



From Voice Notes to Micro-Podcasts: Mobile E-Learning for EFL Speaking and Listening

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Abstract

This Paper describes a classroom experience in which EFL learners transformed simple mobile voice notes into short micro-podcasts as part of a digital speaking and listening project. Grounded in mobile-assisted language learning and media-based pedagogy, the activity built on students' familiar digital habits to create a low-pressure space for spoken English practice, pronunciation awareness, purposeful listening, peer feedback, and learner confidence [1], [2]. The classroom experience was implemented with 30 EFL students, who first listened to short podcast models and examined how effective audio texts progress from an engaging opening to a clear message, supporting details, and a purposeful ending. After choosing meaningful topics drawn from their personal, cultural, academic, or social experiences, students prepared short scripts and recorded initial versions on their mobile phones. They then used peer feedback to revise their work before producing their final micro-podcasts. These recordings were shared on a class digital wall, allowing students to listen to one another's work and respond through short written comments. The presentation highlights the pedagogical design of the activity, its classroom implementation, the materials used, the learning benefits observed, and the practical challenges that emerged. It argues that micro-podcasting can transform everyday mobile communication into a meaningful language-learning experience by connecting oral production with listening, digital storytelling, and project-based learning [1], [2], [3]. The experience offers a flexible, low-cost, and adaptable model for integrating e-learning and student-created media into communicative EFL practice across different proficiency levels and teaching contexts.

Keywords: mobile e-learning; micro-podcasting; EFL speaking; EFL listening; mobile-assisted language learning; digital storytelling; project-based learning.

1. Introduction

Creating meaningful opportunities for spoken English practice is an important concern in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education. Learners need a reason to communicate and opportunities to reconsider how effectively listeners understand them. Mobile-assisted project work offers one way of organising such practice. Benlaghrissi and Ouahidi [1] reported stronger speaking outcomes among learners undertaking mobile-assisted projects, while Peng et al. [2] connected podcast-integrated instruction with improvements in speaking and engagement. These studies provide a basis for exploring teaching designs that connect digital resources with purposeful oral communication.

The present study examines an adaptation of micro-podcasting in an online Advanced Listening Skills course. Here, micro-podcasts are brief, scripted, podcast-style presentations delivered live. The reference to voice notes in the title identifies a familiar model of concise spoken communication. Students developed business-related messages, rehearsed with peers, and performed synchronously online. Final written scripts were shared through a digital wall or class chat. The activity connected preparation for oral delivery with an immediate listening audience.

Research on digital storytelling [3] suggests the value of examining how preparation and feedback shape oral tasks. However, findings about recorded podcasts and multimedia stories cannot establish the effectiveness of live online performance. A descriptive account can clarify how this adaptation operates and what difficulties require attention. The study addresses two research questions:

RQ1. How was a live micro-podcasting activity implemented in an online EFL listening course, and what listening and peer-feedback responses did students report?

RQ2. What pedagogical benefits and practical challenges are identified through the teacher's reflection on the project?



2. Literature Review

2.1 Mobile-Assisted Language Learning In EFL

Mobile-assisted language learning provides a foundation for connecting classroom instruction with independent oral practice. Its pedagogical value depends on how mobile activities contribute to a meaningful learning task. In an experimental study involving 91 Moroccan secondary-school students, Benlaghrissi and Ouahidi [1] found that learners undertaking mobile-assisted projects achieved stronger speaking outcomes than those receiving project-based or conventional instruction. Participants also expressed positive attitudes towards the approach. Although the study did not specifically examine micro-podcasting, it supports integrating mobile tools into projects with a communicative outcome. For the present activity, this provides a rationale for preparing spoken messages for live performance and sharing written scripts digitally.

2.2 Podcasting for EFL Speaking and Listening

Research on podcasting encompasses both listening to existing episodes and producing original recordings. These approaches offer different learning opportunities and should be distinguished when interpreting the evidence. Studies of podcast listening highlight the importance of instructional support. Şendağ et al. [4] found that comprehension was influenced by episode length and the conditions under which learners listened. Repeated listening supported comprehension, although participants could find it monotonous. Similarly, the classroom action research of Horváthová and Křištofířová [5] indicated that carefully staged podcast lessons could support listening development. Their small sample and non-standardised tests, however, limit conclusions about effectiveness.

More recent research connects podcast-based instruction with speaking outcomes. Peng et al. [2] conducted an eight-week controlled study with 70 female intermediate EFL learners. The podcast-instruction group demonstrated greater improvement in speaking and engagement than the comparison group. Namaziandost and Çakmak [6] also reported stronger speaking and vocabulary outcomes among learners exposed to existing podcast series. These findings support podcast input within language instruction, but they do not establish the effects of student-created micro-podcasts.

Evidence addressing production more directly comes from Koçak and Alagözlü [7]. Their university learners created paired podcasts and listened to classmates' recordings before producing responses. Speaking scores improved during the eight-week project, although the absence of a separate control group limits causal interpretation. In a study with Spanish secondary-school learners, Chaves-Yuste and de-la Peña [8] reported benefits particularly for speaking and listening following cooperative podcast activities. Together, these studies illustrate how production can give listening a communicative purpose: learners attend to others' messages because they have something to contribute in response.

2.3 Podcast-Inspired Speaking as a Communicative Project

Student-created podcasts can organise language practice around a message for an audience. Feedback becomes especially relevant when learners can use it to revise their recordings. Cadena-Aguilar and Álvarez-Ayure [9] examined self- and peer-assessment of podcasts produced by 18 undergraduates. They reported gains in comprehensibility alongside evidence of self-regulated behaviour. Their findings suggest that the educational value of recording is strengthened when learners receive guidance in evaluating how clearly they communicate.

Digital storytelling offers a related perspective when students' projects involve personal experiences or narratives. Tatlı et al. [3] examined successive digital-story versions produced by Turkish tertiary learners. Improvements in speaking performance accompanied opportunities to revisit oral delivery following feedback. Participants also experienced substantial cognitive load associated with technical difficulties. Because the projects included multimedia elements, their findings cannot be transferred directly to live podcast-style performances. They nevertheless highlight the importance of keeping production demands manageable so that attention remains on language use.

2.4 Pedagogical Benefits and Practical Challenges

The affective conditions surrounding podcast activities also deserve attention. Hamzaoğlu and Koçoğlu [10] reported lower speaking anxiety among podcast users than among learners who did not use



podcasts. In an online classroom case study, Nurisma and Kusumawati [11] found positive responses to podcast creation, while identifying difficulties associated with unfamiliar technology and unreliable internet access. Korucu-Kis and Sanal [12] used qualitative reflections to explore collaborative podcast-related tasks, finding that participants valued the sense of classroom community. These studies suggest that support should respond to learners' circumstances. They also show why teachers' reflections can contribute practical insights alongside research measuring language outcomes. The present study examines these issues through teacher observations and student responses during a short online classroom activity.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Participants

The study adopted a descriptive classroom approach combining structured teacher observation and reflection with student listening and peer-feedback responses. It examined implementation and participants' reported experiences rather than intervention effectiveness. The study was conducted in an online Advanced Listening Skills course offered by an English Language Institute (ELI) as part of the English for Business Diploma (Associate Diploma) programme at a public university in Saudi Arabia. The research sample comprised 30 female students who consented to participate and were assigned codes P1–P30. The participants were bachelor's degree holders from various academic disciplines, aged 22–30, with reported English proficiency levels ranging from A2 to B2 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Some were employed, while others were seeking employment opportunities. Each participant contributed one practice response and one final-performance response, yielding a total of 60 records for analysis.

3.2 Data Collection Instruments

The teacher completed a structured observation and reflection form for each session. Closed-response items addressed activity completion, additional explanation, observed behaviours, practical difficulties, responses to those difficulties, and future adjustments. A brief open response supplied an illustrative example. The behavioural checklist distinguished what was observed from what was not observed during the teacher's visits; an observed behaviour did not mean that every learner demonstrated it. Across the three sessions, the teacher reported approximately 30 minutes of observation across five breakout groups per session.

Students completed a researcher-developed listening and peer-feedback form during practice and final performance. Items recorded audibility, topic, perceived understanding, speaking pace, and the support the listener considered helpful. One optional question invited a brief idea recalled from the performance. A speaker-response item asked what the student would do next after receiving feedback. These accessible response choices supported classroom use, but the instrument was not a standardised listening test and did not measure proficiency gains. The next-step item was intended for rehearsal; although responses were also collected at final performance, only practice responses are interpreted as intended adjustments before the final session.

3.3 Procedure and Analysis

Three synchronous online sessions took place within scheduled teaching time. Each teacher log recorded approximately 60 minutes. Students examined short business podcast models, prepared written scripts, rehearsed in pairs or groups, exchanged feedback, and delivered final performances live online. Written scripts were shared digitally. The practice form identified *work–life balance* as the topic for all 30 respondents, while the final-performance form identified *meetings*. The two stages therefore represented different topic-based tasks rather than equivalent repeated assessments.

Closed-response items were summarised using frequencies and percentages, with 30 responses as the denominator at each student stage. Teacher responses were considered at session level. Written comments were examined descriptively for observations concerning implementation, pedagogical opportunities, and challenges. Punctuation-only entries in the optional student field were treated as missing rather than meaningful responses.



4. Classroom Implementation

The preparation session introduced the structure of a concise business message through podcast models and script development. The teacher's narrative described students working on openings and focused messages, including a short business pitch. Difficulties finding suitable vocabulary prompted modelling and the provision of vocabulary or sentence starters. This stage connected attention to spoken models with preparation for a message intended for classmates.

During rehearsal, students took turns speaking and listening, exchanged feedback, and completed their own forms. The listening task required students to listen to their partner's live performance before consulting the written script. The response choices directed attention to delivery and comprehensibility through suggestions such as speaking more slowly, explaining difficult words, or adding an example. The speaker then selected a possible next step. The teacher allowed additional practice time after identifying insufficient rehearsal time.

Final performances took place synchronously online, with written scripts and responses shared through the class digital space. The teacher observed selected breakout groups and completed the final reflection. This arrangement provided opportunities for simultaneous participation, although it limited the number of performances the teacher could observe directly. The analysis therefore combines partial teacher observation with students' own reports of listening to their assigned partners.

5. Results

5.1 Teacher Observation and Reflection

Most planned activities were completed in the first two sessions, and all planned activities were completed in the final session. Preparation required repeated explanation or modelling; the later sessions required one brief explanation. Speaking turns, identification of a peer's main message, clarification, and specific peer suggestions were marked as observed in all three sessions. Relevant listening details were observed during rehearsal and final performance, while revision after feedback was marked as observed only in the final session.

During preparation, the recorded difficulties concerned understanding spoken messages and finding words to express ideas. The teacher supplied an example and language support and judged that the difficulty appeared resolved during observation. The rehearsal log identified insufficient time and recorded additional time as the response. No difficulty was marked in the final-session checklist. These judgments describe the teacher's observation window, not the experience of every student.

The written reflections described engagement with podcast models and collaborative script preparation. The rehearsal example documented a student asking a partner to slow down and emphasise key business terms. Although the narrative described feedback as driving revision and improving clarity. The final reflection described enthusiastic delivery and an organised pitch with an opening, problem statement, and closing call to action. These examples indicate teacher-perceived strengths without establishing measured improvement.

5.2 Students' Listening Responses

Table 1 summarises students' reports of audibility, understanding, and pace. Most respondents reported hearing their partner clearly at both stages. Understanding most of the message was reported by 24 students during practice and 17 during final performance. Four students reported understanding very little at the final stage. Because the topics differed, these figures cannot be interpreted as a gain or decline in listening ability.

Table 1. Student reports of listening during practice and final performance

Response	Practice, n (%)	Final, n (%)
Heard partner clearly	27 (90.0)	25 (83.3)
Heard some parts	3 (10.0)	5 (16.7)
Understood most of the message	24 (80.0)	17 (56.7)
Understood some of the message	6 (20.0)	9 (30.0)
Understood very little	0 (0.0)	4 (13.3)
Pace about right	25 (83.3)	24 (80.0)
Pace too fast	5 (16.7)	6 (20.0)



Note. $n = 30$ at each stage. No respondent selected inability to hear or a pace that was too slow. Audibility, understanding, and pace were separate items.

5.3 Peer Feedback and Intended Changes

As Table 2 shows, explaining difficult words was the most frequent request during practice. During final performance, the largest category was no change needed, although requests for examples and slower delivery remained common. These responses describe the support students selected, not independently assessed speaking quality.

Table 2. Support students selected to improve understanding

Selected support	Practice, n (%)	Final, n (%)
Explain difficult words	9 (30.0)	3 (10.0)
Give an example	6 (20.0)	6 (20.0)
Speak more slowly	6 (20.0)	6 (20.0)
Speak more loudly	2 (6.7)	4 (13.3)
No change needed	7 (23.3)	11 (36.7)

Following practice, 10 students intended to add an example, four to speak more loudly, and three to speak more slowly. Thus, 17 of 30 students (56.7%) selected an adjustment. Nine (30.0%) intended to keep their performance unchanged, and four (13.3%) reported not yet receiving feedback. These choices indicate intentions; the forms do not establish whether the changes occurred.

The optional written field contained 11 substantive entries during practice and seven during final performance. Practice entries included references to flexible working hours, personal boundaries, and protecting personal time, alongside general evaluations of the activity. Final entries referred to agendas, punctuality, shorter meetings, and follow-up notes. These comments offer limited examples of attention to topic content. They were not treated as verified comprehension scores, and missing comments were not interpreted as poor listening.

6. Discussion

The activity created opportunities to connect a prepared business message with a listener's immediate response. Teacher observations of clarification and specific suggestions, together with students' selected feedback options, indicate that the task extended beyond script preparation. This is consistent with the communicative rationale of learner podcast work [7], [8] and guided peer assessment [9]. The contribution of the present study is a situated account of these opportunities in a live online format. Its evidence does not establish the speaking gains reported in longer studies using other designs.

Feedback appeared actionable for some learners: 17 students selected a change after practice, most commonly adding an example. However, four reported that they had not received feedback, suggesting that the feedback cycle was incomplete for part of the sample when forms were submitted. Together, these findings support a more cautious interpretation centred on opportunities and intentions. A future version of the task could link one specific peer suggestion to the speaker's subsequent action and record whether it was tried.

The student responses also distinguish hearing from understanding. During final performance, 25 students reported hearing clearly, while only 17 reported understanding most of the message. Audibility alone therefore did not indicate successful comprehension. Vocabulary demands, content familiarity, and delivery may have influenced listening, but the available data cannot determine their relative contribution. The persistence of requests for examples and slower delivery suggests practical areas for teacher support.

More students selected no change needed during final performance even though fewer reported understanding most of the message. These items address different judgments and should not be combined into a single improvement claim. Students may have found it difficult to identify a helpful change, or may have interpreted the feedback item differently; these remain possible explanations rather than demonstrated findings. The shift from work–life balance to meetings further prevents treating the two sets of responses as equivalent pre- and post-intervention measurements.

Teacher reflection identified vocabulary support and rehearsal time as central implementation needs. The final-session judgment that no difficulty occurred should be read alongside the five reports of partial audibility and four reports of understanding very little. Observation covered selected groups for approximately half of each session, so the teacher could not capture every experience. This difference



illustrates the value of retaining student reports alongside teacher reflection instead of treating one source as a complete account.

Descriptions of enthusiasm and confident delivery are encouraging but remain teacher impressions. Research linking podcasting with reduced speaking anxiety [10], [12] provides a relevant perspective, yet recorded tasks and live online performance impose different demands. No confidence or anxiety scale was used here. Similarly, digital sharing supported access to written scripts and peer response, but its independent contribution cannot be separated from the broader teaching sequence. Technical simplicity may reduce some production demands discussed in earlier work [3], [11], without eliminating listening or participation difficulties.

Interpretation is limited by the short duration, a single course, the selected sample of 30 students, and the teacher's combined instructional and observational role. There was no comparison group, validated proficiency measure, or complete performance record. The findings therefore support practical reflection on implementation and learner-reported needs, rather than causal claims or generalisation across EFL settings.

7. Conclusion

This study examined a live micro-podcasting activity across three synchronous online sessions in an English for Business diploma course. The teaching sequence combined podcast models, written preparation, peer rehearsal, and live performance, with final scripts shared digitally. Teacher records and student responses indicated opportunities for purposeful listening, clarification, and delivery-focused feedback, while revealing vocabulary needs, time pressure, and uneven understanding. The activity provided a practical structure for speaking and listening practice during the observed sessions. Future implementation should provide adequate rehearsal time, check that every speaker receives feedback, and document how suggestions inform subsequent delivery. The study offers an adaptable model for integrating live micro-podcasting into online EFL instruction and provides practical insights into supporting purposeful listening and peer feedback. Its contribution lies in documenting classroom implementation and informing future teaching practice, while gains in proficiency or confidence remain to be investigated.

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