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LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF PODCASTS IN THE BULGARIAN DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM

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Abstract. This article examines the linguistic features of podcasts within the Bulgarian digital ecosystem. The podcasts and episodes analyzed were selected according to the theme, media type and creator, as well as the interactional behavior of podcast hosts and their guests. The corpus comprises 50 podcasts and 200 episodes spanning the period from January 2024 to June 2026. The research methodology adopts an interdisciplinary approach, necessitated by the multilayered and complex nature of the objects under study — Bulgarian podcasts — and encompasses linguistic, discourse, and visual analysis alongside cyberethnography. The study hypothesizes that podcast language is characterized by heterogeneity and dynamic development; podcast hosts and their guests express themselves clearly and frequently incorporate professional terminology and even jargon, alongside moderate elements of figurative language. The aim of the study is to establish podcasts within the Bulgarian digital ecosystem as a parallel, and indeed alternative, channel of communication. The linguistic analysis proceeded along four dimensions. The first focused on lexical features, the specific use of words and expressions, and adherence to or deviation from language norms. The second addressed the modes of dialogue and self-presentation employed by participants. The third examined the formulation of episode and podcast titles, as well as the verbal and visual means by which they are presented on social media. The fourth focused on the analysis of visual intertextuality as manifested in podcast logos and episode thumbnails.

Keywords: podcast, digital ecosystem, discourse, dialogue, language norms, visual language, visual intertextuality.

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ЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКИЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ ПОДКАСТОВ В БОЛГАРСКОЙ ЦИФРОВОЙ ЭКОСИСТЕМЕ

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Аннотация. В статье представлены языковые особенности подкастов болгарской цифровой экосистемы. Подбор анализируемых подкастов и эпизодов осуществлён по их тематике, типам медиа и создателям, а также по поведению ведущих подкастов и их гостей. Были отобраны 50 подкастов и 200 эпизодов за период с января 2024 г. по июнь 2026 г. Методология исследования подчинена междисциплинарному подходу, обусловленному многослойностью и сложностью исследуемых объектов — болгарских подкастов. Она включает лингвистический, дискурсивный, визуальный анализы и киберэтнографию. Гипотеза исследования заключается в том, что язык подкастов отличается гетерогенностью и динамичным развитием; ведущие подкастов и их гости выражаются ясно и часто включают в свою речь профессиональные термины и даже жаргон, а также умеренные элементы образности. Целью исследования является утверждение подкастов в болгарской цифровой экосистеме как параллельного и даже альтернативного канала коммуникации. Анализ языка шел в четырех направлениях. Первое фокусировалось на лексических особенностях, специфическом употреблении слов и выражений, соблюдении или нарушении норм языка. Второе направление фокусировалось на способах ведения диалога и самопрезентации участников. Третье направление фокусировалось на формулировании названий эпизодов и самих подкастов, а также на вербальных и визуальных средствах их представления в социальных сетях. Четвертое направление фокусировалось на анализе визуальной интертекстуальности, проявляющейся в логотипах подкастов и иконках эпизодов.

Ключевые слова: подкаст, цифровая экосистема, дискурс, диалог, языковые нормы, визуальный язык, визуальная интертекстуальность.

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Introduction

Over the past two decades, podcasts in Bulgaria have emerged as a component of digital communication, offering new opportunities for information sharing in a different way in comparison with traditional media. Podcasts are an inseparable part of Bulgarian digital ecosystem and they have developed into a format that combines professional terminology, figurative language, spoken discourse, visual elements, digital tools and manners to use social networks concerning broadcasting media content. The growing popularity of podcasts raises questions about language use in media dialogues and digital platforms. The study is dedicated to the linguistic and visual characteristics of Bulgarian podcasts, analyzing their role as a communication channel in contemporary digital and media culture.

Literature Review

Taken together, digital ecosystems influence a firm's strategic landscape. There are three implications of digital ecosystems for competitive strategy:

- 1) the scope of value creation;
- 2) the scope of competition;
- 3) the rise of digital monopoly power [1].



Digital ecosystems are defined as socio-technical environments in which individuals, organizations, and digital technologies develop collaborative and competitive relationships to create value for their end customers through shared digital platforms. The main characteristics of a digital ecosystem include the existence of digital platforms and symbiosis, which refers to the inter-dependence between business ecosystems [2].

The digital media ecosystem is a specialized component of the digital ecosystem, comprising media organizations, journalists, technology platforms, algorithms, content distribution channels, audiences and advertising structures, which collectively create, distribute and consume media content in the digital environment.

The digital media ecosystem encompasses the processes of creating, producing and distributing information within a competitive media market. The digital ecosystem encompasses algorithmic moderation mechanisms, digital tools, software, plugins, AI, and chatbots, including monetization and outsourcing within the financial framework of the virtual space. The digital media ecosystem is characterized by rapid updates to the methods of presenting information across journalistic genres, including public and private radio and television, online media and, in particular, podcasts.

The term “podcasting” was first mentioned by Ben Hammersley [3]. From an etymological point of view, the term “podcast” is a compound word combining “pod” (a reference to a portable media player such as the iPod – a product of Apple) and “broadcasting”.

Podcasts first appeared in Bulgaria at the beginning of the 21st century, and the first example was the Binar podcast¹, created by Bulgarian National Radio (BNR) in 2009. This podcast, which combined analogue, digital and internet technologies, operated as a streaming platform and ran for six hours. The Binar podcast continues to be broadcast in 2026, and the slogan of the modern platform is “Your new digital world”.

The term “podcast” is included in “New Oxford American Dictionary” [4]. During the last two decades podcasts are studied from multiple perspectives and with diverse methods by researchers from different countries and scientific centers.

In [5], Norwegian podcasts are analyzed and it is discussed how podcasts draw commentary journalism in a dialogical direction. In [6], podcasts in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland are analyzed and it is concluded that podcasts have established themselves in the digital media landscape.

Thirty political podcasts in USA are analyzed with a focus on conversational structure, repetitive patterns, figurative language, organic patterns, harmful language in [7].

Podcasts in the context of Ibero-American community and in particular narrative structures enabling diverse storytelling practices are studied too [8].

Storytelling, narrative practice and dual nature of podcasts in Uganda are investigated in [9].

A podcast is a diverse media genre in terms of media, technology and distribution. A podcast can be an audio or video file created using digital tools, software and applications, and published on relevant platforms. Episodes are available for streaming or viewing online, or for downloading to personal devices (computers, mobile phones, tablets, etc.). Podcasts are intended for one-off or repeated listening or viewing by a virtual audience, often a single person.

The producers of the podcasts are journalists, media organizations, individuals, companies, institutions or non-governmental organizations creating audio or video content that is published as a file. The production of a podcast may be carried out either by an individual or by a team comprising professionals, experts or volunteers. In either case, the host is involved in the entire process of creating a podcast – from developing the concept to its distribution.

¹ Подкасти, радио, музика – БИНАР [online] Available: <https://binar.bg> (Accessed 05.09.2026)



Methods and Materials

The methodology combines cyberethnography, linguistic analysis, discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis (CDA), visual analysis, intertextuality, and multimodality.

The first hypothesis is that podcasts are not a homogeneous genre from a media studies perspective. They are distributed via digital platforms using various technological tools within a convergent media environment, combining media literacy with technical and AI-related competencies in a digital space.

The second hypothesis is that the language of podcasts blends registers from different spheres, as participants represent expertise, social status, public visibility, and personal narratives. Consequently, they tend to use a semi-formal mode of dialogue.

Cyberethnography

A brief chronological overview of the literature demonstrates that cyberethnography has been an established methodological approach since the first decade of the 21st century, and it continues to be widely applied by researchers addressing emerging digital phenomena.

In [10], cyberethnographic inquiry is described as an exploration of subjectivities produced at the intersection of local and global, as well as online and offline environments. The authors emphasize ethnographic engagement with these contexts as a methodological foundation grounded in “epistemologies of doing”.

In [11], the focus is on the study of virtual consumer communities, applying ethnographic methods to analyze patterns of interaction and behavior within digital consumption spaces.

In [12], the methodological framework of online ethnography is further developed, highlighting its applicability for studying platforms and mediated interaction in digital environments, thereby expanding the scope of traditional ethnographic practice.

Finally, in [13], digital, media, and virtual ethnography are distinguished, and the evolving linguistic and communicative dimensions of virtual spaces are analyzed, with the emphasis on how language practices are reshaped in online environments [13].

Linguistic, Discourse and CDA

The methodology includes also linguistic, discourse and CDA. In [14], the discourse analysis relates to discourse, context and cognition [14]. CDA has been developed by Teun van Dijk during the past two decades enhancing opportunities concerning analysis in society and politics [15]. CDA tools have been adapted to the objectives of this study, assuming that podcasts have specific manifestations in digital media ecosystem in Bulgaria and they have specific linguistic and discourse features.

The focus of research from a linguistic point of view is on the structures of media dialogue of podcasts in Bulgaria, such as lexicon, syntax, topics, figurative language, clichés, coherence, intertextuality, modality.

Visual Intertextuality, Visual Design and Multimodality

Methodology includes different theoretical and methodological approaches concerning visual elements, visual frames, visual intertextuality, visuality and multimodality.

In [16], an in-depth theoretical overview of visuality in the humanities and social sciences is presented. The author argues for the need for a contemporary understanding of the multimodal/polycode nature of human communication, explores verbal-visual texts, and outlines new fields of inquiry in both theoretical and methodological terms. The theoretical frameworks were taken into account when developing the research methodology of podcast in Bulgaria.

The analysis dedicated to visual intertextuality of logos and thumbnails of episodes of podcasts is adapted from [17].

In [18], a methodological contribution is made by analyzing visual frames as indicators of conflict potential in intercultural interaction on the social network Telegram, as well as the visual design of



social interaction in digital communication. This approach is relevant to analyze digital ecosystem as well as study podcast in digital platforms.

In [19], digital self-identification tools that contribute to converting users from *homo lingualis* into *homo informaticus*, including telegram channels and she concludes that the creative name is an instrument of effective reputation management are analyzed. Adapting the methods, the analysis is focused on the name, nickname of hosts and guests and the title and slogans of podcasts.

In [9], 100 short videos by @fussballinguist in German are analyzed using a multimodal qualitative-quantitative discourse analysis. It is concluded that the verbal layer underlying the short videos is closely linked to the visual elements that guide the transfer of scientific knowledge about linguistic phenomena. This method is appropriate in the context of researching logos of podcasts and thumbnails of episodes in Bulgarian digital ecosystem.

Data Collection

A selection of podcasts in Bulgaria for the period 1 January 2024 – 31 June 2026 has been conducted. Some podcasts discontinue their activity due to competition and the dynamic nature of the media environment, while new podcasts, seasons, and subtopics continuously emerge, reflecting processes of renewal, enrichment, and adaptation. As of June 2026, approximately 300 active podcasts operate in Bulgaria.

The study is based on a selection of 200 episodes from 50 podcasts, chosen according to predefined research objectives. Episodes range in length from 20 to 120 minutes, and both audio and video formats are available. The selection criteria include podcast name, subject matter, producers, hosts, guests, logos, visual elements, digital tools, subscription rates, followers, viewership, and the sustainability of the podcast within the Bulgarian digital media ecosystem.

Regarding format, the selected podcasts are either dialogic or monologic; however, the majority are predominantly structured as interview-style dialogues between two participants: a host and a guest.

The selected podcasts, based on criteria such as topics, hosts, producers, subscriptions, and viewership, are presented in Bulgarian as titles and translated in English in the appendix, with the aim of illustrating a stage of the research and demonstrating the heterogeneity of the object, as well as the need for an interdisciplinary study.

Results

Linguistic Features of Topics' Presentation and Dialogue

The analysis of the selected podcasts shows that, at the linguistic level, there is no sufficient basis to argue for a high frequency of the so-called “Българिश” (Bulgarish) or hybrid speech phenomena. Two main tendencies can be identified.

The first concerns the use of English terminology in fields such as finance, music, art, AI etc., which represents a specific manifestation of bilingualism as there are different preferences regarding the use of terms written in Cyrillic or Latin. For example, *портфолио* [portfolio], *кеш флоу* [cash flow], *бит* [beat], *ремикс* [remix], *саунд дизайн* [sound design], *лейбъл* [label], *стриймिंग* [streaming], *плейлист* [playlist], *machine learning* [машинно обучение], *генеративен ИИ/генеративен AI* [generative AI], *промт* [prompt].

The second tendency is that English words are adapted into the Bulgarian language through derivation and word formation using Bulgarian suffixes, particularly in the case of verbs typical of online communication. In these cases, two sub-phenomena can be observed. In the first, two writing systems are mixed – Cyrillic and Latin. In the second, the word is written in Cyrillic as a composite lexical form between two languages. For example: even when podcasts are presented as a terminological group, there is a tendency to preserve the original pronunciation while adopting Cyrillic spelling: *подкаст* [podcast]; *подкастър* [podcaster]; *подкастинг* [podcasting]; *пост* [post], a noun – an



online publication; *пост* [post], a verb – to publish; *репоствам* [re-post]; *бренд* [brand]; *бренд* [branding], *ребрандинг* [rebranding].

It is also justified to speak about morphological assimilation, where English lexical roots (e.g., *brainstorm*, *scale*, *stream*) take Bulgarian suffixes to express past tense (-вал), as in “*стриймвал*”, or imperfective aspect (-ваш), as in “*стриймваш*”.

The hosts often break long sentences into shorter ones, using repetition and clarification to make the information easier to grasp when listening and reading subtitles online in teasers and short video clips.

The host’s linguistic style is the result of various factors, such as their experience as a dialogue facilitator, their education and their individual style. They often use relaxed, colloquial style to create the impression of a personal conversation with their audience. A conversational style helps listeners and viewers to absorb information more easily and fosters a sense of dialogue.

Another distinctive feature is the blending of styles; the hosts may use standard Bulgarian alongside elements of dialects, slang or specific terminology, depending on the podcast’s subject matter.

The hosts sometimes prefer to address the listener directly; the frequent use of second-person pronouns “you”.

The linguistic and discourse analysis is devoted to dialogue in podcast episodes, as it was established that the predominant form is conversation, while monologue is not a common form in the Bulgarian digital media ecosystem. The episodes exhibit a certain degree of framing, as they include a short introduction to the topic and the participant, as well as concluding remarks and calls to action, along with announcements of upcoming episodes and their topics and participants. The guest is a physician, professor, researcher, film director, geologist, explorer, singer, and writer; thus, identification is achieved immediately. If the guest is appearing on the podcast for the second time or has participated previously, this is explicitly highlighted in order to persuade the virtual audience of the existence of sustained professional relationships and trust. The introduction is concise; at the linguistic level, there is no apologetics or praise through the use of comparative or superlative forms (e.g., “more” or “most”). Instead, the informative and nominative functions of language clearly predominate.

The conversation begins with a brief presentation of the guest by the host, followed by additional information regarding their expertise, achievements, awards, and other relevant details. This is a linguistic strategy used to fulfill marketing and public relations (PR) functions, aimed at building image and demonstrating credibility and popularity within a given professional field in Bulgarian society. Professor Ivo Hristov is introduced as an analyst, lawyer, and sociologist. Professor Nikolay Vitanov is presented as a mathematician and analyst. Dr. Miroslav Nenchev is identified as an anesthesiologist, while Ivo Velichkov is introduced as a psychologist.

More detailed descriptions are less common and typically occur when guests represent non-traditional or alternative fields. For example, Asen Milanov is presented as an energy therapist and researcher in the field of spiritual development; Aida Markovska as a consultant in constellations and family relationships; Silva Doncheva as an astrologer and homeopath; and Georgi Sirakov as a researcher in the fields of history and religions. It is rare to encounter a pathos-filled presentation. For example, Toto introduces the physics teacher Teodosiy Teodosiev, who has trained students that have won world Olympiads and received awards, in the following way: “*There are Bulgarians who deserve a monument while still alive. The teacher who created minds and human beings*”².

The conclusion of the podcast presents new topics, a sustained engagement with a specific field, and aims to intrigue viewers and listeners. At the linguistic level, this is expressed through phrases such as “*In this episode...*”, “*The conversation delves into topics...*”

The dialogue develops with different dynamics; there are returns to previously discussed topics through words and expressions such as “*As we have already mentioned*”. Further developments of

² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fEOroWTCf7I> (Accessed 05.09.2026)



earlier topics are also used as a linguistic device. This topic can be supplemented by more examples. For example: *“I perceive this confrontation not only as a conflict and divergence, but also as an ideological richness. In it, we can see borrowings from what is happening in Greater Europe. Let us talk about the Revival realistically, not romantically”*³.

Storytelling and the narration of personal stories are also present. The sharing of successes and failures is presented in a serious style but also through self-irony and humor. Storytelling is informal, with flashbacks and recollections. One of the most well-known Bulgarian actors, Asen Blatechki, in “Elizabethsko Podcast” uses conversational and vivid language to tell a story, for example about the director Ivan Urumov: *“We have known each other since childhood, since I graduated from the Theatre Academy. In fact, when I was in my first year, he was in his fourth, and that’s how we were together – he as a director, I as an actor. And now it was extremely pleasant for me to work with him again. Koyna Ruseva is like a sister to me; she is very close to me. I first acted with her in “Sea Salt”. It wasn’t in “Tar-tuffe” with Ivan Urumov at the Youth Theatre. That was the first time I acted there.”*

In the past two years, a new trend has emerged in which, during editing, interesting moments are highlighted and presented at the beginning of episodes in order to create anticipation and intrigue. These moments often sound like aphorisms, maxims, proverbs, sayings. For example, in Episode 2, “She and He,” of the podcast “Consciousness and Meaning,” psychologist Ivo Velichkov often uses the following line: *“There’s a saying I know: No woman can be happy with a man who is weaker than she is”, “For someone to like you, there’s a preliminary step – don’t push them away”, “Someone once said that in a relationship, one person loves, and the other allows themselves to be loved. And the one who loves always gains more, because they don’t keep score”, “Intimacy is sharing your strengths and weaknesses. Intimacy means sharing your true self, which isn’t always beautiful”, “The truth isn’t always beautiful, though very often it is. People are afraid of intimacy because they’re afraid of the pain that intimacy inevitably brings – that they’ll be abandoned, or that they’ll lose that person in the end”*⁴.

Professor Ivo Hristov uses figurative language, for example: *“spare tires”, “strategic bypasses”, “China is tactically investing in both ships”, “Singapore and Hong Kong are the two gateways through which massive investments are initially channelled”, “According to the vacuum-cleaner principle, financial resources from all over the world have been accumulated and then structured as Singaporean investment capital”, and “weapons may become blind if the so-called brain – the satellites in near-Earth orbit – is eliminated”*.

These expressions are employed while discussing complex political relations in the podcast “The New Geopolitics: Centers of Control and Influence”, featured in “Geopolitics”, Episode 63, hosted by Simeon Ivanov on Bulgarian National Television. The use of metaphorical and figurative language serves to explain complex geopolitical processes through accessible and vivid imagery, making abstract political and economic concepts easier for the audience to understand and remember⁵.

Linguistic and Digital Features of Online Texts in Platforms

Writing and Reading as a Navigation

In the textual content of podcasts published on digital platforms, a persistent tendency can be observed for subtopics to be formulated more frequently as interrogative sentences. This is likely a result of the intention to stimulate interest, curiosity, and a desire to hear responses within the podcast. The interrogative sentences are brief; however, they simultaneously contain terminology specific to the respective lexical or professional field, with sentence length generally not exceeding 10 words in total. Here are several examples. This is a way of orienting the audience toward the content at the linguistic level, providing a comprehensive overview of the subject matter. In some cases, the questions extend to up to 15 words in order to present complete information about the topics covered in the podcast. Podcast listeners already have experience, attitudes, and expectations regarding the type

³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jnpUtDHFR4g&t=2995s> (Accessed 05.09.2026)

⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IrX41-D5C7Y&t=1585s> (Accessed 05.09.2026)

⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6o5uhr9C7gI> (Accessed 05.09.2026)



of information they will receive, and they use this information to decide whether to watch the podcast or to search for specific topics within it through scrolling and sliding, skipping to a particular section, or returning to a previous topic. At the same time, some hosts of podcasts, such as “Yavor Dachkov Podcast”, “Capital Podcast”, etc., who have experience as journalists, prefer longer sentences and the presentation of key topics in paragraph form. At the same time, the hosts use moderate imagery, conversational language, and expressive expressions. Podcast texts on digital platforms include personalization and transparency in the presentation of guests, their expertise, and their engagement, which at the linguistic level represents a manifestation of the nominative function, while at the rhetorical level it serves as an appeal to authority and the narration of personal stories.

Table 1. Linguistic features of the textual descriptions of podcasts on digital platforms

Bulgarian	English	Podcast and link
Какво преживява човек на място, където ледът, тишината и мащабът променят усещането за Земята? Какво записва една сеизмологична станция в Антарктида? Само земетресения — или и невидимия живот на леда, скалите и планетата? Колко сигурен е светът, който смятаме за сигурен?	What does a person experience in a place where ice, silence, and scale transform the perception of Earth? What does a seismological station in Antarctica record? Only earthquakes — or also the invisible life of ice, rocks, and the planet itself? How secure is the world we consider secure?	Какво крие Земята под България? проф. Бойко Рангелов What does the Earth hide beneath Bulgaria? Prof. Boyko Rangelov LIMITLESS 98000 subscribers
В този епизод на “Гласът на Капитал” говорим със здравния редактор Десислава Николова за: • порочния кръг на обществените поръчки • счупената здравна система какво е необходимо, за да се поправи.	In this episode of “The Voice of Capital,” we talk with health editor Desislava Nikolova about: the vicious cycle of public procurement; the broken healthcare system; what is needed to fix it.	Парите на здравната каса изтичат в счупената система Гласът на Капитал Health Fund Money Leaks into Broken System Voice of Capital 167000 subscribers

Writing and Reading as a Target for Advertising

Heterogeneity constitutes a distinctive linguistic feature of podcasts. The factors contributing to this heterogeneity include genre-specific characteristics, dynamic development within a competitive environment, and the necessity of adaptation to the digital media ecosystem, particularly when podcasts perform advertising and marketing functions.

Producers and editors combine verbal and visual elements in the texts accompanying content on digital platforms. At the visual level, these elements include symbols such as microphones, thumbs-up icons, bells, cameras, and topic-specific visual markers, for example green leaves in relation to environmental issues or coins in the context of financial topics.

At the linguistic level, appeals to the audience are typically concise and directive, for example: “Give us a thumbs up and like the video!”, or through the use of diminutive forms such as “Don’t hesitate to give us a little thumbs-up!”, “Follow us!”, “Stay with us!”, “Watch the new episode first!”, “Watch the new episode now!”. Similar examples include direct appeals: “Click the bell icon! Subscribe to...”, “Support us financially through PayPal or Patreon”, or, conversely, “We do not seek financial support from our audience. Watch our content free of charge”, thereby conveying a philanthropic orientation.

The formation of virtual communities is promoted linguistically through expressions such as: “It is important for us that you leave comments”, “Suggest topics”, “Subscribe! It makes sense!”, and “Subscribe so that new episodes reach you as soon as they are released”. Informal language, following the conversational style characteristic of American digital communication, is reflected in expressions such as: “People, come on!”, “Guys, come on!”, “Tell us what you think about the podcast”, “Write your comments below”. The examples illustrate brief expressions with emotional appeals; they are not linguistically original, but they are frequently used by the hosts.



At the same time, these appeals in podcast texts published on digital platforms can trigger quick and spontaneous responses, prompting virtual viewers to react immediately by commenting, offering support, or subscribing. This is likely due to the brevity of the expressions, which are rapidly decoded as they are familiar and do not present linguistic barriers. Additionally, some podcast listeners are inclined toward engaging in interactive communication within a digital environment. Rather than a categorical intention to become members of virtual communities, these reactions are more accurately characterized as spontaneous responses. These linguistic practices demonstrate an attempt to establish friendly communication and interactivity with virtual viewers and listeners. They also function as invitations to membership in an online community, as evidenced by the frequent use of the first-person plural pronoun “we”, which fosters a sense of collective identity and audience engagement.

Linguistic and Digital Manifestations of “Reading a Video”

In the so-called timestamps (chapters), which constitute a post-production element of podcast content on digital platforms, the segmentation of the video into distinct visual chapters becomes clearly observable. Their function is to inform the virtual viewer about the structure of the media discourse through textual labels, hyperlinks, and indications of duration in minutes and seconds, thereby enabling navigation across the content and facilitating orientation within the podcast.

From this perspective, chapters allow viewers to “read” the video in a manner analogous to reading a book. The concept of “reading a video” should not be regarded as an oxymoron from either a linguistic or a cognitive standpoint; rather, it reflects a specific mode of information processing and interpretation characteristic of digitally mediated communication. Through these chapter markers, podcast audiences gain an overview of the thematic organization of the video, can quickly navigate between sections, skip to topics of greater interest, or return to previously viewed segments.

This functionality enhances audience engagement and viewability by employing clear language, concise formulations, and highly specific thematic labels. Linguistically, chapter titles are typically realized as brief expressions or syntactically incomplete constructions, often lacking explicit verbal predicates. Despite their structural economy, however, they exhibit a high degree of informational density and contribute significantly to the overall user experience by supporting efficient navigation and facilitating comprehension of the podcast’s discourse structure.

Table 2. Linguistic Examples about “Reading a Video”

Bulgarian	English	Podcast and link
[21:47] Гласът като инструмент за доверие в личните и професионалните отношения. [24:17] Авторитетният стил на общуване при лекарите като модел за спокойствие.	[21:47] The voice as a tool for building trust in personal and professional relationships. [24:17] The authoritative communication style of physicians as a model for reassurance and composure.	Силата на гласа и сценичната реч! Валерия Кардашевска – Епизод 231 The Power of Voice and Public Speaking! Valeriya Kardashevska – Episode 231 Xplora BG
00:00 – Интро 02:00 – Различните страни на Мария Силвестър 07:00 – Началото на телевизионната кариера 16:00 – За кариерата като модел 22:40 – Кога красотата пречи? 31:25 – Какъв е смисъла на живота? 38:20 – Първият репортаж на Мария 47:50 – За страха от камерата	00:00 – Intro 02:00 – The different facets of Maria Silvestar 07:00 – The beginning of her television career 16:00 – Her modeling career 22:40 – When does beauty become an obstacle? 31:25 – What is the meaning of life? 38:20 – Maria’s first reportage 47:50 – The fear of the camera	Искам да вляза в парламента и да го ремонтирам за 5 дни! – Мария Силвестър I want to enter Parliament and fix it in 5 days! – Maria Silvestar I want to enter Parliament and fix it in 5 days! – Maria Silvestar Chefo Podcast



Visual Intertextuality in Podcasts in Bulgaria

As already stated above, the theoretical framework and methods are presented in separate parts in order to ensure clarity and logical coherence in the text. The two constructs in the research object, namely the brand and the digital media ecosystem, are characterized by multilayered complexity, which implies the introduction of the concept of intertextuality as well.

The term “intertextuality” is presented through definitions and changes in scope and content across [20, 21], with a focus on literary fiction.

Intertextuality has manifestations in the media, online media, and social networks.

In [17], the findings of a study on visual intertextuality as a means of meaning-making are presented. The authors analyze selected American posters within a specific wartime and postwar context. The study focuses on visual intertextuality, the intertextual competence of communication participants, and their knowledge of the cultural and historical conditioning and background of multimodal discourse. They conclude that verbal-visual texts undergo transformations within specific socio-cultural contexts and that visual intertextuality is shaped by cultural and historical factors.

The analysis is based on the methodology presented in [17], which has been adapted for needs of the analysis of podcasts in Bulgaria following the selection of logos and thumbnails of individual episodes.

Intertextuality and relationships have intersections with metadiscourse, specialized terminology, and podcast language. Several sub-corpora have been identified, along with the following phenomena in digital media ecosystem in Bulgaria.

First, terms and abbreviations continue to appear by producers, editors of thumbnails as a manifestation of media competition. Headlines are presented in Bulgarian language in Cyrillic alphabets but some headlines are written in both Latin and English “*Kanuman Green*” [Capital Green], “*Слави – The Clashers*” [Slavi – The Clashers], “*Дамa Cast*” [Dama Cast], “*Дарук Podcast*” [Darik Podcast], “*Chefo nodkacm*” [Chefo podcast]. Bilingualism and digraphia are also persistently manifested at the language level. Some podcasts only list titles in the Latin alphabet and in English : “*CoMinds Chatters*”, “*MindsetPowerTalk*”.

The analysis of selected podcast logos in the Bulgarian digital media ecosystem shows that one of the most preferred visual symbols is the microphone, which is integrated as an inseparable component of the logo; it is quickly decoded as audio recording and media communication. In order to achieve brand recognizability, identification, and association with a specific socio-cultural context, as well as to target micro-audiences, the visual elements include: parts of a football for sports, a racetrack and flag for car racing, an open book for publishing and reading, scales and a book for justice and the judicial system, green color and forests for ecology, coins and banknotes for finance, a heart for healthcare, among others.

The written word “podcast” also appears in some logos as an inseparable part of the logo. Visual intertextuality is also manifested at the level of colors, with preferred ones being red, yellow, green, and blue in various shades. Fonts – from readable sans-serif ones to specially designed typefaces tailored to the needs of the podcast – are also part of the visualization at the verbal level, but they are likewise combined as an integral component of the logo.

Visual intertextuality also includes numbers and numerals, for example “*2&200 Podcast*”, “*The first page*”, “*The three Matches*”, and others (Fig. 1). The numbers are not used in their mathematical sense; instead, they carry not only an informative but also an expressive function, again with the aim of achieving recognizability and memorability of the podcast logo in a virtual environment.

The pursuit of originality, while simultaneously maintaining recognizability, refers to intertextuality, where signs and symbols are incorporated into the logo, for example “*Xlor Marketing*”, as this is a composite word, made up of abbreviations X and words with the aim of creating interest without leading to a communication barrier.

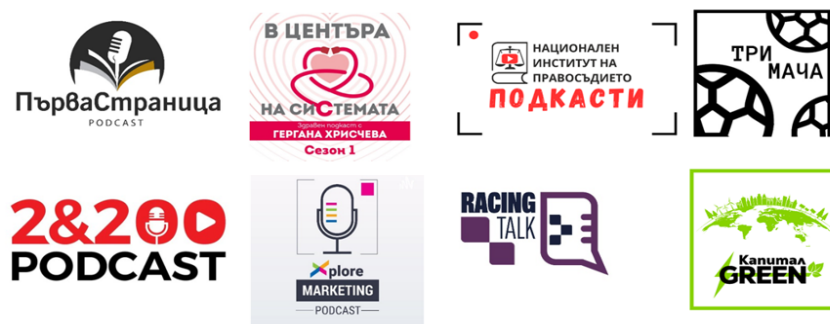


Fig. 1. Logos of Podcasts: Visual Elements



Fig. 2. Thumbnails of Episodes of Podcasts: Visual Elements

In the thumbnails of podcast episodes, visual intertextuality manifests itself in the following ways. Again, in order to achieve recognizability and simultaneously direct attention to the topic of the specific episode, titles are created that perform both an informative and an appealing, call-to-action function. The titles most often include one to three words, as brevity, informational density, and attention-grabbing appeal are sought. For example: „*Навици. Идентичност Развитие*” [Habits. Identity Development]. Words are combined with expressive phrases and words of positive connotations. For example: „*Споделено # 4. Кристалните деца. Минали животи*” [Shared #4. Crystal Children. Past Lives], „*Сънят е злато. с Ивет Лалова*” [Sleep is gold. with Ivet Lalova], „*Спри да се бориш с тялото си*” [Stop fighting your body], „*Епизод 961 Псевдо-жетви + псевдо-ползи*” [Episode 961: Pseudo-harvests + pseudo-benefits].

The competitive media environment also catalyzes the creation of engaging thumbnails precisely with the aim of attracting attention to the episode. A specific feature of visual intertextuality is the increasing use of personalization through images of participants, both via photographs and via AI-generated images as digital tools: “*Комеди Клуб*” [Comedy Club]. Preferences include either the host “*Stefan Popov – Chefo*” or only the guest, or a combination of both, at the level of personalization and recognizability of well-known figures from sports, culture, politics, the arts, and science (Fig. 2).

This visual personalization is combined with the inclusion of participants’ names, which contributes to rapid decoding and simultaneously to representation within a specific socio-cultural context in Bulgaria, i.e., at a local level but within a virtual environment.



Conclusion

The findings of this study confirm that podcasts have become a component of the Bulgarian digital ecosystem, functioning as a media genre and communication format that integrates linguistic, discursive, and visual elements. The heterogeneous nature of podcasts determines a combination of standard language forms, professional terminology, colloquial expressions, figurative language and slang.

The research identifies the main linguistic and communicative techniques employed by hosts and guests. The dialogue is structured through giving expert advice, announcing news, giving examples, storytelling, and experience sharing. The linguistic features of personal narratives as mechanisms for establishing credibility are highlighted too.

The multimodal character of podcasts the relationship between verbal and visual communication are by examined too. The analysis of podcast titles, social media promotion, logos, and episode thumbnails demonstrates that visual language and visual intertextuality play an essential role in attracting attention and shaping audience expectations.

The study provides evidence that Bulgarian podcasts operate as parallel and, in some cases, alternative communication channels within the digital media sphere.

APPENDIX

Table 3. Types of Podcasts, Hosts, Producers, Media, Episodes

Thematic Area	Name in English	Name in Bulgarian	Host	Producer	No. of Episodes
Politics Society	BNR podcast	БНР подкаст	журналисти	БНР	1273
	Konstantin Valkov's office	Бюрото на Константин Вълков	Константин Вълков	Константин Вълков	76
	The Voice of Capital	Гласът на Капитал	Журналисти от в. Капитал	Вестник Капитал	380
	Capial Green	Капитал Green	Ивайло Станчев	Вестник Капитал	34
	Diary	Дневник	Журналисти от в. Дневник	Dnevnik.bg	113
	Z-Cast	Z-Каст	ClubZ журналисти	ClubZ	217
	Studio Bulgaria	Студио България	Генка Шекерова	Свободна Европа	
	Threesome in no time	Тройка по никое време	Милена, Кирил и Тодор	Радио Витоша	64
	Television on the radio	Телевизия по радиото	Анна Цолова Миролюба Бенатова	Седмичен обзор	100
	Natural intelligence	Естествен интелект	Владимир Петков Еленко Еленков	Говори интернет	111
Education Science	BG Science Podcast	БГ Наука Подкаст	Петър Теодосиев	www.nauka.bg	301
	You and Science:	Ти и науката:	Диана Узунова	Obekti.bg	57
Management Marketing	Digitalks	Digitalks	Александър	Digitalks	253
	Morning show for managers	Сутрешно предаване за мениджъри	Пламен Петров	Equinox Partners	1200
	Xplore Marketing	Xplore Marketing	Георги Малчев	Xplore Marketing	231
	Network Marketing Manager	Мрежов Маркетинг Мениджър	Петър Вълчев	Петър Вълчев	38
	ListenUP	ListenUP	United Partners	United Partners	18



Thematic Area	Name in English	Name in Bulgarian	Host	Producer	No. of Episodes
Finances	BenchMark Podcast	BenchMark Podcast	финансисти	BenchMark Finance	66
	Crypto Revolution	Crypto Revolution	Plamen Andonov	Plamen Andonov	475
Law	Minutes with the lawyer	Минути с адвоката	адв. Божидар Терзийски	адв. Божидар Терзийски	17
	Through the labyrinths of law	Из лабиринтите на правото	Юристи адвокати	Български институт за правни инициативи	8
Sport	Sports meeting	Спортна среща	Камен Алипиев	БНР	70
	Three Matches Podcast	Три Мача Подкаст	Алекс и Пламен	Plamen Barzev	122
	Racing Talk Podcast	Racing Talk Podcast	Vladimir Gatev	Vladimir Gatev	20
	Turns	Обороти	Станимир Чолаков, Генчо Генчев	Колоездена организация	16
Health	Meditation and Health	Медитация и Здраве	Калина Стефанова	Калина Стефанова	20
	Easy Running	Леко Бягане	Kiril Nikolov – Disl	Kiril Nikolov	30
Psychology	Authenticity	Автентичност	Георги Йорданов	Георги Йорданов	252
	Consciousness and meaning	Съзнание и смисъл	Ели Александрова	Ели Александрова	
Medicine	Pediatrics	Педиатрия	д-р Андрей Гончаров	Българска педиатрична асоциация	3
	PR Care Bulgaria	PR Care Bulgaria	Елена Цонева и Росяна Сотирова	PR Care Bulgaria	79
History	Bulgarian history	Българска история	Иван Кънчев и Марио Мишев	Bulgarian History	55
	Clash Cast	Clash Cast	Slavi Panayotov	Slavi Panayotov	15
Esotericism	Limitless	Limitless	Живко Кръстев	Limitless	22
	The new knowledge	Новото познание	Стойчо Керев	Новото познание – БНТ	924
	Without borders	Без граници	Невена Цонева	Невена Цонева	8
Arts	Thermodynamics	Термодинамика	Режисьори	Топлоцентрала	123
	Film library	Филмотечно	Галя Жекова Росен Спасов	Българска национална филмотека	16
	One Podcast	Един Подкаст (Edin Podcast)	Емил Аврамов и Борис Калайджиев	Емил Аврамов и Борис Калайджиев	27
	Artists on standby	Чакащи артисти	Кристина Беломорска	Кристина Беломорска	22
Literature	Footnote	Бележка под линия	Стефан Русинов	Преводачески разпратки, хватки и поразии	73
	Home Page	Първа страница	Темз Арабаджиева и Антон Биро	Webcafe.bg и „С книги под завивките“	100
	Golden Tales	Златните приказки	Диляна Атанасова	Dilyana Atanasova	180
	KN Speaks	КХ говори	Учени	ИК Критика и Хуманизъм	38



Thematic Area	Name in English	Name in Bulgarian	Host	Producer	No. of Episodes
Properties	Valuable properties with Stoyanov	Стойностните имоти със Стоянов	Никола Стоянов	LUXIMMO GROUP	8
	Realistimo Real Estate Podcast	Подкаст за имоти на Реалистимо	Мартин и Вихрен	Реалистимо	124
Hobby Animals	DOG AND CAT podcast	КУЧЕ И КОТКАст	д-р Георги Харизанов	От PURINA България.	15

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