Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) and Language Teaching: an operational checklist[1]

The following checklist is divided into five sections to facilitate point-based use and not necessarily sequential consultation. *Section A* will only be useful in the initial analysis of a new podcast while *sections B and C* may help you to clarify your ideas each time you choose a new episode in a podcast. *Sections D and E*, finally, guide more specific teaching choices.

Summary

Section A - General Analysis of a Podcast
        Technical and functional analysis of the podcast
Section B – Podcast Specifications
        Communication in the podcast
Section C - Selecting and Analyzing a Podcast Episode
        Verbal input
        Non-verbal or mixed input
        The relationship between verbal and non-verbal input
Section D - Questions about the Teaching Action
        1. The thematic area
        Some possible general objectives
        2. Possible focuses of language teaching work
        Possible activities and objectives of language teaching
Section E - The Input Manipulation
        Types of input manipulation
In this checklist some questions have only one possible answer while others accept more answers. In some cases, it is also possible to add new answers.

CAPTION	
Question with <u>one possible answer</u>:	**Question with <u>several possible answers</u>:**
o answer o answer o answer	❑ answer ❑ answer ❑ answer
	Question with <u>last open answer</u>:
	❑ answer ❑ Answer ❑ Other: _____

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[1] The design of the tool was discussed in the group and implemented individually as follows. Marina Artese: *section A*; Teresa Quarta: *sections B* and *D1*; Paola Polselli: *sections C* and *D2*; Luisa Bavieri: *section E*.

Section A – General Analysis of a Podcast

Technical-functional analysis of the podcast

At a functional level, podcast technology can be a useful and practical source of up-to-date authentic audio materials, but at a technical level it can create some difficulties, especially related to the level of computer skills of the teacher. So, in the following we will give two possibilities of using podcasts:

- – *using the podcast as it is;*
- – *working on the input for specific teaching purposes.*

Using the podcast as it is published (basic computer skills)

Using the search engine, we type

a. "podcast";

b. keywords from the subject area we intend to cover (medicine, pharmacy, journalism, architecture, economics, etc.). The results found by the search engine then appear, from which we choose the site containing the relevant podcasts;

c. we go to the site and click on the link to the podcast; for a more detailed search on the subject, one can use the search button (🔍) usually found on websites and type in more specific keywords;

d. we assess the difficulty of the podcast according to the language level of the students and the intended teaching objectives (see section D), also with the help of the abstract (available on some sites);

e. if a transcript is needed, there are some sites that provide it along with the podcast and this can be a criterion for choosing a podcast.

Working on the input (average computer skills)

Starting from the chosen podcast, we can work on it in order to modify and adapt the input or to extend the possibilities of educational use of the podcast.

a. We can download the podcast through the same site, if it allows it (right click, click on "save") or, if the site does not allow it, we will have to open a (free) application for reading podcasts (Applepodcast, Spotify, Google podcast etc.).

b. Once we have downloaded the podcast, we can use Audacity to edit the audio file (podcast). This application is very intuitive and allows users to insert pauses, insert background noise, vary the speaking speed and even insert "beeps", cutting off parts of the audio (see section E).

Section B – Podcast Specifications

Podcasts can be classified from various perspectives, including the technical one. For the purposes of language teaching and learning work, these are the classifications that allow us to grasp the variations of the input in the linguistic dimension and in the communicative mode.

Communication in the podcast

With respect to the purposes of the podcast, we can ask ourselves:

- who are <u>the intended recipients</u>?

- It is aimed at higher education recipients
- It is aimed at professionals in the field
- It is aimed at non-specialists interested in the field
- It tries to involve and address the general public
- Other: _____

- what is <u>the main communicative purpose</u> of the podcast?

- Descriptive purpose
- Informative purpose
- Dissemination purpose
- Argumentative purpose
- Regulative purpose

With respect to the <u>topic</u>, some quite common types include

- ❑ autobiographical podcasts in the personal, educational, or professional domains
- ❑ thematic or discipline podcasts in the educational domain
- ❑ thematic or discipline podcasts in the professional domain
- ❑ non-fiction storytelling podcasts
- ❑ fiction storytelling podcasts
- ❑ other topics: _____

With respect to <u>format</u>, they can include

- ❑ solo podcasts
- ❑ interview podcasts
- ❑ conversational and co-hosted podcasts
- ❑ the panel show podcast
- ❑ repurposed content (lectures, TV programs, etc.)
- ❑ other formats: _____

Section C – Selecting and Analyzing a Podcast Episode

The contents of an episode can be usefully exploited in different ways depending on various factors such as the learners' level of language proficiency, mastery of subject matter etc. The following list can be useful to define some of the variables that influence the "quality" of the input. These features should be considered for careful educational planning.

Analyzing the input

In the selected episode, the prevailing feature in <u>oral verbal input</u> is

- ○ spontaneous speech
- ○ sustained speech
- ○ orally delivered written speech
- ○ performed speech

<u>Verbal input</u> includes

- ❑ oral language
- ❑ written language
- ❑ audiovisual language
- ❑ sign language
- ❑ multilingual language

The <u>speech</u> <u>varieties</u> are

- ❑ spontaneous monologues
- ❑ sustained monologues
- ❑ spontaneous interactions with two interlocutors (e.g. telephone calls)
- ❑ sustained interactions with two interlocutors (e.g. planned interviews)
- ❑ spontaneous interactions with several interlocutors (e.g. impromptu debates)
- ❑ sustained interactions with multiple interlocutors (e.g. round tables)
- ❑ communications with a symmetrical relationship between interlocutors
- ❑ communications with an asymmetrical relationship between interlocutors

If <u>non-verbal or mixed input</u> is present, it is of the following types

- ❑ visuals (e.g. drawings, photographs, pictures)
- ❑ visuals with verbal elements (e.g. diagram/chart, tables, flow charts)
- ❑ video with/without sounds
- ❑ video with/without speech

If an <u>audiovisual input</u> is present, the usable elements are related to

- ❑ facial expression, eye gaze etc.
- ❑ other paralinguistic elements (gesture, kinesthetics, proxemics etc.)
- ❑ dress code information
- ❑ object code information
- ❑ other contextual information: _____

At the communicative level, <u>verbal and non-verbal input are in a relationship</u> of

- ❑ redundancy
- ❑ complementarity
- ❑ integration.

<h3 style="text-align:center; color:red;">Section D – Questions about the Teaching Action</h3>

Once an episode in a podcast resource has been selected and analyzed, we should ask ourselves about the focus of the teaching action in terms of general competence (savoir, savoir faire, savoir être, savoir apprendre), in terms of general linguistic-communicative competence (linguistic competence, sociolinguistics, pragmatics), in terms of communicative language activities (reception, production, interaction, mediation) and specific indications for work on the resource (cf. CEFR 2001 and CEFR-VC 2020).

1. <u>The topic</u> of the chosen episode can be useful to

- ❑ introduce new content
- ❑ check the knowledge of content
- ❑ deepen/expand known content
- ❑ exercise and/or revise content
- ❑ update areas of professional interest
- ❑ other uses: _____

Some possible <u>general objectives</u> include

- ❑ promoting opportunities for exposure to specialized language
- ❑ inspiring the pleasure of listening and specialized language noticing
- ❑ realizing forms of collaborative and participative learning (e.g. project-work)
- ❑ strengthening identification with the learning community
- ❑ promoting the sharing of materials by students
- ❑ increasing the motivation to learn and the involvement of students
- ❑ other possible objectives: _____

2. Possible <u>focuses of language teaching work</u>

- ❑ phonetic features of specialized language
- ❑ lexical features of specialized language
- ❑ general vocabulary, specialized vocabulary, levels of expression, and registers
- ❑ morphological characteristics of specialized language
- ❑ syntactic features of specialized language
- ❑ textual features of specialized language
- ❑ language borrowings and specialized language
- ❑ specialized language and aspects of textual reception
- ❑ specialized language and aspects of textual production
- ❑ specialized language and aspects of pragmatic competence
- ❑ oral mediation between two different varieties/modes of the same language and specialized language (intralanguage mediation)
- ❑ written mediation between two different varieties/modes of the same language and specialized language (intralanguage mediation)
- ❑ oral interlanguage mediation and specialized language
- ❑ written interlanguage mediation and specialized language
- ❑ specialized language and conceptual mediation
- ❑ other focuses: _____

Possible <u>activities and learning objectives of language teaching</u>

- ❑ learners use input to understand its content
- ❑ students use input to improve their proficiency in the language system usage (e.g. nominalization phenomena in specialized discourse)
- ❑ students use input to analyze its pragmatic dimension (e.g. discourse organization)
- ❑ students use input to practice the textual dimension
- ❑ students use input to revise content
- ❑ students rework content to transform its register or mode
- ❑ students process input to produce new content
- ❑ students use input to evaluate its communicative effectiveness
- ❑ students use input to create a network of shared peer work
- ❑ students comment on activities to evaluate them
- ❑ students review the input in order to evaluate its educational effectiveness
- ❑ students judge the activity to develop study skills
- ❑ using input teaches students how to learn with the resource type
- ❑ other uses: _____

Section E – Manipulating the Input

Once the podcast episode has been identified and analyzed, and the general coordinates of the learning work defined, it is time to consider whether and how it is useful to enhance, manipulate and process the input.

Types of input manipulation

Enhancement - Preparatory activities to activate prior knowledge and skills:

- ❑ learners develop hypotheses from visual clues in the podcast
- ❑ learners check sources and get information about the author of the podcast
- ❑ learners exchange information about the theme of the podcast.
- ❑ if the podcast also has a video, learners watch the video without sound and make predictions about the contents
- ❑ other activities: _____

Manipulation - editing the audio file with programs such as Audacity to adapt it to educational needs:

- ❑ reducing length
- ❑ slowing down speed
- ❑ insertion of pauses
- ❑ insertion of gaps/blanks or noise
- ❑ if transcription is not available, use audio transcription programs such as sonix.ai, vocalmatic.com, or Transcribe.com
- ❑ other kinds of editing: _____

Audio processing

- ❑ true/false comprehension questions
- ❑ multiple choice comprehension questions
- ❑ open comprehension questions
- ❑ activities on accent and pronunciation
- ❑ completion of audio gaps
- ❑ completion of interrupted parts of audio text
- ❑ dictation
- ❑ other kinds of audio processing:

  _____

Processing with transcription

- ❑ transcription by students
- ❑ insertion of key words in the given transcript
- ❑ insertion of punctuation
- ❑ analysis of the characteristics of the spoken or written text
- ❑ other kinds of processing with transcription:

  _____

Other useful aspects to note: