

USING PODCASTS IN DEVELOPING FOREIGN LANGUAGE LISTENING SKILLS

The article is aimed at studying the role of information and communication technologies in foreign language education as well as at detailed study of specifics of work with podcasts in the process of learning a second foreign language as a tool for formation and development of listening skills. The issues of updating information and increasing students' motivation through using authentic materials have been considered. Three major challenges that modern teachers will face in the nearest future have been analyzed with a focus on social media and changes in educational cooperation.

In terms of an increasingly pressing issue of learners' autonomy, it has been proved that Web-based resources encourage working individually and create a comfortable learning setting for different groups of students. Modern students are characterized as part of a new, digital generation, which calls for transformation in educational setting. Thus, the notion of learners' autonomy has been studied in connection with the demand for more individual activity of students in view of new opportunities provided by ICT.

This trend has been closely researched within the area of acquiring information and the nature of information itself. The peculiarities of working with ICT within the scope of foreign language teaching have been studied. The following advantages of using podcasts in a foreign-language classroom have been identified: actuality of podcast information, that is constantly updated; authenticity of language material as native speakers produce academic podcasts; opportunity to engage in real speech making out an individual, regional and other features and manners of speaking; motivation in extensive learning; experiencing emotions that go along with acquiring new information. Audio podcasts are generally divided into two groups: for language learners and for native speaking audiences, ranging from grammar tips and idioms to film reviews and documentaries.

Key words: *audio podcast, Web-resources, listening skills, information and communication technology, foreign language learners, authentic materials.*

The ability to successfully combine modern and traditional forms of foreign language teaching do not only show one's pedagogical creativity, but enhances students' effective professional training as well. Reasonable exploitation of information and communication technology (ICT) can balance classroom and extra curriculum activity of English language learners (ELLs) and motivate them for better results in language education.

When talking about ICT, we mean all Web-based technology and social media that enable new forms of cooperation in educational setting. Teachers' ambition for using this Web-based technology is more than justified by the overall tendency for expanding classroom boundaries and creating opportunities for worldwide education. An unrestricted access to Web-based resources encourages working individually and creates an increasingly pressing issue of learners' autonomy.

The problem of introducing ICT into the process of teaching foreign languages is widely discussed in scientific investigations (T. Erben, K. P. King, T. Rank, N. Selwyn, M. Thomas, A. Vasquez, C. Warren), while the issue of teaching listening through new technology and Web-resources still leaves room for further research.

The growing focus on learners' autonomy in all fields (far beyond the realm of language education) constitutes a dramatic change in both providing and acquiring information. Nowadays educators face problems with information that constantly becomes outdated and with students who demonstrate a radically new approach to mastering this information. Dealing with modern students as part of digital generation calls for transformation in educational cooperation. The demand for more individual activity of students is becoming evident as much scientific research is focused on learners' autonomy nowadays. This trend is closely connected with the change of acquiring information and the nature of information itself.

In view of digital era and the implementation of social media into everyday life, N. Selwyn proposes three major challenges that modern teachers will face in the nearest future:

1. Social media and new types of learners (changing nature of the students who are entering university, with young people now used to having increased control over the nature and form of what they do, as well as where, when and how they do it. Social media applications are seen to reflect (and to some extent drive) more flexible, fluid and accelerated ways of being).

2. Social media and new types of learning (reflecting in the notion of connectivism – the idea that learning in a social media age now rests upon the ability to access and use distributed information on a 'just-in-time' basis. From this perspective, learning can be seen as an individual's ability to connect to specialized information nodes and sources as and when required).

3. Social media and new forms of higher education provision (a major educational implication of social media is the apparently changing nature of learners' relationships with information and knowledge, supporting forms of knowledge consumption and knowledge construction that are very different to the epistemological principles of formal education and individualized instruction) [7].

The purpose of this paper is to consider the effect of ICT on language education and to analyze podcasting as a powerful tool in developing foreign language listening skills.

Modern ICT provides opportunities for learners' autonomy and unlimited access to authentic information about foreign languages and country studies. Within the scope of foreign language teaching ICT can contribute to: 1) quicker and easier ways of obtaining the necessary information; 2) motivating students to mastering a foreign language; 3) active participating in one's education as well as learners' autonomy; 4) enhancing students' interest in intercultural communication and their motivation to become rightful partners in an intercultural dialog.

Web-based technology in foreign language teaching develops different language skills and provides us with new accessible material in general and authentic listening sources, in particular, as "digital resources can assist with the process of making features of language noticed and more comprehensible" [8, p. 174].

In the scope of foreign language learning, listening is generally viewed as "uni-directional listening where the person seeking comprehension does not interact with the speaker(s) as when listening to a lecture, radiobroadcast or an announcement" [4]. In order to improve their listening skills, students have to do a lot of active listening, often in class setting.

Listening is one of the four skills that are required for a successful interaction and, with many textbooks dedicated specifically to the skill of listening, yet it does not enjoy proper attention in second language acquisition research.

According to the approach suggested by Mary Underwood, who was among the first to insist on authenticity in teaching foreign language listening skills, the process of listening can be divided into 3 parts: pre-listening (vocabulary activation and background knowledge), while-listening ("developing the skill of eliciting messages"), post-listening (listening skills) [9]. The same division is applied to the process of listening to podcasts as a source of authentic real-life speech. One of the most effective means of improving such skills via ICT is podcasting.

As "new Web-based technology can distribute and provide access to audio files" [6, p. 3], podcasts are digital audio or video files, which are produced and available online. The origin of the word "podcast" is interpreted as one coming from a blending of two words "*iPod*" and "*broadcasting*", while the term "Pod" comes from an expression "*play on demand*".

There is a difference between podcasts and any other digital file, as podcast has the capability to be syndicated. Podcasts are generally divided into two groups [2, p. 142]: one is specific for language learners and the other designed for native speaking audiences.

Podcasts	
Podcasts for ELLs	Podcasts for native speaking audiences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - theme based conversation; - English language hints, - grammar tips; - culture; - vocabulary; - idioms; - everyday conversation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - news; - film reviews; - education topics; - science reports; - documentaries, - theatre; - history; - comedy; - politics; - sports

According to Carol Ewans, listening to ready-made podcasts can function as: 1) development and refinement of listening skills; 2) memory aids for the learning of key materials; 3) revision of key topics for examination; 4) revision of lesson material in an out-of-school setting; 5) pupil engagement in peer assessment; 6) supporting independent learning; 7) supporting students with specific learning needs; 8) supporting students who have missed classes [3, p. 193-194].

The advantages of using podcasts in a foreign language classroom can be summed up as following: actuality of podcast information, that is constantly updated; authenticity of language material as native speakers produce academic podcasts; opportunity to engage in real speech making out an individual, regional and other features and manners of speaking; motivation in extensive learning; experiencing emotions that go along with acquiring new information.

Podcasting is often viewed as a two-way street useful both for students and teachers, providing opportunities for personal and professional growth as "the podcasting experience is also one of learning new skills and learning about self... being a medium that affords discovery as it can involve a depth of the individual" [5, p. 6].

In our opinion, working with podcasts is most effective when proper attention is paid to the following:

1. Attracting attention to sounds and intonation of a particular podcast as it is not less important than actual listening comprehension. Making notes on intonation, extracting certain phrases and shadowing them individually is an appropriate way to learn more about phonetic peculiarities of a foreign language.

2. To demonstrate adequate comprehension of a podcast, students are supposed to grasp the meaning of what is being said, make up a plan of the audio-track, indicate the general idea and be able to retell it in class.
3. Students' reaction to podcasts is important to enable peer discussion and evaluation.
4. To retell and discuss a podcast students are supposed to make up a list of words and meanings used [1, p. 154].

As the teaching experience shows, working with ICT and using podcasts exerts a three-dimensional influence: enriching audio listening activities, developing students' pronunciation and building basic phonetic skills. Working with a podcast, students are engaged in familiarizing themselves with the topic of a podcast, background checking on the given topic, searching for the necessary Web-resources, demonstrating an adequate level of computer literacy and, finally, perceiving authentic foreign language speech with a critical ear, accounting for both regional accents and individual speaker's peculiarities.

In conclusion, it may seem appropriate to suggest that introduction of ICT in a foreign language classroom is a reasonable way to react to a new digital generation of students who require a new approach to providing them with information. On the other hand, one should not think of academic podcasts as a complete shift of priorities, but as a supplement to classroom activities and a healthy dose of authentic language comprehension.

Further research will focus on English language learners creating their own podcasts, distributing their podcasts among peers, evaluating each other's work and expanding their independence and autonomy.

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ВИКОРИСТАННЯ ПОДКАСТІВ У ФОРМУВАННІ НАВИЧОК ІНШОМОВНОГО АУДІЮВАННЯ

Стаття присвячена дослідженню ролі інформаційно-комунікаційних технологій в іноземній освіті та безпосередньо розгляду особливостей роботи з подкастами у процесі вивчення другої іноземної мови як інструменту для формування навичок аудіювання. Висвітлено питання оновлення навчальної інформації та підвищення мотивації студентів за рахунок використання іноземних автентичних матеріалів. Розглядається зміна парадигм навчання, що викликана впливом соціальних медіа на життя сучасної студентської молоді.

Ключові слова: аудіоподкаст, Інтернет-ресурси, навички аудіювання, нові інформаційні технології, студенти, які вивчають іноземну мову, автентичний матеріал.

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ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЕ ПОДКАСТОВ ПРИ ФОРМИРОВАНИИ НАВЫКОВ ИНОЯЗЫЧНОГО АУДИРОВАНИЯ

Статья посвящена изучению роли информационно-коммуникационных технологий в иноязычном образовании, а также непосредственному рассмотрению особенностей работы с подкастами в процессе изучения второго иностранного языка как инструмента для формирования навыков аудирования. Освещается вопрос обновления учебной информации и повышения мотивации студентов за счет использования иноязычных аутентичных материалов. Рассматривается смена парадигм обучения, вызванная влиянием социальных медиа на жизнь современной студенческой молодежи.

Ключевые слова: аудиоподкаст, Интернет-ресурсы, навыки аудирования, новые информационные технологии, студенты, изучающие иностранный язык, аутентичный материал.

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