

PODCASTING AS A TECHNICAL WAY OF INTERACTIVE COMMUNICATION OF XXI CENTURY

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The article analyses podcasts, a type of multimedia used for creative tasks, which motivates students and improves their mass media literacy relevant for the use of a foreign language in real-life situations. The article also addresses the didactic potential and the limits of the use of Internet in foreign language training and describes the incredible potential of podcasting for those who wish to listen to a speech in a foreign language and to improve their language skills. Under the current state educational policy the main aim is to ensure the quality of training and the introduction of modern computer technology in education [1].

Keywords: podcasting, computer technology, the quality of teaching, audio texts, audio blog, media literacy, Internet, information and communication technology

Along with education, training and personal development of the students, one of the objectives of foreign language teaching is the formation of communicative competence in a foreign language. Public education of the third generation places high demand on teaching of foreign languages. Such requirements are dictated by necessity: with globalization, global integration and harmonization in the field of economics, politics and culture, large numbers of people from different countries and different continents roam the world in search of jobs, better living conditions, striving to fulfil their intellectual and creative abilities, to meet their ambitions, to achieve professional success and career development, to obtain quality education and training. Consequently, they must be skilled in communicating in a foreign language, from the simplest, basic conversational clichés used in everyday situations, to knowledge of oral and written form of a particular foreign language. This vital need is the best motivation for learning foreign languages. And it does not concern only English, the traditional language of international communication, but also other European languages such as French, German, Spanish, Italian, etc., i.e. languages also necessary for establishing successful business contacts with European partner companies, and for training and working in the EU. Nowadays, knowledge of at least two foreign languages is essential.

With the development of the Internet, its active users have been provided with participatory applications such as blogs or podcasts, and new perspectives for the study of a foreign language have opened up, perspectives associated with people's desire to create and share products in foreign language on the Internet. Success in learning through communication on the Internet has been proved by many studies

and surveys which have confirmed not only improvement of language skills or development of intercultural competence among students, but also an increase in their motivation once the results of their work is published on the Internet for a wide range of users.

Currently, priority in language teaching is given to authentic communication, to language within a cultural context, to independence, and interactive learning. As has been established, the use of the Internet in foreign language teaching enhances speaking, vocabulary learning and grammar. However, even more significant is the use of information and communication technologies in the process of learning a foreign language as the main mode of development of students' independent cognitive activity. These new forms and methods of teaching as well as new approaches to learning are associated primarily with the mental operations of analysis, synthesis and abstraction, identify and compare, comparison, verbal and semantic prediction [2, 284].

Analysis of the latest research and publications

Podcasting, along with other media resources, nowadays represent the essential technical means of learning a foreign language and provide solution to complex problems of foreign language education. Skills generated by listening to podcasts go far beyond mere improving of one's linguistic abilities.

Research questions related to podcasting as a means of interactive communication and identification of related features were among others addressed by M.T. Baimakhanov, T.M. Abdrakhmanov, V.N. Uvarov, A.I. Khud'yakov and A.A. Chernyakov.

The researchers note several advantages of using this technology: the full development of students, the use in teaching different subjects,

including remote maintenance of interdisciplinary communication, and accessibility of education.

This field has also been explored by several Russian scientists, including S.A. Trofimenko, E.E. Tkachenko, B.S. Salin, E.P. Kovalskoy, E.S. Polat, A.P. Avramenko and A. Zelenovsk.

However, in view of the many requirements and challenges of modern methods of teaching a foreign language, our subject of investigation is far from being fully examined. Many theoretical and methodological issues related to podcasting as a means of interactive communication have either not been addressed yet or well understood, and require further scientific scrutiny.

The purpose of the study is to find a way to integrate podcasting in the process of learning a foreign language, to explore the didactical potential of the Internet.

At first glance it may seem that podcasts are applied to a sufficient extent in the education sector. In fact, this is not the case, although with the imagination and creativity of teachers and students, podcasts can give new life to learning. This technology allows you to present new materials and vocabulary to expand the semantic field and train language material, and enhance the social competence of students.

The main results of the study

One of the new means for teaching foreign languages is to create interaction in class, i.e. to apply the method of interactivity. Interactivity is a “union, coordination and complementarity of efforts communicative purpose and effect speech means” [3, 284]. O.N.Shulga defines the interactive approach in the virtual space as one of the means to achieve the purpose of communication in class, differing thus from the principle of communicative presence of true cooperation, where the emphasis is on developing communication and collaboration skills. In a broad sense, the term “interactivity” suggests one of the main principles of learning. Among the major features and interactive tools used are polylogues, dialogues, mental activities, intersubjective relations, freedom of choice, their application in teaching is successful, positive and optimistic [3, 285–286]. By implementing the interactive approaches in modern educational process researchers promise to increase the effectiveness of teaching to communicate in a foreign language [4, 260].

Being interactive, the Internet enables us to achieve self-development through observing and copying other people’s use of the language. The tools of interactive communication provided by the Internet are synchronous communication (real-time communication)

and asynchronous communication (communication with a time delay) [5, 50], such as audio-blogs and podcasts, voice mail and voice forums, digital recording broadcasts or similar programs which are available on the Internet for downloading to a personal audio player [6, 482]. Therefore, podcasting does not only innovate but also modernize the current use of recordings and audio and video clips in teaching. Thanks to online distribution, digital format opens limitless possibilities. For example, users can subscribe to podcasts and receive updates of specific resources. It is the very possibility of subscription that makes podcasts new phenomenon not only in the world of technology, but also in the field of didactics.

From the methodological point of view, podcasts promote the formation of oral language skills. This technology allows teachers to present new materials and vocabulary in order to expand their semantic fields, to practice the language, and to create social competence of students. Podcasts can be applied as material for receptive tasks and also for the development of speaking, training and monitoring of prepared and unprepared speech. Podcasts might also be used for project work. All of the above skills can be formed both in the classroom and outside of it. The advantage of using podcasting in education is their authenticity. On the one hand, students are familiar with their popular content; on the other hand they are receiving the interdisciplinary skills necessary for the use of a foreign language in real life. Moreover, students become more motivated because of the creative value of the materials offered.

Podcasts, or audio blogs, are distributed as separate files, or feeds, at the same address on the Internet, from where they can be easily downloaded into an MP3-player and listened to at the user’s convenience. The word podcast (podcast) combines the words iPod (MP3 player designed by the company Apple) and to broadcast. Hence, the term “podcasting” nowadays means “sharing audio or video on the Internet” [6, 480]. Podcasting means both producing and offering podcasts or video casts. This effective alternative to radio and television does not require any frequency licensing and is available at any time to the listener. As a synthesis of the benefits of Internet and radio (television), podcasting offers incredible opportunities for those who wish to listen to a speech in a foreign language and improve their language skills. An integral feature of the MP3 format is its versatility and availability: it can be recorded and played on computers, MP3 players, and even in modern car stereo

systems. Podcasting presents an ideal, ready-to-broadcast model: the records can be downloaded from the Internet and then listened to at home, in cars or at work. You can select the material of interest: audio diaries, funny stories, political debates or radio shows.

Foreign language teachers who use audio blogs in teaching regularly see two ways of use of podcasts: for listening and for creating information products in class or out of it. However, the essential task of podcasts in education remains to develop auditory receptive skills. Podcasting brings a whole new dimension to listening: the diversity of topics enables listeners to use them in all stages of their language learning. In general, the way we use podcasts coincides with the way we work with common audio texts. It requires a clear sequence of the teachers' and the students' actions (as in the "three-stage model of teaching of listening") [7, 45]: a preliminary pre-task briefing, listening and interpretation of information provided by podcast, and controlling the students' understanding of the text.

The innovation, purpose of the resource (the development of listening, writing, reading and speaking skills), and its creativity attract both teachers and students of language. Interaction can be both synchronous and asynchronous. The products are available at any time. This technical means can be employed both in the classroom and in the self-study. It is important to note the factor of fun and learning efficiency without pressure.

Recently, as the cognitive model of learning along with developing of language skills and communicative competence occupy the central place in language teaching, the so called "language learning awareness" [8, 182], which describes the processes of learning, focused on meta cognitive reflection on language learning, comes into centre of our attention. Similarly to conventional radio and television stations, podcasts are offered by online newspaper, institutions, universities, training centres, etc.

The Internet offers a lot of podcasts on both professional and general topics. Some can help students prepare for international exams, the TOEFL tests, while others are designed for students with low levels of language proficiency. Some even contain ready-made tasks for the students. It has been noted that regular listening to a text adapted to the student's abilities in the foreign language, has a systemic effect on all his other skills, including total literacy and their ability not only to understand, but also to speak in the target language.

The major genres of podcasts include audio blogs, or online diary, music podcasts, comedy podcasts, audio books, educational podcasts,

interviews, news, politics, radio plays, radio shows, games and sports.

To address the challenges of learning a foreign language deserves a special attention of educational podcasts. Now, many European and U.S. colleges and universities prepare their training podcasts. At the same time podcast are used by professors to spread information on the latest scientific advances, and by students to share their knowledge and other useful information.

Educational podcasts devoted to the study of foreign languages can solve a number of methodological problems, including formation of auditory skills, understanding native pronunciation, vocabulary expansion and enrichment, establishment and improvement of grammar, as well as enhancement of listening and pronunciation skills and development of speaking and writing skills.

When teaching speaking in the target foreign language, teachers should use this technology to its maximum potential, because in this context the language is both a means of communication and the object of study. Podcasts in learning and teaching contribute to:

- raising motivation to study foreign languages;
- free selection of the phonetic material according to interest;
- formation of listening skills and the ability to perceive different styles of speech with different accents and intonations;
- improvement of speaking skills.

Nowadays, students can take advantage of a number of web sites with podcasts designed exclusively for the study of the English language with content covering various topics. Based on their content we distinguish the following categories of podcasts:

1. Podcasts aimed at developing listening skills. Such programs include traditional listening exercises.
2. Podcasts aimed at conducting classes in English. Audio files of this type are designed to lead a whole English lesson and are usually accompanied by hand-outs and lesson plans.
3. Podcasts working with lexical material. This type is widely used, probably because of their simplicity: the author simply selects a word, phrase or idiom, explains their meaning and provides examples of their practical use in spoken language.
4. Podcasts accompanied by a secondary text. Synopsis of the audio file can be used to provide support during listening.
5. Podcasts-jokes are a playful way to make learning English more interesting and to encourage students to a particularly careful listening.

Podcasts-songs contain songs specially selected for the study of English as a foreign language.

6. Phonetics enhancing podcasts aim to practicing the pronunciation of English sounds and phrasal stress.

7. Podcasts-stories contain stories, usually accompanied by assignments to check understanding [11, 40].

8. Podcasts are applied as appropriate material for the development of speaking, training and monitoring of prepared and unprepared speech.

Increasing the efficiency of foreign language teaching, podcasts help to intensify, customize and organize the educational process. Podcasts develop the students' autonomy and their critical thinking. Moreover, as a mobile learning tool they implement active forms of learning, standards of modern education and student-centred teaching [9, 22].

Due to didactic qualities and doubtless results in teaching of foreign languages, podcasting can be used as a means of:

- Expanding the boundaries of the learning environment (learning in classroom and during extracurricular time);
- Organizing intercultural communication via the Internet;
- dissemination of educational material (lectures, additional course materials) created by teachers;
- Providing additional practice in target language for students;
- authentic information for students studying foreign cultures;
- Distributing administrative and organizational information, such as schedules and announcements;
- Revising materials from previous lessons;
- Preparing students for lectures and practical exercises;
- Reducing psychological difficulties in studying a foreign language.

Nowadays, podcasts are used in three following ways:

- 1) Onsite listening without downloading;
- 2) Listening after downloading to a personal computer, mobile phone, MP3 player, iPod;
- 3) Creating podcasts for further distribution to Internet users.

As part of the above-mentioned methods, when working with podcasts in learning a foreign language learner can also create podcasts for themselves without further publication, i.e. only for their training of pronunciation or intonation. It must be noted that to work with podcasts users do not need any special technical equipment, such as iPod, MP3 player and mobile phone, they only supply portability process of listening. Even without access to the Internet the user will be able to listen to podcasts on their computer. Podcasts can be

played to traditional language audiences from loudspeakers connected to any device playing podcasts from your own music library or the Internet. For audio casts such devices are phones, smart phones and iPods. In groups of 10-12 people video casts can be viewed on laptops and tablet computers. In a wider audience these devices may be used in combination with a stationary or portable projector.

Didactic potential of podcasting is based on key technical and didactic characteristics of the Internet:

1. Authenticity. A large number of podcasts are adapted to use in language teaching, with accompanying texts, manuscripts, notes on the level of complexity, and didactic recommendations, as well as assignments to the proposed passage. They can be used at different stages of learning a foreign language. When facing an authentic situation, students see the process of learning a foreign language as particularly exciting, motivating and effective.

2. Topicality. Podcasting system allows users to regularly update their archives with new audio and video content from the Internet. By signing up, their podcasts are automatically updated every day on their computers, with information on the latest developments in the various spheres of life. This information can be used in or outside of their classes.

3. Competence in the field of media. Podcasts are rather simple to use: you just download the podcasts you want in MP3 format to your computer or other media. Such technical possibility enables the students to explore new means of training and motivate them to further independent and group work.

4. Autonomy. One of the main advantages of the Internet as a learning platform is the autonomy allowed to the language student. They can adjust the use to their needs, to their pace of learning and level of knowledge. If students can themselves determine the conditions of their studying process, their learning outcome will not only match but even surpass the outcome achieved by traditional teaching methods.

5. Multichannel perception. Podcast service often offers training materials, which are based on a combination of a number of audio, photo or video images as well as text material. This makes it possible to use a single multiclass training materials, i.e. simultaneously involve different organs of perception, which, of course, increases the possibility of receptive students, is an important key to understanding the information in a foreign language, and as a consequence, the incentive to oral or written statements on the topic.

6. Mobility of the technical means (MP3 player) allows you to access the podcast content at any time and off campus, in this case to talk about expanding the learning environment.

Access to such funds, as a podcast, outside of training sessions a chance to study in their spare time and the opportunity to work in accordance with the personal receptive skills, adapt understanding of the complex audio passages to individual peculiarities of perception. This frees up listening to bad halo obligations or tasks of high complexity.

7. Multifunctionality. Podcasting system is multifunctional, it can help in learning a foreign language can develop several kinds of language skills: Listening, along with the classic is to improve current skills of oral and written language, besides podcasts provide knowledge about the diversity of the language and culture of the target language in a comfortable environment for the listener.

8. Productivity. Using of generic materials is one aspect of working with podcasts on the employment of foreign language and to create and redistribute their own podcasts – other. In terms of productivity podcasting is a strong impetus to the activities of a foreign language in terms of the activity approach. Creating and publishing network audio or video materials, students work with advanced information technology in the real world.

9. Interactivity. At the present stage of development of the Internet interactivity is the main idea of the concept of Web 2.0, according to which it is important not only consumption, but also the active interaction between people online. Integration of podcasting in learning a foreign language with its possibilities of cooperative interaction is the best format interactive learning process.

Conclusion

The rate of development of modern information and communication technologies can talk about current and future of this area. Podcasting offers opportunities to ensure the quality of learning a foreign language because of the availability of this technology, cognition, self-intensification of work [12]. Taking all this into account, we can conclude that the podcast is a media source of information, along with other resources essential technical means of distance learning a foreign language, which allows solving complex problems of foreign language education.

In general, the technology podcast coincides with the technology working on audio texts and has a clear sequence of the actions of the teacher and students: a preliminary briefing and pre-task, the process of perception and interpretation of information podcast, job controlling heard understanding of the text. Selecting or developing an exercise podcasts aimed at the formation of auditory skills and skills of listening, consider the levels of different types of jobs.

Thus, the above features podcasts provide a new quality of the process of learning a foreign

language in high school, and was highly motivated students, initiative, commitment, thereby increasing the effectiveness of the educational process, and creates the conditions for the formation of the skills required in the modern graduate careers. Furthermore, the use of podcasts in learning mobility demonstrates the modern education system and timely adaptation to innovation.

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