

Podcasting to sensitize gender equity in English language student teachers

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Abstract

Gender equity remains a challenge that must be addressed across all areas of the education system. This study aims to explore the potential of podcasts to foster reflection on gender inequality in education. The research adheres to the postmodern paradigm and a quantitative approach. Participants are 94 student teachers enrolled in the English as a Foreign Language teacher training program at a public university in Ecuador. Data was collected using a Likert-type questionnaire, a survey, and an information sheet. The results include pre- and post-test findings on knowledge, attitudes, and motivations for podcast production. The study concludes that podcasts offer opportunities for reflection, research, transformation, and dissemination of information on socioeconomic issues such as gender equity in a controlled environment. It also concludes that the planning, production, and distribution of podcasts represent a way to overcome challenges related to soft skills, particularly when using a foreign language. This is an innovative practice that makes a significant contribution to the training process of professionals who respond to the pedagogical and communicative demands of the 21st century.

Keywords: communication, Teachers training, gender equity, educational innovation, podcast.



Introduction

Gender equity is a critical issue in current societies worldwide that persists the policy frameworks and conscience campaigns, drawing significant attention within educational sectors, highlighting the need for awareness and sensitivity towards fair treatment of all genders in learning environments. Promoting educational environments where all students feel valued, accepted, included, and comfortable during their professional training process and grow in a culture of equity.

Podcasts are a modern and accessible digital medium that provides an engaging way to address complicated issues like gender equity to the public in an informal but impact way. This research project studies the use of gender-focused podcasts as a pedagogical tool to reflect teacher students on the involuntary conducts in classrooms, such as the minimization of specific genders' efforts, mainly focusing on raising awareness about gender biases and foster equitable practices in classrooms. By having exposure to discussions on how gender dynamics affect students' experiences and opportunities, we aim to contribute to a more balanced and inclusive approach to education. In this context, pedagogical innovations represent a form of social innovation in education, characterized by introduction of methods, approaches, and forms of interaction between teachers and students that seek to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes (Abdullayena, 2019). These innovations propose that allow educational objectives to be achieved more efficiently, thus promoting a more dynamic and effective learning environment.

In the study, the authors use Podcasts as a tool to practice speaking skills in English as a Foreign Language. Thus, Ruiz (2024) states that using Podcasts to improve language skills in a second language is effective. Allowing students to practice their listening and speaking also helps them develop tech skills. Moreover, Cárdenas & Ramirez (2021) argue that the implementation of podcasts enhances students' oral expression in English communication by promoting autonomous and collaborative learning. Furthermore, some research has indicated that continuous exposure to spoken language through podcasts can also upgrade listening comprehension skills (Sharma, 2024).

The concept of gender in education. - It is essential for understanding how social norms and expectations influence the learning environment and opportunities. Thus, Kuteesa et al. (2024) argued that Gender Equity means ensuring that all students without exception have the same access to services and opportunities throughout the educational system. Gender as a social construct defines how men and women act, relate, and play their roles in coherence with the surrounding society (COE, 2020). Supported by Miller et al. (2016), the ideas of femininity and masculinity are influenced by many factors, including technology and digital media.

Equity is considered a principle to guarantee all people access to the same opportunities. It promotes an inclusive atmosphere, regardless of people's socioeconomic, gender, or cultural characteristics. UNESCO (2017) introduces the term Equity to mean that all learners are valued in the same way. This approach is reinforced by Ochoa (2023), who asserts that, from an educational perspective, equity is achieved when individuals have the same educational opportunities. It not only encompasses access to quality education but also includes staying in school and completing education without discrimination based on social status, ethnicity, or other group factors.

It is imperative to highlight that teachers being aware of this could mean a change in how they view their relationships in classrooms, since they might not be aware of their own biases. Ocio (2024) agrees that teachers have a limited understanding of how to integrate gender perspectives into their subjects.



Since they usually receive little to no practical training at the beginning of their careers, they come to learn through trial and error. Zapata-Cardona (2014) affirms that critical reflection regarding gender inequality must be addressed in the preparation of student teachers. Teacher students must confront their own ideas about equity before reflecting on their own teaching.

Meanwhile, equity ensures that all individuals have access to the same educational opportunities. Inclusion focuses on creating an environment where a diversity of learners feels valued and supported. As UNESCO (2017) stated, inclusion is an ongoing effort to remove obstacles that directly affect students' participation, presence, and learning, because people seek an equitable educational system, fostering an inclusive environment becomes essential to ensure that each learner can thrive and succeed.

Likewise, it is crucial to recognize that inequalities are often influenced by social and cultural factors, such as gender, that can affect students' perceptions of their own abilities (Quinceno, 2022). For that reason, it urges us to understand how gender influences students' perceptions and behaviors in academic contexts. Andrus et al. (2018) pointed out that gender influences how students perceive themselves in History, how they select project partners, and their expectations about future careers. For girls and all students to be completely engaged and empowered, teachers need to build a free gender biases environment, face stereotypes, and remove barriers in subjects or career paths that have traditionally been linked to a specific gender.

Gender equity requires a deep understanding of how inclusion and equal opportunities (Turner & Joseph, 2023), the pursuit of gender equality in education reflects the belief that both men and women deserve the same opportunities for academic growth.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). - They were established by the United Nations in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda, provide a global framework to promote social, economic, and environmental development, recognizing that ending poverty and other deprivations must follow strategies that improve health and education services for reducing inequality in the educational field.

Successively, the fifth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 5) manifests the commitment to eradicate all forms of discrimination against women and girls, fully empower them, and ensure their equal participation in all areas. It promotes formal equality, but also raises awareness about gender roles, social stereotypes, and symbolic power in the classrooms.

Accepting education is a process that seeks to foster conscience and comprehension among students and teachers about social and cultural differences. Gender equity establishes a positive relationship between teachers and students. During reflection sessions, the goal is to stimulate the transition from stakeholders' awareness to relevant information based on possible guidelines to guide schools toward healthy lifestyles (Stoloff et al., 2015).

Podcasts. - They are known as digital audio or video files distributed across the internet. They have a format accessible as an effective and simple educational tool, allowing listeners to learn and reflect while engaging in other activities. According to Goldman (2018), Podcasts can entertain, but also prepare student teachers for future work challenges. Furthermore, Wakefield et al. (2022) mention that educational podcasts are seen as more enjoyable, creative, and confidence-boosting from the students' perspective, emphasizing that factors such as the speaker's enthusiasm and the inclusion of real-life



situations play an essential role in designing effective podcasts, as they encourage deeper understanding through reasoning and analysis (Engzell et al., 2025).

Additionally, the podcast can contribute to fostering spoken language using a teaching task (Díez & Richters, 2020). Consequently, podcasting allows teachers to experiment with creative content adapted to current needs, helping students develop a greater sense of autonomy and control over their learning process. Moreover, as Dversnes and Blikstad-Balas (2023) argue, one of the main advantages of working with podcasts is that they allow teachers to review the different versions made by students at any time, provide feedback, and make corrections to improve their final projects. In fact, a podcast is a teaching strategy for improving students' confidence and oral expression feedback.

Digital technologies adopted by teachers as an effective tool for strengthening specific skills in the English learning process. Thus, Anderson et al. (2016) point out that English classrooms are interactive spaces where cultures and social factors converge, making them ideal environments for observing gender dynamics and communication between men and women. Subsequently, Phillips (2017) points out that students who feel less confident speaking English in class can prepare their podcasts at their own pace. This approach helps to reduce the learners' anxiety associated with real-time communication in a foreign language and increases students' confidence, resulting in a more positive and effective learning experience. Meanwhile, Bentley (2017) explains that radical changes lead teachers to innovations for transforming technology tools. Regardless of the approach universities adopt for students, transformation represents a reformative way of knowledge exchange on diverse topics with podcasts as an educational tool. Besides, they analyze social issues such as gender equity in education. Technology has transformed teaching and learning situations, allowing portability and the ability to distribute time across spaces and study times (Abdulrahman, 2018).

A more supportive and inclusive culture is likely to benefit all faculty and staff, increase career satisfaction, and reduce faculty and staff attrition (Ovseiko et al., 2019). Digital technology transformed teaching and learning in Latin American educational settings.

According to Lubis (2019), the Internet has increased the teaching resources to encourage students. In addition, the practice of effective teaching can benefit significantly when educators experiment and innovate with pedagogical and technological approaches, catering to the demands of twenty-first-century learners (Mengorio & Dumlao, 2019; Murray et al., 2023).

Being aware of the advantages of using digital technologies, Bergum et al. (2022) inform that best practices involve acting as a positive role model and carefully considering the authenticity, relevance, and real contribution gained from using digital communication tools. It helps learners to improve their educational experiences and encourages the responsible use of technology tools.

Kavaliauskienė cited in Mohammed and Khadawardi (2024), affirms that podcasts encourage students to engage in tasks while fostering equitable participation among learners. Professors acknowledge their usefulness in complementing face-to-face sessions, enriching the learning process, and offering flexible access to academic content. In this sense, podcasts can be well articulated to teaching methodologies like Flipped Learning classrooms or Project-Based Learning. They are relevant, as they allow students to prepare ahead of time for synchronous activities that enhance interaction and knowledge application (Savall & Villafán, 2025).

As Stalmatch et al. (2025) state, digital tools can provide multiple ways to clarify ideas and include private feedback options that help reduce students' fear of making mistakes. For this reason, the

integration of podcasts into education demonstrates how to learn with technological tools; however, we must consider the digital challenges we face within the educational field (Savall & Villafán, 2025). In addition, educators remarked on the need for continuous professional development in introducing technology in speaking practices (Roa González et al., 2025).

To accomplish this research, the authors utilized surveys and interviews to collect information from different perspectives on the podcast production process and gender equity awareness. Moreover, they study the theoretical foundation of gender equity in education as well as the effect of media and podcasts on learning. The research questions that guide the study are: (1) What is the participants' prior knowledge of podcasts?

(2) What benefits do podcasts offer to professional training?

(3) What challenges and emotions do teacher trainees experience during the process of creating a podcast?

(4) What values are addressed when producing podcasts?

(5) This study aims to explore the potential of podcasts to foster reflection on gender inequality in education.

This study aims to explore the potential of podcasts to foster reflection on gender inequality in education.

3. Methodology

This study is framed within the postmodern paradigm, with a mixed-method approach. The participants are 94 students, 24 male and 70 female. All the participants agreed to take part in the research voluntarily. The research complies with the ethical standards established by Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí and the American Psychological Association (APA, 2017). It means that all the collected data will be confidential and properly handled by the research team for at least 7 years. Data generated in this investigation for no reason will be commercialized; they will be used only for educational purposes.

Table 1. Sample of participants

Phases	Semester	Women	Men	Total
1	7 th semester	12	6	18
	2 nd semester	35	11	46
2	5 th semester	12	3	15
	6 th semester	11	4	15
Total		70	24	94

3.1. Instruments

The instruments used in this research are:

Likert Scale Questionnaire. – The instrument was created by the research team, the purpose of this process is to collect information about participants' knowledge of podcasting, to determine their thoughts and ideas of numerous topics, as well as their level of familiarity with production tools in this area. The instrument was administered through a Google form. The questionnaire consists of a total of 6 questions, it was validated by a panel of specialists attributed to the Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí from Ecuador, who are associated with English language teaching and scientific research.

Focus Group. – The instrument used was designed to gather information from the participants about their vivid experience developing a podcast and the knowledge they acquired on various topics, including podcasting. This instrument consists of 8 items and was validated by a panel of specialists assigned to the Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí. The panel of specialists recommended reducing the number of questions from the 15 initially proposed to 8. Furthermore, the questions were syntactically well-structured to ensure participants understood them. The categories assessed are experience and knowledge. This instrument was administered in person to a sample of approximately 15 participants.

Survey. – Developed by the research team ad hoc, the survey aims to collect opinions on the replication of the project in the execution of a podcast. The instrument consists of two categories. The first category focused on participants' knowledge of developing a podcast, and the second on their experience with the podcast-making process. Consequently, the instrument was subjected to validation by the panel of specialists of the Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí. It was administered using a Google Form.

3.2. Procedure

The research procedure was implemented through the following stages:

Stage 1. Participant Selection and Permissions. – The research began with the careful selection of participant groups on a ULEAM University located in Manta, Ecuador, gaining the necessary permissions to guarantee their active and responsible contribution.

Stage 2. Theoretical Framework Update. – The theoretical framework was carefully reviewed and updated to encompass the fundamental concepts that reinforce the understanding of the research topic.

Stage 3. Instrument Design and Validation. – Instruments for data collection were developed. This process involved the crafting of tools designed to capture information accurately and comprehensively. Once designed, these instruments went through a rigorous validation process to determine their reliability and validity. This step was crucial to ensure that the data collected were meaningful to the research questions.

Stage 4. Likert Scale Questionnaire administration. – This instrument allowed for the systematic collection of quantitative data from the participants. This phase provided initial insights into the participants' knowledge of podcasting.

Stage 5. Training and Educational Intervention. – Participants received specialized training focused on podcast creation, pointing to develop their technical and original skills in this area. The educational intervention lasted six months. Participants engaged in preparing their own podcast scripts, rehearsing, and completing the recording process.

Stage 6. Focus Group Discussion. – To complement the quantitative data and better understand participants' experiences, focus group discussions were conducted with a carefully selected sample representative of the general group. This instrument revealed attitudes, motivations, and deeper reflections related to the intervention and the general research objectives.

Stage 7. Survey Administration. – A survey was administered to collect multiple perspectives, expecting the active participation of each interviewee and favoring, in turn, the significant contributions to the advancement of this research stage.

Stage 8. Final Report Preparation. – The preparation of the final report was undertaken, organizing the collected data, analyzing the findings, and systematizing the results to present coherent evidence-based conclusions for the study.

4. Results

4.1. Teacher trainees' prior knowledge about the podcast process

In response to the question: What is the participants' prior knowledge of podcasts?

Participants' prior usage of podcasts. - 60% of the participants had previous experience watching and listening to podcasts before the research, 26% had watched podcasts a few times, and 14% had listened to commentaries about podcasts in the past.

Participants' knowledge about podcasts (PKAO). - 35.1% of the answers showed that podcasts are a space to discuss specific topics, 24.6% declared it as a space for dialogue, moreover, 23.7% answered that a podcast is a space where people express their ideas freely. Finally, 16.6% answered that a podcast is a service available online. From there, the rest of the participants gave minor opinions, such as:

(A:21) "It is an important resource for the people",

(A35) "The dialogues in the podcasts depend on participants' interests",

(A39) "It's an audio-video process",

(A21) "They are audio chapters".

Participants' knowledge of podcast script. - 79% expressed that they do not know about it, but 21% expressed that they know well about the podcast script.

Podcast contributions for learning a language. - It was found that 98% of the participants considered that it does help with learning a language, while 2% said otherwise.

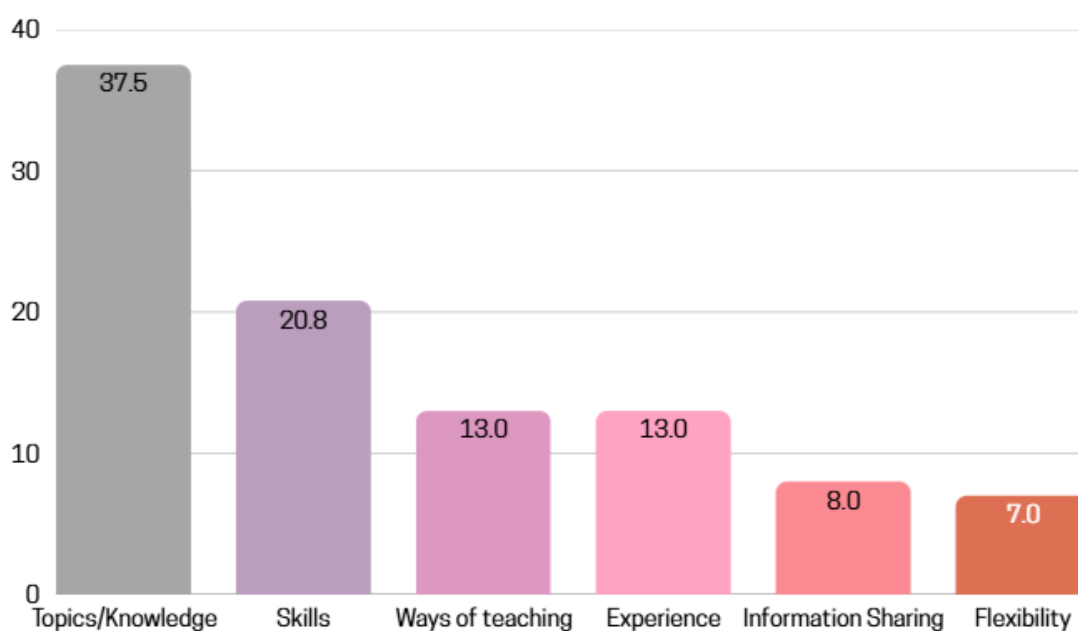
Participants' willingness to record a podcast. - 59% of the participants indicated a positive answer, meanwhile 41% answered a negative answer.

4.2 Podcasts as a beneficial tool in professional training.

In response to the question: What benefits do podcasts offer to professional training?

Graphic 1 show that 37.5% of the participants consider podcasts useful for learning new topics and expanding their knowledge. The data highlights the role of podcasts as a source of updated information in teacher training. The second most frequent benefit is skills development, with 20.8% positive answers, especially in listening, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

Other relevant aspects include the ways of teaching 13% and sharing experiences 13%, suggesting that podcasts are also seen as tools to discover teaching strategies and to reflect on other teachers' practices. Finally, flexibility 8% and information sharing 7% were mentioned less often, but they do point out the practical and community-oriented nature of this resource.



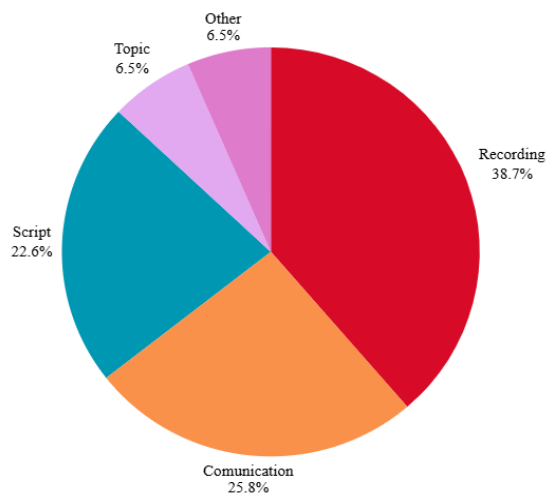
Graphic 1. Benefits of podcasts for the professional training process.

Overall, the results suggest that podcasts are valued for providing knowledge and helping to improve language skills, while also contributing to teaching strategies, reflection, and professional growth in a flexible format.

3.1 Challenges producing podcast.

In answer to the questions: What challenges and emotions do teacher trainees experience during the process of creating a podcast?

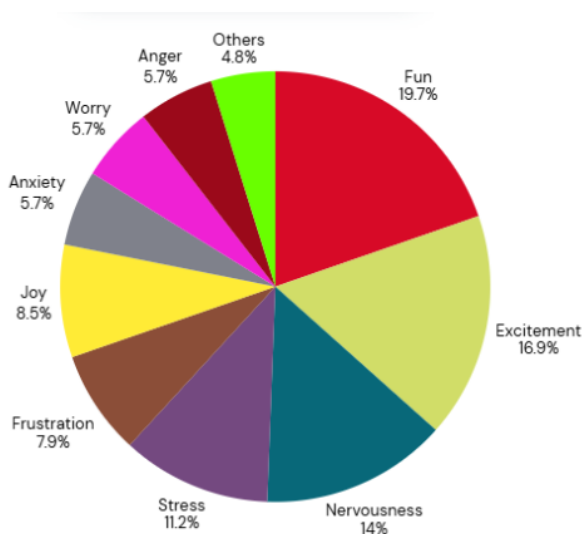
Graphic 2 shows the participants' challenges during the creation of a podcast. They are recording a podcast with 38.7%, followed by communication 25.8%, and script 22.6%. These three categories together account for the reported obstacles in the stages of podcasts' production: planning, collaboration, and execution. Less frequent but still noteworthy challenges included 6.5% for the topic selection. Other small difficulties represent 6.5% altogether.



Graphic 2. Participants' challenges while creating podcasts.

These results highlight that teacher trainees faced greater challenges with the technical and interpersonal aspects of the task rather than the creative dimension. This suggests that podcast-making requires skills beyond mere content knowledge, including teamwork and technological proficiency.

The Graphic 3 shows the interpretation of emotions as a balance between positive and negative experiences among participants. The most frequently occurring emotions were fun 19.7%, Excitement, 16.9%, and Nervousness 14%. Findings indicate that while the podcast, regardless of being an engaging and stimulating activity for many students, also added significant levels of tension. Additional significant emotions included Stress 11.2%, Frustration 7.9%, and Joy 8.5%, suggesting that students moved between moments of satisfaction and challenge. Less frequent but still present emotions were Anxiety 5.7%, Worry 5.7%, Anger 5.7% among Others 4.8%, highlighting the emotional complexity of the experience.



Graphic 3. Participants Emotions During Podcast-Making Process

Overall, these results suggest that podcast-making fosters a dual emotional impact; on one hand, it stimulates creativity and enjoyment, on the other, it introduces pressure and uncertainty, particularly during unfamiliar tasks.

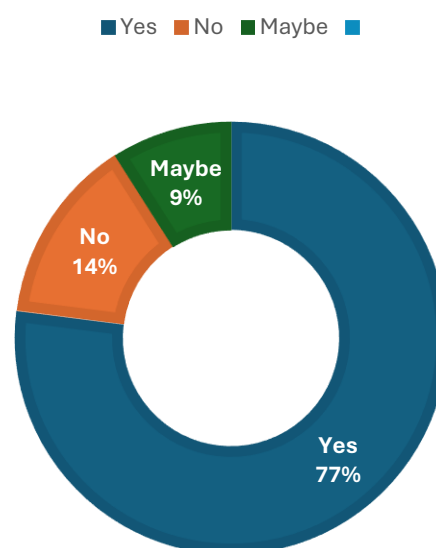
There is an evident relationship between the emotions and the challenges encountered. For instance, the high difference of nervousness, stress, and frustration corresponds with the technical and communicative challenges of recording and teamwork. Conversely, fun and excitement appear linked to the creative and collaborative dimensions of the activity, such as brainstorming topics and sharing the final product.

This contrast foresees that the challenges faced along the process of podcast production not only provoked negative emotions but also added to moments of motivation, enjoyment, and achievement. In other terms, the difficulties experienced were not purely detrimental; they became part of a learning process that stimulated both academic skills, script writing, communication, use of technology, and emotional skills; resilience, confidence, and collaboration.

3.4 Participants' acquisition of knowledge using a podcast.

Most participants, 77% reported that they learned more about their topic through the podcast activity, mainly due to the research process adding to peer contributions. A smaller group, 14%, felt they did not acquire significant new knowledge, as they already possessed prior understanding of the subject. Meanwhile, 9% gave more tentative responses, indicating partial learning or reinforcement of what they already knew. The justifications provided show that students valued peer discussion, collaborative dialogue, and the need to investigate beyond classroom materials as key elements of their learning. These findings suggest that podcast-making not only consolidates prior knowledge but also promotes deeper learning through investigation and collaborative exchange. See figure 2.

Figure 2. Participants' acquisition of knowledge using a podcast.



3.5 Values of the participants that are strengthened by producing podcasts.

In answer to the question: What values are addressed when producing podcasts? Table 3 presents the categories and values worked with by the participants.

Table 3

Values were addressed in the participants by producing podcasts.

Category	Evidence	Sub-category
Dialogue	P2.08': Yes, because various social problems could be discussed through a dialogue, with respect, and in which they present arguments to get a solution.	Respect
	P4.012': They also serve to raise awareness among the audience about the problem and how to solve and/or avoid it.	Awareness
Solutions	P1.015': All types, things that we are ashamed to ask or clarify, can be solved in a podcast.	Self-esteem Clarification
	P2.018': I think it might work, but it depends on the problem and how the podcast is handled for finding a fear solution	Fairness
Importance	P5.022': We must be aware of these issues, Gender equity	Awareness
Participation	P7.028': It may be, but the host of the podcast should be capable of regulating their own understanding and emotions, self-regulating.	Understanding Autoregulation
	P2.034': Yes because it is communicated to other people expecting a change.	Communication

5. Discussion

Based on prior research and the results obtained, the research team agrees with Cárdenas & Ramirez (2021), who confirm that the implementation of podcasts improves students' oral expression in the English language, fostering autonomous and collaborative learning at the same time. Therefore, the results show that teacher trainees learned more effectively about the topics they talked through the podcasts due to the research process they had to face in addition to the peer contribution of details to the conversation during the podcast.

The research presents participants talking through sensitive topics, such as gender biases, with teacher trainees. Thus, Andrus et al. (2018) state that teachers are to provide a bias-free learning environment, dismantling stereotypes and removing gender barriers. It lined up with the survey administered (Graphic 4), where teacher trainees consider that these issues should be addressed to raise awareness on these topics if they are talked correctly.

The research also emphasizes that SDG 4 promotes an equitable and inclusive education for students, regardless of their gender, culture, or socioeconomic situation. In connection with the issue previously mentioned, podcasts can serve as effective educational practices, promoting engagement with content that focuses on equity and participation for all.

Similarly, SDG 5 conveys gender stereotypes in the classroom, planning strategies for teachers that allow them to identify biased practices. Using podcasts to raise awareness about gender equity can improve critical thinking and promote social development among students and teachers.

The results of student's perception of podcasts as important learning tools aligns to Abdullayevna (2019) and Wakefield et al. (2022), stating that podcasts are more creative and confidence boosting for students, adding that these pedagogical innovations lead to a form of social innovation, new skills needed where the communication teacher-student will be more effective ensuring a better achievement of the pedagogical activity. In addition, the results show that participants consider podcasts to be flexible, updated, and community-based learning tools, especially for discussing any sensitive topics.

The results are based on a limited sample and a specific context. The results vary if applied to different educational environments or with larger samples. Moreover, the difficulties encountered throughout the process of creating a podcast, such as the recording process and communication. It meant a starting obstacle to execute activities for gender equity promotion; however, they led to the development of technical skills and teamwork among the participants. The limitation highlights the need for future research with a larger sample. For future studies, it would be beneficial to enlarge the sample to different educational levels and contexts, also exploring the impact of podcasts on variables like self-esteem, socioemotional skills, or active participation in social debates.

6. Conclusión

The review of specialized literature and the results obtained in the empirical part of this study allow the authors to declare the full achievement of the objective of this work: to explore the potential of podcasts to foster reflection on gender inequality in education. It is concluded that 60% of the participants have watched and listened to podcasts, while 35.1% consider podcasts to be great spaces for discussing social issues, useful for expanding knowledge of new topics. Podcasts help improve participants' content knowledge, teamwork skills, and technological proficiency. Regarding the use of a foreign language, podcasts can contribute to practicing listening, pronunciation, and acquiring vocabulary. Podcast production presents challenges in terms of recording, and group work demands significant dedication to planning and execution. The emotions reported were stress (11.2%), frustration (7.9%), and joy (8.5%). Finally, 77% of participants learned about the topic of gender equity through podcast production. These results can be used to design innovative activities that complement current teacher training processes in the field of foreign languages. The use of podcasts creates practice spaces where student teachers can test their knowledge of the selected topic and strengthen soft skills such as emotional intelligence, communication, technology use, and leadership. The study's weakness is its sample size, which does not allow for any generalizations. However, the research generates data and systematizes experiences that contribute appropriately to the innovation of the professional development process for English teachers. Researchers are encouraged to conduct studies on the lines of innovation and human development in teacher training.



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