Student-Generated Podcasts and the Development of Speaking Skills in an EFL Sixth-Grade Classroom

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Abstract

This study was an action research project designed to analyze the impact of student-generated podcasts on the development of speaking skills. The participants were sixth-grade students from Jesus Rey School, Medellín. The data was collected through classroom observations, interviews, and students’ work, which consisted of preparing, recording, and assessing three scripted student-generated podcasts. Results showed a positive impact of podcasts on students’ development of vocabulary and sentence structure and a minor impact on students’ pronunciation. The study is still a work in progress, it requires a greater span of time for its implementation in order to see improvement in its objectives. However, it does provide ideas and suggestion for further research.

*Key words:* EFL, ICTs, mobile assisted language learning, podcasts, speaking skills
Degree Requirement

This action research project is submitted as a requirement of the Bachelor of Education in Teaching Foreign Languages (English-French) at the Escuela de Idiomas, Universidad de Antioquia, in Medellin, Colombia.
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Finally, I would like to mention my mother and father. My mother because she inspired me to never give up when she proudly stated, “My son studies at UdeA.”; my father, because he instilled in me the love for knowledge. I owe them both everything I am.
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Preface

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have always been a subject of interest for me. As a student of foreign language teaching, I received instruction on ICTs and their main possibilities and advantages. Then, as a pre-service teacher at Jesus Rey school, I found issues with the development of speaking skills, common in Colombian public schools. Therefore, I looked into the possibilities of articulating ICTs to the development of speaking skills, as a way to promote a better environment to develop that particular skill.

A literature review on speaking skills in EFL and ICTs opened up an opportunity to work with subjects that I am passionate about. In addition, due to the current development of ICTs and its trends, it is easy to observe that students not only liked technology but at times can be distracted by it. In consequence, I decided to incorporate these means of communication for learning purposes. This is how I decided to address the development of speaking skills through student-generated podcasts.
Description of the Context

This description aims to present an overview of the general and specific features which constitute and shape the education dynamics at the I.E. Jesus Rey school. The segment includes the school’s social, historical and pedagogical background in the PEI, Institutional Education Project. Finally, it introduces the specific group, object of the present study, the cooperating teacher, and the pre-service teacher.

The school is in the city of Medellin, Colombia. It provides education to the Aures No. 1, a relatively new, working-class neighborhood within Comuna 8, one of the 16 political subdivisions of the city. A survey carried out by the school at the beginning of 2017, evidenced how the families that make up the school community are ranked from 1 to 6 within the Colombian socio-economic system of stratification, where 1 is the poorest and 6 the wealthiest. Stratum 2 (82%) represents the vast majority of the school population. Another fact is that between 24% of fathers and 35% of mothers said they were unemployed.

In 1985, a community of nuns called Hijas de Cristo Rey, founded the local middle school in the neighborhood. As of 1997, the school started to offer primary and high school education. Later, in 2002, it introduced preschool education and adopted its current name, IE Jesús Rey, which is a public, co-ed school.

Within the PEI, one can find the school philosophy, mission, vision and its pedagogical principles as follows:

The school philosophy is framed under the notion of a contemporary individual, who responds to the needs of a given context and who fosters an educational community environment. In it children are educated to develop strong, responsible personalities so that they are empowered to consistently strive to strengthen civil society, as well as their
Catholic, ethic, moral, civic, and political values, and on behalf of the environment” (PEI, 2011).

Regarding the current school Mission

…the school aims to be recognized for its quality and excellence in its processes which contribute to the development of well-rounded human beings, able to overcome difficulties and face social challenges. The previous is achieved through the experience of Catholic values, the development of critical-reflexive thinking, and respect for diversity.

The school Vision for 2025 is

…to become a regionally recognized educational institution which offers a well-rounded education to its male and female students, based on acceptance and respect for diversity while emphasizing on English, research and the development of citizenship competencies to enable students to shape their life and collective projects.

As for the institution’s pedagogical principles, it has a Catholic influence which promotes spiritual growth through a process of reflection, analysis and intervention of religious beliefs and values. On a more academic level, its methodology promotes:

…the development of an attitude of constant search for knowledge based on strategies guided towards the development of critical and reflexive thinking. It also implements methodologies that gather the latest trends in psychology, pedagogy and didactics to foster the balanced development of student psychomotor and cognitive skills.

According to the PEI, knowledge is conceived as a cultural construct that allows teachers and students to interact and learn from each other. Thus, knowledge is not seen as a fixed or absolute truth but as a construct built on intellectual structures emerging from students, which is dialogical, adaptable, and reasonable. The school proposes to privilege competencies when
teaching and assessing. Competencies are defined as the different capacities that are measurable through the interpretative, argumentative, and propositional performance in each task.

The group, object of this study between February and November 2017, was 6-3, a classroom made up by 43 students, 19 males and 24 females. Their ages ranged between 11 and 13. The group had 3 hours of English per week and their proficiency level was below A1 according to CEFR. As of April 2017, the cooperating teacher was Alexis Caicedo, the cooperating teacher – CT – holds a BA in English and French Teaching from the Universidad Tecnológica del Chocó. From January to March 2017, English classes had been taught by a temporary teacher assigned by the school. The researcher and pre-service teacher was Luis Sánchez, a BA student of Foreign Language Teaching at the Universidad de Antioquia.

**Statement of the Problem**

In 2016, under a national program called Bilingual Colombia, the Ministry published a collection of books titled My ABC English Kit (MEN, 2016). These books contain both the methodological and pedagogical guide, as well as the Basic Learning Rights, a Suggested Curriculum Structure, and a series of textbooks to teach English at high school level. These publications aim to help schools and teachers articulate their macro, meso, and micro-curriculum to the grade level syllabus design. The textbook issued for sixth grade, Way to Go 1, is divided into modules, units, and language tasks. Each task addresses a language skill: reading, writing, listening and speaking. Concerning the speaking skills, the textbook proposes classroom activities such as pair work, group work, and whole class oral interventions.

However, due to the number of students, oral activities were extremely difficult to implement and the time allotted to such tasks was insufficient to account for all students’ oral production, as evidenced throughout the classroom observations carried out during the first
quarter of 2017. Therefore, the aim of this research emphasized on the development of speaking skills. In addition, I also observed that mobile devices were a source of distraction in the classroom, so I decided to make them a tool for learning and to involve students in the speaking process. Furthermore, I found that the school offered the possibility of working with tablets, available within the school premises, which allowed me to design more appealing activities.

**Theoretical Framework**

**Task-Based Learning and Teaching**

Task-Based Learning and Teaching (TBLT) is the method adopted by the Ministry of National Education’s suggested textbook for sixth-grade. Task-Based Learning refers to the development of tasks that offer a variety of communicative activities (Ellis, 2004; as cited in MEN, 2016). The definition of a task is controversial to the point that it has sometimes considered anything that is done in the classroom (van den Branden, 2006). For this study, I adopted van den Branden’s definition, "A task is an activity in which a person engages in order to attain an objective and which necessitates the use of language" (p. 4). It is important to emphasize this concept as it was implemented throughout the research project with the specific purpose of developing speaking skills.

**Speaking skills**

For this study, I embrace Chaney’s (1998) definition of speaking as "the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts" (p. 13).

**Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)**

In recent years, technology has permeated every aspect of people's lives. This has important implications for the EFL classroom.
ICT can be integrated to the EFL classroom with multiple purposes, such as accessing information, exposing learners to the target language, entertaining, creating texts, publishing learners work, communicating and interacting, creating community, and managing and organizing learning (Stanley, 2013).

As stated by Stanley, technology should be a tool to benefit learning in all walks of life. However, the target of this study was to develop speaking skills, and therefore, other concepts such as Mobile-Assisted Language Learning must be addressed.

**Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL)**

Within the field of education and language teaching, we have had many denominations for ICT. In this study, Mobile-Assisted Language Learning is emphasized. It refers to an approach to language learning in which classes are assisted or enhanced using handheld mobile devices (Valarmathi, 2011). Cell phones and tablets are examples of handheld mobile devices and although these kinds of devices can be introduced into the classroom in countless ways, for practical reasons, in the present study cell phones and tablets were used for the specific purpose of recording and sharing student-generated podcasts.

**Podcasts in the EFL classroom**

Podcasts are digital materials that are recorded, shared, and downloaded from the internet (Hammersley, 2004). Podcasts can be classified in a variety of ways but in the field of education and EFL, two main classifications are relevant: by media and by author.

When classified by media, it refers to podcasts that can be classified into three types: Audio podcasts, or simply podcasts; video podcasts, or sometimes vodcasts (Gkatzidou & Pearson, 2009); and enhanced podcasts, which are audio podcasts that contain images and hyperlinks (Vallance & Shivata, 2008). However, the concept of podcast has recently been
accepted for both audio and video podcasts (Christensen, 2013). In this study, podcasts will refer to both audio and video materials.

When classified by author, Stanley (2011) proposes four categories of podcasts: authentic, educator, teacher, and student podcasts. Authentic podcasts are those that are published for other purposes by individuals and organizations and brought to the EFL classroom. Educator podcasts are made explicitly for instructors and help them acquire new skills or obtain information about the newest methodologies. Teacher podcasts are usually made by teachers for, or as a complement to, their own classes. Finally, student podcasts are podcasts that are made by the students themselves with the help of the teacher. This is the type of podcast proposed for this study since it allows students to practice speaking skills, which is the main goal. Besides, podcasts have the benefit of increasing the time-on-task since they create opportunities for students to practice speaking skills not only inside but outside the classroom (Christensen, 2013). Additionally, prior research suggests an increase in students’ ability to recall information after creating podcasts (Vallance, Michael and Yukiko Shibata, 2008).

**Research Question**

How can the implementation of student-generated podcasts enhance sixth-grader’s development of speaking skills in a public high school in Medellín, Colombia?

**General Objective**

To explore different student-generated podcasts and their outcomes on the development of speaking skills in a sixth-grade classroom.

**Specific objectives:**

- To implement different tasks using student-generated podcasts in the classroom.
- To adapt the student-generated podcasts to the sixth-grade syllabus.
To analyze student-generated podcast outcomes to evidence speaking skill development.

**Action Plan**

Considering that the main objective of this study was to explore different student-generated podcasts and the outcomes on the development of speaking skills, the action plan contemplated seven stages:

First, the implementation of podcasts required a certain level of podcast literacy, therefore, a training stage for students was necessary so they could learn to record, upload, share, and access podcasts. A student survey was also carried out in order to obtain information about student disposition to use mobile devices in the classroom and about mobile device availability among students.

The project set out to implement three different podcast tasks in order to review and practice the language features learned in class and to engage students in speaking skill development using technology. These three tasks consisted of an initial monologue, a dialogue, and a final monologue. Each task synchronized with the pacing of the units in the book proposed by the MEN. Consequently, each podcast task involved a moment for preparation, recording and assessment. All podcasts were an essential part of a follow-up intended to promote student responsibility and autonomy. Table 1 provides information concerning the type of podcast tasks, as well as procedural and their relationship with the syllabus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Podcast training</td>
<td>July 3&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; - 14&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Socialization of the project and preparation of the web platform. Gaining access to the web platform.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey 1</td>
<td>July 6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Online-based survey to get information about students’ disposition to use mobile devices in the classroom and about mobile device availability among students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podcast 1</td>
<td>July 18&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; – Aug. 11&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Short scripted monologue about basic, personal information. Module 1, Unit 1: Hello!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podcast 2</td>
<td>Aug. 22&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; – Sept. 9&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Short, scripted dialogue about two students’ daily routine. Module 1, Unit 2: What do you do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podcast 3</td>
<td>Sept. 18&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; – 29&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Short, scripted monologue about one’s favorite person. Module 1, Unit 3: My people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey 2</td>
<td>Oct. 17&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Online-based survey to get information about students’ perceptions towards the implementation of the podcasts and their speaking skill development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A final student survey was carried out to obtain information about student perceptions on their individual speaking development process after working with podcasts.

**Development of Actions**

The development actions were divided into five stages. Namely, the initial survey, Podcast 1, Podcast 2, Podcast 3, and the final survey.

**Initial survey**

The initial survey was carried out in the computer room. It was designed and performed through Google Forms. It contained 10 questions, five of which were related to availability of mobile devices among students and the other five were related to students’ degree of disposition to use mobile devices in the classroom.
Podcast 1

Podcast 1 was an oral task which consisted of preparation, recording, and assessing a monologue. The topic of the monologue was basic personal information, which was the topic of the lessons during the first term. During the preparation stage, I spent two weeks helping students acquire the necessary vocabulary for the task and guiding students in the writing of the text (Observation # 9, August 2nd, 2017). A rubric containing the necessary podcast requirements was socialized on the board with information such as name, occupation, place of residence, telephone number, favorite music and favorite food. Then, a 50-minute class was dedicated to the recording of the podcast. Most students did not respond positively. At the end of the class, only 4 students had completed their work. The podcast was left as homework. Most of the students did their homework but some of them never completed it. The following class, I dedicated 20 minutes to group feedback which focused on pronunciation and sentence structure mistakes (Observation # 11, August 9th, 2017). The overall work was included in the second term’s grades as follows: 5% for the text and 15% for the podcast.

Podcast 2

This was an oral task which consisted of preparation, recording, and assessing a short dialogue between two students. The topic of the dialogue was daily routines, one of the topics for the second term. During the preparation stage, I spent two weeks helping students acquire the necessary vocabulary related to daily routines for the task and guiding students in the writing of the dialogue script (Observation # 19, September 6th, 2017). For the podcast recording, students left the room in pairs and sat down wherever they pleased. They practiced pronunciation and then recorded and re-recorded if necessary. Student A would ask student B a series of questions and then student B asked student A, the same questions. The recording stage of Podcast 2 was
much better than that of Podcast 1. For instance, it was completed in one class and all students completed the task. I also noticed that students were more engaged in the task than in Podcast 1 (Observation # 20, September 7th, 2017).

**Podcast 3**

Podcast 3 was an oral task which consisted on the preparation, recording, and assessing of a short monologue about physical appearance, one of the topics for the third term. During the preparation stage, the classes were focused on the acquisition of vocabulary related to physical appearance and the writing of a short text about each student’s favorite famous person. The text included information such as height, hair length, hair style, hair color, body type, age, and additional information such as nationality and profession. The idea was for students to describe their favorite famous person in such detail that others could guess who it was without knowing their name. (Observation # 26, September 28th, 2017). This text became the script for Podcast 3. For the recording, students were divided into two groups. Group 1 recorded the podcast while group 2 finished the scripts since they did not work as fast as group 1. Then Group 2 recorded the podcast while group 1 did an extra activity under the supervision of the in-service teacher.

**Final survey**

The final survey was carried out in the computer room. It was designed and performed through Google Forms with 14 questions in two segments: the first requested student perception on the podcasts and their influence on their speaking skill development. The second was a non-gradable self-assessment about student oral skills in relation to the topics they worked on during the three podcasts.
Findings and Interpretations

With the aim of exploring the effect of implementing student-generated podcasts on the development of speaking skills, three podcast tasks were performed. I followed Richard’s (2003) scheme which consists of collecting, thinking, categorizing, reflecting, organizing, and connecting to delineate the data from those podcast tasks and provide findings and interpretations. Three main categories emerged from the data analysis of the podcasts: pronunciation, vocabulary, and sentence structure, which were used to assess improvement of speaking skills during the implementation. Said improvement was measured in terms of the rubrics in Appendices A, B, and C, always bearing in mind that the group was at a true beginner level. The podcasts were complemented by the student surveys and classroom observations.

Pronunciation

When analyzing podcasts 1 to 3, I found that thirty-nine percent, 39%, of students showed no improvement in pronunciation. Their performance was ranked as poor. The number of students ranked in the category of good decreased five percent, 5%. The number of students who performed outstanding at the end of the intervention increased five percent, 5%. This implies that although students basically remained within the same range of performance in pronunciation, there was a slight improvement of those ranked as good, moving from good to outstanding. It is fair to say that the development of pronunciation throughout the podcasts presented no significant variation. However, the student survey showed that fifty-nine percent, 59.9%, of students considered that their pronunciation had improved from podcast 1 to podcast 3. This responds to the fact that sixty-five percent, 65%, felt that the activity allowed them to practice pronunciation. Chart 1 shows the results of development of pronunciation in podcasts 1, 2, and 3.
Chart 1.1

*Development of pronunciation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Podcast 1</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podcast 2</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podcast 3</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Podcasts empowered students enough to state that they had improved their pronunciation as shown in their survey. Brown (2001) identified quality and intensive exposure to the target language as a key variable to be considered when teaching pronunciation. Consequently, true improvement in this aspect lies on greater consistency in exposure to the language and encouragement to practice pronunciation along with the introduction of some basic principles of phonemic and phonological awareness. The observations of classes previous to Podcasts 2 (Observation #18, August 31st, 2017) and 3 (Observation #24, September 21st, 2017) illustrate how students are reluctant to speak English in the class. True results will then require a longer term of implementation with a few additional ingredients in language development.

**Vocabulary**

When analyzing vocabulary, I found that while podcast 1 forty-one percent, 41%, of students performed within the *poor* category, podcast 3 showed that only nine percent, 9%, remained in this category. This implies an improvement of thirty-one percent, 31%. There was a fourteen percent, 14% improvement in the category of *good* and a sixteen percent, 15%, improvement in the category of *outstanding*. This suggests that systematic exposure to vocabulary during the second semester allowed students to incorporate more vocabulary in podcast 2 and 3. The evolution of vocabulary improved from podcast to podcast. These results
were coherent with the results of the student survey in which forty-one percent, 44.1%, of students agreed that they had improved their vocabulary. Chart 2.1 indicates the progress of vocabulary development.

Chart 2.1

*Development of vocabulary*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Podcast 1</td>
<td>41.5%</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podcast 2</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podcast 3</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>41.5%</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the case of vocabulary, Vallance and Shibata (2005) observed an increase in student recall of information after creating podcasts as a positive outcome from student-generated podcasts. This study obtained comparable results as vocabulary was observed to be the category that improved the most. For instance, after Podcast 3, students demonstrated to be able to recall information from the podcast in order to ask and answer questions about a secret person from the group to guess his/her identity (Observation # 29, October 11th, 2017).

**Sentence structure**

The results in sentence structure seem to run parallel to those in the vocabulary section. Thirty-four percent, 34%, of students moved from *poor* to either *good* or *outstanding*, showing an improvement of seven percent, 7%, in the category of *good* and a twenty-nine percent, 29%, improvement in the category of *outstanding*. Because the podcast tasks were scripted, students had the chance to formulate and reformulate their sentences in the preparation stages of the three podcasts. This favored the way they structured their sentences in the last two podcasts. Student survey also provided comparable results in regard to sentence structure as fifty percent, 50%, of
students claimed to perceive an improvement in the way they structured their sentences after the implementation of the third podcasts. Chart 3.1 illustrates the development and overview of sentence structure during the implementation of the project.

Chart 3.1

*Development of sentence structure*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Podcast 1</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podcast 2</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>43.9%</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podcast 3</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>41.5%</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The positive results in terms of sentence structure are partially explained by the fact that the podcasts were scripted, which allowed students to write, obtain feedback, and re-write their ideas before recording. This also shows how practice and engaging activities work to improve various aspects of language development. In time, this may lead to more spontaneous use of the language, as observed in one of the class observations:

The activity began. I walked around the classroom and checked if they were working. Most of them were exchanging information about their daily routines and writing it in the form, as expected. The classroom was a little noisy because of the nature of the activity but most students were engaged (Observation 19th, September 6th, 2017).

The aim of this research was to emphasize on the development of speaking skill through the use of student-generated podcasts with the idea of turning mobile devices into sources of learning in the classroom and not mere distractors. I found that podcasts served as an assertive tool for developing vocabulary and sentence structure among students while their impact on the development of pronunciation was limited by the short period of time of the intervention. In
contrast, in the student survey I found that students perceived a significant improvement in the three aspects which shows that podcasts allowed students to start to take chances on working with the language. The observation from the class that followed Podcast 3 illustrates how students used the language more effectively.

This game engaged everyone from the beginning. One thing that called my attention was that the usually misbehaved boys took the leadership of their team. From the first round, everybody wanted to ask a question. Those who did not know how to answer a specific question, asked me for help (Observation # 29, October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017).

Additionally, this study found that among the cognitive and emotional factors that might have affected student performance in the podcasts, students pointed out their self-perception of a low English level (70.6%) and fear of making mistakes (64.7%) respectively as the most significant. This is consistent with the evolution of students’ behavior from Podcast 1 (Observation # 9, August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017) to Podcasts 2 (Observation # 20, September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017) and 3 (Observation 26, September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017). Students moved form a disruptive behavior that prevented the recording task from being accomplished on time in Podcast 1, to a more engaging environment that facilitated the development of the recording task in Podcasts 2 and 3.

**Conclusions**

Student-generated podcasts are assertive classroom tools for integrating technology into the English class (Christensen, 2013). Given the popularity of mobile devices and the lack of opportunities to practice speaking in the context of this study, student-generated podcasts allowed students to practice and improve their speaking skills while using their handheld devices for learning purposes. Podcast creation became an opportunity for students to engage in
meaningful oral talks that encouraged them to challenge their fears and start saying some words and sentences in English.

In this study, student-generated podcasts contributed more to certain aspects of speaking such as vocabulary and sentence structure than to pronunciation because it was conducted in a short period of time. Brown (2001) points out how crucial sustained exposure to the target language is for pronunciation development. To obtain better results in terms of pronunciation, podcasts should be implemented consistently in a longer period so that students naturalize their work. That is to say, students need time to get exposed to the target language and to get used to talking in front of a microphone and in front of their mates and teachers.

Additionally, podcasts were successfully adapted to the sixth-grade syllabus. The three podcast tasks became an effective way of teaching and assessing the different units conceived in for the grade syllabus. As Christensen suggested, podcasts can be adapted to any level and topic in the EFL classroom.

**Reflection**

This work allowed me to reflect on how I conceive public education, the importance of speaking in EFL, and the implications of doing research in education.

I always conceived public schools as the context I wanted to impact but I thought it was going to be an easy job. This project has changed the way I think of public school. Public schools are special contexts because they often present countless challenges and limited resources to solve them. I also learned that working in a public school means that sometimes what we plan does not work smoothly and that it is beyond our power. It is our duty, as teachers, to give the best of ourselves to overcome the difficulties that we can find and impact those difficult contexts.
In relation to speaking, this study helped me understand how important speaking is and the little importance it is given in public schools. After carrying out this project, I believe that any attempt to help students improve their oral competence is a job that is worth doing. Initiatives intending to promote speaking should be part of long-term projects in public schools so that students graduate in conditions of equality with students from private schools.

This project also allowed me to reflect on how challenging but crucial research is. I realized that doing action research in public education requires extensive training and exhaustive reading and that becoming a successful researcher is not something one can achieve in one year. Nevertheless, research is the path to improve quality in public education. It is an exercise that all teachers, novice and experienced, should embrace in order to rethink the ways we do our work and the impact it has on our students. After this long path, I concluded that doing research in education is fundamental for teacher development and for the quality of public education.
References


Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
## Appendix A

Rubric for analyzing Podcast 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pronunciation</strong></td>
<td>Fails to pronounce well at least 5 words related to basic personal information</td>
<td>Pronounces well at least 5 words related to basic personal information</td>
<td>Pronounces well more than 5 words related to basic personal information. Pronounces well the pronoun <em>I</em> and the determiner <em>my</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocabulary</strong></td>
<td>Fails to use at least 5 words related to basic personal information taught in class</td>
<td>Uses at least 5 words related to basic personal information taught in class</td>
<td>Uses more than 5 words related to basic personal information taught in class. Includes additional information about likes and interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sentence structure</strong></td>
<td>Fails to use basic sentences including a subject and an object related to basic personal information</td>
<td>Uses basic sentences including a subject, a verb, and an object related to basic personal information.</td>
<td>Uses more complex sentences including a subject, a verb, and more than 1 object related to basic personal information and likes and interests.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix B

Rubric for analyzing Podcast 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pronunciation</strong></td>
<td>Fails to pronounce well at least 5 words related to daily routines</td>
<td>Pronounces well at least 5 words related to daily routines</td>
<td>Pronounces well more than 5 words related to daily routines. Pronounces well the numbers related to time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocabulary</strong></td>
<td>Fails to use at least 5 words related to daily routines taught in class</td>
<td>Uses at least 5 words related to daily routines taught in class</td>
<td>Uses more than 5 words related to daily routines taught in class. Includes at least 1 frequency adverb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sentence structure</strong></td>
<td>Fails to use basic sentences including a subject and an action related to daily routines</td>
<td>Uses basic sentences including a subject and an action related to daily routines</td>
<td>Uses more complex sentences including a subject and more than 1 action. Uses the linking word <em>and</em>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

Rubric for analyzing Podcast 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pronunciation</strong></td>
<td>Fails to pronounce well at least 5 words related to physical appearance</td>
<td>Pronounces well at least 5 words related to physical appearance</td>
<td>Pronounces well more than 5 words related to physical appearance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pronounces well the pronouns he/she and the numbers related to age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocabulary</strong></td>
<td>Fails to use at least 5 words related to physical appearance taught in class</td>
<td>Uses at least 5 words related to physical appearance taught in class</td>
<td>Uses more than 5 words related to physical appearance taught in class. Includes additional information about the person in mention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sentence structure</strong></td>
<td>Fails to use basic sentences including a subject and an action related to physical appearance</td>
<td>Uses basic sentences including a subject, a verb, and an adjective related to physical appearance</td>
<td>Uses more complex sentences including a subject, a verb, and more than 1 adjective related to physical appearance. Uses the appropriate conjugation of the verb <em>have</em> for the pronouns he/she.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>