



Developing Cross-Cultural Foreign Language Communication via Mobile Technologies: Podcasting

Rimma Raisovna Sagitova¹, Alina Albertovna Shakirova², Landysh Afraimovna Gizyatova³, & Regina Rafael'yevna Khanipova⁴

¹ Department of European Languages and Cultures, Faculty of Foreign Languages, Kazan Federal University, Kazan, Russia; sag-rimma@yandex.ru

² Department of European Languages and Cultures, Faculty of Foreign Languages, Kazan Federal University, Kazan, Russia; alina-sharafeeva@inbox.ru

³ Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Foreign Languages, Kazan Federal University, Kazan, Russia; klandish@mail.ru

⁴ Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Foreign Languages, Kazan Federal University, Kazan, Russia; regina-90@inbox.ru

Abstract

The significant impact of digital and informational technologies on the development of modern society is unquestionably exemplified by the process of intensive informatization of education in general and language education in particular. Information technologies, specifically mobile technologies, contribute to the development of students' educational activities and increase their awareness of foreign language learning and cross-cultural foreign language communication. Modern realities necessitate a different approach to preparing students for life, one that focuses less on imparting information than on teaching them and its method of application. Furthermore, the Internet's evolution into a platform for active users creates new opportunities for foreign language study. Podcasting, a fundamental component of mobile technologies, is one of the most effective and productive methods for teaching and developing cross-cultural foreign language communication. The authors criticized the concept of m-learning in foreign language education, defined the typology of podcasts, presented their classification, disclosed the characteristics of using podcasts in developing cross-cultural language communication, and presented the algorithm work with a video podcast in the classroom. The results and conclusions of this study can be utilized by teachers and lecturers in English classes, practical classes, and lecture courses such as "English Language Teaching" and "Methods of Teaching English."

Keywords: Mobile Technology; Foreign Language; Podcasting; Language Education.

1. Introduction

Today, the problem of developing the ability to communicate in foreign languages interculturally is at the forefront of attention due to the growing need to provide students with deep knowledge of foreign languages as well as the development of personal qualities that contribute to full participation in cultural dialogue (Fakhrutdinov, 2021). The need for new types of specialists inevitably leads to the learning process in a professional educational institution being increasingly based on students' independent work. Higher education pedagogy in the European Union and Russia has acknowledged the concept that the primary objective of education is not the presentation of ready-made knowledge but rather the organization of active, independent student activities (Gali et al., 2019; Sabirova & Khanipova, 2019).

The use of mobile learning technologies in foreign language teaching is, in our opinion, one of the most effective ways to develop cross-cultural foreign language communication among university students. The significant impact of information technologies on the informatization of education in general and the informatization of language education, in particular, determines the development of modern society. Mobile technologies, in particular, contribute to the development of students' educational activities and increase their conscious participation in foreign language learning (Abrosimova & Kondrateva, 2018; Sagitova et al., 2020; Nazmieva et al., 2019).

1.1. Literature Review

By reviewing the background of the research, it is evident that this field has received little attention. The theoretical foundations of the application of various pedagogical technologies are represented in the works of

several Russian and foreign researchers, such as Choshanov (2015), Jewell (2006), Mukhametzyanova (2008), Polat (2002), and Stockwell (2007), among others. Foreign experts such as Sharples (2007), Traxler (2009), Kelly and Minges (2012), Paul Man-Man (2006), and others investigate mobile learning issues. Domestic researchers and methodologists, including Avramenko (2013), Sabirova (2019), Titova (2014), and others, investigate the development and application of mobile technologies, as well as the renovation of language learning using mobile devices.

2. Methodology

The primary objectives of this study are as follows: 1) to investigate the impact of mobile technologies on cross-cultural language communication among university students engaged in foreign language learning; 2) to analyze the pedagogical characteristics of podcasting, including the categorization and classification of podcasts, as well as the operational procedures involved in working with video podcasts. The study is grounded in a theoretical research approach, which involves analyzing both foreign and domestic philosophical, pedagogical, and methodological literature pertaining to the problem at hand. Additionally, the study incorporates the analysis and synthesis of innovative pedagogical practices, as well as empirical research and analysis of pedagogical experiences.

3. Results

3.1. The Concept of M-learning in Foreign Language Education

The term "mobile learning" (M-learning) was coined by foreign researchers and is defined as the capacity to receive or provide educational information in any format via personal mobile devices (New Oxford American Dictionary, 3rd edition, 2015). M-learning is distinguished by the fact that students are not confined to a specific location or time, and training materials are always accessible and can be studied at any convenient time (Bransford & Douglas, 2000). Mobile technology is regarded as the most popular technology in foreign language instruction, especially now, when an increasing number of students use mobile devices daily. Mobile devices have evolved from simple voice-transmitting devices to multimedia communication tools that can download and update text, text data, audio, and video files (Kelly & Minges, 2012).

The incorporation of mobile technologies through the implementation of the principles of accessibility, interactivity, multimedia, individualization, and personalization of learning all contribute to the effective formation of students' self-educational activities. The combination of mobile applications and mobile devices makes it possible to acquaint students with tools for foreign language learning that promote the development of students' self-educational activities and foster cross-cultural foreign language communication. In addition, the use of mobile technologies to enhance students' cross-cultural foreign language communication makes the teaching process more effective and engaging.

In foreign language instruction, mobile technologies primarily involve cell phones (smartphones, iPhones), mobile devices (players, netbooks, iPods, and others), computers (tablet computer-iPad), and others. Individual choice is dependent on the student's age, the availability of wireless Internet in the classroom, and the course's goals and objectives. Modern gadgets and devices have a wide range of functions and software applications that enable students to study independently and foster the development of intercultural foreign language communication. Students in foreign language classes, for instance, utilize mobile phones, iPhones, smartphones, and tablet computers (iPad), among others, most frequently (Titova, 2017; Gorbunova & Mokeyeva, 2017).

There are primarily two categories of mobile applications in widespread use today: 1) General mobile applications that are not used for educational purposes, such as Google and Google+ tools, mobile social networks, reading applications, mobile poll everywhere systems, mobile podcasts, and others. 2) Educational mobile applications that assist in the development of all types of speech activity: speaking, listening, reading, and writing: apps created by publishers, professional and commercial organizations (MacMillan Free Apps www.macmillanglobal.com).

3.2. Podcasting in developing cross-cultural foreign language communication

Podcasting as a technology is gaining popularity in foreign language education and fostering the development of intercultural foreign language communication. iPod and broadcasting were combined to create the term podcasting. A podcast, as defined by the dictionary, is a digital recording of a radio program or other similar program that is available for download to a personal audio player via the Internet (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2015).

The ability to subscribe and automatically download audio and video files for later listening and viewing on a variety of mobile devices in offline mode, i.e., without an Internet connection, is an essential feature of podcasting as an integral component of mobile technologies for developing cross-cultural foreign language communication. The popularity of podcasts in cross-cultural language communication is contingent upon their didactic properties, which include sound nature, multimedia, mobility, interactivity, usability, and accessibility (Titova, 2017). Audio podcasts, video podcasts (vodcasts), so-called extended podcasts (a combination of audio with text, video, graphics, and animation), and screencasts – digital video and audio recordings produced directly from the computer screen – are all distinct types of podcasts. Podcasts are frequently used as a source of information for developing cross-cultural language communication due to their diversity and authenticity, which motivate language learners throughout their language education.

By duration, podcasts can be categorized as short (1-2 minutes), medium (3-5 minutes), and long (over 5 minutes) (more than 15 minutes). According to presentation style, podcasts are separated into formal (lectures) and informal categories (interviews) (conversations, discussions). By content — lexical, grammatical, podcasts, tutorials, and others. By subject - social, political, historical, and so on (Titova, Avramenko, 2013).

Paul Man-Man identifies the following types of educational podcasts: 1) Comprehensive podcasts that include a wide variety of work (interviews, dictionary work, monologues, dialogical texts, and others) (<https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/general-english/podcasts>, <https://www.gmrtranscription.com/blog/podcasts-comprehensive-list-to-listen-and-create>). 2) Lesson plans based on news podcasts, including audio files, handouts, and news articles (<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/>). 3) A pronunciation podcast that helps improve phonetic skills by practicing specific sounds and phonetic difficulties of the language (<https://pronuncian.com/podcasts/episode159>; <https://gagoga199932971.podomatic.com/>). 4) Vocabulary podcast containing lexical material on a variety of subjects (<http://www.feedspot.com/infiniteress.php?src=feedtitle&followfeedid=5204502>, <https://www.feedspot.com/infiniteress.php?src=feedtitle&followfeedid=52044975>). 5) Conversation exchange podcast featuring text or voice chat with native speakers (<https://player.fm/podcasts/Native-Speaker>; <https://www.enpodcast.com/podcasts/themes/native-speaker>). 6) Humorous podcasts (<https://corp.lingualeo.com/ru/2016/08/23/luchshie-podkastyi-na-angliyskom-ili-poslushayte/>). 7) A podcast containing both traditional and contemporary popular songs with lyrics and transcription included (<https://player.fm/podcasts/Song>; <https://www.udiscovermusic.com/stories/best-music-podcasts/>) (Paul Man-Man, 2006).

Fox, on the other hand, identifies the following types of podcasts: 1) drill podcasts, which aim to develop specific aspects of the language (grammar, phonetics, lexicon); 2) podcasts that are explicitly pedagogical and aimed at enhancing the ability to work with content; 4) student-produced podcasts - podcasts created by students as part of their student course projects (Titova, 2017).

Due to the vast selection of podcasts, their free availability, and their constant updating, we are able to utilize them effectively in the educational process of fostering cross-cultural foreign language communication. For example, in the English language classes, we use BBC video podcasts to the textbook *Speak Out* (Pearson Education Limited) with the first- and second-year students of Kazan Federal University. For the first-year students, we use BBC video podcasts to the textbook *Speak Out – Upper Intermediate level*: <http://www.pearsonlongman.com/speakout/video-podcasts/upperint.html> and for the second-year students – *Speak Out Advanced level*: <http://www.pearsonlongman.com/speakout/video-podcasts/Advanced.html>. Work on a video podcast is completed both in and outside of class. On average, working with a video podcast takes 20-25 minutes. Students work independently using their mobile devices (phone, smartphone, tablets, and others), headphones, and printouts of the video podcast assignments.

Generally, tasks for a video podcast are scheduled second-by-second per second and consist of the following exercises: 1) Read the following sentences about..., then view the video podcast from 0:12 to 0:28 and delete the incorrect word. 2) Watch the video podcast from 0:28 to 1:13 and match the individuals with the appropriate responses. 3) Read the text in the box below, then view the video podcast from 1:14 to 1:58. Tick (✓) the five statements made by the speakers. 4) View the video podcast from 1:59 to 3:16 and indicate whether each sentence is true or false. 5) Watch the video podcast from 1:18 to 2:45 and fill in the blanks using the items in the box below. 6) Personalisation: Write two brief paragraphs about..., using as much of the podcast's language as possible.

5. Discussion

The study demonstrates that podcasts are a highly effective method for developing cross-cultural foreign language communication and language learning. The incorporation of podcast technology into the language-learning process increases students' engagement, trains their foreign speech perception skills, allows for independent study, encourages self-control, and diversifies the lesson. Podcasts, as an integral part of mobile technologies, contribute to the implementation of modern education standards and person-centered learning by fostering student autonomy and critical thinking and implementing active forms of learning. Using podcasts to develop cross-cultural foreign language communication improves the formation of oral speech activity by conveying all nuances of intonation, dialects, and unique characteristics of the speaker's speech. Podcasts improve the organization, intensification, individualization, and systematization of the educational process.

6. Conclusion

The most important thing for students who wish to continue learning English is to maintain contact with the language. Fortunately, there are numerous ways to develop language skills independently and foster cross-cultural foreign language communication in the present day. Information technologies can provide English language learners with websites and a variety of resources. Teachers and lecturers can use the study's findings and conclusions in English classes, practical classes, and courses such as "English Language Teaching" and "Methods of Teaching English."

Acknowledgments

This research was performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

Author Contributions

The authors contributed equally to the writing of the article.

Conflict of Interest

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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