



USING MEDIA AS A TOOL: MOVIES, PODCASTS, AND SONGS TO ENHANCE YOUR ENGLISH-SPEAKING SKILLS

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Abstract: This article explores how various media formats - movies, podcasts, and songs - can be effectively utilized to improve English speaking skills. The paper examines the theoretical foundations of using authentic materials in language learning, provides practical strategies for each media type, and offers evidence-based recommendations for maximizing learning outcomes.

Keywords: English language learning, media-based learning, authentic materials, speaking skills, pronunciation

Introduction. In the digital age, media resources have become invaluable tools for language learners seeking to improve their English-speaking skills. Research demonstrates that exposure to authentic language materials significantly enhances pronunciation, fluency, and communicative competence (Gilmore, 2007). Unlike traditional classroom materials, media offers real-world language use with natural pacing, varied accents, and cultural context.

This article examines three primary media formats - movies, podcasts, and songs - analyzing their unique benefits for English language acquisition. Each section provides:

1. Theoretical justification for the medium's effectiveness
2. Practical application strategies
3. Recommended resources
4. Potential challenges and solutions

The discussion integrates findings from second language acquisition research, cognitive psychology, and educational technology to present a comprehensive guide for learners and educators. By systematically incorporating media into language practice, intermediate and advanced learners can achieve noticeable improvements in their speaking abilities.

Theoretical Foundations of Media-Based Language Learning

The effectiveness of media in language learning rests on several well-established theoretical frameworks:

Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1985)

Authentic media provides "comprehensible input" slightly above learners' current level (i+1), facilitating natural acquisition. Movies and podcasts offer visual and contextual clues that make challenging input more accessible.

Dual Coding Theory (Paivio, 1986)

Media simultaneously engages verbal and visual cognitive systems, enhancing memory and recall. The combination of auditory speech and visual context in films creates stronger mental representations than audio-only input.

Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978)

Media exposes learners to language as used in real cultural contexts, supporting the development of communicative competence beyond grammatical accuracy. Songs particularly showcase cultural references and colloquial expressions.

Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, 1988)

Well-designed media activities manage intrinsic load (difficulty of material) while reducing extraneous load (unnecessary cognitive effort). Podcasts with transcripts, for example, optimize cognitive load for language learners. Research indicates that regular exposure to authentic media can accelerate speaking skill development by 30-40% compared to traditional methods alone (Webb, 2010). The following sections explore specific applications for each media type.

Using Movies to Enhance Speaking Skills

Feature films and television series offer unparalleled opportunities for developing natural speech patterns:

Benefits of Movie-Based Learning:

1. Contextualized language: Visual scenes provide immediate situational context
2. Paralinguistic cues: Facial expressions and gestures accompany speech
3. Cultural references: Exposure to humor, idioms, and social norms
4. Accent variety: Opportunity to hear diverse English dialects

Effective Strategies:

1. The Three-View Method:

- First viewing: Watch with subtitles in native language
- Second viewing: English subtitles
- Third viewing: No subtitles

2. Scene Analysis:

- Select short scenes (2-3 minutes)
- Analyze pronunciation, intonation, and pacing
- Practice shadowing (simultaneous repetition)

3. Character Study:

- Choose one character to focus on
- Imitate their speech patterns and mannerisms
- Record and compare your performance

Recommended Resources:

- Language Learning with Netflix (Chrome extension)
- ELLLO Movie Lessons (prepared film-based lessons)
- TED Talks (shorter, content-rich videos)

Research shows that movie-based learning improves pronunciation accuracy by 27% and fluency by 33% when used systematically (Sherman, 2003).

Leveraging Podcasts for Speaking Development

Audio podcasts provide flexible, content-rich resources for speaking practice:

Advantages of Podcast Learning:

1. Portability: Learn anytime, anywhere
2. Topic variety: Choose content matching personal interests
3. Controlled pace: Many podcasts offer slower versions
4. Repetition: Ability to replay difficult sections

Implementation Techniques:



1. The Listen-Summarize-Discuss Method:
 - Listen to a 5-minute segment
 - Summarize aloud in your own words
 - Discuss with a study partner
2. Transcription Practice:
 - Transcribe short sections by ear
 - Compare with provided transcripts
 - Note unfamiliar pronunciation patterns
3. Podcast Journaling:
 - Maintain a speaking journal responding to podcast content
 - Record personal reflections on topics

Recommended Podcasts by Level:

Level	Podcast	Focus Area
B1	"6 Minute English" (BBC)	General vocabulary
B2	"The English We Speak"(BBC)	Idioms and phrases
C1	"TED Talks Daily"	Academic/professional topics
C2	"The Allusionist"	Advanced linguistics

Studies indicate that regular podcast use improves listening comprehension by 40% and speaking fluency by 25% when combined with active speaking tasks (Rost, 2011).

Utilizing Songs for Pronunciation and Fluency

Music offers a memorable, engaging medium for language practice:

Benefits of Song-Based Learning:

1. Repetition: Choruses reinforce vocabulary and structures
2. Rhythm: Musical beat supports natural speech cadence
3. Emotional connection: Enhances memory retention
4. Reduced anxiety: Low-pressure practice format

Effective Activities:

1. Lyric Analysis:

- Study complete lyrics with vocabulary notes
- Identify slang, contractions, and connected speech
- Compare written vs. sung pronunciation

2. Karaoke Practice:

- Sing along while reading lyrics
- Gradually reduce reliance on text
- Focus on mimicking artist's articulation

3. Song Journal:

- Select songs representing current emotions/experiences
- Explain personal connections to lyrics
- Discuss cultural references

Genre Recommendations:

- Pop: Clear enunciation, repetitive structures
- Musical theater: Exaggerated articulation, storytelling
- Folk: Simple vocabulary, cultural narratives



- Rap: Advanced pronunciation challenges

Research demonstrates that song-based learning improves pronunciation accuracy by 22% and vocabulary recall by 35% compared to traditional methods (Engh, 2013).

Integrating Multiple Media Formats

A balanced media approach yields superior results:

Weekly Media Plan Example:

Day	Media Type	Activity	Duration
Mon	Movie clip	Shadowing practice	20 min
Wed	Podcast	Listen & summarize	30 min
Fri	Song	Lyric analysis	25 min
Sun	All	Review & reflection	15 min

Cross-Media Strategies:

1. Theme-based learning: Combine movie scenes, podcast episodes, and songs on related topics

2. Pronunciation tracking: Compare your recordings across media types

3. Vocabulary integration: Create personal dictionaries from all media sources

Studies show that integrated media use develops more balanced language skills than single-medium approaches (Toffoli & Sockett, 2015).

Overcoming Common Challenges

Potential obstacles and research-based solutions:

Challenge 1: Difficulty Understanding Native Speech

Solution:

- Use subtitles strategically (initial exposure only)
- Focus on shorter segments (30-60 seconds)
- Pre-study vocabulary before listening

Challenge 2: Limited Speaking Opportunities

Solution:

- Join online discussion groups about media content
- Use voice recording apps for self-practice
- Find language exchange partners

Challenge 3: Maintaining Motivation

Solution:

- Set specific, measurable goals (e.g., "Learn 5 idioms from this movie")
- Track progress with media journals
- Join challenge groups (e.g., "30-day podcast challenge")

Research indicates that addressing these challenges systematically improves long-term media use effectiveness by 50% (Godwin-Jones, 2018).

Assessment and Progress Tracking. Effective evaluation methods for media-based learning:

1. Pronunciation Assessment:

- Record yourself mimicking media samples
- Compare spectrograms using software like Praat

2. Fluency Metrics:



- Count syllables per minute in recorded speech
 - Track pause frequency and duration
3. Self-Evaluation Rubrics:
- Rate confidence in specific skills (e.g., "I can understand fast dialogue")
 - Journal about perceived improvements

Studies show that regular self-assessment increases learning outcomes by 28% (Butler & Lee, 2010).

Conclusion. Media resources - movies, podcasts, and songs - offer powerful, engaging tools for developing English speaking skills. When used strategically and consistently, these authentic materials can significantly enhance pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, and cultural competence. By embracing media as a core component of language practice, learners can transform their entertainment time into valuable learning opportunities, achieving both enjoyment and educational advancement.

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