

Real-time translation could end need to learn languages

6th October 2025



New technology from Apple could transform language learning and global communication. The tech giant says its new AirPods Pro 3 earbuds can translate foreign languages in people's ears in real time. In addition, transcripts of conversations will

automatically appear on the screens of users' devices. This could have major repercussions for the language teaching industry. Instant translation could deter people from investing the time and financial outlay required to learn another language. The technology is another example of the impact AI could have on jobs. Many teachers will be concerned about how real-time translation might affect their industry and their future.

Apple wrote on its website that its AirPods Pro 3 would help people communicate "seamlessly" in other languages. It added: "For those moments when a language barrier gets in the way, Live Translation can help users communicate across select languages when messaging or speaking." The technology is another example of science fiction becoming science fact. For the past century, people have foretold novel ways to translate languages in real time. The 1979 novel "The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy" envisaged a fictional "Babel fish" that is put in one's ear to understand foreign tongues. The Japanese manga and anime character Doraemon used a special jelly to magically translate any language.

Sources: apple.com / bbc.com / cnet.com

Writing

We will not need language teachers in the future. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

new technology / language learning / Apple / foreign languages / devices / translation / communicate / language barrier / messaging / speaking / science fiction / anime

True / False

- 1) The article said Apple made new headphones that translate languages. T / F
- 2) The new translation tool only translates the spoken word. T / F
- 3) The English language teaching industry welcomed the new tool. T / F
- 4) Many English teachers are worried about their futures. T / F
- 5) Apples new translation technology could enable perfect communication. T / F
- 6) The new tool is an example of science fiction becoming science fact. T / F
- 7) A 1979 book described a translation fish that is put in the ear. T / F
- 8) A Japanese manga character uses a cookie to translate languages. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. transform | a. reality |
| 2. transcripts | b. expenditure |
| 3. devices | c. predicted |
| 4. outlay | d. gadgets |
| 5. affect | e. imaginary |
| 6. seamlessly | f. alter |
| 7. fact | g. flawlessly |
| 8. foretold | h. written versions |
| 9. fictional | i. overseas |
| 10. foreign | j. impact |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) Why are you studying English?
- c) When have you experienced a language barrier?
- d) What do you think of science fiction becoming science fact?
- e) What impact will real-time translation have on the world?
- f) What impact will real-time translation have on tourism?
- g) What do you think of the idea of just one global language?
- h) What questions would you like to ask a language teacher?

Phrase Match

1. transform language learning and
 2. conversations will automatically appear
 3. This could have major
 4. another example of the impact AI
 5. how real-time translation might
 6. help people communicate
 7. when a language
 8. science fiction becoming
 9. understand foreign
 10. a special jelly to magically
- a. repercussions
 - b. science fact
 - c. "seamlessly"
 - d. on the screens
 - e. translate any language
 - f. could have on jobs
 - g. global communication
 - h. tongues
 - i. affect their industry
 - j. barrier gets in the way

Discussion – Student B

- a) What do you think of language learning?
- b) What languages would you really like to learn?
- c) How can technology aid language learning?
- d) What do you think of real-time translation?
- e) Would you stop learning English with real-time translation?
- f) Which is better, learning English with a teacher or with AI?
- g) How would real-time translation change your life?
- h) What advice do you have for English teachers?

Spelling

1. rsritcptans of conversations
2. appear on the screens of users' vedseci
3. This could have major pinoreussresc
4. dtere people from investing
5. the time and financial ultayo required
6. translation might affect their uydtrsn
7. communicate yssemaell in other languages
8. a language ibrearr
9. people have edltoorf novel ways
10. vegseiadn a fictional "Babel fish"
11. understand foreign gtsoneu
12. used a special jelly to aigyalmc translate

Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. h	3. d	4. b	5. j
6. g	7. a	8. c	9. e	10. i

Comprehension Questions

Listen to / read the news article. Answer these questions.
(Answers are on p. 27 of the 27-page PDF.)

1.	What's the name of the Apple tool?
2.	Where will transcripts of the translations appear?
3.	What kind of repercussions could the tool have for language teaching?
4.	What could the tool stop people doing?
5.	What are language teachers worried about?
6.	What did Apple say might get in the way of communication?
7.	What does the article say science fiction has become?
8.	When was "The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy" written?
9.	What allowed people to understand "foreign tongues" in the book?
10.	What did a Japanese manga character use to translate languages?

Speaking – Language

Rank these with your partner. Put the best ways to learn a language at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- AI chatbots
- YouTube videos
- Grammar books
- Songs
- English schools
- Reading novels
- Study every day
- Vocabulary apps

Answers – True False

1 F	2 F	3 F	4 T	5 T	6 T	7 T	8 F
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.