical accuracy, and sociolinguistic appropriateness are some of the components that are required for this skill (Sung & Chang, 2020). However, especially in Indonesian context, many students struggle with fluency, pronunciation, and confidence when speaking in English. Azis (2022) found that students get difficulty to speak English because they are anxious, lack of exposure to language, lack of motivation, lack of self-confidence, and inefficient teaching methodology.

Additionally, Rahayu, et al. (2021) found that several problems faced by EFL College students in speaking English are English vocabulary and grammar, fear of other responses, and lack of confidence. Seraj, et al. (2021) discovered the EFL teachers' obstacles in teaching speaking are the use of mother tongue, inappropriate teaching method, students' passiveness, lack of motivation, lack of oral practice environment, lack of supporting tools, lack of authentic materials and large class size. Meanwhile, traditional classroom approaches often fail to provide sufficient opportunities for students to practice and develop their speaking skills in an engaging and authentic manner.

In recent years, technology has played a pivotal role in language education, providing students with a range of tools to enhance their speaking skills. Podcasting is one such an innovative learning tool which has gained popularity as a digital learning medium due to its accessibility and effectiveness in EFL classrooms (Chaves-Yuste & de-la Peña, 2023). Besides, podcasting projects allow learners to engage in creative language production, collaborate with peers, and develop digital literacy skills (Phillips, 2017). A podcast is a digital audio (or video) file that is recorded and then uploaded to an online platform to share with others. It can be downloaded to play on any computer or portable device. Thus, podcasting is also part of the paradigm of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL). In the context of higher education, the use of podcasts through mobile devices is considered to promote motivation and engagement, cognition and learning, learner autonomy and innovative opportunities for teaching and presenting information. Podcasts are forms of personalized learning that can be tailored to learners' individual needs and can extend learning beyond the classroom (Phillips, 2017).

Many studies have examined the effectiveness of podcasts as learning media in English language learning process. First, Alfa (2020) found that podcasts as authentic materials can

improve English speaking skill. Second, Novianti, et al. (2019) found that podcasts as a medium can improve vocational students' pronunciation mastery, especially articulation, pronunciation, intonation, and fluency in English. Third, Primarian, et al. (2021) found that podcast media can improve college students' speaking skill. Therefore, podcast can be an innovative learning tool to promote students' speaking skill in Higher education.

While many studies have explored the benefits of podcasting for English language learning, there is growing interest in Student-Generated Podcast, where students actively create their own audio content. This activity aligns with Project-Based Learning (PBL) principles, allowing students to engage in meaningful language production, collaborative learning, and real-world communication. By recording and producing their own podcasts, students can enhance their fluency, pronunciation, and overall speaking proficiency in a creative and interactive manner. Azis (2022) explained that when podcast is produced by the students themselves, it can provide students a deeper learning and empower them to have their voices heard and shared with a wider audience. It can therefore be a tool for overcoming the fears that EFL learners always have when they are asked to speak in front of an audience. In addition, podcasting is easy and fun to do and supports important 21<sup>st</sup> century skills such as communication, critical thinking, creativity and collaboration. Students can love podcasting as a medium to tell their stories and share their ideas, which motivates them to practice their speaking skill. Similarly, Sze (2006) asserted that producing podcast is a motivating way to enhance students' speaking skill.

Accordingly, this study sheds light on the use of Student-Generated Podcast as an innovative learning tool to develop college or university students' speaking skill in EFL classroom. Moreover, this study discusses procedure of generating podcast as well as benefits of students-generated podcast in EFL classroom and challenges faced by students in podcast production. The findings of this study can contribute to the growing body of research on technology-enhanced language learning and offer practical implications for educators seeking to implement podcasting in their teaching practices.

## Literature Review

Speaking is one of English language skills used to express idea and communicate with other people around the world. Abdelkarim (2020) stated that speaking requires both knowledge and practice. It is not merely acquired or learned, but also requires consistent practice. Speaking is a comprehension as well as a production process. Besides, speaking is considered as the most challenging skill that requires students to master several components such as (a) *comprehension* for oral communication which incorporates responding to speech as well as initiating it, (b) *grammar* which is needed for students to arrange a correct sentence in conversation, (c) *vocabulary* which means the appropriate diction used in communication. Without having sufficient vocabulary, one cannot communicate effectively or express ideas in both oral and written forms, (d) *pronunciation* which is the way for students to produce clearer language when they speak, and (e) *fluency* referring to the ability to read, speak smoothly and expressively (Harris, 1974). Consequently, speaking is a complex process.

Since speaking is a complex skill to master, there are many obstacles faced by EFL learners in Higher education. Aljibali (2017) found that students have different types of

difficulties in speaking such as lack of vocabulary and grammar, mispronunciation, and unable to speak properly with native speakers. In addition, Tasmia (2019) discovered that students' problems in speaking such as shyness, grammar and vocabulary meaning, pronunciation, lack of confident, fear of making mistake and anxiety. Furthermore, Suryani, et al. (2020) explored the factors inhibiting the students' speaking skills. The result of the study showed that the two main factors of speaking problems are affective (shyness, lack of motivation, self-confidence, self-esteem, feeling toward the topic, self-consciousness) and cognitive factors (grammar, pronunciation, and knowledge of vocabulary).

Nowadays, technology plays a crucial role in English Language Teaching. The utilization of technology in teaching speaking has become an essential practice particularly in teaching English as a foreign language (Hong, 2006). Akkara, Anumula & Mallampalli (2020) stated that integrating technology in teaching speaking enhances students' speaking fluency and coherence, lexical resource, grammatical range and accuracy and pronunciation. Moreover, utilizing technology in teaching speaking improves students' speaking skills and employing such has a positive impact on learners speaking skills, fluency, and pronunciation. It also overcomes students' speaking difficulty (Hamad, Metwally & Alfaruque, 2019).

Podcasting is one of technological learning tools that have been popular in English language learning. According to Deal (2007), podcasting is defined as the action of producing and publishing of audio and video content on the internet in the form of a series of episodes that share a common theme. These episodes are accompanied by a file known as a "feed", which enables listeners to subscribe to the series and receive new episodes automatically. While the term "podcast" is often used to refer to any type of audio or video content distributed via the Internet, the technical distinction lies in the specific delivery mechanism involving a feed and a subscription model. Most audio podcasts are put into a format called "MP3". MP3 stands for MPEG Audio Layer III, a standard for compressing the file to make it more usable.

Moreover, according to Jowitt (2008), the main features of podcasting are as follows (1) Portability, flexibility, and convenience, (2) Listening anywhere at any time, (3) Multitasking while moving about, (4) Easy Internet access when needed, (5) Listening repeatedly, (6) Controlling speed of playback, (7) Automatic RSS Subscription, (8) Free and individual choice of what to listen to, (9) Special advantages for auditory learners, (10) Enhances services to distance and online students. Furthermore, Carvalho, et al. (2008) proposed taxonomy of podcasts according to six dimensions; type, medium, length, author, style and purpose.

1. *Type*: (a) Informative which presents concepts, analysis, synthesis, description of tools or equipment, (b) Feedback or Comments (to students' assignments and group work), (c) Guidelines (to field work and to practical work; recommendations about studying, group dynamics, reflective learning etc.), and (d) Authentic materials which refer to materials created for the public and not for a specific course or students, such as interviews, news, radio programming, etc.
2. *Medium*: Audio or video (audio-cast, enhanced podcast, vod-cast and screencast). Audio podcast is the most common, and enhanced podcast is gaining popularity, which combines images and audio. Video podcast is also mentioned as vodcast, and if it is a screen captured with audio, it is called screencast.

3. *Length*: Short (1–5 minutes), Moderate (6–15 minutes) or Long (more than 15 minutes).
4. *Author*: Lecturer, Student, and other (experts, local community, and representatives). Lecturers can create their own podcasts for students, they may use authentic materials found on the internet, such as interviews, or they can also ask students to create their own podcasts to share with their classmates.
5. *Style*: Formal or informal style is related to the degree of formality. To make podcasts more interesting, they may incorporate informal learning content such as people's experiences, and opinions.
6. *Purpose*: Podcasts can be used to (inform, analyze, develop, motivate, mediate for reflective learning, etc.).

Additionally, Deal (2007) mentioned that there are three types of podcasts namely (1) creating audio or video archives of classroom lectures. This use of podcasting is very similar to (or is arguably the same as) lecture webcasting, (2) delivery of supplemental course materials. Supplemental materials might include pre-recorded lectures that must be accessed in advance of class time, summaries highlighting important information, or video reviews of homework problems, and (3) student-generated podcasts in which the assignments that require students to produce and submit their own podcasts. This type of podcasting is most useful in classes where oral presentation and/or building technical competence in podcasting are closely related to course goals.

Most of research investigated the use of podcasts as authentic materials to develop students' productive skills, but there is little research on the use of student-generated podcast as a learning tool to improve students' speaking skill. Therefore, this study will provide insight to the potential of student-generated podcast as a learning tool to enhance students' speaking skill in Higher education. As stated by Yeh, et al (2021), podcasting as a creative task can also naturally transform students from passive learners to active knowledge generators. Teachers also benefit from students-generated podcasts as their products which can be used to analyze their strengths and weaknesses and provide immediate guidance to improve their performance. Given the potential of podcasting for developing EFL students' oral communication abilities, it is important to conduct further research into this approach, including both its benefits and challenges.

## **Methods**

This study employed a library research to obtain data through reviewing journal articles and books related to podcasting in Higher education as references. Library research is defined as the use of library sources to gather information (Zeid, 2004). They were analyzed and synthesized in order to reveal the use of student-generated podcast as an innovative learning tool to develop students' speaking skill in Higher education as well as benefits of student-generated podcast in EFL classroom and challenges encountered by students in podcast production, and then a conclusion was drawn.

## Result and Discussion

### *Student-Generated Podcast in Speaking Class*

Student-generated Podcast is defined as a podcast created and distributed by students themselves (Deal, 2007). Besides, it is typically the outcome of task assigned by language teachers to their students where it is created in their free time and then post on free networks podcast in which they reflect on their own learning experiences with the goal of facilitating language acquisition by their peers (Pena & Cassany, 2023). Moreover, producing podcasts requires students to master a number of skills, including researching and analyzing information, creating an outline, drafting and editing a script, and repeated rehearsals to practice pronunciation and fluency (Phillips, 2017).

Fernández and Vera (2010) divided student-generated podcasts into various subgenres, such as interviews, storytelling, mock radio programs, oral presentations and simple classroom recordings of a normal lesson in progress. Furthermore, Li, et al (2015) recommended the following three stages of creating a podcast for lecturers who would like to guide their students in generating a podcast: (1) designing; determining the topic or content, type, style and so on, (2) editing; recording and editing podcast with the help of software and (2) distributing content; uploading Podcast content on certain platforms.

Meanwhile, the process of making podcasts proposed by Strickland (2021) includes (1) recording audio content (2) editing audio and adding notes to describe episodes, (3) uploading audio on podcast platforms such as *iTunes*, *Spotify*, *Sticher*, *Libsyn* and others. *Spotify* is one of the popular Podcast platforms in today's society where the number of listeners has tripled since 2020 (Imarshan, 2021), and (4) use social media to advertise new episode.



**Figure 1. Process of Producing Podcast**

In addition, Fernández & Vera (2010) emphasized that having students create podcasts must involve an appropriate degree of planning and reflection when the process is underway, and must likewise conclude with an equally well planned evaluation process designed to improve future outcomes. In this case, when students create a podcast, they need to go through a thorough planning process and reflect throughout the process. This means they need to think about learning objectives, content, structure, as well as technical aspects before and during the production of the podcast. Once the podcast is finished, there should be a well-designed evaluation process. This evaluation aims to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the podcast that has been created, so that it can be used for future improvements. Overall, this excerpt emphasizes that creating a podcast is not just a technical task, but also a pedagogical process that requires a clear strategy for the results to effectively enhance student learning.

### ***Benefits of Student-Generated Podcast in EFL Classroom***

The integration of student-generated podcasts into language learning environments in higher education presents a range of pedagogical benefits. Philips (2017) explained that students-generated podcast assignment offers several advantages in language learning as follow.

#### **1) Increasing Motivation and Confidence**

Since podcasting is still relatively new in higher education and many students have not been exposed to it, learning a new educational tool such as podcasting can lead to increased student motivation and enhance the learning experience (Dale & Povey, 2009; Lonn & Teasley, 2009).

Student-generated podcasts can significantly increase student motivation in speaking classes because the task feels purposeful, creative, and personally engaging. Unlike traditional speaking activities, which are often limited to the classroom and evaluated only by the teacher, podcasts provide students with a real or imagined audience beyond the classroom. This sense of audience motivates students to pay more attention to their language use and encourages them to do their best. When students are challenged to share their podcasts with others, they may put more effort and attention to detail into them because they know that people other than their teacher will hear the results (McMinn, 2008).

Moreover, less confident students or those who are reluctant to use English in class have ample time to prepare their podcast at their own pace. Anxiety, which is all too common in real-time interaction in a foreign language, can then be reduced, and student confidence can be boosted, which ultimately enhances the overall learning experience. Thus, Hsu et al. (2008) reported that over 80% of the students who participated in their study believed that creating audio recordings is an effective language learning tool that increased their confidence in their English speaking skills.

#### **2) Fostering Collaborative Learning**

Podcasting can be a tremendously powerful tool for fostering classroom interaction and collaborative learning by developing the skills needed to work toward a shared goal (Philip, 2017). Besides, Lee, McLoughlin & Chan (2007) showed the collaborative learning opportunities offered by student-generated podcasts through sharing understanding, perspective-taking and negotiation of meaning among student producers.

#### **3) Promoting Speaking Skill**

The deliberate, multi-stage process of producing a podcast helps students develop awareness of key aspects of the target language that they often overlook. When speaking, students generally have difficulty hearing their own pronunciation errors and prosody mistakes. Paralanguage, such as stuttering, pausing, pitch, pace and power changes of the voice, makes communication authentic and natural, and students have to be aware of different intonation systems in a foreign language (Philip, 2017). When recording a podcast, students have to practice and rehearse the script several times in order to sound fluent and authentic. While this may be repetitive for students, repetition and practice in language learning is keys for

pronunciation and fluency (Sze, 2006; Hsu et al. 2008). In this case, listening to their own recordings helps students identify language errors, particularly in pronunciation and grammar, and fosters self-improvement.

Furthermore, Yeh, et al. (2021) found that student-generated podcasts can enhance EFL students' English speaking fluency and accuracy because the students became more autonomous during the podcast-making process in which they made some changes (e.g., having fewer pauses and mispronounced words). The students found it beneficial to facilitate their speaking competence through self-reflecting and self-regulating, which also helped them overcome their challenges during podcast-making process. In other words, making podcasts increases EFL students' metacognitive awareness that improves their speaking performance, especially guided through metacognitive processes.

#### 4) Developing Transferable Skills

The process of generating podcast can also help students develop transferable skills that are considered desirable in the modern-day professional world (Philip, 2017). For example, Lee, McLoughlin & Chan (2008) found that creating podcasts helped students grasp academic concepts more effectively, and Dale (2007) emphasized the advantages of student-produced podcasts in developing creative and critical thinking, as well as problem-solving skills. In line with Kemp et al. (2011), who found that podcasting assignments afforded students opportunities for creativity when writing the audio script, devising techniques to capture the audience and using non-scientific language to describe scientific methods or concepts.

Moreover, educators must adapt their teaching styles to meet the needs of the generation of digital natives and to communicate in the language of their students (e.g. Morris & Chikwa, 2014). Forbes, Khoo, & Johnson (2012) found that student produced podcasting contributed to student confidence and the development of digital literacy. In this case, podcast can help students refine their digital skills. In other words, some previous studies emphasized on the enhanced digital literacy skills acquired when producing podcasts, which are essential in the modern knowledge society.

### ***Challenges Encountered by Students in Podcast Production***

Since students-generated podcast requires the integration of technology including digital skills in language learning process, it becomes a challenging task for students. Thus, students may encounter various difficulties when producing podcasts to enhance their speaking abilities. One of the main obstacles is lack of technical skills. This issue becomes especially important during assessments. While students may acquire the necessary skills to create a podcast, not having them from the start could lead to added stress and anxiety—particularly when grades are involved and deadlines are pressing (Serini, et.al., 2025).

Besides, Buwono & Surono (2024) discovered that students experienced various challenges, including such as difficulties with editing, fear of making mistakes, limited vocabulary, and pre-production tasks such as topic selection and content arrangement. Moreover, Yeh, et al. (2021) found that there were still some challenges experienced by

students during the process of creating podcast, including feeling difficult to pronounce words correctly, feeling embarrassed to make mistakes, and feeling confused to operate the podcast website. A lack of familiarity with podcasting tools and editing software can also pose technical difficulties, which may reduce their motivation. Moreover, balancing the time needed for planning, scripting, recording, and editing podcasts with other academic tasks can be demanding. Nevertheless, with proper guidance and access to the right resources, podcasting can still serve as an effective learning tool for improving speaking skills. Buwono & Surono (2024) asserted that despite students encountered various challenges; integrating podcasts into speaking class fostered a positive attitude toward technology adoption, boosted confidence, and enriched students' learning experience.

## Conclusion

Student-generated podcast can be an innovative learning tool to enhance students' speaking skill in which students produce their own podcast through scripting, recording, editing and publishing. Besides, there are some advantages of student-generated Podcast in EFL classroom including increasing motivation and confidence, fostering collaborative learning, and developing transferable skills. However, students will face some problems in producing the podcast if they are not familiarized with podcasting tools and editing software and they do not have technical skills. Therefore, students should be guided properly and given access to the right resources in order to make podcasting in EFL classroom effective to develop students' speaking skill.

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