

DEVELOPMENT OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE OF NON-PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS IN THE PROCESS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION WITH THE HELP OF PODCASTING

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Abstract

The development of intercultural communication competence (ICC) is critical in today's globalized world, particularly for non-professional students who are learning English as a second language. This article explores the potential of podcasting as an effective tool for fostering intercultural communication skills in non-professional students within the context of English language education. By examining how podcasts, as accessible and engaging digital media, can bridge cultural gaps and enhance language acquisition, the study highlights their contribution to both language learning and the cultivation of ICC. The article discusses the pedagogical advantages of podcasts, such as promoting authentic listening experiences, exposing students to diverse cultural contexts, and facilitating independent learning. It further offers practical strategies for integrating podcasting into English language courses and suggests areas for further research.

Keywords: Intercultural communication competence (ICC), non-professional students, English language education, podcasting, language acquisition, cultural exchange, digital learning tools.

Introduction:

In the age of globalization, effective intercultural communication is more important than ever. Students learning English as a second language (ESL) must not only master linguistic skills but also develop the ability to understand and navigate different cultural norms and values. Intercultural communication competence (ICC) refers to the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately across cultures, recognizing both verbal and non-verbal cues while adjusting one's behavior accordingly. For non-professional students—those who do not aim to use the language for specific professional purposes—developing ICC through English language education can enhance their global awareness, social interaction skills, and adaptability in diverse environments. Traditional methods of teaching, however, often fall short in immersing students in real-world, intercultural experiences.

Podcasting, an increasingly popular form of digital media, has emerged as an innovative tool to support the development of ICC. Podcasts offer authentic, culturally rich content that can provide non-professional students with exposure to a variety of cultural perspectives, linguistic registers, and communicative contexts. Through the use of podcasts, educators can create an interactive, engaging, and culturally diverse learning environment, enhancing students' intercultural communication skills and language proficiency simultaneously.

This article will explore how podcasting can be used to develop ICC in non-professional

students during their English language learning process. It will highlight the pedagogical benefits of podcasting, examine its role in promoting cross-cultural awareness, and propose practical strategies for incorporating podcasts into language education. **Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC) in Language Education**

Intercultural communication competence involves a combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to engage effectively in cross-cultural interactions. It includes: **Cultural Knowledge:** Understanding the values, beliefs, customs, and practices of different cultures. **Skills:** The ability to adapt communication styles, use appropriate language, and comprehend intercultural nuances. **Attitudes:** Openness, curiosity, and respect for cultural differences. In English language education, fostering ICC involves not only teaching grammar and vocabulary but also developing these cognitive, behavioral, and attitudinal competencies. Non-professional students often seek language skills for personal enrichment or travel, making ICC crucial for their ability to navigate and appreciate diverse cultural contexts.

The Role of Podcasting in Language Learning Podcasting refers to the distribution of digital audio files (often episodic) that can be downloaded and listened to on-demand. In the context of language education, podcasts offer a unique set of advantages: **Authentic Language Exposure:** Podcasts provide real-world content where learners can hear native speakers using English in various cultural settings. This exposure helps students understand colloquialisms, cultural references, and accents. **Cultural Immersion:** Podcasts often feature topics related to history, culture, customs, and traditions of different regions. This allows students to develop cultural knowledge and empathy without leaving the classroom. For example, podcasts that interview people from various cultures can help students gain insights into different ways of thinking and living. **Engagement and Motivation:** Podcasts are inherently engaging because they can be tailored to students' interests. By offering diverse topics—from cultural discussions to music, literature, and global news—students can find content that resonates with them. This personal connection to the material increases motivation and curiosity, key factors in language acquisition. **Flexibility and Accessibility:** As digital resources, podcasts can be accessed anytime and anywhere, giving students the freedom to learn at their own pace. This is especially beneficial for non-professional students who may have varied schedules or are learning in informal settings. **How Podcasting Enhances ICC in Non-Professional Students**

Podcasting can be a powerful tool in promoting ICC by providing students with both linguistic and cultural immersion:

Exposure to Varied Accents and Dialects: Listening to podcasts from different English-speaking countries (such as the US, UK, Australia, or India) allows students to familiarize themselves with diverse accents and dialects. This exposure builds listening comprehension skills and helps students appreciate regional differences in language use. **Cultural Content and Discussion:** Many podcasts feature discussions of social issues, cultural practices, and current events, which can expand students' worldview. For instance, podcasts discussing holidays, festivals, and rituals from different cultures can provide students with cultural context that is often missing in traditional textbooks. **Critical Thinking and Reflection:** Podcast episodes often present content in a conversational tone, which encourages students to critically engage with the material. Teachers can guide students in reflecting on cultural norms,

comparing their own cultural practices to those discussed in the podcast, and questioning their assumptions. **Incorporating Interactivity:** Teachers can encourage students to engage with podcasts by preparing comprehension questions, encouraging discussions in class, or having students create their own podcasts. These activities encourage active listening, critical thinking, and collaborative learning—skills central to ICC.

Practical Strategies for Implementing Podcasting in Language Education

To make the most of podcasts in the development of ICC, educators can adopt the following strategies:

Curated Playlist Creation: Teachers can curate a selection of podcasts that cover a range of topics, such as cultural discussions, storytelling, and interviews with people from various backgrounds. This gives students a broad spectrum of cultural contexts to explore.

Pre-Listening Activities: Before listening to a podcast, educators can provide background information on the topic, introducing cultural nuances and guiding students in setting listening objectives. This primes students to approach the material with a more informed mindset.

Post-Listening Discussions: After listening, engage students in group discussions or debates based on the podcast's content. This helps them articulate their thoughts, compare cultural perspectives, and solidify their understanding of the language used.

Task-Based Learning: Assign tasks such as summarizing podcasts, reflecting on cultural differences, or even creating their own podcast episodes. These tasks engage students actively and help them apply what they've learned.

Conclusion

Podcasting offers a dynamic and effective approach to developing intercultural communication competence in non-professional students learning English. By exposing students to authentic cultural content, enhancing listening skills, and fostering reflection and discussion, podcasts provide a unique opportunity for immersive learning. When integrated thoughtfully into language education, podcasts can serve as a bridge to a deeper understanding of global cultures, enhancing both linguistic proficiency and intercultural sensitivity. As educators continue to explore innovative methods for fostering ICC, podcasting remains a versatile and valuable tool for engaging students in meaningful, real-world language learning experiences.

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