

FROM LISTENING TO GRAMMATICAL MASTERY: THE POTENTIAL OF PODCASTS FOR NON-LINGUISTIC STUDENTS

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The article examines the methodological potential of podcasts for developing grammatical competence among students of non-philological specialties in the context of English language learning. The relevance of the study is determined by the need to develop effective methods for integrating digital educational resources into the grammar-teaching process, as well as by the insufficient coverage in the scientific literature of podcasts' potential as a means of teaching English grammar. The purpose of the study is to substantiate the methodological potential of podcasts for developing grammatical competence and to develop practical recommendations for their integration into the English learning process. The research employed content analysis, comparative analysis, classification methods, and criterion analysis of platforms. The empirical basis consisted of 12 podcasts, including 7 educational and 5 authentic ones. The study identifies specific challenges in grammar acquisition among non-philological students: disconnection between grammar rules and real-world application, limited classroom hours, low motivation for traditional exercises, and insufficient exposure to authentic English environments. Key didactic advantages of podcasts have been established: contextualization of grammatical structures, repeated exposure to constructions in various contexts, development of active listening skills, flexibility of autonomous learning, and increased motivation through professionally relevant content. A classification of podcasts for grammar teaching has been developed based on didactic purpose, format, and complexity level. Comprehensive methodological recommendations include principles for selecting podcasts, a five-stage working model, a system of receptive, productive, and analytical tasks, and recommendations for organizing independent, classroom, and blended learning. The practical significance lies in the possibility of direct implementation of the developed methodology in higher educational institutions as a component of students' independent work or classroom activities.

Keywords: podcasts, grammatical competence, English language teaching, non-linguistic students, digital educational resources, authentic materials, autonomous learning.

Дуброва О. В. Халабузар О. А. Салюк Б. А. Від аудіювання до граматичної майстерності: потенціал подкастів для студентів нефілологічних спеціальностей

У статті досліджується методичний потенціал подкастів для розвитку граматичної компетентності студентів нефілологічних спеціальностей у контексті вивчення англійської мови. Актуальність дослідження визначається потребою розробки ефективних методів інтеграції цифрових освітніх ресурсів у процес навчання граматики, а також недостатнім висвітленням у науковій літературі потенціалу подкастів як засобу навчання англійської граматики. Мета дослідження полягає в обґрунтуванні методичного потенціалу подкастів для розвитку граматичної компетентності та розробці практичних рекомендацій щодо їх інтеграції в процес вивчення англійської мови. У дослідженні використано контент-аналіз, порівняльний аналіз, методи

класифікації та критеріальний аналіз платформ. Емпіричну базу становили 12 подкастів, зокрема 7 навчальних та 5 автентичних. Дослідження виявляє специфічні труднощі в засвоєнні граматики студентами нефілологічних спеціальностей: відсутність зв'язку між граматичними правилами та їх застосуванням у реальному житті, обмежена кількість аудиторних годин, низька мотивація до виконання традиційних вправ та недостатній контакт з автентичним англомовним середовищем. Встановлено ключові дидактичні переваги подкастів: контекстуалізація граматичних структур, багаторазове сприйняття конструкцій у різних контекстах, розвиток навичок активного аудіювання, гнучкість автономного навчання та підвищення мотивації через професійно релевантний контент. Розроблено класифікацію подкастів для навчання граматики на основі дидактичної мети, формату та рівня складності. Комплексні методичні рекомендації включають принципи відбору подкастів, п'ятиетапну модель роботи, систему рецептивних, продуктивних та аналітичних завдань, а також рекомендації щодо організації самостійної, аудиторної та змішаної форм навчання. Практична значущість полягає в можливості безпосереднього впровадження розробленої методики у закладах вищої освіти нефілологічного профілю як компонента самостійної роботи студентів або аудиторних занять.

Ключові слова: подкасти, граматична компетентність, навчання англійської мови, нелінгвістичні студенти, цифрові освітні ресурси, автентичні матеріали, автономне навчання.

Introduction. In today's world of globalization and international academic mobility, English language proficiency has become an integral part of professional competence for specialists in any field. However, because traditional teaching techniques often focus on mechanical exercises that do not necessarily reflect real communicative situations, students in non-linguistic fields often struggle to understand English grammar. Unfortunately, even after understanding the theoretical principles, students are not able to use them effectively in spontaneous communication because of the gap between grammatical content and real-world speech settings.

This problem is particularly acute given the limited number of classroom hours allocated to foreign language learning in higher education institutions that do not specialize in philology. In such circumstances, there is a need for innovative approaches that allow students to master grammatical structures in a natural-language environment independently, combining systematic learning with authentic material.

One promising tool in this context is the use of English-language podcasts. Podcasts, a type of digital audio content, provide a special chance to combine listening to real speech – where grammatical structures are used in a natural communicative context – with methodical grammar study. Podcasts, compared with standard audio materials, cover a broad range of subjects, skill levels, and speech patterns. All these moments help to make the learning process customized to

the unique requirements and preferences of students across several disciplines.

The relevance of the study is determined by the need to develop effective methods for integrating digital educational resources into the process of forming grammatical competence of students of non-philological specialties, as well as the insufficient coverage in scientific literature of the potential of podcasts as a means of teaching English grammar.

Both Ukrainian and international scientists are currently researching the use of digital technologies in foreign language instruction. The potential of podcasts as a medium for language skill development is of special interest to researchers.

Fundamental research on the effectiveness of podcasts in learning English is presented in the works of Hasan, Md. Masudul and Hoon, Tan Bee [3], who analyzed scientific articles and concluded that podcasts significantly support not only listening and speaking skills, but also other language skills, such as grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. Panagiotidis [9], in his comprehensive study covering publications from 2005 to 2021, emphasizes the flexibility of podcasts, which free students from time and place constraints, provide constant access to authentic language material, and promote the development of autonomous learning.

An important aspect is the integration of grammatical structures into the context of authentic speech. O'Bryan and Hegelheimer [8], Li [6] identified the potential of podcasts in developing students' language skills, emphasiz-

ing that this technology accelerates the acquisition of not only listening comprehension, but also grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. Ducate and Lomicka [2] found that podcasting can serve as a tool for self-directed learning and can provide a platform for correcting the knowledge of students with lower levels of preparation.

In Ukrainian scientific discourse, the introduction of digital technologies into English-language teaching is considered in the context of broader education digitization. Kuzminska, Mazorchuk, Morze, and Kobylin [5] studied the components of the digital learning environment at Ukrainian universities and their impact on the development of digital competence among students and teachers. Pylypenko and Kozub [10] analyzed the experience of teaching foreign languages to students at Ukrainian universities in a distance format, identifying the advantages and challenges of using educational technologies.

Relevant to our study is the investigation of the use of mobile applications for teaching professionally oriented English to students of non-philological specialties. A group of Ukrainian researchers (Gorbatiuk et al., Mozharovska) [4; 7] emphasizes that mobile learning tools offer significant advantages over traditional methods, as they encourage independent study, individualize the learning process, and increase students' motivation.

Dubrova, Khalabuzar, and Shkola [1] conducted a critical analysis of digital tools for developing English phonetic skills, demonstrating that audio-based technologies and mobile applications effectively support pronunciation competence through exposure to authentic speech and opportunities for imitation. Their findings on the effectiveness of digital audio resources for developing language skills through listening are particularly relevant to our investigation of podcasts as tools for developing grammatical competence.

At the same time, researchers point to the need for a systematic approach to integrating podcasts into the learning process. Despite the growing number of English-language podcasts, previous studies have found that students remain reluctant to use them outside the traditional language-course framework. This highlights the importance not only of having high-quality

content but also of developing methodological recommendations for the effective use of podcasts in grammar teaching.

Thus, a review of the scientific literature confirms the significant potential of podcasts for teaching English. However, there is a need for research focusing specifically on the use of this technology to develop the grammatical competence of non-language students in the Ukrainian educational context.

The purpose of the study is to substantiate the methodological potential of podcasts for developing the grammatical competence of students majoring in non-philological disciplines and to develop practical recommendations for their integration into the process of learning English.

Research methods and techniques. The study used several methods, including *content analysis* of podcasts to systematically examine the content, structure, and linguistic features of various types of English-language podcasts; *comparative analysis* was used to compare the characteristics of different podcasts in terms of accessibility, complexity of grammatical structures, availability of accompanying materials, thematic focus, and suitability for self-study; *a classification method* was used to systematize podcasts according to typological features (educational vs. authentic, monological vs. dialogical, general vs. professionally oriented) and levels of English proficiency (A2-C1 on the CEFR scale); *criterion analysis of platforms* was used to analyze and evaluate the functional capabilities of popular podcast listening platforms in terms of their suitability for educational purposes.

The empirical basis of the study consisted of 12 podcasts: 7 educational (specially created for studying English grammar) and 5 authentic (on various topics, including science, technology, and economics) that contained grammatically rich speech.

The following criteria were used to select podcasts for analysis:

1. *Language quality* – clarity of articulation, variety of grammatical structures, authenticity of speech.

2. *Accessibility* – free access to content, regular release of new episodes, availability of an archive of previous episodes.

3. *Methodological value* – availability of transcripts, additional teaching materials, possibility of downloading for offline listening.

4. *Episode length* – 5 to 45 minutes (optimal length for educational purposes).

5. *Thematic relevance* – relevance to the professional interests of students majoring in non-language subjects.

Certain criteria were also applied to analyze the platforms. Podcast listening platforms were evaluated according to the following parameters: 1) functionality for learning (playback speed control, bookmarking, replay function); 2) accessibility (free of charge, availability of mobile apps for iOS and Android, web versions); 3) user-friendly interface (intuitive navigation, ability to create playlists, search system); 4) additional educational features (availability of transcripts, integration with note-taking apps, listening statistics).

Presentation of the main research material. So, non-language students face several specific difficulties in learning English grammar. Unlike philology students, for whom language is the object of their professional activity, future engineers, mathematicians, physicists, economists, doctors, choreographers, and musicians view English as a tool for professional communication. This creates a particular need to integrate grammatical structures into a real communicative context.

Main problems found during the analysis:

Grammar rules have no bearing on real-world applications. Grammar is frequently presented in traditional textbooks as a collection of abstract principles that students must mechanically learn but cannot use in natural conversation. A typical scenario is when a student is aware of the tense agreement rule but is unable to select the appropriate verb form in a practical conversation.

A restricted amount of time spent in class. It is impossible to address all grammatical subjects in detail in class because non-philological specialties' curricula devote much less time to foreign language study than philology does.

Little desire to complete conventional grammar tasks. Technical and natural science students frequently see grammar exercises as a tedious routine with no bearing on their future careers.

Insufficient contact with an authentic English-speaking environment. Students rarely

have the opportunity to hear how grammatical structures function in the natural speech of native speakers, which leads to an artificial, "textbook" style of communication.

In our opinion, podcasts, as a genre of digital audio content, can solve these problems thanks to authentic speech, accessibility, a variety of topics, and the ability to regulate the pace of learning independently. Podcasts have several unique characteristics that make them an effective tool for learning grammar:

Contextualization of grammatical structures. Unlike isolated sentences in textbooks, podcasts demonstrate grammar in a natural communicative context. Students do not just hear examples of the present perfect tense; they understand why this tense is chosen in a particular situation – to talk about achievements, express experience, or describe research results.

Constant repetition of structures. While listening to a 20–30-minute episode, students repeatedly hear the same grammatical structures in different contexts, which supports their natural assimilation rather than mechanical memorization.

Exposure to different accents and speech styles. Podcasts introduce students to British, American, and Australian pronunciation and to different functional styles, broadening their grammatical competence.

Flexibility and autonomy of learning. Students can listen to podcasts at their convenience, adjust the playback speed, and return to difficult passages as many times as they like.

Motivational component. Engaging content on professionally relevant topics increases students' intrinsic motivation, and they learn grammar not for the sake of grammar itself but for understanding interesting information.

Active listening skills development. Working with podcasts develops the ability to identify grammatical markers in speech, predict sentence structure, and distinguish grammatical forms by ear.

Based on our analysis, we have concluded that it is most convenient to classify podcasts according to several criteria:

1. By didactic purpose:

A) *Educational podcasts* are mostly created for grammar learning. They are distinguished by their calm speaking, clear organization, rule

explanations, exercises, and examples. Common instances:

– The website **Grammar Girl Quick and Dirty Tips** (<https://www.quickanddirtytips.com/grammar-girl/>) offers brief, five to ten-minute episodes that focus on certain grammar problems, such as the distinction between “whose” and “who’s,” the use of commas, and subject-verb agreement. Benefits include clear explanations, available transcripts, and helpful guidance. It is advised for B1–B2 levels.

– **English Grammar Podcast by Espresso English** (<https://www.espressoenglish.net/podcast/>) – a systematic grammar course with explanations and examples. Each episode is devoted to a separate topic (articles, modal verbs, conditional sentences). Advantages: structured format, numerous examples, and additional PDF materials. Recommended for levels A2–B1.

– **6 Minute Grammar (BBC Learning English)** (<https://www.bbc.com/learningenglish/english/intermediate-grammar>) – short dialogues that explain grammar rules in a conversational manner. Advantages: the dialogue format makes the material livelier, scripts are provided, and there are interactive tasks on the website. Recommended for levels A2–B2.

– **All Ears English** (<https://www.allearsenglish.com/>) – a podcast about American English with episodes devoted to grammar in the context of real conversations. Advantages: natural speech, cultural context, practical advice. Recommended for levels B1–C1.

B) Authentic podcasts on general topics: These podcasts are not specifically designed for learning, but they contain grammatically rich speech that can be used to analyze and learn structures in a real-life context.

For scientific and technical specialties:

– **Science Friday** (<https://www.sciencefriday.com/>) – a popular science podcast about the latest scientific achievements. Grammatical features: active use of the passive voice to describe experiments, Present Perfect to describe achievements, complex sentences to explain cause-and-effect relationships. Recommended for levels B2–C1.

– **TED Talks Daily** (<https://www.ted.com/about/programs-initiatives/ted-talks/ted-talks-daily>) – 15–20-minute presentations on various topics. Grammatical features: rhetorical struc-

tures, modal verbs for expressing possibility and predictions, various tenses for constructing a narrative. For levels B2–C1.

For economics specialties:

– **Planet Money (NPR)** (<https://www.npr.org/sections/money/>) – explanation of economic phenomena through engaging stories. Grammatical features: conditional sentences for discussing hypothetical situations, financial terminology in a grammatical context, and use of the future tense for predictions. Recommended for levels B2–C1.

– **Freakonomics Radio** (<https://freakonomics.com/>) – analysis of economic aspects of everyday life. Grammatical features: complex grammatical constructions for argumentation, modal verbs for expressing probability, and various ways of expressing cause and effect. Recommended for levels B2–C1.

General education podcasts:

– **Stuff You Should Know** (<https://stuffyoushouldknow.com/>) – explanations of various phenomena and concepts in conversational form. Grammatical features: dialogical structure with natural use of interrogative forms, parenthetical constructions, and colloquial abbreviations. For levels B1–B2.

– **The Daily (The New York Times)** (<https://www.nytimes.com/column/the-daily>) – daily news with detailed analysis. Grammatical features: journalistic style with use of passive voice, indirect speech, and complex tense constructions. Recommended for levels B2–C1.

2. By format:

Monologue podcasts – one speaker presents the material. Advantages: predictable structure, opportunity to get used to one speaker’s manner of speaking. Suitable for beginners (A2–B1).

Dialogue podcasts – a conversation between two or more speakers. Advantages: natural question-and-answer constructions, interruptions, and sentence abbreviations, which are characteristic of real communication. Suitable for students at levels B1–C1.

Interview podcasts – conversations with experts. Advantages: variety of accents, combination of prepared and spontaneous speech. For levels B2–C1.

3. By level of complexity:

Beginner level (A2–B1): Brief Podcasts (5–10 minutes), have simple grammatical structures,

a slow tempo (120–140 words per minute), and clear pronunciation. Examples: 6 Minute Grammar and the English Grammar Podcast.

Podcasts with a natural speech rate (150–170 words per minute), a variety of grammatical structures, and a medium duration (10–20 minutes) are considered intermediate level (B1–B2). Examples: All Ears English, Stuff You Should Know.

Advanced level (B2-C1): Authentic podcasts with a fast pace (170-200+ words per minute), complex grammatical structures, idioms, and various accents. Examples: TED Talks, The Daily, Science Friday.

When analyzing podcast listening platforms, it is important to note that the choice of platform significantly affects the effectiveness of using podcasts in the learning process.

Let us analyze the leading platforms according to the criteria that are important for learning:

Spotify (<https://open.spotify.com/>). *Advantages:* playlist creation, device synchronization (in the premium version), an easy-to-use interface, a vast podcast library, free access, and offline mode. *Disadvantages:* restricted learning capabilities (the basic version lacks built-in transcripts and speed control). *Recommendations:* suitable for general listening, creating thematic podcast collections for various professional fields.

Apple Podcasts (<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/new>). *Advantages:* a vast library, free access, relevant category-based search, the option to subscribe to preferred podcasts, and the opportunity to have new episodes automatically downloaded. *Disadvantages:* limited learning options; compatible only with Apple devices (iOS, macOS). *Recommendations:* easy to use for frequent podcast listeners, ideal for users of the Apple ecosystem.

Google Podcasts (<https://newsinitiative.withgoogle.com/resources/trainings/google-podcasts-manager/>). *Advantages:* free, integrating with a Google account, synchronizing devices, having an easy-to-use interface, and making recommendations automatically based on user preferences. *Disadvantages:* the inability to generate extensive notes and basic functionality without extra learning options are drawbacks. *Recommendations:* ideal for Android users and podcast novices.

Pocket Casts (<https://pocketcasts.com/>). *Advantages:* powerful learning features – play-back speed control (from 0.5x to 3x), Trim Silence feature (cutting out pauses), ability to create bookmarks at specific points in an episode, detailed listening statistics, cross-platform compatibility. *Disadvantages:* some features are only available in the paid version (about \$4 per month or \$40 one-time fee). *Recommendations:* an excellent choice for serious learning, beneficial for students who want to work with specific podcast segments.

Overcast (iOS) (<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/overcast/id888422857>). *Advantages:* Unique “Smart Speed” feature (shortens pauses without changing speech speed), “Voice Boost” (improves sound quality), ability to create bookmarks with notes, and free basic version. *Disadvantages:* only available for iOS; the web version has limited functionality. *Recommendations:* an ideal choice for iPhone/iPad users who want to optimize their listening time without compromising quality.

Podcast Addict (Android) (<https://surl.li/jea-qqi>). *Advantages:* the most functional Android app, speed control, ability to create playlists with automatic playback, built-in equalizer, support for video podcasts, and listening statistics. *Disadvantages:* an overloaded interface can be confusing for beginners, and the free version includes ads. *Recommendations:* the best choice for Android users who want maximum control over the listening process.

Conclusions. The study allows us to conclude that podcasts have significant didactic potential for developing students’ grammatical competence in non-philological disciplines and can effectively complement traditional English teaching methods. Limited classroom hours, low motivation to complete traditional grammar exercises, difficulty integrating grammatical structures into authentic communication, and a lack of exposure to an authentic English-speaking environment are among the specific challenges in grammar acquisition among students from non-philological specialties, according to the study. As a type of digital audio content, podcasts can compensate for these shortcomings by combining authenticity, accessibility, and flexibility of learning.

The key didactic advantages of podcasts for developing grammatical competence have been identified: contextualization of grammatical structures in a natural language environment, repeated repetition of constructions in different contexts, exposure to various accents and speech styles, the possibility of autonomous learning at a convenient time, increased internal motivation through interesting, professionally relevant content, development of active listening skills, and grammatical intuition. Three primary criteria – dialectical focus, format, and difficulty level – have been used to categorize podcasts for grammar instruction. It has been determined that the best way to study grammar rules at lev-

els A2-B2 systematically is through instructional podcasts. In contrast, authentic podcasts are effective for developing the ability to recognize and use complex grammatical structures in a natural context at levels B2-C1.

We see prospects for further research in the empirical verification of the effectiveness of the proposed methodology, the development of specialized teaching aids based on podcasts for students of specific specialties, researching the possibilities of integrating artificial intelligence for the automatic analysis of grammatical structures, and studying the potential for students to create their own podcasts as a form of productive activity for consolidating grammatical skills.

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