English Podcasting: A Study of a University Podcast-Based Course

Jaime SELWOOD

Institute for Foreign Language Research and Education

Hiroshima University

The huge growth in ownership of smartphones amongst university students in Japan means that access to podcast content has become freely available to users who may download them and use them anywhere and anytime. Yet the focus, content and access the majority of university students have with podcasts is usually tightly controlled by the language instructor. This paper will first provide a background to the growing potential of podcasting within the field of mobile language learning, and then present the results of a study of a synchronised learning podcast-based course at Hiroshima University in which the student participants completed a project to create their own English language podcasts. The paper will conclude with the results from a survey of 61 non-English faculty students conducted at Hiroshima University.

BACKGROUND

There is a popular cartoon available on the Internet (Cartoon Stock, 2013) that shows a world-weary classroom teacher and a young student engaged in conversation. The student is offering an excuse for non-completion of an assignment by arguing *"Had you subscribed to my podcast, you would have learned that my dog ate my homework"*. What is interesting is not that this cartoon is an accurate representation of a teacher-student interaction, but how podcasts are now perceived to have an accepted place in education (Rosell-Aguillar, 2007) through the reworking of an old homework-themed joke.

Yet despite the growing number of English language podcasts available through the Internet – the figure is estimated to be around 115,000 (The Myndset, 2012) - previous educational studies have concluded that university students are still reluctant to engage with podcasts outside of the traditional boundaries of a language-based course (Lauer, 2011). In other words, students are willing to comply with the necessities of completing a course and thus gaining a grade, but once that has been accomplished the desire to continue with any learning materials introduced through that course is highly diminished.

Diane Laurillard states in her ground-breaking publication *Rethinking University Teaching* that academic learning is more than just acquiring knowledge in a traditional academic setting, such as a classroom (Laurillard, 2002). The aim of this paper is to show how the expanded ownership of mobile technology (specifically smartphones) in correlation with an increased awareness of the potential attributes afforded by podcasts, can assist in the language-learning process particularly at the university level.

The data and findings in this paper will be analysed in an attempt to understand better

how students engage with podcasts. This paper will also attempt to offer an insight into the effectiveness of a podcast-centred university course in addition to students' attitudes towards podcast-based language learning.

However, definitive conclusions must not be drawn solely from the results of one survey conducted at a single university; rather, the findings serve to merely highlight the potential for podcasting as an integral aspect within a language-learning structure.

M-Learning

The online encyclopaedia website Wikipedia defines Mobile-Learning (M-Learning) as learning which takes a language-learner away from a fixed point, such as a classroom or computer desk. As such this provides a direct contrast to eLearning which traditionally uses a fixed-point of access for educational use (Wikipedia, 2013).

How does M-Learning differ from other aspects of eLearning or Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL)? The crucial aspect centres around the portability of the device, access to knowledge and the language-learners location of interaction with the material. To simplify this process: is the learner engaged in a 'where', 'when' or 'how' situation? (Kakihara & Sorensen, 2002)

However, language-learning through the use of technology is hardly a new development, as wax cylinders were being used as learning aids as early as 1901 by the global language training company Linguaphone (Multilingualbooks, 2013). With the growth and development of technology, more portable equipment from personal-tape decks, through to portable CD players and then more recently MP3 devices, have assisted the growth of language-learning into a more mobile-device centred field. The current generation of university language-learners use mobile-playing devices such as the iPod as their chosen mechanism for access to music, just as in previous generations tapes, CDs and vinyl records performed the same role. Educational use of podcasts should build on the foundation of this 21st Century cultural phenomenon (Bull, 2005).

Podcasting

The word 'podcast' is the combination of two words: '**pod**', which was popularised through Apple's audio playing device – the iPod - and 'broad**cast**'. The word itself is defined by the Cambridge Online English Dictionary as the following:

Podcast (n) *A radio programme that is stored in a digital form (= one using signals in the form of numbers) that you can download from the internet and play on a computer or on an MP3 player.* (Cambridge Dictionary.org 2013).

However these two root words are somewhat misleading when trying to actually decipher what a podcast is. Podcasts are generally audio multimedia files available through the Internet on a subscription basis but which do not actually require a mobile device to access their content. Additionally, the majority of podcasts, especially language-learning ones, do not have a wide-

listenership and therefore it would be difficult to classify them as having a broad reach (Lim, 2006).

The evolution of the term 'podcasting' has its origins in the 1980s when it was first called 'audioblogging', before next being known as 'netcasting'. The word 'podcast' was first coined by journalist Ben Hammersly in an article on the growth of audible content on the Internet in The Guardian Newspaper in 2004 (The Guardian, 2004). The general acceptance of the word podcast coincided with the arrival of broadband Internet, the popularity of portable digital audio playback devices such as iPods, and the release of Apple's iTunes in 2004 that for the first time had a section called 'podcasts'. This allowed the user to subscribe, download and listen to any podcast they wished.

Since their early inception on iTunes in 2004 podcasts have developed, and the popularity and potential in particular of language-learning podcasts around the world can be seen clearly in the weekly iTunes Podcast Chart. The high percentage of English language-learning podcasts in the top ten most downloaded podcasts is highlighted in **Table A:**

TABLE A.

Country	Top 10: Percentage	Country	Top 10: Percentage
JAPAN	**100%**	Russia	70%
China	90%	Switzerland	70%
Italy	90%	Belgium	60%
Brazil	80%	South Korea	60%
France	80%	USA	20%

iTunes Chart 2013

Smartphones

The development of podcasts is intrinsically linked to firstly the growth in audio media-player devices such as iPods, and more importantly through the recent explosion of smartphone ownership that allows students the opportunity to access the Internet and therefore podcasts, at a time and location that is convenient for them (Selwood, 2012).

This year (2013) has seen a seminal development for the evolution of hand-held portable media-playing devices, as a seismic event has occurred that may dramatically alter how language-learners use technology to interact and engage with podcasts. Figures in June show that for the first time smartphone sales overtook feature phones (mobile phones without a touch-screen operating system) in world-wide sales figures. In total from April to June 2013 smartphone devices sold 225 million units compared to 210 million units for feature phones an increase of 46.5% on world-wide smartphone sales and a decrease of 21% on feature phone sales compared to 2012. (BBC, 2013).

The Mobile Internet

Survey results presented in this article will show that the ownership of smartphones

amongst the student body at Hiroshima University is currently at 92% **(Box A)**, which is a substantial increase of 61% on student ownership in just two years since a similar survey in 2011. (Selwood, 2012). The high level of smartphone ownership is also reflected in the growing availability of connection to the mobile Internet via hand-held mobile devices. In December 2011 Japan had 98.6 million mobile Internet subscribers – approximately 78% of the population (TCA Website, 2011). By August of 2013 the number of mobile Internet subscribers had grown to 111.5 million or 88% of the population. (MobiThinking, 2013).

Japan is not alone in having high numbers of mobile Internet subscribers; other developed nations in Europe and North America also have a high percentage of subscribers. The top five countries globally are shown below with Japan in second place on the list:

TABLE B.

Country	Mobile Internet Subscribers	Percentage of Population
Italy	55.1 million	90.5%
JAPAN	**111.5 million**	**88.3%**
United Kingdom	45.8 million	72.6%
United States	225 million	70.6%
Germany	53.2 million	65%

MobiThinking Webiste 2013

It is to be expected that developed nations with higher percentages of individual spending power will present high levels of smartphone ownership and mobile Internet access. What is interesting for the future of podcasting as a language-learning tool is the numbers of mobile Internet access amongst countries with web users who either have no access to a fixed Internet connection or infrequent access. The figures in **Table C** are dominated by countries that would be described as 'developing economies' (The United Nations, 2013).

TABLE C.

Country	Mobile Only Subscribers	Percentage of Population
Egypt	58.5 million	70%
India	729.2 million	59%
South Africa	30.1 million	57%
Ghana	13.5 million	55%
Kenya	23.9 million	54%

MobiThinking Website, 2013

The figures in **Table B** and **Table C** indicate that the mobile Internet offers a portable connection to the Internet that is not just limited to those countries that have more developed economies. Podcasts could become a cheap and accessible language-learning tool in areas of the world where more traditional language-learning materials and fixed-location Internet access

would be prohibitive through either expense or location.

iPodagogy

Podcasts can be simple to create and produce and can offer easy access to those with the appropriate Internet connected device, but they also need to be educationally beneficial. Podcasts need to be founded upon clear pedagogical principles whilst at the same time adhering to appropriate linguistic findings (Lauer, 2009). Just because podcasts are a relatively new format should not be enough of a reason to automatically incorporate their use as an integral part of a language course (Eash, 2006).

It is important that both podcast and smartphone use override any notion of the novelty factor as this can negatively influence teachers in how they approach podcast use within the course dynamics. In essence language educators must think carefully as to whether podcasts will offer a meaningful addition to the language acquisition process (Lee, 2005).

Yet language-based podcasts can, through harnessing language-learner ownership of smartphones, exploit the technological abilities of the '*Net Generation*' of students (Maag, 2006). The podcast content needs to offer a sound theoretical basis, for example chunking theory, synchronised-learning or augmented learning, and the podcast content must be clearly defined by a particular theme. This will allow language-learners to make a direct connection between the ambitions of the content within a podcast and each episode's specified theme.

For podcasts to be at their most efficient they need to be integrated within a language-acquisition programme with a clear purpose and validation for its instructional use (Copley, 2007). Podcasts will be most effective when they provide language-learners with authentic language content, whilst at the same time allowing the students as much control in how they choose to access and engage with the podcast content (Selwood, 2013).

THE STUDY
Aims of the Research

The ultimate objective of the research was to identify whether using podcasts as a core aspect of an English language-learning course presented students with a significant new learning opportunity whilst concurrently attempting to gauge what impact podcasts had on students' study habits. Figures have indicated that English language-learning podcasts are popular both within Japan and around the world (**Table A**), whilst in Japan smartphone ownership numbers and mobile Internet access among university students also showed a high percentage (**Table B**). These figures should then offer comfort for an English language course centred around a podcast – as the results suggest an overwhelming majority of students own the technology to access podcasts. But the key question that emerged whilst calculating the data was this:

Can students find podcasts a useful tool in their language-learning process?

It is acknowledged by the author that the sample pool of students is relatively small, and

as the research is still in its early stages a definitive conclusion based upon the findings cannot be provided.

The Student Body

The podcast course which was titled by the author as *Podcast Presentation* consisted of undergraduate students from two separate non-English faculties at Hiroshima University. *Podcast Presentation* was a compulsory 2nd Year English course with students from the Faculties of Integrated Arts and Sciences (28 students) and Education (33 students). There was a total of 61 students (34 male/27 female), 58 of whom were Japanese; two students were from South Korea and one student was from the People's Republic of China. All were aged between 19–23 with both classes being made up of students with mixed-ability and with varying degrees of motivation towards studying English. The classroom used for the course was not a CALL room, but the students were able to access the mobile Internet through an available free Wi-Fi connection. Each class was 90 minutes long and in total there were 15 classes held once a week from April to July 2013.

Whilst a prerequisite of the course was not ownership of a smartphone / mobile-Internet connected hand-held device, a high proportion of the students enrolled on the *Podcast Presentation* course did own smartphones. The figures in **Table D** provide a breakdown of ownership that indicates that students on the *Podcast Presentation* course adhered to the norm of smartphone ownership in comparison to a similar survey conducted at Hiroshima University in May 2013:

TABLE D.

Number of Students	Smartphone	Feature Phone
61	90% (55/61)	10% (6/61)
Hiroshima Univ. Students	Smartphone	Feature Phone
420	92% (386/420)	8% 34/(420)

Survey 1 & Appendix 1

Students who owned tablet devices (iPads / Galaxy Tab etc.) were encouraged to bring these into the classroom if they wished to do so. However, as the data in **Table E** highlights, there was only a small proportion of students both as part of the *Podcast Presentation* course and amongst the general Hiroshima University student body who owned such devices.

TABLE E.

Podcast Present Students	Own Tablet	Do Not Own Tablet
61	13% (8/61)	87% (53/61)
Hiroshima Univ. Students	Own Tablet	Do Not Own Tablet
420	18% (75/420)	82% (345/420)

Survey 1 & Appendix 2

The Course

The aim of *Podcast Presentation* was threefold: Firstly, to increase students 'real-life' language knowledge through activities contained within **Hiroshima University's English News Weekly podcast;** secondly, to encourage students to use hand-held, mobile-Internet connected smartphones to assist with their language-learning process both inside and outside the classroom; and finally, for students to develop activities and materials that could be presented in a podcast form based on their ideas and themes they had researched and chosen.

A detailed course breakdown week-by-week is highlighted in **Table F** below: Week 1 was an introductory lesson where the course and its aims were explained.

TABLE F.

Week	Content	
1	Course Introduction	
	PART 1	
2	ENW Podcast – *Episode 48: The Scream Sold for $120m*	
3	ENW Podcast – *Episode 38: The Toughest Race*	
4	ENW Podcast – *Episode 62: Senkaku or Diaoyu?*	
5	ENW Podcast – *Episode 100: Back in Time!*	
	PART 2	
6	(1st Presentation) Small Groups | Research, Write & Practice	
7	(1st Presentation) Feedback, Edit & Prepare Hand-outs	
8	(1st Presentation) Exchange Hand-outs with another group & Present.	3–5 mins
	PART 3	
9	(2nd Presentation) Change Groups | Research, Write & Practice	
10	(2nd Presentation) Feedback, Edit & Prepare Hand-outs	
11	(2nd Presentation) Exchange Hand-outs with another group & Present.	5–8 mins
	PART 4	
12	(3rd Presentation) Change Groups | Research, Write & Practice	
13	(3rd Presentation) Feedback, Edit & Prepare Hand-outs	
14	(3rd Presentation) Practice & Record Audio Content.	
15	(3rd Presentation) Exchange Audio Content & Hand-outs.	8–10 mins

As **Table F** indicates, the *Podcast Presentation* course was divided into four sections that introduced students to an English language podcast at Hiroshima University, whilst the other three sections involved the students creating their own news topic materials based on content and themes chosen within small groups of three or four students.

The students were encouraged to choose news topic themes that they were interested in and were thus given as much freedom as possible in their selection. Some of the topics included tennis player Kimiko Date-Krumm, a long distance butterfly flight, Mount Fuji and a 'janken' (also known as rock – paper – scissors) competition involving Japanese super-group AKB 48. No restrictions were placed on the news topics but students were advised to steer away from

topics that focused on potentially problematic themes such as sexual violence.

The aim behind Part One of the *Podcast Presentation* course was simply to introduce students to an English language-learning podcast. Students were required to listen to a pre-chosen English News Weekly episode for homework and then in class complete the activities that accompanied each podcast episode in the supplementary PDF. Each episode was a one-week assignment and ended with students writing a brief 100-word summary of the podcast's theme for an oral presentation activity in class.

Part Two and Part Three of the course were both three-week segments that offered students the opportunity to choose a news topic of their choice – the aim being to centralise the students within their own language-learning process. Before the first class in each segment students had to research two current-affair news stories and then bring notes (in English) to that class.

The news stories chosen by the students could originate in any location or language, but had to have been released within five days prior to the first class. In the remaining two classes students would write a summary of between 75–100 words and create pre-listening and post-listening activities as a hand-out to accompany their groups' new stories. In the final week, groups would be placed together so they could present their news stories to each other whilst completing the accompanying hand-out. At the conclusion of the presentation students were encouraged to ask at least one question each of the presenting group before the hand-outs were graded by the original group.

In both Part Two and Part Three the final presentation was not recorded, but students were encouraged to record their own readings of their news stories and email them / exchange them with other members of their groups for feed-back. The author did not require students to do this as not all students possessed smartphones (**Table D**) but those that did were encouraged to do so. The results for those students who owned a smartphone and actually used it to record / send audio files (presented below in **Table G**) was disappointingly low which would support the theory presented early in this paper that if students are not required to embrace new technology as a course requirement then there still seems to be a resistance to its use within a language-learning environment.

TABLE G.

Owned Smartphone	Used to Record Audio	Did Not Use to Record Audio
55 / 61 (90%)	12 / 55 (22%)	43 (78%)

Appendix 3

Part Four followed a similar schedule to Parts Two and Three except there was an extra week; the news story summary was increased to 150–175 words and the time for the audio presentation was increased to between eight and ten minutes. Finally, the presentation itself needed to be recorded prior to the final class of the semester and this final recording could be done by the students on their own using any type of recording device from smartphone, desktop

P.C. or digital audio recorder. Once completed the audio file was then sent to the author or given to him as a memory card. In the final week of the semester the students exchanged audio files and printed hand-outs and then listened via their smartphones to the audio file whilst completing the printed hand-out containing accompanying activities.

Method

The **_Podcast Presentation_** course was analysed through two surveys conducted throughout the 15-week semester. The surveys were written, distributed, collected and analysed by the author. Purposeful sampling was used in the surveys in order to gain a wide range of data relating to podcasting, and it is hoped that this process will be developed and refined in future studies.

The first stage of the process was a survey that was aimed at discovering students' pre-existing knowledge and use of podcasts – in particular language learning podcasts. In the first week of the semester a blind sample survey was distributed amongst the participant students. Respondents were all non-English majors at Hiroshima University. The students were given a questionnaire containing 15 questions, divided into four sections: _General Student Information, Mobile Device Ownership, General Podcast Awareness_ and finally relating to _Hiroshima_

Survey 1

<div style="border:1px solid">

<p align="center">Survey 1 | Questions</p>

1 |	Male / Female _____	3 |	Age: _____	
2 |	Faculty: _____	4 |	Year: 1 / 2 / 3 / 4	

5 |	Do you own a smartphone? (iPhone/Samsung etc.)	YES	NO
6 |	Do you own a tablet? (iPad/Samsung Galaxy etc.)	YES	NO
7 |	Do you have iTunes / Podcast app on your smartphone?	YES	NO
8 |	Do you regularly* use your smartphone to access the Internet?	YES	NO

*For example about 5 – 6 times-a-week.

9 |	Do you know what a podcast is?	YES	NO
10 |	Do you listen to any non-English podcasts regularly*?	YES	NO
11 |	Have you listened to any Hiroshima University podcasts?	YES	NO
12 |	Have you listened to:		
	Hiroshima University English News Weekly?	YES	NO
	Hiroshima University English podcast?	YES	NO
13 |	How often do you listen to these Hiroshima University podcasts?		

Hiroshima University English News Weekly
Never / Once-a-month / Every Week / 3+ Times-a-month
Hiroshima University English podcast
Never / Once-a-month / Every Week / 3+ Times-a-month

14 |	Do you listen to any other English language podcast	YES	NO
	_____ _____		_____

15 |	Do you think podcasts can improve your English?	YES	NO

</div>

University's English Language Podcasts. As detailed below, the majority of questions were formed in a simple YES/NO structure.

A similar survey was conducted at the conclusion of the ***Podcast Presentation*** course with the only difference being a small alteration to the wording of Question 16 and the addition of three extra questions. Question 17 and Question 18 investigated student attitudes towards the potential of a podcast structured language course whilst Question 19 surveyed students' use of smartphones to record audio files.

Survey 2

	Survey 2 | Alterations & Additional Questions		
16 |	Did you think podcasts helped to improve your English?	YES	NO
17 |	Did you enjoy listening to English News Weekly podcasts?	YES	NO
18 |	Will you continue to listen to English News Weekly podcast?	YES	NO
	(Sometimes / 2–3 a-month / Every week / Never)		
19	Used smartphone to record audio files?	YES	NO

Results

The first notable result from Survey 1 was the high number of students who owned smartphones – 92% (55/61). This figure becomes even more significant when tallied with data from Question 9 that showed 98% (54/55) of those that owned smartphones regularly accessed the mobile Internet via their hand-held devices. These results indicate that a podcast-integrated course has the raw materials – smartphones and Internet access – to allow the students the opportunity to download the necessary podcast files.

Although these results are encouraging for the potential of podcasts within a language course, there are obvious pitfalls relating to smartphone screen size, available Internet access and download capabilities. To download an audio podcast file may be a simple process with many podcast apps freely available allowing students the opportunity to subscribe to the required podcast. However, accessing and more importantly writing and editing on the PDF

Box 1 A | Beginning of the Course

Total Number of Students			Own a Smartphone			Own a Tablet		
Total:	61	100%	YES:	55	90%	YES:	8	13%
Males	34	56%	NO:	6	10%	NO:	53	87%
Female	27	44%						
Regularly Access Mobile Internet (via a smartphone)				Installed iTunes / Podcast App (on smartphone)				
YES:	54	98%			YES:	8	13%	
NO:	1	2%			NO:	53	87%	

files that accompany the podcast is still a significant obstacle towards a fully integrated podcast course.

The results from **Box 1 A** were almost exactly replicated in Survey 2 – **Box 1 B** conducted at the end of the course. The only change was an increase in smartphone ownership and a slightly bigger increase in those students who had installed the iTunes / podcast app on their smartphone from 13% to 33%.

Box 1 B | End of the Course

Own a Smartphone			Installed iTunes / Podcast App (on smartphone)		
YES:	56	92%	YES:	20	33%
NO:	5	8%	NO:	41	67%

The next section of results focused on the students' knowledge of podcast presentations, focusing in particular on those produced at Hiroshima University. The data collected showed a low student engagement with podcasts, with only 33% (20/61) who regularly listened to non-English language podcasts (Japanese/Korean/Chinese). The numbers dropped further for those students who regularly listened to English language podcasts – only 28% (17/61). 'Regularly' was defined as downloading and listening at least 'once-a-month'. Of the 28% who answered they had listened to English language podcasts, 53% (9/17) responded that they listened to English News Weekly. This clearly leaves a high percentage of students – 72% (44/61) - who had not engaged with any podcasts prior to the beginning of the course.

Box 2 A | Beginning of the Course

Listen to Non-English Podcasts			Listen to English Language Podcasts			Listen to Hiroshima University's English News Weekly		
YES:	20	33%	YES:	17	28%	YES:	9 (17)	53%
NO:	41	67%	NO:	44	72%	NO:	6 (17)	47%

The biggest change in results in the survey conducted at the end of the course was wholly expected – 100% (61/61) had listened to an English language podcast. This was not a surprise as it was a course requirement. There was an increase in those students who were listening to podcasts in their native language – a jump to 51% (32/61). There was a further overall increase in the percentage of students who continued to listen to English News Weekly throughout the

Box 2 B | End of the Course

Listen to Non-English Podcasts			Listen to English Language Podcasts			Listen to Hiroshima University's English News Weekly		
YES:	32	51%	YES:	61	100%	YES:	33	62%
NO:	29	49%	NO:	0	0%	NO:	28	38%

semester to 62% (28/61) but this again can be *partially explained* through the requirements of the Podcast Presentation course.

The final results in **Box 3 A, Box 3 B** and **Box 3 C** provide limited optimism for the future development of university podcast based courses. In the first survey just over half of respondents 53% (32/61) indicated that they believed podcasts could improve their English skills. However, at the conclusion of the course this figure had improved to 85% (52/61) who answered they believed their English skills had improved.

Box 3 A | Beginning of the Course

Do you think podcasts can improve your English?		
YES:	32	61%
NO:	29	29%

Box 3 B | End of the Course

Did you think podcasts improved your English?		
YES:	52	85%
NO:	9	15%

Box 3 C | Additional Questions

Enjoyed Listening to ENW Podcasts			Will Continue to Listen to ENW Podcasts?			
YES:	44	72%	Sometimes:	52% (32/61)	2–3 a-month:	19% (11/61)
NO:	17	8%	Every Week:	6% (5/61)	Never:	21% (12/61)

The three additional questions that were only contained within Survey 2 also provide some encouragement for podcast advocates. 72% (44/61) of those who responded wrote they enjoyed listening to English News Weekly as part of their course requirement. 85% (52/61) of respondents felt their English ability had improved by the end of the course, however figures dropped from those respondents who answered they would continue to listen to English News Weekly after the cessation of the course. The highest category was 'sometimes' with 52% (32/61), followed by 'never' with 21% (12/61), '2–3 times a-month' at 19% (11–61), and finally 'every week' with just 6% (5–61). Yet prior to the commencement of the course only 28% had listened to any English language podcast, so for students who are not English majors the increase in willingness in some capacity to continue listening is encouraging.

Finally, as with any survey of this type the above results clearly have two potential limitations. Firstly, the students on the *Podcast Presentation* course numbered only 61, which out of a total of 11,300 undergraduates (Wikipedia, 2013) is only 0.5% of the total Hiroshima University student body. Secondly, and this is a potential problem for any sample survey, the student respondents might choose their answers because they wished to impress the author

(their teacher) by providing responses they believed would assist their own progress in the course.

CONCLUSION

The *Podcast Presentation* course is at a very early stage of development as this was the first time such a course had been developed at Hiroshima University. Not all the students had smartphones and only a small minority of them used their smartphones to record their audio files. Only the final podcast in the course required to be recorded, and this is an issue the author wishes to develop in future courses. Currently there is no central Internet page where students can upload their podcast materials and access other materials, but this is under construction and will hopefully be in operation for the new academic year in 2014. Yet encouragement can be drawn from the high number of students who enjoyed the course and felt their English had improved. Future studies will need to focus on establishing the true improvement of students undertaking the course.

Smartphones clearly have limitations in how successfully they can be integrated into a podcast-based course at the university level. Yet, as the data shows, globally and domestically the spread of smartphone ownership and mobile Internet access is growing rapidly. This potentially provides a podcast-based course with the opportunity to harness these growing trends into a successfully integrated and synchronised language course.

Perhaps the biggest limitation revolves around student attitude towards their mobile devices as a language tool and not just a cool accessory (Selwood, 2012). This is further exacerbated by the diversity in technology – the number of different smartphones, apps and operating systems. Cost is clearly another issue as although the software to download the podcasts is free (iTunes), the smartphone itself is not.

Access to the mobile Internet is also usually not free and students need to subscribe to a monthly plan that incurs an additional cost to their monthly bill. Yet although Internet access is clearly an issue the high number of people in Japan (and around the world) with mobile Internet plans is increasing rapidly. Perhaps just as crucial is that universities have classrooms with free Wi-Fi access allowing students to access podcasts without paying additional connection / download fees.

Any podcast-based course must provide students with a clearly defined focus whilst using pedagogically sound themes and language that is drawn from real-life English situations. The relative ease in which a basic podcast can be written, recorded and produced through a smartphone is an additional plus when asking students to create their own materials.

A podcast-based course can provide a clear opportunity to combine the high numbers of smartphone ownership, mobile Internet plans and the popularity of language learning podcasts (iTunes Podcast Chart, 2013). Yet problems still exist and the full potential of a podcast-based course has yet to be reached. Further research and improvement is required to develop a podcast-based course that resolves the current issues that restrict the full potential of English language podcasts.

English News Weekly Podcast Links

For further information relating to ENW podcast episodes, see the following sites:

http://pod.flare.hiroshima-u.ac.jp/cms/enw.php

http://twitter.com/#!/enwpodcast

https://www.facebook.com/ENW1975

REFERENCES

Apple Inc., (2013).
> http://www.apple.com/euro/itunes/charts/podcasts/top10podcasts.html

BBC News Webiste, (2013).
> http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-23707341

Bull, A. (2005). Podcasting and the Long Tail. *Learning and Learning with Technology. November 2005, pp. 24-25.*

Buccela, Marty. (2013). Cartoon Stock Website
> http://www.cartoonstock.com/cartoonview.asp?catref=mbcn1083

Cambridge Free Online English Dictionary
> http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/podcast?q=podcast

Copley, J (2007). Audio and video podcasts of lectures for campus-based students: production and evaluation of student use Innovation. *Education and Teaching International, 44 (4) (2007), pp. 387-399*

Eash, E.K. (2006). Podcasting 101 for K1 Librarians, *Computes in Libraries,* 26 (4), 16

Hammersley, B. (2004). The Guardian Newspaper Webiste
http://www.theguardian.com/media/2004/feb/12/broadcasting.digitalmedia

Kakihara, M. & Sørensen, C. (2002) Mobility: An Extended Perspective. IEEE. *Published in The Proceedings of the Hawai'i International Conference on System Sciences.* January 7-10, 2002, Big Island, Hawaii, USA.

Laurillard, D. (2002). Rethinking University Teaching: A conversational framework for the effective use of learning technologies. London: Routledge Falmer

Lauer, J (2009). Podcast Power: Hiroshima University's New English Listening Materials
> *Hiroshima Studies in Langauge and Language Education, 12, 5-94*

Lauer, J (2011). English Podcasts: The State of the Art
> *Hiroshima Studies in Language and Language Education, 14, 61-70*

Lee, M. (2005). New Tools for online collaboration: Blogs, Wikis, RSS and podcasting.
> *Training and development in Australia, October, 17-20*

Lim, K. (2006). Now hear this – Exploring podcasting as a Tool in Geography Education
> Nanyang Technological University
> http://www.researchgate.net/publication/228495610_Now_hear_thisexploring_podcasting_as_a_tool_in_geography_education/file/79e41510251f3b8056.pdf.

Maag, M., (2006). iPod, uPod? An emerging mobile learning tool in nursing education and students' satisfaction. In: Proceedings of the 23rd Annual Ascilite Conference. Who's

Learning: Whose Technology?

Multilingual Books Website, 2013.

    http://multilingualbooks.com/linguaphone.html

Rosell-Aguilar, F. (2007). Top of the Pods-In Search of a Podcasting "Podagogy" for Language Learning, *Computer Assisted Language Learning, 20:5, 471-492,*

Selwood, J (2012). M-Learning at a Japanese University: Limitations and Opportunities. *Hiroshima Studies in Language and Language Education, 15, 175-185*

Selwood, J (2013). Podcast Potential: Podcasting a Japanese University *Hiroshima Studies in Language and Language Education, 16, 15-30*

TCA Japan Statistics Bureau Website (2011).

    www.sta.go.jp

TCA Japan Statistics Bureau Website (2013).

    http://www.tca.or.jp/english/database/2013/09/index.html

Mobi Thinking Statistics Webiste. (2013).

    http://mobithinking.com/

The United Nations Website, (2013).

    http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/wesp/wesp_current/2012country_class.pdf

The Myndset Website, (2012).

    http://themyndset.com/2012/01/how-many-podcasts-are-there-whats-the-future-of-the-podcast/

Wikipedia Website, (2013).

    http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M-learning

Wikipedia, (2013).

    http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hiroshima_University

要　約

英語学習用ポッドキャスト：
ポッドキャストを活用した大学での英語コースに関する研究

ジェイミ・セルウッド
広島大学外国語教育研究センター

　日本人大学生の間でスマートフォンの所有率が高まり広く普及している現状は，時間や場所を選ばずポッドキャストにアクセスし，そのコンテンツを利用することのできる学習者が増えていることを意味する。しかしながら，ポッドキャストを利用した授業実践では，扱うコンテンツやその取り組み方について，制限された用いられ方をすることが多く，英語教育での活用法について様々な可能性が十分に検討され実践されているとは言えない。このような状況を踏まえて，本稿では，携帯端末によるポッドキャストを利用した語学学習の可能性を考察しその概観について述べる。また，広島大学で実践されている学生による英語のポッドキャストの作成を取り入れた授業実践について紹介するとともに，履修した61名の学部生を対象に行った調査結果についても分析し考察する。