

Teaching and Learning English as Second Language through Podcasting

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Introduction

Rapid development in information and communication technology affects all areas of our life including effective advancement in redefining and modifying new learning and its environment. Technology is the backbone of teaching and learning in ELT in current educational scenario as it is very much part of language learning throughout the world. The integration of latest technologies including tools and resources from web 2.0 generation ensures and encourages good academic and communication development for language learning. Podcasting is one of powerful and efficient tool for English language teaching and learning as it is incorporated by most of the current EFL methodologies for effective transaction of teaching and learning process. Many research studies are carried out to analyse the effectiveness of Podcasting in teaching and learning English as Second language learning as how best it can be to incorporated into L2 classes (Abdous, Camarena, & Facer, 2009; Craig, Paraiso, & Patten, 2007; Schmidt, 2008), podcasts for the purpose of improving their pronunciation skills (Lord, 2008) and podcasts for teaching Academic listening skills (O'Bryan & Hegelheimer, 2007).

Podcasting and Its Educational Implications

The term *podcast* is now a buzz word which is a combination of the words broadcasting and iPod. It refers to a series of digital media files (either audio or video) that are released episodically and often downloaded through web spaces. The term is a play on the words pod (playable on demand) which was later used by the *Apple* for its brand of portable media player iPod and broadcasting. Podcast as a digital audio and video files system nowadays has become widespread and commonplace to all facilitating by its wide access of

resources and the increase in availability and affordability of portable media devices. Podcasting has high-level potential for educational practices as it brings easy and convenient access to teaching and learning materials in and outside the classroom.

‘Apple’s ‘iTunes’ can be considered as the main and prime move and revolution in podcasting media source which is launched in 2003. Consequently in 2007, Apple released its ‘iTunes U’ as a repository for educational teaching and learning content provided by universities and higher level educational institutes. The access for content is restricted to the institutions’ own students, and some is made publicly available as open source material. It has now become spread and established itself as the main source of educational podcasting materials, with over 1 billion downloads between 2007 and 2013 (Rosell-Aguilar, 2013).

Three Trends

Three trends can be seen in favour of growing the popularity of podcasting. First, it is being used mostly as a supplementary or alternative means of delivering content by various industries such as media, entertainment and journalism. Nowadays podcasting is greatly offered by broadcasters and news publishers. The second supportive trend for podcasting is the increase in MP3 player ownership and the use of MP3 players to listen to digital sound. A third favouring trend for popularity of podcasting is the availability of free software and other web tools to create podcasts and distribute them on the internet, and easy access to download and use effectively (Edirisingha, Rizzi & Rothwell 2007). The main advantage of podcasts is that it can be used as a resource created by others including experts, a resource created by the teacher, or as a project created by students (Preston, 2008, Rowe, 2006). The effectiveness of using technologies like podcasting in the classroom does not rely so much on the technology itself but on the ways it can be used to deliver a quality learning experience. The NSW Quality Teaching Model gives the outline of generic qualities of pedagogy that have been successfully applied in a range of school contexts and are shown to lead to improved student learning. It can be categorised into the three dimensions of intellectual quality, quality learning environment, and significance for the student. (NSW DET 2003).

Usefulness of Podcast

Hopson, Simms & Knezek (2002) observe that the creation of a podcast is a valuable task as it is a real world experience in teaching and learning process. It can effectively

provide an authentic exposure for learners and an ideal means to immerse students in the process of inquiry in their learning. The important advantage of podcasting is that students are encouraged to actively manipulate information in a variety of contexts from a number of different resources in order to solve meaningful and relevant problems (Hopson, Simms & Knezek, 2002). The emergence of web 2.0 technologies including podcasting enables anyone to be part of the knowledge-access, knowledge-building, and information-exchanging culture at anywhere (Loving, et al., 2007).

Gray, et.al. (2010) suggests that podcasting is attractive in higher education as both students and instructors are actively engaged in the process, each bringing their own perspective. This is summarised in the table below:

Leaner Perspective	Instructor Perspective
Portable audio devices are increasingly ubiquitous and easy to access	Podcasts are straightforward to produce and distribute among learners
These take the form of iPods/MP3 players and mobile phones with audio playback compatibility and students friendly	They provide an opportunity to raise engagement levels in learning materials through a novel and interesting medium.
Resources are accessible when they want it and can be replayed infinitely if needed.	They enable teachers to review their own materials in the process of creating podcasting and monitoring the learning
Audio adds a real exposure of learning not traditionally associated with traditional education styles. If their classes are missed, students have an opportunity to catch up by downloading recordings if available.	Once created, podcasts are easy to update as new resource or teaching methods are adopted, due to being kept it in digital store.

Podcasting and Its Implications in ELT

The emergence of web 2.0 technology gives ample tools and resources for language teaching especially foreign language like English. Podcasts as tool for web.2.0 technology offer students a wide range of possibilities for extra listening inside and outside the classroom at any time. It facilitates more advanced learning by listen to authentic materials as from real

experience from native peoples. Podcasts that can benefit language learners include those that teachers and students develop as a language learning activity, and the use of ‘authentic’ existing, audio resources. These may be language learning courses which use podcasts (either at the core of their teaching or as supplementary materials) or the vast amount of authentic materials available online, from news items to programmes about any subject in the target language. This web-based exposure to students effectively narrows the gap between the formal English which dominates most second language classroom and the informal English used in most real life communication events. Podcasting as latest technology has huge potential in enhancing and promoting second language learning especially listening and speaking skills. (Stanley 2006). Kenneth Beare (2005) rightly points out that podcasting is especially interesting for English language learners as it provides a means for students to get access to ‘authentic’ listening sources about almost any subject that may interest them. The Language learning was quickly identified as a potential beneficiary through technology mediation and podcasting as new technology tool empowers the language learning among current generation (Chinnery, 2006; Godwin-Jones, 2005; Stanley, 2006). Gromik (2008) highlighted that podcasting technology provides learners access to resources which are authentic, free, real exposure and otherwise not available in territories where the target language is not spoken.

Maximizing Language Learning through Podcasting

Podcasting is essential for English language learning as it maximises its target language focusing all language skills. The important difference between the use of podcasting for teaching and learning languages and its use for other disciplines is that listening for language teaching and learning needs a different kind of listening skill set. While in other disciplines the focus is on the content and meaning. The focus of listening also lies to varying degrees on form, through which learners become aware of grammatical, pronunciation, or other features of the language they are using or are exposed in language learning (Long, 2000, Skehan, 2003).

The following are some areas of podcast creation for English language teaching

- Podcasting based on communication and comprehension activities, interviews and vocabulary, conversation and presentation activates.

- Podcasts for idiomatic expressions in English language with their usages and exemplifications.
- Podcasts for conversations and interaction between the native speakers which may give real exposure to the non-native students.
- Podcasts for enhancing listening skill of the learners by giving various communicative tasks and activities.
- Podcasts for giving guidelines how to prepare discourses, and
- Podcasts for vocabulary enrichment with their pronunciation and contextualisation etc.

Some Podcasts

The simplicity of podcasting as web 2.0 tool is that teachers can create their own podcasts or guide their students to produce their own according to their classroom purposes. Podcasting for specific purposes such as language teaching is now easy for teachers and students to produce with the advent of information and communication technology. Using a free podcast sites like Podomatic, ourmedia.org, Libsyn, PodBean, etc. a teacher can set up a podcast page by simple procedures. The podcast page provides a website for learners to post their podcasts among its audience. The teacher or students needs a computer and Internet connection, and a microphone and speakers or a headset to record and create a podcast. The development of podcasts for educational purposes is extremely easy and no specialist technical knowledge is needed for its creation and use. Learners get full exposure to a number of listening activities to enhance their oral proficiency.

Following are some good podcasting sites for language teaching and learning

TEFL Boot Camp

TEFL Boot Camp is an online resource as form of podcast for ESL learners and teachers. it gives a lot of digital resources for enhancing English language communication with fluency and accuracy. They also offer online courses with TEFL certifications for those who want to get mastery in language teaching. Some of their podcast topics include the following:

- Teaching EFL Reading and Comprehension
- Teaching EFL vocabulary enrichment and Pronunciation
- Discipline in the EFL Classroom

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- EFL Lesson Planning and designing classroom strategies, and
- Various types of Demonstration classes in EFL etc.

International House

International House provides an online platform for podcasting to complement their CELTA course. It gives quick, efficient and cover valuable topics all teachers can take something from these podcasts as these are simply are also downloadable. The class's duration may range from five minutes to 20 minutes. The main areas of its episodes cover the following

- Teaching Methodologies for EFL
- Teaching effective EFL Writing
- Teaching international and Business English in EFL
- Correcting and evaluating Errors in the EFL Classroom, and
- Discipline in the EFL Classroom etc.

The TEFL Show

The TEFL Show is another podcasting team which gives efficient and authentic materials for English language teaching and learning especially for ESL instructors. It really brings together very timely material that can be useful and entertaining for teachers of all levels, ages and locations around the world. These podcasts are also available on iTunes, Tune In and Sound Cloud etc. The TEFL Show has abundant video resources too on their site. Some important areas of their podcasts are as following

- Minority Languages and its usages
- Foreign accent in English Language Teaching
- Interview with some EFL experts such as Cecilia Nobre, and
- Standards for teaching pronunciation etc.

TEFLology

TEFLology podcasts also gives authentic materials for teaching and learning. Each episode includes a nice summary of what the learner can expect, as well as contact information for expert instructors who want to follow up with the episode's presentation and

assignment. Their podcasting resources are also available on iTunes enabling them downloadable for that daily commute. Some of their latest podcasts include the following

- Tim Johns, TEFL Exchange, and CAP (a new theoretical model proposed by Jason Anderson.)
- Research Relevance for Teachers, Textbooks, and Lambert Sauveur
- TESOL 2017 Convention & Miguel Mendoza
- Peter Strevens, English Learning Ventures, and Post-human Applied Linguistics, and
- TEFL Interviews 26: Ryuko Kubota etc.

Masters of TESOL

Masters of TESOL has a lot of podcasting resources for ESL teachers and these are certainly authentic materials for non-native speakers. Masters of TESOL provides lesson plans for ESL, ice breakers and various proficiency levels in EFL. It also serves an entertaining section for edutainment with funny ESL stories and narratives. The following are some titles covering by their podcasting

- The Student Becomes The Teacher
- What the way you speak says about you –(Sociolinguistics with Andrew Euan MacFarlane)
- Babies and First Language Acquisition, and
- How fair is your English test? – QUICKIE etc,

TEFL Training Institute

TEFL Training Institute keeps good website to come with their informative and entertaining ESL podcasts. It also gives TEFL certification to all those who want to join their courses. TEFL Training Institute has abundant videos podcasting resources that can give real exposure in ESL. These are some important of podcast topics covered by TEFL Training Institute

- TEFL Podcast
- Classroom Management in EFL Classroom
- Teacher Development and EFL Strategies
- Academic Management , and
- Teaching and Learning in EFL etc.

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The Advantages of Creating and Listening English Podcasts in the Classroom

There are various advantages of creating and utilising podcasts for English language teaching and learning purposes and its effective implementation in the in the classroom. The prime focus is that it can give real exposure in target language and effectively maintain the interest and motivation in students. Some advantages of integrating podcasting for language teaching are following:

Self-Directed Learning

Podcasts material gives the learners opportunities for self directed learning according to their interest. They were given prompt support to upload podcasts from the web, and the best search engines available to them were Google for wide searches over a large database of websites and Yahoo for a more theme-based approach. Seema Jain & Farha Hashmi (2013) found that most of the students keenly liked the idea of using ELT podcasts on provided websites for their language learning.

Maximises Exposure in Target Language

The main advantage of podcasting in language teaching is that it gives maximum exposure to target language by giving real life experience from native peoples. Using podcasting, teacher can give specific and authentic material for language teaching and teacher can evaluate the material prepared by students (Stanley, 2006).

Encourage Engaged Learning

Engaged learning is the hall mark of current pedagogical practices as it ensures students centeredness in teaching and learning process. Podcast can provide the learners the effective means to listen to authentic materials and to speak and prepare their own materials. Students can enjoy their English language learning by gaining confidence in with new technology.

Platform for Interaction and Collaboration

Podcasting as a web 2.0 tool gives effective platform to interact and collaborate among its members including teachers and students. It helps to respond the podcasting materials prepared by teacher and to student's podcasting materials. Teacher can give

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effectively the feedback to the podcasting resources created by students. The interaction and collaboration among its members ensures the development of language skills.

Students Centred Learning

The students of current generation are rightly ‘digital native’ as they prefer digital life in their teaching and learning. Podcasting as technology resources can arouse the interest in learners to learn new things as it is linked with their digital experience. If teachers are standing away from these technological resources, they cannot motivate and bring the learners in to the mainstream of language teaching. Seema Jain & Farha Hashmi (2013) reported from their study on podcasting for language teaching that most of the students expressed their full satisfaction on using podcasts and showed improvement in their communication and language skills and students learned new expressions in web-enabled environment and simultaneously jotted down the vocabulary they found difficult to understand.

Learning at Any time and Any Where

The creation and maintenance of podcasting is very simple process as advanced technological skills are not essential for its implementation in classroom process. A teacher can create podcasting with simple procedure and students can get access to these materials at any time and any place. Teacher can give authentic learning materials via podcasting from expert sources. The students can really experience learning English language easily, quickly and naturally through effective podcasting.

Conclusion

Podcasting is a powerful web 2.0 tools that can be used for English language teaching for better result and it can be incorporated for effective language teaching. Podcasting is current trend in online language teaching as teachers can simply utilise it and learners can get access at anytime and anywhere. Teachers can prepare podcasting as their own materials in accordance with the cultural and social background of learners. It can be created by simple procedure and it is also economical as a digital learning aid. It is most suitable that students of current generation are ‘digital natives’ so as podcasting in language learning can maximize their interest, motivation and digital exposure.

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