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PODCAST APPLICATION IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING: THEORETICAL ASPECT

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Abstract. The article is devoted to the theoretical aspects of using podcasting technology in foreign language teaching and learning. This communicative tool of social media has become an important educational instrument due to globalization and the rapid development of information and communication technologies in education. The author has analyzed the peculiarities of using podcasts as a means of mastering foreign languages both in a classroom and for independent work. Different classifications of podcasts have been specified. A thorough analysis of the benefits of using audio podcasts, video podcasts, and screencasts has been carried out. Thus, podcast media can be used as one of the alternative media in foreign language teaching and learning.

Key words: podcast, foreign language, learning and teaching, internet, technology.

Introduction. Nowadays, the Ukrainian higher education is experiencing some constructive changes since its traditional model does not meet the current needs of society (Ivanytska, Dovhan, Tymoshchuk, Osaulchyk, Havryliuk, 2021). The researchers argue that ‘the educational events of the last decade have given impetus to significant changes in the education system in Ukraine’ (Zahorodna, Saienko, Tolchieva, Tymoshchuk, Kulinich, Shvets, 2022, p. 78). Modern foreign language teaching is closely related to innovative processes in education. Growth and technological progress have drastically affected teaching methods. The role of digital resources and interactive techniques has increased recently. Using of up-to-date electronic didactic tools makes learning much more effective (Tymoshchuk, 2022).

The World Wide Web provides the modern teacher of a foreign language with a wide range of technical teaching aids, i.e., websites, e-mail, electronic encyclopedias, blogs, wikis, podcasts, webinars, and video conferencing. Thus, the introduction of multimedia technologies allows teachers to make each lesson different from the previous one. Multimedia technologies add interactivity, and dynamics, making it possible to present information in a more visualized and structured way. Multimedia technologies are a powerful factor in increasing the motivation of students to study higher education.

Podcasting is one of the powerful, emergent technological tools that have been used in education for many years. Podcasts offer language teachers and students a wide range of extra possibilities both inside and outside of the classroom (Naidionova, Ponomarenko, 2018). Researches on podcasting pedagogy have already documented lots of evidences that podcasts can greatly help to develop basic learners’ language skills, especially speaking and listening ones (Kavaliauskienė, Anusienė, 2009; Kardashova, 2015; Samad, Bustari, Ahmad, 2017; Dmytriieva, 2018; Naidionova, Ponomarenko, 2018; Yoestara, Putri, 2019).

The scholars state that podcasts can be widely used for various purposes, such as ‘vocabulary revision, listening exercises, interviews with native speakers, key point summaries of a lecture or group of lectures, sharing announcements, describing homework assignment assessment, giving feedback, guidelines, reducing the effects of isolation and promoting inclusivity, developing students’ study

skills through collaborative learning, providing guidance on student practical work, etc.’ (Carvalho, Aguiar, Santos, Oliveira, Marques & Maciel, 2009: 417).

Analysis of recent studies and publications. According to Dmytriieva, ‘podcasting as an online communication innovative technology is a comparatively new way to inspire learning’ (Dmytriieva, 2018: 162). Due to high-tech development, this approach to teaching English has rapidly become popular among Internet users. Published audio recordings on the Internet with a possibility to download the content were first called a “podcast” in 2004 and a year later, in 2005, the editors of The New Oxford American Dictionary chose the term “podcast” as the “Word of the Year” (Kavaliauskienė, Anusienė, 2009).

Podcasting is a synthesis of two words – “iPod” and “broadcasting”, while the podcast is ‘a digital media file, or a related collection of such files, which is distributed over the Internet using syndication feeds for playback on portable media players and personal computers’ (Ho, 2016). Podcast is an audio publishing to the internet, it is defined as sources academic field and has several kinds of material for learning (Asmawati, 2017).

Such scientists as C. Adams, D. Ashley, O. Baltina, O. Bihych, O. Betsko, D. Bolliger, S. Huette, N. Hrytskyk, L. Jackson, D. Jobbings, O. Kirshova, J. Leach, S. Morhunova, G. Salmon, I. Strashko, S. Shekhavtsova, G. Stanley, D. Warlik have researched various aspects of podcasting technology applying in teaching foreign languages.

Studies on the use of podcasting in foreign language teaching and learning have identified its potentiality in developing learners’ language skills (O’Bryan, Hegelheimer, 2007; Li, 2012). Podcast can accelerate language learners’ learning not just in listening but also in other language areas such as pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, speaking and related learning activities. Ashton-Hay and Brookes argue that podcasting facilitates self-paced learning (Ashton-Hay, Brookes, 2011). Scholars also state that podcasting can function as a tool for developing students’ pronunciation (Ducate, Lomicka, 2009).

The Ukrainian scientists (Hrytskyk, 2015; Drobit, 2011; Shyian, 2010) have researched podcasting technology as an effective tool of teaching English. Dmytrovskyi has focused on peculiarities of podcasting as a main component of Internet radio (Dmytrovskyi, 2017). Naidionova and Ponomarenko have proved that teaching listening to students by using podcasts makes it possible to increase student listening comprehension, as this technology provides students with authentic and contextual material. Their findings also suggest that such listening practice should be an integral part of English teaching at university level (Naidionova and Ponomarenko, 2018).

The purpose of the study. This article intends to broaden existing research on the use of podcasting in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching and learning at Ukrainian universities, to justify the significance of using podcasting technology in foreign language classes and to prove its didactic potential. The findings of this study will be helpful for students, teachers, stakeholders, and researchers to adopt this innovative technology for EFL learning and teaching.

Methods of the study. The study employs a number of general scientific methods (analysis, synthesis, comparison, generalization) as well as highly specialized. The method of literature review is used to summarize educational experience of podcasting use in teaching and learning EFL.

The findings of the study. In this era, technology is important to support learning process. Podcast is one of the products of technology that is now popular in language learning and teaching due to its breakthrough. It has the potential to support and promote a wide range of alternative teaching and learning approaches across all stages of the curriculum in a wide range of contexts and in different locations (Naidionova, Ponomarenko, 2018). Podcast has selections of content that can support language learning. This statement is supported by Rosell-Aguilar findings who conducted a survey on podcast. The scholar states that podcast could attract students’ attention in language learning (Rosell-Aguilar, 2007).

N. Kardashova suggests that teachers might use podcasting to promote personalized and independent learning; engage and motivate students; promote creativity in the classroom; create differentiated materials that can be matched to the abilities, needs and motivation of various learners (Kardashova, 2015).

Podcasting offers a number of potential benefits relating to student learning. Based on literature review, we can name such benefits of podcasts as an EFL learning tool: most podcasts are free; transcripts are available for some podcasts; there are lots of podcasts to choose from on a wide range of topics; user-friendly podcast aggregators are widely available; podcasts can be automatically downloaded; podcasts present authentic topics at natural speed; thousands of podcasts are designed for English language learners; learners can build up their own library and share their favorite podcasts with others; listening to podcasts promotes self-instruction.

Podcasts have their own characteristics. They include the possibilities to place individual user podcasts on the Internet; create a personal zone by each podcast author, which is necessary for organizing a network discussion of the content of the podcast; organize a network discussion of the podcast content using a microblog or a web forum; place messages chronologically when discussing the podcast content (in a blog or on a forum); accessibility as a podcast published on the server can be viewed or listened to by any registered user (Dmytrovskyi, 2017).

There are three main types of podcasts, namely audio podcast, video podcast, and a screencast. Screencasting is basically a digital recording of the computer screen output, often including audio narration. Screencasting is different from screen shooting or screen capturing in that the former contains video captures – visual components similar to a movie – of the computer screen activity accompanied by audio, while the latter provides images of the screen content at a particular time (Kilickaya, 2016).

The scientific literature contains various classifications of podcasts. According to G. Stanley, there are authentic podcasts, teacher podcasts, student podcasts, and educator podcasts (Stanley, 2005). Authentic podcasts are podcasts authored by native speakers. These podcasts were not created for educational purposes. However, they are a valuable resource for improving listening skills, learning new vocabulary, and idioms. Teacher podcasts are aimed at helping students learn a particular topic. Student podcasts are audio or video files recorded by students, usually with the help of a teacher, as a result of individual or group work. There are also educator podcasts, their target audience are teachers, since such podcasts are devoted to various aspects of teaching foreign languages.

Ukrainian scholar Baltina suggests classifying according to other criteria. The researcher classifies podcasts depending on the English language used in the podcast. For example, American or British English. The next criterion is the thematic focus of the podcast. For example, business English, sports, news podcasts, podcasts with recitations of classic English poetry, debates and public speaking, podcasts for children, etc. The scientist also classifies podcasts according to the level of language training of the target audience (Baltina, 2011).

Scientists created a classification of podcasts which they stated as ‘a transferable model of podcasting’. This model has ten variables: Purpose, Convergence, Developer, Medium, Reusability, Structure, Length, Style, Capacity, and Frequency (Salmon, Nie, Edirisingha, 2007).

Portuguese scientists have developed a podcast taxonomy having taken in consideration the following assumptions: podcasts are not used in classroom; podcasts are not lectures recorded in the class during face-to-face sessions; podcasts should be reusable although some types, such as those giving feedback, for instance, are not (Carvalho, Aguiar, Santos, Oliveira, Marques & Maciel, 2009). Their taxonomy model had six variables (Table 1).

It is common knowledge podcasts have a certain topic and publication frequency. The main podcast genres are audio blogs, music, comedy podcasts, audiobooks, educational podcasts, news, politics, radio shows, and sports. When learning a foreign language, you can make the most of this technology, because language as a means of information is also an object of study in this context.

Table 1

Podcast Taxonomy (Carvalho, Aguiar, Santos, Oliveira, Marques & Maciel, 2009)

Podcast Taxonomy					
Type	Medium	Length	Author	Style	Purpose
Informative	Audio	Short	Lecturer	Formal	Inform
Feedback / Comments	Video	Moderate	Student	Informal	Analyze
Guidelines	–	Long	Other	–	Develop
Authentic Materials	–	–	–	–	Motivate

There are already a large number of podcasts on the Internet. English language podcasts cover a wide range of subject matter. Widiastuti has analyzed content types of podcasts (Widiastuti, 2012). They are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Content types of podcasts (Widiastuti, 2012)

Type	Example
Comprehensive	http://www.englishteacherjohn.com/podcast/
Whole lessons	http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/
Vocabulary, idioms, etc.	http://englishteacherjohn.com/
Conversations with script	http://www.e-poche.net/
Jokes	http://www.manythings.org/jokes/
Songs	http://englishpodsong.blogspot.com/
Phonetics, pronunciation	http://phoneticpodcast.com/
Stories	http://www.englishthroughstories.com/
Listening comprehension	http://mylcpodcasts.blogspot.com/

Podcasting holds uses for both learners and teachers and both parties have two alternatives to utilize this tool: using existing podcasts or creating one’s own original podcasts. Figure one shows this two-alternative model created by Rosell-Aguilar (Rosell-Aguilar, 2007: 476).

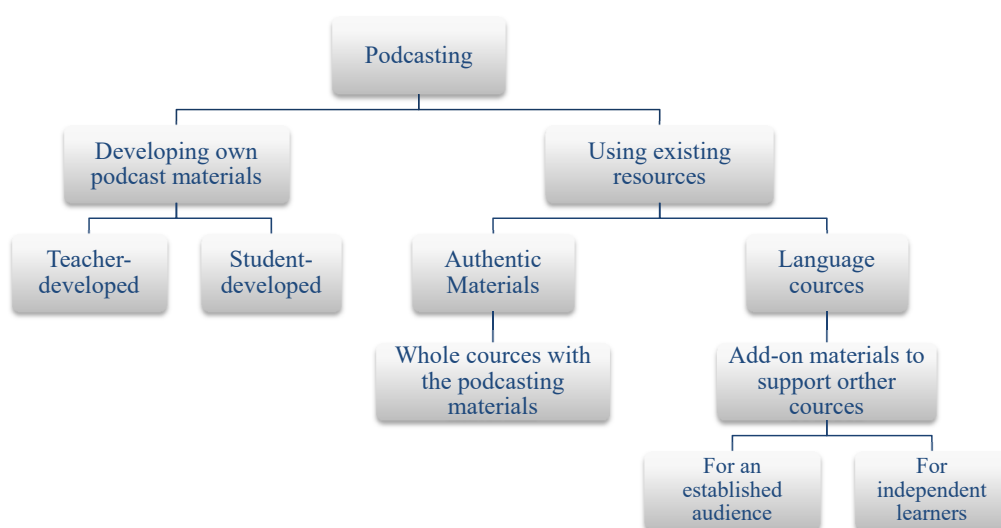


Figure 1. Taxonomy of uses of podcasting for language learning (Rosell-Aguilar, 2007: 476)

According to Shekhavtsova and Protopopova, Internet podcasting technology is based on the following technical and didactic characteristics:

1. Podcasts are authentic, they significantly enrich language knowledge, because they are intended for listening. It is worth noting that the possibility of creating an authentic situation for students improves foreign language learning and makes it motivated.

2. Podcasts are relevant. Learning with the help of podcasts provides an opportunity to replenish regularly the archive with audio and video podcasts from the Internet. It is a unique opportunity to have various files on your computer containing interesting and relevant information from various spheres of life.

3. Podcasts form competence in the field of media and Internet technologies. Using podcasts is very simple and requires no additional effort, but this can be the basis for promising future potential.

4. Work with podcasts can be done autonomously. Autonomy and remoteness are one of the main advantages of the Internet as an educational platform and information resource.

5. Using a mobile technical device outside the educational institution. Students save podcasts both on their personal computers and smartphones providing an opportunity to expand the scope of learning, i.e., access to the podcast outside of school hours provides a chance to study in your spare time. Moreover, the student is able to independently adapt the understanding of a complex audio file in accordance with his own characteristics of information perception.

6. Productivity of the system. First, we play the material at the initial stage of working with podcasts. Then, we do the exercises and tasks that are suggested after listening. As a result, we can create and distribute podcasts ourselves. Therefore, students have the opportunity to work with promising information technology in real life.

7. Interactivity of the system. We interpret interactivity as the creation of comfortable learning conditions under which each student feels his success and intellectual ability. Learning takes place only through constant, active interaction of all students. Podcasting in learning a foreign language provides unlimited opportunities for cooperative interaction, gives the educational process interactivity (Shekhavtsova, Protopopova, 2019).

Both students and teachers can easily find and utilize an unlimited number of resources on such sites that are designed to help them in their language-related studies. For students, for example, such digital tools and learning aids can be really motivating as audio-video resources appeal to digital natives far more than written resources. Working both online and offline (once downloaded) on almost any portable digital device, podcasts remove time and place restrictions. Thus, students hold the option to extend their studies out of the classroom and improve their language skills on their own, which makes them autonomous learners. As podcasts consist of audio and video files, they constitute an invaluable tool that contributes to the development of listening and pronunciation skills. Especially in foreign language learning contexts it is hard to access authentic materials. Podcasts remove this barrier through original speech, dialogues, radio and TV programmes, etc. They also foster other language skills, reading and vocabulary skills in particular. Podcast sites generally offer the transcripts of the audio-video files with accompanying exercises. Accordingly, language learners can reap an integrated benefit from podcasts on their journey to develop language skills. On the other hand, such websites offer benefits for also language teachers. They can bring to-the-point audio-video files to the classroom or ask students to consolidate a specific aspect through a suggested podcast at home.

Podcasts can be used as a repetitive tool, i.e., to repeat the already passed material by means of recorded lectures, including lecture slides and demonstration material (screencasts). Podcasts can also provide supplemental information, for instance, listening to interviews, various additional audio materials on a certain topic, radio programs, announcements, commenting on something, giving instructions on practical work of students, etc. Students find it much more convenient to work with podcasts than with printed publications. They allow them to save time when preparing for class, because some texts

have questions, tasks, and parallel text versions. It is noted that regular listening to a text adapted to the student's ability to perceive a foreign language has a systemic effect on other skills, including general literacy and the ability to perceive and speak a foreign language that is being studied.

It is advisable to listen to the podcast twice. The more times a student listens to the podcast, the faster he gets used to the pronunciation and intonation of the native speaker and understands it. It is recommended to use podcasts at the beginning of the lesson to create a favorable language atmosphere for further work with students ('warm-up'), as well as for the presentation of new vocabulary or grammatical phenomena. Podcasts can also be used for individual training of speaking speed through a simple exercise of imitating the speaker's intonation by trying to repeat his speech after him. You can use podcasts to train in simultaneous translation in classes on the theory and practice of first foreign language translation. Pauses are made during the podcast and students translate the material heard. We use such podcasts as 6 Minute English (a selection of audio materials from the BBC), Luke's English Podcast (a podcast by Luke Thompson, a teacher and comedian from Great Britain who discusses current everyday topics), ESLnewcast.com, EspressoEnglish (podcasts aimed at mastering regular expressions, including explanations of grammatical constructions, idioms, and phrasal verbs). You can use such podcasts for B2 level students as English Lesson Podcast (a selection of materials by the British teacher Jade Joddle), BBC News (quality information about the latest world events from the main news resource), National Public Radio (interesting topics about art, education, and politics), Practical Money Skills (the resource helps to improve language skills and enrich financial terms) (Hlushok, 2017).

Using resources with authentic native speakers, such as podcast, is not defined as a pedagogical approach, but it provides an authentic language context with native speakers who are fluent in their spoken language. Using podcast in test preparation is an option that teachers can use to help the students in learning the English subject. Podcast presents the combination of e-learning with audio, video, and text files, which can instantly replace language laboratories, compact disc, DVD, or radio cassettes, which are usually used in ordinary language classrooms. It makes it easier for the students to be invested in their language learning. Furthermore, it does not only make students able to explore many language inputs, podcast can also stimulate them into the target language because podcast brings authentic English experience to occur in the classroom. Podcast also encourages students to manage their focus on the task, recognize new vocabulary, memorize the sounds of the spoken words, and boost their linguistic competence in order to be a more effective listener. To use a podcast, teacher should prepare the activities that match with the students' ability; that is, podcast with very simple texts should be given to students with lower competence level. From here, they can move to the complicated authentic materials when the students have become advanced.

Conclusions. Podcasts are being used in higher education. Numerous studies on using podcast for teaching and learning foreign language reviewed in this paper make it clear that podcast application is more beneficial and effective than using the traditional 'chalk and talk' method and confirm the efficacy of information and technology applications in EFL learning and teaching contexts. The integration of podcasting can improve academic performance, enhance motivation, and promote learning. We can conclude that a podcast shares similarity with a public library that provides materials or resources straight to users' devices. Podcast is very useful in language learning because it does not only help students master the listening skill, but also motivates students to learn. Podcast allows students to have interaction during the language learning process. Therefore, the use of podcasts for language learning and teaching purposes has definitely several merits; nevertheless, the weak points likely to be involved in the application process should be carefully identified and eliminated as much as possible.

For other researchers who are interested in conducting similar studies. It is good to find out the effect of podcast types (informative, guidelines and feedback) in students' motivation to task achievement.

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