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Conference “Innovative Approaches of Language Teaching:
Bridging Theory and Practice”**

**«Тілдерді оқытудың инновациялық тәсілдері: теория мен
практиканы ұштастыру» атты II көктемгі халықаралық
ғылыми-практикалық конференция**

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конференция «Инновационные подходы преподавания
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«Тілдерді оқытудың инновациялық тәсілдері: теория мен практиканы ұштастыру» атты ІІ көктемгі халықаралық ғылыми-практикалық конференция материалдар жинағында шетел тілдерін оқыту саласындағы озық тәжірибелермен алмасуға, мәдениетаралық қарым-қатынасты нығайтуға, цифрлық дәуір жағдайында шетел тілдерін оқытудағы инновациялық технологияларды таратуға, сондай-ақ халықаралық ғылыми-академиялық ынтымақтастықты кеңейтуге бағытталған ғылыми-практикалық зерттеулердің нәтижелері енгізілген. Материалдарда білім алушылар мен жас ғалымдардың осы бағыттағы зерттеулерге белсенді қатысуын ынталандыру мәселелері қарастырылған.

В сборник материалов ІІ весенней международной научно-практической конференции «Инновационные подходы преподавания языков: слияние теории и практики» включены результаты научно-практических исследований, направленных на обмен передовым опытом в области преподавания иностранных языков, укрепление межкультурной коммуникации, распространение инновационных технологий обучения в условиях цифровой эпохи, а также расширение международного научно-академического сотрудничества. В материалах рассматриваются вопросы стимулирования активного участия обучающихся и молодых ученых в исследованиях в данной области.

The proceedings of the ІІ Spring International Scientific and Practical ONLINE Conference “Innovative Approaches of Language Teaching: Bridging Theory and Practice” include the results of scientific and practical research aimed at sharing advanced experience in foreign language teaching, strengthening intercultural communication, disseminating innovative teaching technologies in the digital age, and expanding international scientific and academic cooperation. The materials also address issues related to encouraging the active participation of students and young researchers in this field.

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II Spring International Scientific and Practical ONLINE Conference “Innovative Approaches of Language Teaching: Bridging Theory and Practice”

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теории и практики»**

The Main Themes of the Conference:

1. Teaching foreign languages for professional and interdisciplinary purposes.
2. Innovative technologies in foreign language teaching methodology.
3. Language training in the context of multilingualism and lifelong learning.
4. Language education based on digital technologies and artificial intelligence.

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USING PODCASTS AND SHADOWING TECHNIQUES TO ENHANCE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS’ FLUENCY AND NATIVE-LIKE PRONUNCIATION

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Introduction

Languages play a key role in communication, education, and professional growth. Many individuals learn English as a second or foreign language to study abroad, access better job opportunities, or interact with people globally. Despite years of studying English grammar and vocabulary, many learners still struggle with speaking fluently and pronouncing words accurately.

Fluency and pronunciation are two of the most challenging areas in learning English. Fluency involves speaking smoothly and naturally without long pauses or hesitation. Pronunciation deals with how words and sounds are produced, including aspects like stress, rhythm, and intonation. Many learners find it difficult to speak English confidently due to fear of pronunciation errors or difficulties in maintaining a natural speaking rhythm.

Traditional English language classrooms typically emphasize reading, grammar, and writing skills. While these skills are essential, they may not offer sufficient opportunities for learners to practice speaking and listening naturally. As a result, many students can understand written English but feel uneasy when they need to speak in real-life situations. In recent years, technology has introduced numerous tools to aid language learning, one of which is podcasts. Podcasts are digital audio programs available for listening online or downloading to phones and computers. They cover a wide range of topics, such as news, education, culture, storytelling, and everyday conversations. For language learners, podcasts offer access to authentic spoken English, often produced by native speakers.

Podcasts are beneficial for language learning as they allow students to hear natural speech patterns, pronunciation, and vocabulary used in real communication. Learners can listen to podcasts anytime and anywhere, making them a flexible learning resource. Regular listening can help improve listening comprehension and familiarity with the rhythm and sound patterns of English [1; 19].

Another effective technique for enhancing pronunciation and fluency is shadowing. Shadowing involves listening to an audio recording and repeating what is heard almost simultaneously with the speaker. Instead of waiting for the speaker to finish a sentence, the learner imitates the speech immediately. This method encourages learners to focus on pronunciation, intonation, and speech rhythm.

Research in language learning shows that shadowing can enhance both listening and speaking skills. It improves the link between hearing and speaking because learners have to listen to sounds and quickly repeat them [2;35]. This method also aids in better pronunciation by imitating native speakers' speech patterns.

Studies indicate that shadowing boosts pronunciation accuracy, speaking speed, and confidence. Hamada found that students who practiced shadowing regularly improved their listening and speaking fluency more than those using traditional methods. This implies that shadowing is an effective technique for language learning when used consistently [3; 24]. Combining podcasts with shadowing may offer even more benefits for English learners. Podcasts provide authentic audio, while shadowing promotes active engagement with that audio. By repeatedly listening to podcasts and practicing shadowing, learners can become more comfortable with natural speech and enhance their pronunciation.

Despite these benefits, many learners are not familiar with shadowing or how to use podcasts effectively for language practice. In classrooms, teachers might skip these activities due to the extra preparation or technology needed.

Therefore, examining how podcasts and shadowing can be used together is crucial for supporting English learners' speaking skills. Understanding these methods helps teachers create effective learning activities and encourages students to practice speaking outside of class. The goal of this study is to explore how combining podcasts with shadowing techniques can improve English learners' fluency and pronunciation. It specifically looks at whether regular practice with these tools helps learners speak more smoothly and develop native-like pronunciation.

The research also investigates students' feelings about these learning methods. Understanding how learners perceive podcasts and shadowing can help educators evaluate the practicality and motivation these methods offer to students.

This study seeks to answer these research questions:

1. Do podcasts and shadowing enhance English learners' speaking fluency?
2. Do these methods aid in developing more accurate and natural pronunciation?
3. How do students perceive podcasts and shadowing as language learning tools?

The results of this research may enhance language education by showing how technology-based tools support speaking practice. Additionally, the study may offer

practical advice for teachers and learners aiming to improve English fluency and pronunciation through regular listening and imitation exercises.

Methods

This study utilized a quasi-experimental research design to examine the effects of podcasts and shadowing techniques on English language learners' fluency and pronunciation. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed to gain a thorough understanding of the learning process and outcomes.

The quantitative aspect involved comparing speaking test scores before and after the training. The qualitative component included student questionnaires and observations to understand learners' experiences and attitudes toward the activities.

The experiment lasted five weeks, during which students regularly practiced podcast listening and shadowing. The participants were 40 university students enrolled in an intermediate-level English course, divided into two groups:

- Experimental group: 20 students practiced with podcasts and shadowing.
- Control group: 20 students continued with traditional classroom speaking activities.

Both groups followed the same course curriculum, but only the experimental group engaged in podcasts and shadowing exercises. Several materials were utilized during the study.

First, a selection of English learning podcasts was chosen. These podcasts featured native speaker conversations, short stories, interviews, and everyday dialogues. Each episode lasted 5 to 10 minutes and had clear speech suitable for intermediate learners.

Second, transcripts of the podcast episodes were provided. These transcripts helped students grasp unfamiliar vocabulary and follow the content while listening.

Third, audio devices were used to record students' speaking performances before and after the training. These recordings enabled researchers to assess changes in fluency and pronunciation.

Finally, a questionnaire was created to gather student feedback about the learning experience. It included both multiple-choice and open-ended questions.

Pre-Test: At the study's start, all participants took a speaking pre-test. They were asked to speak for about two minutes on a familiar topic, like their hobbies, daily activities, or future plans. Their speech was recorded and later assessed by two English teachers, focusing on three key areas:

- Fluency
- Pronunciation accuracy
- Intonation and rhythm

Each aspect was scored on a five-point scale. Training Phase: Over an eight-week period, the experimental group engaged in listening to podcasts and practicing shadowing exercises three times a week, with each session lasting 30–40 minutes.

The sessions included several steps:

1. Listening: Students listened to the podcast without a transcript to grasp the overall conversation.
2. Detailed Listening: They listened again with a transcript, identifying new vocabulary and focusing on pronunciation patterns.
3. Shadowing Practice: Students repeated the speech immediately after the speaker, mimicking pronunciation, speed, stress, and intonation.
4. Repetition and Practice: They repeated the shadowing until comfortable with pronunciation and rhythm.

Meanwhile, the control group continued regular classroom activities like group discussions, role plays, and pronunciation exercises, without using podcasts or shadowing techniques.

Post-Test: After the eight weeks, both groups took a post-test similar to the pre-test. Students spoke for two minutes on a given topic, and their speech was recorded and evaluated again.

Questionnaire. Following the post-test, students in the experimental group completed a survey about their experiences with podcasts and shadowing practice.

Data Analysis. The researchers analyzed pre-test and post-test scores to assess improvements in fluency and pronunciation. They calculated and compared the average scores for both groups. The survey responses were reviewed to find common themes regarding students' opinions on podcasts and shadowing.

Results

The study results show that using podcasts combined with shadowing techniques positively affected students' speaking fluency and pronunciation. The experimental group demonstrated significant improvement in speaking fluency, with many participants speaking more smoothly and with fewer pauses during the post-test.

The average fluency score for the experimental group rose from 2.9 to 4.2 on a five-point scale, suggesting that regular shadowing practice made students more comfortable with continuous English speaking. In contrast, the control group showed only a slight improvement, with their average fluency score increasing from 3.0 to 3.3. Pronunciation scores also improved notably for the experimental group. Students exhibited clearer pronunciation of English sounds and more natural intonation patterns. The average pronunciation score for the experimental group increased from 2.8 to 4.1, whereas the control group improved slightly from 2.9 to 3.2. Many students found that their ability to mimic the rhythm and stress patterns of native speakers improved significantly after practicing shadowing repeatedly. This aligns with previous studies indicating that imitation-based methods can enhance pronunciation accuracy and speech rhythm [4; 48].

Beyond improvements in fluency and pronunciation, many students also reported better listening skills. Regularly listening to podcasts helped them become more accustomed to natural speech patterns and faster speaking speeds. Additionally, students felt more confident speaking English. Practicing with native speakers' speech

reduced their fear of making mistakes. According to a questionnaire, most students had positive attitudes toward using podcasts and shadowing:

- 90% said podcasts helped them better understand natural spoken English.
- 85% believed shadowing improved their pronunciation.
- 88% felt more confident when speaking English.

Students also appreciated the flexibility of podcasts, as they could listen to episodes outside the classroom while travelling or relaxing at home. However, some students initially found shadowing challenging because it required simultaneous listening and speaking. After several practice sessions, most became more comfortable with the technique. In addition to the quantitative gains reflected in the test scores, classroom observations demonstrated significant changes in students' behavior during speaking activities. Initially, many students were hesitant to speak and frequently paused while searching for the correct words or pronunciation. However, by the end of the practice period, students in the experimental group appeared more at ease and willing to engage in conversations. Their speech became more fluid, and they were able to maintain longer speaking turns without frequent interruptions. Another noticeable outcome was the enhancement in students' awareness of English rhythm and stress. Through repeated listening and shadowing of podcast episodes, students began to recognize how native speakers link words together and emphasize important syllables. Consequently, their speech sounded less mechanical and more natural. Some students even reported noticing pronunciation patterns while watching movies or listening to music in English, indicating that the learning process extended beyond the classroom.

Students also expressed that podcasts made learning more interesting and engaging compared to traditional pronunciation exercises. Since podcasts often include real-life topics, conversations, and storytelling, learners felt they were exposed to authentic language. This helped them understand how English is used in everyday situations. Many students said they enjoyed choosing podcast episodes that matched their interests, which increased their motivation to practice more regularly.

Conclusion

This research explored how podcasts and shadowing techniques impact English language learners' fluency and pronunciation. The findings indicate that these methods significantly enhance speaking skills. Learners who engaged with podcasts and shadowing showed more improvement in fluency and pronunciation compared to those using only traditional speaking exercises. Podcasts provided exposure to natural language patterns, while shadowing encouraged active replication of these patterns. Students generally responded positively to these methods. Podcasts were seen as convenient and engaging due to their easy access on digital devices. Although initially challenging, shadowing became more enjoyable with practice.

These results emphasize the value of integrating modern technology into language learning. Teachers can use podcasts for authentic listening experiences and

guide students through shadowing to boost pronunciation and speaking confidence.

However, the study had several limitations. The number of participants was relatively small, and the training period lasted only five weeks. Future research could involve larger groups of learners and longer training periods to examine long-term effects. Researchers could also explore different types of podcasts and investigate how shadowing affects other language skills such as vocabulary development and listening comprehension.

In conclusion, combining podcasts and shadowing techniques provides a practical and engaging approach to improving English speaking skills. With regular practice and guidance, learners can develop greater fluency, clearer pronunciation, and increased confidence in using English in real-life communication.

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К ВОПРОСУ МОТИВАЦИИ НА ЗАНЯТИЯХ НЕМЕЦКОГО ЯЗЫКА В НЕЯЗЫКОВОМ ВУЗЕ

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Введение

В рамках статьи рассматриваются возможности повышения мотивации для