

# ДОКЛАДЫ СТУДЕНТОВ НЕЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКИХ СПЕЦИАЛЬНОСТЕЙ НА КРУГЛЫХ СТОЛАХ

## АКТУАЛЬНЫЕ ПРОБЛЕМЫ ЛИНГВОДИДАКТИКИ ГЛАЗАМИ СТУДЕНТОВ И ПРЕПОДАВАТЕЛЕЙ

*Lyssenko T. A., Pichugova I. L.*

### USING PODCASTS TO PROMOTE LEARNER AUTONOMY

The article is focused on how podcast can promote learner autonomy. Special attention is given to what learner autonomy is and some basic characteristics of dependent and independent learners. The examples of using podcasts in foreign language teaching are given. Some advantages and disadvantages of using podcasts as well as the criteria for selecting podcasts are enumerated.

**Keywords:** *learner autonomy, English language teaching (ELT), podcast.*

Since its beginning about three decades ago, learner autonomy has changed the traditional roles of teachers and students, introducing a new era in which students are no longer the passive learners who sit and listen; and the teachers are no longer the front of knowledge. Students are now being transformed into independent learners assuming more responsibility for their own learning as teachers are becoming facilitators, advising more and lecturing less.

The term «learner autonomy» was first introduced in 1981 by Henri Holec, the «father» of learner autonomy. Many definitions have since been given to the term, depending on the writer, the context, and the level of debate educators have come to. According to Holec, «learner autonomy is an ability to take charge of one's own learning» [1]. This means that students take responsibility for learning process in terms of determining the objectives, choosing the content material to study, selecting strategies and methods of study, monitoring and evaluating their learning. David Little defines autonomy as «a situation in which the learner is totally responsible for all the decisions concerned with his or her learning and the implementation of those decisions» [2]. In this respect autonomous learners use meta-cognitive skills which relate to capacity for critical reflection, decision-making, independent action and transferring what they have learnt to other context of learning.

The basic characteristics of dependent and independent learners were summarized by J. Mynard and R. Sorflaten in 2002 [3]. They suggested that learner independence ranges across a continuum, where at one end there are dependent learners who have had little opportunity to develop independent learning skills, and at the other end of the continuum there are learners who are self-directed, self-motivated and capable of learning without a teacher (Table 1).

*Table 1. Characteristics of dependent and independent learners*

<i>Dependent learners</i>	<i>Independent learners</i>
Rely heavily on a teacher	Are self-reliant
Cannot make decisions about their learning	Can make informed decision about their learning
Do not know their strengths and weaknesses	Are aware of their strengths and weaknesses
Do not connect classroom learning with the real world	Connect classroom learning with the real world
Think that the teacher is wholly responsible for their learning	Take responsibility for their own learning, know about different strategies for learning
Do not know the best way to learn something	Plan their learning and set goals
Do not set learning goals, will only work when extrinsic motivators such as grades or rewards are offered	Are intrinsically motivated by making progress in learning
Do not reflect on how well they are learning and the reasons	Often reflect on the learning process and their own progress

Table 1 illustrates a stark contrast between dependent and independent learners. The main reason as to why students should be autonomous as opposed to being dependent on teachers is that autonomous learning activities involve them in authentic learning situations and therefore, is more effective than learning in an artificial classroom context. Another reason is that autonomous learners are intrinsically motivated. According to Little, «if learners are proactively committed to their learning, the problem of motivation is by definition solved». He asserts that such learners have developed «the reflective and attitudinal resources to overcome temporally motivational setbacks».

However, there is a gradual transition from being a dependent learner to independent one. According to their capacities, motivation and attitudes students mostly fall between the two extremes on the continuum.

Nowadays there is a growing trend amongst learners to be more and more independent of teachers and classrooms spurred by advances made in information and communication technology. Technologies are the most important means to form professional competence and their development, experimental check and implementation into practice ensure the efficiency of modern educational process.

One of such technologies which can promote learner autonomy is podcasts.

Podcasts are a kind of information and communication technologies. A *podcast* is a type of digital medium that consists of an episodic series of audio, video, digital radio, PDF, or ePubfiles subscribed to and downloaded through web syndication or streamed on-line to a computer or mobile device. The word is a neologism and portmanteau derived from «broadcast» and «pod» from the success of the iPod, as audio podcasts are often listened to on portable media players.

There are various types of podcasts that can be used in English as a foreign language teaching [4]:

1. *Authentic podcasts* are podcasts that are not aimed at ELT students can often be a rich source of listening. Most of these will only be suitable for use with higher level students, but others are made by non-native speakers of English and their length (5-10 minutes) make them ideal for use with classes.
2. *Teacher podcasts* are produced by teachers, often for their own classes, these podcasts are usually aimed at helping students learn by producing listening content that is not available elsewhere, or that gives a local flavor.
3. *Student podcasts* are produced by students, but often with teacher help, students can listen to these and experience the culture and hear about the lives and interests of other students from around the world.
4. *Educator podcasts* are reflective podcasts that cover methodological matters as well as podcasting for ELT teachers.

How to choose the best podcast? What should the teacher be careful about when selecting a podcast? While choosing the best podcast for the students one should keep in mind the following criteria [5]:

- content (thematic compliance of internet-resources with the curriculum or criterion of professional importance),
- context (compliance of internet-resources with students' interests and abilities),
- authenticity of internet-resources,
- availability of internet-resources,
- update of the internet-resources,
- novelty of the internet-resources,
- real-time operation mode,
- functionality of the internet site with podcasts,
- textual functionality of the podcast.

Learning poses a major challenge to the majority of students. Grow observes that «the goal of the educational process is to produce self-directed, lifelong learners» [6]. Grow's view of the role of education has also been recently supported by Benson who stresses that the role of the school should not only enable pupils to reach a worthwhile level of proficiency in the their subject matters but also to equip learners with the attitudes and skills which will enable them to continue to plan, carry out and monitor their own learning once all the supporting and disciplinary structure of institutionalized learning are withdrawn [7].

Podcasts can be used to achieve the following educational goals in a technical university including the process of learning a foreign language:

1. Promoting learner autonomy;
2. Individualization of learning (applying different materials which correspond to students' interests and age peculiarities in order to increase motivation, teaching learning strategies to create their own podcasts, choosing their own trajectory to fulfil tasks);
3. Broadening the range of academic environment (studying both inside and outside the classroom);
4. Developing additional teaching aid;
5. Providing alternative methods and techniques of study;
6. Organizing intercultural communication (offering and exchanging podcasts in the Internet).

Motivated, autonomous learners learn the language through using it effectively, which enables them to master receptive and productive skills of the target language much more efficiently than the non-autonomous ones learning in traditional teacher-centered classroom context.

Podcasts can assist in developing the following skills:

- setting learner's own goals and objectives,
- making a plan of work,
- searching the required information (when planning and designing a podcast project) with the help of modern information technologies,
- systematizing and structuring information (when developing the podcast content and format),
- analyzing information (when selecting audio/video material),
- producing ideas (when creating a podcast),
- exchanging information (when offering a created podcast on the World Wide Web),
- computer literacy (e. g. working with search engines to get some software for creating audio effects),

- planning both individual and team work (when creating a podcast),
- making decisions,
- encouraging teamwork,
- transferring what students have learned to wider contexts, etc.

The advantages of using podcasts in teaching and learning English as a second language are obvious. They are the following:

1. To give an opportunity to choose their own learning trajectory (students can listen to podcasts at any suitable time, at any suitable place and as many times as they need) which is extremely important for developing learner autonomy skills;
2. To help students overcome psychological barriers when learning a foreign language (students can train their skills without demonstrating their difficulties in front of the group);
3. To give students a possibility to evaluate their own achievements which is also important for promoting learner autonomy;
4. To provide learners with additional language practice;
5. To supply a big range of teaching materials to improve listening, reading, speaking and writing skills;
6. To provide a free access to authentic materials;
7. To increase a level of motivation for learning a foreign language;
8. They are easy to use.

However, in spite of all advantages mentioned above there are some drawbacks of using podcasts. They are the following:

1. Dependence on Internet access;
2. Information overloading which can be provoked by unlimited access to different resources;
3. Psychological barrier which can cause some difficulties if students are novice users.

Like any authentic material, podcast audio or creating a podcast can be really motivating. It will take up a lot of time though, but for students the potential benefits can be huge. Podcasts suit the requirements for oral activities that are often otherwise neglected in the EFL classroom. Students may be encouraged into increasingly complex interactions using podcasts as follows [8]:

1. Add a text comment to the podcast blog;
2. Debate a topic;
3. Send an audio comment (as a mail attachment for example) even when there is no overt invitation to do so by the podcasters;
4. Record a feature for inclusion in a particular blog;
5. Negotiate to produce a whole podcast edition for an existing show;
6. Create and publish a regular class podcast. This can be done relatively easily through free semi-automated services, e. g. such as *Podomatic* (<http://www.podomatic.com>). Managing the technical requirements may produce valuable additional English practice.

In conclusion, learner autonomy is relatively a new concept in TESOL (teaching English to speakers of other languages) and is still being investigated and debated by researchers. The paradigm is shifting from the main stream methods of teachers lecturing students to the novel idea of helping students teach themselves in today's world of language learning by applying advances made in information technology. Podcasts offer the pedagogical potential for varying degrees of involvement in interaction and proffer student engagement that promotes effective and deep learning according to currently accepted cognitive theories. Subscribing to podcasts also has the potential to promote life-long learning that engages students in motivating authentic experiences with a global audience.

Autonomous learners are indeed effective learners [2; 7]. They have the following features in common. Generally speaking, autonomous learners are responsible, flexible, and curious; they see the need to learn, hold positive attitude towards learning, set their own objectives, plan their own learning, explore available learning opportunities and resources, use a variety of strategies, interact effectively with others, monitor their progress, reflect on and evaluate their learning, rationalize their actions, are aware of alternative learning strategies, are aware of their cognitive abilities and learning style, transfer what they have learned to wider contexts and, finally, appreciate that their own efforts are crucial to progress in learning and behave accordingly.

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Lyssenko T. A., student  
**National Research Tomsk Polytechnic University**  
E-mail: [asleaptim@gmail.com](mailto:asleaptim@gmail.com)

Pichugova I. L., senior lecturer  
**National Research Tomsk Polytechnic University**  
E-mail: [inpich@mail.ru](mailto:inpich@mail.ru)

*Лысенко Т. А., Пичугова И. Л.*

## **ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЕ ПОДКАСТОВ ДЛЯ РАЗВИТИЯ УЧЕБНОЙ АВТОНОМИИ ОБУЧАЮЩИХСЯ**

В статье показано, как подкасты могут способствовать учебной автономии. Особое внимание уделяется тому, что такое учебная автономия, и основным характеристикам зависимых и независимых учащихся. Приводятся примеры использования подкастов в процессе обучения иностранному языку. Перечислены преимущества и недостатки применения подкастов, приведены основные критерии их отбора.

*Ключевые слова:* учебная автономия, подкасты, методика преподавания английского языка.

Лысенко Т. А., студент  
**Национальный исследовательский Томский политехнический университет**  
E-mail: [asleaptim@gmail.com](mailto:asleaptim@gmail.com)

Пичугова И. Л., старший преподаватель  
**Национальный исследовательский Томский политехнический университет**  
E-mail: [inpich@mail.ru](mailto:inpich@mail.ru)

*Черепанова А. И.*

## **ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЕ КОРПУСНЫХ ТЕХНОЛОГИЙ В ОБУЧЕНИИ ИНОСТРАННОМУ ЯЗЫКУ**

Автор описывает возможности использования данных корпусной лингвистики изучении профессионального иностранного языка. Статья представляет собой обзор результатов проектов и исследований, направленных на улучшение изучения иностранных языков с помощью корпусных данных. Рассматриваются такие методы корпусной лингвистики, как компиляция, изучение специализированных корпусов, и их применение в изучении иностранного языка. Обсуждаются проблемы, возникающие в процессе применения языкового корпуса при изучении языка.

*Ключевые слова:* языковой корпус, корпус учащегося, обучение на основе данных, компьютеризированное языковое обучение.

Интерес к корпусной лингвистике находит свое отражение не только в докладах на профильных лингвистических конференциях, но и в книгах, учебниках, и других материалах, посвященных преподаванию языка. Ярким примером являются современные словари, которые составляются с использованием постоянно обновляющихся многомиллионных баз – лингвистических корпусов (такие словари часто отмечены надписью «corpus based» – «созданы на основе корпусных данных»). Действительно, корпусная лингвистика в какой-то мере заставила изменить наше восприятие языка: пересмотреть подход при составлении грамматических справочников, словарей и других учебных пособий и материалов; взглянуть на процесс изучения языка и обучения языку в целом с другой стороны. Целью данной работы является изучение различных видов корпусов иностранного языка, а также исследование возможностей внедрения корпусных технологий в обучение иностранному языку, в том числе и для самостоятельного использования студентами.

Вклад корпусной лингвистики в языкознание и методику преподавания иностранных языков трудно оспорить. По мнению М. МакКарти, корпусная лингвистика изменила взгляд на систему образования, роль преподавателей в обучении, характер предоставления образовательных услуг и посредничество между теорией и практикой [1. Р. 315].

Рассматривая корпус в качестве нового источника знаний и информации, студенты автоматически находят для себя ответы на такие важные вопросы, как:

- Какие слова и фразы наиболее часто используются в языке, который они изучают?
- Какие различия можно наблюдать между устной и письменной речью?
- Какие грамматические конструкции наиболее часто встречаются в языке и наоборот?