

Learn Chinese on the Go: Integrate podcasts into college-level Chinese classes

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Paper Abstract :

Listening practice is essential to learning a foreign language. However, research shows college students do not have sufficient listening practices in and out of classes, thus their listening proficiency often lags behind other skills such as reading. Besides the shortcomings with listening materials (too difficult or irrelevant to course content), surveys reveal another problem: students do not have the habit of listening to audio materials in the target language.

To address the above issue, teachers must think outside of the box – looking for ways beyond the traditional textbook-type listening assignments. We believe podcasts can become an innovative learning tool to realize the following purposes. (1) Listening practices can be easily incorporated into students' increasingly mobile and always-connected lifestyles. (2) Authentic and current listening materials will help engage students and make them realize the importance of spending time on listening. (3) Student-centered and student-led episodes will not only create opportunities for learning but also alter students' roles from passive consumers of information to active producers of the language.

This presentation will report a classroom study investigating the effects of podcasts on students' listening habits, their perceptions of listening to Chinese audio materials, and their experiences of participation in marking podcasts. The findings will be of value to Chinese language instructors who intend to use technologies to help students improve their listening skills and Chinese proficiency in general.

Presenter's Bio :

Zhongqi Shi is a Senior Lecturer and Associate Director of the Chinese program at Columbia University. He directed Columbia's Business Chinese and Internship Program from 2008-2016. He authored several textbooks that are widely used in the USA and China. His research interests include motivation in second language learning, instructional technology, and teaching Chinese for special purposes. Wenqian Yu is an adjunct instructor teaching Chinese at NYU. She is working on her MA degree in Applied linguistics at Teachers College, Columbia University.