

**The TFL Master Students' Perceptions of the Integration of AI-assisted Tools for
Speaking Skills Improvement**

Ayazhan Aldabek

A thesis submitted to the School of Education and Humanities
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

SDU University

Department of Language Education

June, 2026

Thesis Advisor:

Doctor of Ped.Sc. Gulnara Kassymova

©Copyright by Ayazhan Aldabek, 2026

SDU University

School of Education and Humanities
Department of Language Education

This is to certify that the Master's Thesis of

Ayazhan Aldabek

has met the thesis requirements of
SDU University

Kaskelen, 2026

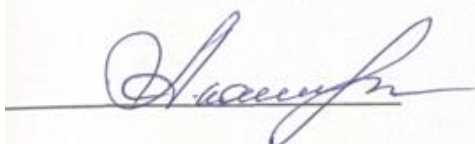
Approved by:



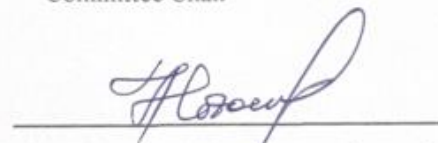
Doctor of Ped.Sc. Gulnara KASSYMOVA
Thesis Supervisor



Doctor of Ped.Sc. Gulnara KASSYMOVA
Committee Chair



MA., Senior Lecturer Ainur ALIYEVA
MA program coordinator



PhD., Associate professor Akmarzhan
NOGAIBAYEVA
Department Chair



PhD., Assistant professor Dana
MOLDABAYEVA
Dean, School of Education and Humanities

AUTHOR AGREEMENT

The Author, I, Ayazhan Aldabek , hereby grants SDU University full and exclusive rights to reproduce the manuscript, make revisions, and reproduction. SDU University rights include but are not limited to the following: (1) to reproduce, publish, sell, and distribute copies of the thesis, selections of the thesis, and translations and other derivative works based upon the thesis, in print, audio-visual, electronic, or by any and all media now or hereafter known or devised; (2) to license reprints of the thesis to third persons for educational photocopying; (3) to license others to create abstracts of the thesis and to index the thesis; (4) to license secondary publishers to reproduce the thesis in print or digital form, including electronic on-line databases; and (5) to license the thesis for document delivery. These exclusive rights run the full term of the copyright, and all renewals and extensions thereof.

I hereby accept the terms of the above Author Agreement and I sign.



Author signature

10.06.2026

Date

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this submission is entirely my own work, in my own words, and that all sources used in researching it are fully acknowledged and all quotations properly identified to my best extent. It has not been submitted, in whole or in part, by me or another person, for the purpose of obtaining any other credit, except where due acknowledgement is made in the thesis. I understand the ethical implications of my research, and this work meets the requirements of the School of Education and Humanities Research Ethics Policy.

Aldabeli Ayazhan

Name



Signature

10.06.2026

Date

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to sincerely express my acknowledgement to everyone supporting me during my work on my thesis.

First of all, my separate and deep thanks to my scientific supervisor, professor Gulnara Kassymova, for her professional guidance and allocated time to provide me with detailed feedback at all stages of my journey, eventually shaping my research work. Her patience made this experience valuable, despite existing challenges in some stages of research. I really appreciate this opportunity to gain useful insights and ideas that keep strengthening my view on the research world. Additionally, thanks to my participants, TFL Master students, their responsibility, time and support made this research manageable to conduct. Final deep thanks comes to my family and friends, for believing me when I was even struggling. Their belief in me guided me throughout the whole journey.

Table of Contents

List of Figures.....	ix
List of Tables.....	x
Abstract.....	1
Аңдатпа.....	2
Аннотация	3
CHAPTER 1 Introduction	4
1.1 Research problem statement.....	5
1.2 Research significance	6
CHAPTER 2 Literature Review	7
2.1 AI chatbots: Definition and Types	7
2.2 AI in Learning languages	7
2.3 AI chatbots in Speaking skills	8
2.3.1 Anxiety in Speaking	8
2.3.2 Fluency and Pronunciation	9
2.3.3 Confidence and Motivation	9
2.4 Awareness and Perceptions	10
2.4.1 Perceptions on Effectiveness	10
2.4.2 Benefits and Limitations of AI assisted tools.....	11
2.5 Learner independence.....	14
2.6 AI-assisted chatbots in Kazakhstan	15

2.7 Research Gap	15
CHAPTER 3 Methodology	17
3.1 Overview	17
3.2 Theoretical framework	17
3.3 Research design	18
3.4 Data Collection tools	19
3.5 Participants and Sampling	20
3.6 Research site	21
3.7 Data collection procedures	22
3.8 Data analysis	23
3.9 Ethical considerations	24
CHAPTER 4 Results	26
4.1 RQ1: How well are TFL Master students aware of AI chatbots for development of speaking skills?	26
4.1.1 Dimension 1: Existence Awareness	26
4.1.2 Dimension 2: Features Awareness	27
4.1.3 Dimension 3: Integration Awareness	28
4.2.1 RQ2: How do TFL Master students' describe experiences with AI chatbots for speaking purposes?	31
4.2.1.1 Overview of Themes	32
CHAPTER 5 Results	44
5.1 Key Findings	44

CHAPTER 6 Conclusion.....	46
6.1 Summary of findings	46
6.2 Implications for practice	46
6.3 Limitations.....	47
6.4 Further recommendations	48
References	49
Appendix A	55
Appendix B.....	56
Appendix C.....	58
Appendix D	60
Appendix E.....	62

List of Figures

Figure 1. Likert scale results: Awareness of Existence.....	26
Figure 2. Likert scale results: Awareness of Features.....	27
Figure 3. Likert scale results: Awareness of Integration.....	28

List of Tables

Table 1 Demographic Information of The Respondents.....	20
Table 2 Awareness Level of Participants.....	29
Table 3 Descriptive statistics of three dimensions.....	30
Table 4 Participants eligible for Interview stage.....	31

The TFL Master Students' Perceptions of the Integration of AI-assisted Tools for Speaking Skills Improvement

Abstract

The rapid development of AI-assisted tools, chatbots has shaped the practice of learning English as a Foreign Language. The current study has explored TFL Master students' perceptions on integration of AI-assisted chatbots within speaking. The research has also considered reflections on potential pedagogical integration of AI-assisted chatbots for speaking skills improvement due to the dual role of Master students, as learners and teachers. The study consisted of two stages: Liker-scale questionnaire to measure level of awareness, and a semi-structured interview exploring experiences of TFL Master students. Convenience sampling along with criterion-based purposive one were employed at two stages of the research. The derived data as the result of the interview was analyzed through thematic analysis.

According to the findings, it has been revealed that TFL Master students hold positive perceptions regarding AI-assisted chatbots for speaking improvement, namely in order to upgrade pronunciation, vocabulary range, and preparation practices. Additionally, positive changes in terms of confidence and fluency also have been reported. Despite prevailing personal learning experiences with AI-assisted chatbots, the gap in terms of pedagogical integration has been identified as the result of the interview. The lack of direct integration of AI-assisted chatbots was reflected in the presence of challenges in assessment and methodology clarity, preference for peer and group interaction. There is an existing gap between personal and professional readiness to integrate contemporary AI-assisted tools. The current study contributes to the further practical reflections regarding AI-assisted chatbots within speaking improvement among educators, curriculum developers and other stakeholders such as policymakers within the EFL context.

Key words: artificial intelligence (AI), AI-assisted chatbots, TFL Master students (Two Foreign Languages), speaking skills improvement, perceptions, awareness, experience, integration

**TFL Магистранттарының Сөйлеу Дағдысын Дамыту Мақсатында ЖИ-ге
Негізделген Құралдарды Енгізу Туралы Түсініктері
Аңдатпа**

Жасанды интеллект құралдары, чат-боттары қазіргі таңда ағылшын тілінің шет тілі ретінде оқуда елеулі әсер етті. Көптеген ЖИ чатботтары сөйлеу дағдысын да дамытуға бағытталған құрал ретінде қарастырылған. Бұл зерттеу Қазақстандағы “Екі шет тілі” бағдарламасында білім алып жатқан магистранттарды зерттеуге бағытталған. Зерттеу ЖИ негізіндегі чат-боттарды қолдануға қатысты сөйлеу дағдысын дамытудағы түсініктер аясында, хабардарлық пен тәжірибелерін қарастырды. Сонымен қатар, педагогикалық ой-пікірлерін де ескерді. Сапалық зерттеу аясында, екі кезең арқылы жүзеге асырылды: сауалнама және жеке сұхбат. Лайкерт сауалнамасы хабардарлықтың деңгейін, ал сұхбат бөлімі жеке тәжірибелерді қарастырды. Екінші кезеңге өту мақсатында критерийлерге негізделген зерттеу әдісі қолданылды. Жеке сұхбат нәтижесінде деректер тақырыптық анализ арқылы талдалды. Алынған деректер, қатысушылардың жалпы оң көзқарастарын көрсетті. Қатысушылар ЖИ негізіндегі чатботтарды айтылымды жаттықтыру, сөздік қорын дамыту және сөйлеуді, яғни ауызша жаттықтыру мақсатында қолданды. ЖИ-негізіндегі чат-боттар сөйлеу үрейін төмендетіп, сенімділікті арттырғаны да анықталды. Алайда, маңызды тұжырымдардың бірі болып магистранттардың көпшілігінің ЖИ құралдарын педагогикалық қолданыстың шектеулігін, яғни тікелей енгізудегі тәжірибенің жоқтығын білдірді. Зерттеу нәтижелері көрсеткендей, жеке сөйлеу дағдылысын дамыту мен тікелей оқытуда қолдану арасында алшақтық анықталды. Алаңдатушылық бағалау мен методология жөнінде білдіріліп, үйренушілер арасындағы қарым-қатынасқа артықшылық берілді. Зерттеу ЖИ-негізіндегі ағылшын тілін шетел тілі ретінде оқу тәжірибесіне және ғылыми пікірталастарға үлес қосады. Оқытушылар, бағдарлама ұйымдастырушылар, білім беру саясатшылардың практикалық рефлексияға мүмкіндік береді.

Кілт сөздер: Жасанды Интеллект (ЖИ), ЖИ негізіндегі чатботтар, TFL магистранттары, сөйлеу дағдыларын дамыту, түсініктер, хабардарлық, тәжірибе, интеграция

Восприятия Магистрантов TFL об Интеграции Инструментов с Использованием Искусственного Интеллекта для Улучшения Навыков Речи

Аннотация

Стремительное развитие искусственного интеллекта продолжает оказывать влияние на практику обучения английского языка как иностранного. Среди других инструментов технологии, ИИ также считается одним из инструментов для развития навыков речи. Данное исследование направлено на изучение восприятия магистрантов программы “Два иностранных языка”, точнее их уровня осведомленности и индивидуального опыта. Кроме того, исследование рассмотрело педагогические размышления магистрантов относительно потенциальной интеграции в образовательный процесс и программы.

Качественный подход служил инструментом для проведения исследования. Сбор данных происходил на двухэтапной основе: шкалы Лайкерта, показывающее уровень осведомленности о чатботах для разговорных навыков, и интервью об индивидуальном опыте участниками. Для прохождения на второй этап интервьюирования, применилась критериально ориентированная выборка. Ответы на основе интервью были интерпретированы на основе тематического анализа. Результаты также выявили в целом положительное восприятие к ИИ инструментам для развития разговорных навыков, используя активно для улучшения произношения, расширения словарного запаса и подготовки. Также было отмечено улучшение беглости речи общей уверенности и снижение тревоги при говорении. Однако, главный выявленный пробел заключается в наличии опыта в использовании чатботов для личного обучения, и отсутствие прямого опыта в педагогической интеграции. Выражалась обеспокоенность по поводу оценивания и методологии, и было отдано предпочтение аутентичному взаимодействию между обучающимися. Был выявлен разрыв между личным и профессиональным внедрением чатботов для разговорной речи.

Исследование вносит вклад в дискуссии по поводу обучения английского как иностранного на основе ИИ. Применимо для практической рефлексии преподавателями, разработчиками программ и образовательной политики.

Ключевые слова: искусственный интеллект, ИИ чат боты, магистранты TFL, развитие разговорных навыков, восприятие, осведомленность, опыт, внедрение

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Nowadays Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become a powerful tool in different fields, including education as well. Computer advancement and automatization of the learning process have made the learning process digitized more than ever before, where COVID-19 significantly managed to influence. As El Shazly (2021) states, it is a learner-centered, flexible and interactive tool, ensuring development of speaking skills. Artificial intelligence is capable of performing several functions such as responding to inquiries, completing tasks in a humanized way, inferring, analyzing and synthesizing information or data and generating from scratch. AI is a breakthrough in education and its technology. The following assumption about AI and its chatbot's substitution of human responses appear to be present due to its rapid development and popularity. They seem to serve like a personal assistant for humans regardless of occupation, age and purpose. Regarding speaking, it is considered to be an indicator of proficiency of the language (Nazara, 2011). The speaking skills are usually evaluated based on accuracy and fluency. Therefore, many students strive to master the current productive skills since it is a significant communicative tool.

The aim of this study is to investigate Master students' perceptions of the integration of AI-assisted tools, specifically, AI chatbots for speaking skills improvement. The study will inform about the level of awareness of students regarding AI chatbots for speaking skills enhancement. It can provide valuable insights, as for students, and for teachers lacking speaking practice. The part with the experiences with AI chatbots can also become significant in order to make sure of the practicality of integration of AI chatbots for speaking skills .

The research will examine the following questions:

- 1) How well are TFL Master students aware of AI chatbots for development of speaking skills?
- 2) How do Master Degree students' describe experiences with AI chatbots for speaking purposes?

These questions are expected to reveal Master students' perceptions towards integration of AI chatbots for speaking improvement, specifically investigating their awareness and experience of using AI chatbots for speaking development.

1.1 Research problem statement

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become an evolving educational tool serving as a personal assistant, encouraging students to learn and develop any domain, including language skills such as speaking. As the result of a comprehensive literature review, it was established that an overwhelming number of studies were conducted in East Asian countries, namely China, Japan, South Korea or Taiwan (Du & Daniel, 2021). Studies exploring Central Asia in the scope of AI-assisted tools for education are limited. Moreover, learners may lack immediate feedback that educators might provide in limited amounts due to time constraints and large class size (El Shazly, 2021). The majority of studies consider anxiety, motivation level, and AI powered chatbots' influence on the general aspects of language learning (Vy, N., & Pham, 2024). Similarly, In the Kazakhstani context, since the educational system prioritizes grammar and receptive skills, oral skill, speaking, is being neglected (Tutbayeva & Yussimbayeva, 2025). Additionally, the existing studies have considered one-angled perspectives, learners or educators. However, TFL Master students provoke the study to examine aforementioned points due to holding dual roles, from learning and teaching perspectives.

1.2 Research significance

This study is found to be significant due to the identification of awareness towards AI chatbots as a tool for speaking skills improvement. It is going to ensure some reflection for educators and students seeking or having absence of practice in speaking. The following investigation of perceptions will fill the gap in literature sources, especially in the context of Higher Education (HE) and TFL Master students, as learners and teachers. The potential presence or absence of experience with AI chatbots for speaking improvement might provoke stakeholders to incorporate the existing chatbots into the learning process for speaking development. Although there are a number of researches focusing on experience with learning, while less data is available on experience with pedagogical implementation of AI-assisted chatbots. Moreover, the current study has a potential to contribute to further development of special programs oriented to educators and stakeholders that can facilitate professional adoption and integration of AI-assisted tools in Higher Education institutions.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

2.1 AI chatbots: Definition and Types

AI(Artificial Intelligence) assisted tools are transformative means in the educational field, providing users with personalized practice and response. According to Adamapoulou and Moussiades (2020), chatbots are software tools capable of interacting with users through processing. The interaction with chatbots can be kept in text-based or voice-based ways, providing responses dependent on the input. The evolution of AI-assisted chatbots began with ELIZA in 1966, nowadays followed by ChatGPT and other remarkable tools. AI chatbots are able to generate human-like responses immediately (Çobanoğulları & Özbek, 2025). Voice-powered chatbots such as ChatGPT, Google Gemini and others provide the learner with both written and oral conversation practice. AI chatbots are also considered within NLP (Natural Language Processing) due to its orientation in interpretation analysis and responses close to human format. It is relevant to language learning due to its nature as a virtual language assistant (Belda-Medina & Calvo Ferrer, 2022).

2.2 AI in Learning languages

The linguistic responses are realized through particular algorithms and commands in a complex and context specific way (Yang et al., 2022). AI-assisted chatbots represent computer-assisted language learning (CALL) and mobile-assisted one (MALL). These tools provide the learner with limitless opportunity for practice, personalized response and interaction, along with a conducive atmosphere with no judgment (Kohnke, 2022). Huang et.al (2022) claims the three main functions of AI-assisted chatbots: immediate feedback and response, personalized interaction and accessibility.

Technological advancements, breakthroughs in terms of AI, or machine learning significantly contributed to the format of communication. The demand for AI-assisted tools has become a transformative instrument across many domains, including language learning with education. In language learning context, AI-assisted tools are found to be demanding for its voice and text-based capacity to interact with learners. The contemporary tools, namely chatbots remain consistent in usage due to several features such as personalized and flexible feedback, context and learner orientedness. There are several researches being conducted in the scope of AI-assisted tools within CALL. Current sources highlight AI-assisted tools or chatbots as language learning partners. As Belda-Medina and Calvo Ferrer (2022) emphasize the lack of native or competent speakers, capable of assisting learners. Therefore, AI-assisted chatbots are found to be filling the existing gap. AI-assisted chatbots may provide feedback on separate components such as vocabulary, grammatical accuracy, pronunciation or fluency. The chatbots can provide feedback in response to errors and additional requests of the user on any aforementioned aspects (Zhang, 2024).

2.3 AI chatbots in Speaking skills

Speaking skills is considered as one of the most challenging skills to practice and improve. AI chatbots due to availability and open access are gradually becoming promising tools for the current skill enhancement.

2.3.1 Anxiety in Speaking

Du and Daniel, (2024) in the comprehensive review state that AI chatbots in 11% of studies highlight the role of AI-assisted chatbots in lowering overall anxiety level. As a result of an experience, with a duration of two weeks, the willingness of students to speak comparatively rose (Tai and Chen, 2023). Likewise, Han (2020) in the study claims that learners interacting with AI chatbots managed to reduce anxiety level, and became

independent in the learning procedure. According to Cakmak (2022), in comparison with human interaction that can be accompanied by judgments and unpredictable reactions, AI chatbots are found to be favourable in speaking.

2.3.2 Fluency and Pronunciation

It is stated by several studies that AI chatbots assist in improving fluency which is an integral element of speaking. According to Wu et al (2023), as the result of participants' interaction with Chinese chatbot “SpokenBot”, students have noted the improvement in fluency. In another conducted study, with involvement of 29 participants, the improvements in pronunciation were emphasized after communication with Google Assistant (Chen et.al, 2023). Stress, intonation levels were also perceived as improved ones.

2.3.3 Confidence and Motivation

Azizimajd (2023) has conducted the quasi experiment with 60 EFL learners communicating with an AI-assisted chatbot named “Replica”. It was established that AI chatbots significantly helped learners in upgrading confidence in self-expression. Zou et al., (2024) study considers the interaction of AI chatbots as pleasant and engaging activity for learners, rather than an obligatory task to accomplish. It significantly affects the general level of motivation, willingness to learn and improve speaking. Motivation is a primary component in learning foreign languages and skills improvement. It sets impetus towards honing skills necessary for language proficiency and performance (Neji et.al., 2023). In this regard, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has a potential to provide learners with individual or unique assistance in accordance with their predisposition and requirements, boosting their level of motivation (Khasawneh, 2024). In order to ensure the effectiveness of the learning process, the authors highlight the essence of sufficient level of interest, engagement and personalized feedback where AI chatbots are relevant assistance tools. As

the result of the conducted study, over 75% of students affirmed the fact of stimulating foreign language learning of AI based chatbots and models out of the classroom as well. Moreover, 70% of lectures also confirmed the improvement of performance after the integration of AI. Therefore, motivation exerts its effort and significantly affects the usage of it for learning.

2.4 Awareness and Perceptions

Despite the study considering perceptions of TFL Master students, awareness and experiences are two of its interrelated components. The involvement of awareness and experience allows comprehensive consideration of perceptions about AI-assisted tools. Consequently, perceptions are not solely limited by theoretical familiarity, but also followed by personal and practical experience. It also provides deep reflections on integration of AI chatbots for speaking skills in Higher Education, striving to explore perceptions through experiences. Çobanoğulları & Özbek, (2025) have designed the scale entitled “ChatGPT Usage Scale for Foreign language Learners”, where more than thousand universities have participated. The study has identified variations and differences in awareness, with less awareness of advancements in features for speaking practice. Similarly, Kohnke (2022) claimed that despite the knowledge of AI chatbots, few users are aware of voice-based opportunities for interaction.

2.4.1 Perceptions on Effectiveness

Learners’ personal perceptions according to several studies were found to be positive. Mudawy (2025) explored perceptions of learners regarding AI chatbots, as the result students have positive attitudes toward speaking improvement, acknowledging motivational side alongside. Fathi, Rahimi, and Derakhshan (2024) study compared AI-assisted interaction with peers. It was concluded that AI chatbots interaction was perceived to be more positive due to lowered anxiety, level of engagement.

2.4.2 Benefits and Limitations of AI assisted tools

The benefits AI-assisted tools can be categorized into several bullet points:

(1) adaptive space for learning, (2) the absence of time constraints, (3) reduced anxiety, (4) the level of willingness and motivation. According to Shemshack and Spector (2020), AI-assisted chatbots can provide adaptive and flexible learning atmospheres, similar to tutoring systems. It mainly contains significant aspects such as self-regulation, differentiated instruction, and personalized approach to learning. Unlike traditional classroom setting, AI assisted chatbots are independent of time and space orientation. As Rakhmadani et al., (2026) states conversational chatbots can be out of the classroom. They create a conducive and non-judgemental atmosphere that positively affects learners with high stress levels while speaking. Ahyarudin & Jamilah (2024) connect personal development with supplementary nature of AI-assisted chatbots that leads to easier perception and higher eagerness to practice and speak. The use of AI in language education reflects a wider change from traditional methods that focus on the teacher to more learner-focused teaching approaches. Modern language learning settings now place more emphasis on learner independence, customized learning, and adaptability, which means that they are supported by AI. According to Madhavi et al. (2023), AI tools help learners practice language beyond the classroom, allowing them to learn at their own pace while getting constant support and feedback. These technologies offer chances for independent language development regardless of location or time, thus expanding learning beyond formal classroom instruction. One major contribution of AI to language learning is its ability to provide learning experiences. Classroom environments often struggle with limited time, large groups, and varied learning needs. AI technologies help by modifying learning content, feedback, and activities to align with individual learner abilities and preferences. Zou et al. (2024) found that students generally have positive views,

involvement, and willingness when using AI tools, especially when these tools support individually. Among various AI technologies, conversational chatbots have attracted large attention. Unlike earlier computer-based language learning tools that mainly focused on grammar and vocabulary, AI chatbots enable interactive communication and encourage active language use. Belda-Medina and Calvo-Ferrer (2022) argue that AI-assisted chatbots give learners opportunities to engage in meaningful conversations while receiving immediate responses and support. These interactions create learning environments that are closer to actual communication than traditional language-learning. A growing number of research papers suggests that AI chatbots positively affect language skills. Grab (2025) found that learners who engaged in ongoing chatbot-assisted speaking practice showed significant improvement in speaking performance, confidence, and language accuracy. Similarly, Halimah et al. (2025) reported that AI-based voice chatbots help improve pronunciation, fluency, coherence, and grammatical accuracy through consistent practice and immediate feedback systems. These findings show that AI tools may offer valuable support for language learning by increasing meaningful language use. Beyond language skills, AI-assisted tools also positively affect learners' emotional experiences. Stress is a common challenge in language learning, often preventing learners from participating in communication. According to Rachmadani et al. (2026), learners often find AI chatbots less stressful than teachers or peers, leading to lower levels of Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety (FLSA). Similar findings have been found by Ding and Yusof (2025) who observed improved learner confidence and communication participation after using chatbots. In addition to reducing anxiety, AI technologies may also boost learners' motivation. The interactive nature of chatbot conversations, combined with instant feedback and personalized support, creates learning experiences that many students find enjoyable and rewarding. Rachmadani et al. (2026) indicates that AI-assisted learning can

increase academic performance, strengthen learners' personal goals, and encourage activeness in language learning tasks. Similarly, Aldosari (2024) found that AI-supported speaking practice positively influenced learners' academic willingness to communicate, suggesting that AI technologies may support cognitive outcomes as well as positive emotional experiences.

As for limitations, there are multiple major studies identified despite the benefits. In the comprehensive review, the authors have emphasized main limitations: (1) speech recognition, (2) inconsistencies in communication, (3) irrelevancy across levels of proficiency (Du and Daniel, 2024), (4) instructional design support, (5) assessment concerns.

Speech recognition challenges were raised by several studies. According to Moussalli and Cardoso (2020), AI-assisted chatbots fail to recognize longer utterances. Mistakes in recognition and errors appear to prevent further interaction. Cakmak (2022) in the study also reports the failure to be recognized and understood whilst interacting with AI chatbot “Replica”. Additionally, another study has acknowledged the discrepancy and gap between levels of proficiency. Lower leveled learners mispronunciation and some mistakes in terms of grammar caused misunderstandings and lack of clarity in interactions (Chen et al., 2020). According to existing research, there is a lack of concrete NLP strategies and instructional design in conditions where AI-assisted chatbots can be applied effectively (Koç & Savaş, 2024). Limitations may result in factual feedback or responses AI-assisted chatbots meant to provide (Huang et al., 2022). Assessment-related concerns are another area of discussion. While AI systems can provide instant feedback on linguistic aspects like grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency, questions remain about the validity and reliability of AI-generated assessments (Grab, 2025). Communicative competence involves more than just accuracy and includes social elements that are

challenging for AI to evaluate. Therefore, scholars generally recommend that AI feedback be used to support formative learning while keeping the role of teachers in assessing broader aspects of speaking.

2.5 Learner independence

An essential contribution of AI to language education is the promotion of learner autonomy. Autonomous learning has become important in education as it encourages learners to take control of their own learning processes. AI-assisted technologies support autonomous learning by providing flexible access to learning resources and enabling learners to practice language skills according to their schedules and needs. Belda-Medina and Calvo-Ferrer (2022) emphasize that AI chatbots can act as conversational partners, thus encouraging self-regulated practice and independent learning. Similarly, Mahmoud (2022) argues that chatbot-assisted environments align well with self-regulated learning by helping learners monitor their progress, identify areas needing improvement, and focus on targeted practice. It has become an essential part with growth of different formats of learning, and existing emphasis on self-regulation or self study. It is perceived that autonomous learners are capable of monitoring progress independently, set personal learning goals and become in charge of learning. Besides a sense of independence, AI-assisted chatbots provide the user with the idea of a continuous learning mindset. As Grab (2025) claims, AI -assisted chatbots provide the opportunity to access practice across any time. Consequently, AI tools provide individualized feedback. Learners access to weaknesses, namely aspects to grow on through self-paced polishing improvements. The self regulative mode of learning encourages learners to a higher responsibility level (Huang, 2022).

2.6 AI-assisted chatbots in Kazakhstan

According to Tutbayeva and Yussimbayeva (2025), despite AI chatbots being considered as a transformative and innovative tool in EFL context, the implementation of chatbots as a supplementary tool still remains at earliest stages of the development. Moreover, there is still an existing emphasis on grammar and memorization, rather than an interactive mode of learning. Furthermore, authors highlight that chatbots are favourable for learners from remote areas, with restricted opportunity to practice. Nevertheless, the main concern is the presence of qualified English teachers integrating innovative tools such as AI in classroom instruction. Similarly, Nogaybaeva et al., 2025 states that as the result of study with 16 EFL teachers, it was found out that there is limited familiarity with AI chatbots. Additionally, Urazbayeva et al., (2024) has identified an identical level of proficiency in integration of AI-assisted chatbots that has risen to the modest point after several weeks of intervention.

Overall, current literature suggests that AI has become a significant part of modern language learning. Through personalized access to practice, AI tools have the potential to support both speaking and positive learning experiences. However, challenges concerning communication quality, authenticity, and integration into teaching requires the need for thoughtful implementation that considers both technological and educational factors. As a result, AI is increasingly viewed not as a replacement for teachers but as an assisting tool that can enhance language learning when carefully and effectively integrated into educational practice.

2.7 Research Gap

The literature sources show that AI-assisted chatbots have strong potential for speaking skills. Research shows that chatbots are advantageous in terms of opportunities for pronunciation, fluency, boosting motivation and confidence. However, several research gaps were identified.

First of all, most reviewed studies emphasised the undergraduate population. It requires additional consideration of Master students, from both perspectives that can be possessed, as learners and teachers simultaneously.

Secondly, most studies have focused on attitudes of the learners. No study has examined the level of familiarity, namely awareness of features and practical integration of them in classroom instruction.

The third gap was identified as local. Some authors of Kazakhstan highlighted the demand for teachers with proper integration of contemporary tools.

Therefore, the study with involvement of Master students can fill the current gap due to the fact that the research considers their awareness and perceptions from a doubled angle, learning and professional perspectives. It might lead to a rise of further familiarity along with methodological transformation in the EFL context.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

3.1 Overview

The current research investigates Two Foreign Languages (TFL) Master students' perceptions on integrating AI chatbots for speaking skills improvement. In the scope of perceptions, this research focuses on two aspects: 1) Master students' level of awareness regarding AI chatbots for speaking 2) experiences of integrating AI chatbots for speaking improvement. The research aim at answering the following questions:

- 1) How well are TFL Master students aware of AI chatbots for development of speaking skills?
- 2) How do TFL Master students' describe experiences with AI chatbots for speaking purposes?

3.2 Theoretical framework

The current study was grounded by Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) developed by Davis (1989). It interprets how users accept technology based on two dimensions: perceived usefulness and ease of its usage. In the current context, AI-assisted chatbots are perceived as supplementary tools for speaking skill in Higher Education Institutions. The framework provides interpretation of TFL Master students' perceptions, where its components are awareness and experience. The theory supports the perceived benefits AI-assisted tools possess in terms of speaking skills such as lower anxiety level, non-judgmental environment, pronunciation model, and comparison with human interaction. Additionally, the theory supports the participants' perceptions reflecting AI-assisted tools as supplementary one more than actual replacement.

3. 3 Research design

The study uses a mixed-method, particularly, mixed methods study research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data within a single or multiple case study framework (Master students' perceptions within several educational institutions of "Two Foreign Languages" across Kazakhstan. This approach is used to gain a comprehensive, in-depth understanding of complex phenomena by combining statistical breadth with rich, contextual narratives. As for the type of mixed methods case study research design it will be an explanatory sequential design: A two-phase design where quantitative data is collected and analyzed first and qualitative data is then collected to help explain or dive deeper into the initial quantitative results. It will involve quantitative and qualitative techniques of data collection in order to assess level of awareness and explore their experiences and perceived benefits with challenges. The study will apply Likert-scale in order to assess the level of awareness of AI chatbots, and semi-structured interviews for those having an awareness in order to explore experiences in a greater detail. As a result of responses, only participants demonstrating prior familiarity of AI chatbots and clear awareness were expected to be invited to the semi-structured interview. The research used thematic analysis to interpret responses. The current method identifies repeated ideas and common patterns in the respondents' answers. The answers are firstly transcribed, then undergo thorough review and coded based on particular segments. The derived codes are transferred into themes that represent the participants' existing experiences, perceived challenges and benefits in the context of speaking skills improvement. In this regard, the researcher uses an inductive approach that implies the selection of answers directly from the interview with no pre-determined framework.

3.4 Data Collection tools

The researcher has constructed the self-reported Likert-scale questionnaire consisting of 15 items overall measured on a 5 point scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree). The current scale consists three main sub-sections:

Section A: Awareness of the existence AI chatbots

Section B: Awareness of the features

Section C: Integration awareness

The scale avoids the questions considering benefits, or challenges with AI chatbots. On this stage it exclusively considers general awareness, namely familiarity whether the participants have the image of AI chatbots for speaking skills. The distribution of the questionnaire was ensured through Google Forms. The questionnaire was adjusted from “the ChatGPT Usage Scale for Foreign Language Learners” designed by Çobanoğulları & Özbek (2025), which has a high level of reliability (Cronbach’s Alpha=0,93) across 1,006 universities. The original scale measured three dimensions (Usability, Learning and Development). The research has adapted the current part for this study, making some modifications and adjustments. The adaptation covers: (1) emphasizing awareness rather than usage, (2) replacing phrasing “I use...” by “ I am aware that...”, (3) renaming of three dimensions as follows: (Existence Awareness, Feature Awareness, and Integration Awareness, (4) Expanding the range from ChatGPT to AI chatbots.

The semi-structured interview consisted of 10 open-ended questions originally developed by the researcher. It strived to explore existing AI chatbots that participants have experience in using, perceived benefits and faced challenges. Participants solely having awareness proceeded with the current interviewing stage.

3.5 Participants and Sampling

The research was conducted, in the main, within SDU University with a target population, involving 1-2 year Master students of the speciality “Two Foreign Languages” (TFL). The Master students from other higher institutions of Kazakhstan have also participated in the questionnaire. It is essential to highlight the fact that the majority of participants have experience with part-time teaching that will contribute to considering findings from a professional perspective. All stages of the data collection were voluntary based, the absence of implications in case of withdrawal at any stage was mentioned prior to data collection procedure. The final number of participants was 20 Master students, accomplishing the Likert-scale questionnaire. For the current stage of data collection, convenience sampling was selected. As a result of the questionnaire, 13 students were invited for a further interview stage for deeper exploration of the experience with AI chatbots for speaking skills. In this regard, the purposive criterion sampling was applied for the participation in semi-structured interviews. Purposive criterion sampling involves the selection of participants in accordance with predetermined criteria relevant to the research (Patton, 2015).

Participants were selected based on several criteria: (1) scoring higher than 60 out of possible 75 on the Likert-scale and (2) participants consenting to share experience with AI-assisted chatbots for speaking. They were followed by the exclusion from the semi-structured interview. The participants of the interview have offered valuable insights and conveyed the experiences with AI chatbots for speaking with width and depth.

Table 1

Demographic Information of The Respondents

Variables and Categories	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
--------------------------	---------------	----------------

Table 1*Cont.*

<i>Gender</i>		
Female	14	70%
Male	6	30%
<i>Year of Study</i>		
1st year	2	10%
2nd year	18	90%
Total	20	100%

3.6 Research site

In this research, the majority of respondents are from SDU University. Some participants from other institutions of Almaty region were also involved due to the voluntary willingness to participate. There are several factors for selecting the sites. First of all, other institutions of Kazakhstan also have access to Master students and the programme of “Two Foreign Languages”. Second, despite the prevailing number of participants from SDU University, several other institutions allow the researcher to cover a broader awareness level and range of experiences with AI-assisted chatbots for speaking skills improvement. For the first stage with questionnaire, they were selected based on convenience sampling. In regards to the second stage of the interview, purposive criterion-based sampling was applied in order to select participants possessing sufficient level of awareness of AI-assisted chatbots for speaking. Purposive sampling allows the researcher

to recruit participants competent to provide qualitative data with involvement of predetermined criteria or characteristics (Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024).

3.7 Data collection procedures

This study exposed dual staged data collection procedures in order to ensure breadth of the research in investigating TFL Master students' perceptions of the integration of AI chatbots for speaking skills improvement.

First of all, the researcher distributed the Likert-scale questionnaire to the group of Master students. The questionnaire begins with general demographic information including gender and year of study. It is followed by 15-items measuring the level of awareness, being divided into three main dimensions: Existence Awareness (5 items), Feature Awareness

(5 items), and Integration (5 items). The respondents have completed the questionnaire via Google Forms at their convenience, and based on their voluntary willingness. The estimated duration of the questionnaire completion took 7-10 minutes per participant. The distribution procedure of the questionnaire occurred through university chats and media platforms (e.g, Whatsapp, Telegram) used among Master students. The second stage of the research aimed at qualitative exploration of the experiences. The respondents were recruited based on several aforementioned criteria: (1) scoring higher than 60 out of possible 75 on the Likert-scale in total (2) participants consenting to reflect on experience. The researcher has invited selected respondents through messaging an invitation letter to the interview stage. The interviews were conducted through Google Meet and audio-messages with the duration of 20-30 minutes per participant. The interview section questions aimed to explore experiences of participants from two angles: as language learners(using chatbots for personal practice), and from teaching (integrating AI chatbots for speaking). For the fixation of the derived responses, the researcher was

taking notes along with recordings. The relevant and logical integration of this sequence provided a broader overview of the target audience. The measurement of the level of awareness regarding AI-assisted chatbots ensured access to eligible participants having deeper experiences. The quantitative side of the data was exported to Excel Sheet for further analysis and calculations. The second qualitative data was transcribed manually by the researcher. For privacy and confidentiality of the data, the device and an account were password-protected. Any identity revealing information was removed in order to meet ethical considerations and confidentiality.

3.8 Data analysis

The study employed both types of data analysis: quantitative and qualitative in order to address research questions. The quantitative data regarding level of awareness was collected through a 15-item Likert-scale questionnaire. The 5-points responses ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The maximum possible score was 75 points. The current data was analyzed through descriptive analysis in Excel Sheet (Cohen et al., 2018). Descriptive statistics involve the calculation of total sum, frequency and percentage, mean score (M) and standard deviation (SD). The mean score was calculated in order to measure levels of awareness. Consequently, been converted into percentages and categorized into three levels of awareness: low, moderate and high shown in Table 2.

In order to derive percentages, mean score was divided into 5 (number of items) per each dimension and multiplied by 100. The scores along with percentages showcased the participants eligible for the further stage of qualitative data collection through an interview where equivalent to a high level was 80% (60 out of 75). As for standard deviation (SD), it was applied in order to identify consistency of responses among participants. Therefore, the results with slightly higher scores can be interpreted as the lack of agreement among respondents, variation of their perceptions, namely experiences.

The following stage of a semi-structured interview included 6 phases proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The rationale for selection of thematic analysis was its structured and systematic approach to identify and interpret data, namely patterns of responses. It was found relevant due to exploration of perceptions within the respondents' experience. The first stage included familiarization with derived data. All responses were transcribed and reviewed to ensure accuracy of wording of the responses. At the following stage initial codes were identified. Meaningful components relevant to the research question were selected. Coding covered personal experience with AI-assisted tools for speaking improvement. The third stage involved grouping into broader categories and potential themes. Naming occurred in accordance with the central idea of the responses. As a result, the fourth stage was dedicated to review of potential themes, where overlapping ideas were merged, while responses and parts lacking specific ideas were excluded. The fifth stage was followed by clarification and identification of final themes reflecting the central idea which addresses the research question. The final stage involved the report. The specific responses representing specific themes with quotations were indicated to illustrate key findings. The integration of mixed approach ensured the consideration of perceptions within awareness and experiences. The combination of numerical data representing levels of awareness served as a mediating stage to in-depth exploration of participants' experience with AI-assisted tools for speaking. It provided a more comprehensive approach to understanding TFL Master students' awareness and experiences regarding AI-assisted tools for speaking, considering the dual role of participants as learners and teachers simultaneously.

3.9 Ethical considerations

All principles of ethics are considered throughout the research. Any received data is stored in a separate file device with a particular password, being available only for the

researcher. The researcher will ensure confidentiality of all received data. Both a questionnaire, and a semi-structured interview will contain the full information about the aim, significance of the research, its procedure and potential risks (in case any). Prior to an interview, the consent letter also is sent and signed by the respondents. Additionally, each respondent of an interview is assigned with a number (Participant 1, 2...) that will be reflected in a data analysis section. After all stages of data collection and data analysis, received raw data of all respondents along with an aforementioned separate file will be disposed of.

CHAPTER 4

Results

This chapter will describe the results of the Likert-scale measuring awareness, followed by semi-structured interviews from selected participants to explore experiences, perceived benefits, challenges and suggestions for integration of AI chatbots for speaking improvement.

4.1 RQ1: How well are TFL Master students aware of AI chatbots for development of speaking skills?

4.1.1 Dimension 1: Existence Awareness

20 Master degree students of Two Foreign languages (TFL) have participated in the first data collection procedure. The 15-itemed and self-reported Likert-scale measured the level of awareness being divided into three dimensions: (1) Existence Awareness (5 items), (2) Feature Awareness (5 items), and (3) Integration Awareness (5 items).

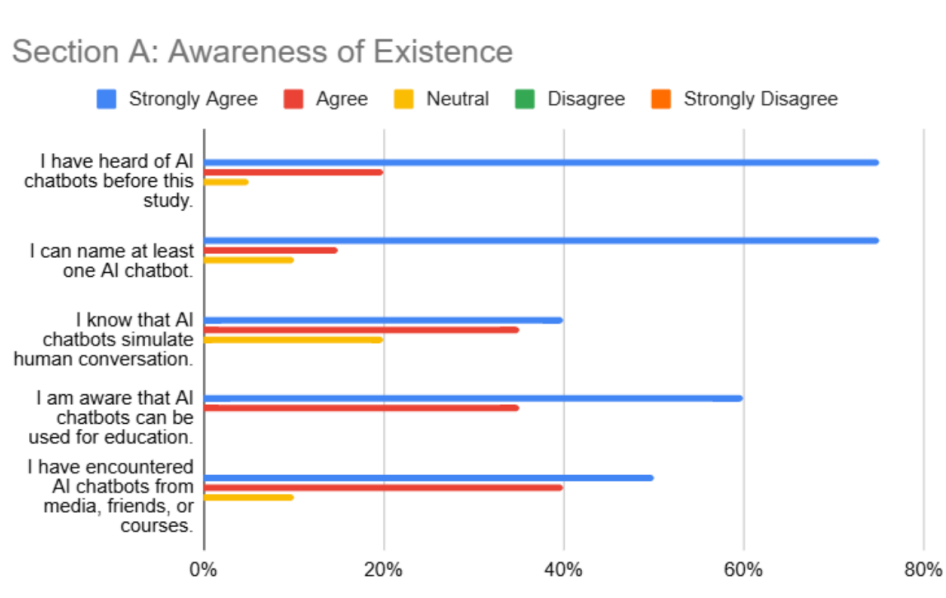


Figure 1. Awareness of Existence (n=20)

Figure 1 shows the level of existence of awareness about AI chatbots for speaking skills improvement. As it can be seen, the prevailing majority of Master students have demonstrated a higher level of awareness. It implies their understanding of the existence of

AI chatbots specialized in speaking skills improvement. 75% of respondents have heard of AI chatbots. Similarly, students can name at least one of the AI-assisted tools 10% of students have selected the option “Neutral” which can be interpreted as uncertainty about agreement or disagreement, and overall awareness about AI chatbots’ existence. In the current section A, no strong disagreement was demonstrated, indicating a general sufficient level of awareness.

4.1.2 Dimension 2: Features Awareness

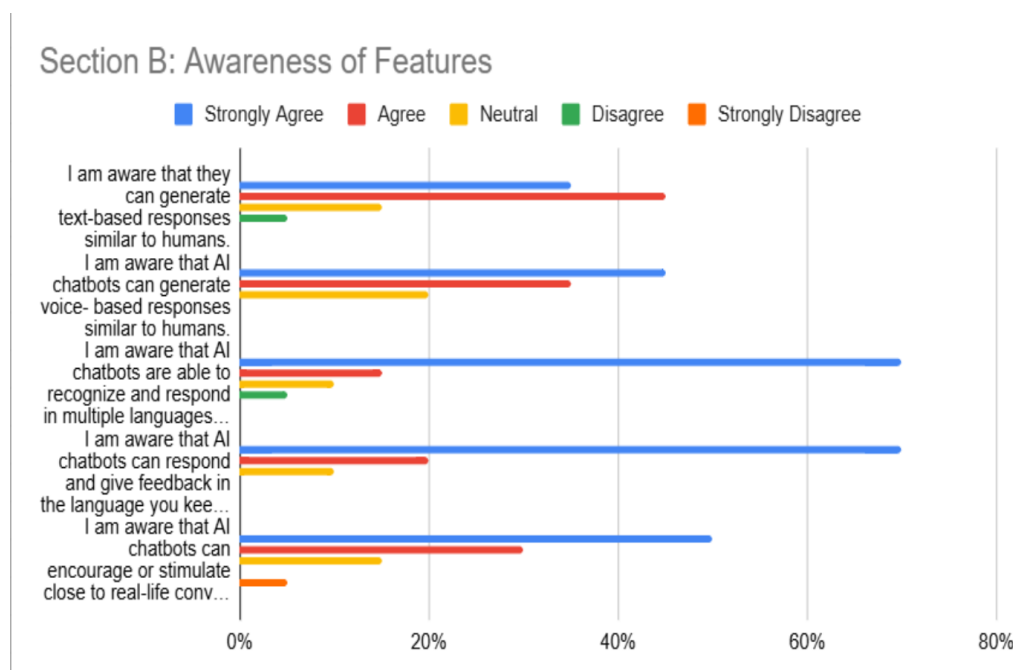


Figure 2. Awareness of Features (n=20)

Figure 2 demonstrates the sufficient level of awareness about AI chatbots features, namely their basic functions.

45% of participants have shown strong agreement about voice-based feedback that can be obtained from AI chatbots. An identical percentage of participants indicated strong agreement with the feature of authentic conversation, close to real life (e.g, consulting, job interviews). One quarter (25%) of participants are aware of text-based responses of AI chatbots dependent on the request and mode. The option of "Neutrality" was ranging from

10 to 20% that generally informs about strong awareness of features of AI-assisted chatbots. 70% Participants are aware of AI chatbots' capability to recognize multiple languages. Similar percent of them are also aware of the response that is dependent on language choice by the user. Only 5% (n=1) participants strongly disagree with close-to real life encouragement of AI chatbots. This section overall informs us about the existence of awareness of features of AI chatbots, namely major functions and capacity.

4.1.3 Dimension 3: Integration Awareness

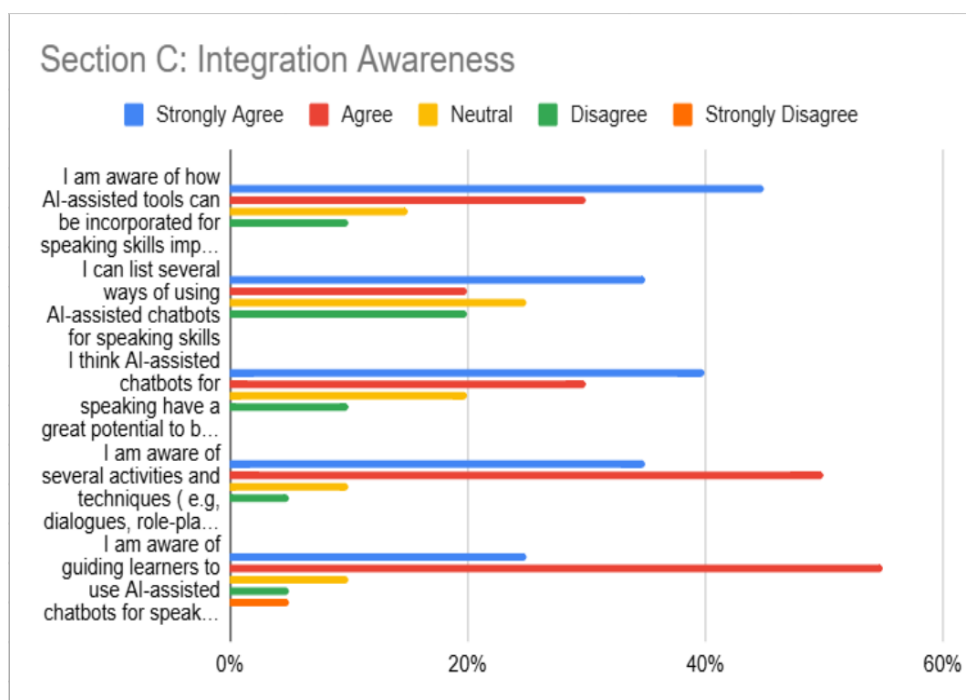


Figure 3. Integration Awareness (n=20)

This section addresses pedagogical integration of AI chatbots for speaking improvement. Almost half of participants (45%) are aware of incorporation of AI chatbots for speaking improvement. Incorporation refers to integration of AI chatbots into speaking improvement, either in the classroom instruction or beyond it. The half of participants (50%) have shown strong agreement with their awareness of several ways of incorporation of AI- assisted chatbots, followed by the identical number in awareness of specific techniques and activities with AI-assisted chatbots involvement (e.g. dialogues, role-play,

job interview). Across all existing 5 items of this section, only 20% of participants have acknowledged the disagreement with listing several ways of integrating AI chatbots for speaking class which can be interpreted as lack of awareness of practical ways of incorporating AI chatbots. In this regard, one specific pattern between two items should be stated. According to the results, the discrepancy in 15% between two items within the current section: “I can list several ways of using AI-assisted chatbots for speaking skills improvement” and “I am aware of several activities and techniques (e.g., dialogues, role-plays, job interview) was identified. A notable difference can be caused by generalizability of the statement with higher level of disagreement (20%), and specific nature of the question about techniques in another item with 5% of disagreement. Therefore, it can be stated that the research requires concrete examples and experiences that can be realized through the second stage of the research, via semi-structured interviews exploring experiences, perceived benefits and challenges, in order to avoid vague conclusions.

Table 2

Awareness Level of Participants (n=20)

Level of Awareness	Sum score range	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
High Awareness	60-75 (80-100%)	13	65%
Moderate Awareness	31-59 (41-79%)	7	35%
Low awareness	15-30 (20-40%)	0	0%
Total		20	100%

Table 2 informs about the level of awareness TFL Master students possess on AI-assisted chatbots for speaking skills improvement. It can be observed that the prevailing

majority of respondents have a high level of awareness, while one third have a moderate one.

In order to showcase statistic data of level of awareness the calculations of means (M) along with Standard Deviation (SD) with percentages have been applied across aforementioned three dimensions. The interpretation followed the benchmark with three levels of awareness: high 80-100% (60-75), 41-79% (31-59) and low 20-40% (15-30).

Table 3

Descriptive statistics of three dimensions

Dimension	M	SD	%	Interpretation
Awareness of Existence	4.44	0.77	88.8	High
Awareness of Features	4.33	0.87	86.6	High
Integration Awareness	3.97	1.01	79.4	Moderate
Overall	4.25	0.91	85.0	High

As shown in Table 3, participants overall demonstrated strong level of awareness in existence and features, where Awareness of Existence has shown the highest mean score (M=4.44), indicating the presence of awareness about AI-assisted tools existence prior to the current research. Likewise, level of features was found to be also high in terms of mean score and standard deviation which denotes the participants' strong awareness about features and functions of AI-assisted tools for speaking (M=4.33, SD=0.87). As for the level of integration was indicated as moderate, with comparatively the lowest mean score (M=3.97) which can be interpreted as the lack of awareness regarding integration of AI-assisted tools or chatbots in speaking instruction. Moreover, the third dimension obtained the highest score for standard deviation (SD=1.01) that reflects variations in responses of

participants. It denotes the fact that not all participants possess confidence in factual implementation, creating further space for exploration of va

4.2.1 RQ2: How do TFL Master students' describe experiences with AI chatbots for speaking purposes?

As it was described in Methodology Section (Chapter 3), the criterion-based sampling was applied to select respondents for the semi-structured interviews. The researcher calculated each participant's total sum which comprises 75 maximum (each item weighs 5) for all 15-items. The threshold for participants with a strong level of awareness was established by the researcher as 60 (80% of awareness). As a result of calculations made through Excel Sheets, 13 participants managed to reach a score of 60, therefore qualified to participate in a semi-structured interview. As a result of the provided invitational letter to the interview, 10 respondents approved the participation. Table 2 informs about participants reaching an established sum score ≥ 60 (80% of awareness), being accepted for the next stage of the research.

Table 4

Participants eligible for Interview stage

Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage %
Total respondents	20	100%
Achieved sum score (≥ 60)	13	65%

4.2.1.1 Overview of Themes

The interview stage aimed at exploring perceptions within their experiences with AI chatbots for speaking skills practice and improvement. The following themes were derived as the result of thematic analysis:

(1) personal experience in usage for speaking (2) perceived benefits for speaking skills (3) perceived challenges (4) comparison with human interaction (5) experience in integration (6) perceived benefits in integration (7) anticipated challenges (8) integration in the syllabus

4.2.1.2 Personal experience in usage for speaking

Participants have shared their personal usage of AI chatbots for speaking. The majority of participants have listed three common AI chatbots: ChatGPT, Google Gemini and character.ai .

Participant 1 stated “ I have been using ChatGPT since the beginning for having a conversation in English. I mostly ask it to ask questions about my day, or past events to practice my English in a natural way”.

Participant 2 reported the usage of character ai to practice IELTS speaking section. “ To be honest, I could not afford tutoring for IELTS preparation. That’s why I started looking for options. Character. ai is one of the best findings for sure. I used it to practice the trickiest questions in IELTS sections. Participant 3 compared two chatbots ChatGPT and Google Gemini. “At the beginning I was using ChatGPT for speaking, but then I noticed some errors and mistakes as in the system, as in the language. I have decided to speak with Google Gemini. For now, it is better for me in terms of clarity and mistakes. However, I still need to test it to be completely sure.”

Participant 4 have reported mixed feelings about AI chatbots for speaking. “Sometimes they are very good at giving responses, sometimes I give up on using them

due to their surface, undetailed responses. I have unclear feelings about my general experience with AI chatbots.”

Participant 5 has shared the experience with practice of delivery and presentation skills via ChatGPT. “I have tried to use it to train a bit before my presentation at work, and to upgrade the level of confidence and clarity of my delivery.” Of course, I was preparing my speech in advance, but I wanted to see how well I would be able to speak in fact. I would say, it wasn’t that bad. I don’t remember any challenges I faced. I also asked ChatGPT to give me objective feedback. It was quite fine”.

Participant 7 also has shared the identical experience with AI chatbots, in the context of presentation given, prior to pre-defense. “I wanted to get external feedback, so I chose Gemini. Of course, it was impossible to train the whole speech, but I tried to get prepared for the main methodology, practical part. The chatbot listed some moments and things to clarify, and even noted some words that I mispronounced. To be honest, I did not expect this part with words, but it was quite an interesting experience. Maybe the chatbot considered this due to my detailed and thorough prompt, that finally considered not only content but also the language use”.

Participant 8 also has been using AI chatbots for academic vocabulary practice. “I had to give answers and speech in some seminars at my university life, that’s why I was asking for help from ChatGPT. First of all, I was asked to give me academic words or phrases possible to use there. Then I tried to adapt that vocabulary to my assignments, in order to sound more academically rich. I would not say that it was every seminar, but a couple of times”.

Participant 10 has shared his experience for personal learning. “AI chatbots were not popular at that period, but once ChatGPT went viral, I decided to try to have a conversation with it. At that time, I was really anxious to speak with humans, so from time

to time I was practicing new words or idioms I learned with it. It was nice to get feedback from the system, I could clarify or ask for a better explanation of some moments in English”.

4.2.1.3 Perceived benefits for speaking

Participant 1 stated “My level of confidence became better, because I was practicing with ChatGPT at least three times per week for 15-20 minutes.” My voice used to tremble at first, maybe because I was less confident. However, after some time I started sounding more confident and calm”.

Similarly, Participant 3 noted his fluency becoming better. “I didn’t like when I was making pauses and hesitations while speaking, even if my English was good enough. But, as the main benefit AI chatbots have is that they give you a chance to train in a non-judgmental environment. If you seriously care about fluency of the speech, AI chatbots may help you in boosting it. Even giving you an interview right now, you can notice that I make pauses not that frequent. Before, maybe 1-2 years ago it was more.”

Participant 5 also has mentioned a level of confidence alongside vocabulary range that other participants have not. “I used AI to just speak and share everything on any topic in my head. You may notice that even ChatGPT uses complex words and vocabulary in responses. I was searching for their meaning and trying to use it in my speech, while teaching my own students too. It really helps to boost vocabulary range within interaction”.

Participant 8 has mentioned the accessibility and independence in usage of the tool. “Actually, even if we had some practical hours at university, whole courses of English, we had some time constraints, also some groupmates of mine could be less willing to practice speaking during group work. After classes when I was free, I used to open ChatGPT, the most available and popular one at that time, and just had a conversation. I was trying to use

new words, and built a chat around my interests. It was not bad, I liked that it was available any time, especially when I was bored, or wanted to practice speaking with someone”.

Participant 9 has also mentioned that AI chatbots’ main benefit is their open access.

“I found AI chatbots easy and ready on hand. If you want to practice English, prepare for an upcoming speech or lesson with your delivery, it can be helpful and available everywhere”.

4.2.1.4 Perceived challenges in usage for speaking

Along with benefits, participants have acknowledged several challenges and limitations in AI-assisted chatbots.

Participant 2 states that there are some existing inconsistencies in voice recognition.

“Periodically, AI chatbots tend to recognize the words in the wrong way. Character ai. was giving me feedback on words that were mistakenly or wrongly used, but I remember that I did not even use them in my answers. It can be maybe because of peculiarities of my pronunciation, but anyways I had to repeat and restate everything in order to continue interaction.”

Participant 4 has conveyed frustration with own pronunciation as the result of interaction with AI chatbots. “I used to interact with ChatGPT or Gemini. But they frequently did not interpret what I wanted to say. I think it's because of my strong Kazakh accent. I had to speak slowly and repeat the words in order to be understood well. They made me rethink the pronunciation I am still working on. Anyways, AI-assisted tools are for different backgrounds and people, they have inconsistency in recognition.”

Participant 5 shortly stated that AI chatbots still need improvement and adjustment for better satisfaction with quality of conversation. “I believe AI chatbots still should

adjust and improve their features, because sometimes errors and responses it gives out of context prevents natural flow of conversation in English. I had to remind ChatGPT not to jump from the initial context of the conversation.”

Participant 7 has admitted technical issues during practice sessions. “I really liked the idea of using AI to practice my speaking, but those interruptions in the middle of conversations were changing the overall pace. I was demotivated to continue chatting with ChatGPT after such errors and interruptions. It made me stop using it for a longer period “.

Participants 8 and 10 have expressed common concern about AI chatbots usage for learning related to overreliance on it. “AI-assisted chatbots can minimize real interaction with people. It can result in total isolation of us, therefore I would not use it that much”.

For me the challenge of such AI-assisted tools lies not only in its function and features, but more in the consequences it can follow for a learner. People can become overdependent on it, which can make them less willing to interact in English in the real world. In my opinion, nothing can be better than a real conversation with people.

4.2.1.5 Comparison with human interaction

Participants compared the interaction of AI-assisted tools with daily face-to-face ones. All five participants have considered advantageous, and limiting sides of AI-assisted chatbots within speaking improvement.

Participant 1 highlighted that AI-assisted chatbots are limitlessly available for learners. Also, there is less pressure or stress while speaking. “I would say that AI-assisted chatbots are available all the time, while humans are limited by their personal schedule and other circumstances. Moreover, even if your English is fine, you tend to overthink about every mistake you potentially make or made. With chatbots you will not have such fear or anxiety”.

Participant 2 similarly admits about the pressure human interaction might provide along with lacking aspects of AI-assisted chatbots.

“When it comes to human interaction, you almost do not have any time to take time, think over and respond later. However, with AI chatbots you can easily pause, think of word choice and give answers back without further judgments or feeling of embarrassment. But in my opinion, nothing can replace real conversation with people. People have empathy, emotional intelligence and a special vibe that makes speaking practice more engaging. When it comes to chatbots, they are robots with no feelings. Actually it depends, what the learner prioritizes”.

The responses of Participants 3 and 4 were overlapping. Both of them stated that AI chatbots are advantageous in terms of comfort zone, but still cannot fully replace human interaction and provide growth.

Participant 3: “AI-assisted chatbots are very good for learners with high levels of anxiety and overthinking, but still have limitations. You will not learn to get out of your comfort zone with AI-assisted chatbots. For real speaking improvement, learners should undergo unexpected situations or contexts that only human interaction can guarantee.”

Participant 4: “Basically, improvement comes with experience, I mean real experience. Therefore, human interaction outweighs AI-assisted chatbots because you will end up speaking English with real people whether here or abroad. You just need to find a friend or study buddy to improve your speaking offline or online. Of course, you may use chatbots if humans are not available, but it will not give you real experience with speaking”.

Participant 5: Participants have acknowledged lack of humour AI-assisted chatbots can produce. “AI-assisted chatbots have not reached the human level. We tend to make

jokes, add some local words or slangs that enrich our understanding and language level.

But chatbots are automated robots, they will not give such a chance”.

Several participants’ responses had common emphasis on emotional engagement that AI chatbots lack.

Participants 6, 7 and 9 stress the affective side of AI chatbots that cannot be provided by them. “AI-assisted tools can be perceived as supportive when it comes to anxiety while speaking, but anyways interaction is more than just speaking in English. It fails to give emotional feedback and response, we as humans tend to give and expect from others”.

“I really appreciate that opportunity to practice speech and fluency, but still that experience when I was using it for preparation to some classes and seminars differed from offline preparation with peers. I managed to get almost the same amount of encouragement and feedback from them. With people it feels deeper and real than with AI chatbots”.

“I suppose the most comparable side between real conversations and artificial ones, as its name says, is the nature of interaction, specifically emotional involvement. With AI it is possible to train pronunciation, develop vocabulary baggage and just create some opportunity for practice, but right people around also can give similar experience, and even more. It is much better to combine these two formats in order to have balance, and still experience real human reactions and feedback”.

4.2.1.6 Experience in integration of AI chatbots

Beginning from this section, AI chatbots for speaking skills improvement are considered from a teaching perspective. As the result of 10 participants being interviewed, none of the participants have depicted the direct integration of AI chatbots in speaking lessons. Below are several concerns participants justified with almost no

experience with integrating AI-assisted chatbots: authentic interaction preferences, methodological unclarity and objective evaluation.

Participants 6 and 8 state the main concern for avoidance of integrating AI chatbots is opting for a real life based speaking practice environment. “I believe students come to learn in order to have real interaction with peers. I did not see any need to include it. They can always do that out of the class to consolidate and practice the topics”. “Personally, I was using AI chatbots for additional learning. I thought that it was enough. In offline format, students have speaking partners to work on their speaking”.

Participant 9 has expressed a sense of ambiguity regarding integration of AI chatbots, claiming lack of clarity how to integrate in speaking sessions effectively.

“Let me be honest, I do not know how to include chatbots in speaking at once in a group with several learners. I just do not find it meaningful. Out of the class, no problem.”

Participant 10 has added one point regarding assessment of the lessons with integration of AI chatbots. “Assessment criteria, descriptors are concerns for integrating them in my teaching. AI-assisted tools, activities and tasks should have fair criteria which is a challenge for me.”

4.2.1.7 Perceived benefits in integration

Participants 2 and 4 stated that it will be beneficial for students with high levels of anxiety, fear of mistakes. “I think it is a great idea for learners with the fear of mistakes, or peer judgment. For them it is a complementing tool that can be used in order to lower stress prior and while speaking.

“For shy students it is a good tool to practice speaking. This is the main benefit I see from AI-assisted chatbots”.

Participant 3 highlights its integration out of the classroom, justifying it through autonomous learning. “Students should feel and know that they are in charge of their

learning. AI-assisted chatbots can be also integrated in homework assignments in order to encourage independent learning. They will start to understand that learning and improvement should occur out of the classroom walls too. As a future instructor, I will consider integration of AI-assisted chatbots for speaking.

Participant 5 have mentioned practice hours where AI-assisted chatbots can be integrated for better consolidation of covered material. “During practical lessons, AI-assisted chatbots can be great supplementary tools for teachers, in case of specific and clear instructions. For 10-15 minutes at the beginning or at the end students may provoke interaction with AI chatbots with involvement of target vocabulary or grammar, or for revision”.

Participants 7 and 9 added about AI chatbots' benefit in terms of pronunciation. “Voice-based chatbots, for example, model an ideal pronunciation of English, despite being robotic in some way. It can be beneficial for learners' improvement of their speech, because they can repeat after them if needed”.

“I think the good side of AI chatbots is that they are helpful in improving pronunciation of the students. There are some words where stress is important, because it can change the function of the word. Some learners struggle to differentiate them, where AI chatbots can help to drill and consolidate this moment in practice”.

4.2.1.8 Anticipated challenges in integration

Regarding Participant 1 and Participant 4, their perceptions on integration of AI chatbots is found to be ambiguous. Participant 1 conveyed some concerns about it. “Since AI chatbots tend to make mistakes, or have inconsistency in responses and feedback giving. It cannot fully improve students' speaking skills. I am not sure about their effectiveness. We still need time and more expertise before integrating such tools in the curriculum”.

Participant 4 believes it will make students lose connection with real life interaction. “We live at times when everything is digitized. Students, in my opinion, are already overreliant on technology and AI-powered tools. On the contrary, they need more human interaction, full of natural language and conversations. I cannot say that it is important to integrate AI-assisted tools for speaking. They already have group mates and people to do so”.

Participants 6 and 8 claimed the topic of privacy of data is questionable. “I am not sure if AI chatbots store data from conversation properly. The matter of safety and privacy are important, especially when it comes to students”.

“AI-assisted tools’ privacy guidelines are not that transparent yet. I am not sure whether it can be integrated for university students, because of these moments the university might find it not clear enough”.

Another concern raised by Participant 9 was that for teachers monitoring is another challenging side of integrating chatbots. “I would say that for instructors it can be difficult to spot the learners actually practicing speaking with AI chatbots, and those just pretending or getting read-generated answers”.

Participant 10 raised the question about its converse effect on learners’ interaction patterns. “As a teacher, I truly value face-to face communication along group tasks, where students collaboratively work on something. AI tools can decrease real interaction. That’s why I have a question about its effect right now in my head ”.

4.2.1.9 Integration in the syllabus

In this regard, participants provided responses regarding integration of AI-assisted chatbots for speaking in the syllabus. The majority of participants have noted it as a supplementary tool along with its several challenges.

Participants 7 and 9 have highlighted the fact that AI-assisted chatbots can be integrated as a supplementary tool for weekly practical sessions.

“I think at university, AI-assisted chatbots can be used for seminars where students have more practical tasks”.

“ They can be used for role-play tasks with specific topics. Especially, shy students will find it better”.

However, Participants 9 and 10 have also highlighted the readiness of instructors.

“For some instructors, it might be difficult to combine authentic interaction with AI-assisted one. There should be methodological clarity that I am not sure about”.

Participant 10 emphasized the instructional support the educators will need. AI-assisted chatbots for speaking should have alignment with learning objectives. Teachers will need some training, even longer courses to fully understand the integration of them”.

Another common concern for participants has been stated about ambiguity with assessment.

Participants 6, 8, 9 and 10 have considered it as a significant challenge, requiring scrupulous adaptation of evaluation criteria.

Participant 6: “Institutions will need to rethink the syllabus, especially the assessment part. Teachers will need to build assessment criteria for speaking based on AI tools. In my opinion, it can be difficult to create everything from zero”.

Participant 8: “ It’s going to be confusing for educators to distinguish if speaking preparation was done only through AI or not. That’s why evaluation of the speech can be less reliable. AI-assisted tools can easily be a supplementary one, but without involvement or assessment of it”. Participant 9: “ Lessons and evaluation can not be centralised by AI-assisted tools, especially in communicative context. It can be just an additional tool teachers may be encouraged to use during regular lessons” .

Participant 10: “In order to integrate it, their effectiveness should be proved. It requires experiments, comparison of students’ actual improvement of speaking skills through AI. Therefore, for further periods it is better to use it as a helping tool for preparation or some sort of speaking tasks in practice hours”.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

5.1 Key Findings

The level of awareness was indicated as prevailingly strong in the current research. It demonstrated alignment with previously conducted research where participants showcased sufficient level of familiarity with AI conversational chatbots(Mudawy, 2025).

Moreover, there was acknowledgement of AI-assisted tools as transformative and contemporary in language learning context. In addition, as the result of the research it was admitted that AI tools can supplement in both formal and informal contexts. As the result of data collection and results of the interview it can be seen that there is an existing gap between personal experience in learning and integration of AI-assisted chatbots for speaking skills improvement. However, regarding teaching at a part-time level or tutoring, no direct integration of AI chatbots has been identified. The majority of participants are generally aware of AI-assisted tools for speaking, and there is a presence of experience in personal learning in preparation for presentations, pronunciation, confidence, overall fluency and communication improvement (Du & Daniel, 2024). The findings also align with personal benefits that have been found in improvement of confidence and lower level of anxiety eventually (Mudawy, 2025). Madhavi et al., (2023) also has found that AI and ICT tools positively affect the development of speaking, namely communicative competence and interaction. The research also supports the view about AI-assisted chatbots' opportunity for independent and autonomous learning. The learners hold an opportunity to practice speaking in a sustained and frequent way beyond the classroom. The accessibility and flexibility of AI beyond the classroom has been mentioned by participants, which strongly align with the point about personalized and adaptive approach to learning (Grab, 2025).

Nevertheless, the majority of participants of the current study acknowledged some existing limitations of AI-assisted chatbots in speaking, by also comparing it with human interaction. Similar findings in terms of affective limitations, namely emotional involvement and lack of flexibility have been identified in another research (Huang, 2022). Moreover, concerns regarding methodology and assessment along with curriculum alignment have been raised, being also highlighted in another study (Zou et al., 2024). According to reflections and perceptions about integration the participants shared, pedagogical and methodological implementation are found to be vague. It requires digital and AI competence from educators' side (Nogaibayeva & Yersultanova, 2025). Additionally, the current authors essentialize the interpersonal and collaborative side of the speaking that fails to be reached through AI-assisted chatbots. Abdallah (2025) raises a concern regarding assessment strategies that should be built and adjusted in order to measure speaking as a communicative tool. The identical reflection was provided in the current study by participants in the reflective format regarding integration in the syllabus.

It can be interpreted that the current research finding concerning the gap between personal and professional implementation of AI-assisted tools contributes to the general set of literature. The findings indicate that the presence of awareness or familiarity may fail to correlate with actual implementation in educational context. Although potential benefits of AI-assisted chatbots have been listed, the participants lacked specific pedagogical implementations or strategies due to mentioned challenges. Therefore, the AI-assisted tools can serve as a supplementary tool but fail to replace in pedagogical context leaving some space for further research on the issue from a practical angle.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

6.1 Summary of findings

The study managed to explore TFL Master students' perceptions on integration of AI-assisted chatbots within speaking skills improvement. According to findings, participants hold positive perceptions, by actively integrating them in personal speaking improvement practices. The main purposes for using them were expansion of vocabulary, boosting confidence, preparation for performance-based tasks and assignments. By comparing AI-assisted chatbots with human interaction, positive aspects such as non-judgmental atmosphere and availability were emphasised. Alongside benefits, several challenges and limitations were identified. Despite the fact TFL Master students are considered as learners and teachers, the direct integration of AI-assisted chatbots in teaching practices was not identified, creating an existing gap between personal and professional implementation. Therefore, experienced and perceived challenges were identified and depicted where several main concerning topics were raised: methodological readiness among educators, lack of clarity in assessment procedures and overall challenges with managing or monitoring effective integration of AI by learners.

6.2 Implications for practice

The current findings suggest that AI-assisted chatbots are positively perceived as supplementary or supportive tools for speaking improvement. It provides some space for creation of specific methodological guidelines for educators, requiring thorough research on effective adaptation at the institutional level. The integration of AI-assisted tools can remain in the personal learning stage, setting necessity to construct specific guides, including assessment and methodological strategies for literate integration of AI-assisted tools. However, the findings also denote that level of familiarity and experience may fail to

interalign. Although participants possessed awareness and personal experience, there is an existing gap in terms of pedagogical usage. No experience in incorporation of AI-assisted tools has been found. Therefore, educators and education oriented programs need to consider opportunities for pedagogical preparation. It implies practical training oriented in designs of speaking sessions mediated by AI-assisted tools, assessment of AI-assisted responses, creation of instructions and descriptors to evaluate AI mediated sessions and activities. The findings also have implications for curriculum development in Higher Education language programs. Participants acknowledged several potential benefits of AI-assisted chatbots, including increased opportunities for speaking practice, immediate feedback, flexibility to learning resources, and reduced speaking anxiety. These perceived benefits suggest that AI-assisted speaking activities could complement existing curriculum by extending speaking practice hours. The integration of chatbot-assisted activities can mainly become valuable in contexts where classroom time is limited or where opportunities for individualized speaking practice are insufficient. Curriculum designers may therefore consider additional AI-supported tasks, reflective speaking activities, pronunciation practice, or self-directed communication exercises that encourage learners to engage with English outside formal instructional settings. The findings highlight the importance of alignment of AI-supported learning with communicative language teaching aspects. Since participants emphasized the importance of authentic interaction and collaborative learning, curriculum integration should consider AI chatbots as supplementary resources rather than primary instructional methods. Such an approach may help support communicative dimensions of language learning while benefiting from the flexibility and accessibility offered by AI-assisted tools.

6.3 Limitations

It is essential to acknowledge several limitations of the current study.

The study conducted self-reported data through questionnaires and interviews. Self-reported data can lead to biased results where participants share expected answers rather than actual background. Moreover, the study fails to contain longitudinal research with involvement of experiments to compare learners prior and after the usage of AI-assisted chatbots for speaking as it was conducted in another study with interventional stage (Elov et.,al, 2025).

The final limitation can be the absence of large sample size (n=20) that may prevent generalizability of the findings.

6.4 Further recommendations

The further recommendations regarding this study should be longitudinal and experiment-oriented research, with enrollment of a larger number of respondents. The following topics deepening institutional readiness for integration of AI, specific strategies in methodology and assessment along with experienced teachers' perspectives can provide valuable insights and results within EFL context. The qualitative nature of results can be complemented through application of quantitative research tools in order to research AI-assisted chatbots in measurable and comprehensive manners. The final aspect to be taken into account can be the investigation of the relationship between personal professional application of AI-assisted tools. Since the current study has identified a gap between personal and professional integration, the further studies could explore potential challenges preventing integration of AI-assisted chatbots among educators.

References

- Abdallah, M. M. (2025). How to Use Conversational AI Chatbots in English Language Teaching/Learning: Developing Linguistic Competencies and Skills and Supporting EFL Teachers' Professional Development. *Online Submission*.
- Adamopoulou, E., & Moussiades, L. (2020). Chatbots: History, technology, and applications. *Machine Learning with applications*, 2, 100006.
- Ahyarudin, D. A., & Jamilah, J. (2024). Enhancing Students' Speaking Skills: The Impact of AI-Based Instructional Tasks in the Genre-Based Approach. *FORMOSA JOURNAL OF SUSTAINABLE RESEARCH Учредители: Formosa Publisher*, 3(9), 2019-2032.
- Aldosari, M. (2024). Another world with artificial intelligence in speaking classes: To delve into the influences on willingness to communicate, personal best goals, and academic enjoyment. *Computer-Assisted Language Learning Electronic Journal*, 25(4), 439-463.
- Azizimajd, H. (2023). Investigating the impacts of voice-based student-chatbot interactions in the classroom on EFL learners' oral fluency and foreign language speaking anxiety. *Technology Assisted Language Education*, 1(2), 61-83.
- Belda-Medina, J., & Calvo-Ferrer, J. R. (2022). Using chatbots as AI conversational partners in language learning. *Applied Sciences*, 12(17), 8427.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.

- Çakmak, F. (2022). Chatbot-Human Interaction and Its Effects on EFL Students' L2 Speaking Performance and Anxiety. *Novitas-ROYAL (Research on Youth and Language)*, 16(2), 113-131.
- Chen, X., Xie, H., & Hwang, G. J. (2020). A multi-perspective study on artificial intelligence in education: Grants, conferences, journals, software tools, institutions, and researchers. *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence*, 1, 100005.
- ÇOBANOĞULLARI, F., & Özbek, Ö. (2025). AI-powered language learning: Developing the chatGPT usage scale for foreign language learners. *Education and Information Technologies*, 30(9), 12517-12534.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). Research methods in education (8th ed.). Routledge
- Davis, F. D. (1989). Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and user acceptance of information technology. *MIS Quarterly*, 13(3), 319–339.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/249008>
- Ding, D., & Yusof, M. B. (2025). Investigating the role of AI-powered conversation bots in enhancing L2 speaking skills and reducing speaking anxiety: a mixed methods study. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 12(1), 1-16.
- Du, J., & Daniel, B. K. (2024). Transforming language education: A systematic review of AI-powered chatbots for English as a foreign language speaking practice. *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence*, 6, 100230.

- Grab, Melissa Özlem. "Integrated AI chatbot practice: A pathway to improved ESL speaking skills." *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 12 (2025): 101933.
- El Shazly, R. (2021). Effects of artificial intelligence on English speaking anxiety and speaking performance: A case study. *Expert Systems*, 38(3), e12667.
- Elov, B., Abdullayeva, I., Raupova, L., Kholikov, A., & Mirkasimova, M. (2025). Speaking exams with less anxiety in Intelligent Computer-Assisted Language Assessment (ICALA): mirroring EFL learners' foreign language anxiety, shyness, autonomy, and enjoyment. *Language Testing in Asia*, 15(1), 3.
- Fathi, J., Rahimi, M., & Derakhshan, A. (2024). Improving EFL learners' speaking skills and willingness to communicate via artificial intelligence-mediated interactions. *System*, 121, 103254.
- Halimah, A. N., Budianto, A., Hoesny, M. U., Cabuquin, J. C., & Ulfa, S. (2026). Improving English speaking skills through AI-based voice chatbots: A systematic review of vocational education studies. *Studies in Learning and Teaching*, 6(3), 785-797.
- Huang, W., Hew, K. F., & Fryer, L. K. (2022). Chatbots for language learning—Are they really useful? A systematic review of chatbot-supported language learning. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 38(1), 237–257.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jcal.12610>
- Khasawneh MAS. (2024). Academic integrity and the use of ChatGPT by EFL pre-service teachers. *Journal of Infrastructure, Policy and Development*. 8(7): 4783.
<https://doi.org/10.24294/jipd.v8i7.4783>

- Koç, F. Ş., & Savaş, P. (2025). The use of artificially intelligent chatbots in English language learning: A systematic meta-synthesis study of articles published between 2010 and 2024. *ReCALL*, 37(1), 4-21.
- Kim, H. S., Cha, Y., & Kim, N. Y. (2021). Effects of AI chatbots on EFL students' communication skills. *영어학*, 21, 712-734
- Madhavi, E., Sivapurapu, L., Koppula, V., Rani, P. E., & Sreehari, V. (2023). Developing Learners' English-Speaking Skills Using ICT and AI tools. *Journal of Advanced Research in Applied Sciences and Engineering Technology*, 32(2), 142-153.
- Maysuroh, S., Fikni, Z., & Aisyah, S. (2025). EFL Students' Perceptions of AI Chatbots in Learning Speaking Skills. *INTERACTION: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa*, 12(3), 489-500.
- Mudawy, A. M. A. (2025). Exploring EFL learners' perceptions on the use of AI-powered conversational tools to improve speaking fluency: A case study at Majmaah University.
- Nazara, S. (2011). Students' Perception on EFL Speaking Skill Development. *JET (Journal of English Teaching)*, 1, 28-43.
- Neji, H., Rekik, M., Souifi, L., & Rodriguez, I. B. (2025). A Systematic Review of Sustainable Supplier Selection Using Advanced Artificial Intelligence Methods. *ICAART (3)*, 451-460.
- Nogaibayeva, A., & Yersultanova, G. (2025). 'It is not the same as a classroom teacher': A qualitative study of foreign language teachers' perspectives on artificial

intelligence-supported tools in Kazakhstan. *Contemporary Educational Technology*, 17(4), ep599.

Nyimbili, F., & Nyimbili, L. (2024). Types of purposive sampling techniques with their examples and application in qualitative research studies.

Patton, M. Q. (2014). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice*. Sage publications.

Rachmadani, K. O., Musyafaah, I. R., Januanto, A. H., & Fitriyah, I. (2026). Exploring the Impact of AI Chatbots on Students' Speaking Skills in EFL Learners: A Systematic Review. *ETERNAL (English Teaching Journal)*, 17(1), 229-240.

Shemshack, A., & Spector, J. M. (2020). A systematic literature review of personalized learning terms. *Smart learning environments*, 7(1), 33.

Urazbayeva, G., Kussainova, R., Aibergen, A., Kaliyeva, A., & Kantayeva, G. (2024). Innovation off the bat: bridging the ChatGPT gap in digital competence among english as a foreign Language teachers. *Education Sciences*, 14(9), 946.

Vy, N., & Pham, V. P. H. (2024). AI chatbots for language practices. *International Journal of AI in Language Education*, 1(1), 10-54855.

Wu, C. H., Lam, H. Y., Kong, A., & Wong, W. L. H. (2023). The design and evaluation of a digital learning-based English chatbot as an online self-learning method. *International Journal of Engineering Business Management*, 15, 18479790231176372.

Zhang, R., Zou, D., & Cheng, G. (2024). A review of chatbot-assisted learning: pedagogical approaches, implementations, factors leading to effectiveness,

theories, and future directions. *Interactive Learning Environments*, 32(8), 4529-4557.

Zh, T., & Yussimbayeva, S. (2025). ROLE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN TEACHING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE. *Yessenov science journal*, 50(1), 210-215.

Zou, B., Liviero, S., Ma, Q., Zhang, W., Du, Y., & Xing, P. (2024). Exploring EFL learners' perceived promise and limitations of using an artificial intelligence speech evaluation system for speaking practice. *System*, 126, 103497.

Appendix A

Hi Ayazhan,

We've received your submission. Based on the information you provided, you don't need to apply for Ethics Review and you can continue with your research project.

Thank you

Research Ethics Committee

Appendix B

15-itemed Likert scale

Section A: Awareness of Existence

I have heard of AI chatbots before this study. Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neutral=3, Agree=4, Strongly Agree=5
I can name at least one AI chatbot. Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neutral=3, Agree=4, Strongly Agree=5
I know that AI chatbots simulate human conversation. Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neutral=3, Agree=4, Strongly Agree=5
I am aware that AI chatbots can be used for education. Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neutral=3, Agree=4, Strongly Agree=5
I have encountered AI chatbots from media, friends, or courses. Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neutral=3, Agree=4, Strongly Agree=5

Section B: Awareness of Features

I am aware that they can generate text-based responses similar to humans. Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neutral=3, Agree=4, Strongly Agree=5
I am aware that AI chatbots can generate voice- based responses similar to humans. Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neutral=3, Agree=4, Strongly Agree=5
I am aware that AI chatbots are able to recognize and respond in multiple languages (English too). Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neutral=3, Agree=4, Strongly Agree=5
I am aware that AI chatbots can respond and give feedback in the language you keep conversation with. Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neutral=3, Agree=4, Strongly Agree=5
I am aware that AI chatbots can encourage or stimulate close to real-life conversations (e.g, asking for advice, agreement/disagreement, job interviews, etc). Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neutral=3, Agree=4, Strongly Agree=5

Section C: Awareness of Integration

I am aware of how AI-assisted tools can be incorporated for speaking skills improvement
Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neutral=3, Agree=4, Strongly Agree=5

I can list several ways of using AI-assisted chatbots for speaking skills improvement
Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neutral=3, Agree=4, Strongly Agree=5

I think AI-assisted chatbots for speaking have a great potential to be integrated and used
Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neutral=3, Agree=4, Strongly Agree=5

I am aware of several activities and techniques (e.g, dialogues, role-plays, job interviews etc) with integration of AI-assisted chatbots.
Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neutral=3, Agree=4, Strongly Agree=5

I am aware of guiding learners to use AI-assisted chatbots for speaking beyond the classroom (e.g, preparing prompts, assigning specific tasks with chatbots, reviewing feedback from chatbots through mobile devices).
Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neutral=3, Agree=4, Strongly Agree=5

Appendix C

Likert Scale Consent Form

You are invited to take part in the research entitled "**The TFL Master students' perceptions of the integration of AI-assisted tools for speaking skills improvement**".

Research purpose and procedures:

The aim of this study is to investigate Master students' perceptions of the integration of AI-assisted tools, specifically, AI chatbots for speaking skills improvement. The study will inform about the level of awareness of students regarding AI chatbots for speaking skills enhancement. It can provide valuable insights, as for students, and for teachers lacking speaking practice. It is expected to take 7-10 minutes overall. As a result of this questionnaire, some participants may be invited to proceed with further steps for semi-structured interviews to identify existing experiences. The exploration of the experiences with AI chatbots can also become significant in order to make sure of the practicality of AI chatbots for speaking skills improvement .

Possible risks:

There are no possible risks for the participants. The content of the questions solely considers experience with AI chatbots for speaking, considering personal experience of the participants within academic context. There are no sensitive questions, leading to any kind of discomfort or inconvenience.

Possible benefits:

Possible benefits from participation may be an opportunity to share self-reflect on one's own awareness level on AI-assisted tools for speaking skills in the context of EFL (English as a Foreign Language).

Privacy and Confidentiality:

It is highlighted that the data will be used for academic (Master thesis), namely research purposes only. Once the data is interpreted, and the results section is completed, the data will be deleted from all devices of the researcher. No identity of the participants will be released or displayed in any stage of the research.

Voluntary nature of the research:

The participant has the whole right to withdraw from any stage of the research without further institutional implications.

Approximate time for the completion:

7-10 minutes

Instructions for participants:

Instructions for participants:

After the agreement to participate in this research, proceed with the next page. Please read statements carefully and choose the option reflecting your opinion best (**Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neutral=3, Agree=4, Strongly Agree=5**). **There are no right or wrong answers.** Answer honestly, totally relying on your background and experience. Please complete all 15 items.

Contact information:

In case of any questions and concerns, you are welcome to contact the researcher to corporate email:

241302008@sdu.edu.kz

Appendix D

Interview Protocol

Date/time of the interview:

Format: Online

Platform: Google Meet

Researcher: Ayazhan Aldabek

Participant's Name:

The individual Semi-structured Interview questions

Invitation letter:

Thank you for allocating time to participate and make a contribution to the research. Your participation is highly valuable for the current research to identify **TFL Master students' perceptions of the integration of AI assisted chatbots for speaking skills improvement**. The interview does not have correct or wrong questions. It is aimed at exploring existing experience with AI chatbots for speaking, perceived benefits and challenges faced by your personal experience and background. Therefore, it is highly recommended to be honest with your answers throughout the whole interview. The matter of confidentiality of your responses is highly guaranteed, your identity is not going to be reflected at any stage of the research. You can also feel free to withdraw from the interview any time, by stopping the procedure without any further implications.

Interview Questions:

1. Which AI chatbot(s) have you used for English speaking improvement ?
2. How would you describe your personal learning experience with AI chatbots?
3. What did you like most about AI-assisted chatbots in the context of speaking skills improvement?
4. What did you like least about them?

5. What kind of difference do you see between conversation with AI-assisted chatbots and face-to face one with humans?
6. Have you ever integrated AI-assisted chatbots in your own tutoring or teaching?
Why yes/no?
7. What are the benefits of integrating AI chatbots for lessons to improve English speaking skills?
8. What are the limitations or challenges of integrating AI chatbots for lessons to improve English speaking skills?
9. Do you think AI chatbots for speaking should be integrated in the syllabus of English learning? Why yes/no?
10. What aspects should be considered for integrating AI-assisted chatbots in Higher Institutions?

Appendix E

Consent form for an Interview

Research title: "The TFL Master students' perceptions of the integration of AI-assisted tools for speaking skills improvement".

Dear participant, (Name/Surname)

You are successfully eligible to proceed with a further stage of the research, an interview!

We invite you to take part in a semi-structured interview, aiming at exploring experiences with AI-assisted chatbots for speaking improvement.

Purpose of the interview:

The aim of the interview is to explore Master students' perceptions of the integration within experiences with AI-assisted chatbots for speaking skills improvement. It is expected to take 15-20 minutes overall. As a result of this interview, existing experiences and personal perceptions will be identified with depth and width.

Possible risks:

The current research has no possible risks for the participants. The content of the questions solely consider the presence of experience, namely academic experience of the participants. There are no sensitive questions, threatening personal safety or convenience.

Possible benefits:

Possible benefits from participation may be an opportunity to share unique experiences, based on background and express personal perceptions with AI-assisted tools for improving speaking skills in the context of EFL (English as a Foreign Language).

Privacy and Confidentiality:

Within the whole duration of the research, any obtained and derived data will remain confidential. It is highlighted that the data will be used for academic (Master thesis), namely research purposes only. Once the data is interpreted, and the results section is

completed, the data will be deleted from all devices of the researcher. No identity of the participants will be released or displayed in any stage of the research.

Voluntary nature of the research:

The participant has the whole right to withdraw from any stage of the research without further institutional implications.

Approximate time for the completion:

15-20 minutes

Contact information:

In case of any questions and concerns, you are welcome to contact the researcher to corporate email:

241302008@sdu.edu.kz

Consent:

By agreeing to participate, you get familiar with the whole information about the research, and acknowledge your voluntary participation.

Thank you for your valuable contribution to this study!

Participant's Name: _____

Signature