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THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF USING PODCASTS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

Turejanova Altinay Aleuatdinovna
A PhD Student at Karakalpakstan
State University named after Berdakh

ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the theoretical foundations of using podcasts in English language teaching. The role of information and communication technologies in modern language education, the didactic potential of podcasts, and their importance in developing listening and speaking skills are highlighted. The article also examines the classification of podcasts, methods of working with them, and theoretical aspects of their integration into the educational process. The author summarizes the scientific views of foreign and domestic researchers on the use of podcasts.

Keywords: Podcast, English language teaching, listening comprehension, information technologies, audio materials, authentic materials, methodology

ANNOTATSIYA

Ushbu maqolada ingliz tilini o'qitishda podkastlardan foydalanishning nazariy asoslari tahlil qilingan. Zamonaviy til ta'limida axborotkommunikatsiya texnologiyalarining o'rni, xususan, podkastlarning didaktik imkoniyatlari, ularning tinglab tushunish va gapirish ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirishdagi ahamiyati yoritilgan. Shuningdek, maqolada podkastlarning tasnifi, ular bilan ishlash metodikasi va o'quv jarayoniga integratsiya qilishning nazariy jihatlari ko'rib

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chiqilgan. Muallif tomonidan podkastlardan foydalanishga oid xorijiy va mahalliy tadqiqotchilarning ilmiy qarashlari umumlashtirilgan.

Kalit so'zlar: podkast, ingliz tili o'qitish, tinglab tushunish, axborot texnologiyalari, audio materiallar, autentik materiallar, metodika

АННОТАЦИЯ

В данной статье анализируются теоретические основы использования подкастов в обучении английскому языку. Освещены роль информационнокоммуникационных технологий в современном языковом образовании, дидактические возможности подкастов, их значение в развитии навыков аудирования и говорения. Также в статье рассмотрены классификация подкастов, методика работы с ними и теоретические аспекты их интеграции в учебный процесс. Автор обобщены научные взгляды зарубежных и отечественных исследователей на использование подкастов.

Ключевые слова: подкаст, обучение английскому языку, аудирование, информационные технологии, аудиоматериалы, аутентичные материалы, методика

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of information and communication technologies has significantly transformed the landscape of language education. In the 21st century, educators are constantly seeking innovative ways to enhance the effectiveness of English language teaching. Among various technological tools, podcasts have emerged as a powerful resource for developing listening and speaking skills. Podcasts are digital audio files available on the internet that can be downloaded or streamed, covering a wide range of topics and genres. They

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offer authentic language input, expose learners to diverse accents and speech patterns, and provide flexibility in terms of time and place of learning [1].

The theoretical foundations of using podcasts in English language teaching are rooted in several learning theories, including constructivism, connectivism, and the input hypothesis. These theories provide a framework for understanding how podcasts facilitate language acquisition and why they should be integrated into the curriculum. Despite the growing popularity of podcasts, there is a need for a comprehensive theoretical analysis of their role in language education, particularly in the context of Uzbekistan and Karakalpakstan, where English language teaching is undergoing significant reforms [2].

This article aims to explore the theoretical underpinnings of using podcasts in English language teaching, examine their classification and didactic potential, and discuss the methodological aspects of their integration into the educational process.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

The use of audio materials in language teaching has a long history, dating back to the language laboratory movement of the 1950s and 1960s. However, podcasts represent a new generation of audio resources that offer unprecedented access to authentic language content. The term "podcast" was coined in 2004, combining "iPod" and "broadcast," and since then, podcasts have gained popularity in various fields, including education [3].

Several researchers have contributed to the theoretical understanding of podcasts in language education. S. Brown [4] examined the cognitive processes involved in listening comprehension and argued that podcasts provide optimal input for language acquisition. R. Schmidt's [5] noticing hypothesis suggests that learners need to pay attention to linguistic features in the input for acquisition to occur, and podcasts can facilitate this process through repeated listening and focused tasks.

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In the context of Uzbekistan, A. Qodirov [6] investigated the impact of podcasts on students' motivation and listening comprehension skills. N. Xasanova [7] explored the integration of digital technologies, including podcasts, in English language teaching at the tertiary level. M. Rasulova [8] developed a methodology for using podcasts in developing students' listening and speaking skills. B. Tursunov [9] analyzed the effectiveness of authentic materials, including podcasts, in teaching English as a foreign language.

Foreign scholars have also made significant contributions to this field. D. Mendelsohn [10] proposed a strategy-based approach to teaching listening comprehension, which can be effectively implemented using podcasts. J. Field [11] examined the cognitive processes involved in listening and suggested pedagogical implications for using audio materials. M. Rost [12] provided a comprehensive overview of listening in language learning, emphasizing the role of technology in providing authentic input.

The methodology of this research is based on theoretical analysis, synthesis of existing literature, and generalization of best practices in using podcasts in English language teaching. The study examines the theoretical foundations from the perspective of cognitive psychology, psycholinguistics, and second language acquisition theories.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Definition and Classification of Podcasts

Podcasts are digital audio files that are episodic, downloadable, and usually free. They can be subscribed to via Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds, allowing users to automatically receive new episodes. In the context of language teaching, podcasts can be classified according to various criteria [13]:

1. By content type:

Educational podcasts: specifically designed for language learning (e.g., BBC Learning English, VOA Learning English)

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Authentic podcasts: created for native speakers but useful for advanced learners (e.g., TED Talks Daily, The Economist)

Learner-generated podcasts: created by students as part of project work

2. By language level:

Beginner level podcasts: slower speech rate, simplified vocabulary

Intermediate level podcasts: natural speech rate with some support

Advanced level podcasts: authentic speech with complex content

3. By purpose:

Listening comprehension podcasts: focused on developing listening skills

Pronunciation podcasts: focused on improving pronunciation

Integrated skills podcasts: combining listening with speaking, writing, or vocabulary development

4. By format:

Monologue podcasts: single speaker presenting information

Interview podcasts: conversations between host and guest

Dialogue podcasts: discussions between two or more speakers

Storytelling podcasts: narratives and stories

Theoretical Frameworks Supporting Podcast Use

Several learning theories provide a theoretical basis for using podcasts in English language teaching:

1. Krashen's Input Hypothesis. Stephen Krashen's [14] Input Hypothesis suggests that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to comprehensible input that is slightly beyond their current level ($i+1$). Podcasts can provide such input by offering authentic language content that learners can understand with the help of contextual clues, repetition, and support materials. The key principle is

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that input should be interesting, relevant, and not grammatically sequenced, which characterizes many podcasts.

2. Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory. Vygotsky's [15] sociocultural theory emphasizes the role of social interaction in cognitive development. The concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) suggests that learners can achieve more with appropriate support. Podcasts can serve as a tool for mediated learning, especially when combined with prelistening, whilelistening, and postlistening activities that scaffold the learning process.

3. Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning. Mayer's [16] theory posits that people learn more effectively from words and pictures than from words alone. Although podcasts are primarily audiobased, they can be combined with transcripts, visual aids, and interactive tasks to enhance learning. The theory emphasizes the importance of managing cognitive load, which is crucial when designing podcastbased activities.

4. Connectivism. Siemens' [17] connectivism theory views learning as a process of connecting specialized nodes or information sources. In the digital age, learning is distributed across networks and technologymediated. Podcasts represent one such node in the learning network, allowing learners to connect with authentic language content and expert voices from around the world.

5. Autonomous Learning Theory. Holec's [18] concept of learner autonomy suggests that learners should take responsibility for their own learning. Podcasts support autonomous learning by allowing learners to choose content that matches their interests, control the pace of learning, and learn anytime, anywhere. This flexibility promotes intrinsic motivation and sustained engagement.

Didactic Potential of Podcasts

The didactic potential of podcasts in English language teaching can be analyzed from several perspectives:

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1. Authenticity. Podcasts provide authentic language input that exposes learners to realworld language use, including natural speech patterns, colloquial expressions, and cultural references. This authenticity helps learners develop communicative competence and prepares them for reallife interactions [19].
2. Accessibility. Podcasts are easily accessible through various platforms (Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google Podcasts) and can be downloaded for offline use. This accessibility ensures that learners can engage with language content beyond the classroom, extending learning opportunities.
3. Variety. The wide range of podcast topics (news, science, culture, entertainment, education) caters to diverse learner interests, increasing motivation and engagement. Learners can choose content that aligns with their personal or professional interests.
4. Flexibility. Podcasts allow for flexible learning in terms of time, place, and pace. Learners can listen while commuting, exercising, or doing household chores, maximizing exposure to the target language.
5. Repetition and Review. Unlike live speech, podcasts can be paused, rewound, and replayed, allowing learners to process difficult passages and review content multiple times. This feature supports detailed comprehension and language analysis.
6. Integration with Other Skills. Podcasts can be integrated with other language skills through followup activities such as discussions, summaries, debates, and creative projects. This integration promotes holistic language development.

Methodological Approaches to Using Podcasts

Effective use of podcasts in English language teaching requires a systematic methodological approach. Based on the analysis of existing literature and best practices, the following methodological framework is proposed [20]:

1. Selection Criteria. When selecting podcasts for language teaching, educators should consider:

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Language level appropriateness

Content relevance and interest

Speech rate and clarity

Length of episodes (515 minutes for beginners, 1530 minutes for intermediate, 3060 minutes for advanced)

Availability of transcripts and support materials

Cultural and educational value

2. Task Design. Podcastbased tasks should follow a threestage framework:

Prelistening tasks:

Activating prior knowledge about the topic

Preteaching key vocabulary

Setting a purpose for listening

Making predictions about content

Whilelistening tasks:

Comprehension checks (multiple choice, true/false)

Notetaking

Gapfilling exercises

Sequencing activities

Identifying specific information

Postlistening tasks:

Summarizing content

Discussing opinions and reactions

Roleplaying related situations

Creating similar podcasts

Researching related topics

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3. Integration into Curriculum. Podcasts should be systematically integrated into the curriculum rather than used as occasional addons. This integration can take various forms:

Regular podcast listening as homework

Podcastbased listening comprehension tests

Podcast projects where students create their own podcasts

Blended learning approaches combining podcasts with faceto face instruction

Flipped classroom models where students listen to podcasts before class

4. Assessment. Assessing podcastbased learning can include:

Comprehension quizzes

Reflective journals

Podcast summaries and critiques

Studentgenerated podcasts as project work

Peer evaluation of podcast projects

Challenges and Limitations

Despite their potential, using podcasts in English language teaching presents certain challenges [21]:

1. Technical Issues. Internet connectivity, access to devices, and technical literacy can be barriers, particularly in rural areas or underresourced educational settings.

2. Selection Overload. The vast number of available podcasts can overwhelm both teachers and learners, making selection difficult.

3. Lack of Visual Support. Unlike videos, podcasts lack visual cues, which can make comprehension more challenging for beginners.

4. Quality Variation. Podcast quality varies significantly in terms of audio production, content accuracy, and educational value.

5. Teacher Training. Many teachers lack training in effectively integrating podcasts into their teaching practice.

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Pedagogical Implications for Karakalpakstan Context

In the context of Karakalpakstan, where English is taught as a foreign language, podcasts offer particular benefits. Students have limited exposure to authentic English outside the classroom, and podcasts can bridge this gap by providing regular, accessible input. Furthermore, podcasts can expose students to various English accents, preparing them for international communication.

However, implementation must consider local factors: internet access in rural areas, availability of devices, and teacher preparedness. A phased approach is recommended, starting with carefully selected, levelappropriate podcasts, accompanied by teachercreated support materials. Gradually, as teachers and students become more comfortable, podcast use can be expanded to include more autonomous learning activities.

Pedagogical Recommendations

Based on the theoretical analysis, the following recommendations are proposed for effectively using podcasts in English language teaching:

1. Start with structured listening. For beginner and intermediate learners, provide clear listening guides, vocabulary support, and comprehension tasks. Gradually reduce support as learners become more proficient.
2. Integrate podcasts systematically. Rather than occasional use, incorporate podcasts into regular instruction with clear learning objectives and assessment criteria.
3. Encourage learner autonomy. Teach students how to select appropriate podcasts, use listening strategies, and monitor their own progress. Provide guidance on finding podcasts that match their interests and level.
4. Combine individual and collaborative learning. While individual listening is important, collaborative activities such as pair discussions, group projects, and peer feedback enhance learning outcomes.

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5. Create a podcast library. Develop a collection of recommended podcasts with accompanying tasks, organized by level, topic, and skill focus. This resource saves time for both teachers and students.
6. Provide teacher training. Offer professional development opportunities for teachers to learn about podcast selection, task design, and integration strategies.
7. Promote student-generated podcasts. Encourage students to create their own podcasts as project work, which develops multiple skills including research, writing, speaking, and digital literacy.
8. Use podcasts for assessment. Include podcast-based tasks in formative and summative assessment to ensure that listening skills are adequately evaluated.

CONCLUSION

The theoretical foundations of using podcasts in English language teaching are robust and multifaceted. Drawing on established learning theories such as Krashen's Input Hypothesis, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, and Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, podcasts offer a powerful tool for language development. Their authenticity, accessibility, variety, and flexibility make them particularly valuable in contexts where exposure to authentic English is limited.

The classification of podcasts according to content type, language level, purpose, and format provides a framework for systematic selection and use. The three-stage methodological approach (prelistening, whilelistening, postlistening) ensures that podcast listening is integrated into a comprehensive learning experience that develops multiple language skills.

In the context of Karakalpakstan, podcasts can play a crucial role in enhancing English language teaching by providing authentic input, promoting learner autonomy, and bridging the gap between classroom learning and real-world language use. However, successful implementation requires attention to local

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conditions, teacher training, and the development of appropriate support materials.

Future research should focus on empirical studies examining the effectiveness of podcastbased instruction in the Karakalpakstan context, the development of localized podcast materials, and the integration of podcasts with emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and mobile learning applications.

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