

The impact of AI chatbots on English language learners' speaking proficiency: A systematic review

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ABSTRACT

Artificial intelligence (AI) chatbots have become a significant phenomenon not only in the information technology field but also in education, where they are transforming how students learn English. Numerous studies have explored the use of AI chatbots in English language teaching (ELT), especially their potential to support speaking practice. However, the existing research is fragmented and lacks a systematic synthesis, making the findings inconclusive about how chatbots contribute to speaking proficiency and how learners perceive their use. This limitation creates uncertainty for educators, policymakers, and researchers in assessing the educational value of chatbots in ELT. To address this gap, this study aims to critically analyze how AI chatbots enhance students' English-speaking skills and the implications for developing speaking proficiency, as well as investigate students' perceptions of their effectiveness. This systematic literature review examines findings from various studies related to AI chatbot applications in English-speaking educational settings, published between 2018 and 2025. Using the PRISMA guidelines, an initial search across Google Scholar and Science Direct yielded 111 papers; the findings reveal both benefits, such as increased learner engagement and opportunities to practice, and challenges, including the lack of accuracy. By synthesizing prior research, this study offers a clearer understanding of the role of chatbots in increasing speaking proficiency and contributes to ongoing debates about AI in ELT.

Keywords: artificial intelligence (AI); chatbots; English language teaching; speaking proficiency

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INTRODUCTION

Speaking is often the most challenging skill for English learners, not only because of the grammar or vocabulary, but also because of the lack of opportunities to practice and the lack of English-speaking partners. Recently, the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) chatbots has introduced a possible solution for being an interactive partner that stimulates conversation and provides instant feedback. Chatbot development has been greatly influenced by technological progress in natural language processing (NLP) and machine learning in the last six decades (Du & Daniel, 2024). AI chatbots are basically an AI program that uses NLP and sentiment analysis to communicate with people in human language

through text or speech (Adamopoulou & Moussiades, 2020). Nowadays, AI chatbots are commonly utilized in English language teaching (ELT) to help improve learners' English language skills, especially in speaking (Almawadeh et al., 2024; Du & Daniel, 2024; Koç, 2024). With AI technology improving so quickly day by day, many studies have researched how chatbots help learners. This systematic review will therefore evaluate the existing research on how AI chatbots affect learners' speaking skills and the students' perception regarding such technologies.

In line with this focus, current discussion in ELT often sees AI chatbots as useful because they can offer personalized feedback, instant correction, and engaging practice that can complement traditional teaching methods (Al-khresheh, 2024; Fathi et al., 2024; Lee et al., 2023). However, there is still some debate about how effective they truly are for improving the learners' speaking proficiency. Some studies demonstrated that chatbots can help learners speak better, while others point out potential downsides and challenges derived from the chatbots (Duong & Suppasetserree, 2024; Zou et al., 2023).

Although individual studies have explored chatbots utilization in language learning, there is a limited systematic synthesis of evidence on their effectiveness in enhancing speaking skills and shaping learners' perceptions. To address this gap, this study conducts a systematic literature review of research published between 2018 and 2025 on AI chatbots in the ELT context. Guided by the PRISMA framework, the review categorizes findings thematically to evaluate their impact on speaking proficiency and to examine learners' perceptions. The year was chosen because in 2016, the new era of chatbots was marked (Winkler & Soellner, 2018). Then, Covid-19 later intensified the adoption of innovative technologies, including AI-mediated "Machine-to-student" engagement (Rof et al., 2022). This study focuses on speaking because speaking is often regarded as the most challenging skill, primarily due to the lack of speaking partners and limited opportunities to practice it (Khasawneh, 2023). The aim is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the benefits, challenges, and educational implications of chatbot use in ELT. By doing so, this study contributes to ongoing debates on AI integration in education and provides evidence-based insights for teachers, researchers, and policymakers.

Based on the rationale above, this study is guided by the following research questions:

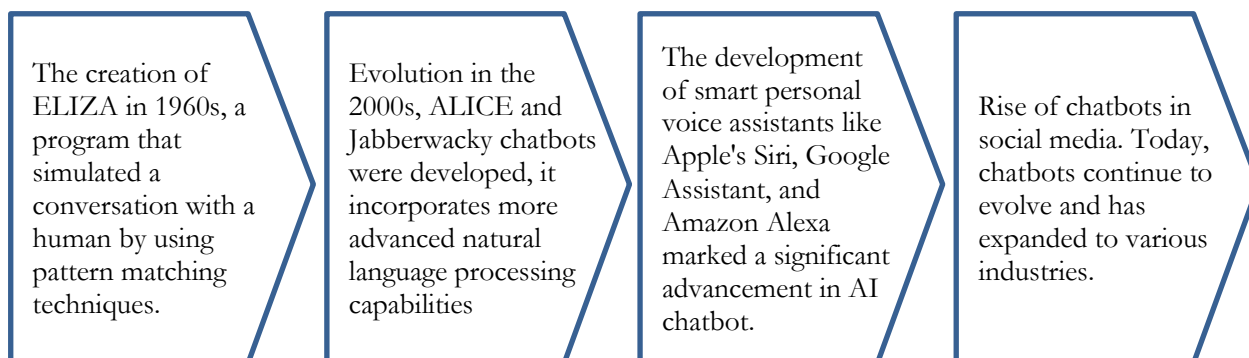
1. How do AI chatbots enhance English language learners' speaking proficiency, including aspects such as fluency, pronunciation, and conversational practice?
2. What are learners' perceptions of using AI chatbots for English speaking, particularly in terms of benefits and challenges?

The history of AI chatbots

Current advancements in AI chatbots have become a hot topic. To understand it better, it is important to look at the history of AI chatbots. The concept of AI chatbots actually dates back to the 1960s with the creation of ELIZA (Adamopoulou & Moussiades, 2020). ELIZA utilized simple pattern-matching techniques to simulate conversation and focus primarily on a script of responses crafted to mimic a Rogerian psychotherapist (Gunnam et al., 2023; Priya & Rao, 2023).

Figure 1

The History of AI-Chatbots (Adamopoulou & Moussiades, 2020)



Following the initial developments of chatbots in the 20th century, the early 2000s saw a wave of innovations to enhance the complexity of interactions. Chatbots such as ALICE (developed utilizing the artificial intelligence markup language) and Jabberwacky appeared during this period. They incorporated advanced natural language processing NLP techniques that enabled more engaging human-like conversations (Mathew et al., 2021; Abdul-Kader & Woods, 2015).

During the 2010s, the progression of smart personal voice assistants represented a transformative phase in chatbot evolution. Major players, including Apple's Siri, IBM Watson, Google Assistant, Microsoft Cortana, and Amazon Alexa, have introduced sophisticated systems that are capable of processing voice commands and providing contextually relevant responses. These voice assistants utilize extensive libraries of data and machine learning (Huang, 2023).

In 2016, the integration of chatbots into social media platforms marked a new era. Chatbots enable brands to connect directly with consumers through messaging applications (Winkler & Soellner, 2018). There was a rapid increase in chatbot deployment across various industries, including marketing, healthcare, and education, reflecting a shift toward automation in customer engagement and service provision (Çelik et al., 2022).

Current development in chatbots technology is moving beyond simple commands to focus on creating more emotionally intelligent interactions. The goal is to improve how chatbots understand and respond to humans. By being more emotionally responsive, these chatbots can create a more engaging and more supportive user experience (Gumusel, 2024; Szmurlo & Akhtar, 2024). This progress opens up new possibilities for using chatbots in many fields, especially in education. For example, in the area of ELT, these more advanced AI chatbots can offer students new ways to study and practice English whenever they want.

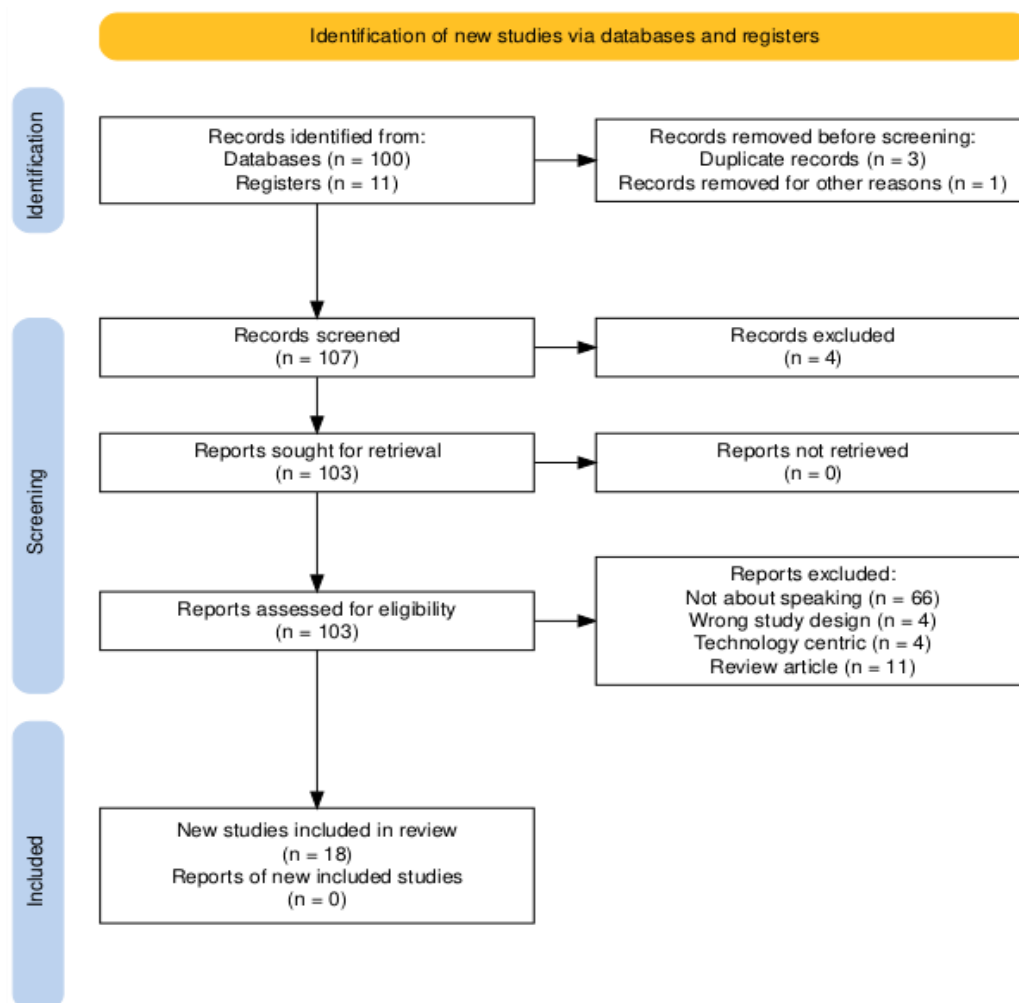
METHOD

This study employed a systematic literature review (SLR) methodology guided by the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework, specifically following the PRISMA 2020 guidelines. It depicts mandatory reporting requirements for systematic reviews to promote clarity, consistency, and reliability in literature reviews (Page et al., 2021). As Artificial Intelligence becomes more integrated into education, AI chatbots provide a unique opportunity for English language learners. To better understand their true effectiveness, this review was conducted to see how such technology impacts learners' speaking skills and how learners perceive the AI chatbots.

The literature collection started with a broad keyword of "AI Chatbots, Artificial Intelligence, English Speaking, Conversation" search all over multiple academic databases, including Google Scholar and Science Direct, which initially found 111 articles. Following the PRISMA protocol, a careful filtering process was begun. Three article duplicates were systematically removed, along with one paper which was unrelated to the study design, resulting in a total of 107 articles for further screening. The inclusion criteria were focused specifically on studies that addressed English-speaking skills. Based on the criteria, 66 articles were set aside because they were not centered on the speaking aspects of language learning. A handful of other articles were also excluded for not meeting the quality and relevance criteria. Four studies had an inappropriate research design, four were too focused on the technology itself without a clear educational topic, and 11 were review articles, not original research. The process resulted in the final selection of 18 studies that directly addressed the core questions of the research. The validity of the research data was maintained by following the rigorous PRISMA guidelines with a transparent process of identifying, screening, and selecting studies. Then, all stages of data collection and analysis were conducted collaboratively by a research team who did various cross-checking and verification to ensure reliability.

Figure 2

PRISMA Framework (Haddaway et al., 2022)



A thematic analysis was employed to interpret the qualitative data from the reviewed studies to provide a structured, in-depth understanding of the patterns and key insights (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Using six steps of thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2022), which are familiarizing with the data, coding key features, grouping codes into themes, refining and naming the themes, then finally reporting the findings with supporting evidence, the process involved data familiarization and initial coding to identify the emerging themes related to AI chatbots use in improving learners' speaking skills. This approach helps to find meaningful connections regarding the use of AI chatbot in English language learning. By aligning the analysis with a thematic approach, this research ensures the transparency and precision which is crucial for high-quality systematic reviews under the PRISMA framework (Haddaway et al., 2022).

FINDINGS

An analysis of the 18 selected studies provides a clear picture of how learners use AI chatbots to study English. Looking at the research as a whole, through thematic analysis, three major themes were identified: (1) the development of AI chatbot applications, (2) the impacts of AI chatbots on learners' speaking skills, and (3) learners' perceptions regarding the use of AI chatbots in speaking practice. The three major themes were then divided into several sub-themes for better understanding of the findings.

Table 1*Emerging Themes*

Theme	Studies
The development of AI chatbot apps for English-speaking	Han (2020), Lee et al. (2023), Zhao et al. (2023),
The impacts of AI chatbots on learners' speaking skills	Almawadeh et al. (2024), Çakmak (2022), Dewi et al. (2024), Duong & Suppasetseree (2024), Fathi et al. (2024), Kim et al. (2021b), Tai & Chen (2024), Wang et al. (2024), Yang et al. (2022),
- AI chatbots' impact on enhancing learners' speaking skills	Almawadeh et al. (2024), Çakmak (2022), Duong & Suppasetseree (2024), Fathi et al. (2024), Kim et al. (2021b), Yang et al. (2022),
- AI chatbots' impact on improving learners' pronunciation	Duong & Suppasetseree (2024), Han (2020), Zhao et al. (2023), Zou et al. (2023),
- AI chatbots' role in simulating conversations to improve learners' speaking skills	Azizimajd, (2023), Kim et al. (2021b), Mahmoud (2022)
- AI chatbots' instant and personalized feedback for learners' speaking practice	Fathi et al. (2024), Mahmoud (2022), Tai & Chen (2024), Zhao et al. (2023)
Learners' perception towards the utilization of AI chatbots for learning English speaking	Kim et al. (2021a), Yang et al. (2022), Han (2020), Dewi et al. (2024), Koç (2024), Khasawneh (2023), Al-khresheh (2024), Azizimajd, (2023), Wang et al. (2024), Tai & Chen (2024), Mahmoud (2022)
- Learners' positive perception of the utilization of AI chatbots for learning English speaking	Dewi et al. (2024), Duong & Suppasetseree (2024), Khasawneh (2023), Kim et al. (2021a), Lee et al. (2023), Yang et al. (2022)
- Learners' perception of AI chatbots' roles in reducing speaking anxiety	Azizimajd, (2023), Han (2020), Koç (2024), Mahmoud (2022), Tai & Chen (2024), Wang et al. (2024)

The development of AI chatbots for English-speaking

Several studies emphasize that they are not only using AI chatbots for English-speaking, but also actively developing chatbot applications to contribute to the advancement of AI chatbots and their broader impacts in English education. The researchers developed voice-based devices (Han, 2020) and teachable agents like the Odinga Agent (Lee et al., 2023). Zhao et al., (2023) incorporated advanced technologies such as Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR), Text-to-Speech (TTS), and Machine Translation (MT). These tools allowed learners to practice speaking English in authentic, dynamic, and independent settings.

Some features are developed to help the learners practice speaking English, receive feedback, and engage in conversations. Odinga Agen by Lee et al. (2023) offer four modules: Teaching, Check, Reward, and Free Talking for learners to practice their English speaking at their proficiency level to increase their language acquisition and fluency. "Ellie" by Yang et al., (2022) are developed for the study by utilizing the chatbot builder API platform DialogflowTM by Google. This chatbot features 71 tasks categorized under "Mission Challenge" and allows students to engage in authentic conversations, exchanging an average of 9.6 conversational turns per session. Zhao et al. (2023) developed the UEnglish app, which includes Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR) for transcribing spoken language, Machine Translation (MT) for translating text, and Text-to-Speech (TTS) for providing auditory input. It allows students to practice speaking English, receive instant feedback, and improve their language skills in authentic contexts. The findings showed that some countries are trying to contribute further to the AI chatbots' improvements for speaking. The researchers are not only utilizing but also developing the AI chatbots to better meet the learners' needs.

What are the impacts of AI chatbots on learners' speaking skills?

AI chatbots' impact on enhancing learners' speaking skills

Nowadays, AI chatbots have changed the way students learn English (Du & Daniel, 2024; Koç, 2024). Various studies regarding the use of AI chatbots for learning the English language, especially its utilization to improve the learners' speaking skills (Duong & Suppasetsee, 2024; Kim et al., 2021b; Yang et al., 2022). Several studies also found some improvements on students' speaking skills after they implement AI chatbots in a group of students compared to the group without any exposure to AI chatbots (Fathi et al., 2024; Han, 2020; Kim, et al., 2021b).

The trend of AI chatbots has led to numerous studies on their effectiveness in improving learners' speaking skills compared to human peers or conventional methods (Almawadeh et al., 2024; Çakmak, 2022; Kim et al., 2021a). Research highlights the clear advantages of AI chatbots when compared to more traditional methods. A study by Almawadeh et al. (2024) examined English speaking skills among Jordanian secondary school students. It concluded that AI chatbots were essential tools for not only improving speaking abilities and reducing errors, but also for boosting students' self-confidence. The tools also can be easily integrated into the classrooms, as they don't require any special technical expertise from the learners. Another study directly compared students' speaking performance in practicing face-to-face with human peers versus practicing with the chatbot replica (Çakmak, 2022). The research showed that students performed significantly better with Replika, potentially due to the chatbot's perceived native speaker status and authentic accent exposure. Kim et al. (2021) compared face-to-face, AI voice-chatting, and AI text-chatting groups in a study. The face-to-face showed significant improvement in responding to questions and expressing an opinion task, but no significant difference in describing a picture task, while AI text-chatting group had a significant improvement in all three speaking tasks and AI voice-chatting demonstrated remarkable improvements in all three speaking tasks, with relatively high average differences compared to the other groups. AI chatbots are proven to improve the learners' speaking proficiency through providing speaking practice and boosting learners' confidence. Chatbots could also be integrated seamlessly without difficult technical expertise.

AI chatbots' role in simulating conversations to improve learners' speaking skills

Some studies affirm that AI tools can successfully simulate engaging conversational scenarios, which improves the learners' speaking ability in the results (Azizimajd, 2023; Kim et al., 2021a; Mahmoud, 2022). The study by Mahmoud (2022) demonstrated a direct link between the use of AI-based conversational agents and language acquisition. The study affirms that AI tools can successfully simulate conversational scenarios, facilitating a more engaging and effective language practice environment. In Kim et al.'s (2021a) study, participants showed improvements in speaking abilities when they engaged with AI chatbots. The improvements noted were likely facilitated by the additional opportunities for verbal practice that chatbots provided, which traditional classroom settings often lack. Azizimajd (2023) found that the Replica AI chatbot helped students reduce speech pauses. The data suggests that the treatment was proven to positively increase the speech rate of the experimental group, indicating a significant impact on speaking fluency. This improvement potentially happens because the chatbot focuses on understanding word meanings rather than grammar rules, making speaking more fluent. Engaging conversation practice could be a rare opportunity for the students, the AI chatbots provide conversational simulations for students to practice that later improve learners' fluency and speaking skills.

AI chatbots' impact on improving learners' pronunciation

One of the most apparent benefits highlighted in the research is the power of AI chatbots in sharpening specific speaking skills, especially pronunciation. Technology often helps by providing instant feedback during communication breakdowns. As Koç (2024) found that this process not only fixes errors but also builds vocabulary and boosts learners' confidence in speaking.

The improvements aren't just theoretical; the results from [Zou et al.'s \(2023\)](#) study showed significant improvements in overall speaking scores, especially in pronunciation, fluency, and vocabulary. 40 Chinese undergraduate EFL learners who practiced speaking skills for one month using AI programs in the study found that AI speech evaluation programs improved their oral fluency, pronunciation, and reading aloud. [Han \(2020\)](#) discovered significant improvements in speaking proficiency, specifically in pronunciation, fluency, and language use, after interacting with the voice-based AI chatbot Echodot. The study concluded that voice-based AI chatbots enhance speaking competence in Korean EFL middle school students by enabling students to engage in oral communication and practice speaking skills. Pronunciation is one of the micro skills in speaking. AI chatbots are proven to improve learners' pronunciation by providing instant feedback that they can use to fix their mistakes in pronunciation.

AI chatbots' instant and personalized feedback for learners' speaking practice

Immediate and personalized feedback is one of the appeals of AI Chatbots that influences learners to utilize the technology ([Fathi et al., 2024](#); [Mahmoud, 2022](#); [Tai & Chen, 2024](#); [Zhao et al., 2023](#)). Based on the interviews in [Zhao et al.'s \(2023\)](#) study, it was observed that the scoring function and immediate feedback significantly influenced students' English-speaking practice. The availability of instant feedback in English motivated students to engage in independent practice in authentic contexts until they were content, thereby promoting self-regulated English learning. The research by [Tai and Chen \(2024\)](#) also emphasizes the personalized learning experience that AI chatbots can facilitate, such as feedback that aligns with individual learner goals and styles. Chatbots' capacity to provide real-time feedback and simulate human interaction positively influences student engagement and motivation in language learning settings ([Mahmoud, 2022](#)). The chatbots provided personalized feedback, created a low-pressure environment for speaking practice, offered opportunities to enhance speaking fluency and students' self-confidence, included various speaking activities, and provided instant feedback for error correction. However, in [Fathi et al.'s \(2024\)](#) study, some participants preferred human interaction due to the irreplaceable nature of social interaction and the benefits of unique feedback from a human instructor. Learners prefer AI chatbots due to their instant and personalized feedback, which often lacking in human conversation. It later motivates the learners to improve their speaking.

What are the learners' perceptions towards the utilization of AI chatbots for learning English speaking?

Learners' positive perception of the utilization of AI chatbots for learning English speaking

Across multiple studies, learners generally expressed positive perceptions of AI chatbot use for English-speaking practice ([Lee et al., 2023](#); [Dewi et al., 2024](#); [Duong & Suppasetseree, 2024](#); [Kim et al., 2021b](#); [Yang et al., 2022](#)). Learners reported that chatbot-assisted learning was more engaging, fun, and less intimidating compared to conventional classroom activities. Furthermore, students appreciated AI Chatbot's personalization and flexibility. In Indonesian context, [Dewi et al. \(2024\)](#) revealed that participants showed enthusiasm for learning through AI chatbots, they recognize Memrise's advantages and effectiveness in the learning process. The students stated that Chatbot conversations were dynamic and motivating, increasing students' interest in learning.

Students generally have positive experiences using AI chatbots due to the opportunities they provide for practicing speaking English. AI chatbots provide authentic feedback, creating a low-pressure environment for speaking practice and enhancing fluency and self-confidence. The AI chatbot's, which can mimic native-like conversation, provide valuable opportunities to practice speaking English, which they sometimes cannot obtain through face-to-face interactions in real life ([Lee et al., 2023](#); [Dewi et al., 2024](#); [Duong & Suppasetseree, 2024](#); [Kim et al., 2021b](#); [Yang et al., 2022](#)).

[Khasawneh \(2023\)](#) did a more extensive study to understand learners' perceptions towards several AI chatbots as virtual conversation partners (VCP). The study participants reported varying levels of usage for different VCPs. LinguaBot was consistently used by over 63% of respondents, while PoliglotPa was used by approximately 43% of participants. LingvoChat was frequently used by

around 55% of the study population, and ChatLingo was used by about 52% of respondents. Participants reported varying levels of usage and satisfaction, with over 80% reporting that the chatbots helped enhance speaking skills. AI chatbots are considered user-friendly and beneficial by over 90% of respondents. 82% of students believed that AI chatbots are beneficial for improving speaking skills. The studies generally reported positive perceptions of AI chatbots for English speaking practice due to their benefits such as engagement, reduced anxiety and opportunities to practice conversation without judgment. AI chatbots are also user-friendly and effective, with 80% acknowledging improvements in speaking proficiency.

Learners' perception of AI chatbots' roles in reducing speaking anxiety

AI chatbots are believed to reduce learners' anxiety while practicing English speaking (Azizimajd, 2023; Han, 2020; Koç, 2024; Mahmoud, 2022; Tai & Chen, 2024; Wang et al., 2024). The learners feel less anxious when they talk to AI Chatbot because it creates a relaxed environment where the learners do not have to consider other conversation partners. They aren't afraid to make mistakes or to be judged, unlike the usual case with human partners, where they often are judged by their peers, as these virtual partners create a judgment-free space for them (Tai & Chen, 2024). AI Chatbot such as Replica helped students shift their focus from language structures to conveying messages and meanings, reducing Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety (FLSA) and lowering anxiety levels during target language speaking practice (Azizimajd, 2023). The study from Wang et al. (2024) revealed that AI chatbots with human-like avatars significantly enhanced EFL learners' speaking proficiency, willingness to communicate (WTC), and self-perceived communicative competence (SPCC) while reducing foreign language speaking anxiety (FLSA). Interviews further revealed that GenAI-powered tools with human-like avatars provided emotional support that later enhanced students' enjoyment and confidence. The study shows the potential for GenAI tools to complement traditional EFL teaching by creating more dynamic, supportive, and immersive environments.

Despite various studies emphasizing the decrease of learners' anxiety while practicing English speaking with AI chatbot, the study by Çakmak, (2022) found otherwise. The study initially aimed to lessen anxiety with L2 speaking through chatbot interactions, yet there were negative perceptions and difficulties in the use of Replika chatbot, which contributed to higher anxiety levels in some students. The students reported that they often felt anxious and awkward when interacting with Replika. The students' fewer positive impressions about using the chatbot are, allegedly, due to some linguistic factors, such as communication failures, miscommunication, and so forth with the chatbot that were apparent in the interaction. The studies indicate that AI chatbots could help reduce learners' anxiety by providing a judgment-free and supportive environment. They could focus on practicing without worrying about making errors.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this systematic review suggest that AI chatbots offer clear benefits for speaking practice, especially in providing opportunities to communicate in English, improved pronunciation, fluency, and more. It is related to the output hypothesis by Swain (2005) that points out learners do not progress only from exposure to comprehensible input but also must be "pushed" to produce language and refine their output through feedback; these processes are important to develop accuracy and fluency. Chatbots help fulfill this process by offering learners opportunities to speak in English anytime they want and receive instant feedback.

This study also points out several challenges and limitations with AI chatbots that need to be interpreted through the lens of language learning theories. On a technical level, for example, Yang et al. (2022) detected some issues that affected the task completion, such as the students' inappropriate or offensive responses to the chatbot's questions and some technical flaws in the dialogue tree (DT) for the tasks. Some participants in Duong and Suppasetserree's (2024) research expressed dissatisfaction with the chatbot's limitations, such as the inability to recognize cultural references and limited conversation topics. When the chatbots cannot sustain realistic or contextually appropriate

interaction, it could constrain the authenticity of communication, which is essential for language learning. Beyond technical issues, a more fundamental concern is the gap between AI chatbots and real human interactions. [Fathi et al. \(2024\)](#) stated the drawbacks as chatbots made mistakes and was less effective than human interaction; they were sometimes found to be inaccurate and give irrelevant responses. Even a powerful tool such as ChatGPT often struggles to mimic the spontaneity and depth of a real human conversation. [Al-khreshheh \(2024\)](#) pointed out that using ChatGPT too much might not fully get students ready for the real-life communication aspects. While it shows that chatbots align with [Swain's \(2005\)](#) emphasis on output and feedback, their errors and limitations also make clear that human interaction is still important for providing rich and related responses, as they lack the nuanced structure and empathetic engagement that human teachers provide.

Given these limitations, the research offers clear advice for educators. The primary advice is that educators should utilize AI Chatbots as supplementary aids rather than replacements for human interaction. Educators can utilize chatbots and other AI-driven tools to enhance student engagement without losing the interpersonal connections that are crucial for effective learning environments. To value authentic communication, while AI can supplement educational experiences, it should never substitute the nuanced understanding and empathic engagement offered by human educators ([Selwyn, 2022](#)). [Al-khreshheh \(2024\)](#) also emphasizes that teachers need to make sure that ChatGPT supports, not replaces, the important creativity in language education while still using its benefits.

Furthermore, teachers should take an active role. By guiding students to critically evaluate chatbots' conversations instead of just following the chatbots altogether. This guidance is crucial to create an atmosphere of reflective learning where students can identify and benefit from chatbot limitations ([Rajaei, 2023](#)). Additionally, overreliance on AI Chatbots might reduce opportunities for authentic, creative language use, which is essential for real-world communication.

This study emphasizes the role of chatbots in supporting language learning by creating additional opportunities for practice beyond the classroom, as chatbots provide flexible spaces for learners to practice anytime at their own pace, unlike the rigid nature of curriculum goals. This explains why their use is not always fully embedded into the curriculum, because they function as supplementary tools that extend learning rather than replace classroom teaching. The reviewed papers illustrate this point. The implication is that teachers and policymakers should integrate chatbots strategically, which to complement, not replace, human teaching while supporting critical reflection and creativity in language learning.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine how AI chatbots support students' English speaking skills. Using a systematic review approach, it was found that for many students, the biggest challenge in learning English is often just finding an opportunity to practice speaking without pressure. To remedy this situation, current research suggests that AI chatbots are proven to help students improve not only their technical skills, such as pronunciation and grammar, but also their vocabulary. These practices also build the confidence they need to speak the language.

However, limitations remain, such as occasional errors, irrelevant responses, and the inability to fully replicate authentic human communication. Many students point out that chatbots can still make mistakes or give inaccurate and irrelevant responses. But these issues don't seem to outweigh the other advantages. After all, the point of these tools isn't to replace human conversation, but rather to open up opportunities for students to practice speaking English that is often difficult to find in daily life. Students in general have a positive perception of the use of AI chatbots for language practice tools. They believe that AI chatbots provide opportunities for enhanced speaking practice; it also helps to increase their confidence and reduce their speaking anxiety. The studies suggest that students appreciate the convenience, interactive, and non-judgmental features of AI chatbots as conversation partners.

The implication of this study is that it is almost impossible to avoid AI altogether; therefore, educators should integrate AI chatbots into language teaching in a balanced way. This will provide

extra speaking practice, reduce speaking anxiety, and provide instant feedback while still maintaining the human elements of creativity, empathy, and authentic conversation.

Further research on the utilization of AI chatbots to enhance students' speaking skills should be conducted to fill in the gaps of integrating AI chatbots into the language learning curriculum, as most studies used chatbots as additional tools outside structured lessons in the curriculum. Future research could study how teachers incorporate chatbot activities, design learning tasks, and assess student progress according on the existing curriculum. The writer also found limited research on the utilization of AI chatbots in English language learning, especially in the Indonesian context. There is a growing interest in integrating technology into education, especially AI, yet the research on AI chatbots for speaking practice remains limited, and there is also a lack of AI chatbot applications created by Indonesian researchers that will be more suitable for Indonesian learners. Therefore, more researchers in Indonesia should conduct studies on the utilization of AI chatbots to provide valuable insights for English educators in Indonesia. The research could also contribute to enhancing language learning practices, particularly in relevance and engagement, for Indonesian learners.

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