

UDC 372.8  
SCSTI 16.01.45

## PODCASTS AS THE TOOL FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

T.O. Moldabayeva<sup>1</sup>, I.A. Olkova<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>NKSU named after M. Kozybaev, Petropavlovsk, Kazakhstan

### Abstract

In this article we highlight the importance of using podcasts in a foreign language classroom. Our main aim is to illustrate the benefits of such digital materials. We also propose the methodology of teaching via podcasts as an additional tool. Moreover, one should take into account the selection criteria and the steps of podcasting to have better results in the integration of podcasts in the lesson. The steps such as writing the text, recording using voice recorder, editing the recorded file via Audacity, and publishing the results on the podcasts web site are considered to be the basics of creating podcasts. Discussing the advantages of podcasts, we also emphasize the need of using them only as additional instruments for teaching with follow-up activities.

The information presented in this article can be used as recommendations for teachers of foreign languages who intend to use additional opportunities in teaching foreign languages. The article briefly demonstrates the possibilities of effective and professional work with podcasts. This material is recommended for all teachers who are interested in adding podcasts to their curriculum.

**Key words:** podcasting, methodology, criteria, listening, foreign languages, additional tool, educators, curriculum.

## ПОДКАСТЫ КАК ИНСТРУМЕНТ ДЛЯ ОБУЧЕНИЯ ИНОСТРАННОМУ ЯЗЫКУ

Молдабаева Т.О.<sup>1</sup>, Олькова И.А.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>СКГУ им. М. Козыбаева, Петропавловск, Казахстан

### Аннотация

В этой статье мы подчеркиваем важность использования подкастов на уроке иностранного языка. Наша главная цель - проиллюстрировать преимущества таких цифровых материалов. Мы также предлагаем методику обучения с помощью подкастов в качестве дополнительного инструмента. Кроме того, необходимо учитывать критерии выбора и этапы подкастинга, чтобы иметь лучшие результаты при интеграции подкастов на занятии. Такие шаги, как написание текста, запись с использованием диктофона, редактирование записанного файла с помощью Audacity и публикация результатов на веб-сайте подкастов, считаются основами создания подкастов. Обсуждая преимущества подкастов, мы также подчеркиваем необходимость их использования только в качестве дополнительных инструментов для обучения с последующей деятельностью.

Информация, представленная в этой статье, может быть использована в качестве рекомендаций для учителей иностранных языков, которые намерены использовать дополнительные возможности в преподавании иностранных языков. В статье кратко демонстрируются возможности эффективной и профессиональной работы с подкастами. Данный материал рекомендуется для всех учителей, которые заинтересованы в добавлении подкастов в свои учебные планы.

**Ключевые слова:** подкасты, методология, критерии, аудирование, иностранные языки, дополнительный инструмент, преподаватели, учебный план.

## ПОДКАСТТАР ШЕТ ТІЛІН ОҚЫТУҒА АРНАЛҒАН ҚҰРАЛ РЕТІНДЕ

Т.О. Молдабаева<sup>1</sup>, И.А. Олькова<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>М. Қозыбаев атындағы СҚМУ, Петропавл, Қазақстан

### Андатпа

Бұл мақалада подкасттарды шет тілі сабағында қолданудың маңыздылығын атап өтеміз. Біздің негізгі мақсатымыз - осындай сандық материалдардың артықшылықтарын көрсету. Қосымша құрал

ретінде подкасты оқыту әдістерін ұсынамыз. Сонымен қатар, сабақта подкасттарды біріктіру кезінде жақсы нәтижеге қол жеткізу үшін таңдау критерийлері мен подкастингтің кезеңдерін ескеру қажет. Мәтін жазу, дауыстық жазғыштың көмегімен жазу, Audacity көмегімен жазылған файлды өңдеу және нәтижелерін подкаст веб-сайтына жариялау сияқты қадамдар подкасттар құру негізі болып саналады. Подкасттардың артықшылықтарын талқылау кезінде біз оларды қосымша оқытудың қосымша құралы ретінде ғана қолдану қажеттілігін атап өтеміз.

Осы мақалада келтірілген ақпарат шет тілдерін оқытуда қосымша мүмкіндіктерді пайдаланғысы келетін шет тілдерінің мұғалімдері үшін ұсыным ретінде пайдаланылуы мүмкін. Мақала подкасттармен тиімді және кәсіби жұмыс жасау мүмкіндіктерін қысқаша баяндайды. Бұл материал оқу бағдарламаларына подкаст қосуға қызығушылық танытқан барлық мұғалімдерге ұсынылады.

**Түйінді сөздер:** подкасттар, методология, критерийлер, тыңдалым, шет тілдері, қосымша құрал, мұғалімдер, оқу жоспары.

### **Introduction**

It is well observed from different fields of life that we live in a highly digitalized world. Such digitalization is also implemented in foreign language teaching. For example, the use of mobile applications and video files can be an illustration of multimedia technologies integration. Moreover, a podcast application in teaching non-native languages is becoming more and more popular due to its long list of benefits.

### **The research methods**

First of all, the notion of «podcast» should be clarified to give a clear definition of the word. According to the Oxford Dictionary, the term «podcast» is derived from the combination of the words «iPod» and «broadcast». It credits «pod» from iPod and «cast» from «broadcast». The most extended interpretation for this word: series of digital and video recordings uploaded on the web with the aid of Rapid Simple Syndication feeds. Podcasts are an extremely useful tool for the learning process. There are lots of benefits of its usage in a classroom of foreign languages [1].

The foremost advantage of podcasts is the availability at any time and in any place. For instance, students, as well as teachers, can download such audio files to their smartphones and listen to them during the classroom activity.

The other advantage based on the fact that students can have their own pace while learning using the podcast application. One can pause it at any time or listen to the file again so that to ensure the comprehension.

Podcasts might be a brilliant instrument to save teachers' time. While explaining a new topic, educator spends much time. Instead of it, he or she can give a home task to listen to a new material via podcasts so that to spend classroom time for more practical activities. There are several ways to prepare the content for learners [2].

On the one hand, teachers can use ready podcasts on the topic that are available at the web portal. In this case, teachers do not need to create the content themselves. However, an audio material that will be presented for students should be carefully chosen, and if necessary, edited according to the aim of the lesson plan.

On the other hand, teachers can create the content themselves if there is a lack of material. This path is more complex and takes time. For creating their podcasts, teachers need to fulfill the following steps: prepare the content, record, edit, publish. The last step depends on the educators' preference. Further, these four steps will be described in detail [3].

### **The research results**

The first process of creating a podcast is to prepare the content. By the content it is meant the text that will be written on the topic of the lesson. This text can be based on the

prepared lecture that students should know, or teachers can write a new text as the result of the interview with the experts in the considered field.

The second step is to record the prepared content. In order to record the voice, teachers can use a Dictaphone if they have one. In the case, if they do not have such a tool, then the simplest way is to use a particular application on the smartphone. This standard application is called Dictaphone, and one can download it on the play market or App store, but mostly it is already set standard application on the phone. It is advisable to record the text in smaller spaces to avoid the echo. If one does not have such an opportunity, then people can use a blanket so that to make more clear recording.

The third step of creating a podcast is editing the recorded file. For this purpose, one can use a wide variety of different programs. One of such editing programs is known as Audacity. This is the most attractive program for editing audio files due to the following advantages: high quality, simple to use, and free. Using Audacity, teachers can cut the piece of audio files, and put the pieces in a different arrangement.

Furthermore, there is a possibility of adding any music by taste. It will make a podcast more expressive. After editing the file, teachers can download that in an MP3 format.

The last but not the least step is to publish the podcast on the website. One of such websites is Podomatic, where podcasts can be published. This step is not required from teachers, but can be done depending on teachers' preference. By publishing the podcast on the Podomatic, educators can spread this material to the broader audience.

Following these all four steps, teachers create a lecture material in the form of a podcast. However, the creation of such audio files is not an easy process, and requires some effort and time. The other handicap is that not all teachers are willing or able to invest time and effort into this. That is why the first option, which is based on ready podcasts, might be more suitable for teachers [4].

Viewing all the available podcast sites, a list of preferable choices can be made. The most popular are PodOmatic and BBC podcasts. They can be accessed via the following links ([www.podomatic.com](http://www.podomatic.com), [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)).

Among all the podcast sites, a special place should be given for Ted Talks. They are the series of beneficial podcasts, which can also be accessed by YouTube. Ted Talks is made for minds and used for spreading ideas. The critical point of such podcasts is that experts from different fields deliver a speech in the auditorium full of intellectuals. Ted-Ed might be used for more informative purposes, such as the process of how the gum is made or any other stuff. Moreover, there is a full course of video lessons, which are free and available by subscription. Teachers can choose an episode from a broad range of podcasts and present it during the lesson [5].

For choosing a podcast educators need to remember simple criteria such as the topic, duration, and relevance. It seems evident that episodes need to be chosen on a topic of the future lesson, but sometimes, when there is no such podcast, it is advisable to find the most relevant one. It is usually impossible not to find a podcast on the topic as there are a variety of discussed areas. The other important criterion is its duration. A usual Ted Talks podcast lasts 15 minutes or less, which is an ideal duration. However, there are some podcast episodes that can last for half an hour or more. During the lesson, it is better to use the podcast with less duration, because in other way, students will be bored and distracted. The other criterion to remember is the relevance, which means that the podcast should correlate with the objectives of the lesson.

The next question is concerned with the following-up activities for teachers, and will sound as follows: «What kinds of activities need to be used after listening to podcasts?» The answer to this question can be extended as there are varieties of different activities that might be important to consider. For example, students can work in pairs to express their opinions about the speech on a specific topic. Another way is to collaborate in groups creating questions to each other based on the content of the podcast. Moreover, learners might prefer dialogue and vivid discussion. Exchange with opinions may also be implemented in the form of a round table, group discussion, and quiz. Also, depending on the age of students and content of the podcast, teachers could use interactive games such as exchanging their seats based on their judgments, e.g., «for» or «against», «true» or «false» and so on.

According to the research done in this field, students adore when teachers use podcasts. The level of motivation to study a foreign language goes up, and learners become to feel more confident speaking this particular language. The key underlying this positive result is that one can listen to the speech of a native speaker. Application of podcasts can not only set a natural environment but also gives a practical illustration of their accents, which students can imitate; therefore, the fluency of speech will increase [6].

Moreover, using podcasts in a classroom of non-native language can boost learners' listening ability. It might be highlighted first as anyone can see a close link between listening to podcasts in a foreign language, and improving the ability of listening to this language, understanding the content more clearly. However, if the teacher intends to develop students' listening skills, then it is not just enough to listen. Listening activity should be implemented in combination with following-up activities such as gap filling, open quizzes, etc. Also, it is advisable to follow the principles of listening, which includes pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening [7].

Pre-listening activity ought to be used before listening to the chosen podcast. This might be any type of questions about the topic of the podcast so that to prepare the student to listen to the speech about it. It can also be an association field written on the desk, where learners can give examples connected with the discussed topic. The way of introducing the topic and preparing for listening to a foreign language might be different, and the list of examples can be extended depending on the teachers' creativity.

While-listening activity is considered to be some assignment that is performed by students during the listening activity. The most suitable exercise for such kind of activity is to do filling gap exercise when learners need to find a necessary word from the content to fill the gap. The other exercise is matching, when students match the suitable word with pictures or definitions. Teachers can also give a task to describe a speaker taking into account its gender, accent, and mood. The one thing important to remember here is that while-listening activity should not require too much thinking ability due to the fact that listeners will be already engaged listening; and therefore it would be difficult to do simultaneously two activities.

Post-listening activity includes the exercises concerned with the checking the gained information. For this purpose, one might use different kind of questions such as When?, Where?, What?, How? and Why? These five questions would help us to understand the content. Some teachers would also prefer to give the scripts after listening to the podcast so that to avoid any misunderstanding. In this case, the script might include definitions some terms used by speakers of the podcasts. The different way of testing the comprehension is to listen to the students' impression of the podcast. It can be implemented in the form of feedback. Anyway, post-listening activity is one of the main activities which should not be neglected.

Furthermore, the use of podcasts in foreign language teaching can lead to positive results, which will be illustrated in the improvement of not only speaking and listening skills, but also writing and reading. Teachers might give an assignment to write a composition or an essay on the topic of podcast. Such essay can be written in the form of feedback to the discussed issue. In order to improve reading skill, one might consider reading the script and the other materials on the topic of the podcast. In addition, students can be also grouped to perform project work. The aim of the project work would be to research the given topic reading different resources of information.

### **Conclusion**

To sum up, many benefits of using podcasts in a classroom of foreign languages are observed. Implementation of podcasts results in improvement of listening, speaking, writing and reading skills. Moreover, teachers of foreign languages can create their own podcasts which is a great way of presenting a new material for the students. However, podcast can be only considered as the tool for foreign language teaching, and not as the substitution of the entire classroom activity. For this purpose, there are pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening assignments as well as the other forms of activities for conducting a lesson.

### **References:**

1. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (7th ed.). (2007). Podcast. New York: Oxford University Press.
2. Beare, Kenneth (2006). Introduction to English learning Podcasts. Available at <http://esl.about.com>
3. Chan, W. M., Chen, I. R., & Döpel, M. (2011). Podcasting in foreign language learning: Insights for podcast design from a developmental research project.
4. Kim, D., & King, K. (2011). Implementing podcasts with ESOL teacher candidates' preparation: Interpretations and implication. *International Forum of Teaching and Studies*, 7(2), 5-19.
5. Ashraf, H., Noroozi, S., & Salami, M. (2011). E-listening: The Promotion of EFL Listening Skill via Educational Podcasts, 10-17.
6. Stephens, M. (2007). All about Podcasting. *Library Media Connection*, 25(5), 54-57.
7. G. Cambell: There's Something in the Air: Podcasting in Education. *EDUCAUSE Review*, 40, 6 (2005).