

## AI-SUPPORTED PODCASTS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION: TOWARD DEVELOPING LISTENING AND ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

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**Abstract.** This study examines the use of AI-supported podcasts in foreign language education, with particular focus on listening and oral communication skills. It explores how generative AI can support the creation and adaptation of audio content and related learning activities. The study adopts a descriptive-analytical approach and emphasizes the teacher's role in ensuring linguistically, culturally, and pedagogically appropriate use.

**Keywords:** AI-supported podcasts, generative AI, foreign language education, listening skills, oral communication.

**Annotatsiya.** Ushbu tadqiqot xorijiy til ta'limida sun'iy intellekt yordamidagi podkastlardan foydalanish imkoniyatlarini tahlil qiladi. Asosiy e'tibor tinglab tushunish va og'zaki muloqot ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirishga qaratiladi. Shuningdek, generativ sun'iy intellektdan audio materiallar va o'quv topshiriqlarini yaratishda foydalanish hamda o'qituvchining nazorat roli yoritiladi.

**Kalit so'zlar:** sun'iy intellekt, podkast, xorijiy til ta'limi, tinglab tushunish, og'zaki muloqot.

**Аннотация.** В статье рассматривается использование подкастов с поддержкой искусственного интеллекта в обучении иностранным языкам. Основное внимание уделяется развитию навыков аудирования и устного общения. Также рассматривается применение генеративного ИИ для создания учебных аудиоматериалов и подчеркивается роль преподавателя в контроле их качества.

**Ключевые слова:** искусственный интеллект, подкаст, обучение иностранным языкам, аудирование, устное общение.

### Introduction

Foreign language education has changed substantially with the expansion of digital media and artificial intelligence. Learning is no longer confined to the

textbook or the classroom; learners can now access spoken language, repeat it, and interact with learning materials across different times and settings. This shift has increased interest in resources that connect formal instruction with authentic or semi-authentic language use and give learners greater opportunities for independent practice.

Listening and oral communication are central to this process. Knowing grammar and vocabulary is not sufficient if learners cannot understand spoken discourse or respond to it in meaningful interaction. Podcasts have therefore attracted attention as flexible audio resources. They can be replayed, paused, and used inside or outside class. Bakhsh and Gilakjani (2021) reported positive effects of podcast use on listening comprehension, while Koçak and Alagözlü (2021) and Yeh et al. (2021) showed that podcast production and related tasks can also support speaking development, fluency, and learner participation.

The rapid development of generative AI has added a new dimension to podcast-based learning. Teachers can use AI to draft dialogues, simplify or expand texts, generate questions, create alternative versions of a script, and adapt content to a particular proficiency level. Recent reviews by Law (2024), Li et al. (2024), and Du and Daniel (2024) indicate that AI is increasingly present in language education, particularly in content generation, feedback, self-directed learning, and speaking practice. Their educational value, however, depends on how they are integrated into instruction and on the quality of the materials they produce.

From this perspective, an AI-supported podcast is not simply an audio file produced by a digital tool. It is a learning resource in which AI may assist at one or more stages of design and production while the teacher remains responsible for the instructional purpose, linguistic accuracy, cultural appropriateness, and connection to communicative activity. This paper therefore examines how AI-supported podcasts can be used to move learners from listening and comprehension toward interaction and oral production.

### **Research Problem**

The availability of podcasts and AI tools does not in itself guarantee effective language learning. A podcast may remain a passive listening resource, while AI-generated material may contain language, pronunciation, examples, or cultural references that are not fully suitable for a particular group of learners. The central problem is therefore pedagogical rather than purely technological: how can these tools be organized within a learning sequence that moves learners from audio exposure to comprehension, interaction, and purposeful oral use?

The study addresses the need for a clear framework that combines the flexibility of podcasting with the adaptive potential of generative AI without reducing the role of the teacher. It focuses especially on the relationship between repeated listening, scaffolded comprehension, and the opportunities learners receive to reuse new vocabulary and structures in communicative tasks.

Main research question: How can AI-supported podcasts be used in foreign language education to contribute to the development of listening and oral communication skills?

- ❖ What educational characteristics make podcasts suitable for foreign language learning?
- ❖ How can generative AI support the design, adaptation, and production of educational podcast content?
- ❖ How can podcast listening be connected to interaction and oral language production?
- ❖ What linguistic, cultural, and pedagogical safeguards are required when AI is used to prepare podcast materials?

### **Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study lies in bringing together three areas that are increasingly important in contemporary language education: podcasting, generative AI, and communicative skill development. The studies reviewed in this paper have largely examined podcasting and AI as separate strands. This paper considers how they may be combined within one instructional process, with listening used not as an end in itself but as a starting point for oral interaction. The analysis may help teachers and materials designers use AI more purposefully while preserving human judgment and meaningful communication.

### **Objectives, Method, and Scope**

The study aims to clarify the educational value of podcasts in foreign language learning, identify ways in which generative AI can support their design, and explain how podcast activities may be linked to listening comprehension and oral communication. It also seeks to highlight the teacher's role in reviewing AI-generated content and to identify the main challenges related to accuracy, pronunciation, cultural suitability, and learner level. The paper adopts a descriptive-analytical approach based on relevant literature on podcasting, generative AI, and language learning. It does not include a field experiment or statistical measurement of learning gains.

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **1. Podcasts in Foreign Language Learning**

Podcasts offer several characteristics that make them useful for language learning. They provide repeated exposure to spoken language, allow learners to control the pace of listening, and can extend practice beyond class time. Their value increases when the audio is linked to an instructional purpose rather than used as isolated input. Bakhsh and Gilakjani (2021) found that podcast use can support listening comprehension, while Koçak and Alagözlü (2021) showed that learner-created podcasts can contribute to speaking development. Yeh et al. (2021) likewise reported gains in aspects of speaking performance when students engaged in podcast-making.

These findings suggest that podcasting can serve a dual function. Learners first receive language through listening, but they can later respond to it, summarize it, discuss its content, or create a related spoken product. This movement from reception to production is particularly important because listening and speaking are closely connected in actual communication.

## **2. Generative AI in Language Education**

Generative AI can produce and transform language in ways that were difficult to achieve with earlier digital tools. A teacher can request a dialogue at a specified proficiency level, ask for a shorter or more natural version, generate comprehension questions, or create several contexts in which the same vocabulary appears. Law (2024) describes a broad range of opportunities for generative AI in language teaching and learning, while Li et al. (2024) identify roles related to content generation, learner support, and teacher assistance. Du and Daniel (2024) also point to the growing use of AI-powered conversational systems for speaking practice.

At the same time, AI output should not be treated as automatically accurate or pedagogically appropriate. Language may be grammatically acceptable but unnatural for a specific context, and generated audio may not always provide the pronunciation, rhythm, or cultural nuance that a teacher intends to model. Human review therefore remains necessary, especially when materials are used as language input.

## **3. AI-Supported Podcasts as an Integrated Learning Tool**

When podcasting and generative AI are combined, AI can support several stages of instructional design. It can help generate or adapt a script, offer alternative levels of difficulty, produce questions for different listening purposes, and suggest follow-up speaking tasks. It may also assist in creating audio versions of a text. The educational objective, however, is not to automate the entire lesson.

The teacher determines what learners should notice, what kind of listening is required, and how the audio will lead to meaningful language use.

#### **4. Listening and Oral Communication**

Listening comprehension involves more than recognizing individual words. Learners need to identify the main idea, follow details, infer meaning from context, and connect what they hear with prior knowledge. Oral communication then requires them to respond, reformulate, express an opinion, or negotiate meaning. An effective podcast activity should therefore create a bridge between these processes. Repeated listening can reduce processing pressure, while post-listening tasks can turn comprehension into spoken interaction.

#### **How AI-Supported Podcasts May Develop Listening and Oral Communication**

##### **1. Before Listening: Preparation and Personalization**

Before listening, AI can help the teacher prepare a short introduction, select essential vocabulary, or create prediction questions appropriate to the learners' level. This stage should not explain the entire text in advance. Its purpose is to activate relevant knowledge and remove only those difficulties that would prevent learners from following the audio. The teacher can also ask AI to produce easier or more challenging versions of the same topic for groups with different proficiency levels.

##### **2. During Listening: Comprehension and Repeated Exposure**

During listening, learners can first focus on the general message and then listen again for specific information, expressions, or discourse features. One of the main advantages of podcasts is that learners can replay difficult sections and work at a manageable pace. AI-generated questions can support this process, but they should be reviewed to ensure that they actually measure comprehension rather than trivial recall or information that is not clearly present in the recording.

##### **3. After Listening: Interaction and Oral Production**

The post-listening stage is where the podcast becomes a communicative resource. Learners may summarize the episode, discuss a point of view, role-play a similar situation, respond to a problem raised in the audio, or create a short spoken continuation. In this way, vocabulary and structures encountered through listening are reused for a new communicative purpose. AI can suggest task variations or conversation prompts, but learners should produce their own meanings rather than simply repeat AI-generated responses.

##### **4. Teacher Mediation and Quality Control**

Teacher mediation remains essential throughout the process. The teacher must verify linguistic accuracy, naturalness of expression, pronunciation quality, cultural appropriateness, and the degree of difficulty. The teacher also decides when AI is useful and when direct human interaction is more valuable. AI can expand the range of available materials, but it should support instructional decisions rather than replace them.

### **Discussion: From Audio Exposure to Communicative Use**

The literature suggests that the main educational value of AI-supported podcasting lies in the connection between flexible input and structured use. Podcast research indicates benefits for listening and speaking, while recent AI research highlights the potential of generative tools to personalize materials and expand opportunities for practice. Combining these two strands creates a practical model in which learners hear language repeatedly, receive tasks matched to their level, and then use the content in oral interaction.

This combination also introduces important limits. If the audio is entirely machine-generated without review, learners may be exposed to unnatural language or culturally weak examples. If post-listening answers are also produced by AI, the learner may complete the activity without engaging in genuine language production. A balanced design therefore keeps the learner active and the teacher responsible for quality. Technology should reduce unnecessary preparation barriers and widen practice opportunities, while communication itself remains an activity performed by learners.

### **Results**

- The literature reviewed suggests that podcasts can support repeated exposure to spoken language and contribute to listening comprehension when they are integrated into structured learning tasks.
- Podcast activities can also support oral communication when learners summarize, discuss, role-play, or produce their own spoken content rather than remaining passive listeners.
- Generative AI can assist in creating, adapting, and differentiating scripts, questions, and follow-up activities, which may make podcast materials more responsive to learner level and instructional goals.
- AI-generated language and audio require teacher review for accuracy, naturalness, pronunciation, cultural suitability, and pedagogical relevance.
- The most balanced model uses AI to support preparation and personalization while preserving learner-generated speech and direct human interaction as central elements of language learning.

### **Conclusion**

AI-supported podcasts can provide a flexible way to connect listening practice with oral communication in foreign language education. Their value does not come from the novelty of the technology alone, but from the instructional sequence in which the audio is used. When learners prepare for a topic, listen for meaning, revisit difficult sections, and then respond through discussion or spoken tasks, the podcast becomes more than a listening file; it becomes a starting point for active language use.

Generative AI can make this process easier to design by helping teachers adapt content, vary difficulty, and prepare supporting activities. Yet the teacher remains responsible for the quality of the input and for creating opportunities in which learners speak for themselves. AI is therefore most useful as a supportive tool that broadens access to practice while leaving linguistic judgment, communicative purpose, and human interaction at the center of the learning process.

### **Recommendations**

- ❖ Design relatively short podcast episodes that match learners' proficiency levels and have clear listening and communication objectives.
- ❖ Use generative AI to support script preparation, adaptation, and activity design, but review all generated language and audio before classroom use.
- ❖ Connect every listening task to meaningful post-listening activities such as discussion, oral summary, role-play, or problem-solving so that learners actively reuse the language they hear.
- ❖ Provide teacher training on responsible AI use and conduct future field studies that measure the actual effects of AI-supported podcasts on listening and oral communication across different languages and proficiency levels.

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