

IMPROVING LISTENING PROFICIENCY THROUGH PODCAST INTEGRATION IN ENGLISH LESSONS

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Annotation: Listening comprehension is a fundamental component of language acquisition, particularly in military educational institutions, specifically in the military academic lyceums of "Temurbeklar Maktabi," where English is taught as a Foreign Language (EFL). Integrating podcasts into English lessons enables learners to develop listening skills effectively in meaningful and practical contexts through authentic, engaging, and flexible audio materials. This article analyzes the theoretical foundations of podcast-based teaching, highlights the pedagogical advantages of developing listening and speaking skills, and discusses strategies for the effective use of podcasts in a military academic environment. The use of podcasts promotes learner autonomy, communicative competence, and motivation, aligning with contemporary language teaching principles.

Keywords: podcast integration, listening comprehension skills, speaking skills, English teaching, military academic lyceum, "Temurbeklar Maktabi," language acquisition teaching, military academic lyceum, "Temurbeklar maktabi", language acquisition.

Annotasiya: Tinglab tushunish chet tilining asosiy komponenti bo'lib, ayniqsa harbiy ta'lim muassasalari, xususan, "Temurbeklar maktabi" harbiy akademik litseylarida ingliz tilini chet tili (EFL) sifatida o'rgatishda muhim ahamiyatga ega. Ingliz tili darslariga podkastlarni integratsiya qilish o'quvchilarga haqiqiy, qiziqarli va moslashuvchan audio manbalar orqali tinglash ko'nikmalarini samarali va amaliy kontekstlarda rivojlantirish imkonini beradi. Ushbu maqolada podkastlarga asoslangan o'qitishning nazariy asoslari tahlil qilinib, tinglab tushunish va gapirish ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirishdagi pedagogik afzalliklari yoritiladi hamda harbiy akademik muhitda podkastlardan samarali foydalanish strategiyalari muhokama qilinadi. Podkastlardan foydalanish o'quvchilarda mustaqil o'rganish, kommunikativ kompetensiya va o'quv motivatsiyasini oshirishga xizmat qiladi, bu esa zamonaviy til o'qitish prinsiplari bilan uyg'un keladi.

Kalit so'zlar: podkastlarni integratsiya qilish, tinglab tushunish ko'nikmasi, so'zlashish ko'nikmasi, ingliz tilini o'qitish, harbiy akademik litsey, "Temurbeklar maktabi", tilni egallash.

Listening is widely recognized as the cornerstone of effective communication, and in EFL environments, particularly within specialized educational systems like “Temurbeklar Maktabi” military academic lyceums, the ability to comprehend spoken English accurately is critical for academic and professional success. Pupils (grades 10 and 11) often need to interpret instructions, analyse information, and participate in discussions in English, which makes advanced listening skills essential. Traditional approaches to listening instruction frequently rely on scripted dialogues or teacher-centered exercises, providing limited exposure to natural and spontaneous speech. Podcasts—digital audio programs available on multiple platforms—offer an innovative solution by providing authentic listening experiences that reflect real-world language use, diverse accents, and varied intonation patterns.

Listening comprehension involves complex cognitive processes that integrate bottom-up strategies, such as decoding sounds and vocabulary, with top-down strategies that involve using prior knowledge, context, and expectations. In military educational settings, these skills are particularly important, as learners must follow instructions accurately under time pressure and in high-stakes environments. Podcasts represent a form of authentic input, which is central to effective language acquisition. Krashen’s Input Hypothesis (1985) says people learn language best when they hear or read things that are a little harder than what they already know, called $i + 1$ (i = your current level of language knowledge and $+1$ = something slightly harder than what you already know). Podcasts give this kind of material, with topics like news, work skills, or military subjects, so learners can hear language used in real-life situation.

The pedagogical advantages of integrating podcasts into English lessons are multifaceted. Firstly, podcasts provide exposure to authentic, unscripted language, allowing learners to experience natural speech patterns, idiomatic expressions, and a range of accents. This exposure improves listening comprehension, helping pupils adjust to different speech rates and intonations. Secondly, listening and speaking are interconnected skills. Activities such as summarizing podcast content, engaging in discussions, and role-playing scenarios help learners transfer comprehension into production, enhancing overall communicative competence. Thirdly, podcasts encourage learner autonomy by enabling learners to control the pace, content, and timing of their learning. This self-directed approach fosters motivation and accountability, qualities that are essential in both academic and military training contexts.

For effective implementation, podcasts can be integrated into lesson plans through structured phases. In the pre-listening phase, teachers can introduce relevant vocabulary, activate prior knowledge, and set specific learning objectives. During the listening phase, pupils actively engage with the audio content through note-taking, predicting content, and identifying key ideas. The post-listening phase can involve

comprehension questions, group discussions, role-plays, and reflective exercises to consolidate learning. Additionally, cadets can extend their practice beyond the classroom by subscribing to educational podcasts, maintaining listening journals, and sharing summaries or analyses with peers. This extended engagement supports lifelong learning habits and enhances overall language proficiency.

The integration of podcasts also has motivational and cognitive benefits. By providing content that is relevant to cadets' interests and professional development, podcasts increase engagement and encourage active participation. Moreover, analyzing and discussing podcast content fosters critical thinking and reflective skills, which are valuable for both academic success and military decision-making. However, it is important to consider potential challenges, such as selecting content appropriate to learners' language level, managing limited classroom time, and ensuring access to necessary technological resources. Careful planning and scaffolding can address these challenges, ensuring that podcasts effectively contribute to language learning outcomes.

Since students use the same course books but differ in their language proficiency, it's recommended that they listen to English-learning podcasts suited to their individual levels and learning goals. For instance, learners at the intermediate level can benefit from podcasts like 6 Minute English, VOA Learning English, and All Ears English, which feature short and clear episodes to enhance listening and everyday vocabulary. Meanwhile, upper-intermediate learners may find Luke's English Podcast and The English We Speak more useful. Additionally, other podcasts such as TED Talks Daily and The Guardian Podcasts can further support the development of learners' speaking, vocabulary, and listening skills.

In conclusion, the use of podcasts in English lessons at military academic lyceum represents a highly effective approach for developing listening proficiency and enhancing speaking skills. As most teenagers both auditory and visual learners, these podcasts can be the most effective way of teaching a foreign language. By providing authentic, engaging, and flexible input, podcasts support learner autonomy, communicative competence, and critical thinking. When thoughtfully integrated into structured lesson plans, podcasts create a dynamic and motivating learning environment, equipping pupils with essential language skills for academic, professional, and military success.

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