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PODCASTS AS AN INNOVATIVE MEANS OF TEACHING ENGLISH IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Abstract: The article under discussion examines podcasts as an innovative means of teaching English in higher educational institutions. At the present stage pedagogical science and practice solve the problem of improving the methods and forms of teaching a foreign language, aimed at solving problems of modernization of education, increasing the quality and effectiveness of foreign language professional training. The article deals with the possibility of using one of the innovative means of teaching English - podcasts. The aim of the research is to reveal theoretically and experimentally test the didactic capabilities of podcasts in teaching English.

Key words: podcasts, innovation, English, higher education, information technology, motivation, video, audio commentary, blog.

Language: English

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Introduction

Educational podcast as a media carrier is a technical means of teaching a foreign language, allowing you to solve complex problems of foreign language education. The use of podcasts in education demonstrates the mobility of the modern education system in general, its adaptive nature.

Main part

The term "podcast" first appeared in 2005. It owes its appearance to the famous MTV host Adam Kerry. He combined two words: *iPod* - trademark of portable media players produced by Apple (USA) and *broadcasting* - wide-screen broadcasting. The term "podcasting" acquired the following meaning: it is a method of distributing audio or video information on the Internet.

In other words, a podcast is an audio text of some genre, of some time duration, in some cases accompanied by video material. Podcasts are also called audio blogs or programs published on the Web in the form of issues; regularly updated series of files published at one address on the Internet [7, p.19]. Despite the fact that podcasts appeared less than 17

years ago, today they are very popular among absolutely 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 in distance education.

For ease of differentiation, podcasts are usually divided into several types, each of which has its own characteristic features: audio podcast, video podcast, screencast. The essence of screencast is that with the help of a special program, actions are recorded on the computer screen along with audio comments. Audio files are the most used because they have several advantages over video format, namely:

- 1) no eye strain (students spend a lot of time at the computer, so there is an opportunity to listen, while you can close your eyes, give them a rest);
- 2) small file size (is quicker to absorb and easier to store);
- 3) ease of use.

You can listen to a podcast on almost any device (computer, phone).

As a rule, podcasts have definite themes and periodicity of publication. There are following main

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genres of podcasts: audio blogs (analogue of online diary), comedy podcasts, technology, music, couple casts (covering personal life of the authors, often families), educational podcasts, audio books, news, scientific-fiction, interviews, radio plays and radio shows, politics, sports and games [3, p.76]. News, science, sports podcasts, interviews, radio shows, and other audioblog genres provide variation in listening instruction content. In this connection, the value of podcasts of all genres and categories should be emphasized, which allow the teacher to solve complex learning tasks. An undeniable advantage of podcasts is that they provide students with a great opportunity to listen to relevant contemporary authentic texts of different genres on any topic of interest to the student in a variety of performances (accent, timbre, rhythm, fluency of the speaker) [10, p.260].

The use of podcasts in foreign language teaching provides the following relevant opportunities:

1) the boundaries of the learning environment are expanded, and learning can take place both in the classroom and outside of class time;

2) the problem of intercultural communication and interaction is largely solved, there is a distribution and exchange of podcasts on the Internet;

3) there is a decrease in psychological difficulties and overcoming the language barrier;

4) additional and very fruitful language practice;

Podcasts can also help students who are visually impaired or dyslexic (a selective impairment in the ability to learn to read while retaining overall learning ability); podcasts may prove more appealing to a certain, traditionally low-motivated student population and promote a sense of "belonging" to the learning community for distance learners [9, p.9].

The effectiveness of the podcast is borne out by the fact that it provides more opportunities to analyze learning content. The podcast also helps develop communication skills, the ability to organize one's time, and the ability to structure and summarize the proposed material within a learning topic. It helps to improve critical and analytical thinking mechanisms. For example, the podcast may include discussion questions to be answered by the students for the next class. Thus, the podcast develops critical attitude to the proposed material and analytical skills of the students.

Educational podcasts used in the study of English allow solving a number of methodological problems:

- expansion and enrichment of vocabulary;
- formation and improvement of grammatical skills;
- development of speaking and writing skills.

The most acceptable and realistic task of using podcasts in educational purposes remains the formation of receptive listening skills when working with phonetic, lexical and grammatical material; the development of skills of understanding foreign

language speech by ear - to separate the main from the secondary, to determine the subject of the message, to divide the text into semantic pieces, to establish logical connections, to highlight the main idea, to perceive messages at a certain pace, a certain duration, to the end without omissions [7, p. 27].

To date, there are the following ways to use podcasts:

- listening without downloading files, online;
- listening offline, downloading a file;
- creation of your own podcasts.

Podcast, as a means of real communication in English, contains information that we perceive with different depth and accuracy of understanding [5, p.92]. Thus, when selecting podcasts for the listening comprehension content and developing tasks for them, teachers should follow the basic principles and requirements for working with audio texts and take into account the real needs and goals of listeners, depending on the specifics of the audio text. For example, specially created educational audio-blogs can be aimed not only at the development of listening comprehension skills, but also at the development and improvement of listening comprehension, lexical and grammatical skills, while authentic podcasts provide information for oral or written reflection or discussion.

Work with podcasts involves several stages, including preparation for comprehension, listening comprehension exercises, and practicing the listened material. In general, technology of work with podcasts coincides with technology of work with audio texts and has a clear sequence of teacher and student activities:

- preliminary instruction and preliminary task;
- the process of perception and comprehension of the information from the podcast;
- tasks controlling the understanding of the heard text.

There are many podcasts for learning English, which are narrated by a native speaker or a teacher with many years of experience. The most effective among them are:

1. The BBC Learning English Podcast. The advantage of this podcast is that it is only 6 minutes long, easy to listen to (intelligible speech, medium pace). Despite the fact that the audio recordings use rather complicated vocabulary, each podcast is accompanied by a transcript. If there is difficulty in listening, the text can be in front of you.

2. Audio English Podcast. This podcast can be useful both for those just starting to learn the language (English for beginners), and for those who are improving it (Practical English section). There is also an opportunity to choose a topic of interest (Travel English, Telephone English, Banking English, Accounting English).

3. Luke's ENGLISH Podcast. Luke is a qualified English teacher from London with 14 years

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teaching experience. He tries to invite friends and family to his podcast, so we can hear spontaneous dialogue from native speakers. Luke often defuses the atmosphere with jokes, and sometimes invents and includes games to make the topic more interesting. Most audio recordings are over an hour long and can be listened to while walking or driving. This podcast will be especially useful for English language students as it develops listening skills.

4. Effortless English Podcast. American A.Haug uses mini-stories with lots of English tenses. This is an effective way to acquire fluency in expressing thoughts in a non-native language. He is easy to understand even with beginning knowledge because he speaks slowly and articulately. A.Haug developed his own method how to quickly learn English (it is better to learn phrases, not words; it is senseless to take up grammar without a vocabulary of 1000 words; listening is essential).

5. I Will Teach You a Language Podcast. Ollie Richards, the podcast host, says that the most important thing in learning a language is to enjoy the process. Ollie speaks 8 languages and now gives practical tips and strategies for language learning. The blogger himself started learning foreign languages as an adult, now he is an example for all beginners - English can be learned by anyone.

6. English with Jennifer. Over 400 instructional videos from a real English teacher. Grammar, pronunciation, listening, tests, examples, assignments. Lessons are designed to be easy to follow and are taught at a relaxed pace.

7. Puzzle English. Tutors use different idioms, behavior in real life situations, interesting examples and unusual exceptions to the rules. Many users are attracted by the analysis of interesting expressions from popular songs, shows and TV series.

8. EngVid. This is one of the largest channels by the number of clips available here. At the moment EngVid has more than 900 videos narrated by eleven different teachers. Each one is 5-10 minutes long and focuses on one topic related to current news, life situations, interesting facts. There are also grammar lessons.

The most famous podcast server is YouTube. On YouTube service every registered user can post his video podcasts, view other ones, and participate in discussion/commenting on podcasts in microblogs.

The podcast service has the following didactic features:

- the ability to post users' personal podcasts online on the podcast service;
- the ability to create a personal user zone at the service of podcasts (personal user zone is required to organize an online discussion of the podcast);
- an opportunity to organize network discussion of the podcast in the service user's personal microblogging zone;
- creation of a personal user zone and its moderation are carried out by the podcast author;
- placement of comments when organizing an online discussion of the podcast is carried out chronologically;
- podcast is available for viewing by all the registered users of the service.

It should be noted that the use of podcasting increases motivation and interest in learning a foreign language, realizes the personal potential of the student, helps to master intercultural communicative competence.

Thus, the above features and capabilities of podcasts provide a new topical quality of the process of foreign language learning, namely, not only high motivation of students, but also contribute to the manifestation of their initiative, purposefulness, develop the ability to listen and hear, which certainly contributes to the effectiveness of the learning process.

Conclusion

Podcasts, indeed, are innovative means of teaching English in the higher educational institutions, because they form language and speaking skills in various types of speech activity (listening, reading, writing, speaking), enrich vocabulary, improve grammar skills, increase motivation to learn English, allow to individualize training, promote differentiation activity for students and intensify the process of language learning.

It should be noted that we should not forget about the role of the teacher himself in the educational process. After all, only an ICT-competent teacher willing to use all kinds of Internet resources is able to organize the learning process competently and productively. With the proper application of the latest Internet technologies in the educational process, the efficiency of learning will increase, and the achievement of the set results will be carried out at a higher level.

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