

PODCAST AS TEACHING AND LEARNING TOOL: AN EXPERIENCE IN LINGUISTICS

PODCAST COMO HERRAMIENTA DE ENSEÑANZA Y APRENDIZAJE: UNA EXPERIENCIA EN LINGÜÍSTICA

PODCAST COMO FERRAMENTA DE ENSINO E APRENDIZAGEM: UMA EXPERIÊNCIA EM LINGÜÍSTICA

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Abstract

This work deals with the use of podcasts as an educational activity in the field of linguistics. It was an activity carried out with a class of the first level of the undergraduate degree in Letras - English Language, at the Federal University of Pará, Bragança campus, in the curricular component Fundamentals of Linguistics. With the help of volunteer monitors, scientific initiation researchers in the Project Materiais Autênticos e Cultura Pop, under the coordination of the professor of the class and coordinator of the project, a podcast channel entitled *Açaí com Farinha e Linguística*, in which students produced short episodes on different topics in linguistics. The base texts for the episodes were taken from the book *O que sabemos sobre a Linguagem: 51 perguntas e respostas sobre a linguagem humana*, organized by Valdir do Nascimento Flores and Gabriel de Ávila Othero (2022). The objective of this experience report is to showcase the development of the activity and discuss the potential of using podcasts as a teaching and learning tool. Therefore, this text is divided into an introduction; history, concepts and characteristics of podcasts; organization for production and broadcasting of podcasts; *Açaí com farinha e linguística*: an experience, a possibility; final considerations; and references. With the experience report presented, it is possible to point out that the use of podcasts as a tool in the classroom was positive, promoting interaction among students, commitment to the proposed activity and the final result as a means of sharing knowledge.

Keywords: Podcast; Teaching; Learning; Linguistics.

Resumen

Este trabajo aborda el uso de los podcasts como actividad educativa en el área de la lingüística. Fue una actividad realizada con un grupo de estudiantes de primer nivel de la licenciatura en Letras - Lengua Inglesa en la Universidad Federal de Pará, campus Bragança, en el componente

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curricular Fundamentos de la Lingüística. Con la ayuda de monitores voluntarios, investigadores de iniciación científica en el Proyecto Materiais Autênticos e Cultura Pop, bajo la coordinación del profesor docente de la disciplina y coordinador del proyecto, se desarrolló un canal de podcasts titulado "Açaí com Farinha e Linguística", en el cual los estudiantes produjeron episodios cortos sobre diversos temas de lingüística. Los textos base para los episodios se extrajeron del libro "O que sabemos sobre a Linguagem: 51 perguntas e respostas sobre a linguagem humana", de Valdir do Nascimento Flores y Gabriel de Ávila Othero (2022). El objetivo de este informe de experiencia es presentar el desarrollo de la actividad y discutir las potencialidades del uso de podcasts como herramienta de enseñanza y aprendizaje. Para ello, este texto se divide en introducción; historia, conceptos y características de los podcasts; organización para la producción y difusión de podcasts; "Açaí com farinha e linguística": una experiencia, una posibilidad; conclusiones; y referencias. Con el informe de experiencia presentado, es posible destacar que el uso de podcasts como herramienta en el aula fue positivo, promoviendo la interacción entre los estudiantes, el compromiso con la actividad propuesta y el resultado final como medio de socialización del conocimiento.

Palabras clave: Podcast; Enseñanza; Aprendizaje; Lingüística.

Resumo

Este trabalho trata da utilização de podcasts como atividade educacional na área de linguística. Foi uma atividade realizada com uma turma de primeiro nível de licenciatura em Letras – Língua Inglesa, na Universidade Federal do Pará, campus Bragança, no componente curricular Fundamentos da Linguística. Com o auxílio de monitores voluntários, pesquisadores de iniciação científica no Projeto Materiais Autênticos e Cultura Pop, sob a coordenação do professor regente da disciplina e coordenador do projeto, foi desenvolvido um canal de podcasts intitulado *Açaí com Farinha e Linguística*, no qual os estudantes produziram episódios curtos sobre temas diversos da linguística. Os textos-base para os episódios foram retirados do livro *O que sabemos sobre a Linguagem: 51 perguntas e respostas sobre a linguagem humana*, de Valdir do Nascimento Flores e Gabriel de Ávila Othero (2022). O objetivo deste relato de experiência é apresentar o desenvolvimento da atividade e discutir as potencialidades do uso de podcasts como ferramenta de ensino e aprendizagem. Para tanto, este texto está dividido em introdução; histórico, conceitos e características de podcasts; organização para produção e veiculação de podcasts; *Açaí com farinha e linguística*: uma experiência, uma possibilidade; considerações finais; e referências. Com o relato de experiência apresentado, é possível salientar que o uso de podcasts como ferramenta em sala de aula foi positivo, promovendo a interação entre os discentes, o empenho na atividade proposta e o resultado final como meio de socialização do conhecimento.

Palavras-chave: Podcast; Ensino; Aprendizagem; Linguística.

Introduction

It is undeniable that, with the advancement of technology and the popularization of the internet, new forms of communication, entertainment, and educational methodologies have been implemented in our society. In terms of communication, we have moved on from phone cards and telephone tokens for telephone boots - the famous payphones - to simple voice messages, text messages,

or instant video calls through applications connected to the internet, which allows quick and immediate exchange between two people.

In entertainment, it was necessary to rent VHS tapes in a video rental shop for a short period to have access to movies. Nowadays, streaming platforms make available, online and indefinitely, a vast catalog of movies, series, concerts, and documentaries capable of keeping us entertained in our idle moments. In the educational sector, books, pencils, and blackboards are no longer the only resources used in student learning; now, as educators, we have appropriated several pedagogical-technological resources, having the podcast among them.

A podcast is a digital media format consisting of audio or video episodes available for download or streaming on the internet. Podcasts are usually produced in series, with each episode covering a specific topic, to which listeners can subscribe to receive new episodes as they are released automatically. In summary, a podcast is a digital audio file that contains programs with conversations, music, or both (FREIRE, 2017).

The podcast can be an educational tool that has the potential to be used in different ways in the classroom, depending on the purpose chosen by the teacher (and the student in their own studies). This resource can help the teacher in his classes or an activity for the students, allowing them to obtain more information about specific content or promote group discussions and debates.

In addition, the podcast construction process can be an engaging and exciting way to encourage students to actively participate in the learning process since building a podcast with students allows exploring a set of practices that exercise different skills. For Coradini, Borges, and Dutra (2020), this activity can improve student teamwork, enabling the prior conception of the subject chosen to be portrayed in the podcast. In addition, it allows the acquisition of new skills such as: “data collection, conducting interviews, making syntheses, training reading, preparing and recording works”⁴ (PAULA, 2013 apud CORADINI; BORGES; DUTRA, 2020).

⁴ “coleta de dados, realização de entrevistas, fazer sínteses, treinar a leitura, preparar e gravar trabalhos” (original text).

Thus, this article aims to describe, in an informative way (contextualizing the study by providing information on the aspects addressed, offering the reader the opportunity to know the path and details of the content presented) (MUSSI; FLORES; ALMEIDA, 2021), the experience report (ER), with a qualitative approach on the construction of a podcast channel with students of the undergraduate course in English Language, at the Federal University of Pará, Campus Bragança, who, during November 2022, attended the curricular component Fundamentals of Linguistics (in an intensive format, with daily classes). This action was mediated with the tutoring of the professor responsible for the discipline and by three volunteer monitors who helped in the creation of each stage of the podcast. In short, the purpose of the activity was to streamline and share with the public the discussions generated from the chapters in the book *O que sabemos sobre a linguagem: 51 perguntas e respostas sobre a linguagem humana* by Valdir Nascimento Flores and Gabriel De Ávila Othero (2022).

The choice of ER as the methodological approach in this work is because it allows researchers to describe and analyze their experiences in detail, allowing the reader to understand the events, contexts, and meanings involved in the report. By ER, Daltro and Faria (2019) understand the narrative work of knowledge resulting from a process. Complementarily, Lüdke and Cruz (2010) emphasize the strong experiential character experienced by the authors of RE, reiterating that a research report is, in essence, a report of a lived experience but that not every lived experience is necessary, a result of a research process. Mussi, Flores and Almeida (2021, p. 62) point out that “such experiences can be, for example, derived from research, teaching, university extension projects, among others”⁵.

In this sense, the article will present the results of this experience, guiding the necessary aspects for the construction of the podcast and its episodes and how the creation process occurred in practice. Therefore, this text is divided into an introduction; history, concepts, and characteristics of podcasts; organization for producing and broadcasting podcasts; *Açaí com farinha e linguística: an experience, a possibility*; final considerations; and references.

⁵ “tais experiências podem ser, por exemplo, oriundas de pesquisas, ensino, projetos de extensão universitária, dentre outras” (original text).

History, concepts, and characteristics of podcasts

A podcast is a tool and consists of a file in audio format available on the internet for download or synchronously or asynchronously streaming. Freire (2013a, p. 68) points out that "a podcast consists of a mode of production/free dissemination of programs distributed on demand and focused on the reproduction of orality and/or music/sounds"⁶. Whether or not divided into episodes, a podcast can be listened to on computers or mobile devices, such as cell phones and tablets, from specific applications, such as streaming platforms. The term "podcast" is a combination of the words "iPod", Apple's famous MP3 player, and "broadcast", which means transmission (BERTO; GREGGIO, 2021; MEDEIROS, 2006).

When we consider the definition given by Freire (2013a), we can claim the existence of the most varied types of podcasts, with different formats, styles, and themes. Based on these particularities, they can vary in their structure. However, podcasts follow a basic script with an introduction, segments, and conclusion. Saucedo (2016) *apud* Bontempo (2019), in turn, highlights a simple standard structure for podcasts, briefly described below:

Intro: stage in which the podcast/episode is presented. The speaker needs to set the importance and tone of the content. Some introductions include a musical opening or sound effects.

Act I: in this stage, the announcer begins to deepen the subject spoken in the episode, defining its first concepts and opinions.

Act II: deepening the topic and surveying the main points to be discussed based on concrete opinions.

Act III: moment to conclude the discussion and make clear the opinion on the subject. There is the possibility of resuming any position opened in previous acts.

Other: it concludes the podcast/episode which usually ends with a summary of the main points discussed.

⁶ "o *podcast* consiste em um modo de produção/disseminação livre de programas distribuídos sob demanda e focados na reprodução de oralidade e/ou de músicas/sons" (original text).

However, the popularization of the format over the years has promoted variations in this structure. Depending on the creator of the content, theme, target audience, and consumption dynamics, the structural organization of podcasts is systematically modified, in a kind of subversion of the format of the genre, aiming at reaching different audiences and accommodating the possible variations of the format.

Although it became popular in the early 2000s, the podcast has its roots in the 80s (POLITI; ROSA, 2019). According to the authors, in this decade, there had already been, in the United States, a restricted service that provided music and conversation software for radio stations, the RCS (Radio Computing Services). Using this technology, in 1993, the North American Carl Malamud created a talk show that innovated by being distributed in computer files, emphasizing that the great advantage of the format was the possibility of listening and pausing the audio at any time, which was considered a breakthrough when compared to radio. Politi and Rosa (2019, n.p) define this as “the closest offline experience to what we know today as a podcast”⁷.

With the advancement of technology, in 1993, the MP3 was launched: an audio coding and compression technology. Along with the MP3, there was the technological advance in audio capture and output tools, and the increase in people with internet access, revolutionizing the music industry (POLITI; ROSA, 2019).

In turn, Freire (2013a) relates the origin of podcasts to blogs, from the creation of the RSS (Really Simple Syndication) system in 1999 - a real-time content distribution resource initially designed for blogs. Politi and Rosa (2019) corroborate the previous author by mentioning the high popularity of blogs in the said year, which led to the need to meet user demand for audio content, which Freire (2013a) calls audioblogs. “This technology was originally about making audio recordings available in MP3 format related to the contents of blog posts”⁸ (FREIRE, 2013a, p. 62). However, according to the author, the download of the production was necessary for the user to be able to hear the audio, which they considered a limitation of the RSS system.

⁷ “a experiência offline mais próxima do que hoje conhecemos como *podcast*” (original text).

⁸ “Essa tecnologia se tratava originalmente da disponibilização em formato MP3 de gravações em áudio relativas aos conteúdos das postagens nos blogs” (original text).

In the 2000s, Adam Curry, a former MTV VJ, realizing the high potential of on-demand audio distribution online, teamed up with programmer Dave Winner to create a function for embedding digital audio files in MP3 into RSS (FREIRE, 2013a; POLITI; ROSA, 2019). Already producing his own 30 minute show, Adam used the conventional format of radio programs, with openings, news, music, and vignettes, making them available as a file on the internet, with free access for any user (MEDEIROS, 2005).

In 2001, with the launch of the Ipod, Adam Curry realized the need for a software that could search for MP3 audio programs on the internet and download them to the computer or directly to the Ipod, adding on-demand subscription tools to this. Adam Curry named this software iPodder, and aiming at improving the tool, made the program available in open source so that other programmers could work on its improvement (MEDEIROS, 2005; FREIRE, 2013a).

In 2004, Adam Curry started producing his podcast (although the term was not used yet), the *Daily Source Code*, aimed at podcast software and its developers. “This action raised collaborations for the project, which started to be improved through the joint activity with several interested parties in the new technology”⁹ (FREIRE, 2013a, p. 63). That same year, the English journalist Ben Hammersley suggested, for the first time, the term “podcast” in an article for the British newspaper *The Guardian*. The suggestion pleased Adam Curry, Dave Winner, and other leaders at the time (POLITI; ROSA, 2019).

In the following years, the podcast quickly became popular with the emergence of new programs in diverse areas, such as news, business, comedy, health, sports, technology, science, religion, spirituality, entertainment, and education. Thus it has become a popular form of entertainment and information for millions of listeners, reaching the incredible mark of 3,070,481 podcasts and 160,544,342 episodes published today¹⁰. Among the platforms for streaming podcasts, *Spotify*, *Deezer*, *Google Podcasts*, *Apple Podcasts*, *Amazon Music*, and *YouTube* stand out.

⁹ “Essa ação acabou por angariar colaborações para o projeto, que passou a ser aprimorado mediante a atividade em conjunto com diversos interessados na nova tecnologia” (original text).

¹⁰ Data taken from the Listen Notes website on 03/27/23. Available at: <https://www.listennotes.com/>.

In the educational context, due to its growing prominence and popularity, the podcast started to be used as an auxiliary teaching and learning methodology for students of the most varied levels of education, including higher education, enhancing the practical character of the pedagogical actions of teachers (CREPALDI; FERREIRA, 2022), since “it is a mobile technology, easy to use and found in practically every student's pocket”¹¹ (COELHO, 2019, p. 79).

Given this scenario, Freire (2013b) starts from the need to outline a strategy for classifying podcasts in education. Using the mode of production as a classification criterion, the author arrives at the following categories: Technological Expansion, Registration, and Original Production, which interest this article. The Technological Expansion podcast “is the one whose digital audio format is used for the online distribution of contents previously produced for other technologies”¹² (p. 8), as is the example of the availability, in MP3 audio, of radio station shows, audiobooks, audio extracted from cassette tapes, among others. Registration podcast, in its turn, “consists of capturing the audio of a certain event, such as a class or lecture”¹³ (p. 8). Finally, the author classifies as Original Production podcast the multimedia file already produced, from the beginning, as a podcast. The audio program is marked by technical care, editing, and the concern to maintain a fluid rhythm between episodes and plot.

Crepaldi and Ferreira (2022), when outlining an overview of the use of podcasts in higher education, conclude that this tool has been used as a complementary resource to education in a passive teaching model, that is, in which the student does not assume the leading role or does not act as an active agent in their learning process. As a solution, the authors suggest that the insertion of the podcast in the teaching and learning of students be done in a creative, collaborative, and autonomous way, with the active participation of students and teachers, which corroborates Coelho (2019), who states that, when produced in the form of co-creation with students, the podcast brings benefits to professors, students and other members of the university community.

¹¹ “é uma tecnologia móbil, de fácil manuseio e que se encontra no bolso de praticamente todos os estudantes” (original text).

¹² “é aquele cujo formato digital de áudio é utilizado para a distribuição *on-line* de conteúdos já previamente produzidos para outras tecnologias” (original text).

¹³ “consiste na captura do áudio de um determinado evento, como uma aula ou palestra” (original text).

Given the above, and considering the studies by Crepaldi and Ferreira (2022), Coelho (2019), and Freire (2013b), we aim with this article to report the experience of creating an Original Production podcast with co-creation by students, in a class of the first level of English Language degree, in the curricular component Fundamentals of Linguistics. For this, it is necessary to dedicate a section to dealing with the technical aspects of producing a podcast to better understand the procedures applied in this experience.

Organization for the production and dissemination of podcasts

In this section, the necessary aspects for the construction of a podcast will be addressed, focusing on its technical aspects. This encompasses the presentation of the Anchor platform, which was chosen for the podcast's construction during the proposed activity. Furthermore, it also elaborates on what is encompassed in the recording process of each episode, ranging from the selection of sound resources to compose the segment, to the necessary considerations that must precede the production for decisions related to the image that the podcast will convey to the listener.

Before producing the segments of a podcast, irrespective of its theme, it is crucial to contemplate certain pivotal stages in order to create a well-structured production. This holds particular significance when the podcast's creation is a task directed towards students. In this context, it is imperative to ensure that the instructions are lucid so that the final product does not deviate from the initial purpose envisioned by the teacher.

Regarding these thoughts, Freire (2015) as cited by Coradini, Borges, and Dutra (2020) expounds upon the importance of reflecting upon the production stages and how this reflection contributes to the development of the student's critical thinking.

Furthermore, the development of critical thinking in podcast production is highlighted, as this process entails more than just recording and editing audio. Primarily, it involves defining a theme and formulating an agenda, a phase during which one must gather information through various means and engage analytically with the subject under discussion. This entails assessing both the validity and relevance of the collected data. Subsequently, there is a deliberation regarding what will be selected for recording, what the purpose of the podcast episode will be, and the most

effective way to convey the information. Additionally, it is possible to reevaluate the recorded material during the editing process to enhance dynamism, organization, and swiftness in the dialogues. (FREIRE, 2015 apud CORADINI; BORGES; DUTRA, 2020)¹⁴

From this reflection, it is understood that the process of podcast production is structured into stages that, when followed, enable the creation of content in alignment with the initial objective envisioned for it. Furthermore, this process fosters the critical development of the student, evolving with the execution of each production stage.

Thus, it is paramount for producers to contemplate what will constitute their podcast and the process of structuring it. This begins with the visual aspects, which encompass design and visual elements that will be part of the podcast's aesthetics—be it in the initial cover or artwork of subsequent segments. It extends to the description and sound selection used to compose the segments. In order to generate a final product, it is crucial for visual, auditory, and content elements to be interconnected. This ensures the listener encounters thematic fragments implicitly woven throughout the entire podcast.

When it comes to what precedes the actual podcast recording, it is essential to primarily consider an environment with minimal noise and no echo to ensure the recording sounds as professional as possible, even with limited resources - recognizing that not everyone embarking on podcast creation will have access to professional equipment like stereo microphones or sound booths, it is advisable to utilize smartphone recordings along with wired earphones. This approach allows for potential audio noise control by positioning the earphones optimally.

It is worth emphasizing the effort invested in the podcast is not tied to seeking success in the market for the final product. Instead, it is connected to the achievement of crafting material closer to what is found on streaming platforms. By dedicating attention to the podcast's details, students become motivated to take a greater interest in educational practices intertwined with podcast production (FREIRE, 2013a).

¹⁴ Destaca-se, ainda, o desenvolvimento do pensamento crítico na produção de podcasts, pois esse processo envolve não apenas gravar e editar o áudio, mas sim, primeiramente, definir um tema e formular uma pauta, fase em que se deve coletar por vários meios e apropriar-se de informações sobre o assunto em discussão com uma perspectiva analítica, observando-se tanto a validade quanto a relevância dos dados coletados. Segue-se reflexão sobre o que será selecionado para a gravação, qual será o propósito do episódio de podcast, e qual a maneira mais efetiva de expressar as informações. E, ainda, é possível fazer uma releitura do material gravado no processo de edição para oferecer mais dinâmica, organização e celeridade às falas (original text).

ANCHOR: A Spotify Platform

For the execution of the central activity in this work, the chosen platform to bring the project to life was the Anchor platform¹⁵, owing to its practicality in structuring a podcast. Opting for this platform was primarily motivated by its streamlined approach to managing each required function, given that the timeline for podcast construction activities was constrained within a short timeframe.

Anchor emerged as the ideal platform for constructing the podcast and its team segments, as it provides a space where both simple and complex tasks can be accomplished, even for individuals with limited knowledge in the podcasting field. Unlike other platforms in the market, Anchor offers simplified options for the podcast's technical construction. It enables recording, editing, hosting, and automatic distribution of podcast episodes across major audio platforms, including *Spotify*, *Google Podcasts*, *Apple Podcasts*, and others. Additionally, it provides resources for swiftly building the podcast's visual identity and its segments.

Regarding the *Spotify* platform, it was selected due to currently having the widest listener reach in the world (UBC, 2021). In this context, since the purpose of the activity was to facilitate engagement and sharing with a broader audience, not solely within the academic community, *Spotify* emerged as an ideal host for the produced material.

- Resources offered by the Anchor platform

In this subsection, the resources offered by the Anchor platform will be presented, based on the order of features outlined on the website, starting from the podcast segment creation homepage.

On the homepage, the platform provides an overview of available features: Recording Environment, Library, Music, Messages, and Transitions. Each of these

¹⁵ Platform for creating podcasts linked to the Spotify streaming service: <https://anchor.fm/spotify>

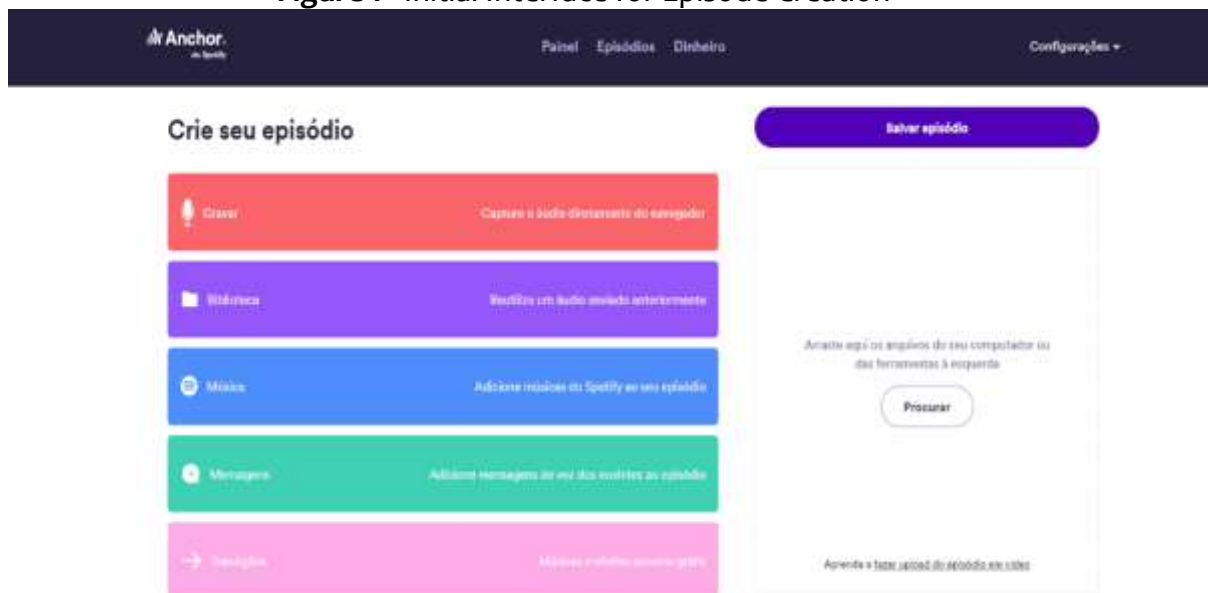
options offers more detailed information about the functionalities within each topic, which will be presented throughout this section.

In Figure 1, the initial options for constructing episodes offered on the platform can be observed. The *Record* option allows users to record audio within the platform to compose their episode. Within this option, users can record multiple segments for a single episode and then host these audio files for organization later.

Upon selecting the *Record* tool, users can choose between recording an individual voice or engaging in a group conversation. For individual recording, users can initiate this process by clicking the *Record* button. At this point, the platform leverages the available resources of the user's access location to perform the recording. This can occur through a mobile phone with a functional microphone or a computer equipped with the necessary audio recording equipment.

The podcast producer can invite others to participate in the recording via email or by sharing a link for the conversation in the other option. When all participants are ready, clicking *Record* initiates the conversation recording, which can be paused and resumed as needed.

Figure 1 - Initial Interface for Episode Creation



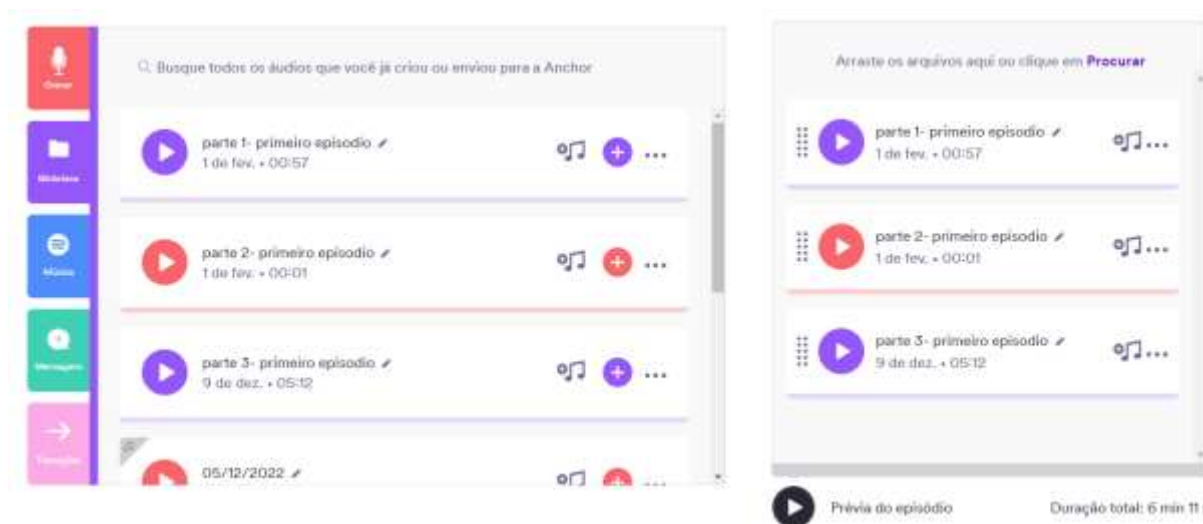
Source: Screenshot from <https://anchor.fm/spotify>. Accessed on: January 5, 2023

The second available option is the Library, a space that hosts segments recorded within the platform as well as audio files uploaded by users. Within this space, users can access any audio files previously linked to Anchor. Using this function, the user can select which audio to work with in the current episode by clicking on the "+" icon located next to the segment.

After selecting the segment, the user can view and edit the audio files in the box on the right-hand side. Within this area, available options include editing each audio, with features like cutting and splitting. Users can access these options by clicking on the *etcetera* notation next to the musical note icon.

Clicking on the musical note icon allows users to choose a soundtrack to serve as background music for the episode. In this section, various sounds are provided, categorized into options such as cheerful, calm, curious, dramatic, electronic, folkloric, melancholic, among others. Users can select sounds according to the tone of their podcast and the specific episode they are working on.

Figure 2 - Library and Editing Area.



Source: Screenshot from <https://anchor.fm/spotify>. Accessed on: January 5, 2023.

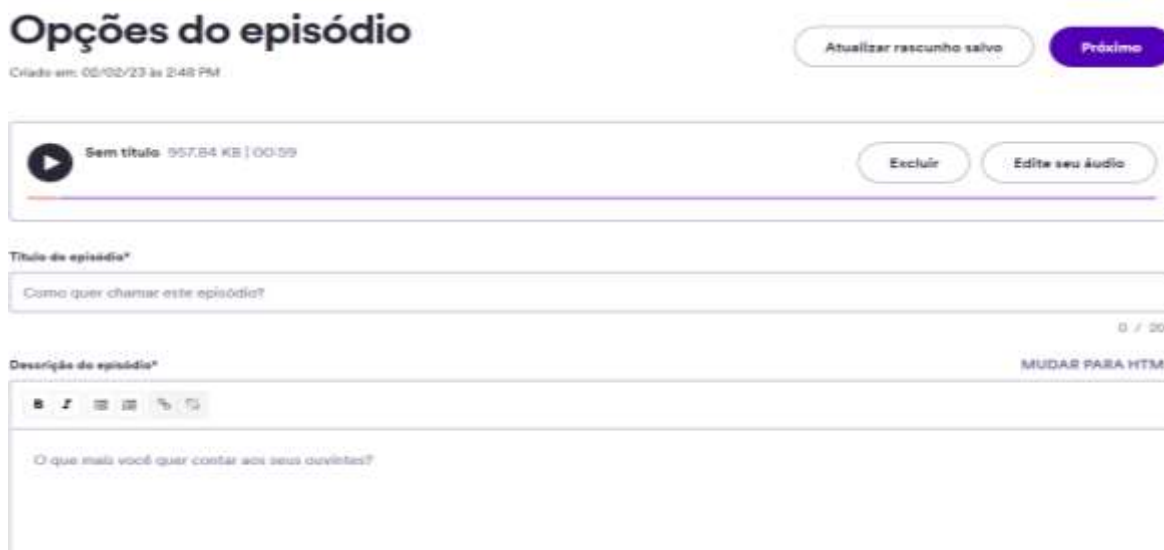
Another available option is the transition between segments within an episode. In this area, a variety of sounds are provided, encompassing the same categories mentioned earlier. These sounds can be used to mark the transition from the end of one topic to the beginning of a new one within the same episode.

Another noteworthy aspect offered by the platform is the ability to receive messages from listeners. If deemed relevant by the podcast producer, an option can be activated that enables listeners to record and send audio messages to the podcast. These messages are stored in the *Messages* tab and can be incorporated into an episode if desired. This feature allows listeners to interact and have a role in the podcast segments.

Descriptive and Visual Elements

Upon completing the episode construction phase, the Anchor platform guides the user to create the descriptive elements for the previously crafted episode. In this section of the platform, the user initially needs to add a title for the episode. It is important that this title is named according to the theme of the specific episode, and the other descriptions should also be closely aligned with the content that the episode will cover.

Figure 3 - Episode Description.

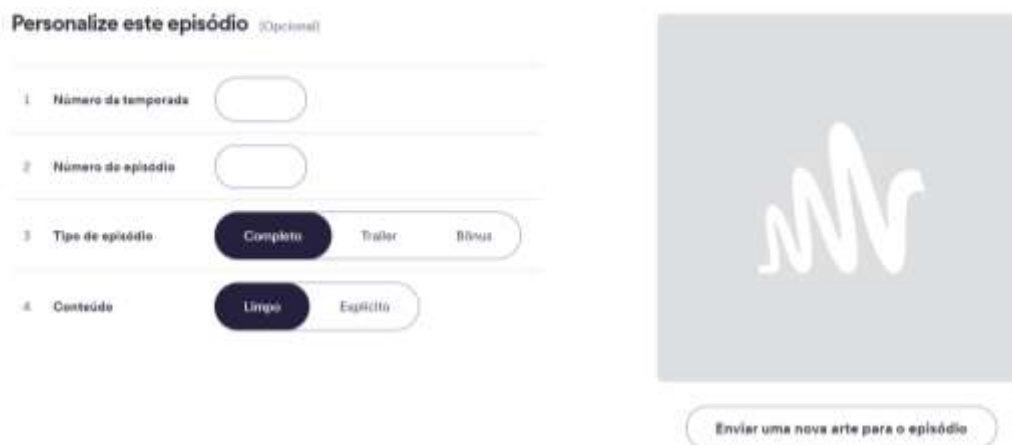


Source: Screenshot from <https://anchor.fm/spotify>. Accessed on: January 5, 2023.

After providing the descriptions, the next step involves customizing the specific episode. This phase is responsible for visually organizing all podcast episodes. Thus, it is necessary to define certain aspects, as depicted in Figure 4. This process

starts with selecting the season to which the episode belongs. For initial podcasts, it is crucial to specify that it is the first season. Following this, the episode number is determined, and the user needs to specify whether it is a full episode, a trailer, or a bonus episode.

Figure 4 - Episode Customization.



Source: Screenshot from <https://anchor.fm/spotify>. Accessed on: January 5, 2023.

For those starting a podcast, it is recommended to initially launch a trailer. The trailer serves the purpose of informing potential listeners about what the podcast will cover throughout the season. It is a good idea to include information about the podcast's producers and the reasons behind its creation. This allows the listener to understand what they will be consuming.

Following the sequence suggested by the platform, the next step is to determine the cover art that will represent the episode. While the platform does not provide space for creating individual episode covers, it does offer the option to upload a premade cover. This cover can be designed using graphic design platforms like *Canva*, *Adobe Spark*, *Photoshop*, or other software, according to what the episode and the producer aim to convey to the audience.

To conclude the podcast creation process, the platform guides the user through podcast settings. Here, one can define the podcast's name, language, description, and the niche the production will belong to. Even though this is the final step according to the platform's sequence, it is important for the producer to be aware of these details before beginning the technical construction, as these aspects determine the type of product that will be created.

In summary, the platform's resources are user-friendly and each step's purpose is clearly described, making it easier for new users to navigate. This brings us to the end of a kind of tutorial that could facilitate or guide new educational actions involving podcasts through the platform's descriptions. It is worth emphasizing that understanding this process was crucial to carry out the creation of the *Açaí com farinha e linguística* podcast experience, which we will describe in the next section of this text.

Açaí com Farinha e Linguística: an experience, a possibility

In this section, we will discuss the steps and procedures applied in this podcast construction experience, also emphasizing the impressions and implications regarding the development of the activity and final product.

The opportunity for this experience arose with the curricular component Fundamentals of Linguistics, offered to a first-level class of English Language undergraduate students, conducted by Dr. Rafael Timmermann, at the Federal University of Pará (UFPA), Campus of Bragança, during the month November 2022. The activity in question took place between November 5th and November 11th. The action had the help of three volunteer monitors, members of the research project “Authentic Materials and Pop Culture: English language teaching with a focus on interculturality”, coordinated by the same professor.

In order to streamline learning, the professor used, in a somewhat innovative way, the book *O que sabemos sobre a Linguagem: 51 perguntas e respostas sobre a linguagem humana*, by Valdir do Nascimento Flores and Gabriel de Ávila Othero (2022), for the production of an Original Production podcast (FREIRE, 2013b) on the subject, entitled *Açaí com Farinha e Linguística*, whose episodes were used as an evaluation procedure for the course. The podcast's title is due to the fact that açaí pulp accompanied by cassava flour or tapioca is a typical dish of Pará cuisine, incorporating a reference to the course taught, in an attempt to create an attractive name for potential audiences.

To start the activity, the class was divided into teams, which were responsible, each one, for a chapter from the book, to organize a podcast script from the information present in the designated texts, interspersing this script into questions and answers. Due to the textual distribution of the book to the teams, the podcast episodes received the same titles as the texts, according to the following arrangement:

Episode 1: *Qual a relação entre as línguas e as sociedades?* by Dermeval da Hora

Episode 2: *Como são criadas as palavras novas de uma língua?* By João Paulo Lazzarini Cyrino

Episode 3: *Por que as línguas mudam?* by Carlos Alberto Faraco

Episode 4: *O que são metáforas?* by Heronides Moura

Episode 5: *O que é sotaque?* by Christina Abreu Gomes

Episode 6: *Existe uma língua mais difícil do que a outra?* by Evani Viotti and Juliana Ángel-Osorno

Episode 7: *Qual é a função da linguagem?* by José Luiz Fiorin

Episode 8: *O que é preconceito linguístico?* by Maria Marta Pereira Scherer

The activity was carried out at the Language Laboratory (LABLIN), of the Department of Foreign Languages (FALEST), a space for using digital tools for teaching and developing learning objects. This space has 28 computers equipped with technological tools that support the student, such as headsets, webcams, microphones and student control panels that are directly connected to the SANAKO LAB 100¹⁶ software, idealized for activities related to audio.

The three monitors were responsible for assisting, each one, two or three teams, and the professor established a space of three days for the conclusion of the activity. With the texts previously distributed, the first day of the activity was dedicated to writing the script and rehearsing. At this stage, the teams, with the help of the monitors, prepared the script for an episode lasting four to six minutes, focusing on the main points of the indicated text. The guidelines for the preparation of the

¹⁶ Lab 100: Language laboratory which offers technological resources to help teachers and students during language teaching and learning practices (SANAKO, [s.d]).

script promoted a conversational dynamic, with questions and answers, providing the participation and interaction of all the members in each team.

Since it was an innovative tool in the classroom, few students were familiar with writing a script for a podcast episode. Assimilating the content of the text and trying to pass it on dynamically in the middle of an informal conversation was an unprecedented challenge for the students. However, the book used for the activity contains accessible language and already includes the question-answer model, which helped to carry out this stage.

Following the elaboration of the scripts, the students rehearsed their episodes. These rehearsals took place through recording on the Anchor platform, under the professor's supervision and with the help of monitors to capture and record the audio on the platform. After recording, the professor evaluated the episodes, giving his opinions and pointing out possible improvements and changes to the final product.

The rehearsal stage was significant, since the students were able to become familiar with the audio recording platform, as well as, based on the observations, they were able to adapt their episodes to the dynamic specificities of a podcast, that is, tone of voice, conversation rhythm, presentation of the speakers, introduction of the subject, among others.

After editing the script and rehearsing, the students recorded the final version of the episodes. These were edited on the Anchor platform by the volunteer monitors. Episode opening sounds, background music, and concluding vignettes were added. Edits were also made, such as cuts in some moments when the conversation dynamic was affected by pauses. After editing on the platform, the teams and monitors jointly decided to publish the episodes on the Spotify streaming platform, considered the largest and most popular audio streaming platform in the world.

After the upload of the podcast's episodes, it was up to the professor, considering feedback from volunteer monitors, to evaluate each episode based on a more careful listening, analyzing the content passed on, conversation dynamics and script. This was pointed out by the monitors as an excellent result in the conclusion of the activity with the delivery of lean and objective episodes in the transfer of content, without losing the essence of a podcast, through the implementation of a more informal conversation.

The *Açaí com Farinha e Linguística* podcast proved to be an excellent teaching, learning and assessment methodology, as it allowed students to become protagonists of their learning in a more autonomous and collaborative way, overcoming the traditional model mentioned by Coelho (2019). Reading the assigned text, filtering the main information, creating a script in accessible language and recording an episode in a conversational and informal way on the topic for an external audience, reduced the pressure felt by students in relation to a formal assessment activity, leaving learning to lighter and more relaxed, highlighting the performance of students as protagonists in this learning process.

The final product of this experience can be accessed through the link <https://open.spotify.com/show/1SXjiFeSibQQ2fvPJ517vK?si=652704eb950d406c> on the Spotify platform.

Final considerations

This article sought to describe the experience of building a podcast entitled *Açaí com farinha e linguística* with undergraduate students during a course on linguistics, with the purpose of stimulating and sharing with the public the discussions generated from the chapters present in the book *O que sabemos sobre a linguagem: 51 perguntas e respostas sobre a linguagem humana* by Valdir Nascimento Flores and Gabriel De Ávila Othero (2022).

Based on this experience, it is argued that the podcast can be a useful tool within the context of teaching and learning. This resource has an influence on several aspects of the processes, and can contribute to the acquisition and/or improvement of different skills. In addition to streamlining the course, the tool allowed students to develop digital, linguistic and communicative skills, which allowed them to improve their ability to express themselves orally and articulate ideas and arguments according to the context of the material produced.

In addition, the podcast made it possible to disseminate the discussions generated from the book *O que sabemos sobre a Linguagem: 51 perguntas e respostas sobre a linguagem humana*, by Valdir Nascimento Flores and Gabriel De Ávila Othero (2022) for a wider audience, contributing to the democratization of knowledge and bringing the university closer to society. This means that the reflections carried out by the students involved were shared with an audience that is not necessarily part of the university, so that this experience is beneficial not only to the students who produced the material but to all those who access the podcast.

Since creating a podcast involves technical skills such as using recording equipment, audio editing, and publishing online, it is necessary for teachers to be familiar with podcast production techniques to guide students, providing clear guidelines and identifying the pedagogical possibilities of this media. Otherwise, without teachers' knowledge and familiarity with podcast production techniques, there may be some consequences and challenges that can affect the result generated through podcast creation, such as: failing to meaningfully involve students in the process; not being able to identify and take advantage of the tool's opportunities in their pedagogical practice; performing low-quality productions and generating frustration for students, among other factors.

Moreover, it is crucial to point out that, in order for all the benefits of this tool to be achieved, the full functioning of the space and equipment used for the production of the material is essential, whether professional or not, to guarantee the quality of the audio and avoid technical setbacks that may compromise the end result of the podcast or the idealized pedagogical path. Thus, it is necessary to verify in advance the selected equipment and software/applications.

In this sense, in order to make it possible for teachers and students to use this tool, it is necessary to encourage education and training, which may include training programs, workshops and learning resources about the use of podcasts as an educational tool. It is important to note, however, that the use and production of podcasts require specific knowledge and skills to handle these tools properly.

It is therefore suggested that additional studies and research be carried out to improve the field of knowledge about the use of podcasts in education, such as case studies, experience reports, comparative analyzes with other teaching tools, impact assessment in different educational contexts or research into effective audience engagement strategies.

Considering the reported experiences of the entire process, the results found and the challenges highlighted, we concluded that the experience of creating a podcast not only promoted the participation and interaction of students in the course, but also stimulated the production and sharing of quality linguistic knowledge, positively impacting both the academic environment and society in general.

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