



## Podcasts in Language Learning and Teaching: A State-of-the-Art Article

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### ABSTRACT

The present study is a state of the art article on the use of podcasts in ELT. The study summarizes four decades of research on podcasting, through a critical review of the published literature on podcasts. Issues such as theoretical underpinning of podcasting, their significance, different definitions of podcasting as well as taxonomies of podcasts are delineated in this study. Then, the effects and impacts of using podcasts in various fields of studies such as language learning, college-level learning, listening comprehension, speaking ability and vocabulary learning are illustrated through references to published studies on podcasts. In conclusion, some future potential trends and recommendations are offered for those researchers interested in podcasting research.

**Keywords:** Podcasts; Language learning, Language Teaching, Audio podcasts, Video podcasts

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Podcasting is the creation of audio or video files for use on iPods and other MP3 players (Baker, Harrison, Thornton, & Yates, 2008, p. 49). It allows the user to view or listen to downloadable files wherever or whenever desired. Podcasting, by definition, combines "iPod" with "broadcasting," and has the advantages of ease of publication, ease of subscription, and ease of use across multiple environments (Campbell, 2005). Since 2003, podcasting has quickly established itself and attracted a large worldwide audience (Chan, 2014).

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the latest generation of web-based tools such as podcasts. Podcasts are media files that can be distributed via the Internet and played on computers and handheld devices, including iPods or other digital audio players. The essence of podcasting is the creation of audio and/or video content for an audience that wants to listen to what they want, when they want, where they want, and how they want. With students now more mobile than ever, the idea of being able to access information without being linked to a certain physical location is very attractive.

More and more web 2.0 technologies are being implemented in education; examples include podcasts, Wiki, and blogs. Bonk (2007), for example, demonstrated how these emerging technologies can be integrated into participatory learning environments. With these new technologies, learners can overcome physical distance (Anzai, 2007), physical distance is not the solely definitive distance for learners any more. These audio and video files can be downloaded to portable media players that can be taken anywhere, providing the potential for "anytime, anywhere" learning experiences (mobile learning). Wikis, blogs and podcasts are all relatively easy to use, which partly accounts for their proliferation. The fact that there are many free and Open Source versions of these tools may also be responsible for their explosive growth (Boulos, Maramba, & Wheeler (2006).

The provision of course material, including lecture notes and overheads, to students through learning management systems is commonplace in universities, and the practice is well documented in the literature (e.g. Jensen, 2007). Similarly, provision of lecture recording on magnetic tape cassettes dates back at least three decades, and is common place in provision of distance education. However, the digital recording of lectures and making these available to