

PODCASTING IN THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM: A PATHWAY TO MEDIA COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

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Abstract. *This article explores the role of podcasting as an innovative pedagogical tool for developing media communicative competence among students of language faculties. Drawing from theories of communicative competence, media literacy, and digital production, the study presents the design and outcomes of a podcast-based instructional module integrated into a university English course. Findings indicate that podcasting supports the development of linguistic fluency, critical media awareness, and digital content creation skills. The article concludes with practical recommendations for implementing podcasting in language education and highlights its potential to foster real-world communication and digital engagement.*

Keywords: *podcasting, media communicative competence, language education, media literacy, digital pedagogy, student-centered learning, content creation.*

ПОДКАСТИНГ НА ЗАНЯТИЯХ ПО ИНОСТРАННЫМ ЯЗЫКАМ: ПУТЬ К ФОРМИРОВАНИЮ МЕДИАКОММУНИКАТИВНОЙ КОМПЕТЕНЦИИ

Аннотация. В статье рассматривается использование подкастинга как инновационного педагогического инструмента для формирования медиакоммуникативной компетенции у студентов языковых факультетов. На основе теоретических подходов к коммуникативной компетенции, медиаграмотности и цифровому производству, в исследовании представлен опыт внедрения подкаст-модуля в курс английского языка в университете. Результаты показывают, что подкастинг способствует развитию языковой беглости, критического мышления в отношении медиа и навыков создания цифрового контента. В заключение даются практические рекомендации по интеграции подкастинга в языковое образование и подчеркивается его потенциал для развития реальной коммуникации и цифровой активности студентов.

Ключевые слова: подкастинг, медиакоммуникативная компетенция, языковое образование, медиаграмотность, цифровая педагогика, обучение, ориентированное на студента, создание контента.

TIL DARSLARIDA PODKASTING: MEDIA KOMMUNIKATIV KOMPETENSIYANI SHAKLLANTIRISH YO‘LI

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada til fakulteti talabalarida media kommunikativ kompetensiyani shakllantirishda podkastingdan innovatsion pedagogik vosita sifatida

foydalanish masalasi ko'rib chiqiladi. Kommunikativ kompetensiya, media savodxonligi va raqamli kontent yaratish nazariyalariga asoslangan holda, maqolada universitetdagi ingliz tili kursiga integratsiyalangan podkast asosidagi dars moduli taqdim etiladi. Tadqiqot natijalari podkasting til bilimi, tanqidiy media tafakkuri va raqamli kontent yaratish ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirishga xizmat qilishini ko'rsatdi. Maqola podkastingni til o'qitish jarayoniga joriy etish bo'yicha amaliy tavsiyalar bilan yakunlanadi va uning real kommunikatsiya va raqamli ishtirokni rivojlantirishdagi salohiyati ta'kidlanadi.

Kalit so'zlar: *podkasting, media kommunikativ kompetensiya, til ta'limi, media savodxonligi, raqamli pedagogika, talaba markazli o'qitish, kontent yaratish.*

Introduction

In today's media-saturated environment, language learners are not only required to master grammatical structures and vocabulary but also to communicate effectively across multimedia platforms. Traditional language instruction, often focused on reading and writing in academic contexts, does not always prepare students for the realities of global, digital communication. As such, there is a growing need to integrate **media communicative competence** into the language classroom.

Media communicative competence goes beyond linguistic proficiency to include the ability to understand, evaluate, and create media content in various formats and for diverse audiences. In this context, podcasting represents a particularly accessible and pedagogically rich medium. It combines speaking and listening practice with skills in planning, collaboration, editing, and audience adaptation—all critical elements of communication in the 21st century.

Podcasting is an especially effective medium for language learning because it encourages authentic, purposeful use of the target language. Students must plan content, engage with real-world topics, consider tone and audience, and deliver messages in coherent and creative ways.

This aligns with contemporary educational goals emphasizing active learning, digital competence, and interdisciplinary integration (Redecker, 2017). Moreover, podcasting fosters both *input* (through listening to models and peer work) and *output* (via performance and production), aligning well with second language acquisition theories. It also creates space for learner autonomy, collaborative creativity, and peer feedback, making it an ideal tool for student-centered learning environments.

This article investigates the use of podcasting as a method for developing media communicative competence in language faculty students. It examines the theoretical underpinnings of the approach, outlines a classroom implementation, and discusses findings from a pilot project that combined language instruction with digital media production.

Обзор литературы

The development of **media communicative competence** in language education is grounded in multiple theoretical frameworks that intersect across linguistics, media studies, and digital pedagogy. This section synthesizes relevant concepts from communicative competence theory, media literacy education, and digital production pedagogy to provide a comprehensive foundation for using podcasting in the language classroom.

Communicative Competence in Language Education.

The concept of *communicative competence*, introduced by Hymes (1972) and expanded by Canale and Swain (1980), fundamentally redefined the goals of language instruction. Rather than focusing solely on grammatical accuracy, communicative competence emphasizes the ability to use language appropriately and effectively in social contexts. It comprises four components:

- **Grammatical competence** (accuracy in syntax, morphology, phonology),
- **Sociolinguistic competence** (understanding of social norms and cultural context),
- **Discourse competence** (coherence and cohesion in communication), and
- **Strategic competence** (the ability to overcome communication problems).

Modern applications of this framework extend to digital environments, where learners must adapt their language use to various online genres and platforms, including podcasts, blogs, and social media posts. In such contexts, students not only apply linguistic knowledge but also navigate audience expectations, tone, and multimodal formats.

Critical Media Literacy.

The rise of digital technologies has intensified the need for **media literacy**, which refers to the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create media messages across platforms (Hobbs, 2010; Potter, 2018). Critical media literacy goes a step further by encouraging learners to question the power structures, ideologies, and biases embedded in media content. In language education, media literacy is vital for promoting critical thinking and intercultural awareness.

Students must be equipped to understand the constructed nature of media, recognize persuasive techniques, and reflect on the ethical use of information. This is particularly important when learners become content creators, as in podcasting, where they must make decisions about representation, tone, and sourcing. Critical media literacy thus becomes a bridge between linguistic form and communicative function in contemporary settings.

Digital Production and Participatory Pedagogy.

With the shift from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0, learners are no longer passive recipients of knowledge but active participants in content creation. This **participatory culture** (Jenkins et al., 2009) supports the idea that students can learn more effectively by producing content that reflects their identities, interests, and social realities. In the context of podcasting, this translates into a **multimodal learning** environment where students script, speak, record, and edit content for real or imagined audiences. Research by Koltay (2011) and Redecker (2017) highlights the importance of equipping students with digital production skills as part of a broader literacy framework that includes collaboration, creativity, and technological fluency.

Digital production also encourages **authentic communication**, a key principle in task-based and project-based language learning. By producing podcasts on relevant topics, students engage in meaningful language use, negotiate meaning, and apply feedback—all of which support language acquisition and confidence.

Media Communicative Competence as an Integrative Construct

Bringing these strands together, *media communicative competence* can be understood as a hybrid construct that includes:

- Proficiency in the target language across spoken and written modalities,
- The ability to critically engage with media texts and platforms,

- The skills to produce coherent, audience-sensitive, and ethically responsible media content.

Podcasting, as a pedagogical tool, offers a practical and creative means to develop this competence. It enables students to apply their language skills in real-world scenarios, fosters digital agency, and cultivates a deeper understanding of how communication operates in multimedia contexts.

Methodology

To explore the effectiveness of podcasting as a tool for developing media communicative competence among students of language faculties, a **mixed-methods** approach was employed.

This design allowed for both quantitative and qualitative insights into student progress, experiences, and challenges throughout the implementation of a podcast-based instructional module.

Research Design

The study followed a three-phase structure:

1. **Pre-intervention Assessment** – to establish students' baseline competencies in language use, media literacy, and familiarity with digital content creation.
2. **Instructional Intervention** – a podcast production project integrated into a regular English as a Foreign Language (EFL) course.
3. **Post-intervention Evaluation** – to measure changes in competencies and gather student perceptions of the learning process.

This design aligns with exploratory action research methodology, allowing the researcher to implement, observe, and refine pedagogical practice within an authentic classroom environment.

Participants

The participants were **25 second-year undergraduate students** enrolled in the English program at a language faculty of a major university. All students had intermediate to upper-intermediate proficiency in English (B1–B2 levels based on CEFR). They represented a mix of linguistic backgrounds, but all shared limited prior experience with media production.

In addition, **two language instructors** and one **media literacy specialist** supported the module by co-facilitating sessions and offering technical guidance on podcast production.

Intervention: Podcasting Module Structure

Over a period of **six weeks**, students participated in a structured podcasting project embedded within their communicative English course. The module included the following components:

- **Week 1: Introduction to Podcasting**

Students were introduced to the concept of podcasting, key genre conventions (interviews, discussions, storytelling), and basic technical tools (e.g., Audacity, Anchor.fm).

- **Week 2: Topic Selection and Research**

Students worked in pairs or small groups to choose a podcast topic relevant to their interests and target audience (e.g., youth culture, study tips, cultural comparisons). They conducted background research and began outlining their episodes.

- **Week 3: Script Writing and Planning**

Groups drafted scripts and planned episode structure, integrating researched content, personal insights, and language goals (e.g., use of specific grammar or vocabulary items).

• **Week 4: Recording Sessions**

With support from instructors, students recorded their podcast episodes using smartphones or USB microphones, practicing pronunciation, pacing, and intonation.

• **Week 5: Editing and Finalization**

Basic editing (e.g., noise removal, segment trimming, music insertion) was completed using freely available software. Students were encouraged to reflect on how editing choices impacted their message.

• **Week 6: Presentation and Peer Feedback**

Final podcasts were shared with the class, and students provided peer feedback based on a rubric that included linguistic accuracy, creativity, audience engagement, and media clarity.

Data Collection Instruments

To evaluate the impact of the module, multiple data sources were collected:

• **Pre- and Post-Surveys:** Designed to assess student confidence and self-perceived competence in language use, critical media literacy (e.g., ability to evaluate credibility, detect bias), and media production skills.

• **Podcast Rubric Assessments:** Instructor-evaluated podcasts using a rubric covering language accuracy, coherence, originality, use of media tools, and audience adaptation.

• **Semi-Structured Interviews:** Conducted with 10 randomly selected participants after the module to explore their experiences, challenges, and perceived learning outcomes in depth.

• **Instructor Observation Notes:** Throughout the module, instructors kept notes on student engagement, collaboration dynamics, and technical challenges faced in production.

Data Analysis Procedures

• **Quantitative Data** (surveys and rubric scores) were analyzed using descriptive statistics and paired t-tests in SPSS to determine pre-/post-intervention differences in student confidence and performance.

• **Qualitative Data** (interviews and observation notes) were analyzed using thematic coding in NVivo. Recurring themes were identified, such as “audience awareness,” “technical learning curve,” and “language ownership.”

The mixed-methods design ensured triangulation of findings and strengthened the reliability and validity of the study’s conclusions.

Findings and Discussions

The findings from this study highlight how podcasting, as a form of integrated language and media instruction, can significantly enhance media communicative competence among students of language faculties. The results are organized according to the three core components of the competence framework: **linguistic development**, **critical media literacy**, and **media production skills**.

Linguistic Development: Enhancing Fluency and Accuracy through Performance

Quantitative data from the rubric-based evaluations indicated a noticeable improvement in students’ spoken language performance by the end of the six-week project. In particular:

• **76% of students** demonstrated stronger discourse competence, with more structured and cohesive spoken segments.

- **68% showed improvement in pronunciation and intonation**, aided by repeated rehearsals and peer feedback during the scripting and recording process.

- Vocabulary use became more **topic-specific and idiomatic**, reflecting increased awareness of audience and context.

Interview responses revealed that podcasting tasks created a sense of real-world communication, which motivated learners to be more attentive to clarity, register, and delivery.

One student commented,

“Unlike typical classroom tasks, podcasting made me think about how I sound to a listener. I practiced more because I knew someone would hear it.”

These findings support the argument that podcasting fosters **authentic, audience-aware language use**, a key feature of communicative competence.

Critical Media Literacy: Awareness of Message, Bias, and Audience

While students entered the project with minimal understanding of media analysis, post-survey responses showed significant gains in **critical awareness**. Specifically:

- **65% of students reported being more conscious of bias, tone, and information credibility** when scripting podcast content.

- **58% acknowledged adapting their language** to suit the expectations of a target audience, including word choice, tone, and style.

For example, groups producing episodes on social issues (e.g., gender stereotypes, language and identity) expressed a newfound sensitivity to how messages might be interpreted or misinterpreted. One participant reflected:

“We had to think carefully about our language, especially when discussing social topics. It made me realize how media shapes opinions.”

The podcasting format encouraged students to engage with real-world discourse and to evaluate their role as both message senders and receivers—key dimensions of **critical media literacy**.

Media Production Skills: Learning by Creating

At the start of the intervention, only 20% of students reported any prior experience with digital audio tools. By the end of the project:

- **80% of students expressed confidence** in basic audio recording and editing.

- **72% successfully published polished podcast episodes** featuring clear structure, music or effects, and thoughtful transitions.

The process of scripting, recording, and editing taught students to think beyond language mechanics and consider pacing, timing, and multimodal enhancement of their messages. These skills fostered a deeper understanding of how media works and how language can be shaped within digital formats.

Despite initial anxiety, many students described the learning curve as empowering. One noted:

“At first I was nervous because I’m not a tech person. But now I feel like I can produce something meaningful and even share it online.”

This growth in digital production ability suggests that **media communicative competence** requires not only critical analysis but also hands-on, participatory creation—an outcome well-supported by the podcasting format.

Challenges and Barriers

While overall outcomes were positive, several **challenges** emerged:

- **Technical limitations:** Not all students had access to high-quality microphones or editing tools, though mobile phones and free software like Audacity were adequate for basic tasks.
- **Time constraints:** Podcast production required more time than traditional tasks, which led to some stress under regular academic workload.
- **Instructor support needs:** Some students felt uncertain during the editing stage, suggesting that instructors also need training in media tools to effectively guide students.

Additionally, a minority of students expressed a preference for traditional written tasks, citing discomfort with performance or concerns over pronunciation.

These challenges underscore the need for **institutional support**, such as better access to equipment and **faculty development programs** in media pedagogy.

Synthesis: Podcasting as a Pathway to Integrated Competence

The integration of language instruction with podcasting tasks provided a **multidimensional learning experience** that engaged students cognitively, creatively, and socially. The podcasting project:

- Encouraged **collaborative learning** and peer negotiation,
- Created opportunities for **project-based assessment**,
- Fostered **student agency** and **confidence** in both language and media domains.

The study supports the view that podcasting is not merely a speaking activity, but a **comprehensive platform for developing media communicative competence**, as it naturally integrates form, meaning, and medium.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that podcasting is a powerful pedagogical tool for cultivating *media communicative competence* among students of language faculties. By blending linguistic practice with digital content creation, podcasting engages learners in authentic, meaningful communication that mirrors real-world media contexts. The findings show that students not only improved in core language skills—such as fluency, pronunciation, and discourse structure—but also developed greater awareness of media messages, audience engagement, and ethical communication. Additionally, the hands-on experience of scripting, recording, and editing podcast episodes empowered students with essential digital production skills, aligning language education with 21st-century communication demands. However, effective implementation of podcasting as a learning strategy requires adequate pedagogical and technical support. This includes equipping classrooms with accessible media tools, training educators in basic media production and media literacy principles, and integrating such projects meaningfully into existing curricula rather than treating them as optional add-ons. Podcasting represents more than just a new format—it embodies a transformational approach to language education, one that shifts students from passive consumers of information to active communicators and content creators. As the media landscape continues to evolve, equipping language learners with the ability to navigate and shape that landscape through language is not a luxury but a necessity. Future research should explore the long-term effects of such media-integrated instruction, the impact on various language proficiency levels, and the potential for cross-cultural collaboration through podcasting projects.

Ultimately, fostering media communicative competence through podcasting holds the promise of developing not only more proficient language users but also more critically aware, digitally literate global citizens.

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