

INTEGRATING CHATGPT AS A LISTENING ASSISTANT IN SECONDARY EFL CLASSES: BENEFITS AND LIMITATIONS

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Abstract: The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies such as ChatGPT into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms offers new possibilities for enhancing listening comprehension and learner engagement. This paper explores the pedagogical value and limitations of using ChatGPT as a listening assistant in secondary EFL classes, with a focus on the Uzbek educational context. ChatGPT, when combined with text-to-speech or speech recognition tools, provides opportunities for real-time, interactive listening practice, allowing learners to engage in simulated conversations, receive immediate clarification, and adjust the complexity of input based on their proficiency. These features promote learner autonomy, metacognitive strategy use, and increased exposure to English input in a low-anxiety environment. However, several limitations exist, including a lack of natural prosody, challenges in simulating authentic discourse, and infrastructural constraints in under-resourced schools. Additionally, the overuse of AI-generated content without pedagogical mediation can hinder critical thinking and pragmatic development. The study concludes that when integrated into a blended learning approach—alongside teacher guidance and authentic materials—ChatGPT can be a valuable tool in supporting listening development in EFL learners, provided that digital literacy and access barriers are addressed.

Keywords : ChatGPT, listening instruction, EFL learners, secondary education, artificial intelligence in education, AI-assisted learning, listening comprehension, digital pedagogy, learner autonomy, Uzbekistan.

The integration of conversational Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms has opened new pedagogical pathways, especially in developing learners' listening comprehension and interactive skills. While ChatGPT is predominantly known as a text-based AI model, recent advancements in multimodal and speech-enabled versions have enabled it to serve as a listening assistant, simulating conversational listening practice and interactive dialogues. This article explores the benefits and limitations of incorporating ChatGPT as a listening assistant in secondary EFL classes, with a focus on the Uzbek educational context where digital transformation is emerging and pedagogical innovations are being gradually embraced.

One of the most significant benefits of using ChatGPT as a listening assistant is the availability of authentic and adaptive conversational practice. Traditional listening materials often lack interactivity and are based on static audio recordings that offer little room for learner response or feedback. In contrast, ChatGPT allows learners to engage in dynamic interactions, where they can ask questions, clarify meanings, and even receive tailored explanations. When integrated with speech recognition software or paired with text-to-speech features, ChatGPT can simulate spoken conversations, providing learners with both input and output opportunities essential for listening development.

Another key advantage lies in ChatGPT's responsiveness and flexibility. The AI can adjust its language complexity, speed, and topic based on the learner's proficiency level. For secondary school learners in Uzbekistan, who may have limited exposure to spoken English outside the

classroom, this provides a scalable and learner-centered method for listening practice. ChatGPT can act as a supportive environment for low-stakes listening rehearsal, reducing learners' anxiety and boosting confidence before engaging in formal assessments or real-life communication.

ChatGPT also supports the development of metacognitive listening strategies. For example, when students are confused or unable to understand a segment, they can request ChatGPT to repeat, rephrase, or summarize content. This facilitates active listening behaviors such as self-monitoring and clarification-seeking, which are essential for becoming autonomous language learners. In this way, the model not only serves as a tool for language exposure but also trains learners in strategies to manage and repair communication breakdowns.

However, integrating ChatGPT as a listening assistant is not without its limitations. One critical concern is the absence of natural human voice and prosody in many applications, especially when learners use only the text interface. While text-to-speech technology can convert ChatGPT's responses into audio, these voices may still lack natural intonation, emotional variation, and cultural nuance found in authentic speech. As a result, students may miss the opportunity to develop advanced listening skills related to tone, sarcasm, or emotion recognition, which are crucial in real-life communication.

Moreover, ChatGPT may not always accurately simulate authentic spoken discourse. Its responses are often grammatically clean and structurally formal, differing from the fragmented, idiomatic, and interactive features of real conversation. For Uzbek learners who need exposure to informal or regional varieties of English, reliance on ChatGPT alone may create a gap in pragmatic competence. Teachers, therefore, need to balance ChatGPT-based practice with exposure to real human interactions through videos, podcasts, or in-class dialogues.

Technical and infrastructural challenges also limit the widespread adoption of ChatGPT in Uzbek secondary schools. Many institutions still lack sufficient internet access, computer labs, or personal student devices. Moreover, there is a digital literacy gap among teachers and students alike, which may hinder the effective and safe use of AI tools. Without proper training and guidance, learners may use ChatGPT passively or for irrelevant tasks, reducing its instructional value. Ensuring safe, pedagogically-aligned, and age-appropriate use of ChatGPT requires clear policy frameworks and teacher support.

Another pedagogical concern is the risk of overreliance on AI-generated content. ChatGPT may occasionally provide oversimplified or factually incorrect information, especially in complex or ambiguous language contexts. Teachers must act as mediators who guide students in critically evaluating AI outputs, distinguishing between correct and misleading information, and fostering digital discernment. Developing these critical AI literacy skills should be part of a broader digital citizenship curriculum.

Despite these limitations, the potential of ChatGPT to transform listening instruction in EFL classrooms remains substantial. Its ability to offer endless conversational practice, adapt to learner needs, and support interactive listening strategies makes it a valuable supplementary tool. For optimal integration, it is recommended that ChatGPT be used in blended formats—combined with teacher-led instruction, peer collaboration, and real-world audio content. Teachers should receive training in designing AI-enhanced tasks, such as listening quizzes based on AI interactions, pronunciation shadowing with AI feedback, or role-playing exercises with ChatGPT as a virtual character.

In conclusion, the use of ChatGPT as a listening assistant in secondary EFL classes offers both pedagogical promise and practical challenges. When thoughtfully integrated, it can enrich the listening experience, promote learner autonomy, and supplement traditional instruction. However, to maximize its educational value, educators and policymakers must address technological gaps, provide teacher training, and ensure that AI tools are used to complement—not replace—human interaction and authentic communication experiences. As technology continues to evolve, its alignment with educational goals will determine its long-term impact on language learning in Uzbekistan and beyond.

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