

## Exploring Tadulako University Students' Perceptions Toward the Use of ChatGPT Voice as an English Speaking Practice Tool

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### ABSTRACT

*Speaking skill is an essential competence in English language learning; however, it remains a challenge for many students, particularly in terms of fluency, confidence, and limited opportunities for real-life practice. With the advancement of digital technology, ChatGPT Voice has emerged as an alternative learning medium that allows students to practice speaking in a more flexible and accessible way. This study aims to explore the perceptions of students from the English Education Department of Tadulako University toward the use of ChatGPT Voice as an English speaking practice tool. This research employs a qualitative approach with narrative analysis, involving students selected through snowball sampling. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed by identifying patterns of experiences and meanings constructed by the participants. The findings reveal that students' perceptions of ChatGPT Voice are generally positive, as the tool provides a comfortable and low-pressure learning environment that encourages active speaking practice, reduces anxiety, increases confidence, and supports linguistic development such as fluency, vocabulary, and pronunciation through repeated interaction and feedback. However, students also recognize several limitations, particularly the lack of authentic human interaction, including emotional expression and natural conversational dynamics. Therefore, ChatGPT Voice is not perceived as a replacement for real communication, but rather as a supplementary tool that is used independently, selectively, and strategically in developing students' speaking skills.*

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### KEYWORDS

ChatGPT Voice, Speaking Skills, Narrative analysis, Independent Learning.

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### 1. Introduction

The rapid development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has significantly influenced educational practices in recent years, particularly in the field of English language learning. In Indonesia, English is an important subject taught at various levels of education, including higher education, where students are expected to develop communicative competence in both written and spoken forms. Among emerging AI technologies, ChatGPT, developed by OpenAI, has gained considerable attention due to its ability to generate human-like responses and support interactive learning processes (Yaumi et al., 2023; Rahman, 2014; Mastang et al., 2026). With the introduction of the ChatGPT Voice feature, this technology has expanded beyond text-based interaction, enabling users to engage in real-time spoken communication. This development offers new opportunities for students to practice English speaking in more flexible and accessible ways outside the traditional classroom environment (Novita et al., 2024; Anggriyani et al., 2026; Pratiwi et al., 2026).

Among the four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—speaking is often considered one of the most challenging for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Speaking requires not only knowledge of vocabulary and grammar but also fluency, pronunciation, and the ability to convey meaning effectively in real-time interaction (Brown, 2001; Andini et al., 2026; Karubaba & Rahman, 2025; Adinda et al., 2025). However, many students continue to face difficulties in speaking due to limited vocabulary, lack of confidence, and anxiety when communicating in English (Weda et al., 2021; Youngsun et al., 2024; Yaumi et al., 2024). In conventional classroom settings, these challenges are often exacerbated by limited opportunities for practice, especially in large classes where not all students can actively participate in speaking activities.

Various factors contribute to students' speaking difficulties, including limited exposure to English outside the classroom, fear of making mistakes, and lack of immediate feedback (Dilzhan, 2024). In addition, traditional teaching

approaches often emphasize teacher-centered instruction, which may reduce opportunities for students to engage in authentic communication. These conditions highlight the need for alternative approaches that can provide more interactive, student-centered, and flexible speaking practice opportunities.

In this context, AI-powered tools such as ChatGPT Voice have the potential to address these challenges. The voice feature allows students to simulate real-life conversations with AI, providing a low-pressure environment where they can practice speaking without fear of judgment. It also offers immediate responses, enabling students to develop their fluency and confidence through continuous interaction. Recently, students in the English Education Department at Tadulako University have begun using ChatGPT Voice independently as a supplementary tool for speaking practice, reflecting a growing interest in technology-assisted language learning.

Several studies have explored the use of ChatGPT in educational contexts. Previous research indicates that students generally have positive perceptions of ChatGPT, particularly in supporting engagement and improving writing skills (Rahim et al., 2023). Other studies have highlighted its role in providing feedback and facilitating learning, although concerns about accuracy and overreliance on AI remain (Sila et al., 2023). Similarly, Meluwu and Neman (2025) reported that high school students show positive attitudes toward ChatGPT in English learning, particularly in enhancing motivation and understanding, although some students expressed concerns about its reliability. In addition, Alwi (2024) revealed that university students perceive ChatGPT as helpful in supporting their English learning process, especially in generating ideas and practicing language use. Despite these findings, most existing studies focus primarily on text-based applications of ChatGPT, such as writing and reading tasks (Mahfouz & AbdelMohsen, 2025; Younes et al., 2025). Research specifically addressing the use of ChatGPT Voice for speaking practice is still limited, especially in the context of Indonesian higher education. This indicates a gap in the literature regarding how students perceive the use of AI-based voice interaction for developing speaking skills.

Local context also plays an important role in shaping students' learning experiences. At Tadulako University, students come from diverse linguistic and educational backgrounds and often encounter challenges in developing their speaking skills due to limited classroom interaction, large class sizes, and time constraints. While innovative technologies such as ChatGPT Voice offer potential solutions, their effectiveness largely depends on how students perceive and accept their use. Understanding students' perceptions is essential because their attitudes and experiences influence their engagement, motivation, and willingness to use the technology in learning (Sila et al., 2023).

This study is grounded in Irwanto's (1994) theory of perception, which explains how individuals interpret and assign meaning to their experiences, as well as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) proposed by Davis (1989), which highlights perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use as key factors influencing technology adoption. In addition, Brown's (2001) theory of speaking provides a framework for understanding speaking as a complex skill involving fluency, accuracy, and real-time communication. These theoretical perspectives support the analysis of students' experiences in using ChatGPT Voice as a speaking practice tool.

Based on these considerations, this study seeks to explore how students perceive the use of ChatGPT Voice in supporting their English speaking practice, while also uncovering the benefits and challenges they encounter during its use in real learning situations. By examining students' experiences, this research aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the role of AI-based voice technology in facilitating speaking development.

The findings of this study are expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, this research contributes to the growing body of literature on the use of AI in English language learning, particularly by offering insights into how ChatGPT Voice can support speaking skill development in EFL contexts. It also extends discussions on technology-enhanced learning by emphasizing the importance of students' perceptions and experiences, and may serve as a reference for future studies in similar areas.

Practically, this study provides valuable information for lecturers and educators regarding students' perceptions of ChatGPT Voice, which can inform the design of more effective and engaging speaking activities. It also helps students become more aware of how AI tools can be utilized to improve their speaking skills and build confidence in communication. Furthermore, the findings offer important input for educational institutions in considering the integration of AI-based tools into the curriculum, particularly in supporting students' speaking performance in higher education contexts.

## **2. Methodology**

In this research, the researcher used a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research was chosen because it allows the researcher to explore and understand participants' experiences, perceptions, and interpretations in depth. The

participants of this study were students from the English Education Department of Tadulako University. The participants were selected using snowball sampling technique, where initial participants recommended other participants who had experience using ChatGPT Voice for speaking practice. This method was chosen to ensure that all participants had relevant experience related to the research focus.

The source of data in this study was primary data obtained directly from participants through semi-structured interviews. The interviews were conducted to explore students' perceptions, including their experiences, opinions, and evaluations of using ChatGPT Voice. The use of semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to guide the discussion while still providing flexibility for participants to express their thoughts in detail.

In analyzing the data, the researcher used narrative analysis by identifying patterns and themes from participants' stories. According to Riessman (2008), narrative analysis emphasizes the ways individuals construct and communicate meaning through their stories and personal experiences. The analysis was conducted through the following steps:

1. Reading and re-reading the interview transcripts to gain a comprehensive understanding of the data.
2. Constructing individual narratives
3. Identifying key narrative statement related to students' perceptions and experiences.
4. Categorizing the data into themes.
5. Interpreting the meaning of participants' experiences based on relevant theories.
6. Drawing conclusions based on the patterns and themes identified in the data.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Result

In collecting the data, the researcher used primary data obtained from semi-structured interviews with students of the English Education Department at Tadulako University who had experience using ChatGPT Voice for speaking practice. The data focused on students' perceptions, including their experiences, opinions, and evaluations of using the tool in improving their speaking skills.

Based on the data source, the researcher focused on analyzing several participants' narratives as representative data. These participants shared their experiences regarding how they used ChatGPT Voice, the benefits they perceived, and the challenges they encountered during the interaction. The data was then categorized into several themes that emerged from the experiences of the three students, while also noting important differences.

**Table 1. Cross-Narrative Themes: Common Experiences Across Stories**

| No | Themes                    | Students' Experience                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | Enjoyment and convenience | All three participants perceived ChatGPT Voice as an enjoyable and convenient tool for practicing English speaking. Despite their different backgrounds, they shared a similar experience of finding the tool easy to access, flexible, and engaging. Student 1 described how her experience became more enjoyable after becoming familiar with the tool: <i>"When I got used to it, it became more enjoyable, and I could explore more topics."</i> She also emphasized its practicality: <i>"We can use it anytime, just open ChatGPT and start talking."</i> Student 2 highlighted the relaxed and customizable nature of the interaction: <i>"I can choose the communication style, and I can make the conversation more relaxed and casual."</i> Meanwhile, Student 3 expressed enjoyment because she could practice independently: <i>"I'm very happy that I could practice because I'm not really a very social person."</i> These findings suggest that ChatGPT Voice provides a flexible and enjoyable learning environment that supports independent speaking practice. |

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|                                                 | <p>This finding is consistent with previous studies, particularly Wulandari, Setiyono, and Ngaff (2025), who found that students perceived ChatGPT as an accessible and helpful learning tool that enhances motivation and engagement. Similarly, Pratiwi et al. (2024) emphasized that ChatGPT Voice provides flexibility and a non-judgmental learning environment, allowing students to practice speaking more comfortably.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <p>2. Increased Speaking Confidence</p>         | <p>Student 1 experienced a clear turning point when practicing for a real campus event (MC role): <i>“When the event started, I felt less nervous than before because I had already practiced.”</i></p> <p>Student 2 described gradual confidence growth due to repeated low-pressure interaction: <i>“When I make mistakes in vocabulary or pronunciation, I do not feel judge.”</i> Student 2 also perceived that ChatGPT Voice grown her confident: <i>“it makes me more confident speaking English without feeling embarrassed”.</i></p> <p>Student 3 gained confidence after preparing for an English club session and receiving recognition from peers: <i>“some of my friends asked me where I practiced because they saw improvement.”</i></p> <p>These stories show that confidence development was not immediate but built through repeated practice, preparation, and real-life validation. The improvement was both emotional (less nervousness) and practical (smoother speaking performance). This result supports Alsalem (2024), who found that the use of ChatGPT reduces anxiety and increases students’ confidence in speaking.</p>                                                                                                                            |
| <p>3. Reduced Speaking Anxiety</p>              | <p>A strong and consistent theme across all narratives is the reduction of speaking anxiety. ChatGPT Voice was perceived as a safe and low-pressure environment where students could practice freely. Student 2 explicitly stated: <i>“I feel less pressure and more relaxed with ChatGPT Voice.”</i> Student 3 emphasized the absence of social judgment: <i>“With ChatGPT, I just do it alone in my room, so no one could judge me and I could be myself.”</i> Similarly, Student 1 highlighted the non-judgmental feedback: <i>“They do not judge... they correct in a good way.”</i> Student 1 also described: <i>“I once had a duty to become an MC in a Himabris event. It was my first time, so I felt nervous. The night before the event, I practiced with ChatGPT about what to say and how to say it. After practicing, when the event started, I felt less nervous than before because I had already practiced.”</i></p> <p>These findings indicate that the absence of social pressure allows students to experiment more freely, which significantly reduces anxiety and encourages active participation. Pratiwi et al. (2024) also highlighted that ChatGPT Voice creates a pressure-free environment, which encourages students to practice more frequently.</p> |
| <p>4. Improvement in Fluency and Vocabulary</p> | <p>All participants acknowledged that ChatGPT Voice contributed to improving their speaking ability, particularly in fluency, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Student 1 stated: <i>“After semester three and four, I felt that my speaking improved because of ChatGPT.”</i> Student 3 explained the impact more specifically: <i>“It helps me to expand my vocabulary and unlock new phrases.”</i> She also added: <i>“It gives me</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

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|                                                      | <p><i>a lot of impact, especially on the way I pronounce things.</i>" Student 2 also confirmed its usefulness: <i>"It can help me improve my English speaking skills."</i> These findings show that consistent interaction with ChatGPT Voice supports linguistic development through practice and exposure.</p> <p>This findings is consistent with Wulandari, Nugroho, and Saputri (2025), who found that ChatGPT supports the improvement of students' language skills and learning motivation.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <p>5. Feedback and Self-Improvement</p>              | <p>Another recurring theme is the importance of feedback. Student 3 strongly highlighted the value of AI suggestions: <i>"It gives a lot of feedback on what I should improve next", "that it gives a lot of feedback from what we've been talking about, like our topic itself."</i> Student 1 explained: <i>"I can ask it to correct what is wrong in what I say, and it can do that", "It can correct our grammar and sometimes pronunciation if we ask."</i> Student 2 benefited from being able to practice freely without fear of mistakes.</p> <p>Across narratives, ChatGPT Voice functioned as a reflective tool that allowed students to notice weaknesses and make adjustments. This finding is supported by Dilzhan (2024), who stated that ChatGPT can provide immediate feedback and support independent learning. The AI's feedback played a role in promoting self-awareness and independent learning.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <p>6. Limitations in Authentic Human Interaction</p> | <p>Despite overall positive perceptions, all three participants acknowledged limitations as challenges of the use of ChatGPT Voice for speaking practice. A common concern was that ChatGPT Voice cannot fully replicate real human interaction.</p> <p>Student 1 mentioned the lack of emotions and expressions: <i>"When we talk to humans, there are emotions and expressions. But in ChatGPT, there is no emotion at all."</i></p> <p>Student 2 noted responses that were sometimes too general or too formal: <i>"Sometimes the information i receive is not exactly what i need or expect"</i></p> <p>Student 3 emphasized that AI conversation feels different from real-life communication: <i>"The atmosphere between we talk with the ChatGPT Voice and the real life person, it's going to be so different", "It's comfortable, but it's not the same as real conversation."</i> Student 3 also noted that social skills must continue to be improved <i>"Even though you're actually very good in speaking, because ChatGPT helps you, but you need to also like expand your skills to like socialize with people or like real life people"</i></p> <p>This theme highlights a balanced perception: This limitation is also emphasized in previous research, such as Alsalem (2024) and Dilzhan (2024), which concluded that AI cannot fully replace human interaction in language learning. ChatGPT Voice is helpful but not perfect. It supports speaking practice, yet it does not replace the social and emotional elements of authentic communication.</p> |

This table presents that ChatGPT Voice had a positive impact on students' speaking development. Students reported improvements in confidence, reduced anxiety, and increased willingness to speak. They also experienced progress in linguistic aspects such as fluency, vocabulary, and pronunciation. the tool provided a comfortable and low-

pressure learning environment, which encouraged students to practice speaking more frequently. However, the findings also indicate certain limitations of the tool. The most prominent issue is the lack of authentic human interaction. Overall, the findings demonstrate that ChatGPT Voice is perceived as a beneficial and supportive tool for speaking practice.

### 3.2 Discussion

The findings indicate that students' positive perceptions of ChatGPT Voice are strongly influenced by its flexibility and ease of use. This is in line with the Technology Acceptance Model by Davis (1989), which suggests that perceived usefulness and ease of use shape users' attitudes toward technology. When students find the technology easy to operate and beneficial for their learning, they are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward its use. From the perspective of perception theory by Irwanto (1994), these experiences are interpreted by students as convenient and supportive, which shapes their positive perception of the tool. Because students experience direct benefits such as accessibility and flexibility, they assign positive meaning to their interaction with ChatGPT Voice. Thus, the flexibility and ease of use of ChatGPT Voice play an important role in shaping students' positive perceptions and encouraging continuous use in speaking practice.

Another key point is confidence development. Students' confidence increased through repeated practice and successful speaking experiences. This finding can be explained through Irwanto's (1994) theory of perception, where repeated positive experiences lead students to interpret their performance as successful, thereby forming positive self-perceptions. In addition, from the perspective of TAM, this reflects the perceived usefulness of the technology, as students recognize that ChatGPT Voice helps improve their speaking confidence. The more students feel that the tool benefits their learning, the more they are motivated to continue using it. Therefore, consistent practice and positive interaction with ChatGPT Voice significantly contribute to the development of students' speaking confidence.

The reduction of speaking anxiety is another important finding. Consistent with previous studies, the absence of social judgment plays a key role in helping students feel more relaxed during speaking practice. For example, students stated that they felt more relaxed because there was no fear of being judged. This can be explained through Irwanto's (1994) theory, where students interpret the absence of social pressure as a safe and comfortable learning condition, leading to positive emotional responses. From the TAM by Davis (1989) perspective, this comfort contributes to perceived ease of use, as students feel that the tool does not create psychological barriers in learning. As a result, they are more willing to engage in speaking practice. Thus, the reduction of anxiety plays a significant role in increasing students' participation and engagement in speaking activities.

The findings also confirm that ChatGPT Voice contributes to linguistic development, including fluency, vocabulary, and pronunciation. From the perspective of TAM, this reflects the perceived usefulness of the technology, as students recognize its contribution to their language development. According to Irwanto's (1994) theory of perception, these improvements are interpreted by students as meaningful learning outcomes, which strengthen their positive perception of the tool. When students notice progress in their speaking ability, they are more likely to view the technology as beneficial. Through continuous interaction with ChatGPT Voice, students become more aware of their language use and gradually improve their performance. Therefore, ChatGPT Voice not only facilitates practice but also contributes to measurable improvements in students' speaking performance.

Additionally, the study highlights the role of feedback in promoting self-regulated learning. Students actively reflect on feedback and use it to improve their speaking performance, indicating the development of learner autonomy. From the TAM perspective, immediate feedback enhances the perceived usefulness of the system, encouraging students to continue using it. From Irwanto's (1994) perspective, students interpret feedback as valuable input that helps them evaluate their performance, which contributes to the development of self-awareness and autonomy. It shows that AI tools not only facilitate language acquisition but also encourage students to become more autonomous learners.

However, the lack of authentic human interaction remains a significant limitation. Unlike real communication, ChatGPT Voice does not fully provide emotional cues, spontaneous reactions, or social negotiation. Student 1 mentioned that conversations with AI feel less emotion compared to real-life communication. From the perspective of perception theory by Irwanto (1994), this limitation is interpreted as a lack of realism in communication, which may affect students' readiness for real interactions. From the TAM perspective, this issue may reduce the perceived usefulness of the tool in certain contexts, especially for developing real-life communication skills. Therefore, while ChatGPT Voice offers many benefits, it should be used as a complementary tool rather than a substitute for real-life communication.

#### 4. Conclusion

This study concludes that students' perceptions toward the use of ChatGPT Voice are predominantly positive. The tool is considered helpful in improving speaking skills, increasing confidence, and reducing anxiety. It also supports independent learning through feedback and reflection. However, the lack of authentic human interaction remains a major limitation. ChatGPT Voice cannot fully replicate real communication, particularly in terms of emotional and social aspects. Therefore, it is best used as a supplementary tool rather than a replacement for real-life speaking practice.

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