

Increasing Performance of Lecturer through Podcasts in English Department

Fauris Zuhri

English Department of Universitas Negeri Surabaya

Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Unesa

Surabaya 60213, Indonesia

fauriszuhri@unesa.ac.id

Abstract – The purpose of this paper is to describe how English lecturer has to have efforts to be able to conduct the activities of teaching and learning through social software. It discusses about what social software is, podcasts is in English teaching, and how learner creates podcasts. It also increases lecturer's performance in conducting learning teaching activities day by day. English Department of Unesa has gradually implemented social software in some subjects. There are some lecturers causing internal factors are reluctant to implement social software – podcasts for their learners. Yet, they are realized that implementing social software – podcasts for their learners, is having some advantages. So English Department should consider the causes of technophobia and try to find out ways of overcoming it. The result of examination concerning with implementing social software shows that some lecturers doubt about it and suggest some solutions. At last, English Department outlines the basic skills and equipment that lecturers need in order to start implementing social software – podcasts for their learners in independent learning.

Keywords – *learning English; podcasts in learning English; independent learning English*

I. INTRODUCTION

Learning English using technology is not new in English Department. Technology, in this paper, consists of software and hardware relating to learning English. It focuses on what social software is, podcasts in learning English, and how to create learner podcasts. Social software – podcasts fulfill an independent learning English. Learning English based on systems of credit semester consists of three activities, such: a face to a face, structural of assignment, and independent learning. Among those activities, it focuses on number three which is called an independent learning.

Podcasts is one of examples of social software, beside blogs and wikis. The social software is a tool of computer that allows learners to connect, to communicate and to collaborate online. A podcast is an audio and/or video file that is 'broadcast' via the Internet and can be downloaded to a computer or mobile device such as an MP3 player for listening/viewing. The word podcast comes from combining iPod and broadcast, iPod being the brand name for the Apple portable MP3 player. A blog is essentially a web page with regular diary or journal entries. The term is short for weblog. A wiki is a collaborative web space, consisting of a number of pages that can be edited by any user. The term comes from the

Hawaiian word for 'quick'. Although these three tools are different, the writer is grouping them together in this paper as they have certain features in common when applied to the classroom:

- They can be setup and used by teachers and/or learners.
- They can be used to connect learners to other communities of learners, for example to a class in another country.
- The ideas and content can be generated and created by learners, either individually or collaboratively.

Although the use of social software such as podcasts, blogs, and wikis can be very motivating for learners, lecturers are themselves sometimes fearful of the technology, or feel they are not technically competent enough to use these tools. However, as the writer has seen, all of these tools are easy to setup and use, with no specialist technical knowledge required.

Another common misgiving is one related to content, and the lack of control that a lecturer may feel about allowing learners to generate and create their own content. Lecturers may find themselves thinking: 'will the content be appropriate? Will the language used by my learners be good enough?' In fact, these tools engender a sense of social responsibility, with learners working collaboratively on content. Also, the public nature of the content created using these Internet tools ensures that accuracy and appropriacy become more important for learners.

II. METHOD

This research applied a descriptive qualitative approach. It is expected to describe how an English lecturer tried to compose and implement an independent learning through social software – podcasts. In order to find out comprehensive data, this study implemented a questionnaire and interview guides lines. The research instruments were applied in two stages of activities: planning stage and implementing.

III. DISCUSSION

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A. Discussion on Planning Stage

It is started with the preparation how to create learner podcasts is. Lecturers and learners should understand that learner podcasts can consist of a series of short audio files, lasting from 10 - 20 seconds to several minutes, made by individual learners, or of longer podcasts, made by small groups. Below are a number of ideas for podcasting projects (see table 1 in point C):

After mentioning a number of ideas for podcasting projects, the next step is to prepare a class podcast project. There are four steps as the result of a class podcast project.

Step 1 - Setting-up a podcast page (approximately 30 minutes). Used a free podcasts sites like podomatic (www.podomatic.com), the lecturer sets up a podcast page for the project. This needed to be done at home or in the computer room before class. Recorded a podcast, the lecturer needed a computer and information technology connection, and a microphone and speakers or a headset. Podcasts sites were extremely easy to use and no specialist technical knowledge is needed. The podcast page provided a website for learners to post their podcasts to. The lecturer was be able to provide a short text description of the project, with photos and an example podcast, on the podcast page. The lecturer was also be able to add a podcast as a briefing for the class, including the information that they would like learners to have in their own podcasts.

Step 2 – Creating learner podcasts (approximately 45-60 minutes). In pairs or individually, learners prepared and rehearsed a short text about them selves. Told them to include the following information:

- ☐ name and age.
- ☐ job or school year.
- ☐ hobbies or sparetime activities.
- ☐ one unusual thing about themselves.

It was important to allow learners time to rehearse their texts several times so that they feel confident about being recorded. Although their podcasts should not be directly read out word by word, did allow learners to make notes to help them, as they were going to feel it is important to be as accurate as possible.

A podcast site such as podomatic was going to allow learners to record, listen to and then re-recorded their podcasts until they were entirely happy with the results. Only then learners should publish their podcasts to the podcast project page. Recorded and re-recorded required no special technical knowledge or software apart from Internet access to the podcast page already setup by the teacher, and a microphone and headphones for each student to record their podcast with. The recording software was incorporated into the podcast page and is very easy to use. In the single computer classroom, learners were going to need to take turns to record their podcasts. When learners were happy with the recordings of their individual podcasts, they published them to the main podcast page.

Step 3 - Listening to learner podcasts (approximately 45 – 50 minutes). In a subsequent class, put learners individually (or in pairs) with a computer and allowed them to listen to all

of their classmates' podcasts. In the single computer classroom, the podcasts was be able to play one by one, via speakers. Told learners to note down what hobbies each person had, and also the unusual thing each person mentioned. Once all the podcasts had been listened to, allowed learners to compare notes in small groups. What had they found out about their classmates?

Step 4 – Follow up (3 – 4 subsequent lessons). Once learners had produced one short podcast, and were familiar with the podcasting site and how to use it, they were be able to start to produce regular podcasts on the topics which were covered in class. The more learners practice preparing podcast texts, rehearsed them and recorded them, the more confident they were going to become, and the more 'natural' their recordings were going to start to sound. And the quicker they were going to carry them out.

Lecturers were going to see that podomatic also allowed comments from listeners, which was be able to be in text form or even recorded, if permission was given to do this. Other classes, or the parents of younger learners, were able to be encouraged to listen to the podcasts and to comment on them. Podomatic was easy to use, and produced a page similar to the one on the previous page, with your podcast embedded in the page. You were be able to choose from a variety of templates for a different look. You were also easily be able to add photos to your audio podcasts – made the page more visually attractive.

B. Discussion on Implementing Stage

This part is to elaborate podcasts is in English teaching. The closest analogy to a podcast is that of a radio or TV show but the difference is that you can listen to or watch a podcast on a topic that interests you whenever you want to. A podcast could be downloaded automatically to your computer using RSS, pod catching software.

Typically, a podcast was going to consist of a 'show' which was released either periodically or at regular intervals, for example everyday or once a week. A podcast was be able to be on any topic, and was be able to include music and video. Video podcasts was also known as Vodcasts or PodClips. A podcast was be able to last anything upwards of a few minutes to an hour or more. Podcasts was be able to be authentic – for example, BBC radio shows were often downloadable as podcasts – or specially made for English learners.

Podcast directories were one place to start looking for podcasts. Teacher or his learners were be able to click on a category and scroll through a list of podcasts, listening to and subscribing to any that interest them. A podcast directory aimed specifically at teachers and learners of English was English caster (<http://www.englishcaster.com>).

There were two main uses of podcasts in teaching English. Firstly, learners were be able to listen to podcasts made by others and, secondly, they were be able to produce their own podcasts. It was becoming increasingly common in tertiary education, for example, for professors to record lectures as podcasts, so that students who missed a class can download

the lecture podcasts for later listening on their computers or mobile devices like a MP3 player. This was sometimes referred to as course casting. Lecturers might have standard lectures that had been recorded and were made available at certain points in the university term/ semester, and they might also record new podcasts regularly for their students. Podcasts were also be able to be used in a similar way in teacher training, where trainees listened to/watched podcasts on issues of teaching methodology.

An English teacher was be able to direct their learners to podcasts already available on the Internet, for self-study purposes, or even used them for listening in class via a computer. These could be EFL/ESL podcasts made especially for learners, such as those found at the English caster directory, or authentic podcasts.

One option for the English teacher was to encourage learners to find a podcast on a topic that interested demand got them to subscribe and then listened to it regularly in their free time. EFL/ESL podcasts were available for all levels of learners, covering a wide variety of topics, from vocabulary items to discussions on topics of interest, to jokes and to learning songs. Alternatively, a lecturer was be able to encourage high-level learners to subscribe to authentic podcasts, for example from sites such as the BBC News (<http://wwwbbc.co.uk>).

More demanding, but ultimately perhaps more rewarding, was the option of learners actually producing their own podcasts. Learner podcasts could be a 'one-off' podcast, which was then stored on the internet, or learners could produce a series of regular podcasts on a variety of topics, much like a radio show.

C. Tables

TABLE 1. The result of creating a number of ideas for podcasting projects.

Podcast idea	Suggested length of each podcast	Student language level	Individual/Small group recording	One-off/ Series of podcasts
Personal information (e.g. name, age, likes & dislikes)	1-3 minutes	Low	Individual	One-off
Views on topics	1-3 minutes	Low+	Individual	Series
Describing (e.g. national customs/ holidays)	5 minutes plus	Intermediate+	Small groups	One-off/ Series
Telling	1-3	Intermediate	Individual	One-off/

Podcast idea	Suggested length of each podcast	Student language level	Individual/Small group recording	One-off/ Series of podcasts
jokes/ anecdotes	minutes	ate+	1	Series

In order to find out lecturers and learners' understanding about social software, the researcher used the following instrument (questionnaire: matching some terminologies with their definitions) for them.

TABLE II. The result of questionnaire concerning with a terminology: social software (podcasts, blogs, and wikis). Matching the terminology to the definition.

No	Terminology	No	Definition
1	Social software	D	ICT tools which encourage users to collaborate and communicate online. Typically they allow multiple authorship, and the content is generated by the users.
2	Blog roll	L	A list of links to other blogs.
3	Edublog	F	A blog used in education.
4	Blogfade	A	The lack of enthusiasm one feels for one blog, after a time.
5	Blogger.com	M	A well-known site where one can easily setup a blog.
6	Vlog	G	A videoblog.
7	Wiki	E	A collaborative webspace consisting of several linked web pages, that can be edited by several people.
8	Wikipedia	B	A well - known collaborative encyclopedia on the Internet.
9	Pbwiki	N	A user-friendly site where one can easily setup a wiki.

No	Terminology	No	Definition
10	Ropodcast	C	An audio or video file which can be downloaded to a personal computer or to a mobile device such as an MP3 player.
11	Pod catching software	J	The software needed to download a podcast.
12	Vodcast	I	A pod cast in the form of a video.
13	Course casting	K	Course lectures delivered in podcast format – increasingly popular in tertiary education.
14	Podomatic	H	A user-friendly site where one can easily create and record a podcast.

The choices are:

- A. The lack of enthusiasm one feels for one blog, after a time.
- B. A well - known collaborative encyclopedia on the Internet.
- C. An audio or video file which can be downloaded to a personal computer or to a mobile device such as an MP3 player.
- D. ICT tools which encourage users to collaborate and communicate online. Typically they allow multiple authorship, and content is generated by the users.
- E. A collaborative webspace consisting of several linked web pages, that can be edited by several people.
- F. A blog used in education.
- G. A videoblog.
- H. A user-friendly site where one can easily create and record a podcast.
- I. A pod cast in the form of a video.
- J. The software needed to download a podcast.
- K. Course lectures delivered in podcast format – increasingly popular in tertiary education.
- L. A list of links to other blogs.
- M. A well-known site where one can easily setup a blog.
- N. A user-friendly site where one can easily setup a wiki.

This is the next instrument (interview guide lines) to find out the lecturers and learners' understanding concerning with the advantages and disadvantages of learning English skills used podcasts.

TABLE III. The result of interview concerning with advantages and disadvantages of learning English skills used podcasts.

Activity of learners	Advantage	Disadvantage
Learners listened to podcasts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> low-level EFL/ESL podcasts available for low-level learners. high levels can be exposed to authentic podcasts. Podcasts good for self-study (learners can listen to them where and when they want). teacher introduces a new medium into the classroom. podcast content can be stimulating and up-to-date. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> learners need an MP3 player or similar
Learners created podcasts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> learners use a new ICT tool, and create their own content (motivating). learners can in theory reach a world-wide audience. learners will take extra care in preparation and presentation knowing that there is a wider audience. podcasts can look and sound very professional. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> teacher needs a microphone connected to the computer to record the podcast. learners may feel overly pressured to 'get it right'.

IV. CONCLUSION

The writer tries to introduce examples of social software, one of them is podcasts to motivate students to become more active in increasing independent learning.

Lecturer tried to demonstrate how to use social software, one of them is podcasts in English teaching more specifically in listening comprehension class.

Lecturer can collaborate with students how to set up simple podcast projects in learning English, and it gradually increases students' self-reliance and independence.

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