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**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

## The Use of Podcasts for Language Learning: A Systematic Review of Literature

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**ABSTRACT**

Podcasts, which are digital recordings, are a very popular technical tool for language learning, especially for English language learners. Podcasts are particularly appealing to the younger generation since they are flexible and allow learners to access language-learning materials at any time and from any location. By evaluating multiple journal articles released between 2013 and 2023, eighteen (18) papers were identified that meet the eligibility criteria for the study following the PRISMA 2020. The aim of this systematic review is to investigate the benefits and drawbacks of using podcasts as a language learning method. The results show that podcasts can be a useful tool for enhancing motivation and language proficiency. Due to the lack of possibilities for critical analysis and evaluation, there are reservations about their usage in English language instruction.

**KEYWORDS**

Podcasts, language, learning, benefits, drawbacks, roles of podcast, systematic review

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**1. Introduction**

Authentic materials have typically been used in a classroom environment for language instruction, but with the development of the internet and other technologies, new and efficient language learning methods have emerged. Students now have access to a variety of resources and practice materials that may be tailored to suit their individual requirements and learning preferences, thanks to technology tools. There are a variety of digital tools available that can help students improve their general competency and build their English language skills, including interactive language games, exercises, applications, and software. The use of computers and software has become a necessary component of the modern world as the significance of digital literacy continues to increase, and these technologies become more widely available. (Mohamedamin & Ghafar, 2022)

A media outlet that has proven to be especially helpful for language learners is the podcast, which is one such tool. The podcast has gained popularity as a useful tool for language learners looking to develop their abilities in a convenient and entertaining manner due to its distinctive features and capabilities. Podcasts are a remarkably versatile tool that enables learners to practice their listening and comprehension skills, as well as to expand their vocabulary and understand grammar in a fun and engaging way. In today's world, English language students frequently rely on computers and software to enhance their language abilities and fluency. Additionally, podcasts are very accessible and simple to include in homework or classroom activities. Teachers and students can both profit from podcasts by utilizing their advantages. (Budiasningrum & Rosita, 2022).

It is common knowledge that real audio recordings of the target language are frequently used in language learning applications' teaching and learning activities. Radio and television broadcasts were the main legitimate sources utilized in language training for many years prior to the development of the internet. "Audioblogs" were frequently utilized in the early days of Web 2.0 to distribute real audio recordings to students online. (Panagiotidis, 2021). With the rapid advancements in technology, we can now utilize podcasts as a much easier way to support language learning.

Podcasts give students a special chance to develop their listening and comprehension abilities by exposing them to real language use in a range of situations. Furthermore, by offering examples of competent speech and chances for language output, they can aid learners in improving their speaking abilities. Finally, listening to podcasts can help students acquire new words and expressions in a fun and engaging way.

### **1.1 What Does Podcasting Promise For Language Learning**

In situations where it can be difficult to get real resources for language study, podcasts are a useful tool that helps with listening and pronunciation. Podcasts eliminate this barrier and enhance other language skills like reading and vocabulary by offering original speech, conversations, radio and TV programs, etc. Additionally, most podcast websites provide exercises and transcripts of the audio-video recordings, giving language learners a well-rounded educational experience. These websites are especially helpful for language teachers since they can assign specific podcasts for students to listen to at home to reinforce their learning or bring pertinent audio-video assets into the classroom. (Yaman, 2016)

There are a few potential drawbacks to consider, though. Despite encouraging results in most of the studies, there is currently a dearth of studies looking at how well students' access to language learning is facilitated by podcasts. Studies already conducted have mostly focused on the opinions of students; further research is necessary to evaluate whether podcasting is a useful tool for language acquisition. Such research would be advantageous to the industry as educators look for efficient strategies to engage a student body that is becoming more diverse and tech-savvy. (Cumming and Gunderson, 2022)

## **2. Research Question**

This systematic review aims to address the following research question:

- (1) What are the benefits and drawbacks of using podcasts as a language learning tool?

Through a literature review, this article explores the use of podcasts in language learning while looking at both its benefits and drawbacks. This study will pay close attention to the effects of podcasts on language learning while identifying any potential advantages and disadvantages.

Through a thorough analysis of the literature, this article will offer a fair assessment of the benefits and drawbacks of utilizing podcasts for language acquisition, assisting both teachers and students in making decisions about how best to use this potent tool.

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1 Search strategy**

The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020 strategy for paper selection was used to conduct a systematic literature review in order to meet the goal of this paper. A set of rules and processes for carrying out an exhaustive search for papers and manuscripts to be included in systematic review studies are provided by the PRISMA framework, which was created by Moher et al. in (2009).

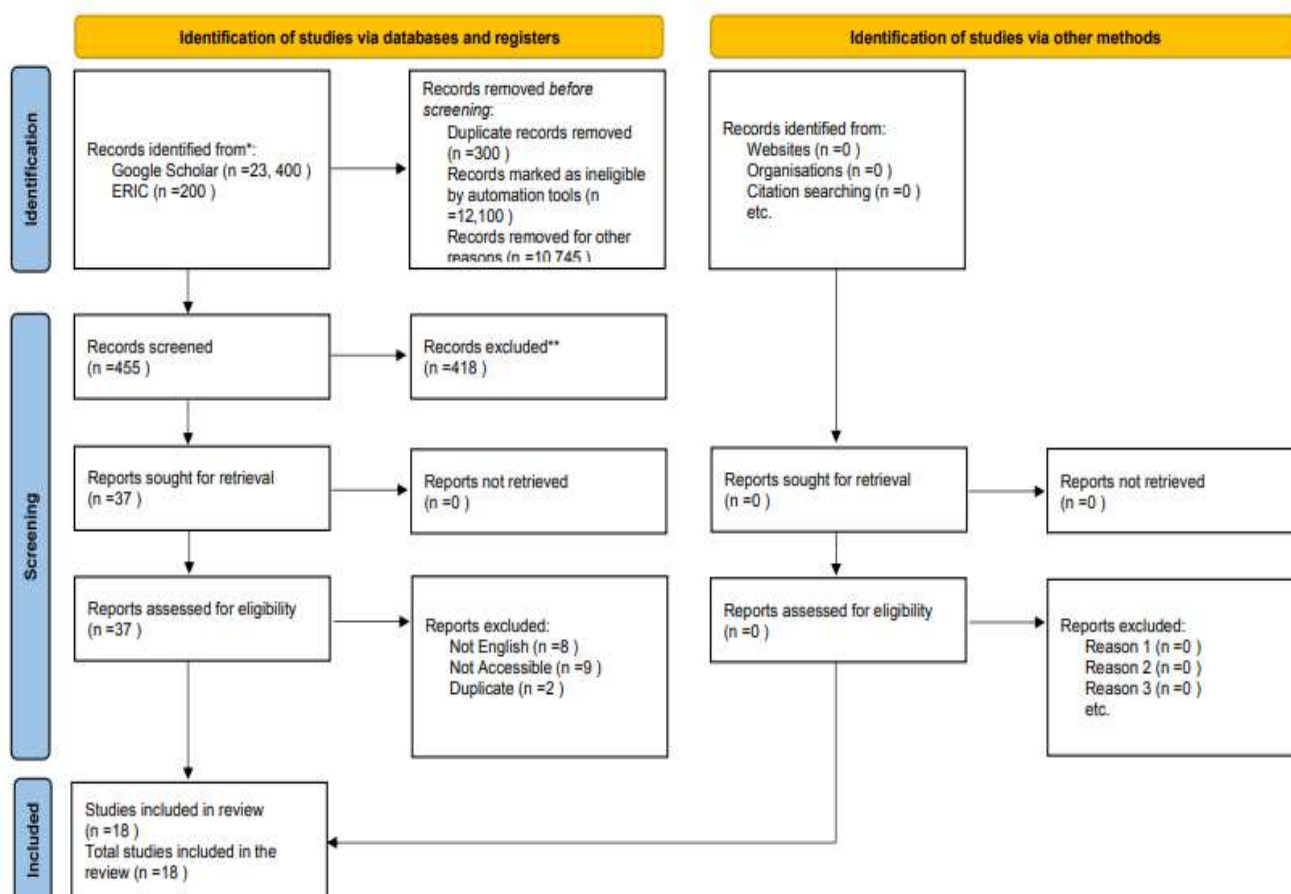
In the paper search, the keywords "podcast", "language", "learning", "benefits", "drawbacks", "roles of podcasts", and "systematic review" were utilized. A search was conducted using the Google Scholar and ERIC databases by employing these keywords. A large number of publications were compiled on the usage of podcasts by language learners to support their language acquisition using the search term. There were 18 total documents that were eligible because they were journal articles and review papers. (Hidayanto et al., 2022)

### **3.2 Selection procedure**

As depicted in Figure 1, the PRISMA 2020 flowchart approach was utilized for the selection process, resulting in the detection of 23,600 papers in the search database. Following this, a thorough screening of the titles and abstracts of these papers was conducted to identify the pertinent studies, leading to the exclusion of 23,145 papers that were found to be unrelated to the present study.

The remaining 455 papers were examined with full articles accessed, and it was discovered that 2 papers were duplicated, 9 papers were inaccessible, 8 research articles did not use English as a writing medium, and 418 papers were not research articles on research writing published since 2013. Thus, the final number of papers included in this study is 18.

PRISMA 2020 flow diagram for new systematic reviews which included searches of databases, registers and other sources



\*Consider, if feasible to do so, reporting the number of records identified from each database or register searched (rather than the total number across all databases/registers).

\*\*If automation tools were used, indicate how many records were excluded by a human and how many were excluded by automation tools.

Figure 1: Result from the PRISMA 2020 approach

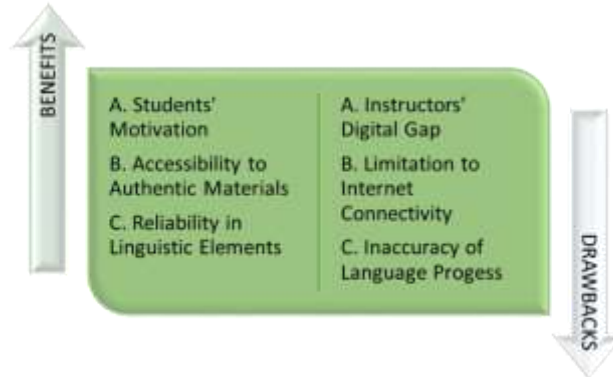
### 3.3 Data Gathering Tools

To direct the search process, eligibility criteria were developed prior to finding, locating, and retrieving the research studies. These criteria, which were intended to filter papers based on elements like publishing type, study outcomes, language, and publication year, contained both inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Parameters	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Type of Research	Primary research published in peer-reviewed journals	Books reviews, opinion pieces, literary reviews, policy documents
Results of the study	Research articles that dealt with the use of podcasts in language learning	Research articles that did not elucidate the use of podcasts in acquisition of language.
Language	Research articles that made use of English as a medium of writing	Research articles that did not make use of English as a medium of writing
Database	Google Scholar, ERIC	Databases not accessible to the researcher
Time Frame	Research articles on research writing published from 2013	Research articles on research writing published not later than 2013

#### 4. Results and Discussion

Eighteen (18) papers that meet the eligibility criteria of the study following the PRISMA 2020 were identified, as in Figure 1. All the selected papers were thematically analyzed and can be classified into six themes. The following themes under the benefit of using podcasts for language learning are students' motivation, accessibility to authentic materials, and reliability in linguistic elements. On the other hand, the following themes fall under the drawbacks: instructors' digital gap, limitation to internet connectivity, and inaccuracy of language progress.



**Figure 2. Themes of the Use of Podcasts for Language Learning**

##### 4.1 Benefits of Podcasts

Numerous studies have indicated that podcasts can have a beneficial impact on the language learning process. Podcasting has specifically been proven to improve learning outcomes, motivation, engagement, and cognition in higher education. Furthermore, podcasts can support learner autonomy and offer creative ways to both teach and convey knowledge.

##### 4.1.1 Students' Motivation

Podcasts can help students learn in a variety of ways, including by enhancing classroom lectures, offering more resources for in-class instruction, and encouraging innovation, creativity, and teamwork among students. By fostering the skills required for working toward a common goal, the usage of podcasts can also encourage classroom interaction and support collaborative learning. As a result, podcasting has the potential to be a very powerful instrument in the study of languages. (Budiasningrum & Rosita, 2022).

Academic achievement and attainment can be raised, motivation can be raised, and learning may be further enriched by bringing podcasting into the classroom. (Salehi & Shafiee, 2019)

Students were more motivated as a result of incorporating technology, as shown by their greater propensity to finish their schoolwork, study, and be productive. Additionally, this strategy makes it possible for authentic teaching and learning to take place. Regardless of location or time, technology enables a learner-centered environment that benefits all students and encourages self-regulated learning. (Hashim & Loganathan, 2020)

A multimodal approach to teaching and learning is encouraged via podcasting, which also motivates students to interact with and create real-world language outside of the classroom. (Phillips, 2017)

##### 4.1.2 Accessibility to Authentic Materials

The resources at their disposal give students an opportunity to engage in authentic language experiences and get individualized support for learning a range of English language skills. These materials include recordings of native speakers, allowing students to hear and imitate the language's natural sounds. They can improve their ability to speak and listen to English more effectively by doing this. (Budiasningrum & Rosita, 2022).

Podcasts provide a unique and different computer-based learning tool that may improve students' listening and speaking skills as well as comprehension. Podcasts give students access to real content, allowing them to learn from and acquire insight from native speakers. Additionally, podcasts offer a plethora of knowledge that can be used for efficient language learning. Learning can be interesting and entertaining as a result, which may encourage favorable views about the use of podcasts for learning the English language. (Budiasningrum & Rosita, 2022).

Podcasts are a fantastic resource for learning English since they provide samples of real-world conversational English to help with pronunciation. The ability to pause and fast-forward through podcasts as needed is one of its advantages. There are a number of

English podcasts available on YouTube channels that might be quite helpful for language learners. "Podcasts in English," which offers dialogues on many themes amongst native English speakers, is one of the most beneficial podcasts. It is arranged according to language level and type. (Pratiwi & Salainti, 2021)

English language learners would benefit from seeking out podcasts as these resources offer ample opportunities for meaningful language practice, exposure to authentic communication, and access to novel information. (Hasan & Hoon, 2013)

The crucial point is that English language learners have several opportunities to listen to actual and authentic information from podcasts created by native English speakers. (Hasan & Hoon, 2013)

Engaging in conversations with English learners worldwide via podcasts is an excellent way to improve language skills. This is because it enables students to practice the concept they have learned by interacting with actual native and near-native speakers in authentic contexts. (Abdi & Makiabadi, 2019)

#### **4.1.3 Reliability in Linguistic Elements**

Grammar hints, vocabulary building, theme-based podcasts, pronunciation aids, and idioms are just a few of the podcasts made specifically for learning the English language. (Hasan & Hoon, 2013)

When it comes to integrating speaking and listening skills into the English classroom, podcasting is a useful and innovative educational technology tool. Speaking and listening skills, among others, can be developed and improved both in and outside of the classroom using podcasts. (Salehi & Shafiee, 2019)

The development of podcasts as a technology medium has impacted students' approaches to learning. Podcasts can help students improve their listening and speaking skills in English outside of the language classroom because they frequently present various components in the language, which is English in this case. Podcasts have a clear advantage as a teaching tool for enhancing language ability. Students can improve their pronunciation and understanding of the context by listening to new words, especially if they take notes. (Sulistiawati & Suseno, 2022)

#### **4.2 Drawbacks of Podcasts**

Podcasts offer a wide variety of content and give listeners the freedom to consume media on their own time, among other advantages. However, it is crucial to take into account these potential drawbacks as well.

##### **4.2.1 Instructors' Digital Gap**

There is a lot of potential for using new technologies in the classroom, but it is important to understand that the process can be difficult for both teachers and students. For them to provide adequate instruction and promote student participation, instructors must be well-versed in the technologies. (Phillips, 2017)

The digital gap and the fact that many instructors are digital immigrants are two issues that limit the usage of podcasts in teaching. Additionally, podcasts will only be successful if they are backed by strong linguistic material. They require technical skill to create, and they can have the potential to be annoying. Some podcasting websites also demand paying memberships. Finally, if podcasts are overused, there is a chance of becoming overly dependent on technology. (Yaman, 2016)

##### **4.2.2 Limitation to Internet Connectivity**

Although podcasts had positive benefits, some students had trouble accessing them because of problems with internet connectivity and content screening. A 2010 quantitative study found that listening to podcasts during class had a detrimental effect on students' attention spans. (Indahsari, 2020)

Technology poses a potential for misuse and distraction in the classroom. The restricted capabilities of technological instruments may limit students' ability to think, and the erratic nature of energy and internet connectivity may obstruct the learning process, frustrating both students and teachers. Although there are several technology tools available, many teachers might not have the expertise or understanding to properly incorporate them. Furthermore, when teachers lack exposure and competence, the effectiveness of learning new skills and information via technology is not guaranteed. Additionally, it can be difficult to accommodate several pupils at once. (Hashim & Loganathan, 2020). Slow internet connections and instability problems may also be obstacles to the learning process using podcasts. (Metruk, 2022)

### **4.2.3 Inaccuracy of Language Progress**

While using podcasts in the classroom has benefits, there are drawbacks as well. The fact that students must set aside their own time to watch the podcast makes one of the key drawbacks challenging: determining whether they have watched it entirely or only partially. (Hidayanto, et al., 2022)

The students' responses indicated that taking online listening classes did not improve their listening abilities. The terminology in the course materials was complex or unfamiliar, which caused problems for the pupils. Additionally, the online format made the students' eyes sore. Their preference for face-to-face instruction was also attributed to the artificiality of the online listening lessons. (Senel, 2023).

The findings on how podcasts affect students' pronunciation when learning a second language were unsatisfactory. The usage of podcasts may improve pupils' general language abilities, particularly their listening abilities. However, it is debatable if the observed enhancements in respondents' attitudes and listening comprehension were a direct result of their use of podcasts. (Hasan & Hoon, 2013)

Bueno-Alastuey's (2020) research findings show that only 34% of his participants were able to acquire new vocabulary through podcasting and had the impression that they were able to use the vocabulary learned through podcasting in oral interaction.

## **5. Conclusion and Recommendation**

Studies have shown that using podcasts instead of the traditional chalk and talk method is better for language learning and teaching. It has been discovered that podcasts improve academic performance, motivation, and learning in circumstances including the acquisition and teaching of second languages. Podcasts are also acknowledged as an effective tool for studying the culture and history of areas where the target language is spoken. (Hasan & Hoon, 2013) Through a range of teaching and learning techniques, podcasting enables students to produce authentic language material outside of the classroom. (Phillips, 2017) The use of podcast technology helps teachers maximize their capacity to impart knowledge to their students. This eliminates the requirement for students to schedule consultations or meet with lecturers in person each time they need clarification on a subject. (Hidayanto, et al., 2022) Thus, while using podcasts for language learning and teaching offers many benefits, it is important to carefully identify and minimize any potential weak areas that may arise during the application process. (Yaman, 2016) This study found that using podcasts to teach language is very helpful as students listen through authentic lessons and conversations with native speakers. It has also been demonstrated that using podcasts presented by native speakers is superior to employing teachers or non-native voices for training listening skills. However, it is possible that some gaps may emerge, including problems with the digital gap among instructors, particularly when some are not well-versed in the use of technology. Some learners may also experience issues with internet access, which might significantly hinder their ability to utilize this media platform. Additionally, it is unclear whether using podcasts helps students' language development advance or stagnate, which raises more questions about their efficacy. Moreover, in order to increase various forms of learning and keep students from losing interest in class through the use of conventional techniques like reading aloud from a book or presenting slides, instructors should adopt podcast technology as one of their teaching tools. (Hidayanto, et al., 2022) If such a useful technology is not utilized, it will be detrimental to the teaching and learning process, specifically in language learning. Teachers of languages should also act as mentors to help students choose the right podcasting websites. The findings of this review will help language learning researchers in identifying areas that have not been thoroughly explored in the literature. Therefore, this review suggests that future research should be conducted to determine if podcasts have an impact on the language learning process.

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