

PODCASTING FOR DEVELOPING EFL SPEAKING SKILLS: AN ACTION RESEARCH IN A RURAL VIETNAMESE UPPER-SECONDARY SCHOOL

Ho Thi Thuy Nhaien^a, Phan Do Quynh Tram^b

^aVinh Loc Upper-secondary School, Hue, Vietnam

^bUniversity of Foreign Languages and International Studies, Hue University, Vietnam

Corresponding Author: Phan Do Quynh Tram - Email: pdqtram@hueuni.edu.vn

Article History: Received on 13th March 2026; Revised on 25th May 2026; Published on 10th June 2026.

Abstract: In Vietnamese upper-secondary EFL classrooms, particularly in low-resource rural areas, students often have limited opportunities for meaningful English-speaking practice, which leads to low confidence and motivation to speak. In response to this challenge, this action research project was conducted to integrate podcasting into EFL teaching practice with an aim of supporting students' speaking development. The project involved thirty-five grade 11 students at a rural upper-secondary school in Central Vietnam. Participants engaged in podcast-creating tasks, including script preparation, podcast recording, peer listening and feedback. Data were generated through pre- and post-project questionnaires, classroom observations, informal student interviews and the teacher-researcher's reflective journal. The findings suggest that podcast-creating tasks provided participants with additional and enjoyable opportunities for speaking practice, which, from their perspectives, increased their confidence, interest in speaking English, and perceived improvement in speaking skills. Participants also reported their challenges related to time constraints, learning facilities, peer collaboration and instructions. The study proposes that podcast-creating tasks have the potential to be effective in developing English speaking skills in low-resource EFL settings.

Key words: podcasting; EFL speaking; action research; English language teaching at the upper-secondary level; rural area.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, the ability to communicate effectively in English has become an increasingly important goal of English language education in EFL settings, including Vietnam, in response to the demands of globalization. The most recent English curriculum reform in Vietnam, with the introduction of the 2018 General education English curriculum has emphasized the development of communicative competence (MOET, 2018). However,

translating this policy into actual classroom practice is challenging (Tran et al., 2023).

Research has documented that English teaching in Vietnamese classrooms remains largely grammar-focused with the emphasis on grammar, vocabulary and reading comprehension over oral skills (Le & Barnard, 2009; Tran et al., 2023). As a result, students often have limited opportunities to use English for real communication in class. Even when communicative tasks are included in textbooks, many teachers modify and adjust them into more controlled language-focused activities due to a variety of reasons such as large class sizes, time pressure, and the need to prepare students for high-stakes, non-communicative exams (Tran et al., 2023; Vu, 2025). These challenges are more evident in rural areas where students have little exposure to English beyond the classroom and limited access to high-quality learning resources. Moreover, to develop students'

Cite this article as: Ho, T. T. N., Phan, D. Q. T (2026). Podcasting for developing EFL speaking skills: An action research in a rural Vietnamese upper-secondary school. *UED Journal of Social Sciences, Humanities and Education*, 16(01), 42-54.
<https://doi.org/10.47393/jshe.vol16.i1.3879>

communicative competence, students need to be given opportunities and communicative pressure to produce accurate and meaningful “output” (see Swain, 2004).

The first author of this study, an upper-secondary school teacher in a rural area, experienced these challenges in her own teaching practice. Students in this context were had low English proficiency and low motivation to use English for communicative purposes. Many lacked confidence and were often hesitant to participate in English speaking activities. Their challenges often included speaking anxiety, limited vocabulary and insufficient opportunities for sustained speaking practice. These classroom realities raised pedagogical concerns not only about students’ speaking outcomes, but also about how teachers should innovate their speaking instruction to better support learners within such contextual constraints.

From a sociocultural perspective, language learning is mediated through social interaction and the use of cultural tools (Vygotsky, 1978). This perspective suggests that learners could develop communicative competence more effectively when they are provided with opportunities for meaningful interaction and appropriate scaffolding. In low-resource rural contexts, digital technologies such as podcasts may function as useful mediational tools by offering learners access to authentic input, repeated exposure to spoken English and additional opportunities for oral practice beyond the classroom. These considerations encouraged the teacher-researcher to seek an innovative approach to creating more supportive speaking opportunities for students.

Nowadays, with the increasing availability of digital technologies, students can potentially gain access to high-quality English input and opportunities for English use. Podcasts, in particular, offer a flexible and accessible option which allows students to listen, rehearse, and record their speech at their own pace. Previous studies have reported numerous benefits of podcasting in EFL classrooms. For example, podcast-creating tasks have been found to enhance learners’ motivation, confidence, and autonomy in language learning (e.g. Rostami, Azarnoosh & Abdolmanafi-Rokni, 2017), while also reducing speaking anxiety and improving their speaking performance and pronunciation, vocabulary and oral

fluency (Hamzaoglu & Koçoğlu, 2016). However, most studies have been conducted at the university level (e.g., Nguyen, H. L. et al., 2023; T. H. Nguyen et al., 2025; Yeh, Chang, Chen & Heng, 2021), leaving upper-secondary public school contexts underexplored. Several studies have investigated the use of podcasts in K-12 public-school settings (Hamzaoglu & Koçoğlu, 2016; Rostami et al., 2017); however, little research has been conducted in the Vietnamese context, especially in rural areas, where resource constraints may shape how technology is implemented in classroom practice. Moreover, most of these studies have examined the effects of podcasts use on students’ motivation, attitudes to language learning or learning outcomes, rather than examining podcasting as part of an ongoing process in which teachers reflect on and adapt their pedagogical practices.

In addition, much of the action research literature in English language education has documented the impact of action research from teachers’ perspectives. Burns and Edwards (2025) in their recent systematic review call for further investigation into the impact of action research on learners, particularly from learners’ perspectives.

To address the research gaps identified above, and in response to this call within action research in English language education, a classroom-based action research study was conducted to explore podcasting as a situated pedagogical innovation in a rural upper-secondary EFL classroom in Central Vietnam. Adopting sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) and the output hypothesis (Swain, 2004), the study investigated the perceived speaking experiences of grade-11 EFL students as podcast-creating tasks were implemented and refined within the contextual constraints. Rather than merely measuring the effectiveness of podcasting as a fixed intervention, the study focuses on how technology-mediated tasks could scaffold learners’ speaking development in a disadvantaged setting. Accordingly, this study is guided by the following research questions:

- (1) How do students perceive the use of podcast-making tasks in developing their speaking skills in a rural upper-secondary EFL classroom?
- (2) What benefits and challenges do students perceive during the implementation of podcasting?

2. Literature review

2.1. Podcasts and their use in language education

A podcast is defined as “a radio program that is stored in a digital form that you can download from the internet and play on a computer or on a mobile phone” (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). In language classrooms, podcasts are increasingly used due to their accessibility, portability and potential to provide authentic language input (Rosell-Aguilar, 2015). In educational contexts, podcasts can serve different pedagogical purposes depending on how they are designed and used. Rosell-Aguilar (2007, 2015) distinguished two main types of language learning podcasts which are self-developed podcasts by teachers or students and existing resources as learning materials. This distinction aligns with Bueno-Tena (2015)’s detailed classification (cited in Acevedo de la Peña & Cassany, 2024), which identifies four categories: authentic non-educational podcasts, learner-produced podcasts, teacher-produced “profcasts,” and teacher-to-teacher podcasts for professional development. Among these, learner-produced podcasts have been considered particularly appropriate to be used as a pedagogical tool for developing speaking skills, especially in low-resource EFL contexts where opportunities for authentic communication are often limited. This form of podcasting shifts learners from passive recipients of input to active language users. Through this form of podcasts, students can engage in repeated practice, self-monitoring and peer interaction.

2.2. Benefits of integrating podcasts into language classrooms

A growing body of research has reported that podcasts strengthen multiple aspects of language competence through authentic input and meaningful practice in language teaching settings. Podcasts are often used as a resource for developing listening skills (Constantine, 2007). In addition, studies have reported podcast-creating tasks provide learners with opportunities to develop speaking skills (Acevedo de la Peña & Cassany, 2024) and improve speaking through reconstructive practice (Hamzaoğlu & Koçoğlu, 2016; Yeh et al., 2021). For example, Yeh et al. (2021) examined the effects of making podcasts on Taiwanese university students’ speaking progress and perceptions of podcast-making. Data sources included pre-test and post-

test speaking scores, podcast recordings and reflective essays. The findings showed students’ improvements in speaking accuracy and fluency such as fewer pauses and fewer mispronounced words. Similarly, Hamzaoğlu & Koçoğlu (2016)’s quasi-experimental study investigated the impact of podcasts on Turkish EFL high-school students’ speaking performance and students’ speaking anxiety. Data were collected from an anxiety questionnaire, oral performance tests and interviews before and after using podcasts. The findings indicated that students who engaged in podcast-based tasks demonstrated stronger oral performance and lower levels of speaking anxiety than those who did not use podcasts. Interview data additionally suggested that students perceived podcasting as a helpful tool not only for improving pronunciation, vocabulary and fluency but also for reducing their anxiety and enhancing confidence.

Podcast-creating tasks not only support the development of speaking skills, but also help develop other skills such as listening skills (Constantine, 2007) and reading and writing through script preparation (Acevedo de la Peña & Cassany, 2024). Through podcast-based instruction, students expand their vocabulary (Hamzaoğlu & Koçoğlu, 2016; Liu, 2023).

Beyond language development, podcasting has been found to enhance students’ motivation and attitudes to English learning. For example, Rostami et al. (2017) conducted a quasi-experimental study examining the effects of podcast-based instruction on Iranian junior high school EFL learners’ speaking performance, motivation and attitudes towards English learning. Data sources included a proficiency test, a motivation questionnaire, speaking pre- and post-tests, and follow-up interviews. The findings of the study revealed that learners exposed to podcasting significantly reported higher levels of motivation. Interview data showed students perceived the support of podcasting in enhancing positive attitudes toward English learning and autonomous learning. More recently, a study conducted in Belgian EFL context reported that university students experienced higher levels of social enjoyment when participating in a cooperative podcast-creating tasks (Alger & Eyckmans, 2026). Through peer-interaction in small creative groups, students reported more positive emotions such as enjoyment, gratitude, pride while

experiencing fewer negative emotions such as shame or boredom. Taken together, the findings from previous studies suggest that podcast-creating tasks have the potential to promote both language proficiency and learner socio-emotional engagement.

In the context of Vietnam, an increasing number of studies have applied technology-assisted language teaching, particularly podcasting to develop students' listening and speaking and skills in recent years (Nguyen, H. L. et al., 2023; T. H. Nguyen et al. 2025). For example, Nguyen, H. L. et al. (2023) investigated the effects of podcasting on non-English majored students' perceptions and experiences of intonation in Vietnam using questionnaires. The results of the study revealed the positive changes in students' awareness of the role of intonation and the effectiveness of podcasting in improving students' intonation.

Despite valuable contributions of the previous studies, several gaps remain in the literature. First, most previous studies on podcasting in EFL education have been conducted at the tertiary level (e.g., Acevedo de la Peña & Cassany, 2024; Nguyen, H. L. et al., 2023; T. H. Nguyen et al. 2025; Yeh et al., 2021), with little attention paid to upper-secondary EFL classrooms. Second, studies conducted in K-12 settings have generally taken place in relatively well-resourced contexts with reliable internet access and adequate technological facilities (Hamzaoğlu & Koçoğlu, 2016; Rostami et al., 2017). Therefore, there is a need for further research in low-resource rural settings where students often have limited access to technological facilities, reliable internet connections and quality English-learning resources.

In addition, limited attention has been paid to how podcasting is integrated in everyday classroom practice and how teachers adapt podcast-based activities to respond to contextual constraints. Many experimental studies (e.g., Hamzaoğlu & Koçoğlu, 2016; Rostami et al., 2017) employed fixed interventions, which offer limited insight into teachers' roles as reflective practitioners who continuously adjust their pedagogical decisions during implementation. Furthermore, these studies were conducted under relatively controlled conditions and therefore may not fully capture the

challenges of public-school settings with limited resources.

2.3. Challenges of podcast use in EFL classrooms

While previous studies have documented multiple benefits of podcasts as pedagogical tools in EFL settings, they have also reported several challenges. One of the most frequently reported issues is related to technical issues. For example, students in Hamzaoğlu & Koçoğlu (2016) experienced difficulties with uploading their recordings to online platforms, which constrained their participation in podcast-creating tasks. Other challenges were students' unfamiliarity with technology and time constraints. Acevedo de la Peña and Cassany (2024) observed that students in their study were initially reluctant to participate and that the integration of podcasting tasks increased workload and time constraints. Regarding podcast-creating tasks, students experienced challenges related to limited linguistic resources, such as vocabulary and intonation, which affected their ability to express themselves clearly in podcast recordings (Hamzaoğlu & Koçoğlu, 2016).

3. Theoretical framework

The current study adopts sociocultural theory and the output hypothesis to explain how podcast-creating tasks may facilitate language development. Sociocultural theory, which originates from the works of Vygotsky, views human mental functioning as a mediated process organised by cultural tools, activities and concepts (Vygotsky, 1978). A central concept in sociocultural theory is the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which refers to the gap between what a learner can accomplish independently and what they can achieve under guidance or through peer collaboration (Lantolf et al., 2018, 2020). In this study, podcasts and digital platforms (e.g., Padlet and Facebook) serve as mediational tools that provide students with access to language input, interaction and opportunities for speaking practice. In addition, teacher feedback and peer feedback activities within the podcast project provide scaffolding through modeling, feedback, and support. These activities help students operate within their ZPD and gradually extend their speaking abilities beyond their current level of independent performance.

While input and interaction are important for language development, Swain (1985, 2004) argues that they are insufficient for achieving high levels of grammatical accuracy and sociolinguistic appropriateness. The output hypothesis emphasizes the role of “pushed output”, in which learners are pushed to produce language that is accurate, coherent and contextually appropriate rather than merely conveying basic meaning. In the podcast-creating project, the requirement to produce a digital product for a peer audience may encourage learners to “notice” gaps not only in their use of the target language but also their interlanguage (Swain, 2004, p. 100). This process may help learners recognize the discrepancies in their linguistic knowledge as they prepare scripts, listen to their own recordings or review their peer recordings. Through analyzing the performance of their own and their peers, learners may gradually self-regulate and refine their language production to create higher-quality spoken output.

4. Context and research design

4.1. The context of the study and participants

The study was conducted at a public upper-secondary school located in a low-resource rural area in Central Vietnam. In this context, students had limited opportunities for English exposure outside the classroom. Students also had limited access to technological resources and reliable internet connections for learning. Their English learning largely relied on textbook-based instruction, with only a small number of students reporting occasional exposure to English through online videos or social media. In such a context, it is challenging to motivate students to learn English for communication. The textbook used in this school was *Tieng Anh - Global success* (Hoang et al., 2020) which is the most widely used English textbook series in Vietnam.

This study involved thirty-five Grade-11 students in the teacher-researcher’s class. Prior to the implementation of the project, permission was obtained from the school principal, and informed consent was collected from all participants and their parents/guardians. The first author acted as both the classroom teacher and the researcher, while the second author provided research mentorship throughout the project, supporting the research design and reflective practice.

4.2. The project

Project design

The project was designed as a classroom-based action research study which aims at providing additional opportunities for students to practice English speaking beyond traditional classroom interaction. The project was motivated by the teacher-researcher’s ongoing concern about students’ low confidence and reluctance to participate in oral activities. The podcast-creating project was implemented over eight weeks and followed an action research cycle including planning, action, observation and reflection (Burns, 2010). This paper reports on the first cycle of the project.

Implementation of podcast-creating tasks

The project was structured using the task-based language teaching framework (Willis, 2021) to support students’ language development through a move from private use to public use. The framework includes three stages which are pre-task, task cycle and focus on form.

Pre-Task: The teacher-researcher provided scaffolding by introducing the purpose of using podcasts and podcast samples to familiarize participants with the format and expectations. She also demonstrated how to prepare scripts, create audio-recordings and upload them to online platforms (i.e. Padlet and a Facebook group) so that they could share their work and provide peer feedback.

Task Cycle: Participants individually created three podcast recordings over six weeks. These tasks “pushed” participants to produce output that is accurate, coherent and appropriate for a wider audience. During the planning process, participants were required to select the topics from the textbooks to facilitate the recycling of linguistic knowledge; however, to enhance learner autonomy and engagement, they were given the flexibility to choose one topic of personal interest. To prepare their scripts, they were encouraged to read and listen widely to increase language input, and to give them opportunities to identify and bridge their own “gaps” in their own language use. They were also encouraged to rehearse their recordings before uploading them. After uploading their products, participants were required to listen to their peers’ podcasts and provide feedback in small groups.

Focus on Form: This stage is to raise the participants' awareness of linguistic forms through peer and teacher feedback. The teacher provided guidelines on how to give constructive feedback including general rating criteria (i.e., needs improvement, ok, good, excellent), simple reactions (i.e., "wow", "great"). Participants were also encouraged to identify common pronunciation, vocabulary and grammatical problems in their peers' podcasts and suggest possible corrections. In addition, teacher feedback was provided through written comments on individual students' recordings and through whole-class feedback sessions focusing on common speaking issues, and students' overall progress. Some language-focused activities such as listen-and-repeat, grammar practice exercises were also conducted to reinforce learners' language awareness and accuracy.

Ongoing support and pedagogical adaptation

The teacher-researcher provided continuous support and made adjustments in response to students' needs. The support included guidance on script preparation, encouragement for students to speak naturally rather than "read" the scripts, assistance with technical issues related to recording and uploading audio files. Based on ongoing classroom observations, several adjustments were made. For example, podcast topics were aligned more closely with textbook topics rather than allowing open-ended topic selection. This adjustment enabled students to draw on recently learned vocabulary and expressions which appeared to increase their confidence and willingness to speak. For students who experienced difficulties accessing the online platform, alternative submission options were provided to ensure that all students would participate in the project. While Padlet was initially selected to facilitate peer viewing and feedback on a single shared page, students who encountered technical challenges were allowed to submit their recordings via the class Facebook group, which was more familiar to them. In addition, informal conversations with students were conducted regularly to identify emerging challenges and monitor their motivation throughout the project.

Data collection and analysis

Data were collected from multiple sources to enhance validity and reliability (Creswell, 2014). Before the project, a pre-questionnaire was administered to explore participants' perceived speaking confidence,

interest in speaking English, perceived speaking difficulties and prior awareness of podcasting as a learning tool. After the project, a post-questionnaire with similar items was used to compare and identify changes in their confidence and interest. This questionnaire also included open-ended items to explore benefits and challenges associated with podcast-creating tasks from students' perspectives. To triangulate the results, qualitative data were collected from classroom observations, informal student interviews and teacher-researcher's reflective journal. These sources helped capture students' experiences and their responses to podcast-creating tasks over time.

The quantitative data were first analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify general patterns in participants' responses. To determine the statistical significance of the results, paired-samples t-tests were conducted. The qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis, as proposed by (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis followed six recursive steps including familiarizing oneself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing potential themes, defining and naming themes and producing the report. The coding process was facilitated by NVivo 15 software to systematically organise and categorize the data.

Reflection and mentorship

Throughout the project, the teacher-researcher engaged in ongoing reflection by documenting classroom events, student responses and instructional decisions. This reflective process was supported by regular discussions with colleagues and mentorship from the second author through an online platform (i.e. a Zalo group), who provided guidance on research design, data collection and reporting practices. Through this process, the teacher-researcher, as a reflective practitioner, continuously adapted pedagogical decisions to respond to the situated needs of the participants.

5. Results

The results of the study, derived from the pre- and post-questionnaires, classroom observations and informal interviews, are organized in relation to participants' experiences of podcast-creating tasks (RQ1) and the perceived benefits and challenges of these tasks (RQ2).

5.1. Participants’ experiences of changes in speaking confidence

Data from pre-and post-questionnaires showed statistically significant changes in participants’ reported speaking confidence (see Table 1 and Figure 1). The paired-samples t-test revealed a substantial increase in mean confidence scores from 1.80 (*SD*=0.60) before the project to 2.66 (*SD*=0.65) after the intervention ($t(34)=7.15, p<.001$). The effect size was large ($d=1.37$), indicating that the podcast-creating tasks had a strong impact on the participants’ self-reported confidence levels.

Before the project, most participants reported low confidence, with a substantial proportion selecting Level 1 (30%) and Level 2 (60%). After engaging in podcast-creating tasks, these figures dropped sharply to 5.7% and 25.7% respectively. The most notable growth occurred at Level 3, which surged from a mere 10% before the

intervention to a dominant 65.7% after the project. This suggests that the majority of participants transitioned from a state of low confidence to a moderate level of confidence after participating in podcast-creating tasks.

Table 1. Paired-sample t-Test results for participants’ perceived speaking confidence (n=35)

Stage	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value	Cohen’s <i>d</i>
Pre-project	1.80	0.60	7.15	<.001	1.37
Post-project	2.66	0.65			

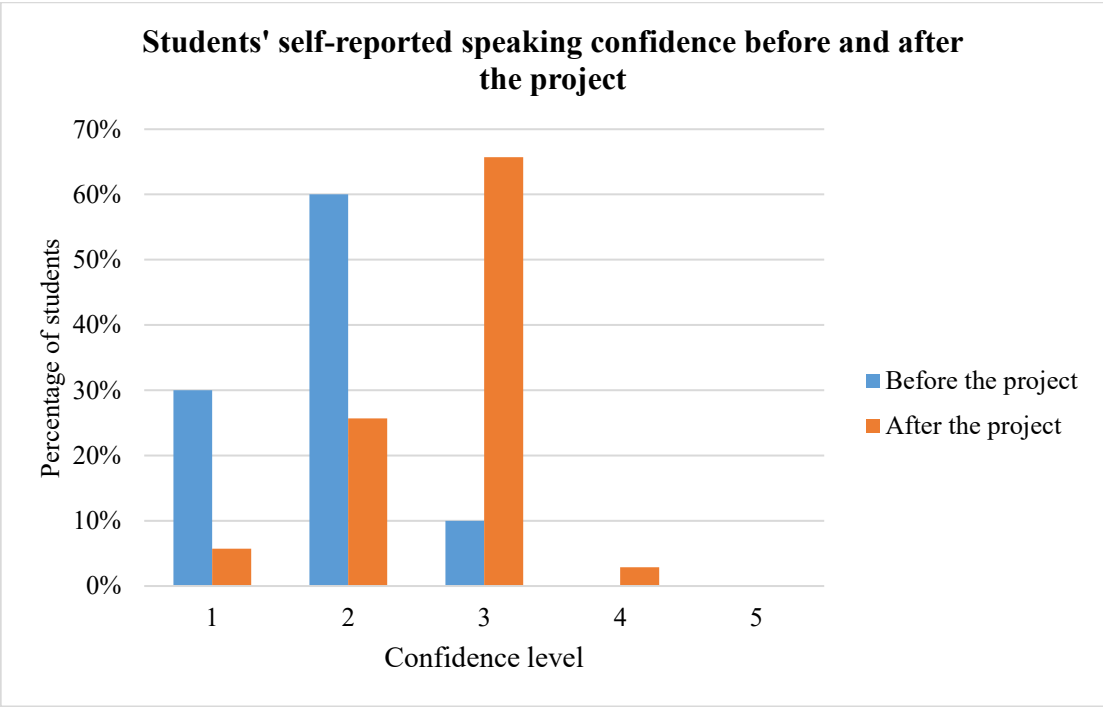


Figure 1. Participants’ self-reported changes in speaking confidence

Classroom observations provided additional support for these questionnaire results. At the beginning of the project, many participants appeared hesitant and anxious when asked to speak or record their voices. However, towards the later stages of the project, participants

uploaded their podcast recordings and engaged in peer feedback with minimal teacher reminders. The change suggests that participants were more familiar with the activity and felt more confident in using English orally.

5.2. Participants' experiences of changes in interest in speaking English

In addition to increased confidence, participants also reported increased interest in speaking English (Table 2 and Figure 2). A paired-samples *t*-test was conducted to evaluate the impact of the podcast-creating tasks on participants' perceived interest levels. The results showed a significant change in mean interest scores, rising from 2.95 ($SD=0.82$) before the project to 3.42 ($SD=0.74$) after the project, $t(34)=3.24$, $p=.002$. The calculated effect size was moderate ($d=0.60$), indicating a positive effect on participants' engagement with speaking tasks.

Table 2. Paired-sample *t*-test results for participants' perceived interest in speaking English ($n=35$)

Stage	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Pre-project	2.95	0.82	3.24	<.002	0.60
Post-project	3.42	0.74			

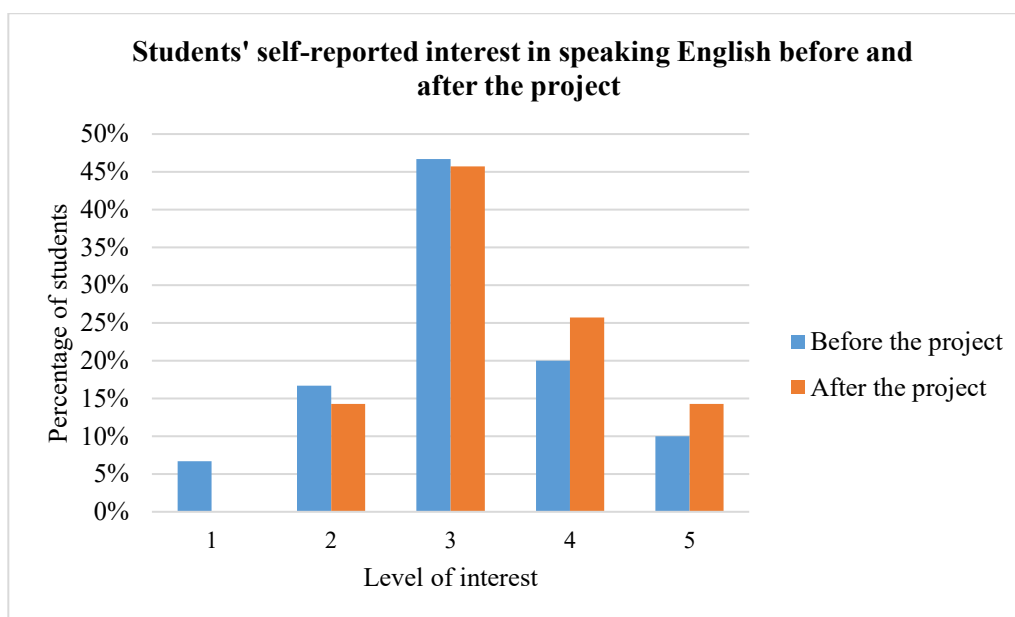


Figure 2. Participants' self-reported changes in interest in speaking English

Prior to the project, participants' reported interest levels were generally moderate, with the majority (46.7%) selecting Level 3 and a notable portion reporting lower levels (6.7 % at Level 1 and 16.7% at Level 2). After the project, the percentage of participants reporting the lowest interest decreased to 0%. At the same time, there was a significant increase in the proportion of participants reporting higher levels, with 25.7% selecting Level 4 and 14.3% selecting Level 5. The findings indicate that podcast-creating tasks may have contributed to enhancing participants' engagement with speaking English. Opportunities to record their voices, listen to

peers' podcasts and provide feedback appeared to create a more interactive and enjoyable learning experience.

5.3. Participants' perceived improvement in speaking skills

Data from post-questionnaires showed all participants ($n=35$) reported some degree of perceived improvement in their speaking skills after participating in the podcast-creating tasks. No participants reported experiencing "no improvement". The largest proportion of participants perceived "moderate improvement", with 40% selecting Level 3 ($n=14$), followed by 31.4% ($n=11$) who indicated "high improvement" (Level 4).

However, 25.7% of participants ($n=9$) reported only “limited improvement” (Level 2) and a small proportion of participants (2.9%) indicated “very high improvement”. These findings show variation in participants’ perceived levels of improvement. Although the project appeared to support speaking development, the uneven distribution of responses may indicate that the project did not fully address the diverse needs of all learners equally in this rural area.

In addition, all participants expressed a willingness to continue using podcast-creating tasks for speaking practice. The results showed the project helped increase participants’ engagement. Several participants noted they became more comfortable with the podcast-creating tasks and gradually enjoyed participating in them more.

5.4. Participants’ reported benefits of the podcast-creating project

Through thematic analysis from post-questionnaires and informal interviews, the results showed several perceived benefits associated with participation in the podcast-creating project. Four main themes were identified, including increased opportunities for language practice, a “new” way of learning, perceived improvement in language and background knowledge and reduced speaking anxiety.

The most frequently reported benefit was increased opportunities for practicing speaking and listening skills. Many participants noted preparing scripts, and rehearsing podcasts allowed them to “practice listening and speaking much more frequently [than in regular classroom activities]”. As one participant shared, “I have never spoken English this much before [laugh]”. In addition, they noted that podcast-making provided them additional time to work on their speaking skills beyond the class time.

Participants also mentioned that the “new” way of learning motivated them. Participants reported that creating podcasts made English learning “interesting” and “enjoyable”, as the tasks differed from traditional classroom tasks. For example, one participant shared that “listening to my voice and my peers’ voices is fun”. They also noted that preparing and uploading podcasts to online platforms was a “new” experience for them; therefore, they needed to be “much more focused” to the teacher’s instructions to complete tasks. Observation

data also confirmed participants’ increased willingness to participate in the project in later stages, as they managed deadlines and peer-feedback activities with minimal teacher reminders.

Other perceived benefits were related to improvements in language and background knowledge. Many participants commented that podcast-creating tasks encouraged them to pay more attention to vocabulary, pronunciation and language use as they aimed to “produce better-quality recordings”, in the words of one participant. They added that the process helped them expand their vocabulary and broaden background knowledge about new topics through preparing their own podcasts and listening to their peers’ recordings.

Participants also mentioned the benefits related to reduced anxiety in speaking. Several participants reported they felt less anxious about speaking English after participating in the project. For example, one participant commented, “I am not as afraid to speak as I was before”, explaining that having time to practice and rehearse before recording helped reduce their fear of making mistakes.

5.5. Participants’ reported challenges of the podcast-creating project

While participants reported many benefits, they also mentioned several challenges during the implementation of the project. The first frequently reported challenge was limited time for completing podcast tasks. They commented that they “lacked time” to complete tasks because they still had to complete other work as usual.

Another challenge was related to facilities and technology. Nearly one third of the thirty-five grade 11 participants did not have their own devices such as smart phones or computers that connected to the reliable internet. Several of them had to use the devices of their group members. This made podcast-making tasks challenging. Additionally, some faced technical challenges with digital platforms, particularly due to their unfamiliarity with Padlet. One participant suggested “adjusting the way to post the podcasts” to make the process easier.

Challenges were also reported regarding peer assessment and collaboration. Although some participants perceived the benefits of peer assessment,

others experienced difficulties. A small number of participants admitted the challenges of giving peer feedback, as one participant noted that he/she “didn’t know how to give comments and feedback”. Some participants reported that their peers did not cooperate, and one participant confessed he/she was sometimes “lazy to do it”. These challenges appeared to stem not only from participants’ limited peer feedback skills but also their group work skills.

Finally, participants identified challenges related to instructional clarity at the initial stage. Several mentioned that “unclear instructions” from the teacher-researcher caused confusion at the beginning of the podcast-making process.

6. Reflections and future directions

The results of the study revealed that after participating in podcast-creating tasks, participants reported significant increases in their English-speaking confidence and interest. They also perceived improvements in their vocabulary, pronunciation and background knowledge as well as a reduction in speaking anxiety. These findings are consistent with previous studies (e.g. Hamzaoglu & Koçoğlu, 2016; Rostami et al., 2017; Yeh et al., 2021). However, unlike many previous studies, which were often implemented in relatively well-resourced learning environments with greater access to English input and learning resources, the present study was situated in a low-resource EFL context where students had limited opportunities and motivation to use English beyond the classroom. The findings showed participants in this study particularly appreciated the additional opportunities for speaking practice provided through podcast-creating tasks. Therefore, this study contributes to the existing literature by expanding our understanding of the potential benefits of podcast-creating tasks for EFL learners in low-resource EFL contexts. While participants reported perceived improvements in their speaking skills, future studies should incorporate more objective proficiency measures such as standardized speaking tests or expert-rated rubrics to further validate these self-reported improvements.

In addition, due to the long-standing dominance of grammar-focused and textbook-based language teaching

in Vietnam (Le & Barnard, 2009; Tran et al., 2023), podcast-creating tasks appeared to provide participants with a “new” way of learning, in which they could interact with technology and collaborate with peers in more engaging ways. These learning experiences appeared to encourage participants to engage more actively not only cognitively but also socio-emotionally in speaking English and in English learning. While Alger and Eyckmans (2026) documented the socio-emotional benefits of cooperative podcasting among university students, the present study extends our understanding by demonstrating similar benefits in a K-12 EFL context.

The findings from this study also support the importance of “pushed output” in foreign language learning (Swain, 1985, 2021) as it created positive pressure for participants to focus on accuracy and coherence alongside conveying meaning. Through script preparation and rehearsal processes, participants had opportunities to notice and bridge their own linguistic “gaps”.

Simultaneously, in this low-resource rural context, digital platforms such as Padlet and Facebook functioned as useful mediational tools that provided learners with access to authentic input and additional opportunities for meaningful interactions. Peer and teacher feedback further functioned as scaffolding, creating a ZPD in which learners were supported by both peers and the teacher in the co-construction of linguistic knowledge.

As the teacher-researchers who are directly involved in the podcast-creating project, we reflected on the success and areas for improvement. At the affective level, we found it pedagogically rewarding and fulfilling to witness students’ engagement in preparing scripts, rehearsing and making attempts to make higher-quality podcasts. Observing their efforts to listen, analyse and give feedback to their peers’ work as well as reflecting on how to improve their own work was a meaningful experience for us as teachers. This experience also encouraged us to continue integrating technology-mediated tools in our teaching practices, particularly to help reduce educational inequities across different areas. When technology is effectively implemented, students in disadvantaged areas can benefit significantly. As Low and Ao (2018) argued, “English is undoubtedly the key to socio-economic advancement” (p.145), and the

unequal access to quality English education therefore widens existing educational and social disparities. They further emphasized that “English is the main language used in a digitally-mediated world, making it the more urgent that access to English is quickly and equitably distributed across the region” (Low and Ao, 2018, p.145). Technology-mediated teaching, such as podcast-creating tasks may contribute to narrowing educational gaps by providing students with greater opportunities for exposure to authentic and higher-quality English use.

We also reflect on how to improve our technology application, particularly podcast - creating tasks in this low-resource rural context. One key issue was the need for clearer guidance and ongoing support when introducing technology-mediated speaking tasks. Initial confusion related to unclear instructions and technical difficulties, particularly in uploading recordings showed that students needed step-by-step guidance and modelling to participate confidently. Although the current group organisation allowed participants to support one another, future implementations would benefit from greater institutional support to help bridge the digital divide in rural areas. Another important issue was related to peer assessment. While peer assessment supported collaborative learning, some participants lacked necessary skills or motivation to provide constructive feedback. Therefore, more explicit scaffolding and modeling of effective peer- feedback strategies as well as clearer support for the development of group-work skills should be provided.

In addition, aligning podcast-creating tasks with textbook content (e.g., Global Success 11) appeared important in reducing participants’ cognitive load and workload as participants were able to reuse and recycle recently learned background knowledge and linguistic resources when producing podcast recordings. Finally, podcast-creating tasks should be integrated in the syllabus and assessment system as part of ongoing assessment practices. Such integration may help reduce students’ workload and assessment pressure while promoting more sustained engagement with speaking activities.

Looking ahead, further research is planned to extend this line of inquiry beyond a single classroom to the school level, where teachers in the English language teaching group implement podcast-creating tasks in their

classrooms. Future studies will examine how podcasting and other related technology-assisted teaching are applied by EFL teachers across the school and their impact on teachers’ professional learning and students’ learning experiences, thereby responding to the calls for investigating the institutional impact of action research (Burns & Edwards, 2025).

7. Conclusion

This study examined the implementation of podcast-creating tasks in a rural upper-secondary EFL classroom in Vietnam. The findings suggest that podcasting provided participants with additional opportunities to practice speaking beyond classroom time. It may have contributed to enhancing participants’ interest and confidence in speaking English. Participants also recognized several potential benefits of podcast-creating tasks and some challenges related to time constraints, technology access, guidance and peer assessment. The findings highlight the importance of context-sensitive implementation. For podcasting to be effective in this specific rural context, these challenges need to be addressed through careful planning, ongoing support and pedagogical flexibility. By refining technical guidance, strengthening peer-feedback practices, and aligning tasks with curricular content, podcast-creating tasks may become a sustainable and meaningful method for language teaching and learning in similar rural contexts.

References

- Acevedo de la Peña, I., & Cassany, D. (2024). Student podcasting for foreign language teaching-learning at university. *Journal of Technology and Science Education*, 14(1), 123-141. <https://doi.org/10.3926/jotse.2509>
- Alger, M., & Eyckmans, J. (2026). Exploring EFL learners’ emotions: A comparative study of cooperative podcast creation and general language learning. *Language Teaching Research*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688251397840>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>

- Burns, A. (2010). *Doing action research in English language teaching: A guide for practitioners*. Routledge. <https://www.routledge.com/Doing-Action-Research-in-English-Language-Teaching-A-Guide-for-Practitioners/Burns/p/book/9780415991452>
- Burns, A. & Edwards, E. (2025). English language teacher action research: A systematic review. In Z. Tajeddin, T. S. C. Farrell (eds.), *Handbook of language teacher education: Critical review and research synthesis*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-47310-4_1
- Cambridge Dictionary. (n.d.). Podcast. In *Cambridge dictionary*. Retrieved August 30, 2025, from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/podcast>
- Constantine, P. (2007). Podcasts: Another source for listening input. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 13(1). <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Constantine-PodcastListening.html>
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Hoang, V. V., Hoang, T. X. H., Chu, Q. B., Vu, H. H., Hoang, T. H. H., Kieu, T. T. H. & Nguyen, T. K. P. (2020). *Tieng Anh 10, 11, 12* (English textbook series 10, 11, 12). Hanoi, Vietnam: Educational Publishing House.
- Lantolf, J. P., Poehner, M. E., & Swain, M. (2018). Introduction. In J. P. Lantolf, M. E. Poehner, & M. Swain (Eds), *The Routledge handbook of sociocultural theory and second language development* (pp. 1-20). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315624747-1>
- Lantolf, J. P., Poehner, M. E., & Thorne, S. L. (2020). Sociocultural theory and L2 development. In B. VanPatten, G. D. Keating, & S. Wulff (Eds), *Theories in second language acquisition* (3rd ed., pp. 223-247). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429503986-10>
- Le, V. C. & Barnard, R. (2009). Curricular innovation behind closed classroom doors: A Vietnamese case study. *Prospect*, 29(2). 20-33. <https://search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/aeipt.178540>
- Le, D. M., Nguyen, T.M.H. & Burns, A. (2021) English primary teacher agency in implementing teaching methods in response to language policy reform: a Vietnamese case study. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 22(1-2), 199-224. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14664208.2020.1741209>
- Liu, C. Y. (2023). Podcasts as a resource for learning academic English: A lexical perspective. *English for Specific Purposes*, 71, 19-33. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2023.02.003>
- Low, E. L. & Ao, R. (2018). The spread of English in ASEAN: Policies and issues. *RELIC*, 49(2). 131-148. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688218782>
- MOET. (2018). *National curriculum for general education: The English curriculum*. (Chương trình Giáo dục phổ thông: Chương trình môn Tiếng Anh 2018-Bộ Giáo dục Đào tạo). Available at: <https://data.moet.gov.vn/index.php/s/CXTqAkDQNTwyEPT#pdfviewer> (Vietnamese version)
- https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/english_language_grade_3_12_2018-eng_translation.pdf (English version)
- Rosell-Aguilar, F. (2007). Top of the pods—In search of a podcasting “podagogy” for language learning. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 20(5), 471-492. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588220701746047>
- Rosell-Aguilar, F. (2015). Podcasting as a language teaching and learning tool. In K. Borthwick, E. Corradini, & A. Dickens (Eds), *10 years of the LLAS elearning symposium: Case studies in good practice* (pp. 31-39). Dublin: Research-publishing.net. doi:10.14705/rpnet.2015.000265
- Rostami, M. A., Azarnoosh, M. & Abdolmanafi-Rokni, S. J. (2017). The effect of podcasting on Iranian EFL learners' motivation and attitude. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 7(1), 70-78. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0701.09>
- Swain, M. (1985). Communicative competence: Some roles of comprehensible input and comprehensible output in its development. In S. Gass & C. Madden (Eds), *Input in second language acquisition*. Newbury House.
- Swain, M. (2004). The output hypothesis and beyond: Mediating acquisition through collaborative

- dialogue. In J. P. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (pp. 97-114). Oxford University Press.
- Tran, N. G., Ha, X. V., Tran, N.H. (2023). EFL reformed curriculum in Vietnam: An understanding of teachers' cognitions and classroom practices. *RELC Journal*, 54(1), 166-182. DOI: 10.1177/00336882211043670
- Vu, L. V. (2025). Examining Vietnamese EFL teachers' perceived impact of the Global Success textbooks on their teaching practices and learners' language proficiency in public secondary schools: A cross-case study. *Canadian Journal for New Scholars in Education*, 16(1), 86-106. <https://journalhosting.ucalgary.ca/index.php/cjnse/article/view/79892>
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher mental process*. Harvard University Press.
- Willis, J. (2021). An evolution of a framework for TBLT: What trainers and teachers need to know to help learners succeed in task-based learning. In N. P. Sudharshana & L. Mukhopadhyay (Eds), *Task-based language teaching and assessment* (pp. 63-92). Springer Nature Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-4226-5_5
- Yeh, H.C., Chang, W.Y., Chen, H.Y. & Heng, L. (2021) Effects of podcast-making on college students' English-speaking skills in higher education. *Education Technology Research and Development*, 69, 2845-2867. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-021-10026-3>

ỨNG DỤNG PODCAST NHẪM PHÁT TRIỂN KỸ NĂNG NÓI TIẾNG ANH: NGHIÊN CỨU HÀNH ĐỘNG Ở TRƯỜNG TRUNG HỌC PHỔ THÔNG NÔNG THÔN VIỆT NAM

Hồ Thị Thuỳ Nhiên^a, Phan Đỗ Quỳnh Trâm^b

^aTrường Trung học Phổ thông Vinh Lộc, Thừa Thiên Huế

^bTrường Đại học Ngoại ngữ, Đại học Huế

Tác giả liên hệ: Phan Đỗ Quỳnh Trâm - Email: pdqtram@hueuni.edu.vn

Ngày nhận bài: 13-3-2026; ngày nhận bài sửa: 25-5-2026; ngày duyệt đăng: 10-6-2026

Tóm tắt: Trong các lớp tiếng Anh ở bậc trung học phổ thông tại Việt Nam, đặc biệt ở khu vực nông thôn có nguồn lực hạn chế, học sinh thường có ít cơ hội thực hành nói tiếng Anh. Điều này làm học sinh thiếu tự tin và động lực thực hành nói. Để giúp giải quyết vấn đề này, nghiên cứu hành động tích hợp hoạt động tạo podcast vào việc dạy học tiếng Anh để hỗ trợ phát triển kỹ năng nói của học sinh. Nghiên cứu được thực hiện với ba mươi lăm học sinh lớp 11 tại một trường THPT ở khu vực nông thôn miền Trung Việt Nam. Học sinh tham gia các hoạt động tạo podcast như viết kịch bản, thu âm podcast, nghe và phản hồi cho bạn học. Dữ liệu được thu thập thông qua bảng hỏi trước và sau dự án, quan sát lớp học, phỏng vấn học sinh và nhật ký phản tư của giáo viên. Kết quả cho thấy các hoạt động tạo podcast mang lại thêm cơ hội thực hành nói thú vị. Học sinh còn cho biết các hoạt động này giúp họ tăng sự tự tin, hứng thú và tự nhận thấy có sự cải thiện kỹ năng nói. Tuy nhiên, học sinh cũng gặp một số khó khăn như hạn chế về thời gian, điều kiện học tập, hợp tác nhóm và hướng dẫn hoạt động. Nghiên cứu cho rằng hoạt động tạo podcast có tiềm năng phát triển kỹ năng nói tiếng Anh trong các môi trường học tiếng Anh như một ngoại ngữ có nguồn lực hạn chế.

Từ khóa: podcast; kỹ năng nói tiếng Anh; nghiên cứu hành động; giảng dạy tiếng Anh bậc THPT; khu vực nông thôn.