



From Authentic to “Authenticized”: Reconceptualizing Language Teacher Identity and AI-Driven Materials

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Abstract

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) creates a pivotal moment for language teacher identity (LTI), introducing productive tensions as educators navigate technological change (Lan, 2024). LTI is a complex construct, understood as the active, conscious way teachers perceive themselves and are perceived by others within their professional roles (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004). The digital age demands a reconceptualization of this identity. This paper reflects on how AI tools afford teachers new pedagogical agency whereby they produce “authenticized” materials—AI-generated content that feels authentic to learners—to create listening tasks tailored to curricular goals.

This approach addresses the persistent gap between authentic materials, such as podcasts, which are often too difficult for L2 learners (Griffiths, 1990; Richards, 2006) and traditional created materials, which can lack engagement and feel unnatural (Ellis, 1999; Moorhouse & Wong, 2025). This article first examines these challenges in L2 listening instruction. It then introduces AI-generated podcasts as “authenticized” input, discusses specific GenAI podcasting tools enabling their creation, and analyzes the implications for teacher agency and the new digital GenAI competencies required (Kildé, 2024; Satvati et al., 2025).

Keywords: Language Teacher Identity, Artificial Intelligence, Listening Comprehension, Teacher Agency, “authenticized” Materials

1. Introduction

Listening comprehension provides learners with essential linguistic input needed for vocabulary growth, phonological awareness, grammar learning, and understanding meaning in context [32, 55]. Nevertheless, listening instruction often receives less focus in language classrooms compared to reading, writing, or speaking [9, 40, 51, 61, 46]. This frequently leaves learners unprepared for the diverse conditions of real-world communication, such as variations in speed, accent, and formality [5, 36]. Processing speech in real time places significant cognitive demands on learners, especially novices [7, 59, 60], yet listening is often treated more to test comprehension than as a skill to be actively taught [25, 56]. Furthermore, the common use of scripted or formal classroom materials often fails to prepare students for authentic, unscripted interactions [5, 8, 13, 21, 36, 47, 64]. This limited exposure restricts familiarity with natural speech variations, and learners may face significant challenges when encountering authentic spoken language outside structured academic environments.

Podcasting technology offers a valuable resource for increasing listening opportunities due to its flexibility and wide range of content [24, 45, 50, 53]. Empirical studies indicate that podcasts can support active learning and facilitate linguistic acquisition [65]. However, most publicly available podcasts are produced for native speakers and are often too challenging for beginning or intermediate L2 learners because of assumed background knowledge and linguistic complexity [22, 26, 52]. While specially created materials offer pedagogical control, they might lack the richness of real language and can feel flat or unnatural [17, 46]. If a language teacher would want to create professional-quality podcasts about a specific topic and targeting grammatical she to be practiced, she would require considerable time to write a script and expensive resources, such as renting a professional studio [29].

This article introduces the concept of “authenticized” materials—pedagogical resources generated with Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) designed to combine the perceived authenticity of naturally occurring language with the pedagogical structuring sought by the teacher [12, 41]. The capabilities afforded by GenAI tools, from the quick production of texts, images, audio and music, potentially shifts L2



teacher agency, positioning educators more as creative content designers than just consumers of materials [29, 54, 67]. Such a change carries implications for professional identity and requires new digital GenAI competencies, including critical GenAI literacy and prompt engineering skills, leveraging technology across learning settings [28, 44, 54, 46].

To develop this argument, the following sections examine challenges in L2 listening instruction and the limits of current materials. The concept of AI-generated podcasts as “authenticized” input is then introduced as a potential solution. Subsequently, specific GenAI podcasting tools enabling their creation are discussed, leading to an analysis of implications for teacher agency, professional identity, and the need for critical pedagogical approaches in the age of AI.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Podcasting in L2 Learning

The term “podcast,” a blend of “iPod” and “broadcast,” was coined back in 2004 [45] and refers to a digital audio file consisting of one or two “hosts” discussing a given topic that the user can stream or download. Since then, podcasts have become an integral part of our digital lives and educational landscape.

A key aspect of podcasts is their flexibility: the listener can play “anytime, anywhere,” which fits perfectly with modern learning habits [53]. As Evans [18] pointed out, students today expect to be able to learn on the go, making podcasts “versatile, reusable, interesting, and stimulating” for today’s young learners [45, p. 15].

Podcasts have been attracting the interest of second language (SLA) acquisition scholars for their potential benefits to second language (L2) listening comprehension skills. Learners can download a file and listen to it over and over—on their commute, at the gym, or between classes. This kind of repetition, or iteration as Larsen-Freeman [37] frames it within Dynamic Systems Theory, is a powerful way to reinforce the material, allowing understanding to transform with each engagement. Hearing the content spoken aloud also adds layers of meaning—like tone, prosody, and emphasis—that plain text is not able to match, increasing retention [16]. The ability to pause, rewind, and replay helps students master complex ideas at their own speed [42].

For language learners, podcasts offer examples of L2 accents, idioms, and cultural contexts that are seldom present in language textbooks, helping them refine listening skills, improve pronunciation, and build fluency [43]. When used in a “flipped” classroom—where students listen before class practice—podcasts have been shown to improve their linguistic progress while promoting learner autonomy [43]. Empirical investigations consistently demonstrate that podcasts facilitate accessible exposure to authentic linguistic input for learners [3, 2, 27, 24].

Quantitative studies provide robust support for these claims. For instance, Abdulrahman et al. [1] reported that Indonesian secondary school students utilizing podcasts surpassed their counterparts in conventional instruction, with the experimental cohort exhibiting heightened motivation, improved vocabulary retention, and elevated self-efficacy. Similarly, Widodo and Gunawan [63] documented notable advancements in comprehension of primary concepts and inferential reasoning among Jakarta-based learners. Among university students with limited proficiency, Yazmin and Clara [65] observed that 74% achieved listening score improvements post-intervention, while a questionnaire revealed 90% enhanced understanding and 78% greater confidence.

Further analysis underscores the efficacy even for underperforming groups. Rahmi et al. [51] indicated that initial low achievers demonstrated substantial progress through podcast integration, ultimately exceeding the control group’s performance, which declined over time. Such outcomes align with the micro-learning paradigm inherent in podcasts, characterized by concise, targeted episodes that conform to comprehensible input hypotheses [20, 22].

Podcasts demonstrate considerable promise in enhancing listening competencies when deployed strategically. They cultivate motivation, deliver genuine linguistic immersion, and accommodate techniques such as narrow listening, involving iterative engagement with constrained thematic or phonetic elements [15]. This versatility positions podcasts as integral to Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) frameworks. Kukulska-Hulme [33] early identified mobile modalities as transformative, seamlessly connecting structured and incidental learning spheres.



Recent syntheses affirm these benefits. A meta-analysis by Li [39] established MALL interventions, encompassing podcasts, as exerting a statistically significant positive influence on auditory skills. Given the ubiquity of personal devices, podcasts enable perpetual access, thereby amplifying cumulative exposure and learner independence [33, 57]. Moreover, their synergy with collaborative platforms, such as discussion forums, further amplifies engagement [4].

Nevertheless, limitations persist in podcast application. Audio content designed for native audiences may impose prohibitive cognitive demands on novices, engendering frustration rather than proficiency [26]. This issue perpetuates longstanding deliberations in pedagogy regarding authentic versus contrived resources. Authentic inputs, emblematic of “real” discourse risks to be overwhelming for beginners [52, 11]. In contrast, pedagogically-crafted materials offer targeted scaffolding, rendering them preferable for foundational stages [14, 17]. Yet, as Moorhouse and Wong [46] contend, such artifacts frequently lack vivacity, diminishing the subtleties of spontaneous communication.

One possibility would be for L2 teachers to create their own podcasts, yet Kılıçkaya and Kic-Drgas [29] delineate two primary constraints: temporal and material demands. Contemporary learners anticipate professional-grade audio fidelity, necessitating costly hardware and expertise that many instructors lack. Compounding this, the cycle of conceptualization, narration, and refinement demands extensive investment of time.

GenAI could be a solution. AI-driven platforms enable the expeditious generation of customized, superior podcasts at minimal cost using Text to Speech technology (TTS) [41]. Consequently, AI could reconcile the merits of didactic materials with the motivational appeal of authentic inputs.

2.2. AI-Generated “Authenticized” Input

Artificial Intelligence presents a novel way to address the challenge of sourcing suitable L2 listening materials [41]. Chatbots like ChatGPT and Google’s Gemini, show sophisticated abilities in generating human-like text and speech [46, 67], enabling highly customized educational content creation [12, 48, 29]. Based on this potential, this article proposes the concept of “authenticized” input: AI-generated pedagogical materials designed to replicate the qualities of authentic resources (like varied voices, conversational flow, natural pacing) while being guided entirely by the teacher’s pedagogical goals and input materials.

“Authenticized” input can be a middle ground, distinct from unmodified authentic materials, which are often too hard or contextually inappropriate for learners [23, 52] and traditional created materials, which are often found to be less engaging or overly simplified [17, 22]. By leveraging advanced TTS technology that convincingly replicates natural prosody, intonation, and varied accents, these AI-generated resources achieve high perceptual authenticity [34, 41]. Crucially, educators retain control over linguistic elements like vocabulary selection, sentence structure complexity, and potentially even speech rate, allowing precise tailoring for comprehensibility (i+1) and alignment with specific learning objectives [41, 32]. This controlled generation process enables teachers to manage cognitive load effectively [60]. This approach bridges the gap noted by Tomlinson [58] between purely instructional materials and genuine communication, offering a blend of pedagogical usefulness (controllability, relevance) and the perceived realism needed for learner engagement and motivation.

2.3. AI Podcasting Platforms

Several platforms now leverage GenAI to facilitate the creation of audio content, including podcasts suitable for educational use. This section details two such tools: Google’s NotebookLM, and Jellypod, highlighting their functionalities relevant to generating “authenticized” listening materials.

Google’s NotebookLM (<https://notebooklm.google/>) positions itself as a GenAI research and writing assistant grounded in user-provided source materials. Users upload documents (PDFs, Google Docs, text files), web URLs, or even YouTube video transcripts, creating a personalized knowledge base. NotebookLM then allows users to query this specific content, generate summaries with inline citations, create FAQs, study guides, and more, ensuring outputs remain tethered to the provided sources.

Its most relevant feature for creating listening materials is the “Audio Overview.” Unlike basic TTS, this function synthesizes the core information from the uploaded sources into a conversational podcast-style dialogue between two distinct AI voices (one male, one female). The resulting audio aims to simulate an



engaging discussion based on the source material, not merely read it aloud. This process takes a few minutes, typically yielding a 10-20 minute audio file. Users can guide the focus of the discussion using a steering prompt (up to 500 characters), although direct control over voice selection or exact duration is limited.

Crucially, NotebookLM supports source documents in over 35 languages and can generate the Audio Overview in over 50 languages. This makes it a powerful tool for creating L2 listening materials based on authentic texts (e.g., summarizing an Italian news article in a conversational Italian podcast). While multilingual support is still evolving, the platform's ability to generate grounded, conversational audio in multiple languages, currently for free, makes it highly valuable for educators seeking to create "authenticized" podcasts.

Jellypod (<https://jellypod.ai/>) is a dedicated platform for creating AI-generated podcasts from various inputs, offering more extensive customization than NotebookLM. It accepts text, uploaded documents (PDFs, presentations, spreadsheets), web URLs, YouTube videos, and even audio or image files as source material.

Jellypod's platform analyzes the input, generates a structured script (often segmented), and assigns dialogue to different AI "hosts." Users can review and edit this script before the final audio rendering. The audio is produced using advanced TTS technology designed to create natural-sounding, multi-voice conversations [34]. The platform emphasizes mimicking human conversational dynamics, aligning well with the goal of creating perceptually authentic listening input. Student feedback often indicates these TTS voices sound acceptably authentic [41].

Jellypod's key strength lies in total customization of the output. Users can select from a library of AI voices, define host personas (name, accent, gender, backstory), and even clone their own voice for use as a host using "Magic Voice Design." This allows for significant tailoring of the listening experience. Jellypod supports podcast generation in more than 25 languages.

Unlike the currently free NotebookLM, Jellypod operates on a "freemium" model. The free tier offers limited generation credits but allows access to premium voices and basic features. Paid tiers provide more credits, additional voice clones, and wider distribution options. While potentially requiring a subscription for extensive use, Jellypod offers educators greater control over the final audio output's script, voice characteristics, and overall production compared to NotebookLM.

3. The Evolving Identity of the Language Teacher in the Age of AI

This article thus positions AI-generated "authenticized" input as a notable pedagogical innovation for L2 listening. It acknowledges the value of authentic materials [23, 58] while addressing their frequent inaccessibility for developing learners [22, 26, 52] and the practical difficulty teachers face in creating or adapting them [29, 41]. It also moves beyond traditional created materials [17], which may lack engagement, by leveraging advanced AI and TTS technology for greater perceived authenticity and relevance. By introducing "authenticized" input via accessible AI podcasting tools like NotebookLM and Jellypod, this work addresses the critical need for comprehensible, engaging, and targeted listening resources that can be efficiently produced by educators. This approach views technology not merely as a tool but as a generative partner, empowering educators as creators [12, 62] and potentially reshaping teacher identity and agency within the evolving landscape of language education [28, 44, 54, 67].

The integration of GenAI into educational contexts is prompting a significant re-evaluation of language teacher identity (LTI) and agency [28, 54, 67]. This shift extends beyond the mere adoption of new technological tools; it suggests a potential, fundamental transformation of professional roles and responsibilities. Current scholarship indicates that GenAI is profoundly altering the landscape of language teaching, sparking critical discussions about necessary adaptations, evolving skill sets, and the redefinition of teacher expertise in environments increasingly influenced by AI [28, 30, 38, 44, 46, 67].

Emerging studies suggest that GenAI is repositioning the teacher's role from being the primary dispenser of knowledge to acting more as a facilitator, curator, and collaborator within an AI-enhanced learning ecosystem [49, 67]. Zhai [67] proposes a developmental framework outlining a potential progression for teachers engaging with GenAI, moving through stages conceptualized as "Observer," "Adopter," "Collaborator," and ultimately "Innovator." Each stage reflects increasing levels of engagement, critical integration, and pedagogical agency. Successfully navigating this evolution necessitates the development of new "digital AI competencies" [28, p. 7], which involve not only technical proficiency but also



sophisticated pedagogical integration strategies, often conceptualized through frameworks like TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge), adapted for the GenAI era [28, 67, 46]. The case study by Mena Octavio et al. [44] illustrates this well, detailing how an EFL teacher developed advanced skills in “prompt crafting” and critical evaluation of AI outputs, thereby embodying a professional identity focused on effectively adapting and mediating GenAI tools for pedagogical purposes. Indeed, positive teacher perceptions, coupled with adequate knowledge and training, are identified as key factors for effective and meaningful integration [28, 67].

GenAI tools particularly amplify teacher creativity, empowering educators to transition into roles as active content creators rather than passive users of pre-existing materials [12, 29, 44, 62, 67]. GenAI assistants can significantly reduce the time and effort involved in producing diverse, interactive, and personalized learning resources [29, 41, 44, 46], an advantage particularly pronounced in contexts where conventional resources are scarce or inadequate [12]. The ability to generate tailored texts, scaffolded activities, formative assessments [29], or custom audio like the podcasts discussed in this article allows teachers to bypass the limitations of standardized textbooks or generic online materials. This enables the design of learning experiences meticulously aligned with specific student needs, proficiency levels, interests, and learning goals [12, 44, 66].

However, this transformative potential is accompanied by significant challenges. Concerns regarding academic integrity (e.g., AI-driven cheating), the perpetuation of algorithmic bias present in training data, data privacy issues, and the fundamental need for critical evaluation of AI outputs are prominent themes in the literature [30, 44, 46, 67, 68]. These challenges underscore the necessity for the evolving teacher identity to incorporate strong critical AI literacy [31, 38, 44, 46]. Successful and ethical integration hinges not only on individual teacher competencies but also requires robust professional development programs and supportive institutional policies [28, 54, 67, 46]. Crucially, scholars consistently emphasize that AI should serve to augment rather than replace human educators, highlighting the indispensable role of human pedagogical expertise, critical judgment, and relational skills [30, 41, 44, 46].

While existing research provides valuable insights into the broad impact of GenAI on teacher roles [28, 67], there has been comparatively less focus on how specific AI content generation capabilities, particularly in modalities like audio, reshape LTI specifically around the practice of material creation. Much of the current discussion addresses general AI integration aspects such as lesson planning support, automated assessment, and feedback mechanisms [28, 38, 44, 46]. This article contributes by specifically examining how AI podcasting tools facilitate the creation of “authenticized” listening input, thereby positioning teachers more firmly as creative designers within their practice. This perspective builds upon the recognized potential of AI to enhance creativity [12, 62] by offering a concrete mechanism—AI audio generation—through which teachers can exercise increased agency [67] in addressing the specific pedagogical challenges associated with sourcing effective L2 listening materials [41]. This application provides a practical pathway for teachers to progress toward the more agentic ‘Collaborator’ and ‘Innovator’ roles conceptualized by Zhai [67], specifically within the domain of listening instruction.

4. Discussion

This article has explored the potential of GenAI, specifically through AI podcasting platforms like NotebookLM and Jellypod, to address persistent challenges in L2 listening comprehension by enabling the creation of “authenticized” input. This approach, which carefully blends the perceived realism desirable from authentic materials with the essential pedagogical control offered by created resources, represents a significant and timely innovation in language education. It provides educators with efficient and accessible tools [41, 46] to generate customized listening materials tailored to specific learner needs, proficiency levels, and curricular goals. This capability offers a pathway to potentially overcome the inherent limitations of both unmodified authentic content (often too complex) and traditional didactic materials (often lacking engagement) [23, 52, 58].

Valid counterarguments focus on the fidelity gap between synthetic speech and genuine human interaction; current AI voices, despite advancements, may still lack the full spectrum of authentic emotional expression found in human speech [19], subtle prosodic variations indicative of pragmatic meaning, and the unpredictable pauses or disfluencies characteristic of natural, spontaneous conversation [41]. Over-reliance on such materials might inadvertently limit learners’ exposure to the very complexities and nuances they need to navigate in real-world communication [6]. Moreover, persistent



challenges surrounding AI bias embedded in training data (which can perpetuate stereotypes or exclude diverse linguistic varieties), the potential for factual inaccuracies or “hallucinations” in generated content, ongoing data privacy concerns, and complex questions of academic integrity and copyright remain pertinent considerations [30, 44, 46, 67, 68].

These limitations underscore the necessity of a critically mediated pedagogical approach, reinforcing, rather than diminishing, the teacher's vital role as evaluator and facilitator [29, 46]. The argument presented here advocates for AI as a tool for augmentation and assistance, not outright replacement of human pedagogical judgment [30, 41]. “Authenticized” materials are likely most effective when strategically integrated as a complement within a diverse ecosystem of listening inputs, used alongside, rather than instead of, genuine authentic materials (e.g., real-world podcasts, conversations, media). The teacher's evolving professional identity must, therefore, encompass strong critical evaluation skills [44, 67], requiring them to meticulously vet AI-generated content for linguistic accuracy, cultural appropriateness, potential biases, and alignment with pedagogical goals (cf. [44, 29]). Decisions regarding the balance between “authenticized” and authentic input necessitate nuanced pedagogical judgment informed by factors such as learner proficiency levels (perhaps utilizing more “authenticized” input in earlier stages to build foundational skills), specific learning objectives (e.g., targeting particular linguistic structures versus developing global comprehension and pragmatic awareness), and the ultimate goal of scaffolding learners toward processing fully authentic, unscripted speech encountered in real-world interactions.

Successfully navigating these complexities demands that educators develop enhanced digital AI competencies and critical literacy [28, 31, 38, 44], capabilities that must be fostered through robust and ongoing professional development initiatives [46, 54, 67]. Ultimately, these challenges serve to reinforce the centrality of teacher expertise, judgment, and ethical considerations in the age of AI [29, 46].

5. Conclusion

Looking ahead, future research should focus on empirically investigating the impact of “authenticized” listening input on various L2 learning outcomes (linguistic, metacognitive, affective) compared to traditional and purely authentic materials across diverse learner populations and educational contexts. Further exploration into optimal prompt engineering strategies specifically tailored for generating high-quality educational audio [44, 46] and examining the long-term effects of sustained AI integration on the evolution of LTI and teacher agency [54, 67] represent crucial areas for investigation. From a practical and policy standpoint, there is the need for comprehensive, ongoing professional development initiatives. These programs must equip language teachers with the necessary technical skills, pedagogical frameworks, and critical literacy to navigate and leverage AI responsibly and effectively [28, 46, 54]. As stressed by Koh and Doroudi [30] and Moorhouse and Wong [46], understanding both the potential affordances and the inherent pitfalls is paramount to harnessing these powerful tools for meaningful pedagogical enhancement, rather than superficial adoption.

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