**Listening (10 marks)**

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| **Situation:**  During your research on the impacts of generative AI on language diversity, you came across a podcast on how GenAI is reshaping communication and education worldwide. Listen to the podcast and answer the following questions.  You will hear **TWO** excerpts from the podcast. Each recording will be played **ONCE** only. |

**Multiple-choice Questions (4 marks; 1 mark each)**

Listen to the recording and answer the following questions:

1. How does AI primarily help break down global communication barriers?

a) By forcing people to learn a single common language.

b) By developing advanced global networking platforms.

c) By providing instant translations and grammar corrections.

d) By simplifying complex linguistic structures for everyone.

1. What is a significant benefit of AI for minority and endangered languages?

a) It creates completely new vocabularies for them.

b) It standardizes their dialects to make them easier to learn.

c) It limits their usage to academic research purposes only.

d) It helps preserve them and share their culture globally.

1. What misconception about AI's effect on language is addressed by the speakers?

a) That it primarily supports only one or two major languages.

b) That it will lead to all people writing in a similar way.

c) That it makes language learning much more difficult for students.

d) That it struggles with translating highly emotional content.

1. How does AI transform how students learn, according to the discussion?

a) By editing student’s work in grammar, vocabulary, and structure.

b) By offering personalized support and targeted feedback.

c) By analyzing traditional teaching materials.

d) By requiring students to learn complex new coding languages.

**Summary Cloze (6 marks; 1 mark each)**

Listen to the recording and fill in the blanks with **NO MORE THAN** **THREE WORDS.**

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| **Notes for “Language in the Digital Age” Podcast**   1. **How do AI developers address cultural concerns?**   AI developers can:   * overcome (5) biases found in earlier language models * incorporate more varied data sets * partnering with global experts * create more (6) culturally sensitive AI systems  1. **Great Language Flattening: Threat or Opportunity for Human Languages?**   **AI aims:**   * not to (7) suppress / erase humans’ voice, but to *amplify* them * to make communication more (8) accessible   **Humans should:**   * use AI’s power to enrich language and preserve cultural (9) diversity * enjoy AI's advantages, but also be aware of its (10) limitations / potential biases |

**Transcript of Listening Material**

**ALEX**: Welcome back to “Language in the Digital Age,” the podcast where we explore how technology is reshaping the way we communicate. I’m Alex.

**JAMIE**: And I’m Jamie. Today, we’re taking a deep dive into a fascinating and sometimes controversial topic: the so-called “Great Language Flattening.” But instead of focusing on the fears about AI homogenizing language, we’re going to explore how AI is actually enhancing communication and education worldwide.

**ALEX**: That’s right. The phrase “Great Language Flattening” has been used to describe the concern that AI-generated text might make all writing sound the same—losing the rich diversity of voices, styles, and cultural nuances that make language so vibrant. But Jamie, from what I’ve been seeing, this narrative only tells part of the story.

**JAMIE**: Exactly, Alex. Let’s start by looking at how AI is breaking down barriers in global communication. One of the most powerful ways AI helps is by supporting people who speak different languages or who are still learning a new language. Tools like real-time translation and grammar correction have made it easier than ever for non-native speakers to participate in conversations that used to feel out of reach.

**ALEX**: Yeah, and it’s not just about making English easier to write. AI platforms are increasingly supporting minority and endangered languages. For example, Google Translate and other AI-driven language tools have expanded their databases to include dozens of less commonly spoken languages. This is huge because it helps preserve those languages and gives speakers a way to share their culture and ideas on a global stage.

**JAMIE**: That’s a really important point. There’s a misconception that AI will push everyone toward one standardized way of writing, but in reality, these tools are helping to keep many languages alive and relevant in the digital age. It’s a kind of linguistic democratization.

**ALEX**: And this democratization extends to education as well. AI is transforming how students learn by offering personalized support that traditional classrooms often can’t provide. For instance, AI-powered writing assistants can analyze a student’s work and give targeted feedback on grammar, vocabulary, and structure, helping learners improve at their own pace.

**JAMIE**: I’ve seen this in action with students who struggle with writing in their second or third language. AI tools act like personal tutors, providing instant feedback that helps reduce anxiety and build confidence. This kind of support is invaluable, especially in large classrooms where teachers can’t always give every student one-on-one attention.

**ALEX**: Speaking of teachers, AI isn’t just helping students; it’s also a huge asset for educators. Many teachers spend hours grading papers and preparing lessons. AI can automate some of these routine tasks, freeing educators to focus more on creative teaching and meaningful interaction with students.

**JAMIE**: Absolutely. And beyond just efficiency, AI can actually foster creativity. It can generate writing prompts, help brainstorm ideas, or even simulate conversations with historical figures or literary characters. This kind of interactive learning encourages students to think critically and explore new perspectives.

**ALEX**: That’s a great point. One of the fears people have is that AI will make writing bland or overly standardized. But actually, AI can serve as a starting point—a scaffold that students can build on and personalize. It models clear, effective communication, which is especially helpful for learners who might not have had strong language support before.

**JAMIE**: Right. And the best educational approaches encourage students to use AI as a tool, not a crutch. They learn to refine and adapt AI-generated content, injecting their own voice and cultural identity into their writing. So rather than erasing individuality, AI can help amplify it.

**ALEX**: Another important aspect is how AI developers are addressing cultural nuance. Early language models sometimes missed the mark by reflecting biases or overlooking diverse linguistic traditions. But now, there’s a growing effort to include more varied datasets and collaborate with linguists and educators worldwide to make AI more culturally sensitive.

**JAMIE**: This is crucial because language is deeply tied to identity and culture. By making AI tools more aware of these nuances, we can ensure they support, rather than suppress, the rich tapestry of human expression.

**ALEX**: So, Jamie, where does this leave us with the idea of the “Great Language Flattening”? Is it really a looming threat, or is it more of a transformation—one that opens up new possibilities for communication and learning?

**JAMIE**: I’d say it’s definitely a transformation. AI isn’t here to erase our voices; it’s here to amplify them, to make communication more accessible, and to help us all learn better. The challenge is how we use these tools. If we approach AI thoughtfully, we can harness its power to enrich language and preserve cultural diversity.

**ALEX**: And that means educators, developers, and users all have a role to play. We need to be critical but optimistic—embracing AI’s benefits while staying mindful of its limitations and potential biases.

**JAMIE**: Exactly. It’s about balance. Using AI to improve clarity and accessibility, while also encouraging creativity and individuality. The future of language is not about flattening but about evolving—becoming more inclusive and dynamic.

**ALEX**: Well said, Jamie. That’s a wrap for today’s episode of “Language in the Digital Age.” Thanks so much for joining us on this deep dive into AI and language.

**JAMIE**: Thanks everyone for listening! We hope this episode gave you some fresh perspectives on how AI is changing the way we communicate and learn. Until next time, keep exploring and keep expressing your unique voice.

**ALEX**: See you next time!

**JAMIE**: Bye!