

Enhancing Students' Willingness to Communicate through Multiple AI Chatbots in EFL Speaking Classes: Students' Perceptions (#2181)

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Abstract

This research aims to explore students' perceptions of using AI chatbots to increase their willingness to communicate in EFL speaking classes at a private university in Yogyakarta. This study implements multiple AI chatbots, namely Microsoft Copilot, Google Gemini, and ChatGPT to improve second-semester students' willingness to communicate and to facilitate a more engaging learning environment. Grounded in MacIntyre's (2001) Willingness to Communicate theory, the findings are expected to reveal that the integration of AI chatbots can improve students' motivation, confidence, and willingness to communicate in English, while also increasing their speaking skills.

Background

Those are the EFL Students' Experience in Speaking Classes:

- Low confidence and hesitation when using English during classroom interactions, resulting in passive participation in speaking activities.
- Limited academic discussions have explored the integration of various AI chatbots to increase students' willingness to communicate (WTC) in the context of Indonesian EFL speaking classrooms.
- The selected AI chatbots provide engaging activities and interesting learning platform to support students' speaking practice and confidence.

Objectives

- to explore students' perceptions in using AI chatbots.
- to examine how selected AI chatbots support students' willingness to communicate in EFL speaking classes.
- to facilitate a more engaging learning environment.

Theoretical Framework

MacIntyre's (2007) Willingness to Communicate (WT) theory

- WTC in an L2 is viewed as learners' readiness to communicate using the L2 in particular settings and influenced by factors such as confidence, motivation, anxiety, and learning environment.

Literature Review

- Ziwen & Hongwei (2025): students' interactions with 8 AI chatbots significantly improved WTC, reduced anxiety, and increased communicative confidence
- Zou, Xie, & Wang (2025): the use of AI in English-Speaking practice significantly improves students' willingness to communicate
- Waluyo & Pratiwi (2025): regular chatbot interaction (Google Assistant, Alexa, and ChatGPT) enhances WTC, communicative confidence, and motivation by reducing speaking anxiety and providing adaptive, nonjudgmental feedback.
- Fathi, Rahimi, & Derakhshan (2024): the use of Andy English Chatbot can improve speaking skills and WTC more than conventional peer interaction.
- Gap of the study: *The related studies generally claim AI chatbots as a promising tool for improving EFL learners' willingness to communicate, but it does not yet directly establish the effects of using multiple chatbots in Indonesian university classrooms.*

AI Chatbots



Research Design

Approach Qualitative approach

Participants Second-semester students at a private university in Yogyakarta, aged between 18 to 20 years, from various ethnic and background

Data Collection Students' reflections, questionnaires, classroom observations, interviews

Research Procedure

- Identifying the Problem and Planning
- Classroom integration of AI chatbots
- Observation and Data Collection
- Data analysis
- Coding students' perception
- Findings and implications

Research Results

The findings are expected to reveal that the integration of AI chatbots can:

1. increase confidence to speak → the use of AI chatbots is less intimidating as it provides a low pressure space for speaking practice. Students claim that they feel more comfortable in practicing English without feeling embarrassed before engaging a face-to-face communication.
2. reduce speaking anxiety → using chatbots can make students feel less anxious because chatbot does not judge them, allowing them to make mistakes or repeat responses and practice without negative evaluation.
3. increase willingness to communicate in English → students become more willing to initiate conversations, respond to questions/prompts, ask more questions, and participate actively in English-speaking activities.
4. enhance students' speaking skills → students can improve fluency, expand their vocabulary, practice their pronunciation, and express ideas.
5. provide more opportunities for autonomous practice → AI chatbots can train students as autonomous learners by expanding opportunities for independent speaking practice, enabling them to practice English and receive feedback immediately.

References

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