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**The Role of AI Chatbots in Speaking Practice:
A Comparative Analysis of Chatbot-Assisted vs.
Human-Assisted Practice in EFL Contexts**
**The Case of Third Year Students at English Department-
Kasdi Merbah University- Ouargla**

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Dedication

I wholeheartedly dedicate this work to:

My beloved family whose unwavering love, encouragement, and sacrifice have been the foundation of my academic journey. Your continuous support and understanding have motivated me and sustained me through every challenge;

My dear parents whose prayers, guidance, and unconditional love have always accompanied me throughout my academic path. They have always stood by me in moments of struggle and success;

My beloved brothers whose encouragement, support, and belief in me have always been a source of strength and motivation;

My friends who have supported me throughout this research journey with kindness and encouragement.

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Abstract

This study investigates the role of AI chatbots in speaking practice in EFL contexts through a comparative analysis of chatbot-assisted and human-assisted practice. It aims to explore students' perceptions of AI chatbots in relation to motivation, confidence, speaking anxiety, and perceived speaking improvement, as well as teachers' views on their effectiveness, limitations, and pedagogical integration. The study was conducted at the Department of English, Kasdi Merbah University, Ouargla, and adopted a mixed-method research design. Quantitative data were collected through a questionnaire administered to forty-three (43) third-year EFL students at the Department of English, while qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with four (4) EFL teachers from the same department. The questionnaire results were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics through frequencies and percentages, whereas the interview data were interpreted thematically. The findings revealed that students generally hold positive attitudes toward AI chatbots: 97.67% considered them easy to use, 95.35% felt comfortable speaking with them, 90.70% considered them effective for learning speaking, and 76.75% reported that their speaking level became better or much better. However, both students and teachers agreed that AI chatbots cannot fully replace teachers, mainly because human-assisted practice provides more authentic interaction, emotional support, and pedagogical guidance. The study concludes that AI chatbots can play a meaningful supportive role in EFL speaking practice when used as complementary tools alongside teacher-assisted instruction.

Keywords: AI chatbots, speaking practice, EFL learners, human-assisted practice, speaking anxiety, teacher guidance.

List of abbreviations

AI: Artificial Intelligence

AIED: Artificial Intelligence in Education

CALL: Computer-Assisted Language Learning

CEFR: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESP: English for Specific Purposes

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

NLP: Natural Language Processing

SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

TBLT: Task-Based Language Teaching

WTC: Willingness to Communicate

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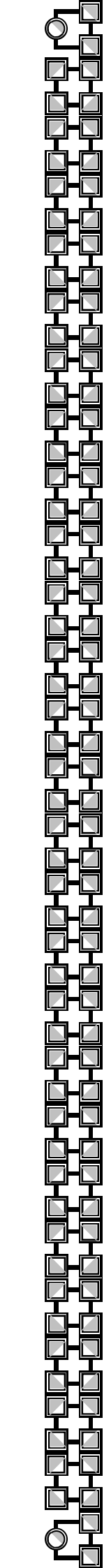
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General Introduction

1. Background of the study

Artificial intelligence (AI) has recently become an influential force in education, particularly in the field of language learning, where it has introduced new possibilities for interaction, personalization, and autonomous practice. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, AI-powered chatbots have emerged as innovative tools capable of simulating human-like conversations and supporting learners in practicing language skills beyond the traditional classroom setting. These tools are increasingly valued because they provide immediate responses, flexible access, and opportunities for repeated practice, which are especially beneficial in language learning environments where exposure to authentic communication is limited (Ding & Yusof, 2025; Du & Daniel, 2025). In this sense, AI chatbots represent a significant development in technology-enhanced language learning, as they offer learners a more interactive and individualized experience than many conventional learning resources.

Speaking is widely regarded as one of the most demanding skills in EFL learning because it requires the simultaneous use of linguistic knowledge, fluency, confidence, and interactional competence. Unlike receptive skills, speaking demands real-time production and spontaneous communication, which often make learners feel vulnerable and hesitant when using the target language. In many EFL classrooms, students are given limited opportunities to practice speaking due to large class sizes, insufficient time allocation, and teacher-centered instructional methods, all of which restrict meaningful oral participation (Goh & Burns, 2012). In addition, speaking is strongly associated with foreign language anxiety, a psychological factor that can negatively affect learners' willingness to participate and their overall oral performance. Therefore, effective speaking instruction requires not only sufficient opportunities for practice but also a supportive environment that helps learners build confidence and reduce anxiety (Bygate, 1987; Goh & Burns, 2012).

Within this framework, AI chatbots are viewed as promising tools for supporting speaking practice in EFL contexts because they are constantly available and less intimidating than face-to-face interaction. They may allow learners to practice more freely, repeat conversations, and develop confidence without the immediate pressure of being judged by others (Ding & Yusof, 2025). However, the extent to

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which AI chatbots can replace or equal human-assisted speaking practice remains debatable. While some studies highlight their potential in improving speaking performance and reducing anxiety, others emphasize that human interaction offers greater authenticity, emotional support, and pedagogical depth (Du & Daniel, 2025). Moreover, much of the existing research tends to focus on learners' performance, while less attention is given to the perceptions of both students and teachers. Therefore, this study seeks to explore these perceptions in order to provide a clearer understanding of the role of AI chatbots in speaking practice within EFL contexts.

2. Motivation of the Study

The motivation for this study arises from two main considerations. First, speaking remains one of the most difficult skills to teach and learn effectively in EFL contexts because it requires extensive practice, reduced anxiety, and sustained interaction. Second, AI chatbots have become increasingly accessible to students, yet their actual pedagogical role in speaking practice remains both theoretically and practically contested. For this reason, the present study is motivated by the need to examine not only whether chatbots are useful, but also how they are experienced and evaluated by the two principal classroom stakeholders: students and teachers.

Another motivation lies in the growing gap between technological availability and pedagogical clarity. Many learners already use AI tools informally for language practice, but teachers and institutions may not yet have a clear framework for evaluating their value, limitations, and appropriate role in instruction. Investigating students' and teachers' perceptions comparatively can therefore help clarify how AI chatbots may be integrated into speaking practice in a pedagogically meaningful way.

3. Statement of the Problem

Although AI chatbots are increasingly used in EFL contexts to provide flexible and continuous opportunities for speaking practice, their pedagogical value remains insufficiently understood, particularly when compared with human-assisted practice. Previous research has mainly focused on learning outcomes, while less attention has been given to how students and teachers perceive the usefulness, limitations, and suitability of chatbot-assisted speaking practice. This gap is significant because students may value chatbots for their accessibility and low-anxiety environment, whereas teachers may focus more on instructional reliability, feedback quality, and

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pedagogical appropriateness. Therefore, this study seeks to explore and compare students' and teachers' perceptions of AI chatbot-assisted and human-assisted speaking practice in EFL contexts through a mixed-method approach based on questionnaires and interviews.

4. Aim of the Study

The present study aims to investigate the role of AI chatbots in speaking practice among EFL learners at Kasdi Merbah University, Ouargla, through a comparative analysis of chatbot-assisted and human-assisted speaking practice.

More specifically, the study aims to:

1. Investigate students' perceptions of AI chatbot-assisted and human-assisted speaking practice in terms of motivation, confidence, speaking anxiety, and perceived improvement.
2. Explore teachers' perspectives on the effectiveness, challenges, and pedagogical implications of integrating AI chatbots into speaking practice.
3. Compare students' and teachers' perceptions in order to understand whether AI chatbots can complement or partially substitute human-assisted speaking practice in EFL classrooms at Kasdi Merbah University, Ouargla.

5. Research Questions

Since the adoption of educational technologies depends on both learners' experiences and teachers' evaluations, the present study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How do EFL students perceive AI chatbot-assisted speaking practice in comparison with human-assisted speaking practice in terms of motivation, confidence, speaking anxiety, and perceived improvement?
2. How do EFL teachers perceive the effectiveness, challenges, and pedagogical implications of integrating AI chatbots into speaking practice?
3. To what extent do students' and teachers' perceptions converge or diverge regarding the role of AI chatbots as a complement to, or partial substitute for, human-assisted speaking practice in EFL classrooms?

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6. Hypotheses

Based on the research questions, the present study proposes the following hypotheses:

1. **H1:** EFL students are expected to report positive perceptions of AI chatbot-assisted speaking practice, particularly in terms of motivation, confidence, reduced speaking anxiety, and perceived improvement.
2. **H2:** EFL teachers are expected to perceive AI chatbots as pedagogically useful tools for expanding speaking practice opportunities, while also recognizing limitations related to feedback quality, instructional control, and the authenticity of interaction.
3. **H3:** Students' and teachers' perceptions are expected to show some degree of divergence, with students likely to demonstrate higher acceptance of AI chatbot-assisted speaking practice than teachers. However, both groups are expected to view AI chatbots as complementary tools rather than complete substitutes for human-assisted speaking practice.

7. Methodology

This section outlines the methodological procedures followed in the present study. It briefly introduces the research design, the participants and research context, and the instruments used to collect data from both students and teachers.

This study employs a methodological framework designed to investigate both students' and teachers' perceptions of AI chatbot-assisted and human-assisted speaking practice in EFL contexts. To achieve a comprehensive understanding of the research problem, the study adopts a mixed-methods research design that combines quantitative and qualitative approaches.

7.1. Research Design

The research design determines the general direction of the study and the way data are collected and interpreted. In this study, a mixed-methods design is adopted because the topic requires both measurable data from students and detailed explanations from teachers.

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This study combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches. This design is appropriate because it allows the researcher to obtain a broader and deeper understanding of the research problem by collecting numerical data from students and interpretive data from teachers.

7.2. Participants and Research Context

The participants and context represent the field in which the study is carried out. They are important because they define the group from whom data are collected and the academic environment in which AI chatbot-assisted and human-assisted speaking practice are examined.

The study was conducted at the Department of English, Kasdi Merbah University, Ouargla. The participants consisted of forty-three (43) third-year EFL students and four (4) EFL teachers. The students were selected because they represent the target group directly involved in speaking practice and are therefore able to express their perceptions of chatbot-assisted and human-assisted speaking activities. The teachers were selected because of their teaching experience and their ability to provide informed perspectives on the pedagogical effectiveness and limitations of AI chatbots in EFL instruction.

7.3. Research Instruments

Research instruments are the tools used to collect the data needed to answer the research questions. In the present study, two instruments were used in order to obtain both students' quantitative responses and teachers' qualitative insights.

First, a questionnaire was administered to forty-three (43) third-year EFL students at the Department of English, Kasdi Merbah University, Ouargla. It aimed to collect quantitative data about their perceptions of AI chatbot-assisted versus human-assisted speaking practice, particularly in relation to motivation, confidence, speaking anxiety, and perceived improvement.

Second, a semi-structured interview was conducted with four (4) EFL teachers from the same department. It aimed to gather qualitative data about their views on the

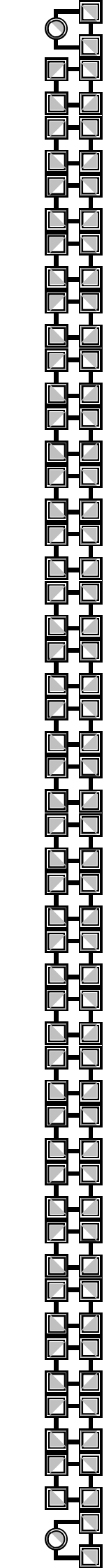
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effectiveness, challenges, and pedagogical implications of integrating AI chatbots into speaking practice.

8. Structure of the Dissertation

This section presents the overall organization of the dissertation. It helps the reader understand how the study is divided and how each chapter contributes to addressing the research problem.

This dissertation is organized into three chapters. Chapter One, entitled *Speaking Skills in the EFL Context: General Concepts and Challenges*, presents the theoretical foundations of speaking as an essential language skill and discusses the main difficulties EFL learners face in developing oral proficiency. Chapter Two, entitled *AI Chatbots and Speaking Skill in EFL Classrooms*, examines the concept of AI chatbots, their pedagogical use in language learning, and their potential role in enhancing speaking practice. Chapter Three, entitled *Research Methodology and Data Analysis*, describes the methodology adopted in the study, presents the data collected from students and teachers, and discusses the main findings in relation to the research objectives and questions.



Chapter –I. Speaking Skills in the EFL Context: General Concepts and Challenges

Introduction

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Speaking Skills in the EFL Context: General Concepts and Challenges

Introduction

This chapter provides a theoretical foundation for understanding speaking as a central skill in EFL learning. It presents speaking as both a productive and interactive process that involves linguistic knowledge, fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, and communicative competence. It also discusses the main challenges EFL learners face in developing oral proficiency and introduces the pedagogical basis for examining tools such as AI chatbots in speaking practice.

1.1 Conceptualizing Speaking in EFL

Conceptualizing speaking in EFL requires moving beyond the common assumption that speaking simply means saying words correctly in English. In applied linguistics, speaking is generally viewed as a highly complex skill that involves the oral expression of meaning through language in real time. It requires the speaker to mobilize vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, discourse organization, and interactional strategies almost simultaneously. Unlike writing, speaking usually takes place under time pressure, which means that learners must process ideas quickly and respond immediately while also considering their listener, purpose, and context. This makes speaking a cognitively demanding and socially situated activity rather than a purely linguistic one (Bygate, 1987; Richards, 2008).

In the EFL context, this complexity becomes even more significant because learners are often studying English in environments where it is not used as a language of everyday communication. As a result, many learners possess some grammatical knowledge of English but still struggle to speak it effectively in authentic or semi-authentic situations. This gap between knowing the language and using it orally is one of the defining features of EFL speaking instruction. For this reason, speaking in EFL should be understood as an active ability to transform linguistic knowledge into meaningful oral communication. It is not enough for learners to know rules or memorize expressions; they must also be able to retrieve and use them spontaneously, appropriately, and intelligibly in actual communicative situations (Bygate, 1987; Goh & Burns, 2012).

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1.1.1 Definitions of Speaking

Speaking is a broad concept that has been defined differently according to the focus of each approach in language education. Before presenting its main definitions, it is necessary to clarify that speaking is not limited to the oral production of correct sentences. Rather, it involves both the ability to produce spoken language and the ability to interact meaningfully with others in real communicative situations.

1.1.1.1 Speaking as a Productive Skill

Speaking is commonly classified as a productive skill because it requires learners to produce language orally in order to convey meaning. In the traditional four-skills model, speaking and writing are considered productive because they involve language output, whereas listening and reading are receptive because they involve language input. However, speaking differs from writing in important ways. Oral production is usually immediate, less planned, and more dependent on ongoing contextual support. The speaker must generate utterances under time pressure and often with limited opportunity to revise or reorganize what is being said. Consequently, speaking as a productive skill involves the rapid coordination of several processes, including idea generation, lexical retrieval, grammatical encoding, and phonological articulation (Bygate, 1987; Nation & Newton, 2009).

From this perspective, speaking can be seen as the oral realization of communicative intention. The learner is not merely producing sounds or grammatical forms, but attempting to communicate a message that is meaningful in a specific context. Bygate (1987) argues that speaking is a skill in which knowledge must be converted into action, meaning that learners may know many aspects of the language system yet still be unable to speak effectively unless they can operationalize this knowledge during real-time communication. This distinction between knowledge and performance is particularly important in EFL settings, where learners often demonstrate acceptable performance in written grammar tasks but encounter serious difficulty when required to speak spontaneously. Therefore, speaking as a productive skill must be understood as a form of proceduralized language use rather than simply the possession of linguistic knowledge (Brown, 2004; Richards, 2008).

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Furthermore, speaking as production is closely related to meaning-focused output. When learners attempt to express themselves orally, they are pushed to test the limits of their linguistic resources and notice what they can and cannot say in the target language. This process can contribute significantly to language development because it encourages restructuring, self-monitoring, and greater control over linguistic forms. In this sense, oral production is not only an outcome of learning but also a mechanism that supports further learning. The productive dimension of speaking is therefore central to communicative language teaching, especially in EFL classrooms where learners need structured opportunities to transform passive knowledge into active oral ability (Goh & Burns, 2012; Richards, 2008).

1.1.1.2 Speaking as Interaction

Although speaking is rightly viewed as a productive skill, this definition alone is incomplete because much spoken language occurs in the context of interaction. Speaking is also an interactive skill, since it often involves at least two participants who collaboratively construct meaning. In real communication, speakers do not simply produce monologic statements; they take turns, respond to previous utterances, interpret intentions, negotiate meaning, and adjust their language in relation to others. Richards (2008) emphasizes that one important dimension of oral communication is talk as interaction, which refers to speech whose primary function is social rather than informational. This includes activities such as greeting, maintaining rapport, showing interest, agreeing or disagreeing politely, and managing conversational flow (Goh & Burns, 2012; Richards, 2008).

Viewing speaking as interaction highlights the fact that successful oral communication depends on more than linguistic correctness. It also depends on the ability to manage discourse and interpersonal relations. Learners need to know how to open and close conversations, ask for clarification, signal understanding, express hesitation, and react appropriately to their interlocutor's contributions. These abilities are essential for natural communication, yet they are often underdeveloped in EFL contexts where classroom-speaking may focus more on individual responses than on genuine interaction. As a result, some learners may be able to produce grammatically acceptable sentences but still fail to participate effectively in conversational

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exchanges. This demonstrates that speaking competence is fundamentally relational and co-constructed rather than purely individual (Bygate, 1987; Goh & Burns, 2012).

1.1.2 Components of Speaking Competence

Speaking competence is a multidimensional construct composed of several interrelated components rather than a single unified ability. The most commonly emphasized components include fluency, accuracy, lexical and grammatical competence, and pronunciation-related intelligibility. Although these dimensions can be analyzed separately, they operate together during real-time communication to shape overall oral performance. These components are reflected in major language frameworks such as the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which describes spoken proficiency in terms of range, control, coherence, fluency, and phonological command (Council of Europe, 2001, 2020). Therefore, an adequate understanding of speaking competence requires attention to both the individual contribution of each component and the way they interact in effective oral communication (Goh & Burns, 2012; Richards, 2008).

1.1.2.1 Fluency

Fluency is one of the most frequently discussed dimensions of speaking competence, yet it is often misunderstood. In academic terms, fluency does not simply mean speaking quickly. Rather, it refers to the ability to produce speech with relative ease, continuity, and smoothness. A fluent speaker is generally able to maintain the flow of discourse, connect ideas with limited disruption, and avoid excessive pauses, hesitation, or reformulation. Fluency is therefore associated with temporal features of speech such as speed, pausing patterns, and continuity, but it also reflects the speaker's ability to access language resources efficiently during communication (Lennon, 1990; Skehan, 2009).

In EFL learning, fluency is often perceived by teachers and learners as one of the clearest indicators of oral proficiency because it gives the impression of confidence and communicative readiness. However, fluency should not be reduced to a superficial sense of smooth speaking. It is closely related to automaticity, which allows learners to retrieve language rapidly without devoting excessive attention to form. When learners have not yet automatized vocabulary and structures, their speech tends to be marked by long pauses, false starts, and repetition. This is why fluency usually

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develops through repeated opportunities for meaningful oral practice rather than through rule explanation alone. In many EFL classrooms, limited speaking time and fear of making mistakes can slow down this development, making fluency one of the most challenging aspects of oral proficiency to achieve (Lennon, 1990; Skehan, 2009). At the pedagogical level, fluency is important because it supports communicative effectiveness. Even when a speaker makes minor linguistic errors, communication can still succeed if speech is sufficiently fluent to sustain interaction and convey meaning. For this reason, many contemporary teaching approaches recommend balancing fluency-oriented activities with accuracy-oriented activities rather than overemphasizing correctness at the expense of communicative flow. Fluency, then, should be understood as a dynamic ability to keep communication moving in a reasonably natural and efficient way (Goh & Burns, 2012; Nation & Newton, 2009).

1.1.2.2 Accuracy

Accuracy refers to the degree to which speech conforms to the grammatical, lexical, and formal norms of the target language. In speaking, accuracy is typically associated with correct use of sentence structure, verb forms, word choice, agreement, tense, and other linguistic features that contribute to well-formed utterances. Unlike fluency, which emphasizes continuity of expression, accuracy emphasizes correctness and control. A speaker who demonstrates accuracy is able to produce language with relatively few errors that interfere with meaning or reduce acceptability (Richards, 2008; Thornbury, 2005).

In EFL contexts, accuracy has long been valued because it reflects the learner's command of the language system. Yet in real-time speaking, accuracy can be difficult to maintain because learners must attend simultaneously to meaning, interaction, and speed of production. This means that learners often face a tension between speaking fluently and speaking accurately. When they focus heavily on correctness, their speech may become hesitant and fragmented; when they focus mainly on keeping the conversation going, they may produce more errors. This trade-off has been widely recognized in second language performance research and helps explain why oral proficiency should not be judged by accuracy alone (Richards, 2008; Thornbury, 2005).

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Nevertheless, accuracy remains an essential component of speaking competence because it affects clarity, credibility, and interpretability. Excessive grammatical or lexical errors can distort meaning, confuse listeners, and weaken the speaker's message. At the same time, it is important to adopt a realistic view of oral accuracy. Spoken communication naturally allows for some self-correction, repair, and occasional non-systematic errors, even among proficient users. Therefore, what matters most pedagogically is not absolute perfection but sufficient control over language forms to ensure effective and appropriate communication. In this sense, accuracy should be framed as a communicative resource rather than merely a formal standard (Skehan, 2009; Richards, 2008).

1.1.2.3 Lexical and Grammatical Competence

Lexical and grammatical competence form the linguistic foundation of speaking ability. Lexical competence involves knowledge of vocabulary, expressions, and collocations, while grammatical competence refers to knowledge of sentence structure and the rules governing language use. Together, they enable learners to express ideas clearly, accurately, and appropriately in different contexts (Council of Europe, 2001, 2020). Limitations in either vocabulary or grammar can reduce the quality and precision of oral communication (Nation & Newton, 2009).

In EFL contexts, learners may develop vocabulary and grammar unevenly, which can affect their ability to speak spontaneously. For this reason, speaking instruction should provide meaningful opportunities for learners to use lexical and grammatical knowledge in real communication rather than studying them in isolation. Thus, lexical and grammatical competence should be viewed as an active linguistic repertoire that supports effective oral expression (Richards, 2008; Nation & Newton, 2009).

1.1.2.4 Pronunciation and Intelligibility

Pronunciation is an essential component of speaking competence because effective oral communication depends on listener understanding. It includes both segmental features, such as vowels and consonants, and suprasegmental features, such as stress, rhythm, and intonation. Recent scholarship emphasizes intelligibility rather than native-like pronunciation, meaning that the main goal is for learners to be

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understood clearly even if they retain a foreign accent (Munro & Derwing, 1995; Levis, 2020).

In EFL contexts, intelligibility is considered a more realistic and meaningful objective than accent imitation. Pronunciation difficulties can interfere with communication and reduce learners' confidence, whereas intelligible speech supports successful interaction and greater participation. Therefore, pronunciation should be viewed as a communicative aspect of speaking competence, and instruction should focus on helping learners produce clear, confident, and comprehensible speech rather than perfect native-like pronunciation (Levis, 2020; Goh & Burns, 2012).

1.1.3 Micro- and Macro-Skills of Speaking

Speaking competence can be divided into micro- and macro-skills, a distinction that helps explain how oral proficiency develops at different levels. Micro-skills refer to the smaller linguistic elements of speech such as phonemes, stress, intonation, vocabulary choice, and grammatical accuracy, while macro-skills involve broader discourse abilities such as fluency, cohesion, communicative functions, and interactional management (Brown, 2004). This distinction shows that effective speaking depends on both the accuracy of language forms and the ability to use them meaningfully in communication (Brown, 2004).

Micro-skills form the foundation of spoken production, as they enable learners to produce intelligible and structurally correct utterances. They include abilities such as controlling pronunciation features, using appropriate lexical and grammatical forms, and managing speech through pauses and self-correction. In EFL contexts, these skills are particularly important because limited exposure to English outside the classroom often results in difficulties with fluency, pronunciation, and automatic language use. Therefore, focused practice on micro-skills helps learners build accuracy and confidence in oral production (Brown, 2004; Goh & Burns, 2012).

Macro-skills, on the other hand, relate to the organization and effectiveness of extended discourse, including coherence, pragmatic appropriateness, turn-taking, and the use of communication strategies. These skills allow learners to perform functions such as explaining, persuading, and negotiating meaning in interaction, aligning with CEFR descriptions of discourse and pragmatic competence (Council of Europe, 2020). Although micro- and macro-skills are distinct, they are interdependent, and effective

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speaking instruction should integrate both by combining language-focused practice with meaningful communicative tasks (Brown, 2004).

1.2 Models of Second Language Speaking Development

The development of second or foreign language speaking has been explained through several complementary theoretical models that highlight different aspects of oral proficiency. While some models focus on communicative competence and the components of effective performance, others emphasize interaction, cognitive processing, or sociocultural participation as key drivers of development. Overall, these perspectives suggest that speaking is a multidimensional process involving linguistic knowledge, real-time processing, interactional ability, and contextual adaptation, rather than a single or linear skill (Canale & Swain, 1980; Council of Europe, 2020; Loewen, 2018).

1.2.1 Communicative Competence Framework

The Communicative Competence Framework, developed by Canale and Swain (1980), is a key model for understanding second language speaking development. It moves beyond viewing speaking as grammatical accuracy only and defines it as the ability to use language appropriately and effectively in real communicative situations. Speaking is therefore seen as interactional, context-dependent, and shaped by the integration of different types of competence.

Within this framework, grammatical competence refers to knowledge of vocabulary and language rules, while sociolinguistic competence involves using language appropriately according to context, participants, and social norms. Strategic competence refers to the ability to overcome communication problems through strategies such as paraphrasing, clarification, and compensation for linguistic gaps (Canale & Swain, 1980; Goh & Burns, 2012; Nation & Newton, 2009).

Later models, such as the Council of Europe's CEFR, expand this view by emphasizing linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competence in real language use (Council of Europe, 2020). Overall, the framework shows that speaking development involves not only grammatical accuracy but also appropriateness, interactional ability, discourse management, and strategic performance in communication (Canale & Swain, 1980; Council of Europe, 2020; Richards, 2008).

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1.2.2 Interactionist Perspective

The Interactionist Perspective explains second language speaking development by emphasizing that interaction plays a central role in language acquisition. It argues that speaking develops not only through exposure to input but through communicative exchanges where learners actively interpret meaning, respond to others, and solve communication problems in real time. A key concept is negotiation for meaning, where learners clarify, confirm, or reformulate language during interaction, which supports acquisition by linking input, feedback, and output (Loewen, 2018; Mackey, 1999).

From this perspective, speaking develops because interaction pushes learners to notice gaps in their language knowledge and adjust their output accordingly. Through negotiation episodes, learners receive feedback, often in the form of recasts or other conversational adjustments, which helps them refine their language use. Thus, oral interaction is not only a context for practicing speaking but also a mechanism through which speaking ability develops (Mackey, 1999; Loewen, 2018).

The interactionist view also highlights the importance of the relationship between input, interaction, and output, where learners need both understandable language input and opportunities to respond and modify their speech. In EFL contexts, this makes interactive tasks such as pair work, information-gap activities, and collaborative discussion particularly important for speaking development (Gass & Mackey, 2006; Loewen, 2018). Overall, it suggests that speaking instruction should prioritize meaningful interaction, turn-taking, clarification, and feedback rather than focusing only on isolated language forms.

1.2.3 Sociocultural Theory and Oral Interaction

Sociocultural Theory (SCT), grounded in Vygotsky's ideas, explains second language speaking development as a socially mediated process rather than a purely cognitive one. It argues that higher mental functions first develop through social interaction and are later internalized by the learner. Key concepts such as mediation, internalization, and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) explain how learners develop oral ability through supported interaction with others (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006/2007; Lantolf, 2009).

From this perspective, speaking develops through collaborative interaction where learners perform beyond their independent ability with the help of teachers or more capable peers. This support may include prompts, feedback, questioning, or

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guided participation, and gradually leads to self-regulation in language use. Collaborative dialogue is central here, as learners use spoken language to jointly solve problems and construct meaning, making speaking both the tool and outcome of learning (Swain et al., 2015; Lantolf, 2009).

SCT also highlights the role of dynamic and development-oriented assessment, where learner performance is understood in relation to the support they need rather than only independent output. Speaking ability is therefore seen as flexible and context-dependent, shaped by interaction, mediation, and task conditions. Overall, SCT provides a view of speaking as a socially constructed and evolving skill that develops through guided interaction and collaborative meaning-making (Poehner, 2021; Lantolf, 2009).

1.2.4 Cognitive Models of L2 Speech Production

Cognitive models of second language speech production explain speaking as a complex mental process involving several stages such as conceptualization, formulation, articulation, and monitoring, as described in Levelt's model (Levelt, 1999; Kormos, 2006). In L2 speaking, these processes are often slower and less automatic than in the first language because learners face difficulties in lexical retrieval, grammatical encoding, and phonological processing. This leads to common features of learner speech such as hesitation, pausing, repetition, and self-repair.

These models also highlight the importance of automaticity in speaking development, as fluent speech requires rapid and efficient processing of linguistic information. With practice, lower-level processes become more automatized, allowing learners to focus more on meaning and interaction rather than form (Kormos, 2006; Chen, 2025). Adaptations of Levelt's model for bilingual speakers also show that managing two language systems can cause cross-linguistic influence and processing delays (de Bot, 1992). Overall, cognitive models explain speaking development as the gradual transformation of linguistic knowledge into fast, efficient, and controlled real-time production.

1.3 EFL Context Nature and Speaking Practice

The English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context plays a crucial role in shaping learners' speaking development, as opportunities for real-life communication in English are often limited outside the classroom. As a result, speaking practice

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largely depends on instructional settings, making it both highly important and challenging for learners' oral proficiency development (Goh & Burns, 2012; Richards, 2008).

1.3.1 Nature of the EFL Context

The EFL environment is generally characterized by limited exposure to authentic English outside the classroom. Learners usually encounter English through textbooks, classroom explanations, prepared activities, or media rather than through natural daily communication. This limited exposure affects their ability to use English spontaneously, especially in oral interaction, because they do not have frequent opportunities to hear and practise the language in real-life situations.

In such contexts, speaking development becomes highly dependent on the quality of classroom instruction and the type of interaction provided by teachers. If learners are mainly exposed to grammar-based or text-based instruction, they may develop stronger receptive knowledge than productive oral ability. Therefore, the EFL context requires carefully planned speaking activities that help learners transform their linguistic knowledge into active communicative use.

1.3.2 Speaking Practice in EFL Settings

Speaking practice in EFL classrooms is often shaped by limited time, teacher-centered instruction, and the absence of authentic interaction outside the classroom. Although learners may study vocabulary and grammar for several years, they may still struggle to speak fluently and confidently because they rarely use English for real communication. This situation creates a gap between knowing the language and being able to use it orally.

For this reason, effective speaking practice in EFL settings should provide learners with meaningful and interactive opportunities to use English. Activities such as pair work, group discussions, role plays, and problem-solving tasks can help learners practise fluency, accuracy, and interactional strategies. Such activities are important because they compensate, at least partially, for the lack of natural English communication outside the classroom.

1.3.3 EFL vs. ESL Learning Environments

A fundamental distinction in language education is the difference between EFL and ESL learning environments. In ESL contexts, English is used in social, academic, and public life, which gives learners more opportunities to hear and use it beyond the

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classroom. In contrast, EFL learners usually study English in a society where another language dominates daily communication, so their use of English is mostly limited to classroom activities or self-initiated.

This distinction has important implications for speaking development. ESL learners may acquire oral fluency through frequent exposure and natural interaction, whereas EFL learners often depend on planned classroom tasks to practise speaking. Therefore, classroom methodology becomes more decisive in EFL settings, since the classroom often functions as the main place where learners can use English orally.

1.3.4 Limited Exposure and Authentic Interaction

One of the main characteristics of EFL contexts is limited exposure to authentic spoken English. Many learners encounter English through textbooks, teacher explanations, grammar exercises, or exam-based materials, which may develop linguistic knowledge but do not always reflect the natural features of spoken discourse, such as turn-taking, hesitation, repair, discourse markers, and negotiation of meaning.

This limitation is both quantitative and qualitative. EFL learners do not only hear less English; they also have fewer opportunities to use it for genuine communicative purposes. For this reason, teachers need to design tasks that approximate authentic interaction, such as information-gap tasks, discussions, role plays, and problem-solving activities, where learners use English to exchange meaning rather than simply display knowledge.

1.3.5 Classroom-Centered Communication

In many EFL contexts, the classroom is the main environment where learners can practise speaking. However, the effectiveness of classroom communication depends on how interaction is organized. If the classroom is teacher-centered, learners may have limited chances to initiate topics, negotiate meaning, or participate in extended oral exchanges.

For classroom-centered communication to support speaking development, it should move beyond controlled answers and display questions toward more meaningful interaction. Pair work, group work, discussions, and communicative tasks can increase learners' participation and help them develop fluency, confidence, and interactional competence. Thus, the classroom can become a productive speaking environment when it gives learners repeated and purposeful opportunities to use English.

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1.3.6 Sociocultural Influences on Speaking

Speaking in EFL contexts is also influenced by sociocultural factors. Learners' willingness to speak may be affected by classroom culture, fear of public mistakes, peer judgment, attitudes toward English, and beliefs about teacher authority. Therefore, speaking difficulties should not be explained only by linguistic weakness, because learners' oral participation is also shaped by social and cultural expectations.

These influences affect learners' confidence, motivation, and willingness to communicate. For example, when speaking English is associated with fear of embarrassment or unrealistic native-like standards, learners may avoid participation. A more supportive classroom environment that values intelligibility, effort, and communication can help reduce anxiety and encourage learners to speak more confidently.

1.4 Challenges in Developing Speaking Skills in EFL

Developing speaking skills in EFL contexts is considered challenging because learners need to combine linguistic knowledge, cognitive processing, and psychological readiness while producing speech in real time. This difficulty is intensified by the limited use of English outside the classroom, which reduces learners' opportunities to practise oral communication naturally and regularly (Goh & Burns, 2012; Richards, 2008).

EFL learners may face several interrelated difficulties, including limited vocabulary, grammatical errors, pronunciation problems, weak discourse organization, speaking anxiety, fear of making mistakes, and low confidence. These challenges are often reinforced by classroom-related constraints such as large classes, limited speaking time, teacher-centered instruction, and assessment practices that focus more on accuracy than communication. Therefore, speaking difficulties in EFL contexts result from the combined influence of linguistic, psychological, pedagogical, and assessment-related factors (Horwitz et al., 1986; Goh & Burns, 2012; Luoma, 2004).

1.4.1 Linguistic Challenges

Linguistic challenges in EFL speaking development refer to learners' difficulties in using vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and discourse features

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effectively during real-time oral production. These difficulties are often intensified by limited exposure to spoken English and a learning focus on written or rule-based instruction, which creates a gap between what learners know and what they can actually produce in speech (Richards, 2008; Goh & Burns, 2012).

A major problem is limited lexical knowledge, which restricts learners' ability to express ideas clearly and fluently. When vocabulary is insufficient, learners tend to use repetition, vague expressions, pauses, or avoidance strategies, which disrupt fluency and reduce communicative effectiveness. In addition, grammatical instability in spontaneous speech is common, as learners struggle with sentence structure, tense control, and agreement under time pressure, often leading to errors and simplified speech (Bygate, 1987; Richards, 2008).

Pronunciation and discourse-level difficulties also significantly affect speaking performance. Problems with sounds, stress, and intonation can reduce intelligibility, while weaknesses in coherence, cohesion, and turn-taking make it difficult to organize extended speech and interact smoothly. Overall, linguistic challenges in EFL speaking are multidimensional, affecting not only accuracy at the sentence level but also fluency and communicative organization (Council of Europe, 2020; McCarthy, 2004).

1.4.2 Psychological and Affective Barriers

EFL learners often experience psychological and affective barriers that significantly limit their speaking performance, in addition to linguistic difficulties. Speaking is an immediate and public skill, which exposes learners to real-time evaluation and increases emotional pressure. As a result, many learners avoid participation, give very short responses, or rely on memorized language due to fear of making mistakes or being judged negatively (Horwitz et al., 1986; Goh & Burns, 2012).

A major factor is foreign language anxiety, which includes feelings of tension, worry, and nervousness specifically related to language learning situations. This anxiety can interfere with learners' ability to retrieve language, concentrate, and speak confidently, even when they have sufficient linguistic knowledge. Closely related is fear of negative evaluation, where learners hesitate to speak because they worry about criticism or embarrassment in front of teachers or peers (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Richards, 2008).

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Low self-confidence and weak willingness to communicate also reduce learners' oral participation, creating a cycle where limited practice leads to weaker performance and further loss of confidence. These affective barriers are intensified by the real-time pressure of speaking, which requires fast thinking and simultaneous control of accuracy and fluency. Therefore, psychological factors are central to understanding speaking difficulties in EFL contexts and are as important as linguistic limitations in shaping learners' oral performance (Burns, 1998; Kormos, 2006; Goh & Burns, 2012).

1.4.3 Pedagogical Constraints

Pedagogical constraints represent a major challenge to speaking development in EFL classrooms, as learners often depend on classroom instruction for oral practice due to the lack of English use outside school. When speaking is not given sufficient time, tasks are overly controlled, or interaction is mainly teacher-led, learners have limited opportunities to develop fluency and communicative competence (Richards, 2008; Goh & Burns, 2012). Therefore, classroom organization and teaching approaches play a crucial role in shaping speaking development.

One key issue is teacher-centred instruction, where the teacher dominates classroom discourse through explanation, questioning, and correction, leaving learners with minimal opportunities to initiate or sustain interaction. In addition, the overuse of form-focused or scripted activities limits meaningful communication, as learners mainly practice controlled responses rather than spontaneous speech. As a result, they may develop accuracy in narrow contexts but struggle with real-life interaction and communicative flexibility (Burns, 1998; Ellis, 2003; Richards, 2006).

Institutional and instructional limitations also contribute to the problem, including large class sizes, limited time, exam-oriented curricula, and insufficient focus on speaking skills. These conditions reduce opportunities for meaningful interaction and detailed feedback, making it difficult for teachers to support all learners effectively. Moreover, feedback practices may either be too correction-focused, which increases anxiety, or too limited, which reduces learning opportunities, highlighting the need for a balanced and supportive approach to speaking instruction (Goh & Burns, 2012; Richards, 2008; Burns, 2017).

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1.4.4 Assessment-Related Challenges

The assessment of speaking presents significant challenges because spoken performance is dynamic, context-dependent, and interactive. Unlike written production, oral speech is influenced by factors such as task type, interlocutor behavior, topic familiarity, and real-time processing demands, which makes it difficult to evaluate in a fully stable and objective way. As Luoma explains, speaking assessment is complex because performance varies across conditions and because raters must consider multiple dimensions such as fluency, accuracy, coherence, pronunciation, and communicative effectiveness (Luoma, 2004; Fulcher, 2003).

A key challenge is construct definition, as there is often no full agreement on what constitutes successful speaking. Some approaches emphasize accuracy, others fluency, interactional ability, or overall comprehensibility, which can lead to inconsistent evaluation if criteria are unclear. To address this, frameworks such as the Council of Europe's CEFR describe speaking through multiple dimensions, including spoken interaction, production, fluency, coherence, and phonological control (Council of Europe, 2020; Luoma, 2004).

Another challenge relates to reliability and rating subjectivity, since speaking assessment often depends on human judgment, which can vary between raters based on interpretation, severity, and focus of attention. This subjectivity becomes more evident when assessment is informal and lacks standardized rubrics or training. Additionally, there is a tension between authenticity and practicality, as more realistic speaking tasks are harder to score consistently, while controlled tasks may reduce communicative realism. Finally, assessment practices also influence learners' speaking behavior, as overly error-focused evaluation may increase anxiety and limit participation, whereas more communicative assessment can encourage meaningful oral interaction (Fulcher, 2003; Council of Europe, 2020; Luoma, 2004).

1.5 Strategies for Enhancing EFL Learners' Speaking Skills

Given the multiple challenges that affect speaking development in EFL contexts, effective enhancement strategies must address speaking as a multidimensional competence rather than as a single isolated skill. Successful pedagogy should integrate linguistic development, fluency-building, interactional practice, affective support, and assessment-informed. In other words, improving

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speaking requires more than asking learners to “speak more”; it requires designing conditions under which learners can gradually develop confidence, control, and communicative effectiveness through structured yet meaningful oral use of English. (Goh & Burns, 2012; Richards, 2008).

One central strategy is the use of communicative and task-based speaking activities. Tasks such as information-gap work, problem solving, role-play, discussion, and collaborative decision-making create opportunities for learners to use English for purposeful communication rather than for mere display. These activities encourage negotiation of meaning, turn taking, clarification, and spontaneous response, all of which are essential for the development of speaking competence. Task-based work is particularly valuable in EFL contexts because it compensates for the relative absence of real-world English interaction by simulating communicative conditions inside the classroom. (Ellis, 2003; Richards, 2006; Goh & Burns, 2012).

A second important strategy is the provision of systematic fluency practice. Since many EFL learners struggle with hesitation and slow retrieval, they need repeated opportunities to speak under conditions that emphasize message delivery, continuity, and confidence rather than constant correction. Fluency-oriented tasks may include repeated speaking, timed discussions, oral rehearsal, and activities based on familiar topics that reduce cognitive overload. Such practice helps learners automate lexical retrieval and discourse organization, making speech smoother and more manageable over time. (Goh & Burns, 2012; Kormos, 2006).

At the same time, speaking enhancement also requires focused support for accuracy, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Learners need access to useful lexical chunks, discourse markers, functional expressions, and grammar patterns that are directly relevant to oral communication. They also benefit from explicit pronunciation work that targets intelligibility, including stress, rhythm, and key segmental contrasts. The most effective approach is not to separate these elements completely from speaking, but to embed them in communicative practice so that learners can notice, rehearse, and reuse them in meaningful contexts. (Council of Europe, 2020; Richards, 2008; Goh & Burns, 2012).

Another essential strategy is the creation of a supportive affective climate for oral participation. Because anxiety and fear of negative evaluation are major barriers

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to speaking, teachers should foster classroom environments in which mistakes are treated as part of learning rather than as failure. Supportive practices include allowing preparation time, using pair and small-group formats before whole-class performance, encouraging peer support, and giving feedback in ways that protect learner confidence. When learners feel psychologically safe, they are more likely to take communicative risks and participate more actively in speaking tasks. (Horwitz et al., 1986; Goh & Burns, 2012).

Teachers can also enhance speaking by adopting scaffolded interaction and gradual progression from controlled to freer production. Learners often need support before they can participate successfully in open-ended speaking tasks. This support may take the form of modeling, guided planning, prompts, sentence starters, vocabulary support, and structured pair work. As learners gain familiarity and confidence, tasks can become less controlled and more interactionally demanding. Such scaffolding aligns with both communicative pedagogy and sociocultural views of learning, since it helps learners perform beyond their current independent level and gradually internalize more effective speaking practices. (Lantolf, 2009; Goh & Burns, 2012).

Feedback is another crucial component of speaking enhancement. Effective oral feedback should be selective, developmental, and strategically timed. Rather than correcting every error immediately, teachers may focus on patterns that most affect intelligibility, task achievement, or language development. Delayed feedback, peer reflection, self-assessment, and post-task language review can help learners notice problems without interrupting interaction excessively. In this way, feedback contributes not only to improved accuracy but also to learner awareness and autonomy. (Goh & Burns, 2012; Luoma, 2004).

Finally, speaking development is strengthened when assessment is aligned with communicative goals. If learners are evaluated through clear criteria that value fluency, intelligibility, interaction, and task fulfillment alongside accuracy, they are more likely to approach speaking as meaningful communication rather than as error avoidance. Analytic rubrics, assessment descriptors based on the Council of Europe's CEFR, and regular low-stakes can help make oral evaluation more transparent and constructive. When assessment supports learning instead of merely judging

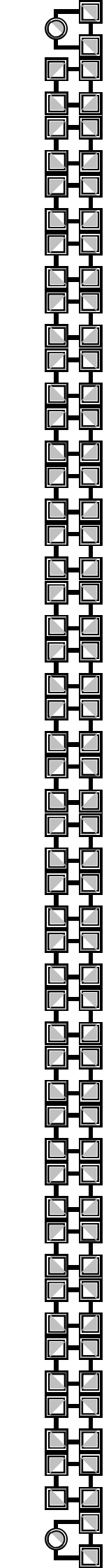
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performance, it becomes an important tool for enhancing speaking skills in EFL contexts. (Council of Europe, 2020; Luoma, 2004; Fulcher, 2003).

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a theoretical foundation for understanding speaking in EFL contexts by showing that it is a complex, multidimensional skill involving fluency, accuracy, vocabulary and grammar, pronunciation, and discourse management. It has also highlighted speaking as both a productive and interactive process, where meaning negotiation and real-time communication are essential for effective performance.

In addition, the chapter reviewed major models of speaking development, including communicative competence, interactionist perspectives, sociocultural theory, and cognitive models, showing that speaking is shaped by linguistic, cognitive, social, and contextual factors. It also examined the EFL context, identifying key challenges such as limited exposure to English, psychological barriers, pedagogical constraints, and assessment issues, and outlined strategies like task-based learning, fluency practice, scaffolding, and supportive feedback to enhance speaking development.



Chapter-II. AI Chatbots and Speaking Skill in EFL Classrooms

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Introduction

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into education has reshaped language learning by introducing new forms of interaction beyond traditional classroom boundaries. In EFL contexts, AI chatbots have become particularly relevant because they simulate human-like conversation and provide learners with additional opportunities to practice speaking in a more flexible, personalized, and low-anxiety environment.

This chapter builds on the previous discussion of speaking skills by focusing on how AI chatbots can support oral development. It explores their role in improving different aspects of speaking such as fluency, accuracy, vocabulary, and pronunciation, while also addressing their pedagogical and affective implications. In addition, it examines both the potential benefits and limitations of integrating these tools into EFL speaking instruction.

2.1 Artificial Intelligence in Education (AIED)

Artificial Intelligence in Education (AIED) refers to the use of AI technologies to support and enhance teaching and learning by simulating aspects of human intelligence such as learning, reasoning, and interaction. In language education, it enables adaptive learning, automated feedback, and personalized instruction that responds to learners' needs in real time, making it especially valuable in EFL contexts where individualized support is often limited (Luckin et al., 2016; Holmes et al., 2019). The emergence of AI-driven tools such as conversational agents has also expanded interactive learning opportunities, allowing learners to practice language in more dynamic and communicative ways compared to traditional computer-assisted language learning systems.

From a pedagogical perspective, AIED is closely linked to learner-centered and constructivist approaches, as it promotes active engagement and individualized learning paths based on learner performance. It supports differentiated instruction by analyzing learner data and providing targeted practice in areas such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and speaking, with immediate feedback (Holmes et al., 2019; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). This makes it particularly useful in EFL contexts, where teachers may not always be able to provide consistent one-to-one support.

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AIED also raises important opportunities and challenges in education. On one hand, it supports more interactive and communicative learning environments, especially through tools like chatbots that simulate dialogue and enhance learner engagement (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). On the other hand, concerns remain regarding data privacy, pedagogical validity, and the extent to which AI can replicate human interaction, including emotional and pragmatic aspects of communication. Therefore, its use in education requires careful and critical pedagogical consideration (Holmes et al., 2019; Luckin et al., 2016).

2.1.1 Definition of AI in Educational Contexts

In educational contexts, Artificial Intelligence can be defined as the use of computational systems that simulate human cognitive processes to facilitate learning, teaching, and assessment. These systems are designed to perform tasks such as language processing, pattern recognition, decision-making, and adaptive feedback, which are traditionally associated with human intelligence. In language learning, AI applications often include speech recognition systems, intelligent tutoring systems, automated writing evaluation tools, and conversational agents, all of which aim to support learners in developing communicative competence. (Luckin et al., 2016; Holmes et al., 2019).

A key feature of AI in education is its ability to provide adaptive and personalized learning experiences. Unlike traditional instructional models that follow a fixed sequence, AI systems can adjust content, difficulty level, and feedback based on individual learner performance. This adaptability is particularly relevant in language learning, where learners often progress at different rates and have varying strengths and weaknesses. For speaking skills, AI tools can offer repeated practice opportunities, immediate corrective feedback, and individualized interaction, all of which are difficult to achieve consistently in large EFL classrooms. (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2024).

Another defining characteristic of AI in educational contexts is its capacity for interaction and simulation. Through natural language processing (NLP), AI systems can understand and generate human-like language, enabling learners to engage in simulated conversations. This is especially significant for speaking development, as it allows learners to practice oral communication in a low-risk environment where they

can experiment with language without fear of negative evaluation. Such interactional affordances make AI tools particularly suitable for addressing some of the affective barriers associated with speaking in EFL contexts. (Fryer & Carpenter, 2006; Wang et al., 2024).

Despite these advantages, it is important to recognize that AI in education is not a replacement for human teaching but rather a complementary tool. While AI can support practice, provide feedback, and enhance access to learning opportunities, it cannot fully replicate the social, emotional, and pedagogical dimensions of human interaction. Therefore, effective use of AI in educational contexts requires a balanced approach that integrates technological tools with teacher guidance and pedagogical expertise. (Holmes et al., 2019; Luckin et al., 2016).

2.1.2 Evolution of AI Tools in Language Learning

The development of AI tools in language learning can be understood as part of the broader evolution of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL). Early CALL systems, which emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, were largely based on behaviourist principles and focused on repetitive drills and grammar exercises. These systems provided limited interaction and were primarily designed to reinforce structural aspects of language. Over time, however, advances in computing and linguistic theory led to the development of more interactive and communicative CALL environments, reflecting a shift toward meaning-focused language use. (Fryer & Carpenter, 2006; Warschauer, 1996).

The next major stage in this evolution involved the integration of multimedia and internet-based technologies, which expanded access to authentic language input and enabled greater learner autonomy. Learners could engage with audio, video, and online communication tools, allowing for more varied and realistic language practice. However, these systems still relied largely on pre-programmed content and lacked the ability to respond dynamically to individual learners' input. The emergence of AI technologies has addressed this limitation by introducing systems that can process natural language, adapt to learner behavior, and simulate interactive dialogue. (Warschauer, 1996; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019).

In recent years, the rise of AI-powered chatbots and conversational agents has marked a significant advancement in language learning technology. These tools use

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machine learning and natural language processing to engage learners in interactive dialogue, provide feedback, and support language practice in real time. Unlike earlier systems, AI chatbots can generate context-sensitive responses, maintain conversational flow, and adapt to learners' input, making them particularly suitable for developing speaking skills. Their ability to provide continuous, individualized interaction represents a major step forward in addressing the limitations of traditional EFL speaking practice. (Ding & Yusof, 2025; Du & Daniel, 2025).

Furthermore, recent developments in generative AI have further enhanced the capabilities of language learning tools. Modern AI systems can produce more natural, coherent, and contextually appropriate language, enabling more realistic and engaging conversational experiences. This has opened new possibilities for integrating AI into EFL speaking instruction, particularly in contexts where access to native speakers or authentic communication is limited. However, as these technologies continue to evolve, it remains essential to critically evaluate their pedagogical value and ensure that they are used in ways that support meaningful learning rather than superficial interaction. (Wang et al., 2024; Holmes et al., 2019).

2.2 Defining AI Chatbots

AI chatbots are computer-based conversational systems that interact with users through natural language. In EFL learning, they can support students by providing immediate responses, simulated conversations, and repeated opportunities to practise English beyond classroom time (Fryer & Carpenter, 2006; Holmes et al., 2019).

Unlike traditional educational software, AI chatbots are more interactive because they can respond to learners' input and support meaningful language practice. However, their effectiveness depends on the type of chatbot, the quality of feedback, and the way they are integrated into teaching activities (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2024).

2.2.1 Rule-based vs. AI-driven Chatbots

One of the most important distinctions in chatbot technology is between rule-based and AI-driven chatbots. Rule-based chatbots operate through predefined scripts and decision trees, relying on pattern matching and programmed responses. These systems are typically limited to predictable interactions and can only respond effectively when user input matches expected patterns. As a result, they are suitable for structured tasks such as guided practice, drills, or simple question-answer

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interactions, but they lack flexibility and adaptability in handling spontaneous communication (Fryer & Carpenter, 2006; Holmes et al., 2019).

In contrast, AI-driven chatbots are based on advanced technologies such as machine learning and natural language processing, which allow them to interpret user input more flexibly and generate context-sensitive responses. These systems are not restricted to fixed scripts and can engage in more dynamic and open-ended interaction. In language learning, this makes AI-driven chatbots particularly valuable for communicative practice, as they can support extended dialogue, respond to unexpected input, and provide more personalized interaction (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2024).

From a pedagogical perspective, rule-based chatbots are useful for controlled practice, especially at lower proficiency levels where learners benefit from structured input and predictable interaction. However, their limitations become apparent when learners need to develop spontaneous speaking skills, as they do not adequately simulate real conversational dynamics. This restricts their effectiveness in promoting communicative competence and interactional fluency (Holmes et al., 2019; Fryer & Carpenter, 2006).

AI-driven chatbots, on the other hand, are better aligned with communicative language teaching because they allow for greater variability, negotiation of meaning, and learner autonomy. They can support authentic conversational practice and provide opportunities for learners to experiment with language in a flexible environment. Nevertheless, despite their advantages, these systems may still produce inaccurate or inappropriate responses, which highlights the need for careful pedagogical integration and teacher supervision (Wang et al., 2024; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019).

2.2.2 Text-based vs. Voice-based Chatbots

Another key distinction in chatbot classification concerns the mode of interaction, namely text-based versus voice-based chatbots. Text-based chatbots communicate through written input and output, allowing learners to type messages and receive textual responses. This mode of interaction provides learners with more time to process language, plan their responses, and reflect on their output. As a result, text-based are particularly useful for supporting language development at lower proficiency

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levels and for activities that require careful formulation of language (Fryer & Carpenter, 2006; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019).

One of the main advantages of text-based chatbots is that they reduce performance pressure and allow learners to engage in interaction without the immediacy of spoken communication. Learners can revise their responses before sending them, which can help improve accuracy and confidence. Additionally, text-based interaction provides a visible record of communication, which can be useful for review and reflection. However, because interaction takes place in written form, these chatbots do not directly support the development of pronunciation, fluency, or real-time (Wang et al., 2024; Holmes et al., 2019).

In contrast, voice-based chatbots rely on speech recognition and speech synthesis technologies, enabling learners to interact through spoken language. This makes them particularly relevant for developing speaking skills, as they engage learners in real-time oral production and listening. Voice-based chatbots allow learners to practice pronunciation, intonation, and fluency in a way that more closely resembles authentic communication. They also encourage spontaneous speech, which is essential for developing communicative competence (Wang et al., 2024; Shashidhara, 2025).

However, voice-based chatbots also present certain challenges. Issues such as speech recognition errors, sensitivity to accents, and technological limitations may affect interaction quality and learner experience. These factors can lead to frustration or misunderstanding, especially for lower-level learners. Therefore, while voice-based chatbots offer greater potential for speaking practice, their effectiveness depends on the reliability of the technology and the design of the learning tasks (Holmes et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2024).

From a pedagogical standpoint, both types of chatbots have complementary roles. Text-based chatbots can support language preparation, vocabulary development, and low-anxiety interaction, while voice-based chatbots can facilitate actual speaking practice and fluency development. A balanced integration of both modes may therefore provide the most effective approach for enhancing speaking skills in EFL contexts (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2024).

2.3 AI Chatbots in Language Education

AI chatbots have become increasingly important in language education because they provide learners with interactive, flexible, and individualized opportunities for language practice. In EFL contexts, where learners often have limited exposure to authentic English communication, chatbots can function as supplementary tools that extend learning beyond the classroom. They allow students to engage in simulated conversations, receive immediate responses, and practice language skills in a low-pressure environment. This makes them particularly relevant to the development of speaking skills, since oral proficiency requires frequent practice, interaction, feedback, and confidence-building (Fryer & Carpenter, 2006; Holmes et al., 2019).

In language education, chatbots are not limited to delivering information or correcting isolated language forms. Rather, they can act as conversational partners that support communicative language learning. Through interaction with chatbots, learners may practice vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation-related expressions, fluency, and pragmatic competence in meaningful contexts. This reflects a shift from traditional computer-assisted language learning, which often relied on fixed drills, toward more dynamic and communicative AI-supported learning environments (Warschauer, 1996; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019).

2.3.1 Historical Development of Chatbots in CALL

The historical development of chatbots in Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is related to the general evolution of technology in language education. Early CALL programs were mainly based on programmed drills, grammar exercises, and controlled practice. These systems helped learners reinforce linguistic forms, but they offered limited interaction and did not support authentic communication. With the development of communicative approaches, CALL gradually moved toward more interactive and meaning-focused environments through multimedia, internet tools, and online communication (Warschauer, 1996; Fryer & Carpenter, 2006).

Chatbots appeared as part of this shift toward more interactive language learning. Early chatbots were mostly rule-based and depended on fixed scripts, which made their responses limited. However, they allowed learners to engage in simulated conversations instead of only completing isolated exercises. More recent AI-driven chatbots use natural language processing and machine learning to provide more flexible and context-sensitive interaction. This development makes chatbots more relevant to EFL speaking practice, especially in contexts where learners have limited opportunities for authentic oral communication (Holmes et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2024; Ding & Yusof, 2025).

2.3.2 Chatbots as Conversational Agents

Chatbots can be described as conversational agents because their main function is to simulate dialogue with human users through natural language. Unlike traditional educational software, which usually provides fixed content or structured exercises, chatbots are designed to receive learners' input, process it, and produce responses that maintain interaction. In language learning, this dialogic nature gives chatbots particular importance because language acquisition depends not only on exposure to input, but also on opportunities for meaningful output and interaction (Fryer & Carpenter, 2006; Holmes et al., 2019).

As conversational agents, AI chatbots can support learners by creating interactive environments where they can practice asking questions, answering prompts, expressing opinions, negotiating meaning, and experimenting with new vocabulary and grammatical structures. This is especially useful in EFL contexts, where learners may have limited access to native speakers or authentic communicative situations. By offering continuous access to conversation, chatbots help compensate for the lack of oral practice opportunities that often characterizes traditional classrooms (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019; Ding & Yusof, 2025).

Another important feature of chatbots as conversational agents is their ability to reduce the psychological pressure associated with speaking. Many EFL learners feel anxious when speaking in front of teachers or classmates because they fear making mistakes or being negatively evaluated. Chatbot interaction may create a less threatening environment because learners can repeat, reformulate, and practice without the same level of social embarrassment. In this sense, chatbots can encourage learners to participate more freely and develop greater confidence in oral communication (Horwitz et al., 1986; Wang et al., 2024).

However, chatbots should not be viewed as complete substitutes for human interlocutors. Human communication involves emotional support, pragmatic sensitivity, cultural understanding, and spontaneous negotiation that AI systems may not fully reproduce. While chatbots can simulate conversation and provide useful practice, their interaction may still lack depth, empathy, and authentic social presence. Therefore, in EFL speaking instruction, chatbots are better understood as supplementary conversational agents that can extend practice opportunities rather than replace teacher-guided or peer-based interaction (Holmes et al., 2019; Du & Daniel, 2025).

2.3.3 Pedagogical Functions of Chatbots in EFL

In EFL education, chatbots perform several pedagogical functions that make them valuable tools for supporting language learning, particularly speaking development. One of their main functions is providing additional opportunities for practice. Since classroom time is often limited and learners may not receive enough

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chances to speak English, chatbots can offer flexible and repeated interaction outside the classroom. This continuous availability allows learners to practice at their own pace and according to their individual needs (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019; Ding & Yusof, 2025).

A second pedagogical function of chatbots is supporting learner autonomy. Through chatbot-assisted learning, students can initiate conversations, choose topics, ask for explanations, request corrections, and repeat tasks without waiting for teacher intervention. This encourages learners to take more responsibility for their own learning and helps them develop independent speaking practice habits. In this way, chatbots align with learner-centered approaches that emphasize active participation, personalization, and self-directed learning (Holmes et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2024).

Chatbots also serve a feedback function. They can provide immediate responses to learners' utterances, suggest corrections, model alternative expressions, and help learners notice errors in grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation-related wording, or discourse organization. Although chatbot feedback may not always be as pedagogically rich as teacher feedback, its immediacy can be beneficial because learners receive support at the moment of communication. This can help them adjust their language use and improve their confidence during practice (Fryer & Carpenter, 2006; Du & Daniel, 2025).

Another important function is affective support. Speaking in a foreign language is often linked to anxiety, hesitation, and fear of negative evaluation. Chatbots may reduce these barriers by offering a private, low-pressure environment where learners can practice without feeling judged. This can increase willingness to communicate and encourage more frequent oral participation. For this reason, chatbot-assisted speaking practice may contribute not only to linguistic development but also to learners' motivation, confidence, and emotional readiness to speak (Horwitz et al., 1986; Wang et al., 2024).

Finally, chatbots can support communicative competence by engaging learners in meaning-focused interaction. Instead of practicing isolated grammar rules only, learners can use language to express ideas, ask for information, respond to prompts, and maintain conversational flow. This makes chatbot use compatible with communicative language teaching and task-based learning. However, teachers need to guide chatbot integration carefully by selecting appropriate tasks, monitoring learners' use, and connecting chatbot practice with classroom objectives. Therefore, the pedagogical value of chatbots depends not only on the technology itself, but also on how it is incorporated into meaningful EFL instruction (Goh & Burns, 2012; Holmes et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2024).

2.4 AI Chatbots and the Development of Speaking Skills

AI chatbots support the development of EFL speaking skills by providing learners with continuous, flexible, and interactive opportunities for oral practice beyond classroom limitations. They help improve key aspects of speaking competence such as fluency, accuracy, vocabulary use, pronunciation, and pragmatic ability by enabling repeated conversational interaction and offering immediate feedback in low-anxiety environments that encourage experimentation (Ding & Yusof, 2025; Du & Daniel, 2025). From a pedagogical perspective, they align with communicative and interactionist approaches by promoting meaning-focused interaction, turn-taking, clarification, and dialogue management, while also supporting learner autonomy through self-paced practice. However, their effectiveness depends on how well they are designed and integrated into teaching practices (Wang et al., 2024; Holmes et al., 2019).

2.4.1 Impact on Fluency

Fluency is one of the most important aspects of speaking, referring to the ability to produce language smoothly, continuously, and with minimal hesitation. AI chatbots can significantly contribute to fluency development by providing learners with frequent and repeated opportunities for oral practice, which is essential for building automaticity. Since chatbots are available at any time, learners can engage in extended speaking practice without the constraints of classroom time, allowing them to rehearse language and improve the speed and flow of their speech (Kormos, 2006; Ding & Yusof, 2025).

Furthermore, chatbot interaction reduces the pressure associated with speaking in front of others, which can help learners speak more freely and take risks in communication. This low-anxiety environment encourages learners to focus on meaning rather than form, which is a key condition for fluency development. Repeated interaction with chatbots also allows learners to become more familiar with conversational patterns, discourse markers, and common expressions, which supports smoother speech production over time (Wang et al., 2024; Goh & Burns, 2012).

However, while chatbots can promote fluency, their effectiveness depends on the nature of the interaction. If conversations are too limited or repetitive, learners may not develop the flexibility required for real-life communication. Therefore, chatbot-

based fluency practice should be complemented by varied tasks that encourage spontaneous language use and interactional diversity (Du & Daniel, 2025; Kormos, 2006).

2.4.2 Impact on Accuracy

AI chatbots can support accuracy development by providing immediate feedback on learner output, which allows learners to notice and correct errors in real time. This feedback may be explicit, such as direct correction, or implicit, such as reformulation or recasting of learner utterances. Such interaction aligns with theories of second language acquisition that emphasize the importance of feedback in promoting language development (Loewen, 2018; Wang et al., 2024).

In addition, chatbots allow learners to repeat interactions and practice specific structures multiple times, which can help reinforce correct forms and reduce errors. Unlike traditional classroom settings, where feedback may be delayed or limited due to time constraints, chatbots can provide continuous corrective input, enabling learners to refine their language use progressively. This repeated exposure to correct forms can contribute to the proceduralization of grammatical knowledge (Kormos, 2006; Ding & Yusof, 2025).

Nevertheless, the effectiveness of chatbots in improving accuracy depends on the quality of feedback they provide. Some AI systems may fail to detect errors accurately or may provide incomplete or misleading corrections. Therefore, while chatbots can support accuracy development, they should be used alongside teacher guidance to ensure that learners receive reliable and meaningful feedback (Holmes et al., 2019; Du & Daniel, 2025).

2.4.3 Vocabulary Expansion and Lexical Retrieval

Vocabulary knowledge plays a central role in speaking, as it enables learners to express ideas clearly and precisely. AI chatbots can contribute to vocabulary expansion by exposing learners to a wide range of lexical items in context. Through interaction, learners encounter new words, phrases, and expressions, which can be reinforced through repeated use. This contextualized exposure supports deeper lexical learning compared to isolated vocabulary instruction (Nation & Newton, 2009; Wang et al., 2024).

Moreover, chatbots can support lexical retrieval, which is the ability to access vocabulary quickly during speech. Frequent interaction with chatbots helps learners

practice retrieving words under communicative conditions, which is essential for developing fluency and reducing hesitation. By engaging in repeated conversational exchanges, learners can strengthen the connections between meaning and form, making lexical access more automatic over time (Kormos, 2006; Ding & Yusof, 2025).

In addition, some AI chatbots are designed to provide lexical support, such as suggesting alternative expressions, paraphrasing learner input, or highlighting appropriate vocabulary. These features can help learners expand their expressive range and develop more varied and precise language use. However, as with other aspects of chatbot use, the effectiveness of these features depends on their accuracy and pedagogical design (Du & Daniel, 2025; Nation & Newton, 2009).

2.4.4 Pronunciation and Intelligibility

Pronunciation is a key component of speaking competence, as it directly affects intelligibility and listener comprehension. Voice-based AI chatbots, in particular, can support pronunciation development by allowing learners to practice spoken interaction and receive feedback on their speech. Through speech recognition technologies, these systems can evaluate learner pronunciation and provide corrective input, helping learners improve segmental and suprasegmental features such as sounds, stress, and intonation (Levis, 2020; Wang et al., 2024).

Another advantage of chatbots is that they provide learners with repeated opportunities to practice speaking in a low-pressure environment. This can help learners become more confident in their pronunciation and reduce anxiety associated with oral production. As learners engage in repeated speaking practice, they can gradually improve their intelligibility, which is a more realistic and pedagogically meaningful goal than achieving native-like pronunciation (Munro & Derwing, 1995; Levis, 2020).

However, pronunciation support in chatbots is still limited by technological constraints. Speech recognition systems may struggle with non-native accents, which can lead to inaccurate feedback or communication breakdown. Therefore, while chatbots can be useful tools for pronunciation practice, they should be used in combination with other instructional methods to ensure comprehensive development of phonological competence (Holmes et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2024).

2.4.5 Pragmatic and Discourse Competence

Pragmatic and discourse competence refer to the ability to use language appropriately in context and to organize speech coherently and effectively. AI chatbots can contribute to the development of these competencies by providing learners with opportunities to engage in contextualized interaction, where they must respond appropriately to conversational prompts, maintain coherence, and manage discourse (Council of Europe, 2020; Wang et al., 2024).

Through interaction with chatbots, learners can practice various communicative functions, such as requesting information, expressing opinions, agreeing or disagreeing, and managing conversation. This helps them develop an understanding of how language is used in different contexts and for different purposes. In addition, chatbots can expose learners to discourse patterns, including turn-taking, topic development, and the use of discourse markers, which are essential for coherent and effective communication (Richards, 2008; Council of Europe, 2020).

However, one limitation of chatbots is their inability to fully replicate the complexity of human interaction. Pragmatic competence involves not only linguistic knowledge but also sensitivity to social and cultural norms, which AI systems may not fully capture. As a result, while chatbots can support the development of pragmatic and discourse competence to some extent, they cannot replace authentic human interaction. Therefore, their use should be complemented by real communicative experiences to ensure balanced development of speaking skills (Holmes et al., 2019; Du & Daniel, 2025).

2.5 Affective Dimensions of Using AI Chatbots

The affective dimension is a key factor in EFL speaking development because learners' emotions, anxiety levels, and self-confidence strongly influence their willingness to participate in oral communication. In many EFL contexts, speaking is associated with fear of mistakes and negative evaluation, which can reduce engagement even when learners have adequate linguistic knowledge. AI chatbots can help address these issues by providing a more private, low-anxiety, and flexible environment for practice, where learners can interact without the social pressure of classroom exposure. This supportive setting encourages more frequent speaking practice and helps reduce emotional barriers, making learners more willing to

experiment with language use (Holmes et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2024; Goh & Burns, 2012; Ding & Yusof, 2025).

2.5.1 Reducing Speaking Anxiety

Speaking anxiety is one of the most significant affective barriers in EFL learning, often preventing learners from participating actively in oral communication. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope define foreign language anxiety as a specific psychological construct involving communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. These factors are particularly evident in speaking tasks, where learners are required to produce language spontaneously in front of others, often under evaluative conditions (Horwitz et al., 1986).

AI chatbots can help reduce speaking anxiety by providing a non-judgmental and private interaction environment. Unlike human interlocutors, chatbots do not evaluate learners socially, which reduces the fear of embarrassment or criticism. Learners can practice speaking repeatedly, make mistakes, and self-correct without experiencing the pressure typically associated with classroom interaction. This creates a safer emotional space for language experimentation and risk-taking, which is essential for speaking development (Ding & Yusof, 2025; Holmes et al., 2019).

Additionally, the self-paced nature of chatbot interaction allows learners to control the speed and frequency of communication. They can pause, think, and retry their responses, which reduces time pressure and cognitive overload. This flexibility is particularly beneficial for anxious learners, as it allows them to focus on meaning rather than worrying about immediate performance. Over time, repeated successful interaction can contribute to a gradual reduction in anxiety and an increase in communicative comfort (Goh & Burns, 2012; Wang et al., 2024).

However, it is important to note that anxiety reduction depends on the quality of interaction. If chatbots produce unclear responses or fail to understand input, learners may become frustrated, which can counteract the positive affective effects. Therefore, while chatbots can reduce anxiety, their effectiveness depends on both technological reliability and pedagogical integration (Holmes et al., 2019; Du & Daniel, 2025).

2.5.2 Increasing Willingness to Communicate

Willingness to communicate (WTC) refers to a learner's readiness to initiate and engage in communication when given the opportunity. In EFL contexts, WTC is a key predictor of actual language use, since opportunities for communication are often limited. Even when learners have sufficient linguistic knowledge, they may remain silent if they lack the confidence or motivation to speak. Therefore, increasing WTC is a major goal in speaking pedagogy (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

AI chatbots can contribute to increased willingness to communicate by lowering the affective threshold for participation. Because interaction with chatbots is private and non-threatening, learners may feel more comfortable initiating conversation and sustaining dialogue. They are not required to compete for speaking turns or respond under social pressure, which encourages more participation that is active. This increased engagement can help learners develop a habit of communication, which may gradually extend to other contexts (Wang et al., 2024; Ding & Yusof, 2025).

Empirical studies have shown that chatbot-assisted learning can positively influence learners' willingness to communicate. For example, research indicates that learners who interact with AI chatbots report greater readiness to speak, increased participation, and improved self-perceived communicative competence. These findings suggest that chatbot interaction can serve as a bridge between passive knowledge and active language use, particularly for learners who are initially reluctant to speak (Zou et al., 2025; Wang et al., 2024).

Nevertheless, WTC developed in chatbot environments may not automatically transfer to real-life communication. Learners may feel comfortable interacting with AI but still hesitate in face-to-face situations. Therefore, it is essential to integrate chatbot use with classroom activities that gradually expose learners to human interaction, ensuring that increased willingness to communicate is transferred to authentic communicative contexts (MacIntyre et al., 1998; Holmes et al., 2019).

2.5.3 Motivation and Learner Confidence

Motivation is a key driving force in language learning, influencing the amount of effort learners invest and their persistence over time. AI chatbots can enhance motivation by making speaking practice more accessible, interactive, and engaging. Unlike traditional methods, which may rely on repetitive exercises, chatbot interaction

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offers dynamic and responsive communication, which can increase learner interest and involvement. In EFL contexts, where opportunities for speaking practice are limited, this increased engagement can play a significant role in sustaining learner motivation (Ding & Yusof, 2025; Wang et al., 2024).

In addition to motivation, AI chatbots can support the development of learner confidence, particularly in speaking. Confidence is closely related to self-perceived communicative competence, which affects learners' willingness to participate in oral tasks. Through repeated interaction with chatbots, learners can experience successful communication, which reinforces their belief in their ability to use English effectively. This positive reinforcement can lead to greater confidence and increased participation in speaking activities (Goh & Burns, 2012; Wang et al., 2024).

The confidence-building effect of chatbots is also linked to their ability to provide immediate feedback and continuous practice. Learners can test their language, receive responses, and improve their performance without waiting for teacher evaluation. This ongoing cycle of practice and feedback helps learners track their progress and develop a sense of achievement. As a result, they may become more willing to take risks and engage in more complex communication (Holmes et al., 2019; Ding & Yusof, 2025).

However, motivation and confidence gains depend on how chatbots are used. If interaction is repetitive, inaccurate, or lacks meaningful context, learners may lose interest. Similarly, confidence developed in AI-mediated environments must be supported by real communicative experiences to become stable and transferable. Therefore, the most effective approach is to combine chatbot interaction with classroom-based speaking activities, ensuring that affective gains contribute to overall communicative development (Du & Daniel, 2025; Holmes et al., 2019).

2.6 Pedagogical Integration in EFL Classrooms

The pedagogical integration of AI chatbots in EFL classrooms requires a structured and purposeful approach that connects technological tools with clear language learning objectives. Rather than being used independently, chatbots should be embedded within communicative and task-based teaching frameworks to ensure that they meaningfully contribute to speaking development and complement teacher-led instruction.

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Effective integration depends on aligning chatbot use with learning outcomes such as fluency, accuracy, and communicative competence, while ensuring that activities remain pedagogically meaningful (Holmes et al., 2019; Richards, 2006). In this sense, chatbots should function as supportive tools that extend classroom interaction rather than replace the teacher's role, providing learners with additional opportunities for practice and exposure to language use.

Successful implementation requires attention to learner proficiency, task design, interaction type, and feedback quality. Chatbot activities should be connected to broader instructional goals and designed to simulate authentic communication as much as possible. When carefully integrated, AI chatbots can enhance learner autonomy, increase speaking opportunities, and support individualized learning in EFL contexts (Wang et al., 2024; Goh & Burns, 2012).

2.6.1 Chatbots as Supplementary Tools

AI chatbots are most effectively used as supplementary tools that support and extend classroom instruction rather than replace it. In EFL settings, where speaking opportunities are often limited, chatbots can provide additional practice outside classroom hours, allowing learners to engage in repeated interaction at their own pace. This extended exposure is particularly valuable for developing speaking skills, as it increases the amount of time learners spend using the target language in communicative contexts (Ding & Yusof, 2025; Richards, 2008).

As supplementary tools, chatbots can also support differentiated learning by providing individualized interaction tailored to learners' needs and levels. Learners can practice specific language functions, repeat tasks, and receive feedback without the constraints of classroom time or peer comparison. This flexibility allows learners to focus on areas of difficulty and progress at their own rate, which is often difficult to achieve in traditional classroom settings (Holmes et al., 2019; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019).

However, the role of chatbots as supplementary tools also highlights the importance of teacher mediation. Without guidance, learners may engage in superficial interaction or fail to use chatbots effectively for language development. Therefore, teachers should provide clear instructions, learning objectives, and follow-up activities

that connect chatbot interaction to classroom learning, ensuring that the technology supports meaningful pedagogical outcomes (Goh & Burns, 2012; Richards, 2006).

2.6.2 Task-Based Speaking Activities with Chatbots

The integration of chatbots into task-based language teaching (TBLT) offers a powerful approach for enhancing speaking skills. Task-based activities require learners to use language to achieve communicative goals, such as solving problems, exchanging information, or making decisions. When chatbots are incorporated into such tasks, they can serve as interactive partners that facilitate meaningful communication and provide opportunities for negotiation of meaning (Ellis, 2003; Long, 2015).

Chatbots can be used in a variety of task-based speaking activities, including role-plays, simulations, information-gap tasks, and scenario-based dialogues. For example, learners may engage in simulated conversations such as ordering food, making travel arrangements, or participating in interviews. These tasks encourage learners to use language in context, apply vocabulary and grammar knowledge, and develop interactional skills such as turn-taking and clarification (Wang et al., 2024; Goh & Burns, 2012).

Moreover, chatbots allow for repetition and variation of tasks, which are essential for language development. Learners can repeat the same task multiple times, improving their performance with each attempt and gradually increasing fluency and accuracy. This aligns with cognitive theories of language learning that emphasize the role of practice and proceduralization. However, for maximum effectiveness, chatbot-based tasks should be designed to promote meaningful interaction rather than mechanical repetition (Kormos, 2006; Ellis, 2003).

2.6.3 Blended Learning Models

The use of AI chatbots is particularly effective within blended learning models, which combine face-to-face instruction with technology-mediated learning. In such models, chatbots can extend classroom interaction by providing additional speaking practice outside formal instructional time. This integration allows learners to benefit from both teacher guidance and autonomous practice, creating a more flexible and comprehensive learning environment (Graham, 2013; Holmes et al., 2019).

AI Chatbots and Speaking Skill in EFL Classrooms

Blended learning also enables a more balanced distribution of instructional time. Classroom sessions can focus on explanation, modeling, and collaborative interaction, while chatbot-based activities can be used for practice, reinforcement, and individualized feedback. This division of roles helps maximize the efficiency of both human and technological resources, ensuring that learners receive both structured instruction and sufficient opportunities for practice (Wang et al., 2024; Goh & Burns, 2012).

In addition, blended models support continuous learning by allowing learners to engage with English beyond the classroom. This is particularly important in EFL contexts, where exposure to the target language is limited. By integrating chatbots into blended learning environments, educators can create a more immersive and sustain learning experience that supports ongoing speaking development (Graham, 2013; Richards, 2008).

2.6.4 Teacher's Role in AI-Mediated Interaction

Despite the growing role of AI technologies, the teacher remains central in AI-mediated language learning environments. Teachers are responsible for designing tasks, selecting appropriate tools, guiding learner interaction, and providing feedback that complements chatbot responses. Their role shifts from being the sole source of knowledge to a facilitator, mediator, and evaluator of learning processes (Holmes et al., 2019; Richards, 2006). One important aspect of the teacher's role is scaffolding. Teachers must prepare learners to use chatbots effectively by providing linguistic support, modeling interaction strategies, and explaining how to engage with the technology. They also need to monitor learner progress and address any misconceptions or errors that chatbots may fail to correct. This ensures that chatbot interaction contributes positively to language development rather than reinforcing incorrect usage (Lantolf, 2009; Goh & Burns, 2012).

Teachers also play a critical role in maintaining a balance between technology and human interaction. While chatbots can provide valuable practice, they cannot fully replicate the social, emotional, and pragmatic aspects of human communication. Therefore, teachers must create opportunities for learners to transfer skills developed through chatbot interaction into real communicative situations. This balanced

AI Chatbots and Speaking Skill in EFL Classrooms

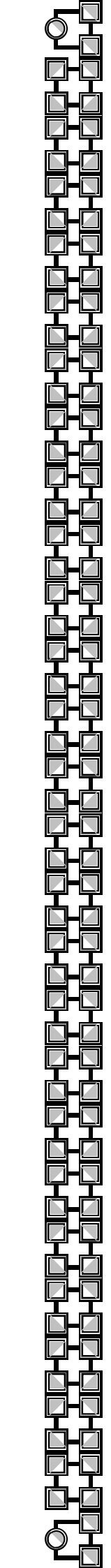
approach ensures that AI tools enhance rather than replace essential elements of language learning (Holmes et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2024).

Finally, teachers are responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of chatbot integration and adapting their use based on learner needs and contextual constraints. This includes selecting appropriate tools, designing meaningful tasks, and ensuring alignment with learning objectives. In this way, the teacher's role remains indispensable in ensuring that AI-mediated interaction leads to meaningful and sustainable development of speaking skills in EFL classrooms (Richards, 2008; Graham, 2013).

Conclusion

Building on the theoretical framework of speaking skills, this chapter examined the role of Artificial Intelligence, particularly AI chatbots, in supporting EFL speaking development. It showed that AI technologies can help address key limitations of EFL contexts by providing more personalized, adaptive, and interactive opportunities for language practice, especially in environments where authentic communication is limited. The chapter also explained that AI chatbots, particularly AI-driven and voice-based systems, function as conversational agents that support learner autonomy, offer immediate feedback, and ensure continuous speaking practice.

In addition, the chapter highlighted that AI chatbots can improve various dimensions of speaking, including fluency, accuracy, vocabulary development, pronunciation, and pragmatic competence, while also reducing anxiety and increasing motivation and confidence. However, it also acknowledged their limitations, especially their inability to fully replicate human interaction and complex communicative nuances. Therefore, it concluded that AI chatbots should be integrated as complementary pedagogical tools alongside teachers, ensuring that technology and human instruction work together to enhance speaking outcomes effectively.



Chapter -III. Research methodology And Data analysis

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Introduction

The present chapter represents the practical part of the research. It investigates the role of AI chatbots in speaking practice by analyzing students' questionnaire responses and teachers' interview data. The chapter presents the research design, population and sample, research instruments, data collection procedures, the quantitative analysis of the students' questionnaire, the qualitative analysis of the teachers' interview, and the discussion of the main findings.

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-method research design. The quantitative part is based on a questionnaire administered to EFL students and analyzed through descriptive statistics using IBM SPSS Statistics. The qualitative part is based on semi-structured interviews conducted with EFL teachers. This combination makes it possible to compare students' perceptions of chatbot-assisted speaking practice with teachers' views about human-assisted and AI-supported speaking development.

3.2 Population and Sample

The population of the study consists of EFL students and teachers at the Department of English, Kasdi Merbah University, Ouargla. The student sample consisted of forty-three (43) third-year EFL students whose questionnaire responses were valid for statistical analysis. The teacher sample consisted of four (4) EFL teachers from the same department who participated in the semi-structured interview. The students were selected because they represent the target group directly involved in speaking practice, while the teachers were selected because of their teaching experience and their ability to provide informed views about the pedagogical use of AI chatbots in EFL speaking instruction.

3.3 Research Instruments

Two research instruments were used in this study. The first instrument was a students' questionnaire designed according to the research topic. It contained six sections: use of AI chatbots in learning, impact on speaking skills, comparison between chatbots and teachers, evaluation of AI chatbots, speaking anxiety and motivation, and

general evaluation. The second instrument was a semi-structured teachers' interview designed to collect professional opinions about AI chatbots, speaking practice, feedback, motivation, limitations, and the teacher's role.

3.4 Data Collection

The questionnaire was administered to forty-three (43) third-year EFL students at the Department of English, Kasdi Merbah University, Ouargla, and all responses were retained for analysis. The collected data were coded and entered into IBM SPSS Statistics for quantitative analysis. Descriptive statistics, mainly frequencies and percentages, were used to describe students' responses and identify the main tendencies in the data.

In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with four (4) EFL teachers from the same department. The interview data were analyzed qualitatively through thematic interpretation in order to identify the teachers' views about the effectiveness, challenges, and pedagogical implications of using AI chatbots in EFL speaking practice.

3.4.1 Students' Questionnaire

3.4.1.1 Description of Students' Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire is composed of forty-two items distributed across six sections. Each section focuses on a specific dimension related to the role of AI chatbots in English speaking practice. Most questions are closed-ended, allowing the results to be organized in tables and figures. The questionnaire is directly connected to the comparative purpose of the study because it includes items about chatbot-assisted practice, teacher-assisted practice, feedback, comfort, realism, motivation, anxiety, and future use.

3.4.1.2 Administration of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was administered to forty-three (43) third-year EFL students at the Department of English, Kasdi Merbah University, Ouargla, and all responses were retained for analysis. The responses were checked for consistency, coded, and entered into IBM SPSS Statistics. Missing answers were checked carefully and treated according to the nature of each item in order to preserve the consistency and accuracy of the collected data.

3.4.1.3 Analysis of Students' Questionnaire

This section presents the analysis of the students' questionnaire. The results are displayed through frequency and percentage tables generated from IBM SPSS Statistics, followed by short interpretations that explain the main tendencies in the data.

Section One: Use of AI Chatbots in Learning

Question 1: Have you ever used an AI chatbot (e.g., ChatGPT) for learning English?

Table 3. 1: Students' Use of AI Chatbots for Learning English

Options	Number	Percentage %
Yes	40	93.02%
No	3	6.98%

This question aimed to determine whether the respondents had previous experience with AI chatbots in learning English. The highest frequency was recorded for "Yes" with 40 students (93.02%), followed by "No" with 3 students (6.98%). This result shows that the majority of the selected learners had already been exposed to AI chatbots before completing the questionnaire. Figure (3.1) summarizes the same results visually.

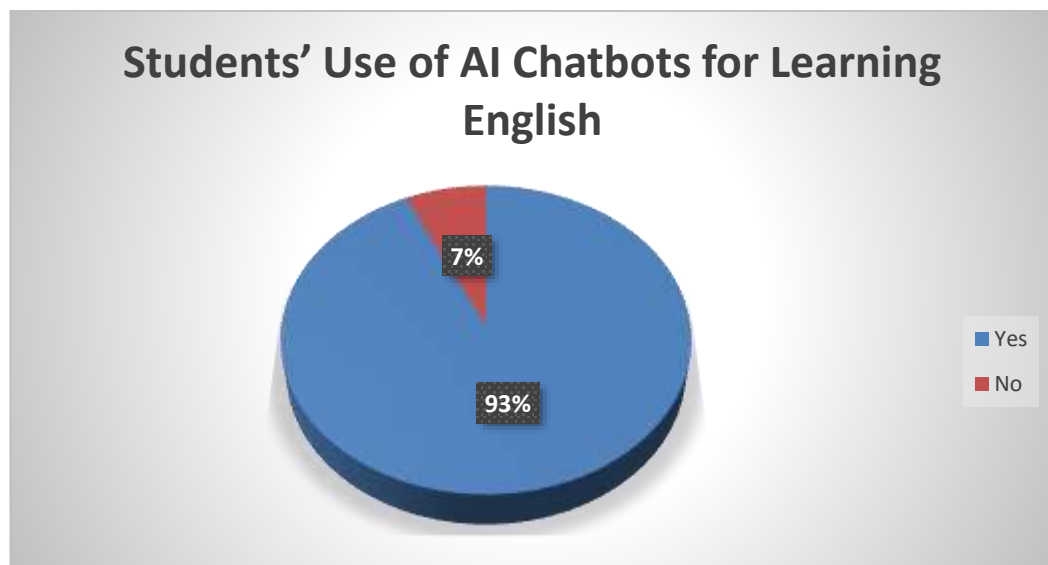


Figure 3. 1: Students' Use of AI Chatbots for Learning English

Question 2: How often do you use AI chatbots?

Table 3. 2: Students' Frequency of Using AI Chatbots

Options	Number	Percentage %
Daily	21	48.84%
Several times a week	19	44.19%
Rarely	3	6.98%
Never	0	0%

This question aimed to identify how regularly students rely on AI chatbots. The highest frequency was recorded for “Daily” with 21 students (48.84%), followed by “Several times a week” with 19 students (44.19%). Only 3 students (6.98%) reported rare use, while no respondent selected “Never”. This indicates that chatbot use is part of the regular learning routine of most students. Figure (3.2) summarizes the same results visually.

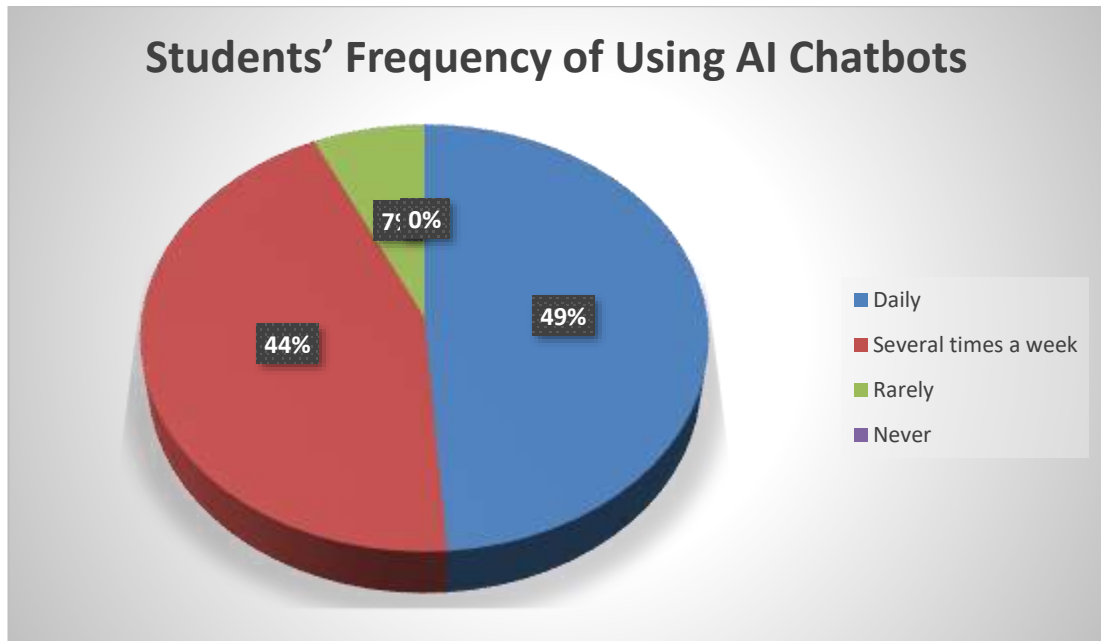


Figure 3. 2: Students' Frequency of Using AI Chatbots

Question 3: When do you usually use AI chatbots?

Table 3. 3: Students' Preferred Time for Using AI Chatbots

Options	Number	Percentage %
Morning	0	0%
Afternoon	0	0%
Evening	4	9.30%
Anytime	39	90.70%

This question aimed to identify the time pattern of students' chatbot use. The results show that the majority of students, 39 respondents (90.70%), use AI chatbots anytime, while only 4 students (9.30%) use them in the evening. No student selected morning or afternoon. This indicates that students mainly value AI chatbots because they are flexible and available whenever learners need support. Figure (3.3) summarizes the same results visually.

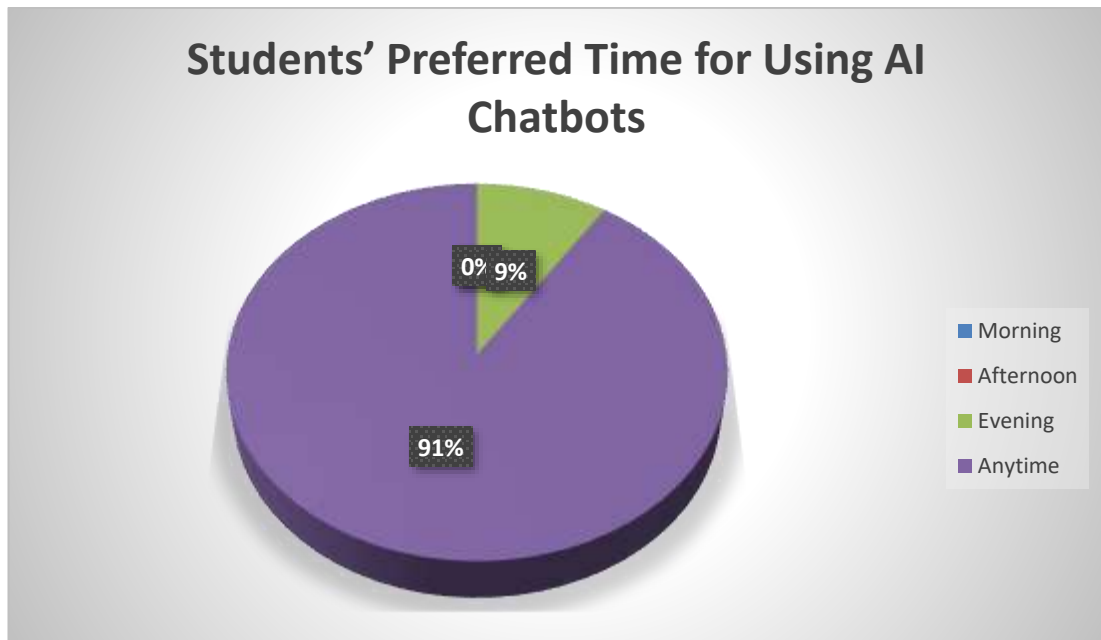


Figure 3. 3: Students' Preferred Time for Using AI Chatbots

Question 4: What is your main purpose for using chatbots?

Table 3. 4: Students' Main Purpose for Using Chatbots

Options	Number	Percentage %
Speaking	21	48.84%
Writing	22	51.16%
Grammar	0	0%
Vocabulary	0	0%

This question aimed to identify the learning purpose most associated with chatbot use. The highest frequency was recorded for “Writing” with 22 students (51.16%), followed very closely by “Speaking” with 21 students (48.84%). No student selected grammar or vocabulary as a main purpose. This indicates that students mainly use AI chatbots to support productive language skills, particularly writing and speaking. Figure (3.4) summarizes the same results visually.

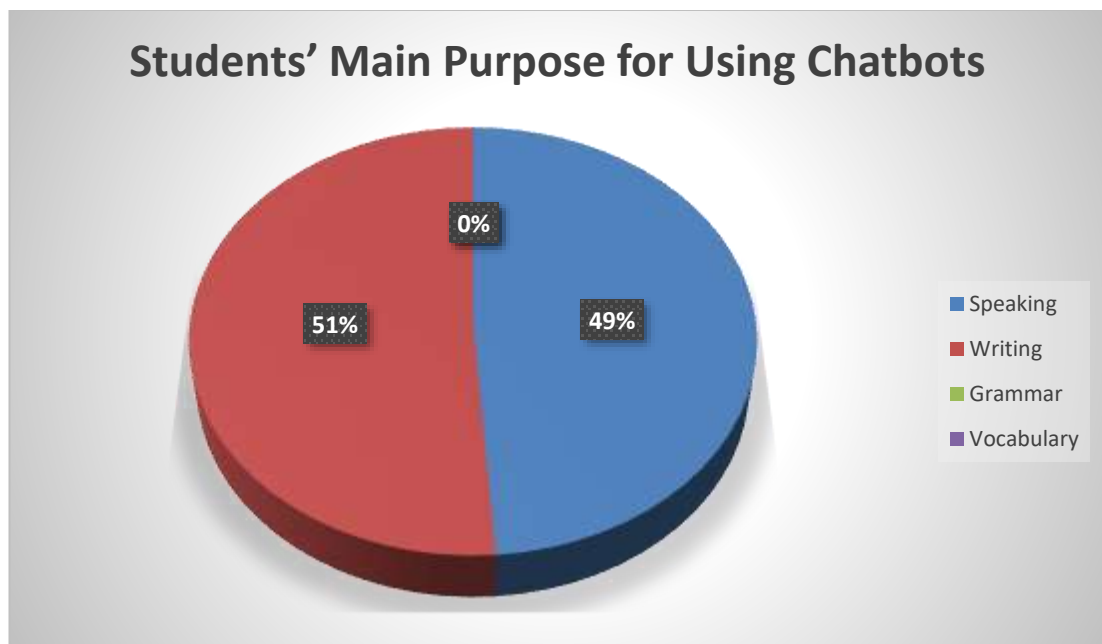


Figure 3. 4: Students' Main Purpose for Using Chatbots

Question 5: Do you use chatbots inside or outside the classroom?

Table 3. 5: Students' Place of Using AI Chatbots

Options	Number	Percentage %
Inside	0	0%
Outside	14	32.56%
Both	29	67.44%

This question aimed to determine whether students use AI chatbots inside the classroom, outside the classroom, or in both contexts. The highest frequency was recorded for “Both” with 29 students (67.44%), followed by “Outside” with 14 students (32.56%). No student reported using chatbots inside the classroom only. This shows that chatbot-assisted learning extends beyond formal classroom time and is also used as an out-of-class learning support. Figure (3.5) summarizes the same results visually.

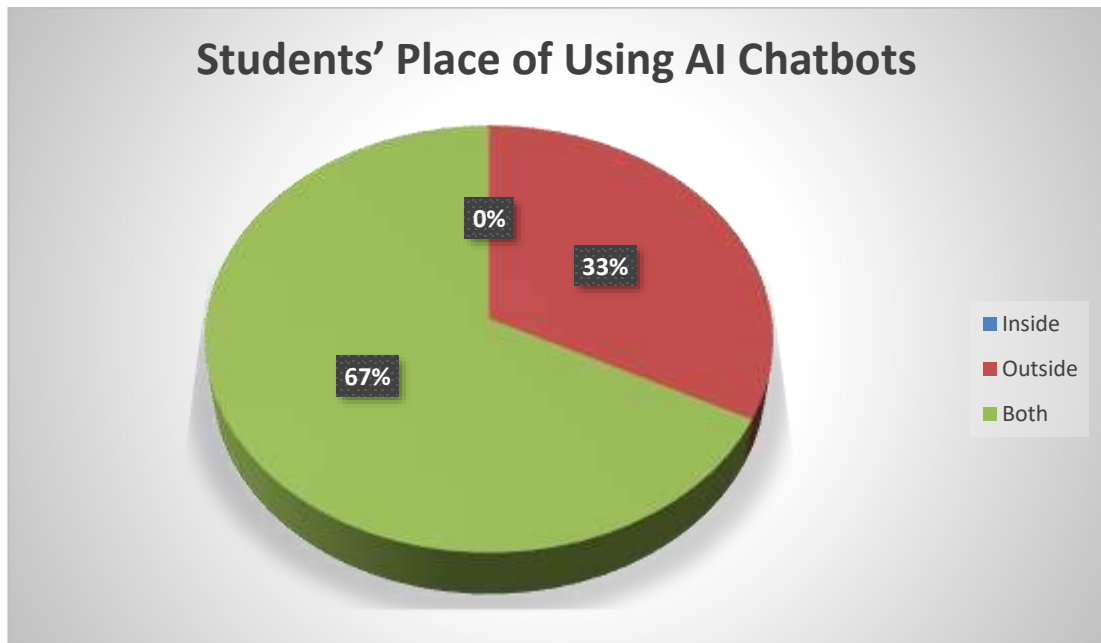


Figure 3. 5: Students' Place of Using AI Chatbots

Question 6: Rate your level of familiarity with AI chatbots.

Table 3. 6: Students' Familiarity with AI Chatbots

Options	Number	Percentage %
Very high	4	9.30%
High	25	58.14%
Medium	13	30.23%
Low	1	2.33%
Very low	0	0%

This question aimed to measure students' perceived familiarity with AI chatbots. The highest frequency was recorded for "High" with 25 students (58.14%), followed by "Medium" with 13 students (30.23%). Four students (9.30%) reported a very high level of familiarity, while only one student (2.33%) reported a low level. This indicates that most respondents are familiar enough with AI chatbots to evaluate their learning value. Figure (3.6) summarizes the same results visually.

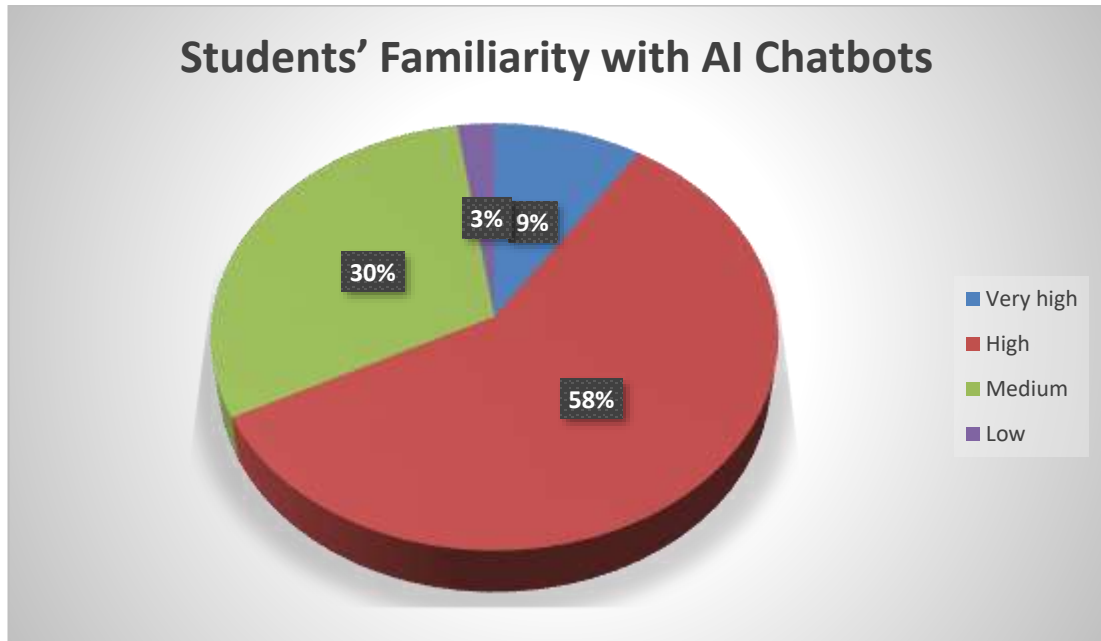


Figure 3. 6: Students' Familiarity with AI Chatbots

Question 7: Do you consider AI chatbots easy to use?

Table 3. 7: Students' Perception of the Ease of Using AI Chatbots

Options	Number	Percentage %
Yes	42	97.67%
No	1	2.33%

This question aimed to explore students' perception of chatbot usability. The highest frequency was recorded for "Yes" with 42 students (97.67%), followed by "No" with one student (2.33%). This result indicates that ease of use is one of the main factors that may encourage students to rely on AI chatbots for English learning and speaking practice. Figure (3.7) summarizes the same results visually.

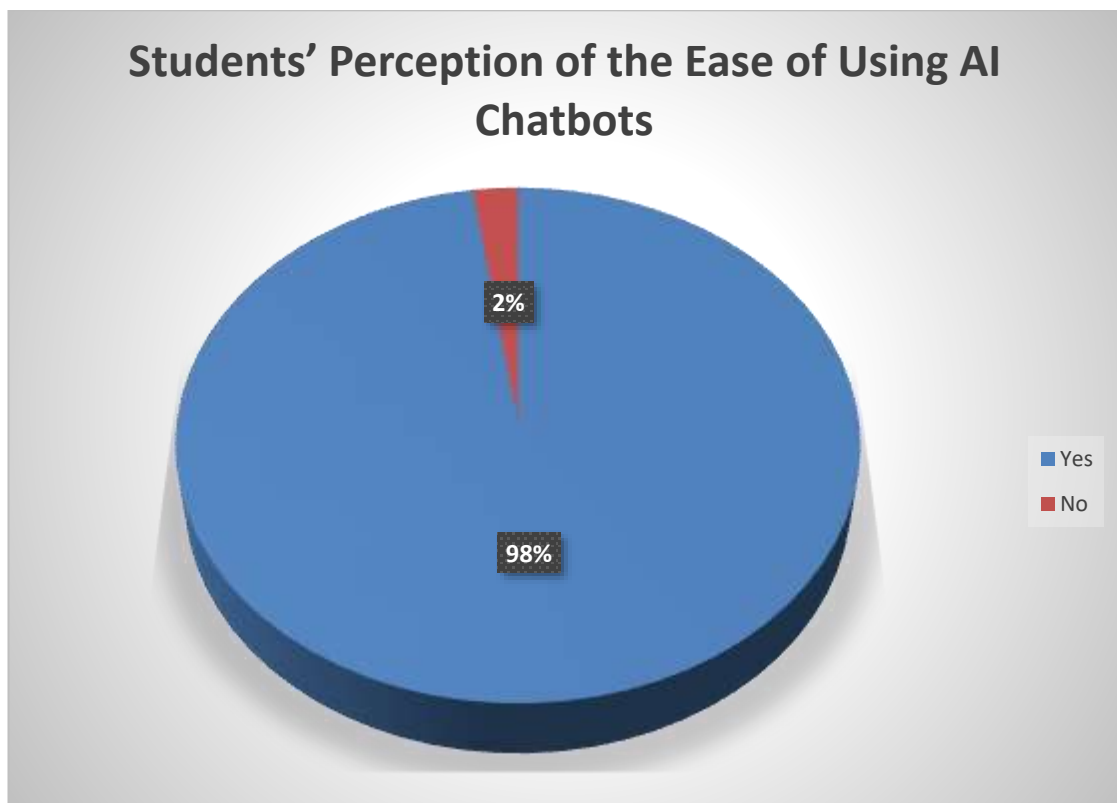


Figure 3.7: Figure 3. 7: Students' Perception of the Ease of Using AI Chatbots

Section Two: Impact on Speaking Skills

Question 8: AI chatbots help me improve my speaking confidence.

Table 3. 8: Students' Perceptions of Chatbots and Speaking Confidence

Options	Number	Percentage %
Strongly Agree	2	4.65%
Agree	24	55.81%
Neutral	11	25.58%
Disagree	2	4.65%
Strongly Disagree	4	9.30%

This question aimed to examine whether students associate chatbot use with improved speaking confidence. The results show that 24 students (55.81%) agreed and 2 students (4.65%) strongly agreed, representing a total positive response of 60.46%. Meanwhile, 11 students (25.58%) were neutral, whereas 6 students (13.95%) expressed disagreement or strong disagreement. These findings indicate that most respondents perceive AI chatbots as helpful in improving their confidence in oral communication. Figure (3.8) summarizes the same results visually.

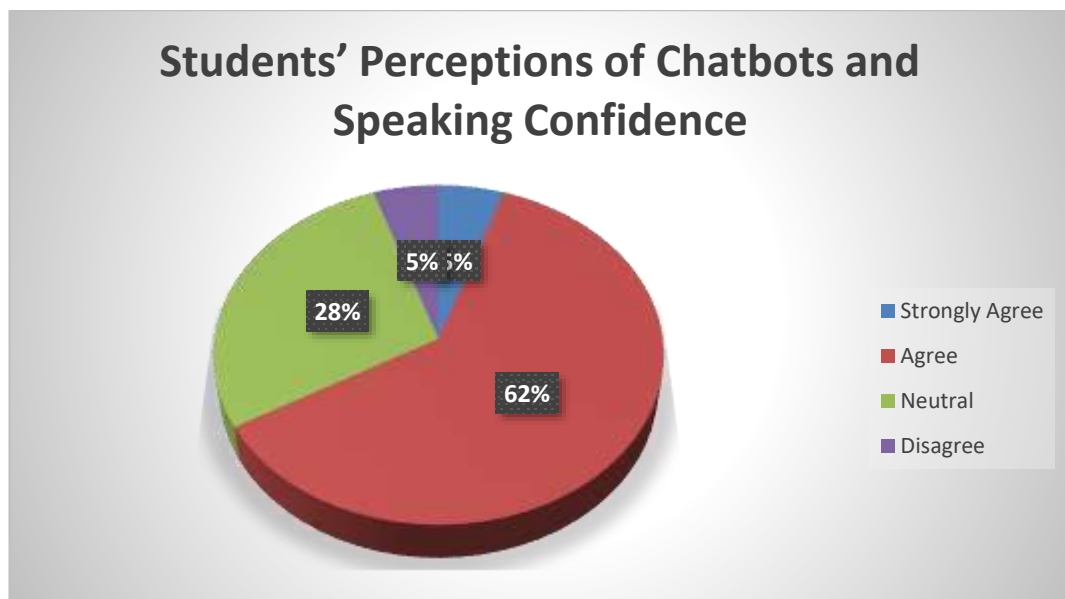


Figure 3. 8: Students' Perceptions of Chatbots and Speaking Confidence

Question 9: Do chatbots reduce your fear of speaking English?

Table 3. 9: Students' Views on Chatbots and Fear of Speaking English

Options	Number	Percentage %
Yes	34	79.07%
No	9	20.93%

This question aimed to determine whether chatbots reduce students' fear of speaking English. The results show that 34 students (79.07%) answered "Yes", while 9 students (20.93%) answered "No". This indicates that AI chatbots are perceived by the majority of students as tools that can reduce fear and create a less stressful environment for speaking practice. Figure (3.9) summarizes the same results visually.

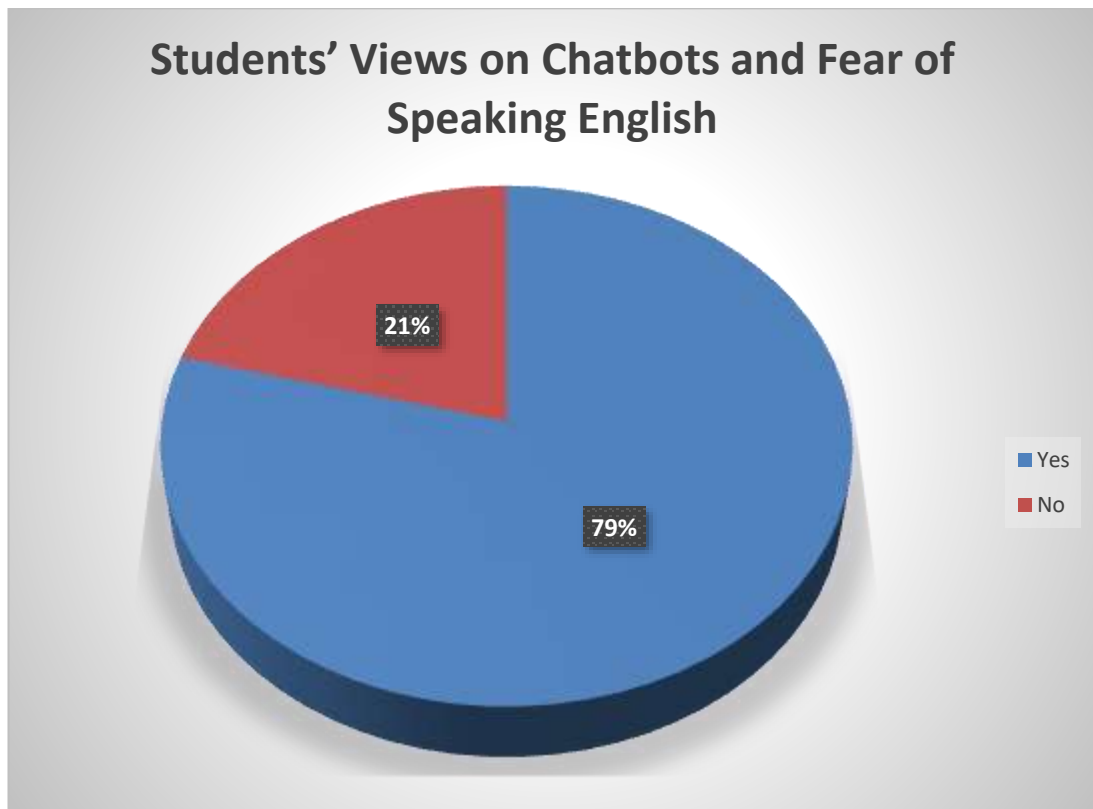


Figure 3. 9: Students' Views on Chatbots and Fear of Speaking English

Question 10: Compared to before, your speaking level is now:

Table 3. 10: Students' Self-Reported Change in Speaking Level

Options	Number	Percentage %
Much better	10	23.26%
Better	23	53.49%
Same	10	23.26%
Worse	0	0%

This question aimed to identify how students evaluate the development of their speaking level. The results show that 23 students (53.49%) described their level as “Better”, while 10 students (23.26%) selected “Much better”. Together, these responses represent 76.75% of the sample. In contrast, 10 students (23.26%) reported that their level remained the same, and no student selected “Worse”. This suggests that most respondents perceive a positive change in their speaking level after using AI chatbots. Figure (3.10) summarizes the same results visually.

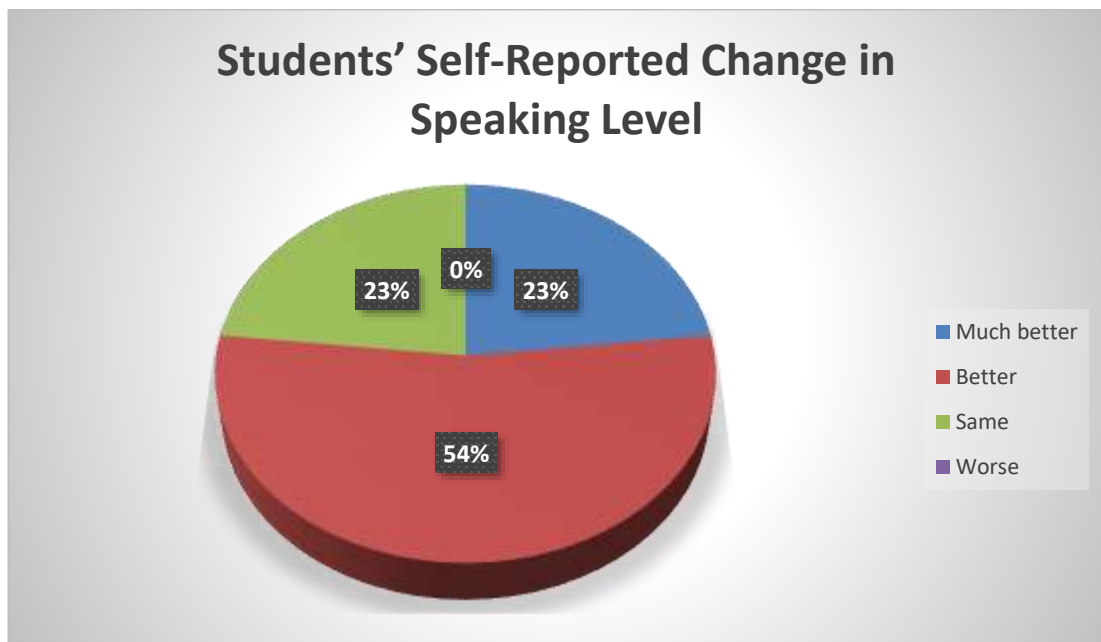


Figure 3. 10: Students' Self-Reported Change in Speaking Level

Question 11: Chatbots help me practice speaking regularly.

Table 3. 11: Students' Regularity of Speaking Practice with Chatbots

Options	Number	Percentage %
Always	5	11.63%
Often	13	30.23%
Sometimes	17	39.53%
Rarely	2	4.65%
Never	6	13.95%

This question aimed to evaluate whether chatbots support regular speaking practice. The highest frequency was recorded for “Sometimes” with 17 students (39.53%), followed by “Often” with 13 students (30.23%) and “Always” with 5 students (11.63%). However, 2 students (4.65%) selected “Rarely”, and 6 students (13.95%) selected “Never”. These results indicate that chatbots support speaking practice to a moderate extent, but they are not used regularly by all students. Figure (3.11) summarizes the same results visually.

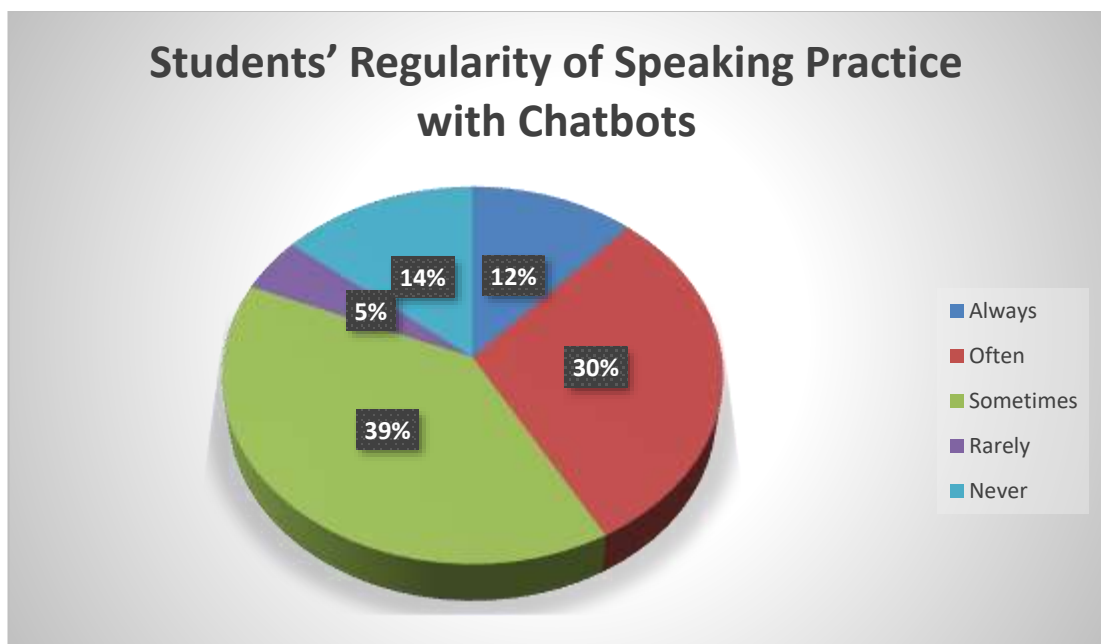


Figure 3. 11: Students' Regularity of Speaking Practice with Chatbots

Question 12: What aspect improved the most thanks to chatbots?

Table 3. 12: Speaking Aspects Most Improved through Chatbot Use

Options	Number	Percentage %
Fluency	3	6.98%
Pronunciation	4	9.30%
Vocabulary	22	51.16%
Confidence	14	32.56%

This question aimed to identify the speaking aspect students feel improved the most through chatbot use. The highest frequency was recorded for “Vocabulary” with 22 students (51.16%), followed by “Confidence” with 14 students (32.56%). Fluency and pronunciation received lower percentages, with 3 students (6.98%) and 4 students (9.30%) respectively. This suggests that students associate chatbot use mainly with vocabulary development and confidence building rather than direct improvement in pronunciation or fluency. Figure (3.12) summarizes the same results visually.

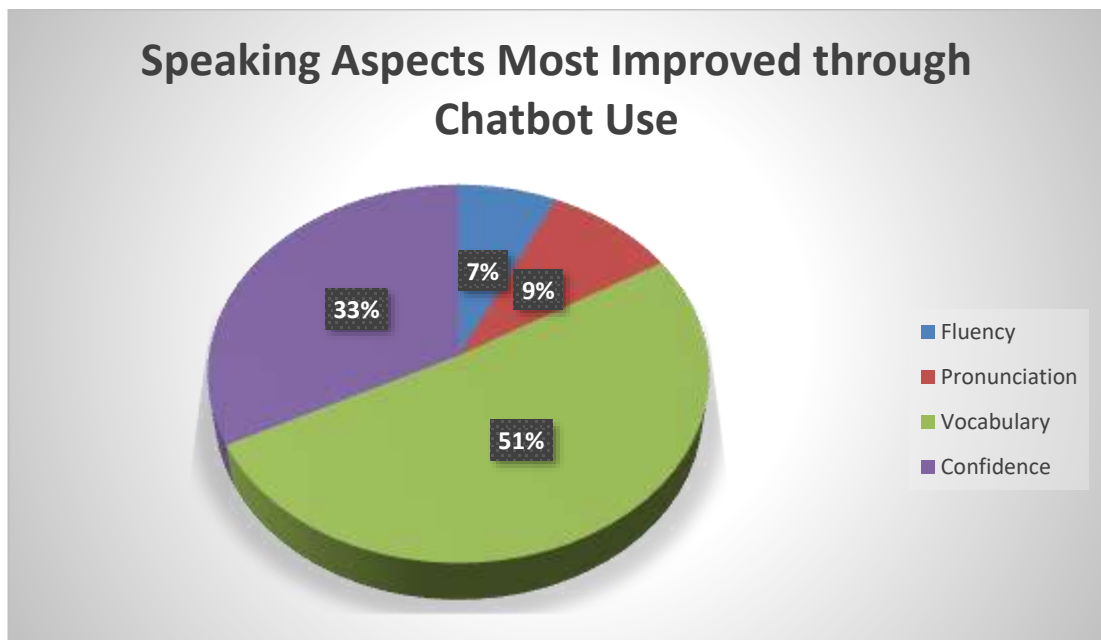


Figure 3. 12: Speaking Aspects Most Improved through Chatbot Use

Question 13: Do you feel comfortable speaking with chatbots?

Table 3. 13: Students' Comfort When Speaking with Chatbots

Options	Number	Percentage %
Yes	41	95.35%
No	2	4.65%

This question aimed to measure students' comfort when practicing speaking with chatbots. The results show that 41 students (95.35%) answered "Yes", while only 2 students (4.65%) answered "No". This indicates that most respondents feel comfortable using chatbots for speaking practice, which may be related to the private and low-pressure nature of chatbot interaction. Figure (3.13) summarizes the same results visually.

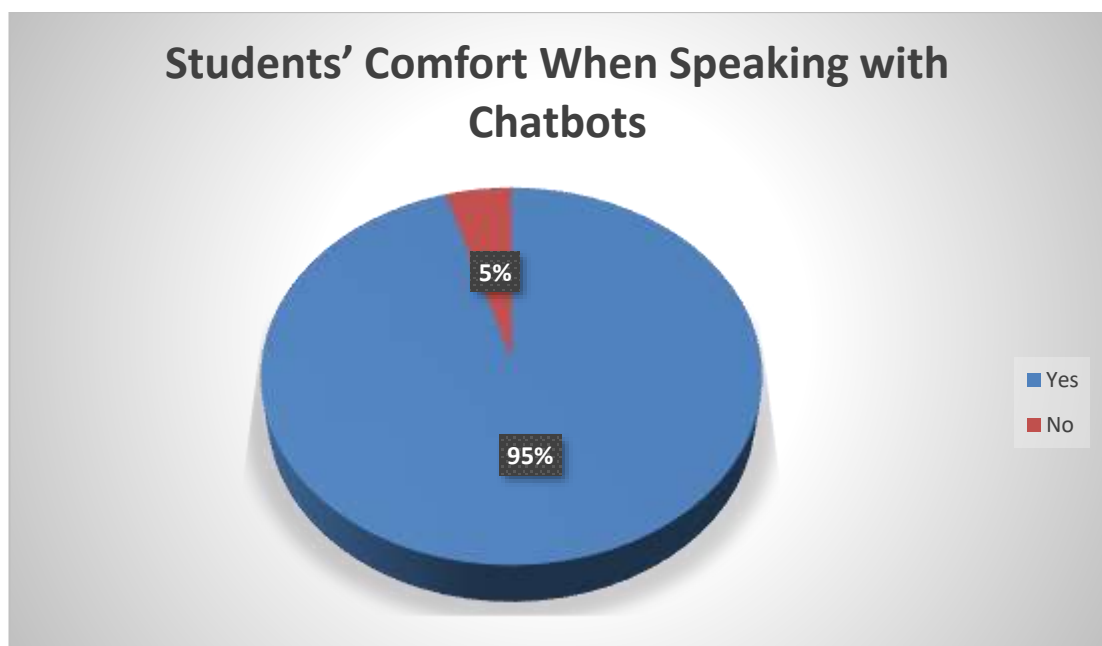


Figure 3. 13: Students' Comfort When Speaking with Chatbots

Question 14: How would you rate the usefulness of chatbots for speaking?

Table 3. 14: Students' Rating of Chatbots' Usefulness for Speaking

Options	Number	Percentage %
Very useful	12	27.91%
Useful	21	48.84%
Neutral	10	23.26%
Not useful	0	0%

This question aimed to assess students' overall evaluation of chatbots for speaking practice. The results show that 21 students (48.84%) rated chatbots as "Useful", while 12 students (27.91%) rated them as "Very useful", representing a total positive evaluation of 76.75%. Ten students (23.26%) remained neutral, and no student selected "Not useful". This indicates that most students consider AI chatbots useful tools for supporting speaking practice. Figure (3.14) summarizes the same results visually.

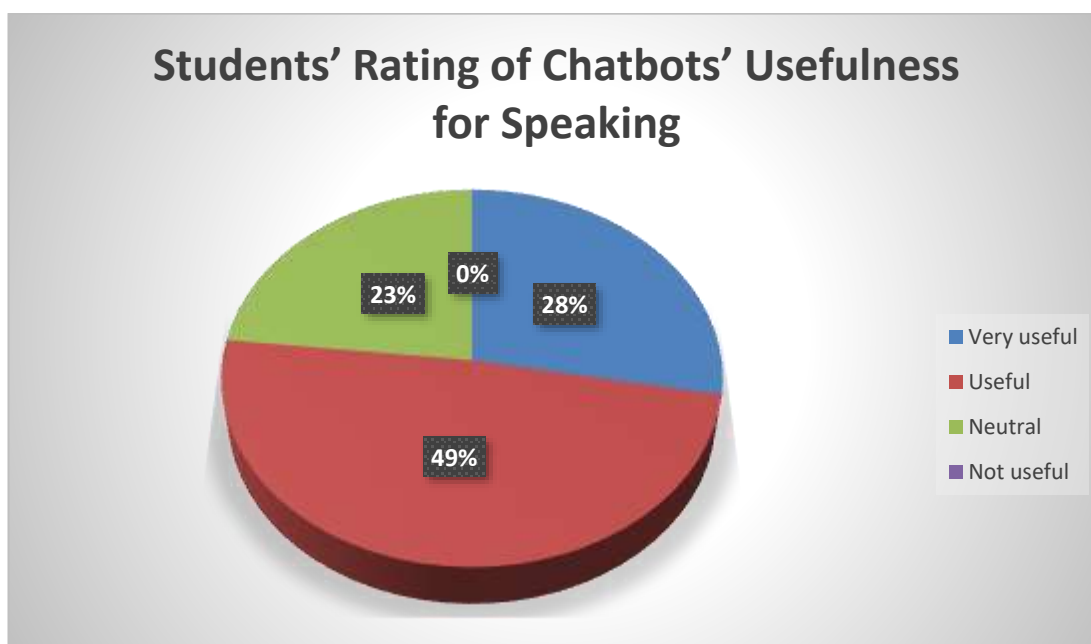


Figure 3. 14: Students' Rating of Chatbots' Usefulness for Speaking

Section Three: Comparison Between Chatbots and Teachers

Question 15: Which do you prefer for speaking practice?

Table 3. 15: Students' Preferred Support for Speaking Practice

Options	Number	Percentage %
Chatbot	3	6.98%
Teacher	11	25.58%
Both	29	67.44%

This question aimed to compare students' preference between chatbot-assisted and teacher-assisted speaking practice. The highest frequency was recorded for "Both" with 29 students (67.44%), followed by "Teacher" with 11 students (25.58%), while only 3 students (6.98%) preferred chatbots alone. This result indicates that most learners do not view chatbots and teachers as competing alternatives, but rather prefer a combined form of speaking support. Figure (3.15) summarizes the same results visually.

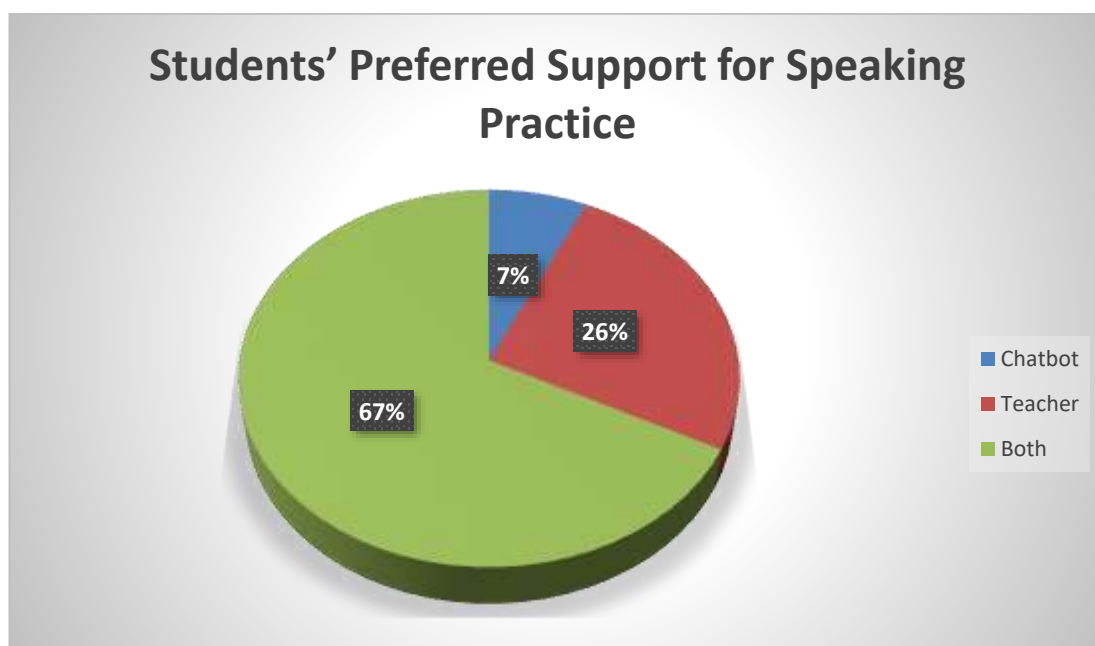


Figure 3. 15: Students' Preferred Support for Speaking Practice

Question 16: Chatbots are more available than teachers.

Table 3. 16: Students' Views on Chatbots' Availability Compared with Teachers

Options	Number	Percentage %
Strongly Agree	6	13.95%
Agree	15	34.88%
Neutral	17	39.53%
Disagree	2	4.65%
Strongly Disagree	3	6.98%

This question aimed to examine whether students consider chatbots more available than teachers. The highest frequency was recorded for “Neutral” with 17 students (39.53%), followed by “Agree” with 15 students (34.88%) and “Strongly Agree” with 6 students (13.95%). Meanwhile, 5 students (11.63%) disagreed or strongly disagreed. These results show that students' views are divided, although there is a partial tendency to recognize the availability of chatbots compared with teachers. Figure (3.16) summarizes the same results visually.

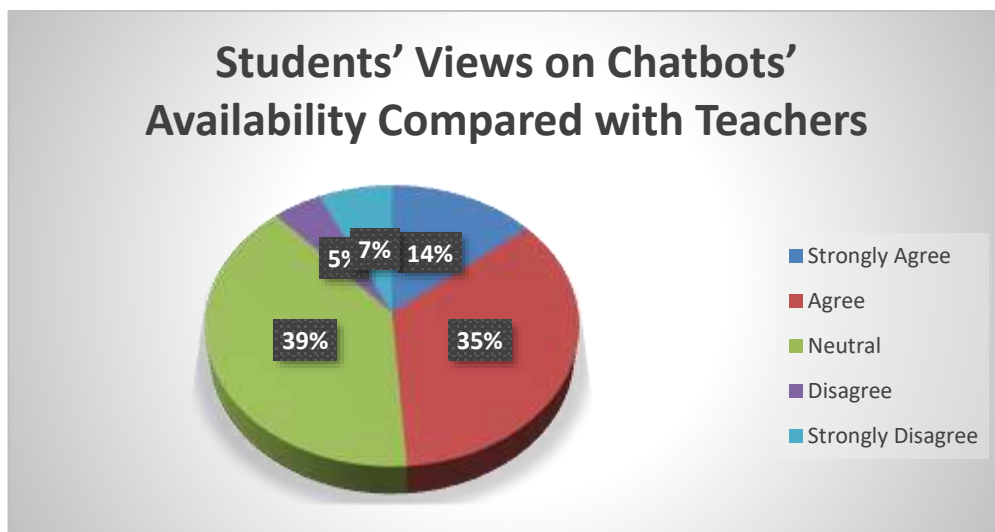


Figure 3. 16: Students' Views on Chatbots' Availability Compared with Teachers

Question 17: Who provides better feedback?

Table 3. 17: Students' Views on Feedback Quality

Options	Number	Percentage %
Chatbot	7	16.28%
Teacher	11	25.58%
Both	25	58.14%

This question aimed to compare students' perceptions of feedback quality from chatbots and teachers. The highest frequency was recorded for "Both" with 25 students (58.14%), followed by "Teacher" with 11 students (25.58%), while 7 students (16.28%) selected "Chatbot". This suggests that most respondents value feedback from both sources, although teachers are still perceived as more reliable than chatbots when only one option is selected. Figure (3.17) summarizes the same results visually.

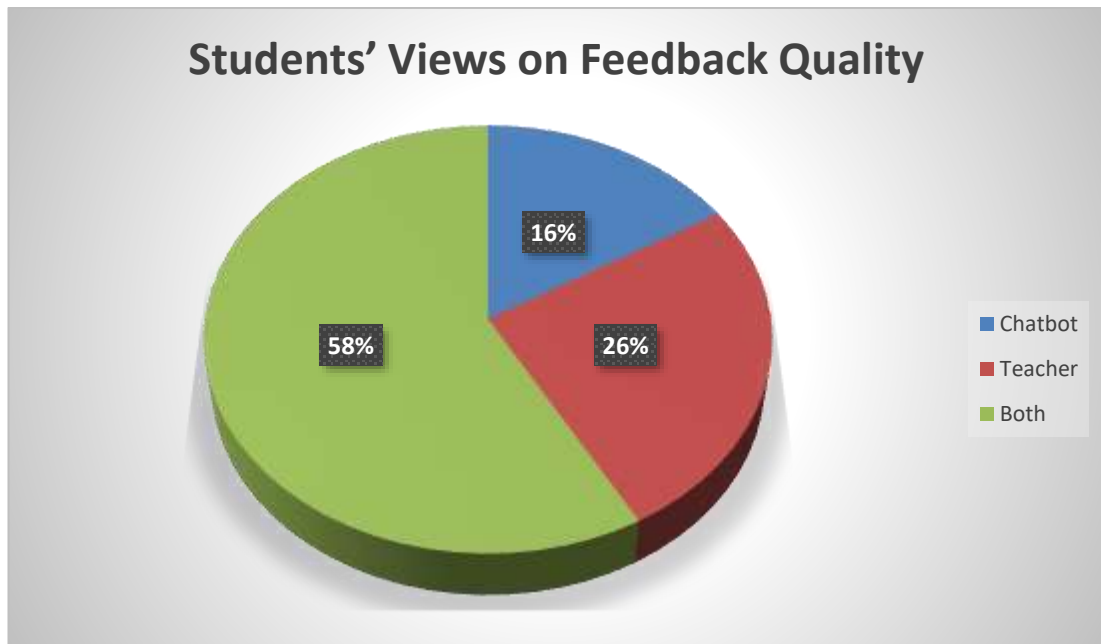


Figure 3. 17: Students' Views on Feedback Quality

Question 18: Do you feel more relaxed speaking with:

Table 3. 18: Students' Relaxation during Speaking Practice

Options	Number	Percentage %
Chatbot	22	51.16%
Teacher	4	9.30%
Both	17	39.53%

This question aimed to identify the practice environment in which students feel more relaxed. The highest frequency was recorded for “Chatbot” with 22 students (51.16%), followed by “Both” with 17 students (39.53%), while only 4 students (9.30%) selected “Teacher”. Taken together, the responses for “Chatbot” and “Both” represent 90.69% of the sample, which indicates that chatbot-assisted practice is strongly associated with reduced pressure and greater comfort in speaking. Figure (3.18) summarizes the same results visually.

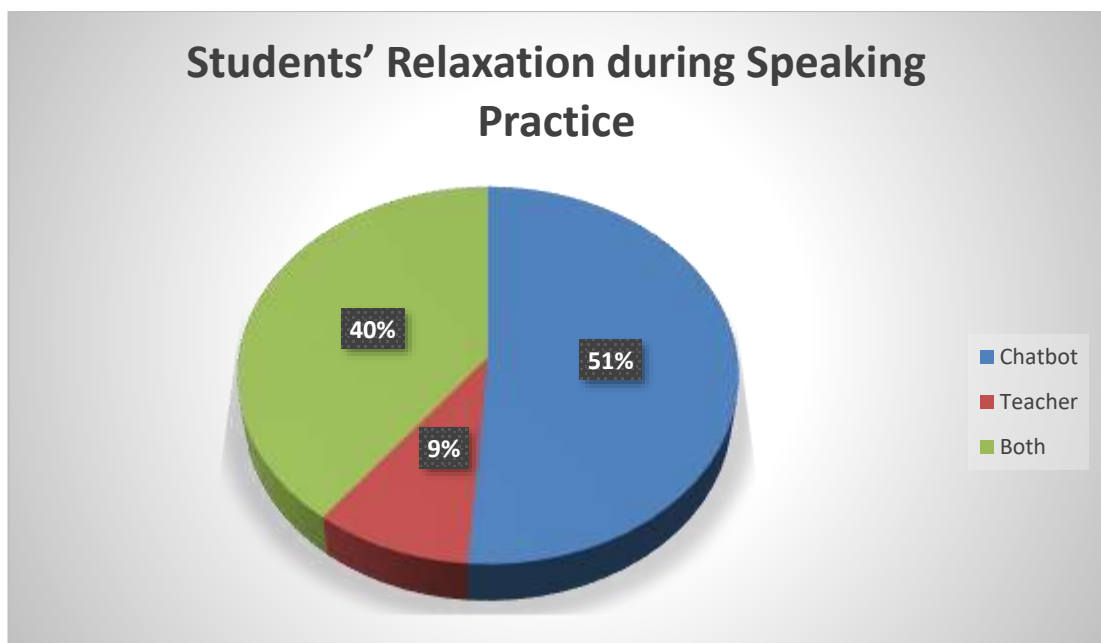


Figure 3. 18: Students' Relaxation during Speaking Practice

Question 19: Who helps you improve faster?

Table 3. 19: Students' Perceptions of Faster Speaking Improvement

Options	Number	Percentage %
Chatbot	13	30.23%
Teacher	10	23.26%
Both	20	46.51%

This question aimed to compare perceived improvement speed across chatbot-assisted and teacher-assisted practice. The highest frequency was recorded for “Both” with 20 students (46.51%), followed by “Chatbot” with 13 students (30.23%) and “Teacher” with 10 students (23.26%). This result suggests that students tend to associate faster improvement with a combination of chatbot support and teacher guidance rather than with one source only. Figure (3.19) summarizes the same results visually.

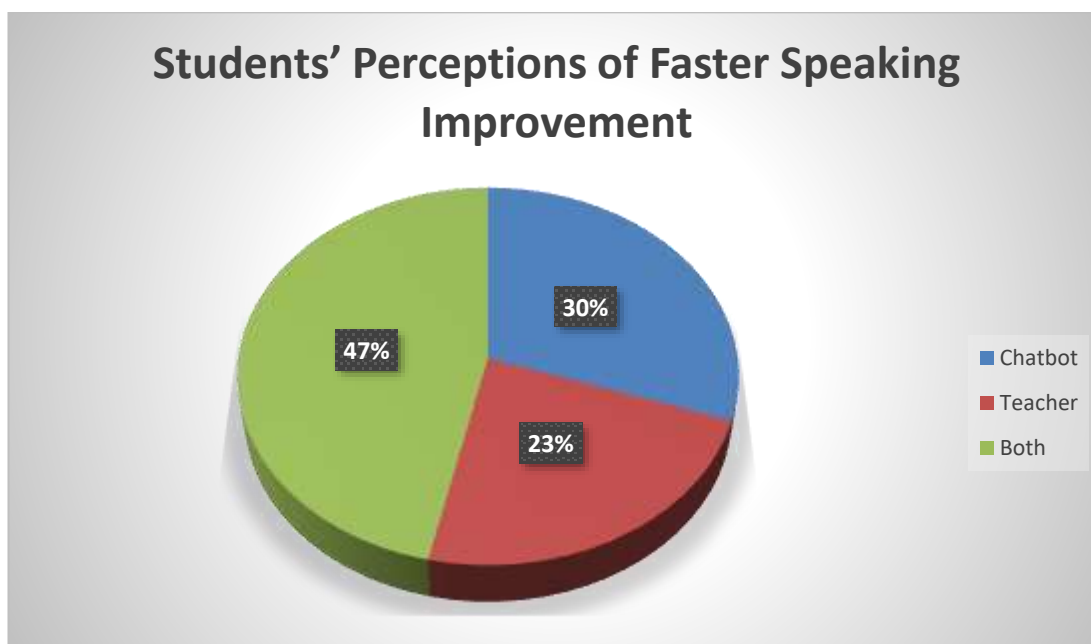


Figure 3. 19: Students' Perceptions of Faster Speaking Improvement

Question 20: Speaking with a teacher is more realistic.

Table 3. 20: Students' Views on the Realism of Teacher-Assisted Speaking

Options	Number	Percentage %
Yes	38	88.37%
No	5	11.63%

This question aimed to determine whether students consider teacher-assisted speaking more realistic. The results show that 38 students (88.37%) answered “Yes”, while only 5 students (11.63%) answered “No”. This strong majority confirms that students still recognize the authenticity and realism of human-assisted speaking practice, despite their positive attitudes toward AI chatbots. Figure (3.20) summarizes the same results visually.

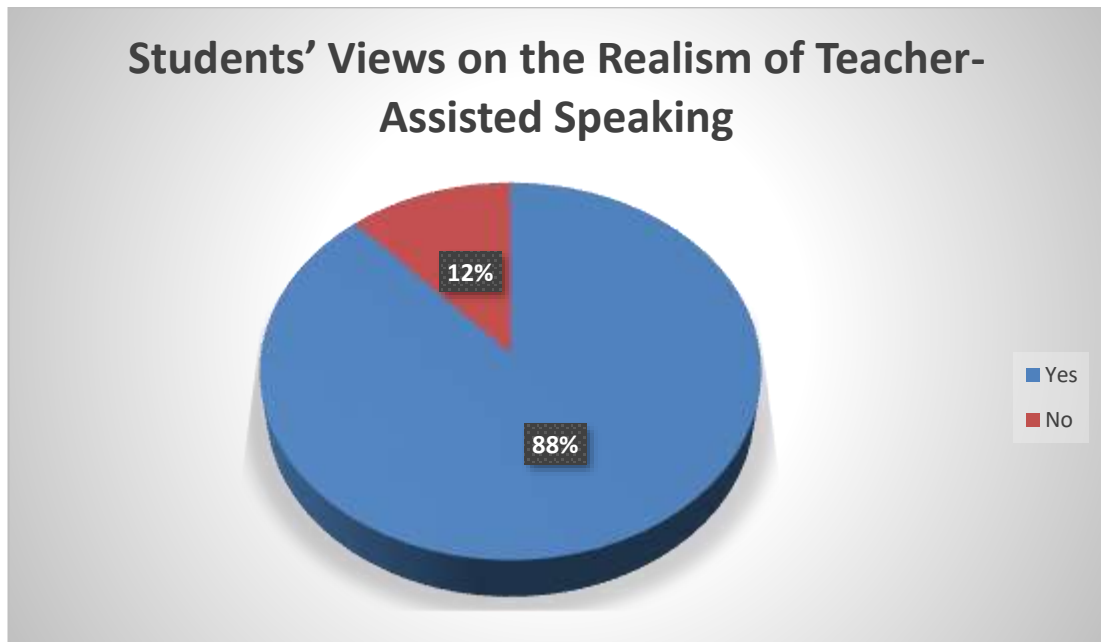


Figure 3. 20: Students' Views on the Realism of Teacher-Assisted Speaking

Question 21: Which environment do you prefer?

Table 3. 21: Students' Preferred Speaking Practice Environment

Options	Number	Percentage %
Formal (teacher)	8	18.60%
Informal (chatbot)	12	27.91%
Both	23	53.49%

This question aimed to compare students' preference for formal, informal, or combined speaking environments. The highest frequency was recorded for "Both" with 23 students (53.49%), followed by "Informal (chatbot)" with 12 students (27.91%) and "Formal (teacher)" with 8 students (18.60%). This indicates that most learners prefer a blended speaking environment that combines the structure of teacher-assisted practice with the flexibility of chatbot-assisted practice. Figure (3.21) summarizes the same results visually.

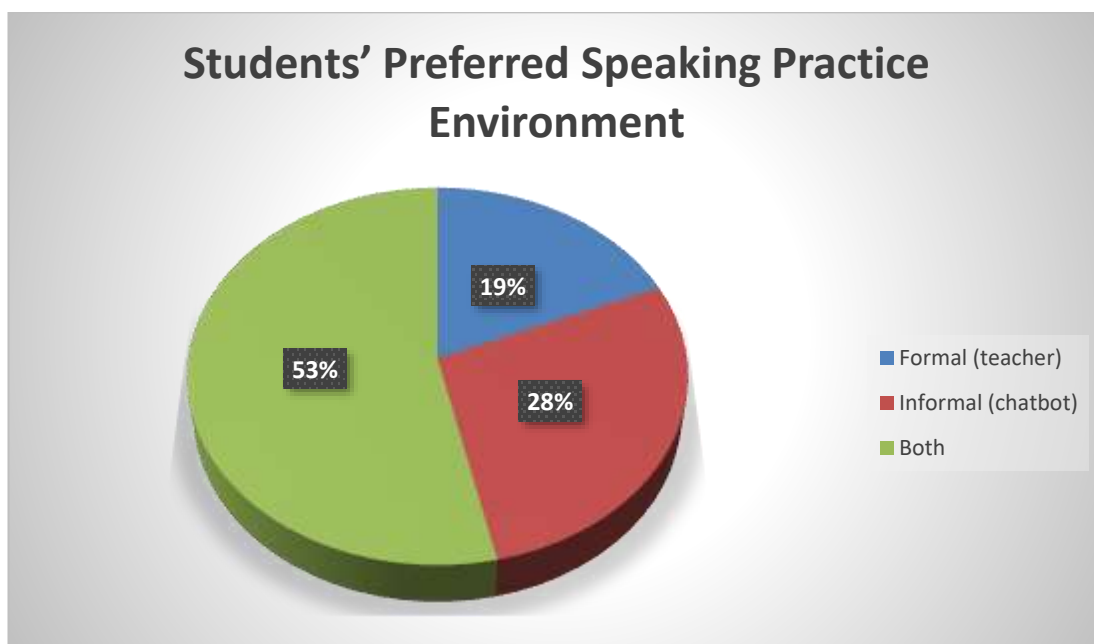


Figure 3. 21: Students' Preferred Speaking Practice Environment

Section Four: Evaluation of AI Chatbots

Question 22: AI chatbots are effective for learning speaking.

Table 3. 22: Students' Evaluation of Chatbots' Effectiveness for Speaking

Options	Number	Percentage %
Yes	39	90.70%
No	4	9.30%

This question aimed to measure students' general evaluation of chatbot effectiveness for speaking. The results show that 39 students (90.70%) answered "Yes", while only 4 students (9.30%) answered "No". This indicates that the majority of respondents perceive AI chatbots as effective tools for supporting speaking practice. Figure (3.22) summarizes the same results visually.

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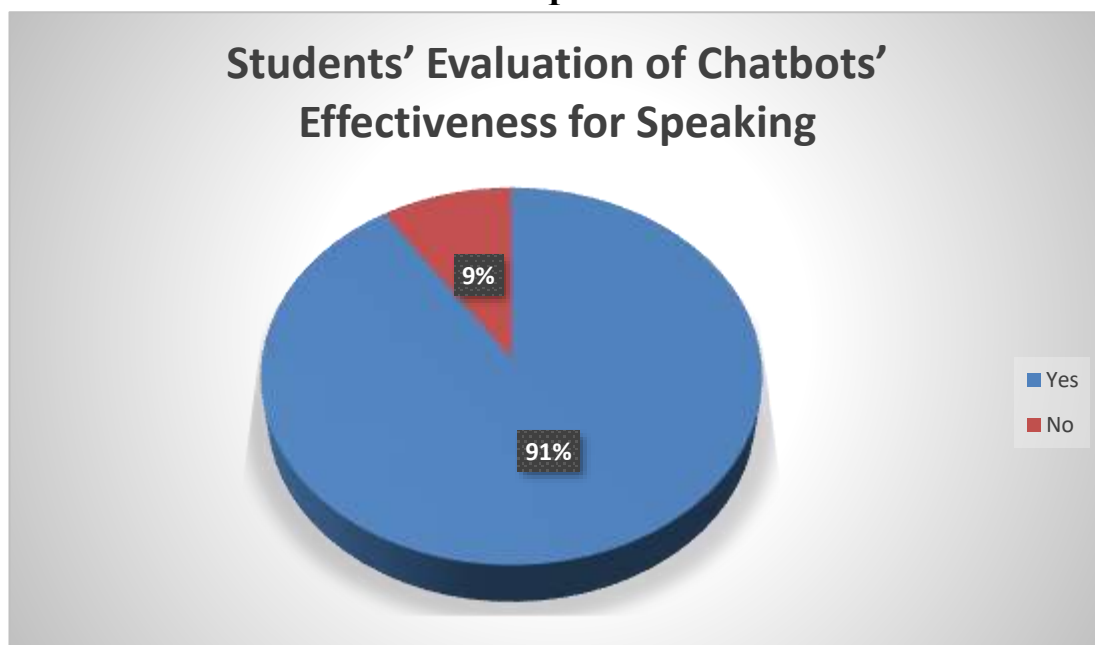


Figure 3. 22: Students' Evaluation of Chatbots' Effectiveness for Speaking

Question 23: How would you rate chatbot performance?

Table 3. 23: Students' Rating of Chatbot Performance

Options	Number	Percentage %
Excellent	7	16.28%
Good	32	74.42%
Average	4	9.30%
Poor	0	0%

This question aimed to assess how students rate chatbot performance. The highest frequency was recorded for “Good” with 32 students (74.42%), followed by “Excellent” with 7 students (16.28%). Together, these two positive responses represent 90.70% of the sample. Only 4 students (9.30%) rated chatbot performance as average, while no student selected “Poor”. This suggests that most respondents evaluate chatbot performance positively. Figure (3.23) summarizes the same results visually.

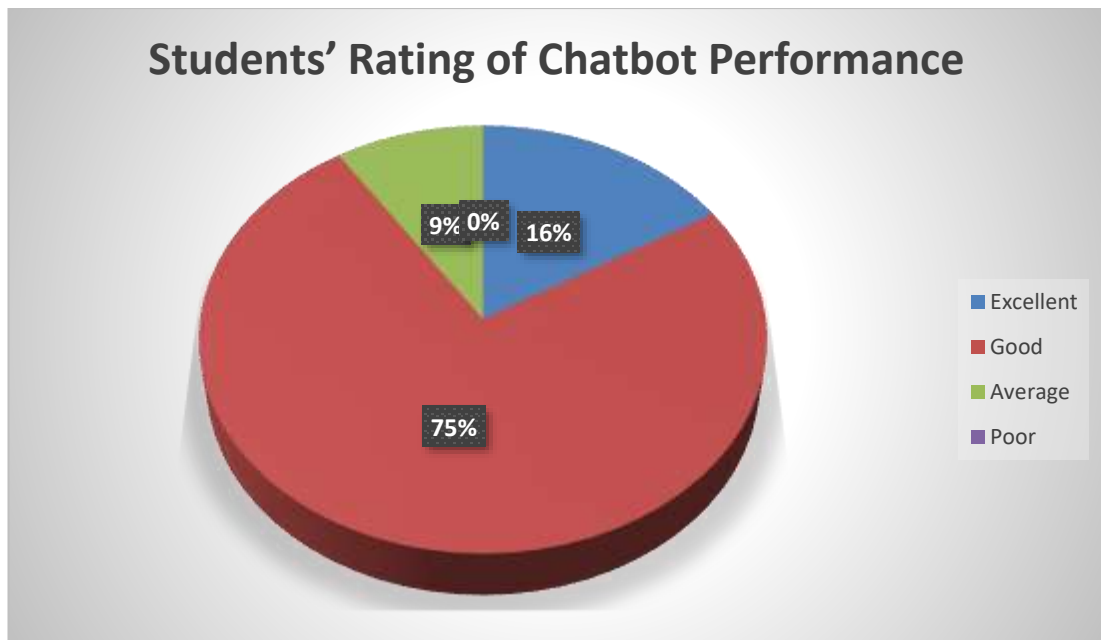


Figure 3. 23: Students' Rating of Chatbot Performance

Question 24: Do chatbots give accurate answers?

Table 3. 24: Students' Views on the Accuracy of Chatbot Answers

Options	Number	Percentage %
Always	1	2.33%
Often	27	62.79%
Sometimes	15	34.88%
Rarely	0	0%

This question aimed to identify students' perceptions of chatbot-answer accuracy. The highest frequency was recorded for "Often" with 27 students (62.79%), followed by "Sometimes" with 15 students (34.88%). Only one student (2.33%) selected "Always", while no respondent selected "Rarely". This indicates that students generally perceive chatbot answers as accurate, but not perfect or always reliable. Figure (3.24) summarizes the same results visually.

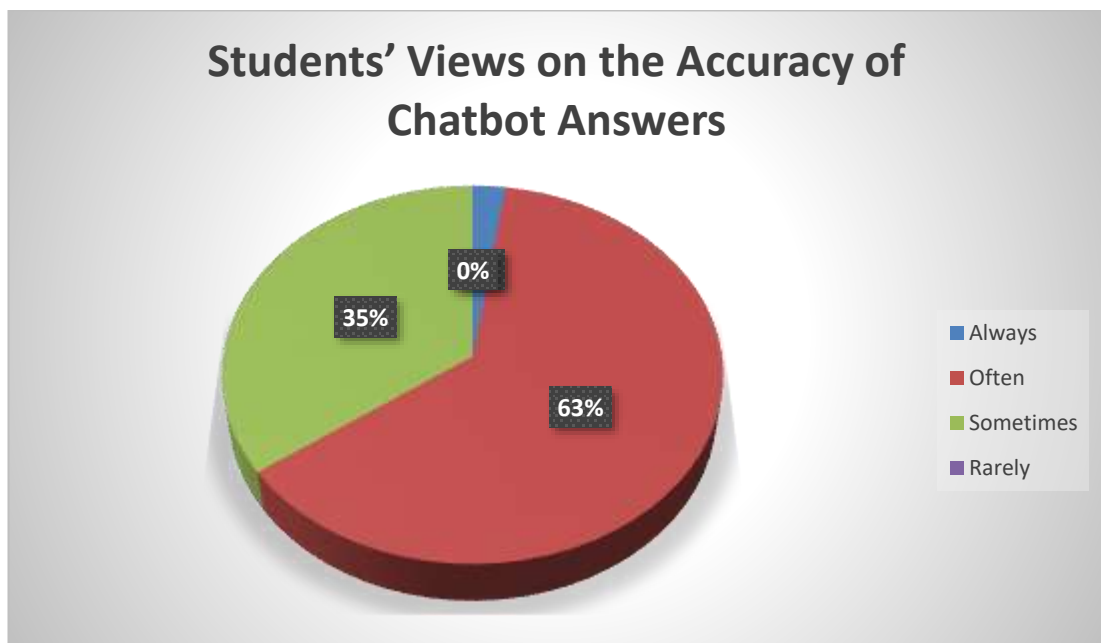


Figure 3. 24: Students' Views on the Accuracy of Chatbot Answers

Question 25: Chatbots should be integrated into education.

Table 3. 25: Students' Attitudes towards Integrating Chatbots into Education

Options	Number	Percentage %
Strongly Agree	9	20.93%
Agree	22	51.16%
Neutral	9	20.93%
Disagree	2	4.65%
Strongly Disagree	1	2.33%

This question aimed to explore students' support for integrating chatbots into education. The results show that 22 students (51.16%) agreed and 9 students (20.93%) strongly agreed, representing a total positive response of 72.09%. Meanwhile, 9 students (20.93%) remained neutral, while only 3 students (6.98%) disagreed or strongly disagreed. These findings indicate that most respondents support the integration of AI chatbots into education. Figure (3.25) summarizes the same results visually.

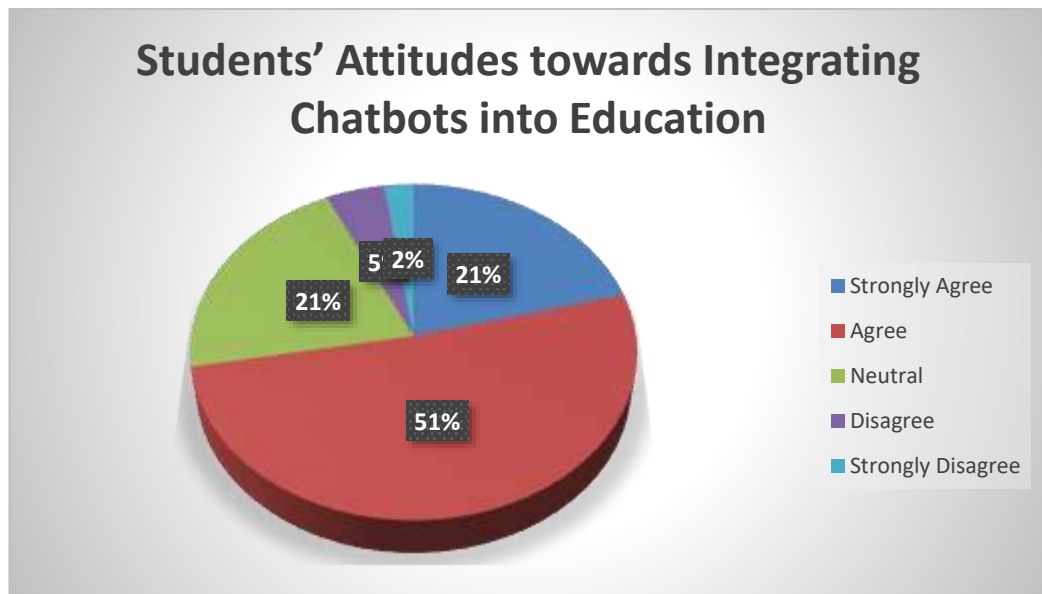


Figure 3. 25: Students’ Attitudes towards Integrating Chatbots into Education

Question 26: Can chatbots replace teachers?

Table 3. 26: Students’ Views on Whether Chatbots Can Replace Teachers

Options	Number	Percentage %
Yes	6	13.95%
No	37	86.05%

This question aimed to determine whether students view chatbots as replacements for teachers. The results show that 37 students (86.05%) answered “No”, while only 6 students (13.95%) answered “Yes”. This result is central to the comparative focus of the study, as it confirms that most students do not consider AI chatbots as full replacements for teachers in speaking practice. Figure (3.26) summarizes the same results visually.

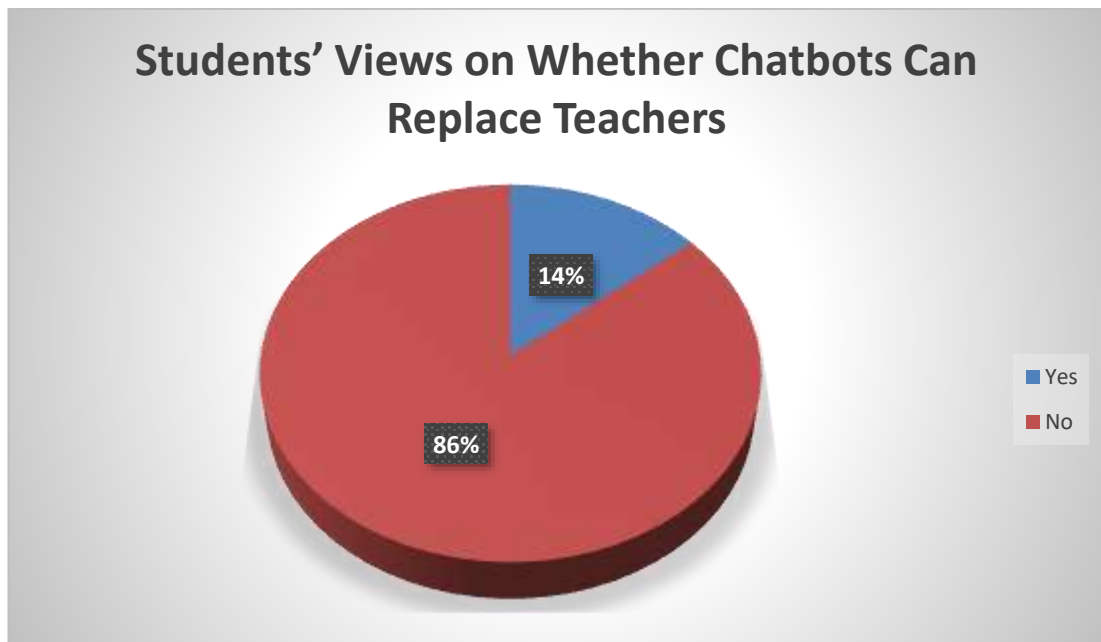


Figure 3. 26: Students’ Views on Whether Chatbots Can Replace Teachers

Question 27: In your opinion, chatbots are:

Table 3. 27: Students' Classification of Chatbots' Educational Role

Options	Number	Percentage %
Complement	19	44.19%
Partial substitute	23	53.49%
Full substitute	1	2.33%

This question aimed to identify how students classify the educational role of chatbots. The highest frequency was recorded for “Partial substitute” with 23 students (53.49%), followed by “Complement” with 19 students (44.19%). Only one student (2.33%) considered chatbots a full substitute. This suggests that students generally view AI chatbots as supportive or partially substitutive tools, but not as complete replacements for human instruction. Figure (3.27) summarizes the same results visually.

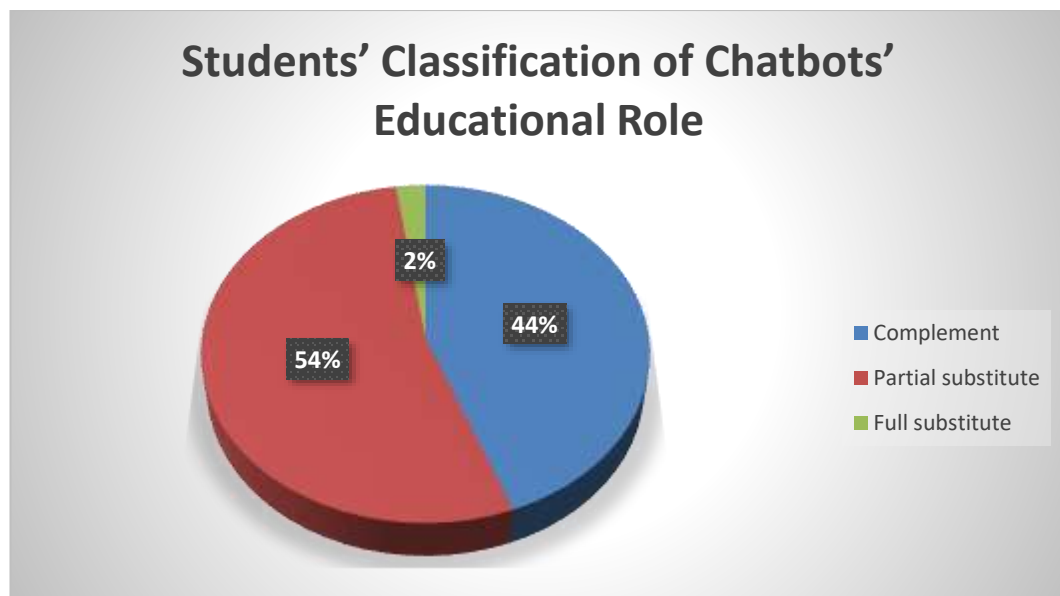


Figure 3. 27: Students' Classification of Chatbots' Educational Role

Question 28: Would you recommend chatbots to other students?

Table 3. 28: Students' Willingness to Recommend Chatbots

Options	Number	Percentage %
Yes	41	95.35%
No	2	4.65%

This question aimed to measure whether students would recommend chatbot use to their peers. The results show that 41 students (95.35%) answered “Yes”, while only 2 students (4.65%) answered “No”. This strong willingness to recommend chatbots reflects a high level of satisfaction and acceptance among the respondents. Figure (3.28) summarizes the same results visually.

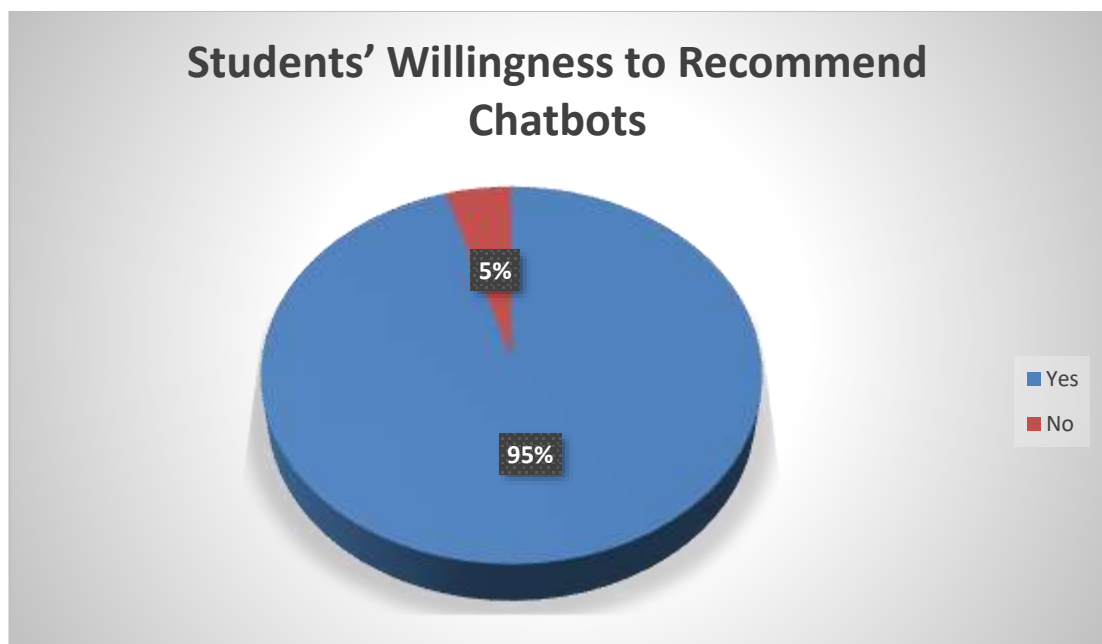


Figure 3. 28: Students' Willingness to Recommend Chatbots

Section Five: Speaking Anxiety and Motivation

Question 29: Do you feel anxious when speaking English?

Table 3. 29: Students' Anxiety When Speaking English

Options	Number	Percentage %
Yes	17	39.53%
No	26	60.47%

This question aimed to determine the level of speaking anxiety among the respondents. The results show that 26 students (60.47%) answered “No”, while 17 students (39.53%) answered “Yes”. This indicates that although the majority of students do not report speaking anxiety, a considerable proportion of the sample still experiences anxiety when speaking English. Figure (3.29) summarizes the same results visually.

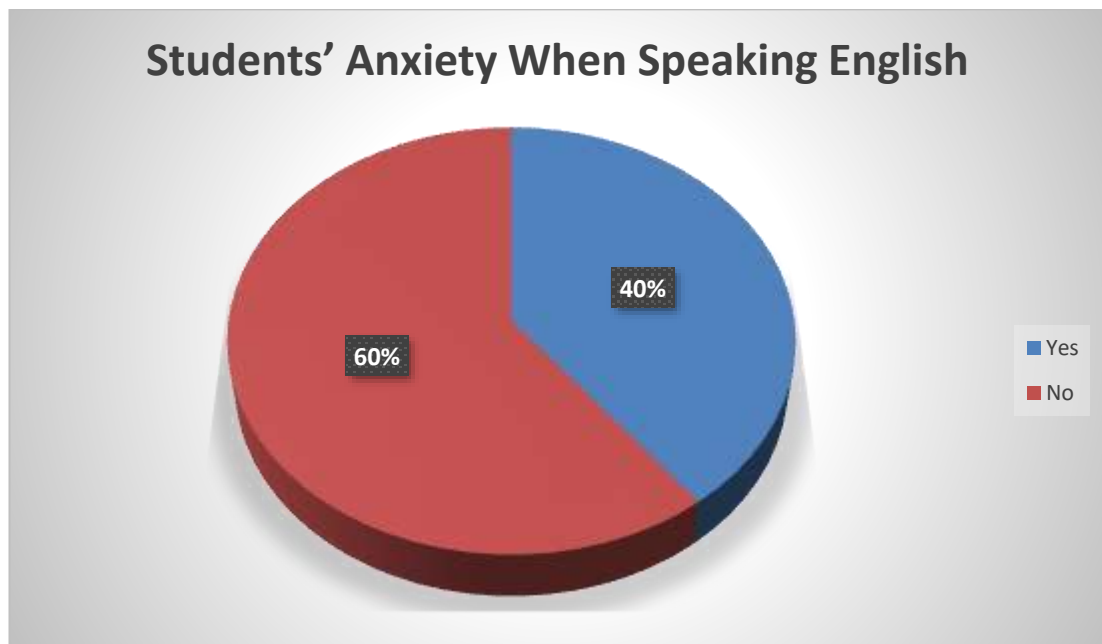


Figure 3. 29: Students' Anxiety When Speaking English

Question 30: Chatbots help reduce my speaking anxiety.

Table 3. 30: Students' Views on Chatbots and Speaking Anxiety Reduction

Options	Number	Percentage %
Strongly Agree	1	2.33%
Agree	22	51.16%
Neutral	17	39.53%
Disagree	2	4.65%
Strongly Disagree	1	2.33%

This question aimed to examine whether students believe that chatbots help reduce speaking anxiety. The results show that 22 students (51.16%) agreed and one student (2.33%) strongly agreed, representing a total positive response of 53.49%. Meanwhile, 17 students (39.53%) were neutral, while 3 students (6.98%) disagreed or strongly disagreed. This suggests that chatbots are perceived by many students as useful in reducing speaking anxiety, although a considerable number of respondents remained neutral. Figure (3.30) summarizes the same results visually.

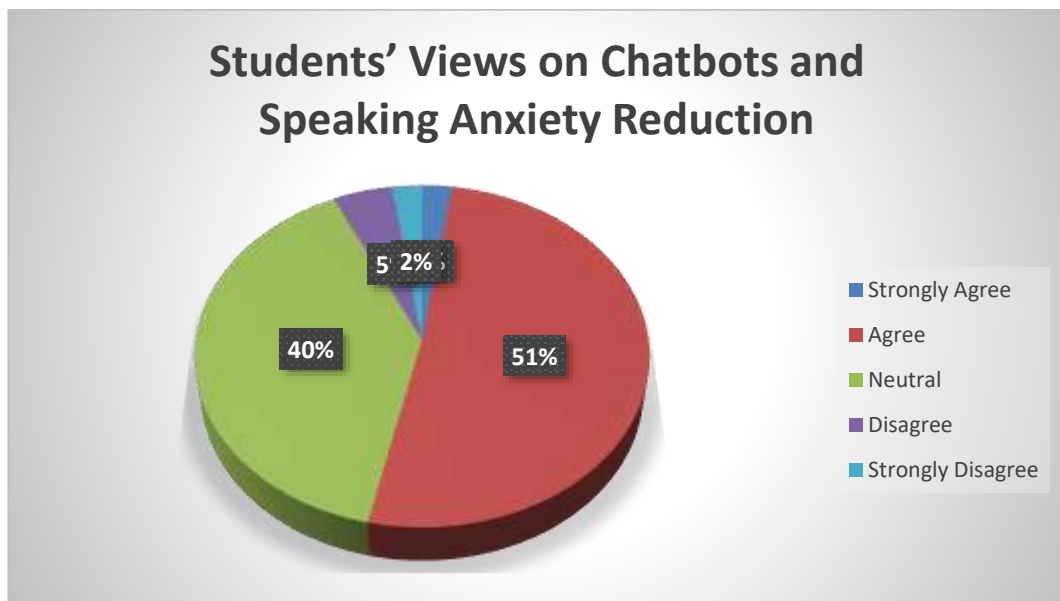


Figure 3. 30: Students' Views on Chatbots and Speaking Anxiety Reduction

Question 31: How motivated are you to use chatbots?

Table 3. 31: Students' Motivation to Use Chatbots

Options	Number	Percentage %
Very motivated	5	11.63%
Motivated	28	65.12%
Neutral	10	23.26%
Not motivated	0	0%

This question aimed to measure students' motivation to use chatbots. The results show that 28 students (65.12%) were motivated and 5 students (11.63%) were very motivated, representing 76.75% of the sample. Meanwhile, 10 students (23.26%) remained neutral, and no respondent selected "Not motivated". This indicates that most students show a positive level of motivation toward using chatbots for learning and speaking practice. Figure (3.31) summarizes the same results visually.

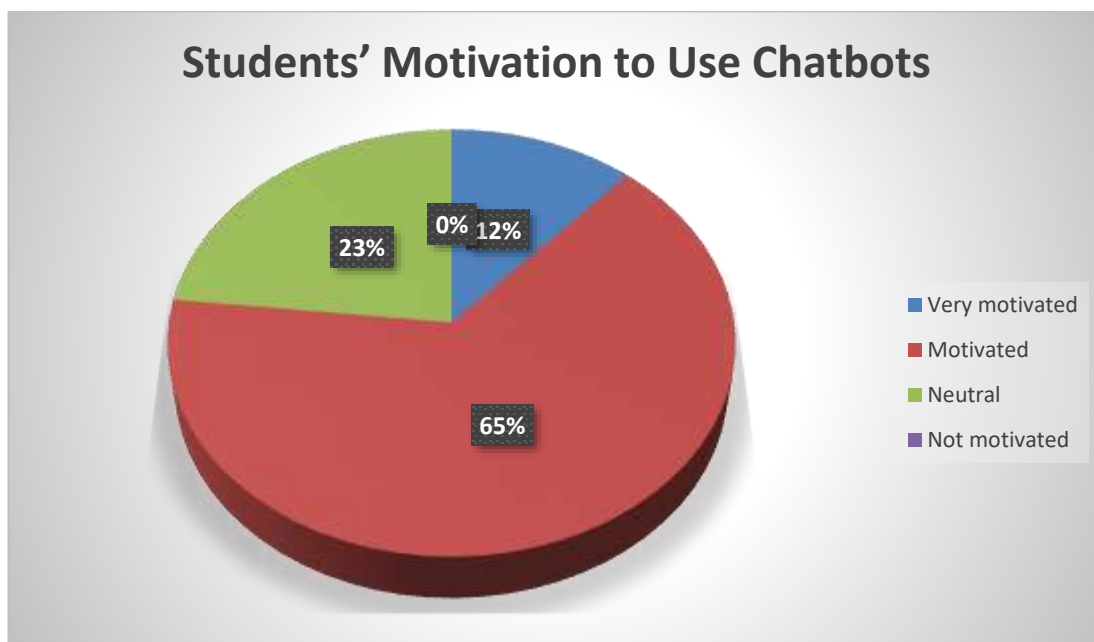


Figure 3. 31: Students' Motivation to Use Chatbots

Question 32: Do chatbots encourage you to speak more?

Table 3. 32: Students' Views on Chatbots Encouraging More Speaking

Options	Number	Percentage %
Yes	36	83.72%
No	7	16.28%

This question aimed to determine whether chatbots encourage students to speak more. The results show that 36 students (83.72%) answered “Yes”, while 7 students (16.28%) answered “No”. This indicates that the majority of respondents believe that chatbot use encourages them to increase their speaking practice. Figure (3.32) summarizes the same results visually.

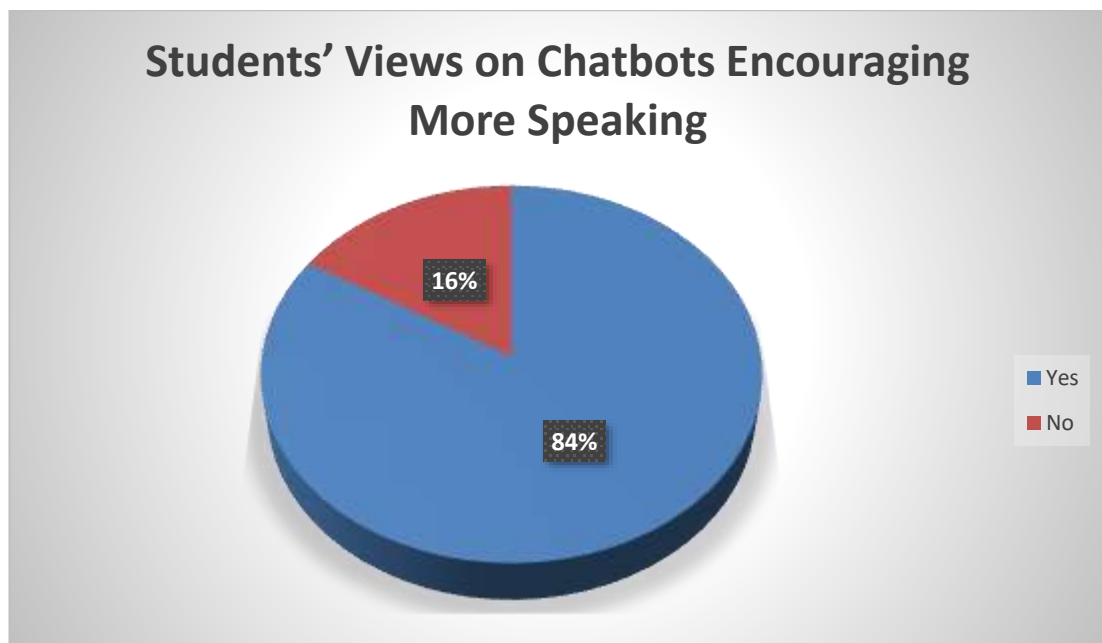


Figure 3. 32: Students' Views on Chatbots Encouraging More Speaking

Question 33: Your confidence in speaking English is now:

Table 3. 33: Students' Current Confidence in Speaking English

Options	Number	Percentage %
Very high	7	16.28%
High	25	58.14%
Medium	10	23.26%
Low	1	2.33%

This question aimed to assess students' current level of confidence in speaking English. The results show that 25 students (58.14%) reported a high level of confidence, while 7 students (16.28%) reported a very high level. In addition, 10 students (23.26%) selected a medium level, and only one student (2.33%) selected a low level. This indicates that most respondents have a positive level of confidence in speaking English. Figure (3.33) summarizes the same results visually.

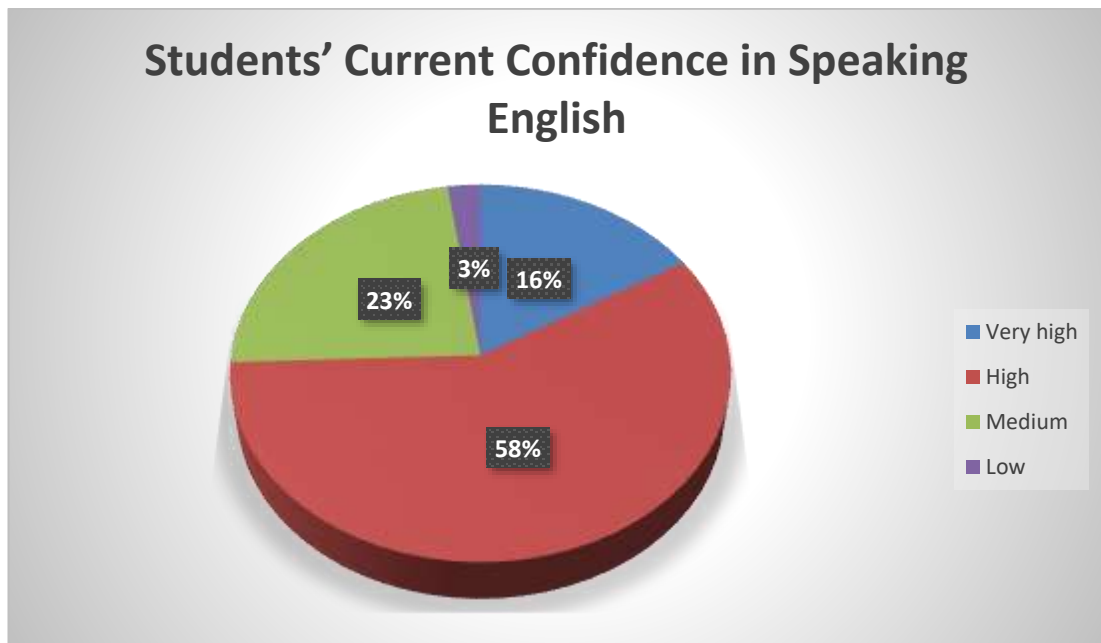


Figure 3. 33: Students' Current Confidence in Speaking English

Question 34: Do you prefer practicing alone with chatbots?

Table 3. 34: Students' Preference for Practicing Alone with Chatbots

Options	Number	Percentage %
Yes	39	90.70%
No	4	9.30%

This question aimed to identify whether students prefer individual chatbot-assisted practice. The results show that 39 students (90.70%) answered “Yes”, while only 4 students (9.30%) answered “No”. This indicates that most respondents prefer practicing alone with chatbots, which may reflect the importance of privacy, flexibility, and reduced pressure during speaking practice. Figure (3.34) summarizes the same results visually.

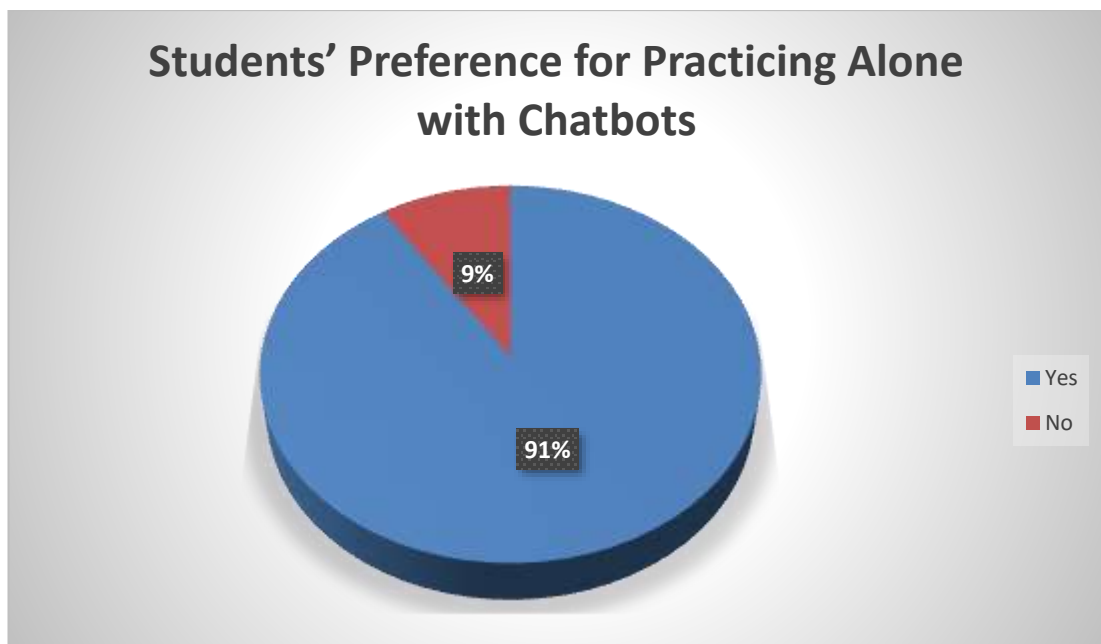


Figure 3. 34: Students' Preference for Practicing Alone with Chatbots

Question 35: Chatbots make learning speaking more enjoyable.

Table 3. 35: Students' Views on Chatbots and Enjoyment in Speaking Learning

Options	Number	Percentage %
Always	14	32.56%
Often	16	37.21%
Sometimes	12	27.91%
Rarely	1	2.33%

This question aimed to assess whether chatbots make speaking learning more enjoyable. The results show that 16 students (37.21%) selected “Often” and 14 students (32.56%) selected “Always”, representing a total of 69.77%. Meanwhile, 12 students (27.91%) selected “Sometimes”, and only one student (2.33%) selected “Rarely”. This suggests that chatbots generally make speaking learning more enjoyable for most respondents. Figure (3.35) summarizes the same results visually.

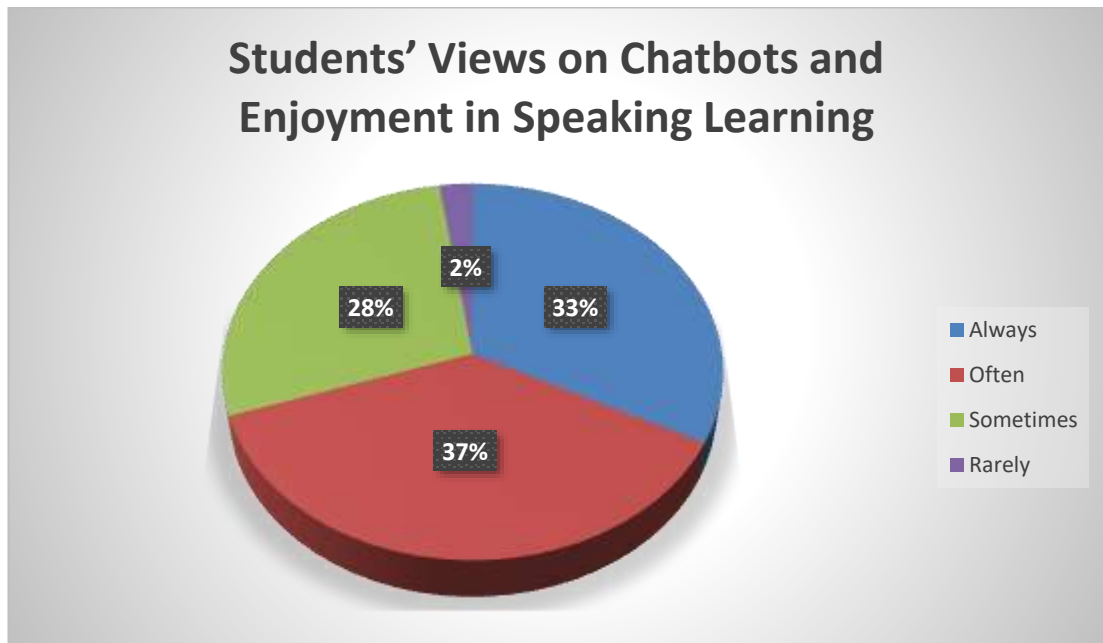


Figure 3. 35: Students' Views on Chatbots and Enjoyment in Speaking Learning

Section Six: General Evaluation

Question 36: Overall, how satisfied are you with AI chatbots?

Table 3. 36: Students' Overall Satisfaction with AI Chatbots

Options	Number	Percentage %
Very satisfied	7	16.28%
Satisfied	28	65.12%
Neutral	8	18.60%
Unsatisfied	0	0%

This question aimed to measure students' overall satisfaction with AI chatbots. The results show that 28 students (65.12%) were satisfied and 7 students (16.28%) were very satisfied, representing 81.40% of the sample. Meanwhile, 8 students (18.60%) remained neutral, and no respondent selected "Unsatisfied". This indicates a high level of satisfaction with AI chatbots among the respondents. Figure (3.36) summarizes the same results visually.

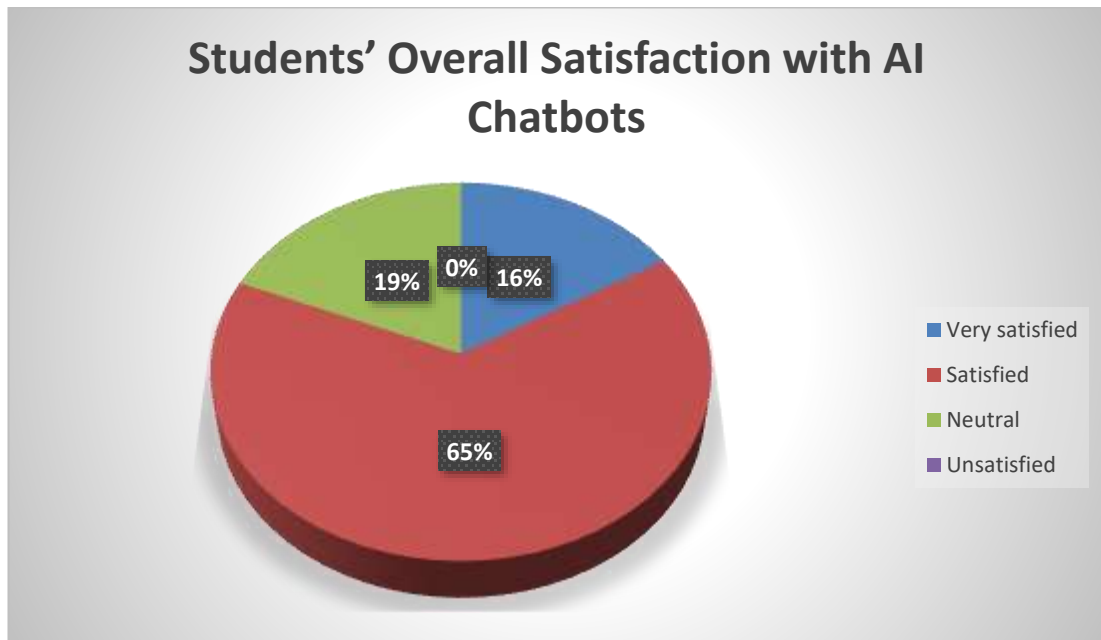


Figure 3. 36: Students' Overall Satisfaction with AI Chatbots

Question 37: Do you trust AI chatbots in learning English?

Table 3. 37: Students' Trust in AI Chatbots for Learning English

Options	Number	Percentage %
Yes	38	88.37%
No	5	11.63%

This question aimed to determine whether students trust AI chatbots in learning English. The results show that 38 students (88.37%) answered “Yes”, while 5 students (11.63%) answered “No”. This indicates that the majority of respondents trust AI chatbots as supportive tools in English learning. Trust is important because it affects students’ acceptance of chatbot feedback, suggestions, and learning support. Figure (3.37) summarizes the same results visually.

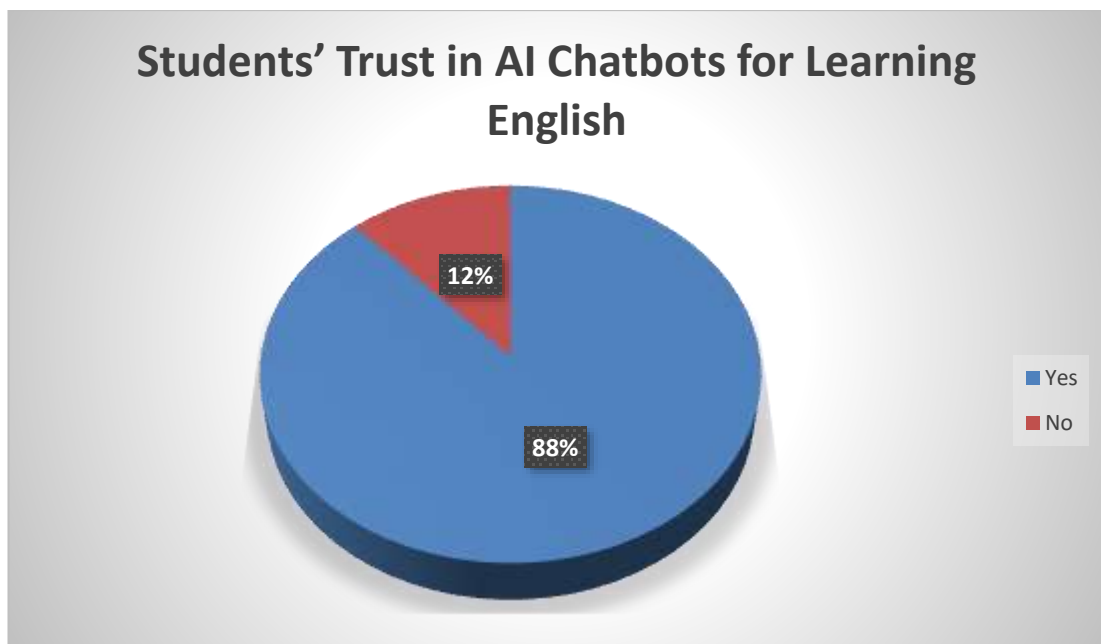


Figure 3. 37: Students' Trust in AI Chatbots for Learning English

Question 38: Would you continue using chatbots in the future?

Table 3. 38: Students' Intention to Continue Using Chatbots

Options	Number	Percentage %
Yes	42	97.67%
No	1	2.33%

This question aimed to assess whether students intend to continue using AI chatbots in the future. The results show that 42 students (97.67%) answered “Yes”, while only one student (2.33%) answered “No”. This strong result indicates that most respondents are willing to continue using chatbots as part of their English learning habits. Figure (3.38) summarizes the same results visually.

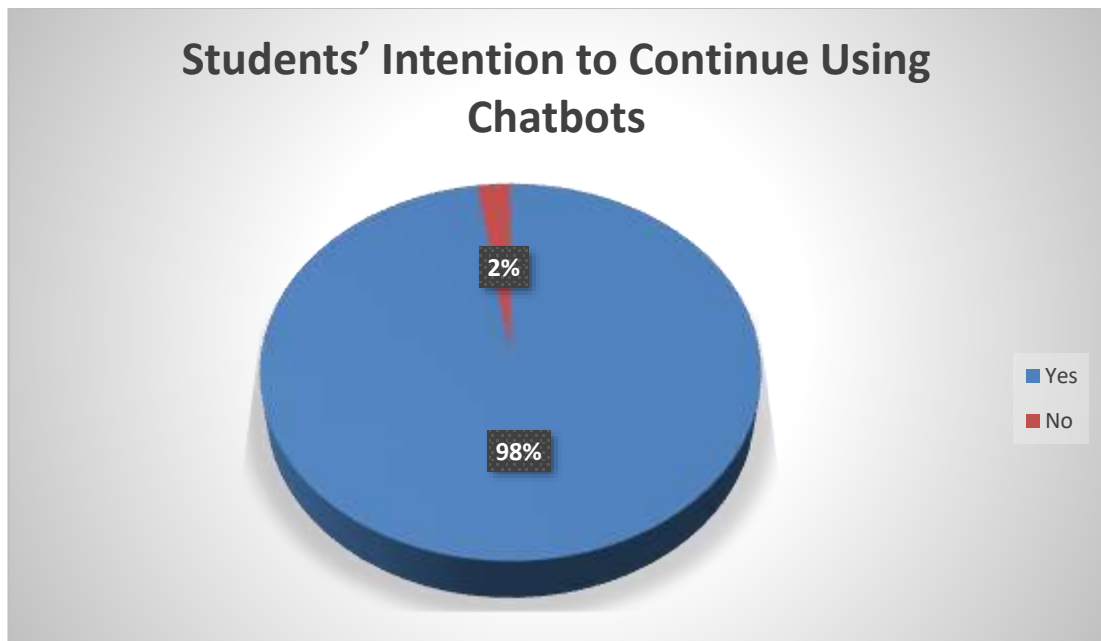


Figure 3. 38: Students' Intention to Continue Using Chatbots

Question 39: How important are chatbots in your learning?

Table 3. 39: Students' Perceptions of Chatbots' Importance in Learning

Options	Number	Percentage %
Very important	4	9.30%
Important	32	74.42%
Less important	4	9.30%
Not important	3	6.98%

This question aimed to evaluate the perceived importance of chatbots in students' learning. The results show that 32 students (74.42%) considered chatbots important, while 4 students (9.30%) considered them very important. Together, these responses represent 83.72% of the sample. In contrast, 4 students (9.30%) considered them less important, and 3 students (6.98%) considered them not important. This indicates that most respondents recognize the importance of chatbots in their English learning process. Figure (3.39) summarizes the same results visually.

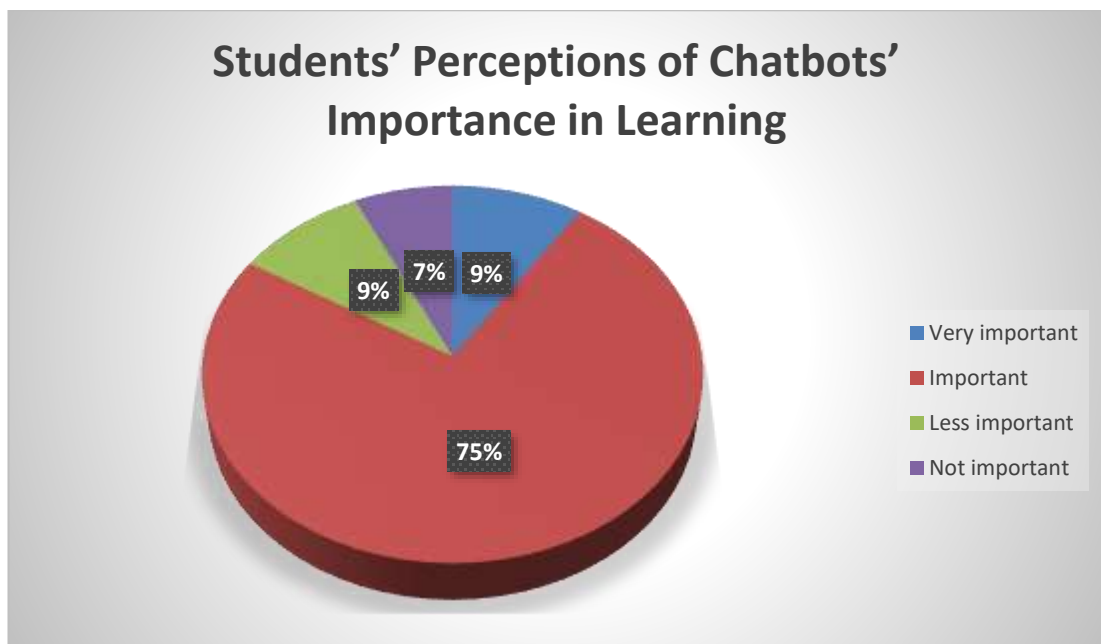


Figure 3. 39: Students' Perceptions of Chatbots' Importance in Learning

Question 40: Chatbots save time in learning.

Table 3. 40: Students' Views on Chatbots Saving Learning Time

Options	Number	Percentage %
Strongly Agree	6	13.95%
Agree	27	62.79%
Neutral	6	13.95%
Disagree	1	2.33%
Strongly Disagree	3	6.98%

This question aimed to identify whether students believe that chatbots save learning time. The results show that 27 students (62.79%) agreed and 6 students (13.95%) strongly agreed, representing 76.74% of the sample. Meanwhile, 6 students (13.95%) were neutral, while 4 students (9.31%) disagreed or strongly disagreed. This suggests that most respondents perceive AI chatbots as time-saving tools in their learning process. Figure (3.40) summarizes the same results visually.

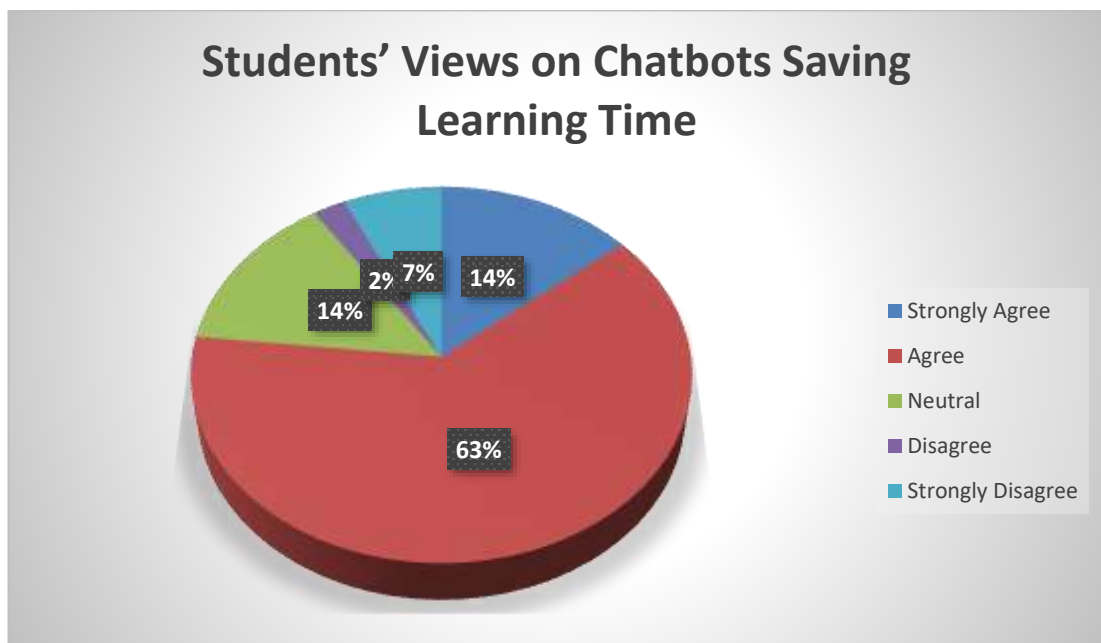


Figure 3. 40: Students' Views on Chatbots Saving Learning Time

Question 41: Do chatbots make learning easier?

Table 3. 41: Students' Views on Chatbots Making Learning Easier

Options	Number	Percentage %
Yes	42	97.67%
No	1	2.33%

This question aimed to determine whether students feel that chatbots make English learning easier. The results show that 42 students (97.67%) answered “Yes”, while only one student (2.33%) answered “No”. This indicates that nearly all respondents perceive AI chatbots as tools that simplify the English learning process. Figure (3.41) summarizes the same results visually.

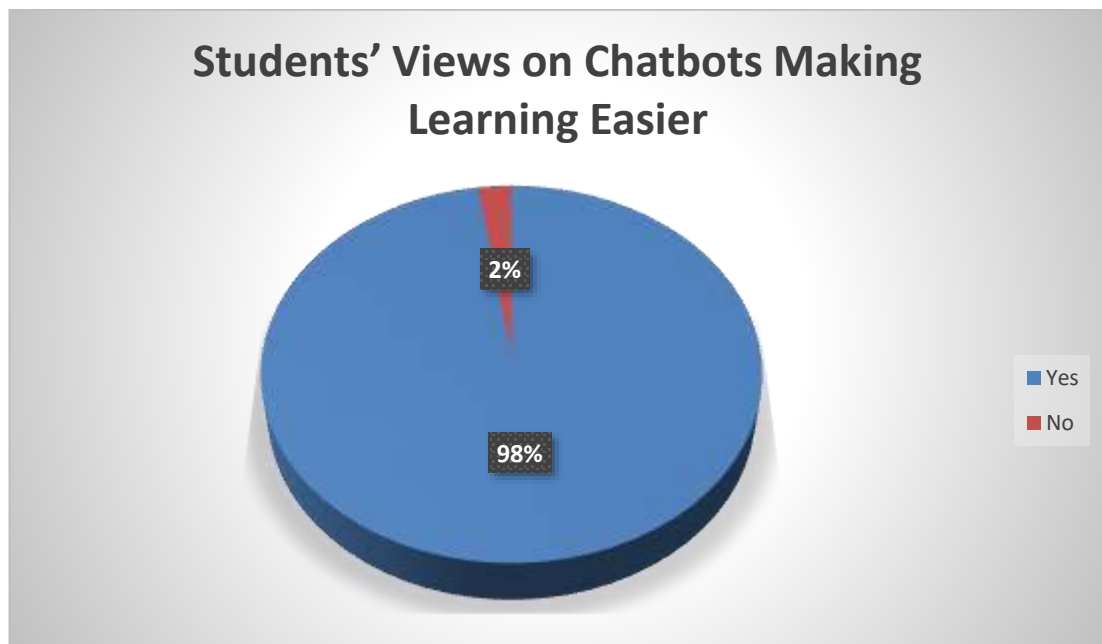


Figure 3. 41: Students' Views on Chatbots Making Learning Easier

Question 42: Overall usefulness of chatbots is:

Table 3. 42: Students' Overall Evaluation of Chatbots' Usefulness

Options	Number	Percentage %
Very high	6	13.95%
High	28	65.12%
Medium	9	20.93%
Low	0	0%

This question aimed to summarize students' final evaluation of chatbot usefulness. The results show that 28 students (65.12%) rated chatbot usefulness as high, while 6 students (13.95%) rated it as very high, representing 79.07% of the sample. In addition, 9 students (20.93%) rated it as medium, and no respondent selected "Low". This indicates that most respondents evaluate AI chatbots as useful tools for supporting English learning and speaking practice. Figure (3.42) summarizes the same results visually.

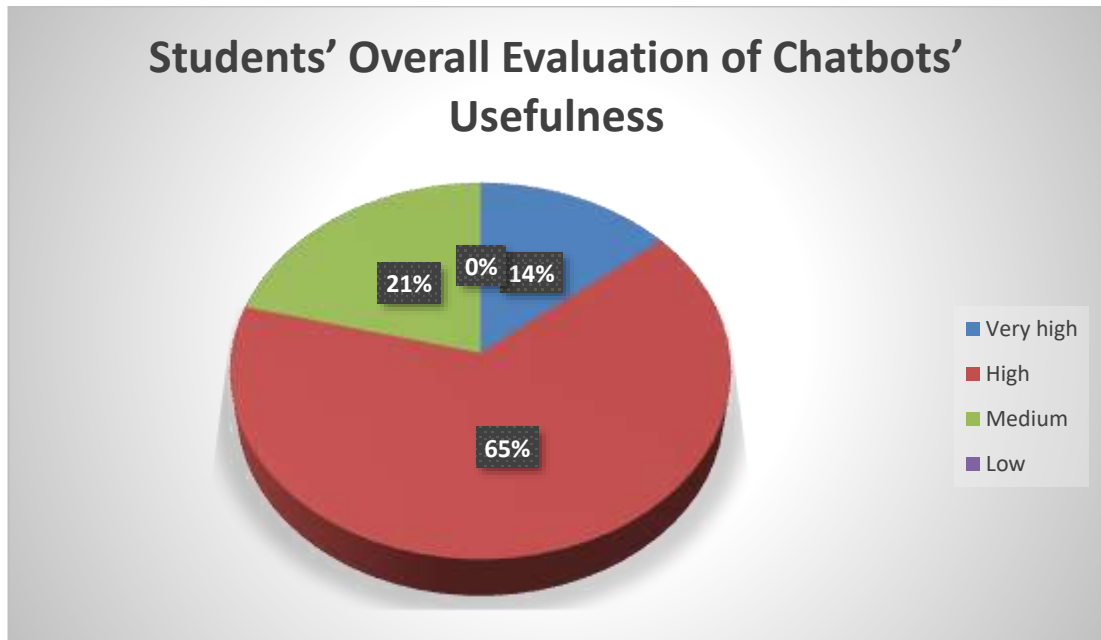


Figure 3. 42: Students' Overall Evaluation of Chatbots' Usefulness

3.4.2 Teachers' Interview

3.4.2.1 Description of Teachers' Interview

The teachers' interview is a semi-structured instrument composed of eighteen open-ended questions. It was designed to explore teachers' views about students' speaking level, their familiarity with AI chatbots, the perceived benefits and limitations of chatbot-assisted speaking practice, feedback accuracy, motivation, the integration of AI chatbots into EFL programs, and the teacher's role when students use AI tools.

3.4.2.2 Administration of the Interview

The interview targeted four EFL teachers with different levels of teaching experience and academic ranks. Four completed responses were used in the analysis. To preserve anonymity and make the analysis clearer, the respondents are referred to as Teacher A, Teacher B, Teacher C, and Teacher D.

Table 3. 43: Profile of Interviewed Teachers

Teacher	Profile
Teacher A	Less than five years of university teaching experience; teaches civilisation and oral communication; familiar with educational technology.
Teacher B	Less than five years of experience; teaches L1/L2 students; Senior Lecturer B; moderate experience with educational technology.
Teacher C	Nineteen years of university teaching experience; teaches oral expression, grammar, ESP, and translation; full professor.
Teacher D	More than five years of experience; approximately ten years at university level; teaches oral expression, linguistics, pragmatics, written expression, and research methodology; advanced educational technology experience.

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on teachers' interview responses.

3.4.2.3 Analysis of Teachers' Interview

The analysis of the teachers' interview provided the following insights:

**Question 1: How long have you been teaching English at the university level?
What modules do you currently teach?**

Teacher A reported two years of university teaching experience and currently teaches civilisation and oral communication. Teacher B reported three years of teaching experience in written and classroom expression contexts. Teacher C reported more than nineteen years of university teaching experience and currently teaches oral expression, grammar, ESP, and translation. Teacher D reported approximately ten years of university teaching experience and teaches oral expression, linguistics, pragmatics, written expression, and research methodology.

The teachers' profiles show that the interview data covers different levels of teaching experience, ranging from early-career university teachers to a professor with long experience. This variety supports a richer qualitative view of chatbot-assisted speaking practice.

Question 2: How would you describe the speaking level of your students in general?

Teacher A described students' speaking level as generally average, while noting that performance varies from one student to another. Teacher B described most students as weak in speaking, with some at a moderate level. Teacher C stated that students are generally average; many understand English but lack fluency and confidence when speaking. Teacher D explained that students' speaking level varies, with some students communicating effectively and others struggling with pronunciation, vocabulary, fluency, and confidence.

The teachers' responses indicate that students' speaking level is not uniformly strong. The repeated references to average or weak speaking performance, limited fluency, and low confidence justify the need to investigate additional speaking-practice tools.

Question 3: Have you ever used AI chatbots, such as ChatGPT, in teaching or learning activities?

Teacher A did not provide a detailed answer for this item. Teacher B reported using AI for preparing lessons, explaining concepts, practicing skills, and completing assignments. Teacher C reported using ChatGPT for speaking practice, brainstorming, correcting language mistakes, and encouraging English communication. Teacher D reported using ChatGPT to generate discussion topics, improve writing and speaking practice, explain grammar, provide feedback, and help students practice conversations. Most teachers reported some form of AI use in teaching or learning support. Although one teacher did not provide a detailed answer, the remaining responses show that AI chatbots are already present in academic practice.

Question 4: In your opinion, how familiar are students with AI chatbots nowadays?

Teacher A stated that students are very familiar with AI chatbots and depend heavily on AI tools. Teacher B stated that university students are generally familiar with AI chatbots such as ChatGPT. Teacher C stated that most university students are familiar with chatbots and use them for learning and academic tasks. Teacher D stated that most students are familiar with AI chatbots, although familiarity differs according to digital skills, motivation, and access to technology.

The teachers consistently reported that students are familiar with AI chatbots, especially at university level. However, the depth of this familiarity differs according to students' motivation, digital skills, and access to technology.

Question 5: Do you think AI chatbots can help students improve their English speaking skills? Why or why not?

Teacher A believed that chatbots can help speaking development by offering authentic material, pronunciation support, vocabulary development, and models of proper speaking. Teacher B believed that chatbots can support speaking because they provide constant practice, instant feedback, and confidence-building opportunities, while still requiring instructor moderation. Teacher C believed that chatbots can improve speaking because they provide continuous practice, immediate responses, and a stress-free environment. Teacher D believed that chatbots can improve speaking through conversation practice, vocabulary development, pronunciation support, fluency, confidence, and instant feedback.

The teachers' responses suggest that chatbots can support speaking improvement, especially by increasing practice opportunities and reducing fear. At the same time, they repeatedly stressed that chatbot use should remain supervised by teachers.

Question 6: What speaking aspects can AI chatbots improve the most?

Teacher A emphasized pronunciation and vocabulary, explaining that students can learn pronunciation through exposure to authentic material and memorize words in context. Teacher B identified fluency, vocabulary, and confidence as the main areas improved by chatbots, while noting weaker support for pronunciation. Teacher C identified fluency, vocabulary, confidence, and grammar as the main areas supported by chatbot practice. Teacher D emphasized fluency, vocabulary, confidence, and grammar, while noting that pronunciation improvement is possible but less effective than direct human feedback.

Across the interviews, the most frequently mentioned benefits were fluency, vocabulary, confidence, and grammar. Pronunciation was treated more cautiously because direct human correction remains stronger in this area.

Question 7: Compared to traditional teacher-assisted speaking practice, how effective are chatbot-assisted activities?

Teacher A considered chatbot-assisted activities effective, but only when governed and controlled by a teacher. Teacher B considered chatbot-assisted practice highly effective for increasing practice time and confidence, but less effective for pronunciation and real-life communicative strategies. Teacher C considered chatbot-assisted activities effective for independent practice, while teacher-assisted practice remains necessary for guidance and human interaction. Teacher D considered chatbot-assisted activities highly effective as complementary tools, but teacher-assisted practice remains stronger for pronunciation, interaction, and authentic communication.

The teachers did not present chatbot-assisted practice as a full replacement for traditional practice. Their responses support a complementary model in which chatbots provide extra practice, while teachers provide guidance, correction, and authentic interaction.

Question 8: Do students feel more comfortable speaking with chatbots than with teachers? Why?

Teacher A explained that comfort depends on learner personality; shy students may feel more comfortable with chatbots, while socially confident students can speak directly with teachers. Teacher B stated that many students feel more comfortable with chatbots because they reduce fear of judgment and allow free repeated practice. Teacher C stated that many students feel more comfortable with chatbots because they are not afraid of mistakes or judgment. Teacher D stated that many students feel more comfortable with chatbots because they do not fear criticism and can practice at their own pace.

The teachers generally agreed that many students feel more comfortable speaking with chatbots because the interaction is less judgmental. This is especially relevant for shy learners or students who fear public mistakes.

Question 9: In your opinion, can AI chatbots reduce speaking anxiety among EFL learners?

Teacher A believed that chatbots can reduce speaking anxiety, especially because the current generation is open to technology and AI tools. Teacher B believed that chatbots can reduce speaking anxiety by offering a safe private space for practice. Teacher C believed that chatbots reduce anxiety because students can practice privately and at their own pace. Teacher D believed that chatbots can reduce anxiety through a supportive, non-judgmental environment and repeated practice.

The teachers' answers strongly support the idea that chatbots can reduce speaking anxiety. This occurs because learners can practice privately, repeat tasks, and interact without fear of embarrassment.

Question 10: What are the main advantages of using AI chatbots in speaking practice?

Teacher A identified reduced fear of mistakes as a main advantage because students know that the interaction is generated by AI rather than judged by a human interlocutor. Teacher B identified anytime practice, reduced anxiety, vocabulary expansion, and confidence building as key advantages. Teacher C emphasized

accessibility, instant feedback, personalized learning, motivation, and unlimited practice opportunities. Teacher D highlighted accessibility, instant feedback, personalization, flexibility, engagement, and varied conversational topics.

The main advantages identified by teachers were accessibility, instant feedback, flexibility, increased practice time, motivation, vocabulary development, and confidence building.

Question 11: What challenges or limitations may students face when using AI chatbots?

Teacher A warned that individual differences may limit chatbot usefulness because some students lack the linguistic and pragmatic competence needed to interact effectively with AI. Teacher B identified lack of real human interaction, overreliance, and reduced spontaneous communication practice as major limitations. Teacher C warned against overdependence, inaccurate responses, lack of real human interaction, and limited critical thinking. Teacher D identified limited internet access, weak digital skills, overreliance, inaccurate or unnatural responses, lack of human interaction, and limited pronunciation correction.

The teachers identified important limitations, including overreliance, inaccurate responses, weak pronunciation feedback, lack of real human interaction, limited digital skills, and possible reduction of critical thinking.

Question 12: Have you noticed any changes in students' motivation when using AI chatbots?

Teacher A noticed positive motivation changes because AI-generated tools are enjoyable in oral communication classes. Teacher B noticed slight changes in motivation. Teacher C observed that students become more motivated and engaged because chatbot activities feel interactive and modern. Teacher D noticed slight improvements in students' motivation.

The teachers noticed motivation gains, but they described them with caution. Motivation seems to increase because chatbots are interactive and modern, yet this benefit depends on proper task design.

Question 13: Do you think chatbots provide accurate and useful feedback for speaking improvement?

Teacher A stated that chatbots provide feedback, but this feedback should be assessed by teachers and not accepted automatically. Teacher B stated that feedback can be useful for grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure but is not fully reliable for pronunciation and spoken performance. Teacher C stated that chatbot feedback is often useful for grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure, but teacher monitoring is still needed. Teacher D stated that feedback is useful for grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, and fluency, but may be limited for pronunciation, intonation, and contextual language use.

The teachers' responses show that chatbot feedback can be useful, particularly for grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, and fluency. However, they repeatedly emphasized that teacher monitoring is needed to check accuracy and appropriateness.

Question 14: Should AI chatbots be integrated into EFL education programs?

Teacher A strongly supported integrating AI tools because students need to learn how to use them properly in a changing world. Teacher B answered "maybe", explaining that chatbots should complement the instructor's work rather than replace it. Teacher C supported integrating chatbots into EFL programs as supportive tools for speaking practice. Teacher D supported integrating chatbots into EFL education because they expand speaking opportunities and autonomous learning, but integration must be guided.

Most teachers supported the integration of chatbots into EFL programs, but only as supportive tools. The interviews therefore favor guided integration rather than uncontrolled adoption.

Question 15: Do you believe AI chatbots can replace teachers in speaking practice? Why or why not?

Teacher A did not believe that chatbots can replace teachers because classrooms must remain organized by teachers and AI should be used within educational limits. Teacher

B rejected replacement, stressing that teachers remain essential for feedback and managing interaction. Teacher C stated that chatbots cannot replace teachers because teachers provide emotional support, classroom management, cultural understanding, and personalized instruction. Teacher D rejected complete replacement because teachers provide emotional support, adapt instruction, manage interaction, and offer authentic communication.

All teachers rejected the idea that chatbots can replace teachers. They emphasized the teacher's human, pedagogical, emotional, and organizational role in speaking instruction.

Question 16: What role should teachers play when students use AI chatbots?

Teacher A saw the teacher's role as assessing students' confidence, eye contact, and ability to respond when using chatbot-supported practice. Teacher B argued that teachers should act as guides and facilitators when students use AI chatbots. Teacher C described teachers as guides who monitor chatbot use, evaluate learning quality, and help students use AI responsibly. Teacher D argued that teachers should guide, facilitate, supervise, evaluate chatbot responses, and design meaningful speaking activities.

The teachers defined their role as guides, facilitators, supervisors, evaluators, and designers of meaningful speaking tasks. This confirms that human assistance remains central even when AI tools are used.

Question 17: What recommendations would you give for improving the use of AI chatbots in EFL speaking practice?

Teacher A recommended teaching students how to use chatbots skillfully and encouraging them to communicate with AI tools in English rather than in their local language. Teacher B recommended integrating chatbots with structured speaking tasks and combining chatbot practice with face-to-face speaking activities. Teacher C recommended training, combining chatbots with classroom interaction, and encouraging ethical and balanced use. Teacher D recommended training for teachers and students, better speech-recognition features, integration into communicative tasks, regular monitoring, and balanced use.

The recommendations focused on training, ethical use, structured speaking tasks, combining chatbot activities with face-to-face interaction, and improving speech-recognition or pronunciation features.

Question 18: Is there anything else you would like to add regarding AI chatbots and speaking development?

Teacher A closed the interview briefly without adding further analytical comments. Teacher B concluded that chatbots are supplementary tools that enhance fluency, vocabulary, and confidence but require teacher moderation. Teacher C concluded that chatbots are valuable for speaking development but should complement traditional teaching methods. Teacher D concluded that chatbots are valuable innovations, but successful speaking development still requires human interaction, teacher guidance, and active real communication.

Overall, teachers viewed chatbots as valuable supplementary tools for speaking development. Their usefulness depends on balance: students need the extra practice offered by chatbots, as well as the correction, interaction, and supervision offered by teachers.

3.5 Discussions and Interpretations of the Main Findings

This section discusses and interprets the main findings obtained from the students' questionnaire and teachers' interview. It aims to relate the quantitative and qualitative results to the research questions and to provide a clearer understanding of the role of AI chatbots in EFL speaking practice.

3.5.1 Findings of Students' Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire shows that AI chatbots are already familiar and widely used by the selected learners. The results revealed that 93.02% of the respondents had used AI chatbots for learning English, while 48.84% reported using them daily and 44.19% several times a week. In addition, 90.70% of the students reported using chatbots anytime, which indicates that chatbot-assisted learning is perceived as flexible and easily accessible among the sample.

The findings also suggest that AI chatbots are positively associated with speaking practice. A large proportion of students, 95.35%, reported feeling

comfortable when speaking with chatbots, while 90.70% considered them effective for learning speaking. Moreover, 79.07% stated that chatbots reduce their fear of speaking English, and 76.75% rated chatbots as useful or very useful for speaking practice. These findings indicate that AI chatbots support speaking practice mainly by increasing comfort, reducing fear, and encouraging more frequent practice.

Regarding perceived improvement, 76.75% of the respondents reported that their speaking level became either better or much better. The most improved aspects were vocabulary, selected by 51.16% of students, and confidence, selected by 32.56%. This suggests that students associate chatbot use more strongly with vocabulary development and confidence building than with pronunciation or fluency.

The comparative section shows that students do not reject teacher-assisted practice. Although 51.16% felt more relaxed speaking with chatbots, 67.44% preferred both chatbots and teachers for speaking practice. In addition, 88.37% agreed that speaking with a teacher is more realistic, and 86.05% rejected the idea that chatbots can replace teachers. These findings support a balanced interpretation: chatbots are useful for extra practice, but human assistance remains essential for realistic interaction, guidance, and feedback.

The general evaluation confirms this balanced view. The results showed that 95.35% of students would recommend chatbots to other students, 97.67% intended to continue using them in the future, and 97.67% believed that chatbots make learning easier. At the same time, students classified chatbots mainly as partial substitutes, with 53.49%, or complements, with 44.19%, while only 2.33% considered them full substitutes. Therefore, the questionnaire results support the integration of AI chatbots into EFL speaking practice as supportive tools rather than replacements for teachers.

3.5.2 Findings of Teachers' Interview

The teachers' interview findings are consistent with the questionnaire results. Teachers generally acknowledged that AI chatbots can help students develop speaking skills by increasing practice opportunities, reducing anxiety, offering instant feedback, and supporting fluency, vocabulary, confidence, and grammar. They also recognized

that many students feel comfortable with chatbots because the interaction is less stressful and less judgmental.

However, the interviewed teachers insisted on the limits of chatbot-assisted practice. They pointed to weak pronunciation feedback, possible inaccurate responses, overreliance on technology, limited human interaction, and the need for critical use. None of the teachers supported the idea that chatbots can replace teachers. Instead, the repeated recommendation was to integrate AI chatbots under teacher supervision and combine them with face-to-face speaking activities.

Taken together, the students' and teachers' findings indicate that AI chatbots can enrich speaking practice in EFL contexts, especially when they are used to extend practice time and reduce anxiety. Nevertheless, the most appropriate interpretation is that chatbot-assisted practice should complement human-assisted practice rather than replace it.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the practical analysis of the study. The questionnaire results showed generally positive students' attitudes toward AI chatbots in speaking practice. For instance, 95.35% of students reported feeling comfortable speaking with chatbots, 90.70% considered them effective for learning speaking, and 79.07% stated that they reduce fear of speaking English. The results also showed that 76.75% of students perceived improvement in their speaking level, while vocabulary and confidence were the most improved aspects.

The interview results confirmed that teachers see AI chatbots as useful supplementary tools, especially for increasing practice opportunities, reducing anxiety, supporting vocabulary development, and building confidence. However, teachers emphasized the need for teacher guidance, human interaction, and responsible use. The main conclusion is that AI chatbots have a meaningful supportive role in EFL speaking practice, but they cannot replace teachers. The most suitable pedagogical approach is therefore a balanced model that combines chatbot-assisted practice with human-assisted instruction.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

The primary aim of this dissertation was to investigate the role of AI chatbots in speaking practice in EFL contexts, with a specific focus on comparing chatbot-assisted and human-assisted speaking practice. The study attempted to explore how EFL learners perceive the usefulness of AI chatbots in improving their speaking skills, and how teachers evaluate the pedagogical value, limitations, and possible integration of these tools into speaking instruction.

This study was guided by three main research questions. The first question aimed to examine students' perceptions of AI chatbot-assisted speaking practice in comparison with human-assisted practice, particularly in relation to motivation, confidence, speaking anxiety, and perceived improvement. The second question sought to explore teachers' views about the effectiveness, challenges, and pedagogical implications of integrating AI chatbots into EFL speaking practice. The third question aimed to compare students' and teachers' perceptions in order to determine whether AI chatbots can function as complements or partial substitutes for human-assisted speaking practice.

The dissertation was divided into three chapters. The first chapter dealt with speaking skills in the EFL context by discussing the concept of speaking, its components, models of second language speaking development, the nature of EFL contexts, the challenges learners face in developing speaking skills, and the strategies that may enhance speaking performance. The second chapter focused on AI chatbots and their role in EFL speaking practice. It presented Artificial Intelligence in education, defined AI chatbots, examined their pedagogical functions, and discussed their impact on fluency, accuracy, vocabulary, pronunciation, discourse competence, motivation, and anxiety. The third chapter represented the practical part of the study. It presented the research design, population and sample, research instruments, data collection procedures, questionnaire analysis, interview analysis, and discussion of the main findings.

The study adopted a mixed-method research design, combining quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data were collected through a questionnaire administered to forty-three (43) third-year EFL students at the Department of English,

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Kasdi Merbah University, Ouargla, while the qualitative data were collected through a semi-structured interview conducted with four (4) EFL teachers from the same department. The questionnaire data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics through frequencies and percentages, while the interview responses were interpreted thematically.

The findings obtained from the students' questionnaire revealed that AI chatbots are widely used and positively perceived by the selected learners. The results showed that 93.02% of students had already used AI chatbots for learning English, 97.67% considered them easy to use, and 90.70% considered them effective for learning speaking. The results also showed that chatbots contribute to speaking practice by increasing comfort, as 95.35% of students reported feeling comfortable speaking with them, reducing fear of speaking, as 79.07% answered positively, and supporting perceived improvement, as 76.75% reported that their speaking level became better or much better. In addition, students associated chatbot use mainly with vocabulary development, selected by 51.16%, and confidence building, selected by 32.56%. However, the results also showed that students do not view chatbots as complete replacements for teachers, since 86.05% rejected the idea that chatbots can replace teachers and 88.37% considered speaking with a teacher more realistic. Most of them preferred a combined approach, with 67.44% choosing both chatbot-assisted and teacher-assisted speaking practice.

The findings of the teachers' interview confirmed many of the students' views. Teachers generally acknowledged that AI chatbots can support speaking development by providing additional practice opportunities, immediate responses, reduced anxiety, vocabulary support, and increased learner motivation. Nevertheless, they also emphasized several limitations, including inaccurate feedback, weak pronunciation correction, lack of authentic human interaction, overreliance on technology, and the need for teacher supervision. All interviewed teachers rejected the idea that AI chatbots can fully replace teachers in speaking practice. Instead, they viewed them as supplementary tools that should be integrated carefully and pedagogically.

The findings helped to confirm the hypotheses of the study. The first hypothesis was confirmed because students showed generally positive perceptions of

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chatbot-assisted speaking practice, especially in terms of motivation, confidence, anxiety reduction, and perceived usefulness. The second hypothesis was also confirmed because teachers considered AI chatbots useful for expanding speaking practice opportunities, while also recognizing important limitations related to feedback quality, interaction authenticity, and pedagogical control. The third hypothesis was partially confirmed, as students showed stronger acceptance of AI chatbots than teachers, but both groups agreed that chatbots should complement rather than replace human-assisted speaking practice.

Despite achieving its main objectives, the study has some limitations. First, the sample was limited to forty-three students and four teachers from one university context, which means that the findings cannot be generalized to all EFL learners and teachers. Second, the study relied mainly on perceptions rather than direct measurement of speaking performance through pre-tests and post-tests. Third, the study focused on AI chatbots in general, without comparing different chatbot platforms or distinguishing deeply between text-based and voice-based interaction in the practical part. Future research could therefore include larger samples, experimental designs, and direct assessment of learners' speaking performance before and after chatbot-assisted practice.

To conclude, the findings of this study show that AI chatbots can play a meaningful supportive role in EFL speaking practice. They provide learners with flexible, accessible, and low-pressure opportunities to practice English, which may help reduce anxiety and increase confidence. However, their pedagogical value depends on careful integration and teacher guidance. AI chatbots should not be seen as substitutes for teachers, but as complementary tools that can enrich speaking practice when used alongside human interaction, classroom instruction, and meaningful communicative activities.

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Recommendations

Based on the findings of the present study, a set of recommendations can be proposed for students, teachers, and future researchers.

First, EFL students should be encouraged to use AI chatbots as supportive tools for speaking practice. These tools can provide additional opportunities to practise English outside the classroom, especially for learners who feel anxious or hesitant when speaking in front of others. However, students should use chatbots responsibly and avoid depending on them completely, since real speaking development also requires human interaction, feedback, and classroom participation.

Second, teachers should guide students in the effective use of AI chatbots for speaking practice. They need to design clear speaking tasks that help learners use chatbots for meaningful communication rather than random or superficial interaction. Teachers should also monitor students' chatbot use, correct possible errors, and help them transfer what they practise with chatbots into real classroom communication.

Third, AI chatbots should be integrated into EFL speaking instruction as complementary tools, not as replacements for teachers. The results of this study showed that students value chatbots for comfort, accessibility, and motivation, while teachers emphasize the importance of human feedback, authentic interaction, and pedagogical control. Therefore, a balanced approach that combines chatbot-assisted practice with teacher-assisted instruction is recommended.

Fourth, institutions and curriculum designers should consider including AI-based speaking activities in EFL programs. This integration should be accompanied by training sessions for both teachers and students in order to ensure effective, ethical, and pedagogically appropriate use of AI tools. Training is especially important because chatbot responses may not always be accurate, and students need to develop critical awareness when using AI-generated feedback.

Fifth, more attention should be given to speaking anxiety in EFL classrooms. Since the findings showed that many students feel more comfortable speaking with chatbots, teachers can use these tools as a preparatory step before face-to-face speaking tasks. For example, students may first practise with a chatbot, then perform similar

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speaking activities with classmates or teachers. This gradual transition may help reduce fear and increase confidence.

Finally, future research should examine the actual effect of AI chatbots on speaking performance through experimental studies. Further studies may use pre-tests and post-tests to measure improvement in fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, and interactional competence. Future researchers may also compare text-based and voice-based chatbots, or investigate how different proficiency levels respond to chatbot-assisted speaking practice.

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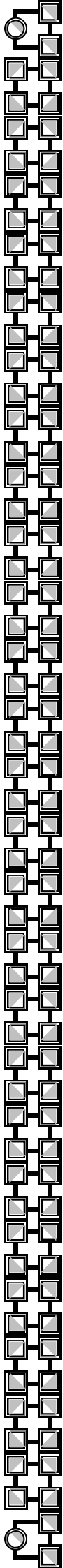
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Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendix A: Students' Questionnaire



Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

Kasdi Merbah University – Ouargla

Faculty of Letters and Languages

Department of English Language and Literature



Students' Questionnaire

This questionnaire aims to collect the necessary data for a graduation thesis entitled:

"The role of AI chatbots in speaking practice: A comparative analysis of chatbot-assisted vs. human-assisted practice in EFL contexts."

Please mark (X) next to the appropriate option honestly and objectively. The information provided will be used for scientific purposes only.

Section 1: Use of AI Chatbots in Learning

N ⁰	Question	options
1	Have you ever used an AI chatbot (e.g., ChatGPT) for learning English?	☐ Yes ☐ No
2	How often do you use AI chatbots?	☐ Daily ☐ Several times a week ☐ Rarely ☐ Never
3	When do you usually use AI chatbots?	☐ Morning ☐ Afternoon ☐ Evening ☐ Anytime
4	What is your main purpose for using chatbots?	☐ Speaking ☐ Writing ☐ Grammar ☐ Vocabulary
5	Do you use chatbots inside or outside the classroom?	☐ Inside ☐ Outside ☐ Both
6	Rate your level of familiarity with AI chatbots	☐ Very high ☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low ☐ Very low
7	Do you consider AI chatbots easy to use?	☐ Yes ☐ No

Section 2: Impact on Speaking Skills

N ⁰	Question	options
1	AI chatbots help me improve my speaking confidence	☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree
2	Do chatbots reduce your fear of speaking English?	☐ Yes ☐ No
3	Compared to before, your speaking level is now	☐ Much better ☐ Better ☐ Same ☐ Worse

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4	Chatbots help me practice speaking regularly	☐ Always ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Never
5	What aspect improved the most thanks to chatbots?	☐ Fluency ☐ Pronunciation ☐ Vocabulary ☐ Confidence
6	Do you feel comfortable speaking with chatbots?	☐ Yes ☐ No
7	How would you rate the usefulness of chatbots for speaking?	☐ Very useful ☐ Useful ☐ Neutral ☐ Not useful

Section 3: Comparison Between Chatbots and Teachers

N ^o	Question	options
1	Which do you prefer for speaking practice?	☐ Chatbot ☐ Teacher ☐ Both
2	Chatbots are more available than teachers	☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree
3	Who provides better feedback?	☐ Chatbot ☐ Teacher ☐ Both
4	Do you feel more relaxed speaking with	☐ Chatbot ☐ Teacher ☐ Both
5	Who helps you improve faster?	☐ Chatbot ☐ Teacher ☐ Both
6	Speaking with a teacher is more realistic	☐ Yes ☐ No
7	Which environment do you prefer?	☐ Formal (teacher) ☐ Informal (chatbot) ☐ Both

Section 4: Evaluation of AI Chatbots

N ^o	Question	options
1	AI chatbots are effective for learning speaking	☐ Yes ☐ No
2	How would you rate chatbot performance?	☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Average ☐ Poor
3	Do chatbots give accurate answers?	☐ Always ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely
4	Chatbots should be integrated into education	☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree
5	Can chatbots replace teachers?	☐ Yes ☐ No
6	In your opinion, chatbots are	☐ Complement ☐ Partial substitute ☐ Full substitute
7	Would you recommend chatbots to other students?	☐ Yes ☐ No

Section 5: Speaking Anxiety and Motivation

N ^o	Question	options
1	Do you feel anxious when speaking English?	☐ Yes ☐ No
2	Chatbots help reduce my speaking anxiety	☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree
3	How motivated are you to use chatbots?	☐ Very motivated ☐ Motivated ☐ Neutral ☐ Not motivated

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4	Do chatbots encourage you to speak more?	☐ Yes ☐ No
5	Your confidence in speaking English is now	☐ Very high ☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low
6	Do you prefer practicing alone with chatbots?	☐ Yes ☐ No
7	Chatbots make learning speaking more enjoyable	☐ Always ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely

Section 6: General Evaluation

N ^o	Question	options
1	Overall, how satisfied are you with AI chatbots?	☐ Very satisfied ☐ Satisfied ☐ Neutral ☐ Unsatisfied
2	Do you trust AI chatbots in learning English?	☐ Yes ☐ No
3	Would you continue using chatbots in the future?	☐ Yes ☐ No
4	How important are chatbots in your learning?	☐ Very important ☐ Important ☐ Less important ☐ Not important
5	Chatbots save time in learning	☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree
6	Do chatbots make learning easier?	☐ Yes ☐ No
7	Overall usefulness of chatbots is	☐ Very high ☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low

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Appendix B: Teachers' Interview



People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Kasdi Merbah University – Ouargla
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of English Language and Literature



SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW FOR EFL TEACHERS

The Role of AI Chatbots in Speaking Practice: A Comparative Analysis of Chatbot-Assisted vs. Human-Assisted Practice in EFL Contexts

1. Dear Teachers

This semi-structured interview is conducted as part of a master dissertation research that investigates the role of AI chatbots in improving EFL students' speaking practice compared to teacher-assisted speaking practice.

The purpose of this interview is to gather teachers' professional opinions, classroom experiences, and perceptions regarding the effectiveness of AI chatbots in developing students' speaking abilities.

Your responses will remain strictly confidential and will be used only for academic research purposes. There are no right or wrong answers; your honest opinions and experiences are highly appreciated.

The interview may take approximately 15–20 minutes. Participation is entirely voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw at any moment without any consequences.

Thank you sincerely for your time, cooperation, and valuable contribution.

Background Information

Date of Interview:

Time:

Years of Teaching Experience:

- ☐ Less than 5 years
- ☐ 5 years
- ☐ More than 5 years

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Level(s) Currently Teaching:

Academic Rank:

Highest Degree Obtained:

Experience with Educational Technology:

Section A: Teaching Context and Technology Use

Q1. How long have you been teaching English at the university level? What modules do you currently teach?

Q2. How would you describe the speaking level of your students in general?

Q3. Have you ever used AI chatbots, such as ChatGPT, in teaching or learning activities?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please explain how:

Q4. In your opinion, how familiar are students with AI chatbots nowadays?

Section B: AI Chatbots and Speaking Practice

Q5. Do you think AI chatbots can help students improve their English speaking skills? Why or why not?

Q6. What speaking aspects can AI chatbots improve the most?

☐ Fluency

☐ Pronunciation

☐ Vocabulary

☐ Confidence

☐ Grammar

Please explain:

Q7. Compared to traditional teacher-assisted speaking practice, how effective are chatbot-assisted activities?

Q8. Do students feel more comfortable speaking with chatbots than with teachers? Why?

Q9. In your opinion, can AI chatbots reduce speaking anxiety among EFL learners?

Q10. What are the main advantages of using AI chatbots in speaking practice?

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Q11. What challenges or limitations may students face when using AI chatbots?

Section C: Teachers' Perceptions and Classroom Experience

Q12. Have you noticed any changes in students' motivation when using AI chatbots?

Q13. Do you think chatbots provide accurate and useful feedback for speaking improvement?

Q14. Should AI chatbots be integrated into EFL education programs?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

Please explain:

Q15. Do you believe AI chatbots can replace teachers in speaking practice? Why or why not?

Q16. What role should teachers play when students use AI chatbots?

Q17. What recommendations would you give for improving the use of AI chatbots in EFL speaking practice?

Q18. Is there anything else you would like to add regarding AI chatbots and speaking development?

الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى البحث في دور روبوتات الدردشة المعتمدة على الذكاء الاصطناعي في ممارسة مهارة التحدث في سياق تعلم اللغة الانجليزية كلغة اجنبية، وذلك من خلال مقارنة الممارسة المدعومة بروبوتات الدردشة بالممارسة المدعومة من طرف الاستاذ. وقد ركزت الدراسة على معرفة تصورات الطلبة حول استعمال هذه الادوات من حيث الدافعية، الثقة بالنفس، قلق التحدث، والتحسين في المستوى الشفوي، اضافة الى معرفة اراء الاساتذة حول فعاليتها وحدودها وامكانية ادماجها في تعليم مهارة التحدث. اجريت الدراسة بقسم اللغة الانجليزية بجامعة قاصدي مرباح ورقلة، واعتمدت على المنهج المختلط، حيث تم جمع البيانات الكمية عن طريق استبيان موجه الى ثلاثة واربعين (43) طالبا من طلبة السنة الثالثة بقسم اللغة الانجليزية، بينما تم جمع البيانات النوعية من خلال مقابلات شبه موجهة مع اربعة (4) اساتذة من نفس القسم. وقد تم تحليل بيانات الاستبيان باستعمال برنامج IBM SPSS Statistics من خلال التكرارات والنسب المئوية، في حين تم تحليل اجابات المقابلات تحليلًا موضوعيًا. اظهرت النتائج ان الطلبة لديهم اتجاهات ايجابية نحو روبوتات الدردشة، خاصة من حيث سهولة الوصول، الراحة، الدافعية، تنمية المفردات، وتعزيز الثقة بالنفس. كما بينت النتائج ان الطلبة والاساتذة لا يرون ان روبوتات الدردشة يمكن ان تعوض الاستاذ بشكل كامل، لان الممارسة مع الاستاذ توفر تفاعلا اكثر واقعية، ودعما انسانيا، وتوجيها بيداغوجيا. وتخلص الدراسة الى ان روبوتات الدردشة يمكن ان تكون اداة مساعدة في ممارسة مهارة التحدث في اللغة الانجليزية كلغة اجنبية، بشرط استعمالها كوسيلة مكملة لدور الاستاذ وليست بديلا عنه.

الكلمات المفتاحية: روبوتات الدردشة، الذكاء الاصطناعي، مهارة التحدث، متعلمو اللغة الانجليزية كلغة اجنبية،

قلق التحدث، دور الاستاذ.

Résumé

Cette étude examine le rôle des chatbots basés sur l'intelligence artificielle dans la pratique de l'expression orale en contexte d'apprentissage de l'anglais comme langue étrangère, à travers une comparaison entre la pratique assistée par chatbot et la pratique assistée par l'enseignant. Elle vise à explorer les perceptions des étudiants concernant l'utilisation de ces outils en termes de motivation, confiance en soi, anxiété liée à la prise de parole et amélioration du niveau oral, ainsi que les avis des enseignants sur leur efficacité, leurs limites et leur intégration pédagogique. L'étude a été menée au Département d'anglais de l'Université Kasdi Merbah Ouargla et a adopté une méthode mixte. Les données quantitatives ont été collectées au moyen d'un questionnaire administré à quarante-trois (43) étudiants de troisième année EFL au Département d'anglais, tandis que les données qualitatives ont été recueillies à travers des entretiens semi-directifs avec quatre (4) enseignants EFL du même département. Les données du questionnaire ont été analysées à l'aide du logiciel IBM SPSS Statistics, en utilisant les fréquences et les pourcentages, alors que les réponses des entretiens ont été interprétées de manière thématique. Les résultats montrent que les étudiants ont généralement des attitudes positives envers les chatbots, notamment en ce qui concerne l'accessibilité, le confort, la motivation, le développement du vocabulaire et le renforcement de la confiance en soi. Toutefois, les étudiants et les enseignants s'accordent sur le fait que les chatbots ne peuvent pas remplacer complètement les enseignants, car la pratique assistée par l'enseignant offre une interaction plus authentique, un soutien émotionnel et un encadrement pédagogique. L'étude conclut que les chatbots peuvent jouer un rôle de soutien important dans la pratique de l'expression orale en anglais langue étrangère lorsqu'ils sont utilisés comme outils complémentaires à l'enseignement assisté par l'enseignant.

Mots-clés : chatbots, intelligence artificielle, expression orale, apprenants EFL, pratique assistée par l'enseignant, anxiété orale.