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The Application of Podcasts in Teaching English at Universities

Abstract. *Pedagogical science and practice are solving the problem of improving the methods and forms of teaching a foreign language, aimed at solving the problems of modernizing education, improving the quality and efficiency of foreign language professional training. The research purpose is to explore the possibilities of using podcasts as one of the innovative means of teaching English. The research task is to theoretically substantiate and experimentally test the didactic capabilities of podcasts in teaching English. History. Using podcasts in teaching English has been studied by scientists since 2005 and a rich didactic experience has been accumulated. Research methods are analysis and synthesis of scientific literature on the research problem, observation, testing, pedagogical experiment. The analysis of the scientific literature on the research problem allowed defining the term "podcast"; highlighting the factors that determine the popularity of podcasts; revealing the didactic potential of podcasts: authenticity, multifunctionality, media competence, multichannel perception, interactivity, motivation, compliance with individual characteristics. The author's experiment proved the effectiveness of using podcasts in teaching English. Podcasts are an innovative means of teaching English at the university, as they form language skills and speech skills in various types of speech activities (listening, reading, writing, and speaking).*

Keywords: *podcasts, innovation, English, university, information technology, motivation.*

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Introduction

In modern conditions of globalization and the rapid development of high technologies, the active use of various mobile applications has become commonplace. Mobile applications provide simple and affordable ways to obtain information, and the constant exchange of information has become an integral part of every person's life today. Digitalization extends to all spheres of public life. Currently, almost all people aged 10 to 60 have mobile devices (devices): smartphones, iPhones, laptops, MacBooks, tablets, and stationary computers. Every year,

technological progress improves electronic processors, which allows them to perform more and more complex tasks and process an increasing flow of information [1, 17 p.]. The sphere of education as the basis for the development of the individual, society, and the state and one of the directions of ensuring the national security of the Republic of Kazakhstan also do not stand aside from digitalization. A new training system based on mobile educational applications in Kazakhstan has not yet been built but in 2012 N.A. Nazarbayev in his Address to the people of Kazakhstan "Strategy "Kazakhstan-2050" [2] drew attention to the key points related

to teaching methods and the development of online systems in the educational environment. He considered them necessary to improve the professional competence of specialists and increase the effectiveness of their professional activities. This indicates the general feasibility and relevance of the use of mobile educational applications, including podcasts, in professional teaching activities.

Research purpose

The purpose is to theoretically substantiate the feasibility and experimentally substantiate the effectiveness of podcasts' application in teaching English at Universities.

Research tasks are the following: to describe the scientific and methodological experience in the analysis of possibilities to use podcasts in the educational system; to identify factors that made podcasts popular; to determine their didactic potential; to select and take into account the pedagogical principles of using podcasts in experimental work; to conduct experimental work on podcasts' using in teaching English to students at universities; to summarize the research results and develop recommendations.

History

The term "podcast" appeared in 2005. It comes from the words "iPod" (Apple's mp3 player) and "broadcast". Thus, the term "podcast" in 2005 meant an audio or video file available for downloading on the Internet and listening (viewing) on a portable media player [3, 221 p.].

Nowadays a podcast is understood as an audio or video created in a foreign language by the language and thematic content of the curriculum and posted on the podcast server for further use in the educational process. Podcasts are very popular among completely different groups of users: from people who use them for entertainment (watching news, TV shows, creating diaries) to leading universities integrating podcasts into the educational process, especially to the distance education system.

The following factors determine the popularity of podcasts:

- The ability to download a podcast for free to a tablet computer, multimedia player, mobile phone, etc. with its subsequent viewing/listening at a convenient time and in a convenient place;
- The presence of universal formats of audio and video files, which allows them to be played on most portable devices;
- The frequency of new podcasts' creation;
- The ability to subscribe, which means automatically informing the user about new podcasts as they appear;
- Authenticity of audio and video materials;
- The presence of text (script) for an audio file or subtitles for a video file [3, 222 p.].

In general, the scientific literature contains many works of scientists devoted to various aspects of the application of modern information technologies in the education system. In particular, the works of F. Caena and C. Redecker [4], J. Fraillon, J. Ainley, W. Schulz, T. Friedman, and E. Gebhardt [5], G.B. Gudmundsdottir and O.E. Hatlevik [6], F. Hamidi, M. Meshkat, M. Rezaee and M. Jafari [7], A.E. McFarlane [8], and others. The theoretical and methodological foundations of introducing podcasts into the educational process and the practical aspects of their use in teaching English were studied by such scientists as

V. Fernandez, P. Simo and J.M. Sallan [9], D. Indahsari [10], S. Nikolou and M. Darra [11], S.M. Palenque [12], M. Yoestara and Z. Putri [13], and many others.

Research Methods

The research methods used in the article correspond to its tasks: comprehensive analysis of scientific and methodological literature on research issues, observation, testing, pedagogical experiment, induction, deduction, system analysis, and forecasting.

Results

According to the scientific literature on the research problem, one can point out the didactic potential of podcasts:

1. **Authenticity.** Native speakers in the countries of the target language created most of the podcasts. Therefore, they not only represent the socio-cultural reality of the country of the target language and demonstrate a combination of verbal and non-verbal codes of foreign language communication, but also contain information related to the professional activities of future specialists and show the functioning of the language as a means of professional communication in a natural environment.

2. **Multifunctionality.** Podcasts are multifunctional, since with their help, when teaching a foreign language; one can develop several types of speech activity: reading, speaking, writing, and listening. In addition, podcasts convey knowledge about the culture of the target language, thereby forming its socio-cultural competence. Knowledge of a foreign language, culture, traditions, customs, the country of the language being studied, undoubtedly, gives great advantages to a future specialist: it is easier to find a job, more chances to integrate into a society with a market economy, to consciously and fully cognize the culture of other peoples, to better understand world problems.

3. **Competence in the field of media (media competence).** Working with podcasts needs basic computer skills to be formed, which includes the ability to download files from the Internet, transfer them to mobile devices, edit and recode if necessary. All this is possible under the condition of the formation of media competence, i.e. knowledge, abilities, skills, motives that contribute to media educational activities in the process of teaching English [14, 441 p.].

4. **Relevance.** The podcast service allows one to subscribe to receive new podcasts and regularly update one's archive with new audio and video materials. Thus, every day one can download new audio and video files with information about current events in various areas of life, which can be used in English classes.

5. **Multichannel perception** is based on the simultaneous perception of visual and auditory information. Information is received through the visual and auditory channels. The visual channel serves for the perception of objects, actions, thereby contributing to the comprehension of

the sequence of sounds captured by the auditory canal. The simultaneous perception of visual and sound images that coincide with them in time and meaning is expressed in the so-called visual-auditory synthesis, which makes it possible to judge what has been said more fully than when messages are received separately.

6. **Interactivity** means an interactive mode of the user's operation with a mobile device, in which he can independently choose the information of interest to him, the speed, and the sequence of its transmission.

7. **Motivation.** The satisfaction of cognitive motives in the study of a foreign language forms a stable motivation for constant work with it: knowledge of a foreign language facilitates access to scientific and practical information, helps to establish international scientific and personal contacts, and expands the possibilities of future professional activities of students.

In this regard, when organizing foreign language teaching using podcasts, one cannot but consider such an important function of a podcast as creating a motivational basis for learning. The podcast is a powerful motivational tool that has the strongest emotional impact on learners through its participatory effect. The combination of cognitive and emotional causes an increased interest in learning a foreign language has a positive effect on memorizing educational material, compensates for deficiencies in attention, increases the educational aspect of learning.

8. **Compliance with individual characteristics.** The mobility of the used technical means (tablet computer, multimedia player, etc.) allows one to access podcasts at any time, including outside the University. Access to such a learning tool as a podcast outside of the classroom provides the chance to learn a foreign language in one's free time and the opportunity to work according to the individual characteristics of the information perception.

Educational podcasts dedicated to the study of foreign languages allow one to solve several methodological problems. For example, the formation of auditory skills and the ability to understand a foreign language by ear, the formation, and improvement of

auditory-pronunciation skills, the expansion, and enrichment of the lexical dictionary, the formation, and improvement of grammatical skills, the development of speaking and writing skills [15, 7-8 pp.].

We revealed significant didactic possibilities of podcasts and their effectiveness in teaching English during the pedagogical experiment, which took place during the second semester of 2020, 42 fourth-year students studying in the specialty "Foreign Language" took part in it. It is necessary to note that the number of students in the experimental and control groups turned out to be the same, all students were about the same age, in each of the groups there were students with high, medium, and low levels of knowledge. In other words, we were able to create identical conditions for the experiment in both groups.

The pedagogical experiment consisted of the fact that in the process of teaching English in the experimental group, not only a standard set of textbooks was used, but also a series of podcasts. In the control group, no additional teaching aids were used.

When selecting podcasts for the experimental group, we took into account the following principles:

- The principle of compliance with the content of vocational education;
- The principle of authenticity (podcasts are voiced by native speakers, reflect not only the peculiarities of the language and science in the student's specialty but also the way of life, life, history, the culture of the country of the target language);
- The principle of compliance of the language content of the podcast with the level of language training of students;
- The principle of matching the content of the podcast to the interests of students;
- The principle of relevance and novelty;
- The principle of quality sound and artistic design.

When organizing English language training in the experimental group, the following stages of working with podcasts were observed: pre-demonstration, demonstration, and post-demonstration.

The pre-demonstration stage of working with a podcast began with the creation of an installation, the nature of which depends on the purpose of the show. Installation options: a message about the purpose of viewing, indicating the main features of the podcast, identifying questions to summarize. The form of creating an installation is also different: recording questions, highlighting a goal, preliminary indication of the main features of the podcast, the nature of the subsequent work. The correct attitude largely determines the stability of attention and the final pedagogical effect in the form of obtaining new knowledge.

When watching a podcast (demo stage), it is possible to draw the attention of students to the most important episodes and shots, but it is unacceptable to distract students from watching, supplement the content of the podcast during the show, or give instructions on further work. If necessary, additions or instructions for further work, one should use a pause.

After watching the podcast (the post-demonstration stage), a short (1-2 minutes) pause is needed, so that the impressions of the information received are somewhat subdued and defined. At this stage, students were offered the following options for work: a conversation on the content of the podcast (on questions, tasks at the installation stage), filling out a table or drawing up a plan for the content of a podcast, writing an essay, reviews, reviews of the podcast, etc.

The results of the pedagogical experiment were known at the end of the semester after the final test. The test work was the same for the experimental and control groups; it contained tasks to check the assimilation of new lexical units, grammatical rules, and linguistic and cultural information for the last semester.

After analyzing the results of the experiment, it was noted that in the experimental group there were more students with a high level of knowledge and fewer students with a low level of knowledge. Students with a high level of academic performance successfully coped with the test, several students with an intermediate level of knowledge managed to get a high mark, often students with a low level of knowledge also showed better results. In the control group,

the situation was stable, the results of the control work generally corresponded to the typical assessments of these students, while there were no significant changes in academic performance.

The experiment showed that podcasts provide a large informative capacity of the language material. There was an increase in the cognitive activity of students, an increase in motivation due to the emotional presentation of educational information, a high degree of clarity of the educational material. It allowed individualizing training, contributing to the differentiation of students' activities, taking into account their characteristics and the pace of learning, as well as making their independent work more intensive. The process of learning English became interesting and led to better results. Podcasts provide an incentive to learn English not only in the classroom but also outside it. Thus, podcasts are an indispensable innovative teaching tool that must be included in the process of teaching English at a university.

Conclusions

Electronic information technology has become an integral part of our lives over the

past few decades. Nowadays the possibilities of information technology have led to the fact that most people use the Internet and digital resources in their personal and professional lives. The virtues of new information technology are opening a new era for education and are changing the teaching and learning process. To create a comfortable learning environment, the universities began to introduce an electronic educational environment, which students can access at any time from their mobile devices. Recently, mobile devices have become more actively used in teaching foreign languages, researchers cite their various advantages as effective and motivational teaching tools. The research showed that podcasts are one of the most effective innovative means of teaching English at the university. They help to form language skills and speech skills in various types of speech activity (listening, reading, writing, and speaking), enrich vocabulary, improve grammatical skills, increase motivation for learning English, allow individualizing training, contribute to the differentiation of students' activities, and intensify independent work and contribute to the development of students' creative potential.

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Применение подкастов в преподавании английского языка в университетах

Аннотация. Педагогическая наука и практика решают проблему совершенствования методов и форм обучения иностранному языку, направленную на решение задач модернизации образования, повышения качества и эффективности профессиональной подготовки иностранных языков.

Цель исследования – изучить возможности использования подкастов как одного из инновационных средств обучения английскому языку.

Задача исследования – теоретически обосновать и экспериментально проверить дидактические возможности подкастов в обучении английскому языку.

История. Использование подкастов при обучении английскому языку изучается учеными с 2005 года, накоплен богатый дидактический опыт.

Методы исследования: анализ и обобщение научной литературы по проблеме исследования, наблюдение, тестирование, педагогический эксперимент.

Результаты. Анализ научной литературы по проблеме исследования позволил дать определение понятию «подкаст»; выделить факторы, определяющие популярность подкастов; раскрыть дидактический потенциал подкастов: аутентичность, многофункциональность, медиакомпетентность, многоканальность восприятия, интерактивность, мотивация, соответствие индивидуальным характеристикам. Проведенный автором эксперимент доказал эффективность использования подкастов при обучении английскому языку.

Выводы. Подкасты действительно являются инновационным средством обучения английскому языку в университете, поскольку они формируют языковые и речевые навыки в различных типах речевой деятельности (аудирование, чтение, письмо, устная речь).

Ключевые слова: подкасты, инновации, английский язык, университет, информационные технологии, мотивация.

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Университеттерде ағылшын тілінен сабақ беруде подкасттарды қолдану

Аңдатпа. Педагогикалық ғылым мен практика білім беруді жаңғырту міндеттерін шешуге, шет тілдерді кәсіби даярлау сапасы мен тиімділігін арттыруға бағытталған шет тілін оқыту әдістері мен түрлерін жетілдіру проблемасын шешеді. Зерттеудің мақсаты – ағылшын тіліне оқытудың инновациялық құралдарының бірі ретінде подкасттарды пайдалану мүмкіндігін меңгеру. Зерттеудің міндеті – ағылшын тіліне оқытуда подкасттардың дидактикалық мүмкіндіктерін теориялық дәлелдеу және эксперименттік тексеру. Тарихы. Ағылшын тіліне оқыту кезінде подкасттарды пайдалануды ғалымдар 2005 жылдан бері зерттеп келеді, сол уақыт аралығында ауқымды дидактикалық тәжірибе жинақталды. Зерттеу әдістері: зерттеу проблемасы бойынша ғылыми әдебиетті талдау және жинақтау, бақылау, тестілеу, педагогикалық эксперимент. Нәтижелері. Зерттеу проблемасы бойынша ғылыми әдебиетті талдау «подкаст»

ұғымына айқындама беруге; подкасттардың танымалдығын айқындайтын факторларды бөлуге; подкасттардың дидактикалық әлеуетін: түпнұсқалылығын, көп функционалдылығын, медиақұзыреттілігін, қабылдаудың көп арналығын, интерактивтілігін, мотивациясын, жеке сипаттамаларға сәйкестігін ашуға мүмкіндік берді. Автор жүргізген эксперимент ағылшын тіліне оқыту кезінде подкасттарды пайдалану тиімділігін дәлелдеді. Тұжырымдар. Подкасттар шын мәнінде университетте ағылшын тіліне оқытудың инновациялық құралы болып табылады, өйткені олар тілдік қызметтің әртүрлі типтерінде тілдік және сөйлеу дағдыларын қалыптастырады (тыңдалым, оқылым, жазылым, ауызша сөйлеу).

Түйін сөздер: подкасттар, инновациялар, ағылшын тілі, университет, ақпараттық технологиялар, мотивация.

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