

Jana Kucharová  
University of Economics Bratislava  
Faculty of Applied Languages  
Department of German Language

Ingrid Kunovská  
University of Economics Bratislava  
Faculty of Applied Languages  
Department of German Language Bratislava

Eva Stradiotová  
University of Economics Bratislava  
Faculty of Applied Languages  
Department of English Language

Radoslav Štefančík<sup>1</sup>  
University of Economics Bratislava  
Faculty of Applied Languages  
Department of Intercultural Communication

## DEVELOPING LISTENING COMPREHENSION THROUGH PODCASTS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

*Abstract: This paper aims to present one of the possibilities of developing listening comprehension with the help of modern media – the podcast – in the process of teaching and acquiring a foreign language. Two main scientific methods were used: experiment and questionnaire. The experiment aimed to prove that using podcasts in teaching the German language positively affected students' listening skills. We used the questionnaire to collect data about the opinions, experiences, and attitudes of students from the experimental group about using podcasts in the educational process. The target group consisted of 196 second-year bachelor students from the University of Economics in Bratislava, who took a three-semester course of vocational German. Compared to traditional teaching, we find that podcasting is an effective tool for learning foreign languages. However, students*

<sup>1</sup>radoslav.stefancik@euba.sk.

*must be appropriately motivated for self-study because if they do not approach learning via podcasts with a higher level of motivation, this form does not deliver the expected goals. The students who used podcasts to supplement instruction improved their listening comprehension skills. The podcast can improve the identification of the meaning of words whose spelling and pronunciation are different. Podcasts can help to understand the content of spoken text and to gain an overall understanding of spoken words. However, as we will subsequently show in our paper, the students' motivation to learn foreign languages is important. Podcasts can improve foreign language competencies, but the student must approach learning responsibly and prepare for classes regularly.*

Keywords: *podcast, listening, foreign language, learning, teaching.*

## 1. Introduction

Listening comprehension is one of the basic skills of mastering a foreign language (Stefancik & Stradiotová, 2020). Its lack of proficiency can be one of the main causes of misunderstandings in target language conversations. Therefore, it is important to integrate listening into the teaching process (Vandergrift, 1997). Acquiring and developing this skill is a demanding process that requires attention from both the teacher and learners. It is one of the receptive communicative language skills. Its basic function is not the production of linguistic content but its perception, reception, and processing. It is an activity in which the learner has to work with foreign language content and be able to carry out several activities at the same time - to identify and differentiate the wording of the text heard, to identify the different sounds, to assign the correct meaning to the individual sound units, and at the same time to accept the different tempo, rhythm, and melody of the speech, as well as possible deviations, accents, or dialect of the text heard. The heard content of the text must be decoded, processed, and stored, which enables the text to be correctly understood and further interpreted in the communication process. Listening comprehension thus forms the basis for the development of productive skills, namely speaking and writing.

The use of modern technologies is transforming traditional forms of education and opening up new possibilities for both teachers and students (Abdous et al, 2009). For this reason, several studies have been carried out on the relationship between the use of new technical and technological tools and education, including the teaching of foreign languages (Sysoyev & Evstigneev, 2015). One way in which modern technology can be useful in foreign language learning is by improving pronunciation (Fouz-Gonzales, 2019), developing listening skills (Šendaž et al., 2018), or expanding

vocabulary in a foreign language (Dmytriieva, 2018). The text aims to present the possibilities of using modern technologies in second foreign language teaching in a Slovak university, which places a great emphasis on education in foreign languages. Modern technologies proved to be indispensable in distance teaching, which was implemented in many countries during the COVID-19 pandemic (Dere & Akkaya, 2022). Thanks to the development of modern technology, this approach to teaching listening and speaking in foreign languages quickly became popular (Dmytriieva, 2018). Here, we focus on the use of the podcast as a modern means of improving listening comprehension. We explain how a podcast can be incorporated in the teaching process, what possibilities a podcast offers, and how traditional foreign language teaching differs from teaching with a podcast.

## **2. Literature review**

Listening is considered a crucial skill which is necessary for understanding a foreign language (Wang & MacIntyre, 2021; Halone et al., 1998). It is defined as a multidimensional construct that consists of complex processes that can be effective (motivation to participate in communication), behavioural (feedback through verbal and nonverbal responses), and cognitive (participation, comprehension, reception, and interpretation of content and relational messages). Listening has an important place in foreign language teaching because it enables learners to improve oral communication (Micic & Cajka, 2013; Retnawati, 2019). Listening comprehension can be seen as the foundation for knowledge acquisition and academic achievement (Marx, Heppt & Henschel, 2017).

Stradiotová et al. (2018:pp.141–156) draw attention to the distinction between the following types of listening:

1. Distinctive listening - is an instrumental type of listening that is primarily physiological and occurs mostly in the receptive phase of the listening process. In this phase, we are engaged in listening and monitoring the environment to isolate certain auditory or visual stimuli. For example, we may focus our listening on a particular part of the sidewalk, yard, etc., to see if we are in danger (Hargie, 2011:p.185). This is a basic form of listening that is the foundation for other types of listening. According to Wolvin & Coakley (1993:pp. 18–19), this type of listening can be improved upon.

2. Informational listening - the goal of this type of listening is to understand and retain information. It is non-evaluative and common in teaching and learning contexts. For example, we use it when we listen to messages, meetings at work, taking instructions, etc.

3. Critical Listening - the goal of critical listening is to analyse or evaluate a message based on information presented orally and information that can be inferred from the context.

4. Empathic listening - this type of listening is the most challenging form of listening because it is about the speaker's thoughts and feelings.

In the context of foreign language teaching, listening comprehension is understood as a skill integrating communicative activities and strategies that enable the foreign-language user to understand spoken language. Within the framework of communicative language skills, it belongs, together with reading comprehension, to the so-called receptive skills, as its primary nature is to receive ready-made language content and work with it (Kucharová, 2015; Mohamed, 2018; Underwood, 1989). Hantschel et al. (2013:pp.24–25) formulate several specific characteristics of listening: we cannot control what we hear; the “fleetingness”, the transience of what is heard; immediacy, directness of what is heard. Reception is an uncontrollable, unguided process; the parallel course of several cognitive processes (decoding, reduction, storage, anticipation, hypothesis formation, and their verification and verification or modification); the language is spontaneous, it depends on the speaker's momentary situation, the sentence structure is simple, and listening is accompanied by sounds from the immediate environment.

The literature usually distinguishes between two forms of listening in the context of foreign language learning. Polomská (2013:p.6) mentions so-called extensive listening, which aims at the overall comprehension of the spoken text. It is usually of a longer format and contains a more challenging vocabulary. The listener, therefore, needs to be focused only on listening. During the listening process, the learner does not try to catch a particular piece of information, word, or phrase in the recording. Such listening comprehension can be mediated by an audio recording, a video, or the teacher reading the text. It can be said that this is general listening. The second type of listening comprehension is called intensive listening, where the listener focuses on a specific piece of information, part of an audio recording, or the grammatical, lexical, or phonological form of a word. The recording should be shorter and repeated several times. It contains more specific information for the listener to pick up. Thus, in this case, it is detailed or selective listening, which aims at a detailed understanding of the text heard or some specific information from it.

In the process of developing listening skills, it is important to use the right strategies to facilitate language learning and thus expedite effective listening training. One important strategy is to work with authentic texts (Erben, Ban & Castaneda, 2009; Nadhianty & Purnomo, 2020). Authentic texts represent a means of acquiring a foreign language, and culture of the target language. They are learning materials

that are not artificially created for specific methodological purposes. Unlike didactic texts, they have the property of fulfilling a socio-cultural purpose in the community of speakers from which the text originates. As Civegna (2005:pp.168–172) states, texts originate from the linguistic community in which the language is used as a mother tongue and completely reflect the relations between the original creators of the text and their environment. The notion of authenticity is particularly important in foreign language acquisition. Its role in foreign language teaching is defined by Edelhoff (1985), who claims that the term authentic is often used synonymously with the terms such as documentary, real, and genuine. It is meant to be the opposite of the notion of created, manufactured, and artificial. He also stresses that for the selection of language rules and communicative stimuli in foreign language teaching, the notion of authenticity serves as a precept to use texts created or spoken by native speakers, not those created or produced specifically for language teaching. Texts should be authentic to make language teaching in schools as close as possible to everyday communicative situations, i.e. to bring it closer to the practical use of language in everyday life. Brünner (2009) emphasises this fact when he says that in foreign language classes, it is necessary to create communicative situations that enable learners to have authentic conversations. Such authentic language communication can prepare students for relevant everyday situations.

A wide range of possibilities for the use of authentic materials (listening comprehension of authentic texts) is offered by modern media, especially the Internet, which has become a direct means of education at all levels of schools in recent times, mostly during the Covid-19 pandemic, and which has also made accessible completely new perspectives for the teaching of foreign languages. The media provides written and spoken authentic language. Especially the Internet, thanks to its communication possibilities, opens up completely new possibilities in intercultural language teaching (Kunovská, 2015; Abdulrahman, T. et al., 2018; Hense, J., Bernd, M. 2021, Goldman, T. 2018). New media also enable communicative interaction. This interaction is between the medium and the recipient and can have a positive impact on both language and intercultural learning. Thus, one of the basic characteristics of new media is interactivity, and these interactive communicative situations are of great value for foreign language learning. Bosenius and Donnerstag (2004) add that electronic media have a didactically justified function in foreign language teaching - they convey that foreign language acquisition is supported by an appropriate media share. In the same way, electronic forms of communication such as email or chat represent important communicative situations and create an important target area for foreign language learning. According to Kolečani Lenčová, Kováčová & Tomášková (2018, p. 148), one of the many advantages of modern media is the continuous availability of digital

content for both teachers and learners, mainly due to the constant development of new technologies, computers, and smartphones. Freudenstein (2007) adds that new modern media prepare foreign language learners for the demands of contemporary society, for the development of communicative language skills, but also for the development of skills such as problem-solving, teamwork, and critical thinking, which are related to everyday life and the world of work. For this reason, forms of communication are also a topic in foreign language didactics, so that, for example, e-mail, chat, or videoconferencing are used to support the development of receptive and productive skills. This enables the process of foreign language learning in the classroom to be linked to the everyday and professional world.

In this study, we focus on one of the possibilities of using modern media with authentic material – podcasts - for listening comprehension training. The term podcast dates back to 2004 and it first appeared in an article in the newspaper *The Guardian* (Hammersley, 2004). The word itself originated from a combination of the words iPod and broadcast = podcast. The term is now used to refer to any type of recorded audio or video whose content is made available to a larger audience and is stored on personal or portable devices (offline) for discrete use (Gnaur & Huttel, 2016).

A podcast can be created using any digital recording device, such as a portable MP3 player. Episodes are usually recorded in mp3 format, the size of which is compatible and suitable for a podcast. But this format is not the only one used in podcasts. Other formats are e.g. M4A/AAC (Advanced Audio Coding), WAV (Windows Wave), WMA (Windows Audio Media), and FLAC (Free Lossless Audio Codec) (Tan & Mong, 2006).

Kay (2012) lists 4 ways of using podcasts in teaching:

1. Lecture-based podcasts - contain recordings of lectures learners can access before, after, or instead of the lecture.

2. Extended Presentation podcasts - refers to presentations and materials for presentations with voice-over commentary.

3. Supplemental podcasts, which are designed to support traditional classroom or learning group instruction. They offer supplemental materials, including real-world examples, summaries of lessons, or textbook chapters. This is the way, of using the podcast in education, we applied in the experiment whose implementation and results we present in the following sections of this study.

4. Worked examples are particularly suited to provide video that explains specific problems or applications for which students need guidance.

Pelet (2013) recognises the following main instructional approaches that involve podcasts:

1. Receptive viewing - is the most common use of podcasts in teaching. It provides information to learners who can process it at a time that suits them. The disadvantage of this approach is that it's a passive activity.

2. Problem-solving - the aim is to provide information to the learners, but unlike the first approach, an objective that relates to solving certain exercises and problems is set.

3. Creative use of podcasts - this is an approach in which the creation of podcasts itself becomes a teaching strategy. This approach aims to encourage learners to explore, collaborate, and present their achievements.

According to Ramirez (2011), audio podcasts can be used in the classroom or a learning group in both productive and receptive domains to practice listening comprehension and to acquire communication skills in a foreign language. The most important advantages of podcasts compared to traditional audio texts can be summarised under the following headings:

1. Audio material authenticity
2. Text topicality
3. Motivation
4. Ease of use
5. Support for autonomous learning

Ramirez (2011) also adds that podcasts have many advantages for foreign language learning in the classroom or learning groups and outside the classroom. However, their rampant abundance on the Internet makes it difficult for teachers to choose. For this reason, when selecting them and using them in the classroom, consideration should be given to selecting podcasts from appropriate sources so that they truly serve the purpose of listening comprehension practice and acquiring communication skills in a foreign language.

Stork (2012) ranks mobile learning (m-learning) among the many advantages of podcasts and their possible use in foreign language teaching. This is a cumulative term for all teaching and learning processes that take place with the support of electronic devices, and in which learners are no longer tied to specific locations explicitly designed for learning. Podcasts can be accessed over the Internet not only via a computer but also via mobile devices such as MP3 players or mobile phones, which learners carry with them anyway.

### **3. Methods**

We focused on the impact of the use of the web application podcast on the development of listening comprehension, speaking skills and on students' motivation to study a foreign language more extensively. In the research, we compared the

traditional methods of foreign language teaching with teaching supported by podcasts. The research was carried out in 2021-2022. In this study, we present the results of the research on teaching the German language with the support of using podcasts.

### 3.1 Instrument

We used the quantitative methods: experiment and questionnaire. The experiment aimed to demonstrate if the use of podcasts in teaching the German language had a positive effect on students' listening skills. We used the questionnaire to collect data about the opinions, experiences, and attitudes of students from the experimental group about using podcasts in the educational process. To analyse the data we used the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) programme.

### 3.2 Participants

The target group consisted of 196 second-year bachelor students from the University of Economics in Bratislava who took a three-semester course of vocational German. The respondents were divided into 5 experimental and 5 control groups. We labelled the experimental groups with a number and the letter e (1e, 2e, 3e, 4e, 5e). The control groups were marked with a number and the letter c (1c, 2c, 3c, 4c, 5c). The research was carried out in the summer semester. The students in the experimental groups worked every week during the 2021/2022 summer semester on assignments published on the Podbean platform, which was created for this purpose.

In Table 1. we briefly present the basic characteristics of the experimental and control groups.

**Table 1** Basic characteristics of the experimental and control groups

Characteristic	Experimental group	Control group
number of students:	98	98
number of groups:	5	5
male:	38	39
female:	60	59
year of study:	second	second
semester:	summer semester	summer semester
degree:	Bachelor's degree	Bachelor's degree



### **3.3 Data Collecting Technique**

The researchers obtained data from the experimental and control groups. The respondents did a pre-test aimed at listening comprehension at the beginning of the summer semester and a post-test, which, like the pre-test, focused on listening comprehension, and was carried out at the end of the summer semester. The tests consisted of 16 tasks. The highest score a student could achieve was 32 points.

### **4. Results and discussion**

Based on the research, we can argue that the use of modern technology in teaching, such as podcasts, can make foreign language learning more attractive for students. Thus, podcasts are an important didactic tool and great support to modernise existing teaching approaches (Chacon & Perer, 2011).

Since we decided to use Podbean, which was free, we had to keep the written part of the tasks fairly limited in the extent. The tasks, therefore, had to be formulated as concisely as possible. During the summer semester, the students had to listen to 10 audio recordings and complete assignments related to listening. The worked-out assignments were subsequently analysed during the seminars. The recordings on the podcast served as supplementary study materials aimed to help students practice their listening skills.

The pre-test aimed to assess the level of the language skill listening comprehension at the beginning of the experiment. In the 12th week of the semester, the experimental and control groups took a post-test. The post-test aimed to check the listening comprehension progress. In Tables 2a and 2b we can see what results the respondents achieved in the pre-test.

In Tables 3a and 3b we can see the analysis of the data presented in Tables 2a and 2b. It is clear that at the beginning of the research, both groups (experimental and control) had approximately the same level of listening comprehension skills. Based on the statistical analysis of data we collected from the results the respondents obtained in the pre-test, we found that the respondents in the experimental groups achieved a slightly higher mean (19.84) compared to the control groups (19.62). This implies that the participants in the experimental groups scored slightly better on average in the listening pre-test compared to the participants in the control groups. The median values are the same for the experimental and control groups (20). This indicates that the mean performance in both groups is the same. The modus for both groups is 19. This means that 19 is the most frequent score in both the experimental and

**Table 2a** Pre-test results in the experimental groups

1e	29	19	18	15	12	16	28	27	27	25	14	20	21	21	23	17	13	25	22	26
2e	25	17	12	30	24	22	13	15	17	15	23	23	20	22	13	24	19	17	20	-
3e	22	12	13	14	16	21	20	22	25	19	30	21	20	15	23	19	23	17	22	-
4e	17	19	21	14	15	8	19	27	21	20	19	15	12	22	27	13	19	21	23	24
5e	25	17	18	19	25	15	28	17	22	14	19	23	27	16	21	25	16	28	15	16

**Table 2b** Pre-test results in the control groups

1c	22	8	21	12	13	16	28	25	26	27	13	17	26	23	22	15	12	26	20	27
2c	25	22	26	8	21	15	19	16	13	18	26	20	19	21	17	21	16	22	21	-
3c	28	11	7	22	21	0	27	28	15	18	21	22	19	17	20	18	27	19	24	-
4c	17	28	16	12	19	24	15	25	20	24	17	19	14	15	23	21	18	22	16	25
5c	12	19	21	17	20	27	25	16	23	19	13	24	27	17	20	23	20	19	25	17

control groups. The standard deviation, which measures the variance of the scores, shows that the control groups had a higher standard deviation (5.32) compared to the experimental groups (4.80). This indicates that the scores in the control groups were more spread out. In other words, while the mean indicates a slightly higher average score in the experimental groups, the median and the mode are similar for the experimental and control groups. The control groups had a higher standard deviation, indicating greater variability in scores compared to the experimental groups.

**Table 3a** Pre-test analysis results in the experimental groups

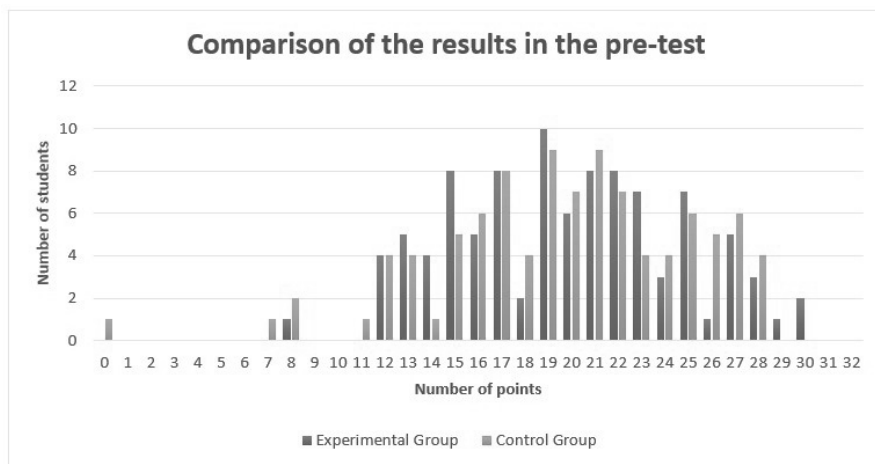
experimental groups	number of students	M (mean)	Median	Mode	SD	worst result in points	best result in points
1e	20	20,9	21	27	5,29	12	29
2e	19	19,52	20	17	4,82	12	30
3e	19	19,68	20	22	4,45	12	30
4e	20	18,80	19	19	4,90	8	27
5e	20	20,30	19	25	4,71	14	28
All groups	98	19,84	20	19	4,80		

**Table 3b** Pre-test analysis results in the control groups

control groups	number of students	M (mean)	Median	Mode	SD	worst result in points	best result in points
1c	20	19,95	21,5	26	6,21	8	28
2c	19	19,3	20	21	4,49	8	26
3c	19	19,15	20	28	7,19	0	28
4c	20	19,5	19	17	4,36	12	28
5c	20	20,2	20	19	4,23	12	27
All groups	98	19,62	20	19	5,32		

In Figure 1, we can see the difference in results respondents achieved in the pre-test in both groups, experimental and control. It is a comparison of the scores achieved by the respondents who take part in the pre-test. The abbreviation EG stands for experimental groups and the abbreviation CG stands for control groups.

**Figure 1** Pre-test results comparison of the experimental and control groups.



Tables 4a and 4b present the results of the post-test in the experimental and control groups. At this point, it should be noted that the students in the experimental group wrote the post-test after completing ten training recordings with tasks made available sequentially on the aforementioned podcast. The students in the control group were trained only in the traditional way during the semester, without the additional listening training exercises posted on the podcast.

At the end of the experiment, both experimental and control groups carried out a post-test. In Tables 5a and 5b we present the data we obtained from the final listening test and their analysis. Based on the data analysis, we found that the experimental groups scored a higher mean (21.53) compared to the control groups (19.9). This implies that the respondents in the experimental groups scored higher on average in the listening test compared to the respondents in the control groups. The median values are similar for both groups (21.5 for the experimental groups and 20 for the control groups). The median is less affected by extreme values, and in this case, it suggests that the mean performance in the groups is similar. The mode for the experimental groups is 25, while for the control groups, it is 19. This indicates that the most common score in the experimental groups was 25, while in the control groups, it was 19. The standard deviation, which measures the variance of the scores, shows that the control groups had a slightly higher standard deviation (5.17) compared to the experimental groups (4.84). This suggests that the scores in the control groups are slightly more dispersed. Overall, the experimental groups performed better on average on the final listening test, as evidenced by the

**Table 4a** *Post-test results in the experimental groups*

1e	25	23	24	19	17	17	28	26	27	22	18	22	21	26	21	12	17	24	20	25
2e	19	21	28	32	29	25	15	14	21	23	25	22	27	11	18	25	18	16	29	-
3e	25	21	15	21	12	28	30	24	19	26	29	18	23	14	26	21	15	18	21	-
4e	25	14	23	18	21	15	22	29	24	19	18	27	24	19	25	17	20	23	25	17
5e	29	15	20	30	23	13	27	17	28	16	25	17	19	17	25	22	14	27	20	23

**Table 4b** *Post-test results in the control groups*

1c	21	12	23	17	19	0	27	21	19	23	15	18	24	29	21	19	17	26	21	25
2c	21	17	27	10	18	14	19	13	17	23	28	16	21	23	19	24	19	19	25	-
3c	27	14	12	23	19	10	28	29	17	20	20	25	18	19	23	19	23	21	23	-
4c	17	27	18	0	17	23	13	27	22	26	18	16	17	16	25	19	19	24	18	23
5c	14	21	20	19	18	28	27	18	20	19	15	22	23	16	23	21	22	20	24	16

higher mean. The mode also indicates a different pattern of the most frequently occurring scores between the experimental and control groups. The median values are close, indicating that the mean performance is similar, and the standard deviation indicates slightly more variability in the control groups' results.

Table 5a.  
Post-test results analysis in the experimental groups

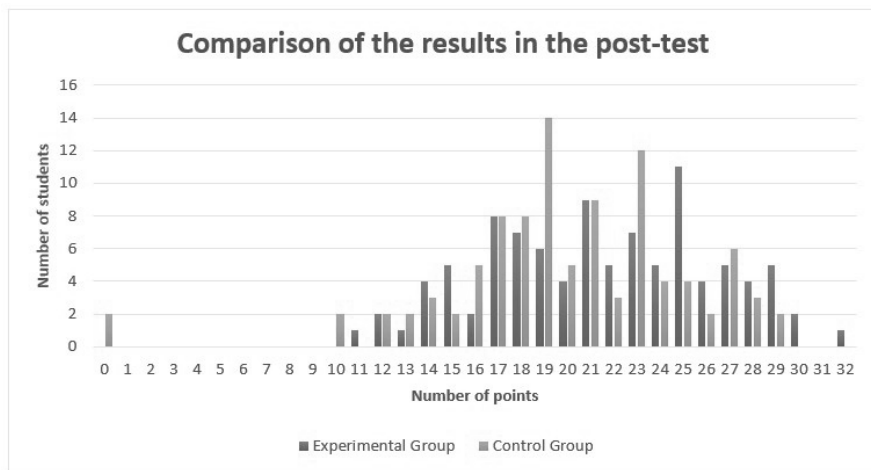
experimental groups	number of students	M (mean)	Median	Mode	SD	worst result in points	best result in points
1e	20,00	21,70	22,00	17,00	4,13	12,00	28,00
2e	19,00	22,00	22,00	25,00	5,77	11,00	32,00
3e	19,00	21,36	21,00	21,00	5,24	12,00	30,00
4e	20,00	21,25	21,50	25,00	4,09	14,00	30,00
5e	20,00	21,35	21,00	17,00	5,29	08,00	30,00
All groups	98,00	21,53	21,50	25,00	4,84		

Table 5b.  
Post-test results analysis in the control groups

control groups	number of students	M (mean)	Median	Mode	SD	worst result in points	best result in points
1c	20,00	19,85	21,00	21,00	6,25	0,00	28,00
2c	19,00	19,63	19,00	19,00	4,70	10,00	28,00
3c	19,00	20,52	20,00	23,00	5,09	14,00	28,00
4c	20,00	19,25	18,50	17,00	6,10	0,00	28,00
5c	20	20,3	20	20	3,69	14	28
All groups	98	19,9	20	19	5,17		

In Figure 2, we can see the difference in results achieved by the respondents. This is a comparison of the scores achieved by the respondents in the final testing.

**Figure 2** Final test results comparison of the experimental and control groups.



After comparing the achieved results by both groups, we can conclude that the experimental groups achieved better results than the control groups. This is because of the many advantages of podcasts, which were used in the experiment as a supplement to traditional teaching. However, the questionnaire responses, which were taken along with the post-test by the respondents in the experimental groups, showed that many students, despite the unlimited availability of the podcast, did not use this medium sufficiently. Listening to the recordings for each assignment was not limited, i.e. students could listen to the uploaded audio posts as many times as they needed. The recordings were available throughout the research. The respondents' answers showed that students mostly listened to each recording only once or twice and then carried out the tasks.

Based on the findings according to the results of the tests and questionnaires, we can state the following:

1. All groups, both experimental and control, consisted of students randomly assigned to groups. This increases the likelihood of obtaining data and results that correspond to their real-life level of proficiency in German as a second foreign language, as well as to the students' ability to use foreign language knowledge adequately in completing the assignments in the tasks of our project.

2. The lower level of foreign language proficiency as well as the heterogeneity of the groups may make students less motivated to regularly and proactively include listening comprehension in a foreign language in their foreign language learning activities than in the case of B2 and C1 proficiency.

3. We consider it important to note that when completing the tasks, students focused more on the content correctness of their answers than on the form, grammatical, and stylistic level of their answers. The reason for this approach may

be a lower level of proficiency in the second foreign language, which was particularly noticeable in the answers in which it was necessary to formulate their sentences and statements. These findings signal the need to work on the development of writing skills in a foreign language during lessons.

4. Listening comprehension in a foreign language is a rather demanding competence, the acquisition of which requires both mastery of basic grammar and vocabulary appropriate to the level. Regular training in this competence is equally important. Students gradually get rid of the feeling of uncertainty and nervousness often associated with listening to a text in a foreign language.

5. Teachers should regularly incorporate listening comprehension into foreign language teaching to motivate students to engage in these types of learning activities. Students have expressed positive attitudes towards the inclusion of such activities in the teaching process, especially in terms of increasing their motivation to learn a foreign language as well as a form of self-monitoring. Students perceived audio recordings as suitable supplementary study material. The current media environment and the possibilities of obtaining authentic recordings in a foreign language are available to every student at any time and repeatedly. These are the facts both teachers and students should make use of more often.

However, we can conclude that using the recordings posted on the podcast certainly contributes to the gradual improvement of receptive communicative language skills. After analysing the gathered data, we claim that the rate of improving language skill listening in the experimental group is certainly influenced by the uploaded audio recordings themselves and the types of tasks students were asked to carry out. Other authors (Şendağ et al., 2018) who investigated the effectiveness of podcasts in foreign language learning came to similar conclusions. If podcasts are to be effective, the strategy for using them must be set up correctly. That is, listen to podcasts regularly, several times in a row, then discuss the content and become familiar with the meanings of unfamiliar terms. Although the use of podcasts brings a higher degree of innovation to the classroom (Nurkhamitov & Gerkina, 2017), to which students respond positively, the use of podcasts must not become a stereotypical activity. Stereotypical methods can decrease overall student performance. For this reason, we could discuss involving students in the preparation of their podcasts so that they practice not only listening but also speaking.

Research has shown that students who used podcasts as a supplement to instruction improved their listening comprehension skills. The podcast can improve the ability to differentiate between words with a similar spelling and pronunciation. Podcasts can help to understand the content of the spoken text and to gain an overall understanding of the spoken word.



## 5. Conclusions

This study aimed to present one of the possibilities of developing receptive language listening skills in the teaching of German as a second foreign language at the University of Economics in Bratislava. We offered students the opportunity to improve their language listening skills through recordings and tasks published on a podcast. Research results show that this form can also be an effective supplement to foreign language teaching. However, it requires even more comprehensive research, and deeper analysis of other factors influencing students' achievement in pre-tests and post-tests, as well as in individual sub-tasks. This research opens the way for even greater motivation for students to use modern media in learning, thus developing their media competence in addition to their communicative language skills. In addition, it is important to lead students to learner autonomy, so that students regulate their learning process and become more independent, which also gives the teacher a new role in a whole new dimension - the teacher becomes a guide in the students' learning journey. The research results opened up several topics focusing on different aspects of foreign language teaching in a non-philological college. In particular, we consider it important to address the question of how to avoid stereotypes in the use of podcasts and explore the possibilities of involving students in the production of their podcasts in a foreign language.

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Јана Кухарова

Економски универзитет у Братислави

Факултет примијењених језика

Одсјек за њемачки језик

Ингрид Куновска

Економски универзитет у Братислави

Факултет примијењених језика

Одсјек за њемачки језик

Ева Страдиотова

Економски универзитет у Братислави

Факултет примијењених језика

Одсјек за енглески језик

Радослав Штефанчик

Економски универзитет у Братислави

Факултет примијењених језика

Одсјек за интеркултурну комуникацију

## РАЗВИЈАЊЕ ВЈЕШТИНЕ РАЗУМИЈЕВАЊА ОДСЛУШАНОГ ТЕКСТА КРОЗ ПОДКАСТЕ У НАСТАВИ СТРАНОГ ЈЕЗИКА

### *Резиме*

У овом раду настојимо да представимо једну од могућности развоја вјештине разумијевања одслушаног текста уз помоћ савременог медија – подкаста – у процесу подучавања и усвајања неког страног језика. Користили смо двије главне научне методе: експеримент и упитник. Експериментом је било замишљено да се докаже како кориштење подкаста у настави њемачког језика позитивно утиче на вјештину

слушања код студената. Користили смо упитник да прикупимо податке о мишљењима, искуствима и ставовима експерименталне групе у погледу кориштења подкаста у образовном процесу. Циљну групу чинило је 196 студената друге године додипломских студија Економског универзитета у Братислави (Словачка), који су похађали наставу из њемачког језика струке током три семестра. У поређењу са традиционалном наставом, сматрамо да је употреба подкаста учинковито средство за учење страног језика. Но, потребно је на прави начин мотивисати студенте за процес самосталног учења, с обзиром на то да овај облик, уколико му се не приступи са високом дозом подстицаја, неће донијети очекиване резултате. Студенти који су користили подкасте као додатак настави побољшали су сопствене вјештине разумијевања одслушаног текста. Подкаст може унаприједити идентификацију значења ријечи чији су правопис и изговор различити. Поред тога, подкасти могу помоћи у разумијевању садржаја изговореног текста, те у његовом свеукупном поимању. Међутим, мотивација студената да уче страни језик од изузетне је важности, што се напосљетку види из закључака овог рада. Подкасти могу да унаприједи вјештине кориштења неког страног језика, али обавеза је студената да се према процесу учења односе одговорно и да се редовно спремају за часове.

► **Кључне ријечи:** подкаст, вјештина слушања, страни језик, учење, подучавање.

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