
**THE USE OF ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PODCASTS
AS A DIGITAL LEARNING RESOURCE
BY UKRAINIAN EFL STUDENTS**

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DOI <https://doi.org/10.30525/978-9934-26-712-3-2-12>

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, podcasts have become one of the most rapidly growing forms of digital media, offering listeners access to a wide range of topics and flexible opportunities for learning and entertainment. Their accessibility, authenticity, and convenience have made podcasts increasingly popular among learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). Unlike traditional learning materials, podcasts allow students to engage with authentic language, improve listening and pronunciation skills, expand their vocabulary, and access educational content anytime, anywhere.

As digital technologies continue to transform language education, podcasts have emerged as an important resource that supports both formal and informal learning. Their flexibility enables learners to integrate language practice into everyday activities, promoting autonomous learning and increasing exposure to authentic English. Previous studies have primarily focused on the effectiveness of podcasts in developing listening comprehension and enhancing motivation. However, relatively little attention has been paid to learners' patterns of podcast use, their emotional engagement with podcast content, and the integration of podcasts into everyday learning practices.

These issues are particularly relevant in the Ukrainian context, where students face numerous academic, social, and psychological challenges while continuing their studies and pursuing personal development during the ongoing war. In such circumstances, digital resources may serve not only educational purposes but also provide opportunities for intellectual engagement, emotional support, and continued self-development. Understanding how Ukrainian EFL students use English-language podcasts and what value they attribute to them can offer valuable insights into the role of podcasts as a component of blended, autonomous, and self-directed language learning.

The growing body of research on podcast-based language learning highlights several features that make this medium particularly suitable for EFL contexts. Podcasts provide learners with exposure to authentic speech, diverse accents, and colloquial language that are rarely encountered in conventional textbooks. In addition, the variety of available genres – ranging from news and storytelling to educational discussions and entertainment programmes – allows learners to select content that corresponds to their personal interests and language needs. Such learner-driven selectivity promotes autonomy, intrinsic motivation, and sustained engagement, distinguishing podcast listening from more traditional teacher-directed listening activities.

Previous studies have identified several benefits associated with podcast use, including improvements in listening comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation awareness, and language confidence. Nevertheless, much of the existing literature has concentrated on specific language outcomes, whereas considerably less attention has been paid to learners' podcast-use habits, emotional engagement, and the role of podcasts in supporting everyday learning beyond formal educational settings. Moreover, Ukrainian university students remain a relatively underexplored population whose engagement with digital learning resources is shaped by distinctive educational, cultural, and socio-political circumstances.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate Ukrainian EFL students' use of English-language podcasts as a digital learning resource, with particular attention to usage patterns, perceived benefits, emotional engagement, and the role of podcasts in supporting language learning and motivation.

1. Theoretical Background and Traditional Challenges

Among the wide range of digital resources available to language learners, podcasts have attracted considerable scholarly attention because of their accessibility, flexibility, and learner-centred nature. Early studies by Campbell¹, Lee and Chan² identified podcasting as an innovative educational medium capable of extending language learning beyond the classroom and integrating language practice into learners' everyday lives. Rosell-Aguilar³ further highlighted the value of podcasts as a source of authentic language input. Reflecting on a decade

¹ Campbell G. There's something in the Air: Podcasting in Education. *Educause review*. 2005, Vol. 40, № 6. P. 32–47. URL: There's Something in the Air: Podcasting in Education | EDUCAUSE Review (Last accessed: 10.05.2026).

² Lee M. J. W., Chan A. Pervasive, lifestyle-integrated mobile learning for distance learners: an analysis and unexpected results from a podcasting study. *Open Learning: The Journal of Open, Distance and e-Learning*. 2007, Vol. 22, Issue 3. P. 201–218. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02680510701619810>.

³ Rosell-Aguilar F. Podcasting for language learning through iTunes U: The learner's view. *Language Learning & Technology*. 2013, Vol. 17, № 3. P. 74–93. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64152/10125/44340>.

of research, he later concluded that "podcasting allows learners flexibility and personalised learning"⁴. These characteristics have positioned podcasts as an effective component of both formal and informal language learning, enabling learners to access authentic English materials whenever and wherever learning opportunities arise.

These early studies established the theoretical foundations of podcast-based language learning by demonstrating that podcasts combine authenticity, accessibility, and learner autonomy in ways that distinguish them from many traditional instructional resources. Their flexibility allows learners to engage with English beyond scheduled classroom activities, while authentic audio content creates opportunities for continuous exposure to naturally occurring language. These characteristics have contributed to the growing recognition of podcasts as an important element of contemporary digital language education. Together, these pedagogical characteristics explain why podcasts have remained a relevant focus of language education research despite the rapid emergence of new digital technologies. By combining authentic language input with flexible access and learner control, podcast-based learning enables students to engage with English more actively and consistently while accommodating individual learning preferences and needs. This pedagogical perspective has subsequently been supported by a growing body of empirical research examining the contribution of podcasts to different aspects of language development.

A substantial body of empirical research has confirmed the effectiveness of podcasts in developing English language skills. Early studies demonstrated that podcast-based instruction enhances listening strategies and encourages learners to engage more actively with authentic spoken English. O'Bryan and Hegelheimer showed that integrating podcasts into ESL instruction improved listening comprehension while fostering learner autonomy through strategy-based listening activities⁵.

Subsequent research expanded these findings by documenting the positive impact of podcasts on multiple aspects of language development. Abdulrahman et al.⁶ reported significant improvements in listening comprehension and vocabulary acquisition among EFL learners, attributing these gains to regular

⁴ Rosell-Aguilar F. Podcasting as a language teaching and learning tool. *10 years of the LLAS elearning Symposium: case studies in good practice* / Borthwick K., Corradini E., Dickens A. Dublin, 2015. P. 31–39. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14705/rpnet.2015.000265>.

⁵ O'Bryan A., Hegelheimer V. Integrating CALL into the classroom: the role of podcasting in an ESL listening strategies course. *ReCALL*. 2007. Vol. 19, № 2. P. 162–180. DOI: 10.1017/S0958344007000523.

⁶ Abdulrahman T. R., Basalama N., Widodo M. R. The Impact of Podcasts on EFL Students' Listening Comprehension. *International Journal of English Linguistics*. 2018. Vol. 8, No. 6. P. 122–130. DOI: 10.5539/ijel.v8n6p122.

exposure to authentic audio materials. Koçak and Alagözlü ⁷ found that creating and using learner-generated podcasts contributed not only to speaking development but also to learners' confidence and communicative competence.

Recent studies have adopted a broader perspective by examining podcasts within digital and informal learning environments. Peng et al.⁸ argued that podcast-integrated instruction supports not only speaking skills but also academic engagement and informal digital learning by encouraging continuous interaction with authentic English beyond classroom settings. Collectively, these studies demonstrate broad agreement regarding the linguistic benefits of podcast-based language learning. Improvements in listening comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, and learner confidence have been consistently reported across different educational contexts. At the same time, the reviewed studies have focused predominantly on evaluating the effectiveness of podcasts as a language learning tool, leaving several broader questions concerning learners' podcast use open for further investigation.

In recent years, research on educational podcasting has gradually shifted from measuring language outcomes to examining learners' motivation, engagement, and informal learning experiences. Rather than viewing podcasts solely as instructional materials, contemporary researchers increasingly recognise them as learner-centred digital resources that encourage sustained interaction with authentic language beyond formal educational settings.

König⁹ demonstrated that podcasts can significantly enhance students' interest, enjoyment, and learning motivation, particularly when they are integrated into well-designed learning activities. Building on earlier research, Hanžić Deda¹⁰ argued that podcasts create meaningful opportunities for authentic language exposure while simultaneously fostering learner autonomy and self-directed learning. Aliti and Xhaferi¹¹ further reported that positive attitudes towards podcast use are closely associated with increased learning interest and students' willingness to engage with English outside the classroom.

⁷ Koçak A., Alagözlü N. The Effect of Learner Podcasts on EFL Students' Speaking Development. *Journal of Language Teaching and Learning*. 2021. Vol. 11, № 2. P. 18–41. DOI: 10.66887/jltl.v11i2.316

⁸ Peng L., Akhter S., Hashemifardnia A. Podcast-integrated speaking instruction: Enhancing informal digital learning of English, academic engagement, and speaking skills. *Acta Psychologica*. 2025. Vol. 258. Art. 105158. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2025.105158>

⁹ König L. Podcasts in higher education: teacher enthusiasm increases students' excitement, interest, enjoyment, and learning motivation. *Educational Studies*. 2021. Vol. 47, № 5. P. 627–630. DOI: 10.1080/03055698.2019.1706040.

¹⁰ Hanžić Deda S. Podcasts in EFL: The views of pre-service teachers. *European Journal of English Language Teaching*. 2023. Vol. 8, № 3. P. 134–158. DOI: 10.46827/ejel.v8i3.4902.

¹¹ Aliti A., Xhaferi B. EFL students' attitudes toward the use of podcasts as a language learning medium to increase learning interest. *PALIMPSEST / IIA/IIIMICECT*. 2024. Vol. 9, № 18. P. 209–220. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46763/PALIM24918209a>

More recently, Yang¹² expanded this perspective by emphasising the pedagogical value of learner-generated podcasts. According to the author, the process of creating podcasts not only develops language proficiency but also strengthens learners' motivation, creativity, and active participation in the learning process. These findings are consistent with the case study conducted by Acevedo de la Peña and Cassany, who investigated the integration of student-produced podcasts into university foreign language courses. Their study demonstrated that podcast creation provides learners with meaningful opportunities to practise speaking while simultaneously engaging reading and writing through script preparation¹³. The authors further argue that publishing student-created podcasts for authentic audiences increases learners' motivation and encourages greater responsibility for the quality of their language production. At the same time, they acknowledge that podcast production requires considerable preparation from both teachers and students and may present challenges for learners with limited technological confidence.

Taken together, the reviewed studies suggest that the educational value of podcasts extends beyond language development, contributing to learners' motivation, engagement, autonomy, and long-term commitment to English language learning. Rather than functioning solely as supplementary listening materials, podcasts increasingly support learner-centred and self-directed approaches to language education by encouraging students to take greater responsibility for their own learning. The growing interest in learner-generated podcasts further illustrates this shift by demonstrating that students can actively construct, rather than merely consume, digital language-learning resources. This broader perspective reflects an increasing recognition that the educational value of podcasts lies not only in the linguistic outcomes they facilitate but also in their capacity to foster sustainable learning habits, learner autonomy, and meaningful engagement with authentic English beyond formal classroom instruction.

The expanding body of review literature demonstrates that educational podcasting has attracted growing scholarly attention over the past decade. Panagiotidis¹⁴, reviewing the existing body of literature, concluded that podcasts

¹² Yang P.-L. The Role of Podcast Creation in Supporting Motivation and Self-Directed Learning Among EFL College Students: An Action Research Study. *TESL-EJ*. 2025. Vol. 28, № 4. DOI: 10.55593/ej.28112a9.

¹³ Acevedo de la Peña I., Cassany D. Student podcasting for foreign language teaching-learning at university. *Journal of Technology and Science Education*. 2024. Vol. 14, № 1. P. 123–141. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3926/jotse.2509>

¹⁴ Panagiotidis P. Podcasts in language learning: Research review and future perspectives. *EDULEARN21 Proceedings: 13th International Conference on Education and New Learning Technologies* (Online, July 5–6, 2021). Palma: IATED Academy, 2021. P. 10708–10717. DOI: 10.21125/edulearn.2021.2227.

have become an effective digital resource for language learning, supporting the development of language skills, learner motivation, and autonomous learning. Nevertheless, the author emphasised the need for further empirical studies investigating podcast use across diverse educational contexts and learner populations.

These findings are further supported by the systematic review conducted by Ramirez¹⁵, which found that previous studies have predominantly focused on the effects of podcasts on listening comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, speaking performance, and learner motivation. At the same time, the review identified a limited number of studies examining learners' actual podcast-use habits, their emotional engagement with podcast content, and the integration of podcasts into everyday learning practices.

Recent empirical research has also broadened the understanding of podcast-based learning by exploring podcast creation¹⁶ and the role of podcasts in supporting informal digital learning and academic engagement¹⁷. However, evidence from Eastern European higher education remains scarce, and the experiences of Ukrainian EFL students have received little scholarly attention.

Another limitation of the existing literature concerns the predominance of intervention-based research. Most empirical studies investigate podcasts as components of specific instructional activities designed by researchers or teachers. Comparatively less attention has been devoted to exploring how learners perceive podcasts as educational resources, what factors influence their decisions to use them, and how they evaluate the educational and personal benefits associated with podcast listening. The reviewed studies demonstrate that podcasts have become an established area of research within digital language education, with consistent evidence supporting their pedagogical value across diverse learning contexts. Nevertheless, existing research has focused predominantly on educational outcomes, whereas learners' everyday experiences of podcast use and their perceptions of podcasts as a digital learning resource remain comparatively underexplored. This gap provides the rationale for the present study. Accordingly, the present study investigates how Ukrainian EFL students use English-language podcasts, the purposes for which they listen

¹⁵ Ramirez M. G. The Use of Podcasts for Language Learning: A Systematic Review of Literature. *International Journal of English Language Studies*. 2024. Vol. 6. No. 1. P. 47–53. DOI: 10.32996/ijels.2024.6.1.4.

¹⁶ Yang P.-L. The Role of Podcast Creation in Supporting Motivation and Self-Directed Learning Among EFL College Students: An Action Research Study. *TESL-EJ*. 2025. Vol. 28. No. 4. DOI: 10.55593/ej.28112a9.

¹⁷ Peng L., Akhter S., Hashemifardnia A. Podcast-integrated speaking instruction: Enhancing informal digital learning of English, academic engagement, and speaking skills. *Acta Psychologica*. 2025. Vol. 258. Art. 105158. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2025.105158>

to them, their patterns of use, perceived educational and emotional benefits, and the role of podcasts as a digital resource supporting both formal and informal language learning.

2. Students' experiences and perceptions of English-language podcasts

To address the research objectives, an anonymous questionnaire was administered to undergraduate students at the State University of Trade and Economics using Google Forms. The survey explored students' podcast listening habits, emotional responses to English-language podcasts, perceived confidence in listening comprehension, motivational effects, and the role of podcasts in their everyday language learning practices.

The study was conducted within the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine, which continues to shape students' educational experiences. A total of 148 undergraduate students participated in the survey, which was conducted in 2026. The questionnaire was designed to examine not only students' podcast listening habits but also their learning experiences, motivational factors, and emotional responses associated with podcast use. Since listening comprehension is widely recognised as one of the most demanding aspects of foreign language learning, particular attention was paid to learners' emotional responses, perceived listening anxiety, confidence in understanding authentic spoken English, and the motivational impact of podcast listening. The findings presented below are organised around these themes, providing a comprehensive picture of Ukrainian EFL students' experiences with English-language podcasts as a digital learning resource.

The first question examined the frequency with which students listen to English-language podcasts. The results indicate that podcast listening has become a regular or occasional activity for the majority of respondents. Almost half of the students (45.9%) reported listening to English-language podcasts regularly, while a further 24.3% indicated that they do so occasionally. Nearly one quarter of the respondents (23.0%) stated that they listen to podcasts only rarely, whereas just 6.8% reported that they do not listen to English-language podcasts at all. Overall, these findings suggest that English-language podcasts are a familiar and widely used digital resource among Ukrainian EFL students, providing a suitable basis for further analysis of their educational value, motivational potential, and emotional impact.

The second question explored the role that English-language podcasts most commonly play in students' lives. More than one third of the respondents (37.8%) identified podcasts primarily as a tool for learning English. A further 19.2% reported that podcasts serve as a source of new knowledge and

information. While language learning was the primary function reported by most respondents, a notable proportion of students also described podcasts as a source of companionship (14.0%) or as background audio that helps avoid silence (15.7%). Smaller proportions reported listening mainly for entertainment (8.7%) or for relaxation and improved concentration (4.7%). These findings indicate that students associate English-language podcasts with a variety of educational and personal functions extending beyond language learning alone. They also suggest that, alongside their educational value, podcasts fulfil broader functions in students' everyday lives.

One finding deserves particular attention. Nearly one third of the respondents reported listening to podcasts not primarily for educational purposes but because they create a sense of company, reduce loneliness, or simply help avoid silence. Although the questionnaire did not directly investigate the reasons underlying these responses, this pattern may be interpreted against the broader social context of the prolonged war in Ukraine. Many university students continue their studies while experiencing disruption of everyday routines through air raid alarms, separation from family members, displacement, or reduced opportunities for social interaction. In such circumstances, the human voice conveyed through podcasts may provide more than authentic language input; it may also offer a feeling of presence and continuity in everyday life. This interpretation is consistent with Rodero¹⁸, who argues that the human voice creates a sense of presence and emotional connection by conveying meaning not only through words but also through prosodic features such as intonation, rhythm, and vocal expression.

Rather than replacing interpersonal relationships, podcasts may function as a supportive component of students' informal digital learning environment, where a sense of routine, continuity, and connection accompanies the language-learning process.

The third question examined the factors that most strongly influence students' willingness to listen to English-language podcasts. The most frequently selected factor was a sense of personal progress (39.9%), closely followed by an interesting podcast topic (38.5%). Recommendations from teachers or classmates were identified by 12.2% of respondents, while relatively few students considered language difficulty (6.1%) or the pace and clarity of speech (3.4%) to be the primary factors influencing their decision to listen. Overall,

¹⁸ Rodero E. The growing importance of the voice and sound in communication in the digital age: the leading role of orality. *AC/E Digital Culture Annual Report 2018. Digital Trends in Culture*. 2018. P. 78–87. URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326692799_THE_GROWING_IMPORTANCE_OF_THE_VOICE_AND_SOUND_IN_COMMUNICATION_IN_THE_DIGITAL_AGE_THE_LEADING_ROLE_OF_ORALITY (Last accessed: 21.06.2026).

the results suggest that students' engagement with English-language podcasts is driven predominantly by intrinsic motivational factors, particularly a sense of personal development and interest in podcast content, rather than by external recommendations or linguistic characteristics of the podcasts.

When asked about the emotions they most frequently experienced while listening to English-language podcasts, respondents generally reported positive feelings. The largest proportion (44.6%) indicated that they experienced satisfaction from understanding what they heard, while a further 33.1% associated podcast listening with interest and enthusiasm. At the same time, 10.1% reported feelings of self-doubt about their own language abilities, and 9.5% experienced anxiety due to the complexity of the language. Only 2.7% of respondents associated podcast listening with boredom. Overall, the findings suggest that positive emotional responses substantially outweigh negative ones, indicating that English-language podcasts are generally perceived as an engaging rather than intimidating digital learning resource.

Students were also asked to assess their level of anxiety while listening to English-language podcasts. More than half of the respondents (52.0%) reported feeling no anxiety at all, while one third (33.1%) experienced only slight anxiety. Moderate anxiety was reported by 10.1% of students, whereas significant anxiety was indicated by 4.1%. Only one respondent (0.7%) stated that anxiety was strong enough to interfere with comprehension. Taken together, these findings suggest that, although listening to authentic English-language podcasts may present certain linguistic challenges, it rarely generates a level of anxiety that hinders comprehension for the vast majority of students.

Respondents were further asked how confident they felt when understanding speech in English-language podcasts. Nearly half of the participants (44.6%) reported feeling very confident, stating that they understood most of what they heard, while 37.8% indicated that they were mostly confident and could understand the general meaning. A further 12.2% described their level of confidence as neutral, reporting only partial comprehension. Relatively few respondents felt unconfident: 4.7% stated that they understood little, and only 0.7% reported that they barely understood anything. Overall, the results indicate a generally high level of perceived listening confidence among the surveyed students when engaging with authentic podcast content.

Participants were also asked how listening to English-language podcasts affected their motivation to learn English. More than half of the respondents (56.1%) reported that podcasts significantly increased their motivation to study English, while a further 23.6% indicated a slight positive effect. Almost one fifth of the participants (18.9%) perceived no influence on their motivation. Only two respondents (1.4% in total) reported a negative effect, with 0.7% indicating

that podcasts slightly decreased their motivation and another 0.7% reporting a significant decrease. Overall, the findings indicate that English-language podcasts serve as a strong motivational resource for most students, with nearly four out of five respondents reporting that podcast listening increased their motivation to learn English to some extent.

The survey also explored the situations in which students most commonly listened to English-language podcasts. Travelling on public transport was the most frequently reported context (25.6%), followed by listening before going to sleep or while resting (23.8%). A further 18.1% of respondents indicated that they listened to podcasts while drawing or engaging in other hobbies, while 16.2% reported doing so during household activities. Smaller proportions listened while exercising (10.7%), during their studies (3.8%), or in other situations (1.8%). These findings suggest that podcast listening is well integrated into students' everyday routines and is most commonly combined with other daily activities rather than being treated as a separate learning task.

A comparison with the results of a survey conducted at the State University of Trade and Economics in 2021 (n = 263) reveals notable changes in students' podcast listening habits¹⁹. During the earlier study, carried out under the conditions of COVID-19-related online learning, the largest proportion of respondents (27.6%) reported listening to podcasts while doing nothing in particular. Smaller proportions listened while cooking (18.8%), cleaning (18.8%), travelling on public transport (15.3%), drawing or engaging in other hobbies (15.3%), or exercising (4.2%). In contrast, the 2026 findings indicate that podcast listening has become more closely integrated into everyday routines, with substantially higher proportions of students listening while travelling on public transport (25.6%), before going to sleep or while resting (23.8%), during hobbies (18.1%), and while exercising (10.7%). Although the two surveys were conducted under markedly different circumstances (pre-war online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021 and wartime conditions in 2026) and are therefore not directly comparable, the findings point to an important change in the way students incorporate podcasts into their daily lives. Rather than representing a separate learning activity, podcast listening appears to have become embedded in students' everyday routines and combined with a variety of regular activities. This pattern suggests that English-language podcasts have evolved from being viewed primarily as an educational resource to becoming

¹⁹ Nypadymka A., Hudym A. Podcasting as a new media format of public communication in the digital age". International scientific and practical conference «*Philological sciences, intercultural communication and translation studies: an experience and challenges*» : conference proceedings, April 23–24, 2021. Vol. 2. Czestochowa : «Baltija Publishing», 2021. P. 164–167. DOI: 10.30525/978-9934-26-073-5-2-43

a flexible digital companion that supports continuous language learning within the constraints of everyday life. In the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine, where students continue their studies while adapting to persistent social and psychological challenges, such flexibility may be particularly valuable, enabling learners to maintain regular contact with authentic English, sustain their motivation, and continue their personal and academic development despite adverse circumstances.

When asked which aspect of their English had benefited most from listening to podcasts, respondents most frequently identified listening comprehension. This option was selected by 41.7% of participants. Pronunciation was reported as the area showing the greatest improvement by 27.0% of respondents, while 20.5% considered vocabulary acquisition to be the principal benefit. Speaking confidence was selected least frequently, although it was still identified by 10.8% of the participants. Overall, the results indicate that students primarily associate podcast listening with the development of receptive language skills, particularly listening comprehension, while also recognising its contribution to pronunciation, vocabulary acquisition, and increased speaking confidence.

The questionnaire also examined whether students believed that listening to English-language podcasts improved their understanding of natural conversational English. Nearly half of the respondents (49.7%) reported that podcasts significantly enhanced their understanding of authentic spoken English, while a further 38.2% perceived a moderate improvement. Another 10.7% indicated only a slight positive effect. Only one respondent (0.7%) stated that podcasts had not improved their understanding, and the same proportion remained uncertain. These findings indicate that the overwhelming majority of students perceive English-language podcasts as an effective means of developing their understanding of naturally occurring spoken English.

Participants were likewise asked to what extent English-language podcasts contributed to their understanding of the cultures of English-speaking countries. As with the previous question, almost half of the respondents (49.7%) reported a significant contribution, while 38.2% perceived a moderate effect. A further 10.7% indicated only a slight improvement, whereas 0.7% reported no contribution and another 0.7% were unsure. Taken together, these responses suggest that students perceive podcasts not only as a valuable language learning resource but also as an effective means of developing intercultural awareness through exposure to authentic linguistic and cultural content.

The final question examined students' attitudes towards the integration of English-language podcasts into university English courses. Nearly half of the respondents (45.1%) stated that they would definitely like podcasts

to be used more frequently in their English classes, while a further 38.5% answered "probably yes". Only 15.0% remained uncertain, whereas just 0.7% selected "probably no" and another 0.7% chose "definitely no". These findings demonstrate a high level of student support for the wider use of English-language podcasts in university English courses, suggesting that learners recognise their educational value and would welcome their more systematic integration into classroom instruction.

CONCLUSIONS

The present study contributes to the growing body of research on podcast-based language learning by examining English-language podcasts not only as a digital resource for language acquisition but also as an integral component of Ukrainian EFL students' everyday learning practices. Unlike much of the existing literature, which has primarily focused on measurable language outcomes, this study adopted a broader perspective by examining students' listening habits, emotional responses, motivational experiences, perceived language benefits, and attitudes towards the integration of podcasts into university English courses. Particular attention was paid to podcast use within the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine, where digital learning resources have acquired increased importance in supporting students' academic continuity and personal development.

The findings demonstrate that English-language podcasts have become a familiar and widely used element of students' independent language learning. Podcast listening is closely integrated into students' everyday routines rather than treated as a separate learning activity, illustrating the flexibility of podcast-based learning and its capacity to support informal, self-directed learning beyond the traditional classroom environment.

The study further indicates that students perceive podcasts as serving a variety of educational and personal purposes. Although language learning remained their primary motivation for listening, many respondents also associated podcasts with companionship and the avoidance of silence. These findings suggest that podcasts fulfil functions extending beyond language learning alone and contribute to creating a stable and supportive digital learning environment in which language learning becomes naturally integrated into everyday life. Although the present study was not designed to investigate psychological outcomes, these findings may reasonably be interpreted within the broader social context of the prolonged war in Ukraine, during which many students continue their studies while adapting to disrupted routines and reduced opportunities for social interaction.

The educational value of podcasts was confirmed across several dimensions of language learning. Respondents associated podcast listening with improvements in listening comprehension, pronunciation, vocabulary acquisition, speaking confidence, motivation, and understanding authentic spoken English and the cultures of English-speaking countries. They also reported predominantly positive emotional experiences, high levels of listening confidence, and little or no listening anxiety. Collectively, these findings confirm that podcasts represent an effective digital resource capable of supporting both linguistic development and sustained learner engagement.

Comparison with survey data collected at the same university in 2021 suggests a noticeable shift in students' podcast listening habits. Although the two surveys were conducted under different educational and social circumstances and therefore cannot be directly compared, podcast listening now appears to be more closely embedded in everyday routines than treated as a separate activity. This development reflects the increasing integration of digital audio resources into students' informal learning practices and highlights the evolving role of podcasts within contemporary language education.

The findings also have practical implications for English language teaching in higher education. The strong support expressed by students for the wider use of podcasts in university English courses indicates that learners recognise their educational value and would welcome their more systematic incorporation into formal instruction. Carefully selected podcast materials may complement traditional classroom activities by providing authentic language input, promoting learner autonomy, increasing motivation, and encouraging continuous exposure to English beyond scheduled lessons. Their flexibility makes podcasts particularly suitable for blended and self-directed learning, both of which have become increasingly important in modern higher education.

The present study has several limitations. Although it provides a comprehensive overview of podcast use among undergraduate students at one Ukrainian university, further research involving multiple higher education institutions would improve the generalisability of the findings. Future studies may also adopt longitudinal or mixed-methods approaches to examine how podcast use evolves over time and how learners integrate podcasts into their language learning practices under different educational and social conditions. Finally, the present study suggests that the educational significance of English-language podcasts extends beyond their well-established role in developing language skills. Within the contemporary Ukrainian context, podcasts appear to function as a multifaceted digital learning resource that supports continuous language learning, sustains learner motivation, provides access to authentic linguistic and

cultural content, and helps maintain continuity in students' everyday educational practices. Rather than representing merely an additional technological tool, podcasts have become a meaningful component of students' informal learning environment. Their ability to combine flexibility, accessibility, authenticity, and learner autonomy makes them a valuable resource for contemporary EFL education and reinforces their potential for broader integration into university language curricula.

SUMMARY

The growing popularity of podcasts has attracted increasing attention within digital language education owing to their flexibility, accessibility, and potential to support autonomous learning. Although previous research has consistently demonstrated the effectiveness of podcasts in developing language skills, comparatively little attention has been devoted to learners' everyday patterns of podcast use, their emotional engagement with podcast content, and the broader educational functions podcasts perform beyond formal classroom instruction. To address this gap, the present study investigated the use of English-language podcasts as a digital learning resource by Ukrainian EFL students within the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine. An anonymous questionnaire was administered to 148 undergraduate students at the State University of Trade and Economics to examine podcast listening habits, emotional responses, motivational experiences, perceived language benefits, and attitudes towards the integration of podcasts into university English courses.

The findings indicate that podcast listening has become closely embedded in students' everyday routines and is commonly combined with travelling, leisure activities, and household tasks, demonstrating the compatibility of podcasts with informal and self-directed language learning. While language learning remained the primary reason for listening, a considerable proportion of respondents also associated podcasts with companionship, reduced feelings of loneliness, and the avoidance of silence, suggesting that podcasts fulfil educational and personal functions simultaneously. Comparison with survey data collected at the same university in 2021 further suggests that podcast listening has become increasingly integrated into students' daily routines rather than being treated as a separate activity. The study demonstrates that English-language podcasts represent a multifunctional digital learning resource that supports language development, learner autonomy, sustained motivation, and continuous engagement with authentic English while contributing to continuity in students' everyday educational practices under the conditions of prolonged war.

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