

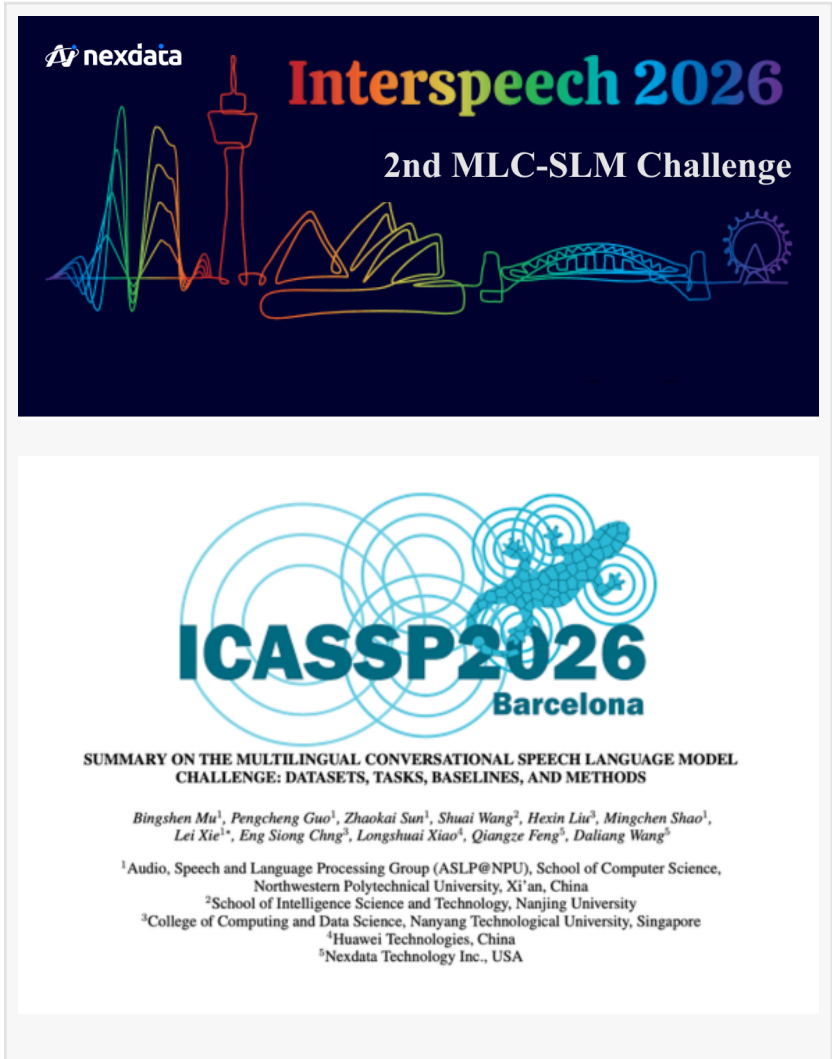
# 2nd MLC-SLM Challenge Launches, Advancing Multilingual Conversational Speech Understanding

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, April 13, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The 2nd Multilingual Conversational Speech Language Model (MLC-SLM) Challenge has officially opened for registration, inviting research teams and practitioners worldwide to participate. Built on a multilingual conversational speech training set covering 100+ languages and approximately 1,000 hours of data, this year's challenge focuses on key tasks including automatic speech recognition, speaker diarization, and machine translation (MT), with a focus on low-resource languages, further pushing speech language model research from simple transcription toward deeper conversational understanding.

Registration is open at <https://www.nexdata.com/inter-speech-2026/mlc-slm-challenge> and will close on May 15, 2026.

As speech language models continue to evolve, real-world multilingual conversations are becoming an increasingly important research direction. Unlike conventional ASR tasks, these scenarios involve multiple speakers, multi-turn interactions, and more complex acoustic and semantic information. Systems are expected not only to transcribe speech accurately, but also to determine who spoke when and ultimately understand the conversation as a whole.

The 2nd MLC-SLM Challenge is designed around this shift, focusing on multilingual conversational speech tasks that are closer to real application settings and providing an open



The image contains two promotional banners. The top banner is for the 'Interspeech 2026 2nd MLC-SLM Challenge' and features the Nexdata logo, a colorful waveform, and stylized outlines of the Sydney Opera House and a Ferris wheel. The bottom banner is for 'ICASSP 2026 Barcelona' and features a blue circular graphic with a dragon and the text 'SUMMARY ON THE MULTILINGUAL CONVERSATIONAL SPEECH LANGUAGE MODEL CHALLENGE: DATASETS, TASKS, BASELINES, AND METHODS'. Below this is a list of authors and their affiliations.

**Interspeech 2026**  
2nd MLC-SLM Challenge

**ICASSP 2026**  
Barcelona

SUMMARY ON THE MULTILINGUAL CONVERSATIONAL SPEECH LANGUAGE MODEL CHALLENGE: DATASETS, TASKS, BASELINES, AND METHODS

Bingshen Mu<sup>1</sup>, Pengcheng Guo<sup>1</sup>, Zhaokai Sun<sup>1</sup>, Shuai Wang<sup>2</sup>, Hexin Liu<sup>3</sup>, Mingchen Shao<sup>1</sup>, Lei Xie<sup>4\*</sup>, Eng Siong Chng<sup>5</sup>, Longshuai Xiao<sup>6</sup>, Qiangze Feng<sup>7</sup>, Daliang Wang<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Audio, Speech and Language Processing Group (ASLP@NPU), School of Computer Science, Northwestern Polytechnical University, Xi'an, China  
<sup>2</sup>School of Intelligence Science and Technology, Nanjing University  
<sup>3</sup>College of Computing and Data Science, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore  
<sup>4</sup>Huawei Technologies, China  
<sup>5</sup>Nexdata Technology Inc., USA

benchmark and international platform for Speech LLM research.

One of the most significant highlights of this year's challenge is the dataset. The training set contains approximately 2,100 hours of multilingual conversational speech spanning 11 languages: English, Spanish, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Hindi, Bengali, Vietnamese, and Thai. Among them, English contributes around 500 hours and includes diverse regional varieties such as US, UK, Australian, Indian, and Philippine English, while each of the other languages contributes roughly 100 hours. This expansion strengthens the challenge's foundation for multilingual conversational speech research in terms of scale, language coverage, and regional diversity.

The dataset is designed to better reflect real application scenarios. All recordings are natural two-speaker conversations, where participants discuss randomly assigned topics in a meaningful and fluent way. The audio was collected in quiet indoor environments using consumer devices such as iPhones, making the data closer to real-world collection conditions.

The dataset also includes real-time timestamps and speaker labels to support system development. In addition, Track 1 and Track 2 share the same training set, encouraging participants to explore unified modeling approaches across recognition, diarization, and conversational understanding.

The challenge includes two main tasks:

Track 1: Multilingual Conversational Speech Diarization and Recognition  
Track 2: Multilingual Conversational Speech Understanding

Unlike traditional speech benchmarks that focus primarily on transcription, the 2nd MLC-SLM Challenge places greater emphasis on multilingual, multi-speaker, and dialogue-level understanding. The evaluation setting does not provide prior information such as pre-segmented utterances or speaker labels, making the tasks closer to real deployment conditions.

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regions, generated 489 valid leaderboard submissions across two tracks, and received 14 high-quality technical reports. These results demonstrate the challenge's academic value and growing international visibility, further demonstrating the challenge's academic value and growing international visibility.

Registration opens March 30, 2026. Training data release April 10, 2026. Development set and baseline system release April 24, 2026. Evaluation set release and leaderboard open June 15, 2026. Leaderboard freeze and paper submission portal opens (CMT system) June 25, 2026. Paper submission deadline July 10, 2026. Notification of acceptance July 20, 2026. Workshop date October 2, 2026.

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By offering open data, realistic tasks, and an international exchange platform, the challenge aims to bring together more research teams to advance multilingual conversational speech language modeling. The launch of the second edition also provides a new benchmark for pushing speech language models from simply “hearing clearly” toward genuinely “understanding” conversations.

Registration Links: <https://forms.gle/jfAZ95abGy4ZiNHo7>  
Official Website: <https://www.nexdata.ai/competition/mlc-slm>

Nexdata  
MLC-SLM Competition Committee  
mlc-slmw@nexdata.ai

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