



DEVELOPMENT OF B1 STUDENTS' PRODUCTIVE VOCABULARY THROUGH AUTHENTIC PODCASTS

Ibragimova Nilufar Tuychievna

Senior Lecturer (PhD) in the Department of Philology, Namangan State Pedagogical Institute, Uzbekistan

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines how authentic podcasts can develop the productive vocabulary of B1 students in Russian language classes. It argues that podcasts provide meaningful input, repeated lexical exposure, and models for speaking. A staged method including pre-listening prediction, guided listening, note-taking, lexical recycling, and output tasks helps learners move words from recognition to active use. The approach increases motivation, contextual understanding, fluency, and confidence in classroom communication and academic interaction.

KEYWORDS: Authentic podcasts; productive vocabulary; B1 learners; Russian as a foreign language; listening; lexical recycling; speaking tasks.

INTRODUCTION

Developing productive vocabulary is a central goal of language education because students need not only to recognize words while reading or listening, but also to retrieve them and use them appropriately in speaking and writing. For B1 learners, this task is especially important. At this level, students already possess a basic lexical foundation, yet they often hesitate in conversation, repeat a limited set of familiar words, and avoid more precise expressions. This gap between recognition and active use shows that receptive knowledge has not yet become productive knowledge.[1] Authentic podcasts are a useful resource for solving this problem. Unlike isolated vocabulary lists, podcasts present words in natural pronunciation, meaningful context, and real communicative situations. They expose learners to current topics, everyday expressions, and discourse patterns that textbooks often simplify. Research on language learning through podcasts and spoken input shows that well-chosen audio materials can support comprehension, lexical growth, and oral performance when they are accompanied by guided tasks rather than simple listening for entertainment.[2]

Main Part. The first methodological principle is careful selection of podcast material. B1 students benefit from short authentic episodes or fragments lasting three to six minutes, with a clear topic, moderate speech rate, and a manageable number of unfamiliar items. Vocabulary learning through listening is most effective when learners understand most of the running words and can guess new items from context. For this reason, the teacher should choose podcasts whose lexical density does not overwhelm learners and whose topic connects with students' academic life, daily routines, study problems, technology, culture, or future profession.[3] The second principle is staging. Productive vocabulary does not appear after one exposure. A podcast lesson should include pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening work. In the pre-listening stage, the teacher introduces the topic, activates background knowledge, and highlights a small number of target items such as collocations, discourse markers, and useful verbs. Students may predict content from the title, key phrases, or a short

quote. In the while-listening stage, students first listen for general meaning and then for lexical detail. Repeated listening is methodologically justified: studies of spoken input show that repeated exposure improves vocabulary gains, especially when students attend to form-meaning connections and collocations.[4]

The third principle is guided noticing and note-taking. After listening, students should not move directly to translation or memorization. They need activities that help them notice how words function in context. Effective tasks include matching target words with meanings, completing partial transcripts, identifying collocations, classifying words by function, and writing down expressions that can be reused in discussion. Recent meta-analytic evidence indicates that note-taking during exposure to second-language input has a small to medium positive effect on learning. For B1 students, short lexical notes are especially useful when they record not only the word itself but also a phrase, an example sentence, and the speaker's communicative intention.[5] The fourth principle is lexical recycling through speech production. Research on receptive and productive vocabulary learning demonstrates that output-oriented work can strengthen several dimensions of word knowledge when learners are required to use new items in sentences and communicative tasks.[6] Therefore, authentic podcasts should become a springboard for speaking. After listening, students can summarize the episode, compare the speaker's opinion with their own, role-play a similar situation, record a one-minute response, or prepare a pair discussion using a required set of target items. Such tasks force learners to retrieve vocabulary from memory, adapt it to a new context, and combine it with grammar and pronunciation.

The fifth principle is regular repetition across lessons. A word heard once in a podcast may remain only partly learned. It is more effective to return to the same lexical items in later lessons through quick reviews, mini-dialogues, reflective journals, digital flashcards, and short oral reports. Studies on incidental vocabulary learning through listening and viewing show that spoken input can produce measurable vocabulary gains and retention, but retention becomes stronger when learners meet the same items again and use them actively.[7] For this reason, podcast-based vocabulary teaching should be part of a larger sequence rather than an isolated activity. An example of a B1 classroom procedure may include the following steps. First, students listen to a podcast fragment about student time management. Before listening, they discuss common study problems and predict useful expressions such as manage time, get distracted, keep up with deadlines, and stay motivated. Then they listen once for the main idea and a second time to complete a short transcript with missing lexical items. Next, they compare answers, explain the meaning of the new expressions, and write two personal sentences with each one. After that, students work in pairs: one student describes a study difficulty, while the other gives advice using the target vocabulary. Finally, they record a short audio reflection about their own time-management habits. In this model, the podcast is not the end of the lesson; it is the source of vocabulary that moves step by step toward productive use.[4][5][6]

This approach also has motivational value. Authentic podcasts create a sense of contact with living language and contemporary culture. Students often perceive them as more personal and realistic than scripted textbook dialogues. In addition, podcasts can be used both in class and independently, which supports blended learning. When learners subscribe to selected channels, listen outside class, and return with notes or questions, vocabulary development

becomes more autonomous. Such autonomy is particularly important at the B1 level, where students must gradually expand their lexicon beyond compulsory classroom input.[2]

Conclusion

In conclusion, authentic podcasts are an effective means of developing B1 students' productive vocabulary when they are used within a structured pedagogical model. Their main advantage lies in combining natural spoken input, contextualized vocabulary, repeated exposure, and opportunities for meaningful speaking. However, podcasts do not automatically create productive lexical knowledge. The transition from recognition to active use requires deliberate selection of target items, staged listening, guided noticing, note-taking, repeated recycling, and communicative output tasks. If these conditions are met, podcast-based instruction can help students speak more confidently, use a wider range of words, and participate more actively in classroom and real-life communication. For teachers of Russian as a foreign language, this method offers a practical way to connect digital resources with communicative vocabulary development.

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