



THE RELEVANCE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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ABSTRACT

The rapid development of digital technologies opens up new prospects in the field of education. It is safe to say that in the modern world there is a tendency to merge educational and information technologies in order to form on this basis fundamentally new integrated learning technologies, based, in particular, on digital technologies. With the use of podcasts, learning becomes interactive, the importance of independent work of students increases, the intensity of the educational process is seriously increased, etc.

Keywords: digital technologies, ICT, educational podcasts, podcasting service, English language learning.

INTRODUCTION

Modern teachers are actively exploring and mastering the use of digital technologies in the teaching process. With the emergence of Web 2.0 services, specialists in lingua didactics and foreign language teaching methods have strongly supported the integration of information and communication technologies into education. Recently, there has been growing interest in newer web-based tools, particularly podcasts. A podcast is a media file distributed via the Internet and accessible on computers as well as portable devices such as iPods and other digital audio players. The core idea of podcasting lies in creating audio or video materials that allow users to access content anytime, anywhere, and in any way they prefer. Since today's students are increasingly mobile, the flexibility to receive information without being tied to a fixed location makes podcasts especially attractive.

In today's world, there are countless podcasts available for learning English. After reviewing many of them, several stand out as particularly effective:

1. **BBC Learning English Podcast** – Each episode is only about six minutes long, which makes it easy to follow. The speech is clear and delivered at a moderate pace, so listeners can understand it without much difficulty. Although the vocabulary is often advanced, transcripts are provided with every episode. At the beginning, when learners may find listening challenging, they can follow along by reading the text.
2. **Audio English Podcast** – This podcast is suitable for both beginners (English for Beginners) and more advanced learners (Practical English). Listeners can also choose specific topics that match their interests, such as Travel English, Telephone English, Banking English, or Accounting English.

3. **Luke's ENGLISH Podcast** – Hosted by Luke, an experienced English teacher from London with over 14 years of teaching, this podcast offers a mix of authentic conversations and humor. Luke often invites friends and family, giving listeners exposure to natural, spontaneous dialogue. Episodes usually last over an hour, making them ideal for listening during free time.
4. **Effortless English Podcast** – Created by American teacher A.J. Hoge, this podcast uses short stories that highlight different English tenses. His clear and slow speech makes it easy to understand, even for beginners. Hoge promotes his own method of language learning: focus on phrases rather than individual words, avoid grammar until you have a strong vocabulary base of at least 1,000 words, and prioritize listening practice.
5. **I Will Teach You a Language Podcast** – Hosted by Ollie Richards, who speaks eight languages, this podcast emphasizes enjoying the learning process. Having started learning languages as an adult, Richards shares practical tips and strategies while serving as proof that anyone can successfully learn a new language.
6. **Breaking News English Podcast** – This resource provides new episodes every two days based on current events. In addition to improving listening and speaking skills, it also offers exercises that develop grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and discourse competence.

After reviewing the above-mentioned podcast services for potential use in English lessons, the Breaking News English Podcast stands out as one of the most effective. Since podcasts are educational by nature and primarily aimed at developing core language skills—especially listening—they can serve as a powerful learning tool. By examining the main features of this social podcasting service and its alignment with didactic principles, we can explore various ways of integrating podcasts into classroom practice.

Podcasts bring fresh energy to the learning process by encouraging creativity and imagination from both teachers and students. Their use contributes to the holistic development of learners. When working with podcasts in English language teaching, students may take on two main roles:

The role of the consumer – Students listen to the assigned podcasts and complete exercises prepared by the teacher.

The role of the creator – Students are given the chance to design and, if they wish, publish their own podcasts online for a wider audience. Alternatively, they may produce podcasts solely for personal practice—such as improving pronunciation, intonation, and fluency—without publishing them. In this way, learners can record and rerecord their material until they achieve the desired level of mastery.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Researchers emphasize that the role of information and communication technologies (ICT) in language teaching and learning cannot be underestimated. Emerging technologies make the learning process more practical and relevant, aligning with approaches recognized by scientists and educational psychologists. For today's teachers and learners, it is essential to stay updated on modern tools that enhance the teaching and learning of English through ICT. Indeed, information and communication technologies have transformed society worldwide, reshaping not

only how people interact but also how language instruction is designed and delivered.

RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE

This research is significant as it expands the scope of studies on writing supported by computer-based information and communication technology (ICT) resources. Since such resources are often costly, it is important to determine the extent to which new tools genuinely contribute to positive learning outcomes. For instance, educational programs and resources should meet the following criteria:

- Encourage students to take control of their learning and foster independent thinking, rather than directing them toward a predetermined conclusion;
 - Reflect and support students' personal interests, such as in English;
 - Inspire creativity and provide opportunities for learners to express their own ideas;
 - Maintain a non-aggressive approach;
- Avoid reinforcing stereotypes. [4]

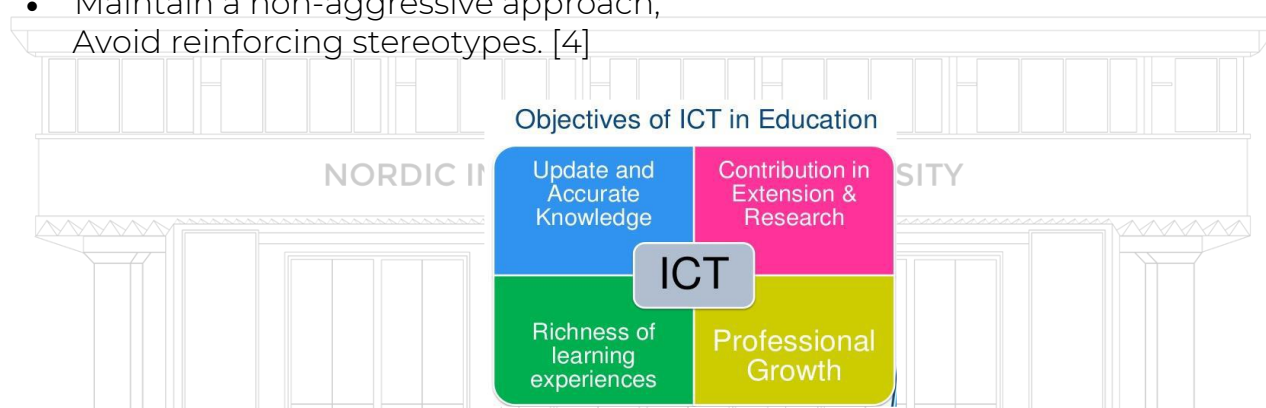


Figure 1. Objectives of ICT in Education

Uzbekistan has always envisioned its future in a well-educated, healthy, and harmoniously developed young generation. Since gaining independence, the education sector has been prioritized as a key area of national development and modernization, with comprehensive reforms established as a central direction of government policy. Today, the republic has created modern conditions not only for quality learning at all stages of education but also for ensuring the effective work of teachers. The authority of mentors and the prestige of the teaching profession have risen significantly, with professionalism, dedication to upbringing and education, creativity, and innovation becoming the main criteria for evaluating and rewarding teachers' work.

In such a supportive environment, students acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to become competitive specialists in a rapidly changing world and under dynamic market conditions. At the same time, new demands placed on teachers have introduced modern technologies as an integral part of the learning process. This shift requires educators to develop relevant skills and train specialists with strong knowledge of information and communication technologies.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Professor P. V. Sysoev proposed a methodology for working with podcasts based on a three-stage model of listening comprehension. This model includes three

phases: **before listening, while listening, and after listening** [4]. For each stage, the author developed specific types of exercises.

Before Listening – At this stage, students are introduced to the context of the upcoming podcast. Examples of tasks include:

- Reading the podcast title and predicting its content;
- Examining an illustration or photo together with the title to guess the subject of the interview;
- Discussing guiding questions in groups, ensuring that the questions reflect the main ideas and content of the podcast;
- Completing lexical and grammatical exercises (e.g., matching words with definitions, filling in verb forms).

While Listening – Here, students engage in direct listening activities. Tasks may involve:

- Answering a general question to identify the main idea of the podcast;
- Arranging images in the order in which events are presented in the audio text;
- Using a picture to identify which details or subjects were missing from the podcast;
- Completing a table with specific information (e.g., names, ages, professions, places of residence, hobbies of the characters).

After Listening – At this stage, students analyze the content of the podcast, either orally or in writing, and in dialogic or monologic form. They may be asked to:

- Express their opinions;
- Develop one of the ideas mentioned in the podcast.

Overall, the methodology of working with podcasts closely resembles that of working with traditional audio texts. It involves a clear sequence of activities for both teachers and students: preliminary preparation and task-setting, perception and comprehension of the podcast, and follow-up activities to check understanding. Additionally, teachers retain flexibility in choosing suitable audio files and supplementary illustrative materials.

Another approach to podcast-based learning focuses on students creating their own podcasts, which fosters both listening and production skills [2]. This process includes:

- a) familiarizing students with podcast posting rules;
- b) the teacher creating a podcast page on a specific topic;
- c) students drafting the text of the podcast;
- d) group discussion and revision of the text;
- e) podcast recording;
- f) presenting student podcasts;
- g) in-class discussion of the podcasts;
- h) evaluation;
- i) self-assessment.

The wide availability of English-learning podcasts—whether produced by native speakers or experienced teachers—offers learners valuable opportunities. Online, one can find both professional and general podcasts, including exam-preparation materials, resources tailored for lower-level learners, and podcasts accompanied by ready-made exercises. Systematic listening to adapted texts strengthens not only

listening comprehension but also other language skills, including literacy and speaking ability in the target language.

DISCUSSIONS

The integration of digital technology in educational institutions is reshaping the teacher's role—from acting as the sole source of instruction to serving as a partner in the learning process. As students increasingly adopt technology as a learning tool, they begin to create technology-based products that represent student-generated knowledge. These knowledge bases are rich and multimodal, providing clear evidence of what learners have acquired. Furthermore, as the learning experience becomes more meaningful, it also grows more authentic and complex [5].

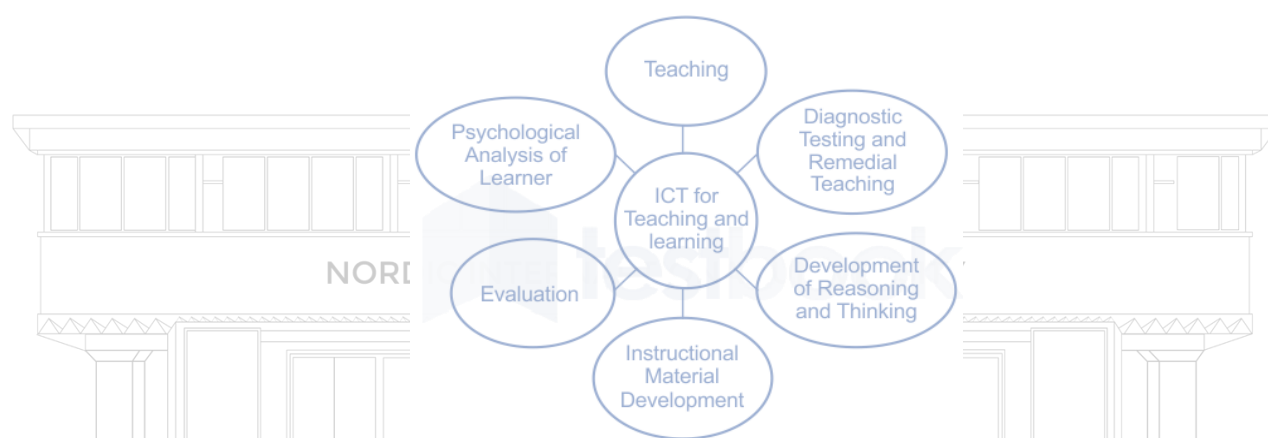


Figure 2. Keys to success in the integration of ICT

Unfortunately, relatively few teachers have yet developed the competencies required to conduct authentic assessments of student learning, such as the use of learning portfolios and performance evaluation rubrics. The need for these assessment skills is becoming increasingly urgent as educators shift from behaviorist and objectivist models of learning toward more constructivist approaches [6].

This issue raises several important questions: How can language teachers update their professional skills through training in the effective use of technology—such as computers, multimedia tools, and interactive smart boards—in the language-learning classroom? As educational institutions undergo modernization and the learning process evolves, the relationship between teachers and students is also changing. Students are now more motivated to acquire knowledge, recognizing that the intellectual foundation built during their years of study serves as the basis for their future success.

At the same time, these changes introduce new demands on teachers, particularly the need for continuous self-improvement. Experts argue that self-development has become one of the essential requirements of the modern world, where the volume of information grows exponentially each day.

CONCLUSION

The research findings highlight several advantages of using information and communication technology (ICT) in English language teaching, where its popularity continues to grow. ICT is regarded as one of the most effective tools for motivating

vocational students' interest in learning English. Moreover, it enables teachers to present their curriculum in a flexible and modern way.

In our view, the greatest value of ICT lies in supporting education on demand. Ideally, we would like the future of learning—where education is accessible anytime and anywhere—to already be a reality, as we are all, in essence, lifelong learners who seek simplicity in the learning process. However, while this vision is appealing, the present reality does not yet fully align with it. The challenge for educators, therefore, is clear: to bridge the gap between the current state of teaching and the desired future of accessible, learner-centered education.

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