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Exploring EFL Students' Attitudes towards AI-Powered Language Learning Applications for Speaking Skills Development

The Case of EFL Students at Mila University Centre

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements of the Master Degree in
Didactics of Foreign Languages

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Dedications

In the name of Allah, TheMost Merciful, and theMost Compassionate God's praise and peace upon our prophet Mohammed

To my parents,

My husband Faycel, and my little kids AbdElwadoud, Roudeina Rhitel,

My partner Fatima Tocheni,

My half soul Maram,

For all who answered the call with no hesitation or delay through day and night,

With deep love, this humble work I dedicate.

Nouria

In the Name of Allah, theMost Merciful,theMost Compassionate

I dedicate this work to:

My sun and moon; my parents for their endless love, prayers and sacrifices

My dear, beloved fiancé for his immersive support

My star sisters for enlightening my dark nights,

My beloved little brother Djawad

My dear nephews: Djihan, Loujain, Taim, Ghofran and Ziad

My dear partner Nouria for her hardwrork and kindness.

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Abstract

In today's globalized world, developing proficient speaking skills is crucial for effective communication and professional success. Hence, the role and importance of technology, particularly Artificial Intelligence-powered tools, have become increasingly significant in enhancing language learning processes. The present study sets out to get insight into English as a Foreign Language students' attitudes of AI-powered language learning applications and their effectiveness in developing speaking skills compared to traditional learning methods. Accordingly, within the context of this study, three research questions are raised: (1) What are the EFL students' attitudes towards AI-powered language learning apps for enhancing their speaking skill? (2) What are the EFL students' opinions regarding the effectiveness of AI-powered language learning apps on students' achievements in speaking proficiency compared to traditional methods? (3) How can AI-powered language learning apps serve as complementary tools for improving EFL learners' speaking skill? To answer these questions, data were collected through a mixed questionnaire administered face to face and via social media to one hundred sixty EFL students at the Department of Foreign Languages, Mila University Center. The results indicate that there is a general positive inclination towards AI-powered apps for speaking skill development among EFL students. Furthermore, while EFL students generally acknowledge the effectiveness of AI-powered apps in significantly improving speaking skills, many may not entirely endorse them as a superior replacement for traditional methods. The results also reveal that AI-powered language learning apps serve as useful complementary tools that enhance EFL learners' speaking proficiency by offering trusted and convenient feedback, comprehensive assessments of pronunciation and grammar, and vocabulary enrichment features. On the basis of the research findings, recommendations are suggested such as looking to integrate app-based learning into the field of FL for policymakers.

Keywords: AI-powered language learning apps, attitudes, EFL students, language learning, speaking skills.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AI: Artificial Intelligence

AIED: Artificial Intelligence in Education

Apps: Applications

ASR: Automatic Speech Recognition

CALL: Computer-Assisted Language Learning

CEO: Chief Executive Officer

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

FLL: Foreign Language Learning

ICT: Information and Communication Technologies

iOS: iPhone Operating System

MALL: Mobile-Assisted Language Learning

M-learning: Mobile Learning

PDAs: Personal digital assistants (smart phones)

TELL: Technology-Enhanced Language Learning

WAP: Wireless Application Protocol

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General Introduction

1. Background of the Study

Incorporating artificial intelligence (AI) in language learning, especially in the realm of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, has been a notable trend in recent years (Golonka et al., 2014; Hsieh et al., 2019). In particular, AI-powered applications have been prominently employed to enhance the speaking skills of EFL learners by providing platforms for speaking practice and feedback (Tao & Xu, 2020; Xu & Wang, 2021).

AI applications utilize speech recognition and other AI-driven features to allow EFL learners to practise speaking, receive instant feedback, and engage in conversations (Golonka et al., 2014; Hsieh et al., 2019). Despite claims that these technologies offer tailored and engaging learning experiences leading to improved speaking proficiency (Tao & Xu, 2020; Xu & Wang, 2021), their effectiveness remains a subject of ongoing investigation and debate (Golonka et al., 2014; Hsieh et al., 2019).

One aspect that has been relatively understudied is the attitudes of EFL learners towards AI-powered apps for speaking skill development (Golonka et al., 2014; Hsieh et al., 2019). Understanding learners' perceptions of the utility, ease of use, and satisfaction with these technologies is crucial as it influences their engagement and benefit from such tools (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh et al., 2003).

The exploration of EFL learners' attitudes towards AI-powered apps for speaking skill development can offer valuable insights into factors that influence their acceptance and usage of these tools (Tao & Xu, 2020; Xu & Wang, 2021). Therefore, the significance of this study appears through the attempt to explore EFL students' attitudes towards the use of AI-powered apps for speaking skill improvement, and explore their attitudes towards the effectiveness of these apps in enhancing their speaking abilities. The findings contribute to the existing

literature on AI integration in language learning and provide guidance and recommendations for improving speaking skills through AI-powered applications.

2. Statement of the Problem

In the process of language learning, the four language skills (writing, reading, speaking, and listening) play a central and mutually reinforcing role, with each complementing the others in the development of language proficiency. Speaking, in particular, demands special attention as it is challenging to master and serves as the primary observable aspect of a language learners' proficiency.According to Bueno Madrid and Mclaren (2006), speaking is one of the most difficult skills that EFL learners encounter. Despite this, it has been forced into the background while EFL teachers have spent most of their classroom time attempting to teach their learners how to write, read, and listen in the second language. Dwi Puteri (2021) highlighted that speaking is considered the most challenging skill for the majority of English learners, emphasizing the importance of mastering various elements such as connected speech, expressive devices, grammar and lexis, and negotiation language to become a competent speaker. Also, the lack of learning tools and the inadequate use of technology may hinder the improvement of students' speaking skills. Thus, one of the major solutions in order to hinder the gap of speaking proficiency is by integrating AI-powered language learning apps into EFL instructions; this step can be a game-changer for improving speaking skills. Because these tools offer personalized support, immersive experiences, continuous practice opportunities, and access to a wealth of language resources that collectively contribute to enhancing EFL learners' speaking proficiency. However, despite the growing popularity of these apps, there remains a gap in understanding the attitudes of EFL students towards their utilization for speaking skills development. This gap poses a significant challenge to teachers and policymakers seeking to integrate technology effectively in language learning. Thus, the overarching problem addressed in this study is the need to explore and understand EFL

students' attitudes towards AI-powered language learning apps specifically designed for speaking skills development.

3. Aims of the Study

This research aims to explore EFL students' attitudes towards AI-powered language learning apps for the speaking skill development. More importantly, it aims to:

1. Explore EFL students' opinions concerning the efficacy of AI-powered language learning apps for speaking skill development.

2. Explore the extent to which EFL students perceive AI-powered language learning apps as effective tools for improving speaking proficiency compared to traditional learning methods.

3. Provide recommendations for enhancing the speaking skill through the use of AI-powered language learning apps.

4. The Research Questions

Through this study, the researchers attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What are the EFL students' attitudes towards AI-powered language learning apps for enhancing their speaking skill?

2. What are the EFL students 'opinions regarding the effectiveness of AI-powered language learning apps on students' achievements in speaking proficiency compared to traditional methods?

3. How can AI-powered language learning apps serve as complementary tools for improving EFL learners' speaking skill?

5. Research Methodology

For the purpose of completing this study and collecting the required data, a questionnaire has been designed for EFL students. The current study is conducted at the University Centre of Mila, Institute of Letters and Languages, Department of Foreign Languages. The population that this study is concerned with consists of all EFL students at Mila University Centre in the academic year 2023\2024. The population is made up of almost 800 students in total, who belong to five levels; among them, 160 students who were selected to make up the research sample. The selection of all EFL levels comes as a result of the inability to collect answers from all the universities around the country.

6. Structure of the Study

This study consists of two chapters. The first chapter covers the review of the literature and the second one is the practical part. The first chapter refers to theoretical perspectives on speaking skills and AI-powered language learning apps in language learning; it is concerned with the two variables: the speaking skill and AI-Powered language Learning Apps, dedicating a separate section to each of these variables. The first section presents the definition of speaking along with its importance, its aspects and types, in addition to students' problems in speaking. Also, stages of speaking are mentioned. Finally, some suggestions for teaching and learning speaking in the FLL are included. The second section deals with theoretical background of information, communication and technology in education, artificial intelligence, applications of artificial intelligence in education, in addition to advantages and disadvantages of using AI language learning tools. The second chapter refers to exploring the role of AI language learning apps in English speaking skill development: student perspectives, it contains two sections. The first section devoted for an overview of the research method. The second section presents a detailed analysis and interpretation of the

students' questionnaire. After that, it ends with the discussion of the results gathered, and gives some suggestions and recommendations related to its findings.

Chapter One: Theoretical Perspectives on Speaking Skills and AI-Powered Language Learning Apps in Language learning

Introduction

Mastering speaking in a foreign language is a central goal for language learners. Speaking constitutes a vital component of human interaction and serves as an initial indicator of language proficiency. Additionally, it persists as a core aim throughout their educational journey. Despite its importance, many learners encounter difficulties in this area, making engaging in real-life conversational practice imperative. This chapter delves into the speaking skills; it emphasizes the theoretical definitions, importance, types, characteristics, stages and difficulties faced during the learning process. In addition, it explores some aspects of the AI-powered language learning apps starting with the theoretical background of information, communication and technology in education, artificial intelligence, applications of artificial intelligence in education, to end with advantages and disadvantages of using AI language learning tools.

Section One: The Speaking Skills

1.1.1. *Definition of the Speaking Skills*

The speaking skill has received great attention from many scholars throughout decades, and many definitions were set. Chaney (1998, p. 13) described speaking as "the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts". In this vein, speaking is considered as the crucial part of second language learning and teaching. Moreover, El-Koumy (2002.p, 85) defined speaking skills from two different perspectives: "From a skill-building perspective, speaking is defined as a collection of micro-skills, including vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation." He added that "speaking from the perspective of language as a whole is defined as the verbal process of meaning

construction and expression". Furthermore, Thornbury (2005, p.121) stated that speaking is an activity in real life carried out by a speaker to carry out his/ her ideas to interact with listeners. The activities are unplanned, and their continuity is based on situations. Speaking is a collaboration between two or more persons in a shared time and context to communicate opinions, information, or emotions. At this point, speaking involves the act of conveying one's thoughts or ideas within a specific setting or community, utilizing both verbal and non-verbal forms of communication in a designated language, situation, and context.

1.1.2.   *The Importance of Speaking Skills*

Most scholars and experts believe that the importance of speaking should be emphasized. Speaking skills are crucial for people to express their ideas and interact with each other, providing or asking for information. This aspect of communication is often described as "a very important part of everyday life" (Thornbury, 2005, p.1). In fact, being able to speak fluently will give EFL learners many opportunities. In a similar vein, Baker and Westrup (2003, p. 5) affirmed that "A student who can speak English well may have a greater chance for further education, finding employment, and gaining promotion". In addition, Renandya and Richards (2002) pointed out that "A large part of the world's language learners learn English in order to improve their oral ability" (p.201). In fact, "learners often evaluate their success in language learning as well as the effectiveness of their English course based on how much they feel they have improved in their language proficiency" (Richards, 2008, p. 19). I.e. many English-speaking students believe that speaking English is a top priority. In addition, they assess their success based on their speaking ability. In short, speaking is an essential aspect of expressing ideas and thoughts, and it is considered an essential method of communication.

1.1.3. Aspects of Speaking

Researchers and scholars consider speaking capacity as the central core of learning a language. According to Syakur (2007), there are at least five components of the speaking skill: comprehension, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency (as cited in Harchegani, 2013).

1.1.3.1. **Comprehension:** The Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary (2003, p. 83) defined comprehension as "the ability to understand something". It is related to the ability to comprehend the entirety of a conversation's meaning. From this perspective, learners must comprehend how to produce the various language points and when, why, and what form of language should be employed in such a setting. In this sense, understanding is essential in communication between a listener and a speaker.

1.1.3.2. **Grammar:** Burkart (1998) stated that learners must emphasise mainly grammar rules, vocabulary, and pronunciation in teaching speaking. Grammar is how the principles of any language organised. It allows people to express their ideas and thoughts effectively and adequately. It helps to make the speakers' meaning apparent. Thornbury (2005) claimed that gaining accuracy in terms of grammar requires the correct use of structures, the complexity of the sentences, and the well-organised clauses.

1.1.3.3. **Vocabulary:** Vocabulary is "all the words that a person knows or uses or all the words in a language" (Oxford Learners' Pocket Dictionary, 2008, p. 495). That is to say, vocabulary is the foundation of any language and it is necessary because we cannot speak without vocabulary. In addition, Harmer (2001) argued that forming well structured utterances and performing well in speaking requires knowledge of word classes. Hence, students must use words and expressions accurately, which means using adequate vocabularies in appropriate contexts.

1.1.3.4. **Pronunciation:** According to Richards and Renandya (2002) pronunciation refers to the students' correct use of sounds and their features to convey meanings, then their utterances are understandable to realise the intended objective. It involves both segmental and supra segmental features (intonation, stress placement, timing, rhythm). Given the essentiality of pronunciation in developing the speaking capability, Elder (2004) suggested that pupils should be supplied with a model-based technique to acquire detailed commentary on their errors and how to rectify them, particularly when compared with native speakers' expressions.

1.1.3.5. **Fluency:** Hughes (2002) defined fluency as the person's capacity to express the ideas, feelings and opinions adequately and meticulously to allow the listener to catch what the speaker wants to say, resulting in successful communication between them. Additionally, Hughes (2000) defined fluency as the production of coherent utterances smoothly and rapidly accurately. In the same context, Bygate (2009) stated that fluency appears primarily on two sides: the pace of delivery and regularity, in other words, a natural amount and the distribution of pauses.

To sum up, one should have a good command of the elements of speaking to speak purposefully and effectively and provide expressive and communicative speeches.

1.1.4. *Types of Speaking*

Brown (2000, pp. 271-273) described six types/ categories of speaking skills that students are required to engage in the classroom. Imitative speaking, intensive speaking, responsive speaking, transactional speaking, interpersonal speaking, and extensive speaking. They are illustrated as follows:

1.1.4.1. **Imitative Speaking**: The first type of speaking performance is imitative activity. This activity guides teachers to use drilling in the teaching process. The teacher asks students to drill word in which students simply repeat a phrase or structure (e.g., "what do you think." Or "can you take a glass of water?" for clarity and accuracy

1.1.4.2. **Intensive Speaking**: Intensive speaking goes one step beyond imitative to include any speaking performance that is designed to practice a specific phonological or grammatical aspect of language. The speaker must be aware of semantic properties in order to be able to respond.

1.1.4.3. **Responsive Speaking**: Responsive performance in speaking refers to the ability to provide replies to the questions or comments in meaningful and authentic way. It includes interaction and testing comprehension but at somewhat limited level of very short conversation, standard greeting and small talk, simple request and comments.

1.1.4.4. **Transactional Speaking:** The transactional speaking is more done in the dialogue. It is aimed at conveying or exchanging specific information, an extended form of responsive language. For example, a conversation which is done in pair work.

1.1.4.5. **Interpersonal Speaking:** Like in the transactional, interpersonal speaking is also carried out in a dialogue. Its purpose is to maintain social relationships rather than transmit facts and information. These conversations are little trickier for learners because they can involve some factors such as, slang, ellipsis, sarcasm, a casual register, etc. This often makes the learners find it difficult to understand the language, or even leads to misunderstandings.

1.1.4.6. **Extensive Speaking**: Extensive speaking primarily takes the form of monologue. In practice, advanced levels are called on to give extended monologue in the form of oral reports, summaries, or perhaps short speeches.

Based on the theory stated above, it can be summarized that speaking performance assessment task encompasses imitative, intensive, responsive, interactive and extensive. Several points should be considered when assessing speaking. Accordingly, students need to know at least the pronunciation, vocabularies, and language functions that they are going to use.

1.1.5. Students' Problems in Speaking

Ur (1996) has stated four main problems that students face while learning to speak English in the classroom. These problems are inhibition, lack of knowledge, low or uneven participation, and mother tongue use. We draw attention that we are not speaking about external factors like; the family, social status, previous learning experiences etc…; we are focusing on problems related directly to the student and his psyche.

1.1.5.1.   Inhibition: Ur (1991, p121) stated that "learners are often inhibited about trying to say things in a foreign language in the classroom: worried about making mistakes, fearful of criticism or losing face, or simply shy of the attention that their speech attracts". Additionally, Guiora et al (1972) and Ehrman (1996) argued that inhibition appears when students want to speak in the classroom. They are worried about making mistakes and fearful of criticism either by their teacher or their classmates. It has a relation with the language ego, which allows the students to minimise the inhibition that may hinder their learning success (As stated in Brown , 2007).

1.1.5.2.   Nothing to Say: The second problem is that learners have nothing to say, and they are demotivated to express themselves. Baker and Westrup (2003) also supported this idea by stating that it is tough for learners to express themselves when their teachers ask them to do so because of the lack of thoughts and opinions, the lack of vocabulary and expressions, and using grammar adequately. What is needed, then, is to search for a motive that makes students engage in the discussion of the chosen topic. In another way, they have to feel 'free to speak' not to feel 'guilty' of not to speak.

1.1.5.3.   Low or Uneven Participation: Differences in personalities are a fact that no one can deny. Students in a classroom have various perspectives and styles; we find talkative ones who tend to dominate their classmates, but at the same time, silent students are many. These latter 'allow or permit', indirectly, the former to dominate them. Under the pressure of

all kinds of inhibition (fear of making mistakes, anxiety, shyness,…) besides the large number of students per class, a new problem related to time given to each student emerges. Moreover, the type of some modules (lectures) gives no opportunity to students to speak; they are almost all the time listening only. So, their last chance to speak as much as they can is during the Oral Expression module sessions.

1.1.5.4. **Mother Tongue Use:** In fact, where learners share the same mother tongue, they often prefer to use it in communication. Harmer (1991) declared that different reasons lead students to use their mother tongue in the classroom. The first reason is when students encounter an unfamiliar topic and are asked to discuss it; they tend to resort to their mother tongue. The second reason is that using the mother tongue is effortless and easy for students if they are not required to speak English. The final reason refers to teachers' use of the mother tongue, which makes learners feel at ease and comfortable doing so in their speaking classes

1.1.6. Stages of Speaking

Bashir, Azeem, and Dogar (2011, p. 36) suggested five stages of speaking skills. They explained each stage in the following table:

Stages	Explanation	Speaking skill
Stage I: Pre-production	Teachers should focus attention on listening comprehension activities and build a receptive vocabulary. English language learners at this stage will need many repetitions of English. Some students will be able to	In the first stage of language acquisition, the learner can barely understand anything. There is very little actual speaking ability, apart from some words and sentences. In stage two, when she or she knows enough to converse, this begins to

	repeat only everything that someone says; This is the silent period. Students may duplicate gestures and movements to show comprehension.	change.
Stage II: Early Production	At this stage, students try to speak some words. They can use straightforward language chunks that have been memorized, although these chunks may not always be used correctly. Learner listens to their talkative classmates and extends their vocabulary.	In this second stage, the learner can speak well in relatively structured and predictable tasks. There are more genuine two-way conversations with speakers of the language. The result is quite a bit of "fluency" in comprehending language. It uses a variety of structures in connected discourse with an ever-growing vocabulary.
Stage III: Speech Emergence	In stage three, the learner can understand new information, but it still helps if that information is still specially geared to a new speaker's needs. The critical ingredient is understanding the background information that everyone in the culture knows about, which	At this stage, Students have a good vocabulary of words and use simple phrases and sentences to communicate with others. They can ask simple questions, which may be grammatically correct or wrong. Students try to initiate short conversations with classmates. They can read and understand easy stories.

	must be learned in connection with the language.	
Stage IV: Intermediate Fluency	English language learners could use more complex sentences in speaking and writing. Comprehension of all subjects' content is increasing. Learners can work with some teacher support. Teachers have to focus on learning strategies. Students in this stage can understand more complex concepts.	In Stage Four, the learner learns most from everyday native-to-native speech. The learner will understand most input, provided he/she attends to it. Native speakers may talk about him/her in his/her presence, intending to tease him/her and get a reaction. He/she will undoubtedly hear that they are talking but may not "hear" a thing they say in a more profound sense.

	Students at this stage will be near native in their ability to perform in content area learning. Students have needed continuous support from the classroom in reading, writing, and speaking.	Here, the learner has increasing facility in discussions using his/her vocabulary without proper preparation.
Stage V : Advanced Fluency		

Table 1-1: Stages of Speaking (adapted from Bashir et al., 2011)

In the communicative approach to language teaching, teachers assist students in building their knowledge by offering authentic practice that equips them for real-life communication scenarios. They guide students in developing the ability to construct grammatically correct, logically coherent sentences that suit specific contexts, all while ensuring their pronunciation is clear and understandable.

1.1.7. Suggestions for Teaching and Learning the Speaking Skill

Gilakjani (2016, p. 61) declared that **"**There are some useful suggestions for EFL teachers to teach speaking skill effectively." EFL teachers should:

1. Provide enough opportunity to EFL learners to speak the language through providing a rich environment that involves group work and real materials.

2. Help learners take part in speaking tasks.

3. Increase their learners' speaking time and observe them.

4. Show positive reactions when explain their learner's answer.

5. Ask eliciting questions to motivate learners to speak more.

6. Not correct their learners' pronunciation mistakes directly while they are speaking because direct correction will distract learners from their speech.

7. Include speaking tasks in and out of their class activities.

8. Move around classes to convince that their learners are on the right track and see whether they need their help while they are working individually or whole group.

9. Give vocabulary in advance that their learners need in speaking tasks.

10. Identify difficulties encountered by learners who are not able to express in the target language and provide more times to practice the spoken language.

11. Place more emphasis on the quality of learners' books at the very beginning levels.

12. Give sufficient time to speaking and phonetic drill of learners.

13. Provide a friendly environment for EFL learners to easily participate in speaking activities.

14. Develop bravery and confidence in learners to ask more questions in their classes.

15. Give motivation for learners to be able to talk, and

16. Encourage EFL learners to listen to CNN and BBC.

Section Two: AI-Powered Language Learning Apps

In the 21st Century, education has seen significant advancements due to Artificial Intelligence (AI), leading students and educators to explore how these technologies can enhance learning and teaching. This has led to the development of applications that simplify language learning and attract students' attention. This chapter provides a historical overview of AI in the context of language learners, defining the different language learning apps, discussing their benefits and drawbacks, exploring their historical background, and examining how they affect language learners.

1.2.1. *Theoretical Background of Information, Communication and Technology in Education*

Integrating technology in education has been inconclusive in its benefits for teaching and learning processes (Pierson, 2001). Technology integration involves teachers effectively using content and technological expertise to benefit student learning and prepare them for the modern digital environment. ICT aims to provide a dynamic and proactive teaching-learning environment (Arnseth & Hatlevik, 2012). It enhances networking learning communities to solve globalization challenges (Albirini, 2006). UNESCO (2018) defined ICT as the use of digital technology to enable individuals and institutions to exchange, use, and access information anytime and anywhere.

1.2.1.1   Computer - Assisted language learning: CALL dates back to the 1960s and became more widely available in the 1970s with the advent of personal computers (PCs). It is an interactive approach that allows learners to work at their own pace and capacity. CALL employs computer technology in all stages of the teaching/learning process, including presentation, practice, and feedback (Kumar &Srechari, 2009).

1.2.1.2. Technology-Enhanced language learning: The distinction between Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and Technology-Enhanced Learning (TELL) lies in the decreasing visibility of the computer, replaced by a focus on the communication media enabled by technology, which is often unseen (Kranthi, 2017, p.30). TELL encompasses the impact of technology on language education and the use of technology in language learning courses, including those for foreign and second languages (Zou & Thomas, 2020). Recent years have seen technology being used to both assist and enhance language learning, with teachers employing various technological tools to support their teaching, engage students in the learning process, provide authentic examples of the target culture, and connect their classrooms. Additionally, some technology tools enable teachers to differentiate instruction and adapt classroom activities and homework assignments, thus improving the language learning experience (Patel, 2017).

1.2.1.3. E-Learning: E-Learning consists of two parts: "E" for electronic and "learning" for the process of acquiring knowledge. Garrison and Anderson (2003), as cited in Rais and Yusup, (2004, p. 50), defined E-learning as network or online learning occurring in a formal setting, utilizing a variety of multimedia technologies. It is a system supported by digital hardware and software, either online (synchronous) or offline (asynchronous). In addition, Downes (2005) noted that E-learning has evolved over about ten years from a radical concept to a mainstream method widely accepted and provided by most colleges and universities. E-learning incorporates various forms of learning, such as media and broadcasting, to achieve optimal teaching/learning outcomes, making use of CD-ROMs, software, documents, audio, and video stored on computers. This benefits students who lack internet access but can use communicative skills to transfer information and share knowledge and experiences via the internet (Garisson& Anderson, 2003).

1.2.2. Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a rapidly growing technological field that has the potential to change every aspect of our social interactions (Arkin, 2022). In the field of education, Al has begun to develop new teaching and learning solutions that are currently being tested in a variety of settings.

1.2.2.1. Definition of Artificial Intelligence: Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a rapidly advancing technological field with the potential to revolutionize social interactions. In education, AI is developing new teaching and learning solutions currently being tested in various settings. Copeland (2021) defined AI as the ability of a digital computer or robot to perform tasks associated with intelligent beings, simulating human intelligence processes. It includes expert systems, natural language processing, speech recognition, and machine vision. AI has progressed from simple categorization and pattern recognition tasks to systems making predictions based on historical data, with deep learning causing a revolution in the twenty-first century (Petersson, 2021). Modern AI encompasses four types: Reactive AI, Limited Memory Machines, Theory of Mind, and Self-Aware AI, each with different capabilities and applications (Petersson, 2021).

1.2.2.2. Types of Artificial Intelligence: Petersson (2021) explained how modern artificial intelligence has progressed from simple categorization and pattern recognition tasks to systems that can make predictions based on historical data. Deep learning is causing a revolution. In the twenty-first century, machine intelligence has advanced rapidly, resulting in such ground-breaking products as self-driving cars and virtual assistants Alexa and Siri. The four types of Al described in Petersson's article (2021) are listed below.

*1.2.2.2.1. Reactive Artificial Intelligence:*The algorithms used in this early form of AI have no memory and are reactive, meaning that the output is always the same given a specific

input. This type of AI-powered machine learning model performs well for simple classification and pattern recognition tasks Gunady, Fang, Majumdar (2021). They can process large amounts of data and appear intelligent. However, they are incapable of analyzing situations that include incomplete data or require historical knowledge. An example of Reactive AI is the famous IBM Chess program that beat the world champion, Garry Kasparov.

1.2.2.2.2. *Limited Memory Machines:* The foundational algorithms in machines with limited memory are designed to replicate the neural connections in our brains, aiming to emulate how human cognition works. These deep learning machines excel at handling complex tasks and making predictions based on historical data. They can perform intricate tasks like automated driving. Despite their impressive abilities, these machines are considered to possess narrow intelligence because they fall short in areas where humans excel. They require substantial amounts of data to learn tasks that humans can grasp with just a few examples. For instance, in self-driving cars, sensors are used to detect pedestrians, steep roads, traffic signals, and more, enabling the vehicle to make informed driving decisions.

1.2.2.2.3. *Theory of Mind:* This type of potential AI is characterized by its ability to understand human motives and reasoning, thereby providing personalized outcomes based on an individual's intentions and requirements. This concept, known as the Theory of Mind, is a key aspect of artificial general intelligence. Unlike limited memory machines, this AI can learn from fewer examples, contextualize and generalize data, and apply knowledge to a broad array of problems Baron (2000). While progress is being made in developing Artificial Emotional Intelligence, which involves recognizing and empathizing with human emotions, current systems still lack a Theory of Mind and are far from achieving self-awareness, which represents the next stage in AI's evolution.

1.2.2.2.4. ***Self-Aware Artificial Intelligence:*** This form of AI is not only aware of the mental states of other entities but also of its own. Artificial super intelligence, also referred to as self-aware AI, is characterized by a machine possessing intelligence comparable to that of a typical human and capable of vastly surpassing human cognition by autonomously creating even more intelligent iterations of itself.

1.2.3. ***Applications of Artificial Intelligence in Education***

Artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly prevalent in various sectors of society, offering efficient solutions to complex problems in industries such as healthcare, entertainment, finance, and education. AI technologies are enhancing our daily lives, making them more convenient and effective (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019).In the field of education, AI in Education (AIED) is a specialized area focused on creating computers that can perform cognitive tasks like learning and problem-solving, traditionally associated with human intelligence. AIED has been a subject of scientific exploration for over three decades, with a current emphasis on understanding and optimizing the use of AI techniques in education.

1.2.3.1. **The Use of Mobile Apps in Language Learning:** The rapid advancement of technology has brought about a revolutionary change in education. Technology has made it possible to overcome geographical barriers, allowing education to reach students wherever they are. Students today heavily rely on technology in their daily lives, finding it valuable, easy to use, and a motivator in the learning process, including for learning foreign languages (Cakir, 2016). The concept of learning through technology is known as Educational Technology (ET) or 'e-learning'. It involves the deliberate use of networked Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the process of learning and teaching (Naidu, 2006). In simpler terms, it refers to using the latest scientific and technological discoveries to enhance the teaching-learning process.

1.2.3.2. **Mobile Learning:** Mobile technology plays a crucial role in educational advancement. Tyler (2002) defined mobile technology as devices like PDAs or smartphones that can store, access, create, modify, organize, or manipulate data from any location without being tethered to a specific spot. In essence, this includes personal digital assistants (PDAs) or smart phones, which are incredibly helpful and useful due to their mobility.

The rapid growth of mobile technologies has given rise to "mobile learning," a new wave of e-learning. Kukulska-Hulme and Traxler (2005) defined mobile learning as being concerned with learner mobility, allowing learners to engage in educational activities without being restricted to a specific physical location. This emphasizes the term "mobility," which refers to the ability to move freely and easily from one place to another.

M-learning is also characterized by the mobility of technology, learning, and the learner (El-Hussein and Cronje, 2010). Firstly, the mobility of technology refers to mobile devices with Wi-Fi and Wireless Application Protocol (WAP) capabilities, which deliver information and learning materials via the internet or satellites, enabling learners to study anywhere, anytime. Secondly, mobile learning enhances the mobility and dynamism of the learning process. Mobile devices allow learners to experience personalized and unique learning and easily connect with others for collaborative learning, which helps them achieve their learning goals (Sharples et al., 2005).

Finally, mobile learning enhances the mobility of individual learners. Many learners prefer independence and freedom, especially in learning, as it helps them develop a sense of individuality, community, and ubiquity, making learning more enjoyable and effective (Kim and Kwon, 2012). Mobile learning, therefore, refers to the use of mobile devices as educational tools to access learning materials anytime and anywhere.

1.2.3.3. **Mobile-Assisted Language Learning:** The burgeoning literature on mobile learning has sparked a new approach in language learning, particularly in learning English as a foreign language, known as Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL). MALL is described as an approach to language learning that is enhanced or assisted through the use of handheld devices. Miangah and Nezarat (2012) stated that "MALL deals with the use of mobile technology in language learning. Students don't always have to study a second language in the classroom. They may have the opportunity to learn it using mobile devices when they desire and where they are." In essence, MALL utilizes mobile devices in language learning, providing students the flexibility to acquire the language in both classroom and non-classroom environments.

MALL, derived from Mobile Learning (M-Learning) and Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), differs from CALL in its use of personal, portable devices that enable new ways of learning, emphasizing continuity or spontaneity of access across different contexts of use (Kukulska-Hulme and Shield, 2008). On the other hand, CALL is a term used for the collection of technologies aimed at enhancing creativity and collaboration, particularly through social networking (Beatty, 2010), describing the use of computer technology in language learning. Therefore, MALL can be seen as a branch of M-Learning and an evolution of CALL.

The rapid transition from CALL to MALL has significantly influenced foreign language learners' attitudes toward language learning (Kukulska-Hulme, 2009, as cited in Cakir, 2016). MALL is considered an ideal solution to language barriers in terms of place and time (Miangah and Nezarat, 2012). The development of mobile technologies has led to the emergence of mobile applications (apps) as tools to support MALL and assist students in their language learning endeavors.

1.2.3.4.   Mobile Apps for Language Learning: Mobile technologies offer the advantage of "anywhere and anytime" access, supporting the adaptation of MALL in educational contexts to engage students' learning abilities (Kukulska-Hulme, 2006). Research on MALL indicates that mobile devices and their apps are beneficial for foreign language learning, particularly due to their interactivity, ubiquity, and portability features (Klimova, 2018).

A mobile application, commonly known as an app, is a type of application software designed to run on mobile devices such as smartphones or tablets (Techopedia, 2013). Mobile apps provide users with services similar to those accessed on PCs. They can be downloaded from app stores such as Google Play for Android and Apple's App Store for iOS, with some apps being free to use while others require payment.

In English language instruction, mobile apps are essential and convenient tools for providing EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students with an easy way to acquire language skills online and offline. These apps aim to meet educational objectives, improve learning quality, and facilitate the learning process through the careful selection of tools such as quizzes and games. According to Rossing et al. (2012), using mobile apps makes learning fun, valuable, collaborative, and useful. In addition, Gilgen (2004) argued that mobile apps are user-friendly and interesting in language learning. Other studies (e.g., Böhm and Constantine, 2016; Zou and Li, 2015) indicated that mobile learning applications can provide EFL students with diverse resources to help practice English, increase academic success, build positive attitudes toward learning English, develop motivation, and prompt a desire to study the language.

Language learning apps are continuously being developed and are widely owned by a large majority of learners, particularly in learning English as a foreign language. El-Hussein

and Cronje (2011) noted that the number of teachers and students using mobile apps as teaching and learning tools is rapidly growing. Numerous language learning applications, such as Duolingo, Memrise, Babbel, Busuu, and Ling, among others, can be accessed for free,requiring an internet connection.

- **What is Duolingo?**

Duolingo is a popular language learning app founded in November 2011 by Guatemalan engineer Luis Von Ahn and Swiss computer scientist Severin. The organization's slogan is "providing free language education to the world" and has more than 30 million registered users, according to its website. It offers multiple languages for English speakers and non-English speakers. Duolingo is an excellent language learning tool and learners can learn new words during the Duolingo application process based on their personal preferences (Munday, 2016). Edwards (2020) defined Duolingo as a web-based language learning experience based on game mechanics. It provides digital opportunities for students of all ages and abilities to learn multiple new languages.

Graph1-1: Duolingo profile Image

Duolingo is also defined as "a multifunctional social platform dedicated to language learning". It can be "downloaded to a mobile phone to talk or interact with a native English

speaker" (Alfuhaid, 2021, p. 9). This new learning tool has attracted the attention of researchers and has become an alternative to traditional methods such as textbooks.

Pros:	Cons:
- Offers content related to 30+ languages. Best for reading, listening, and speaking skills. - Its basic lessons are free. - Offers a 14-day free trial in the Duolingo Super. - Offers gamification learning techniques to learn quickly. - The best source to learn the basics of grammar - It offers many additional features for free. - It is a free platform for School teachers.	- No writing practice. - Not good for more Advanced learners. - Repetitive lesson - Lack of customer service. - Time-consuming for some users. - May not be enough to achieve fluency.

Table 1-2: Pros and Cons of Duolingo App for Language Learning (https://alllearningapps.com/duolingo-review/)

- **What is HelloTalk?**

HelloTalk was launched in 2012 by founder and CEO Zackery Ngai. It is considered the best language exchange app to help you find language partners for conversations worldwide. You can easily make friends with native speakers and practice your target language.

According to Similler web, The monthly visitors of Hello Talk are one Million on its site. Most of its visitors are from the United States, China, Brazil, and Switzerland. Although, it is a Chinese app, its international team is based in Hong Kong. It is available for iOS, Desktop, and Android devices. Its Android app has 10 Million+ downloads. Its iOS app rating is 4.6, and its Android app rating is 4.5 out of 5.
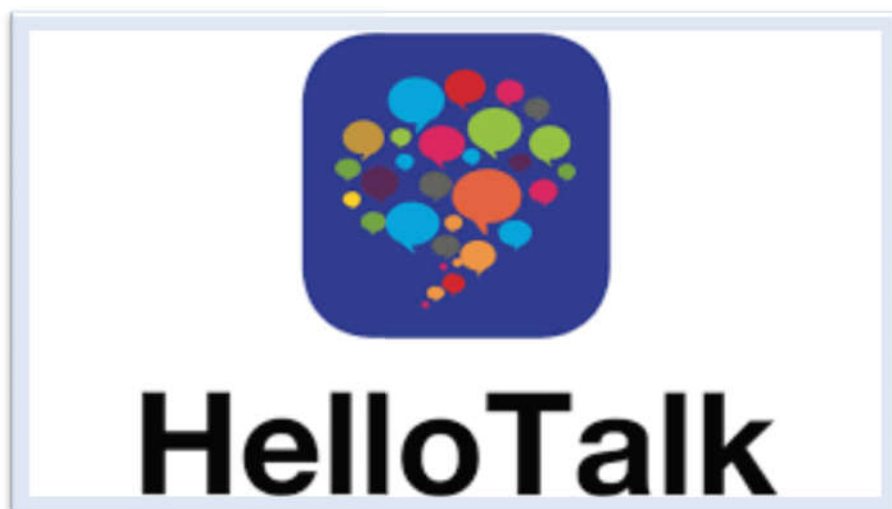
Graph 1-2: Hello Talk profile Image

Hello Talk Review Verdict

Hello Talk is a language exchange platform that connects people worldwide interested in learning new languages. It has one of the largest language exchange communities globally. This platform offers various tools for language learning, including text, voice, video chat, interactive Voice rooms, and Lives (Rivera, 2017). It also has built-in aids for translation, pronunciation, transliteration, and corrections. Trust pilot has given Hello Talk a 4.5 out of 5 star rating.

Pros:	Cons:
- You can chat with people in 150+	- The free version is very limited

languages. - It is available for free with limited features. - Offers Live and Voiceroom to learn a language quickly. - It also offers private classes to learn a language. - You can chat with native speakers worldwide. - 30 Million+ learners have already joined this App.	- It does not teach a language. - You're at the mercy of others.

Table 1-3: Pros and Cons of Hello Talk App for Language Learning

(https://www.google.com/search?q=hello+talk&tbm=isch&ved=2ahUKEwjoi7eY_YKGAxWmnCcCHa1sCUEQ2)

- **What is ELSA Speak?**

ELSA Speak Accent Reduction is an application (app) for non-native English accents and stands for English Speaking Assistant (Becker & Edalatishams, 2019). It also uses artificial intelligence (AI) such as automatic speech recognition (ASR) to provide information about the accuracy of a user's pronunciation. The activities provided focus on training English

pronunciation, including initials, finals, minimal pairs, schwa, th-sounds, and consonant clusters, depending on the user's proficiency level.

Graph 1-3: ELSA profile Image

ELSA Speak Review Verdict

ELSA Speak is a mobile app that uses AI to analyze and provide feedback on English pronunciation. It offers various exercises and lessons to practice pronunciation. While praised for its accurate feedback and interactive lessons. Overall, ELSA Speak is a valuable tool for learners struggling with specific sounds or improving fluency.

Pros:	Cons:
- Improve English pronunciation quickly.	- No additional study material to learn.
- Its app has 10 Million+ Downloads.	- Practice exercises can be repetitive.
- It offers 44 English lessons for free.	- Slow loading speed times.
- Offers 7100+ Lessons on Various Topics.	- Not suitable for writing and grammar.

- Easy to follow your progress.	
- Offers feedback on your pronunciation.	

Table 1-4: Pros and Cons of ELSA App for Language Learning

(https://alllearningapps.com/elsa-speak-review/#ELSA_Speak_Review)

- **What is Babbel?**

Babbel was founded in 2007. Thomas Holl, Toine Diepstraten, Lorenz Heine, and Markus Witte are the founders of this platform. It offers both self-paced and live classes related to 14 languages. According to Similler web. The Monthly visitors of Babbel are 8.6 Million+ on its site. It has mostly visitors from the United States, Germany, France, and Italy.

Babbel offers video lessons and live classes related to 14 languages, such as Spanish, French, German, Russian, Italian, Dutch, Portuguese, Danish, Indonesian, Norwegian, Polish, Swedish, and Turkish.

A certified language teacher provides all classes. Babbel offers live classes related to limited languages such as German, Spanish, French, and Italian. It also offers a podcast related to all languages.

Graph 1-4: Babbel profile Image

(https://www.google.com/search?q=babbel&tbm=isch&ved=2ahUKEwiBuuKbjIOGAxULry cCHYDUAHYQ2-cCegQIABAA&oq=babbel&gs_z)

- **What is Busuu?**

Busuu was founded in 2008 by Bernhard Niesne, making it the best platform to learn language skills. It offers content related to 14+ languages, including the most popular ones like English, Spanish, Japanese, French, and German. According to Similler web, The Monthly visitors of Busuu are 4.5 Million+ on its site. It has mostly visitors from the United States, Brazil, Turkey, Mexico, and Germany. This platform is trusted by a global community of 120 million learners. Its interactive community is very helpful for those who want to practice their language skills. So, it is a learning platform for new and advanced learners.

Graph 1-5: Busuu profile Image

(https://alllearningapps.com/busuu-review/)

- **What is Rosetta Stone?**

Rosetta Stone was Founded in 1992. Eugene and his brother Allen Stoltzfus, Dr. John Fairfield, and Greg Kiem founded this platform. This is a platform to learn new languages. It offers audio and images to teach you words and phrases. According to Simillerweb, The Monthly visitors of Rosetta Stone are 2.2 million on its site. It has mostly visitors from the United States, Ecuador, Canada, and the United Kingdom. Rosetta Stone offers content and resources to learn Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), Russian, Spanish (Latin America), Spanish (Spain), Swedish, Dutch, Filipino (Tagalog), French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Irish, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Latin, Persian (Farsi), Polish, Portuguese (Brazilian), and Turkish. This platform teaches you through real-world scenarios, interactive activities, and audio from native speakers. You can easily memorize new words related to the target language because it

provides opportunities to practice new words and phrases in multiple contexts.

Graph 1-6: Rosetta Stone profile Image

(https://alllearningapps.com/rosetta-stone-review/)

1.2.4. Advantages and Disadvantages of Using AI Language Learning Tools

AI language learning tools have revolutionized the way people acquire and improve their language skills. Leveraging artificial intelligence algorithms, these tools offer a wide range of advantages, from personalized learning experiences to real-time feedback (Karakas, 2023). However, they also come with their own set of challenges and limitations.

1.2.4.1. Advantages of Using AI Language Learning Tools: There are several advantages to using AI language learning tools for language learning, some of them are:

1.2.4.1.1. Personalized learning experiences: AI-powered tools can analyze a student's language proficiency and learning style and adjust the content and pace of lessons accordingly, providing a personalized learning experience (Chen, Zou, Xie, & Cheng, 2021). i.e. AI-driven platforms and applications can adapt to learners' individual needs and learning styles. By analysing learner data and leveraging adaptive algorithms, AI can identify areas of weakness and provide targeted exercises, feedback, and improvement suggestions.

1.2.4.1.2. Real-time feedback: AI-powered tools can provide immediate feedback to students (Porter, & Grippa, 2020), helping them identify areas of improvement and progress in their language learning journey .i.e., AI facilitates the delivery of prompt and helpful feedback to students. AI-driven grading systems can swiftly evaluate assignments, quizzes, and tests, offering instant feedback to students. This timely feedback enables students to recognize their strengths and weaknesses, pinpoint areas needing improvement, and adapt accordingly in the moment. By promptly addressing areas of misunderstanding, students can optimize their learning process and advance more efficiently.

1.2.4.1.3. Accessibility and Flexibility: AI language learning tools are often available online or as mobile apps, making them easily accessible from any device with an internet connection whenever it suits the learners (Porter & Grippa, 2020). This allows learners to study at their convenience and from any location.

1.2.4.1.4. Cultural Exposure: Through interactive lessons and real-life scenarios, AI language learning tools can introduce users to different cultural elements, such as customs, traditions, and social norms. This can help learners gain a better understanding and appreciation of other cultures (Karakaş,2023).

1.2.4.2.   Disadvantages of Using AI Language Learning Tools: While the uses of artificial intelligence tools bring significant benefits, they also present challenges and concerns that need to be addressed. De la Vall and Araya (2023, pp7573-7574) stated that "There are some ethical considerations to keep in mind when using AI in language learning, including":

1.2.4.2.1. Privacy: It is important to ensure that language learners' personal information is safe and not shared without their permission. This includes language proficiency levels, learning styles, and progress.

1.2.4.2.2. Fairness and Bias: AI algorithms can sometimes perpetuate or amplify existing biases in language learning materials or teaching practices. It is essential to carefully consider and address any potential biases in AI language learning tools to ensure that they are fair and equitable for all learners.

1.2.4.2.3. Accessibility: Not all learners have equal access to technology and the internet, affecting their ability to use AI language learning tools. It is crucial to consider the needs and resources of all learners and ensure that AI language learning tools are accessible to all.

1.2.4.2.4. Human Interaction: While AI language learning tools can be helpful to supplement to traditional teaching methods, it is essential to remember the value of human interaction in language learning. AI tools should not completely replace human teachers and should be used as a supplement to traditional teaching methods.

1.2.4.2.5. Transparency: AI language learning tools need to be transparent about how they operate and use learner data. This can help ensure that learners are informed about how the tools work and can make informed decisions about their use.

To sum up, it is important to realize both AI language learning tools' benefits and also the problems and limitations they can cause. Using AI effectively requires training and experience to become familiar with its best uses. Consequently, this familiarity enables individuals to achieve effective results, drive innovation, and develop educational initiatives.

Conclusion

In conclusion, bringing together traditional theories on speaking skills and the advanced features of AI language learning apps creates a great opportunity to improve language education. Combining the insights from these theories with AI technology allows learners to enjoy more engaging, efficient, and personalized speaking practice. This approach not only helps learners become better at communicating but also meets the varied needs of students in this technological era.

Chapter Two: Exploring the Role of AI Language Learning Apps in English Speaking Skill Development: Student Perspectives

Introduction

This chapter constitutes the fieldwork of our study and comprises two major sections. The first section provides design of the study, covering the following headings: research approach, population and sampling techniques, and data collection methods. In this section, we discuss the administration procedure and provide a description of the research tool. The second section presents the analysis of the questionnaire and interprets the results, in addition to discussing the overall findings. To conclude the chapter, recommendations are provided to both teachers and learners, offering guidance on how to effectively utilize the findings of the study in educational practice.

Section One: Design of the Study

This section aims to provide the reader with the approach used in conducting this research and the reasons behind choosing the sample, and the method utilized in the study.

2.1.1. Research Approach

According to Dawson (2019, p.13) "neither qualitative nor quantitative research is better; they are just different, as both have strengths and weaknesses". On this basis, this research follows a mixed methods approach. "A mixed methods approach is an approach to inquiry that combines or associates both qualitative and quantitative forms" (Creswell, 2009, p.4).

This research aims to explore the EFL students' attitudes towards AI-powered language learning apps for speaking skills development by addressing a bunch of related questions in an attempt to have their answers gathered in an organized way. Hence, the need to collect

information by administering a questionnaire for the chosen population makes using a mixed methods approach important.

2.1.2. Population and Sampling

In an attempt to define the "population", Bhandari (2020) stated that a population is an entire group you want to conclude about. Similarly, Johnson and Christensen (2014) described the population as the large group a researcher aspires to generalize the sample results. Likewise, the term "Sample" was referred to as "a set of elements or cases taken to form a larger population" (p.876). However, "sampling" refers to "the process of drawing a sample from a population" (p.877). Sampling is essential, as it is difficult to speak to everyone in the research population.

For this study, the population of interest is EFL students at the University of Mila, Institute of Letters and Languages, Department of Foreign Languages. One- fifth (1/5) of the previously mentioned population, which represents 160 students, were selected to be the sample for this study. The sample was selected using multiple non-probability convenience purposive sampling. For practical reasons, the researchers could not select the sample randomly, but the participants who hold characteristics of interest and who were available and accessible.

The researchers opted for EFL students at Mila university center as participants; after it was not possible to make it a national or even a regional study due to the EFL students' relevance and accessibility; they are directly relevant to the topic of the study. Their experiences with language learning, particularly in the context of English as a foreign language, are pertinent to understanding their attitudes towards AI-powered language learning apps for speaking skills development. In addition, students from our university are readily accessible, making it convenient to conduct the research. This can result in more nuanced and

insightful responses to questionnaire items, offering deeper insights into attitudes towards AI-powered language learning apps.

2.1.3. Data Collection Method

In the pursuit of the aims of the study, a questionnaire is used as a data collection tool, administered to EFL students of Mila university center so as to obtain the necessary information. The questionnaire is one of the most valuable and supportive research instruments for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. Brown (2001) defines the questionnaire as "any written instrument that presents respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers"(p. 06). In a simple way, it is a set of written items to be answered by respondents to get information about a particular topic.

2.1.3.1. Administration of the Questionnaire: The students' questionnaire aims at exploring the EFL students 'attitudes towards AI-Powered language Learning Apps for speaking skills development by addressing a bunch of related questions in an attempt to have their answers gathered in an organized way. Hence, the researchers used Google forms as platform to deliver the questionnaire besides the paper version.

The respondents are informed about the significance of their answers in the progress of the research, and that their responses are intended to be utilized for study purposes merely. Of course, students are also informed that filling in the questionnaire, through ticking the appropriate box, remains anonymous and voluntary in order for them to express themselves freely and provide truthful answers.

2.1.3.2. Description of the Questionnaire: The students' questionnaire is made up of 21 questions. It includes various types of questions: open-ended, closed-ended, and multiple-choice questions. They are answered by ticking the corresponding boxes and justifying or

giving their opinions or suggestions where it is necessary. It is introduced by a brief paragraph in which the aim of the questionnaire as well as the procedure of answering the questions is explained.

The students' questionnaire is divided into four sections:

Section One: General Information

This section aims to gather foundational demographic data to contextualize respondents' perspectives and experiences with language learning, particularly English. It includes inquiries about current English proficiency level, and whether English specialization was voluntary or imposed.

Section Two: The Speaking Skill

Here, respondents assess their speaking abilities and habits, reflecting on their frequency of practice, preferences for solo or group practice, and the types of speaking activities they find most beneficial. Additionally, they reflect on what constitutes a good speaker, identify their personal speaking challenges, reasons for reluctance to speak in the classroom, and motivations for improving speaking skills.

Section Three: AI-powered Language Learning Apps for Speaking Skill Development

This segment delves into respondents' familiarity and comfort levels with AI-driven language learning tools, particularly for speaking skill development. It seeks opinions on the effectiveness of such apps compared to traditional methods, trust in their feedback accuracy, and whether they believe AI tools can replace human instructors. Motivation levels while using AI apps and concerns about their efficacy are also explored.

Section Four: Suggestions

In this final section, respondents are invited to share any additional insights or experiences they have regarding AI-powered language learning apps for speaking skill development. This open-ended prompt encourages respondents to provide constructive feedback or suggestions for improvement based on their personal experiences.

Section Two: Analysis and Discussion of the Results

2.2.1. Analysis and Interpretation of the Results

Section One: General Information

1. **Current English Proficiency Level**
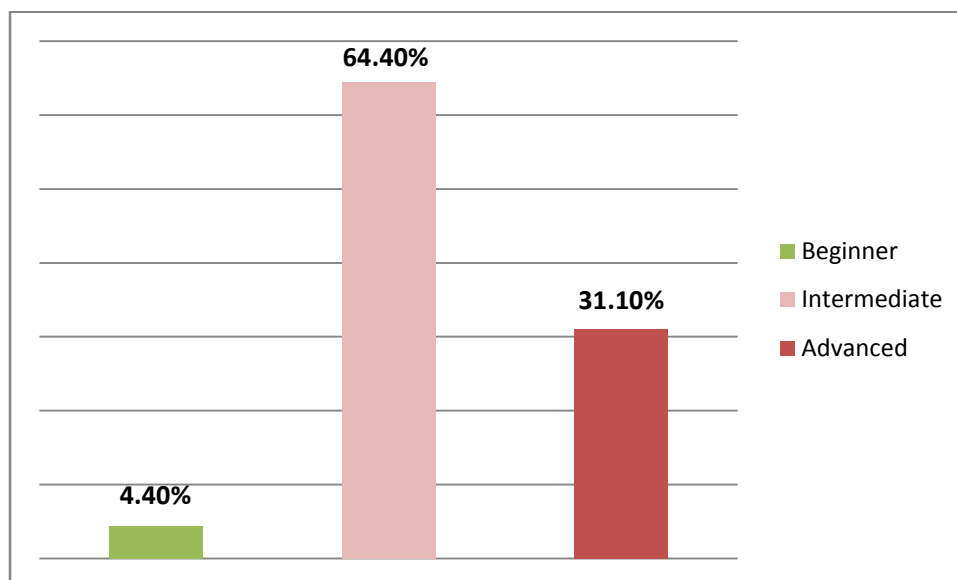
Figure 2-1: The Students' Current English Proficiency Level

This question aims to explore the students' current English proficiency level. Figure 2-1 revealed that 64.4% of the participants had an intermediate level of English. 31.1% of the students enjoyed an advanced level, while 4.4% were at a beginner level. The results indicate that most EFL students' level is beyond good and reflects their ability to promote academic achievement.

2. Did you willingly choose English as your specialty, or was it imposed upon you?
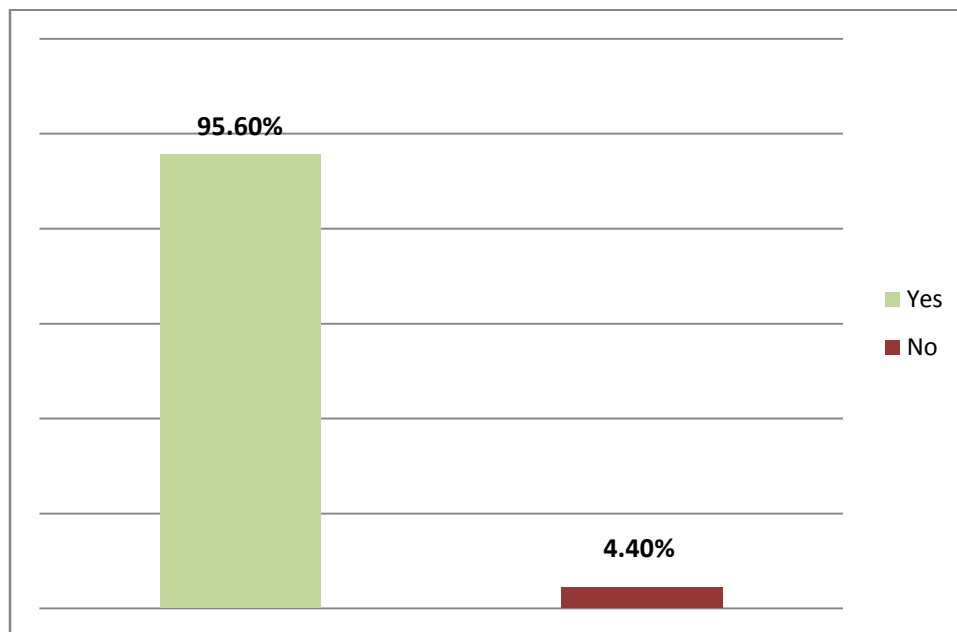
Figure 2-2: The Choice of Studying English: Personal Choice versus External Influences

This question aims to let us know students' choice to study English. The results obtained showed that 95.6% chose to study English without the interference of other individuals. Yet, 4.4% claimed that it was not their personal choice. Since the dominant percentage of students is studying English depending on their personal choice, this indicates that they are highly motivated to study this language.

Section Two: The Speaking Skill

1. How would you describe your speaking abilities?
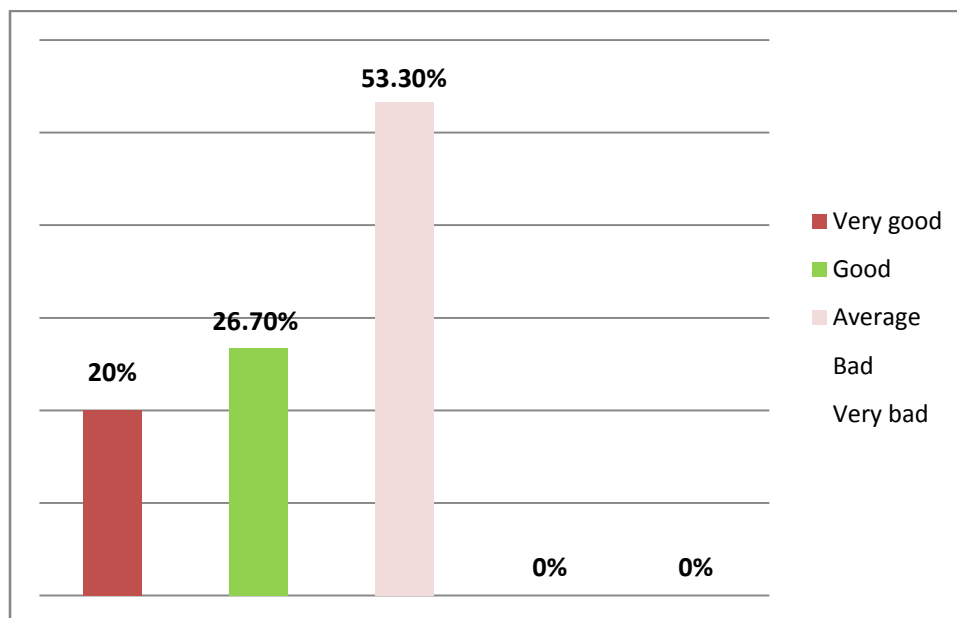
Figure 2-3: Students' Speaking Levels

We aim in this question to identify EFL students' level of speaking and how they estimate themselves. Nearly half (53.3%) of the learners have attained an average level of speaking skill. While no one of the participants has a bad or a very bad abilities in speaking. A notable portion (26.7%) of them believed they have obtained a good level. However, the remaining (20%) stated that their level of speaking is very good. These findings denote that the majority of students with average level might struggle to effectively express themselves and communicate verbally in the target language. It indicates that they may encounter difficulties with vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, or overall fluency when participating in spoken interactions.

2. How often do you engage in speaking practice sessions?
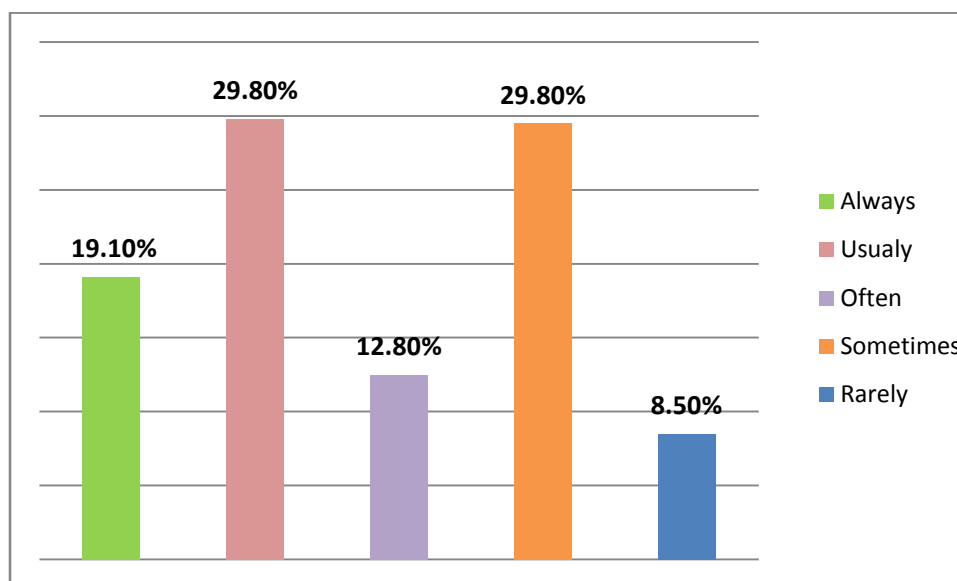
Figure 2-4: The Students' Speaking Practice Frequency

The aim of this question is to gather information about the frequency of speaking practice among the respondents. Thus, understand the level of commitment or effort participants put into practicing their spoken English skills. The figure showed that 19.1% of the respondents practice speaking skills all the time. They are likely very committed to improving their spoken English. 29.8% was the percentage of participants who said that they practice speaking skills usually. The same thing (29.8%) for participants who practice speaking sometimes. 12.8% of the respondents practice speaking frequently. They are committed but may not practice as consistently as those in the "always" or "usually" groups. The smallest rate was for "rarely" option under the percent of 8.5%, those participants might face challenges or have lower motivation levels for practicing spoken English.

3. Do you prefer practicing speaking alone or with others?
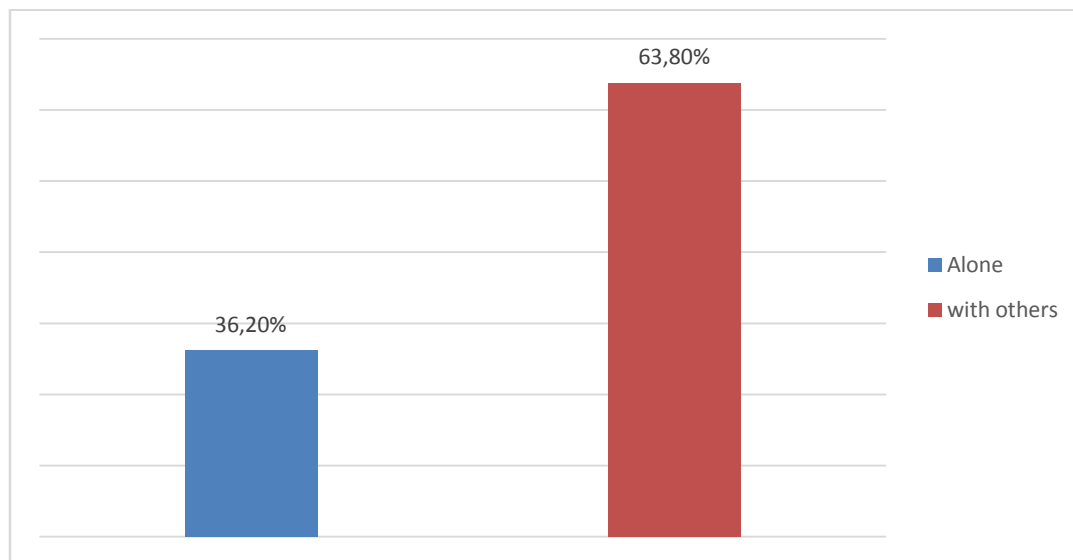
Figure 2-5: Students' Preferences: Practicing Speaking Alone or in Groups

This question sought to gather information about the EFL students' preferred method for practicing their speaking skills. The majority of our respondents(63.8%) prefer practicing speaking with others, suggesting a perfect preference for social and cultural interactive language learning experiences, conversely 36.2% indicated preference for practicing speaking alone, which may indicates they have willingness for solitude or a focus on individual learning styles. These results highlights the existence of a diversity of learning preferences among respondents, suggesting the importance of incorporating both individual and social opportunities for EEL learners in both language learning platforms like Duolingo as well as traditional classes.

4. What types of speaking activities do you find most beneficial for improving your speaking?
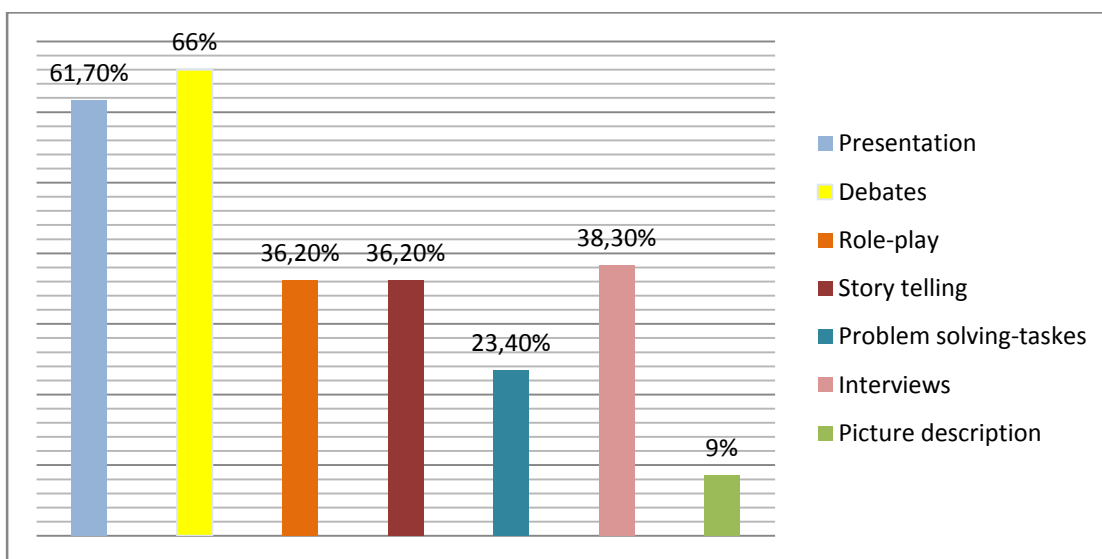
Figure 2-6: Students' Opinions about the Most Effective Speaking Activities

The aim of this question is to identify and analyze which specific speaking activities students perceive as most effective in enhancing their language. Based on the questionnaire results, it appears that the respondents find a variety of speaking activities that help them to practice speaking. Debates and presentations were rated as the most beneficial speaking activities with the respective percentages 66% and 61.7%. This indicates that students respectively prefer activities that require structured communication and expression of ideas. Role-playing and storytelling were selected by 36.2% of the respondents; this might indicate a moderate preference for those activities that involves creativity, narrating or sharing stories and simulating conversations and scenarios. Problem solving tasks were chosen by 23.4% of the participants. This activity requires critical thinking and reasoning as well as practical applications of language skills suggesting a smaller portion that lays on value. Pictures description was ratedthe lowest, with only 8.5% of respondents finding it the most beneficial activity that involves the ability of formulating answers. This is maybe because the pressure

to structure communication is less. The results suggest that a combination of these activities is recommended to include learners with diverse learning styles for better language learning. This might be gained from the use of AI apps for speaking skill.

Few participants mentioned talking to themselves as an activity to develop their speaking skill. Mainly this suggestion was opted for by those who prefer practicing alone, and learners who are shy and fear making mistakes, which could lead to ridicule or negative judgment from their peers

5. In your opinion, who is a good speaker?
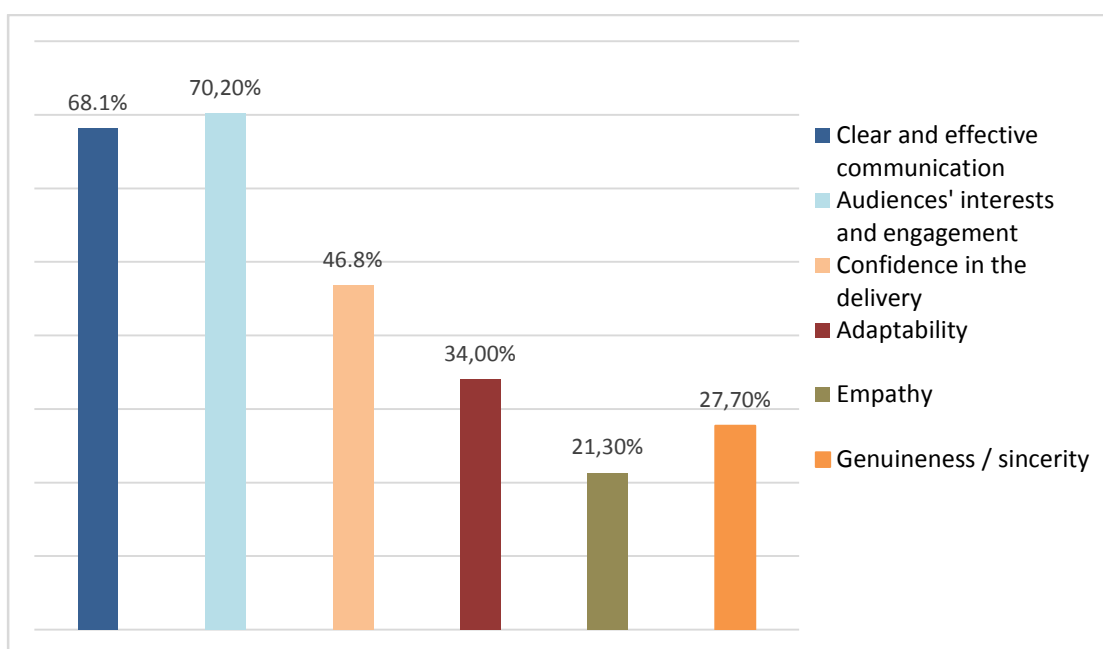
Figure 2-7: Students' Opinions Concerning the Characteristics of a Good Speaker

This question aims to collect students' perspectives on what qualities they believe are essential for someone to be considered a good speaker. The answers revealed several characteristics that the respondents consider them important in identifying who is a good speaker. Clarity and effectiveness in communication was highly chosen by our respondents, in that 68. 1% of the participants insisted on its importance arguing that the clarity and the effectiveness of the speaker increase the comprehension of the message. Confidence in the

delivery was the preference of 46.8% of students suggesting its enhancement to the persuasiveness and impact of their speech. 34% of the participants chose the adaptability in delivery. I.e., adapting the delivery to suite the audience and the situation address diversity of the audience as well as the contexts**.** Demonstrating empathy was rated the last characteristic with 21.3% of the participants, this may indicates that even though it is considered as a positive quality; mainly the students are not interested in. Genuineness and sincerity option was chosen by 27.7% of the participants, it might not be prioritized by the majority, but it is still recognized by a significant portion. Capturing audience interests and engagements was rated the highest with 70.2% of respondents who selected it. This indicates its importance because in order to keep the audience engaged through the discussion the ability to connect with them emotionally and intellectually is needed. Overall the results reveal the multifaceted nature of a good speaker with an inclination to the clarity and effectiveness besides capturing the audiences' interest and engagement.

6. What aspects of speaking do you struggle with the most?
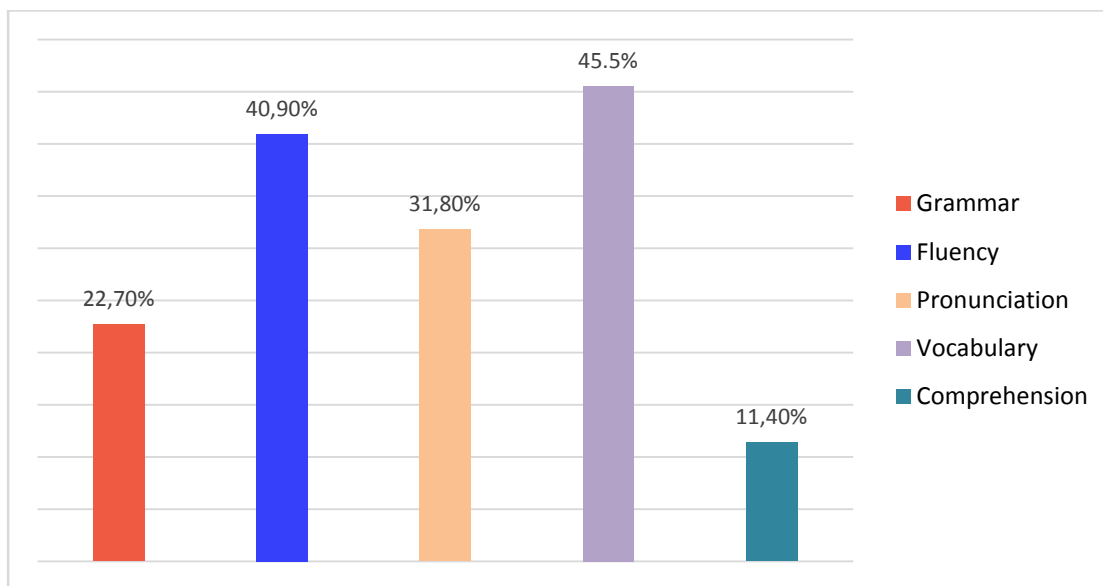
Figure 2-8: EFL Students 'Perceptions about the Difficult Aspects of Speaking

This question aims to know the aspects of speaking that students find most difficult. According to figure 8 nearly half (45.5%) of the students identified vocabulary as their primary challenge. This indicates that many students feel limited by their lexical knowledge, which can hinder their ability to express ideas effectively and understand others.Forty point nine percent of students struggle with speaking fluency.This could stem from a lack of practice, anxiety, or insufficient exposure to spontaneous speaking situations. Pronunciation is another major area of difficulty for 31.8% of the students suggesting that poor pronunciation can affect comprehensibility and lead to misunderstandings. Grammar is a concern for 22.7% of the respondents, while not as prominent as vocabulary or fluency; it remains a significant area where students seek improvement. Comprehension is the least problematic area with 11.4% indicating that most of students feel relatively confident in their ability to understand spoken English. To sum up, the results suggest that vocabulary and fluency are the most common challengeable speaking aspects; this might indicate that these challenges would be improved using AI language learning apps.

7. If you are asked to speak in the classroom and you do not, it's because:
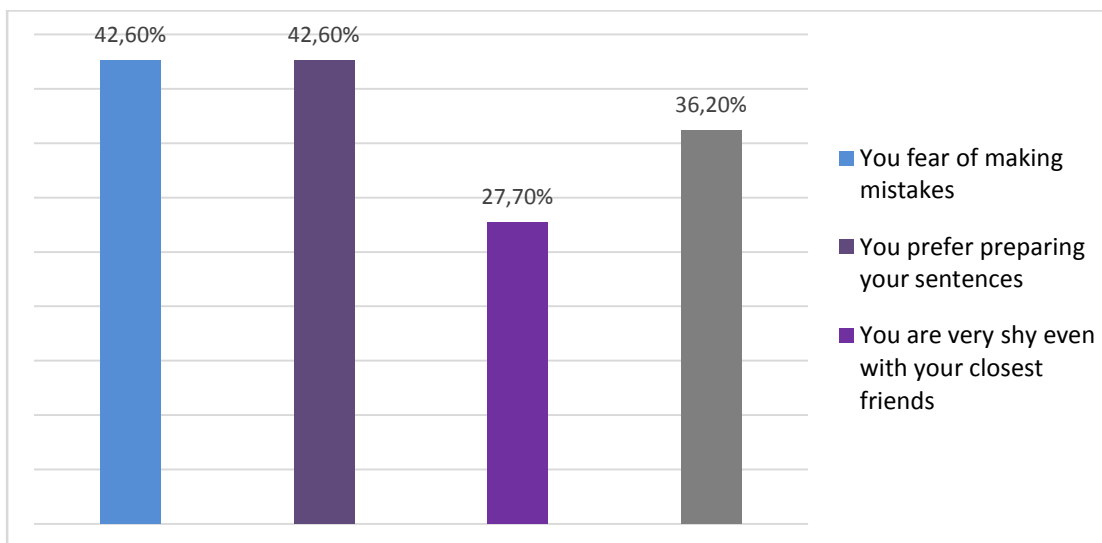
Figure 2-9: EFL Students' Reasons for Reluctance to Participate in Speaking Activities during Class

The aim of the previous question is to identify and understand the specific reasons why students might be reluctant to participate in speaking activities during class. The results revealed that fears of making mistakes and the preference for preparing sentences before speaking are the most common reasons, affecting nearly half (42.6%) of the students. This reflects a significant anxiety about speaking spontaneously and the desire for more structured and controlled speech. In addition, 36.2% of the students do not participate because they are not interested in the topic. This indicates that student engagement is strongly linked to the relevance and interest in the subject matter. Shyness, even with friends, is a notable barrier for 27.7% of the students. This suggests that some students struggle with confidence and social anxiety in speaking situations. A small percentage of students (4.3%) cited their teacher's blaming behaviour as a reason for not speaking. While this is the least common reason, it highlights the negative impact that a critical teaching approach can have on student participation.

8. What motivates you to improve your speaking skills in the English language?

74,50%

50,20%

34%

25,50%   25,50%

■ To be fluent and increase your
  level

■ To Understand people
  speaking English

■ To be understood once you
  speak English

■ To get a diploma
  and, therefore, get a job

■ For pleasure
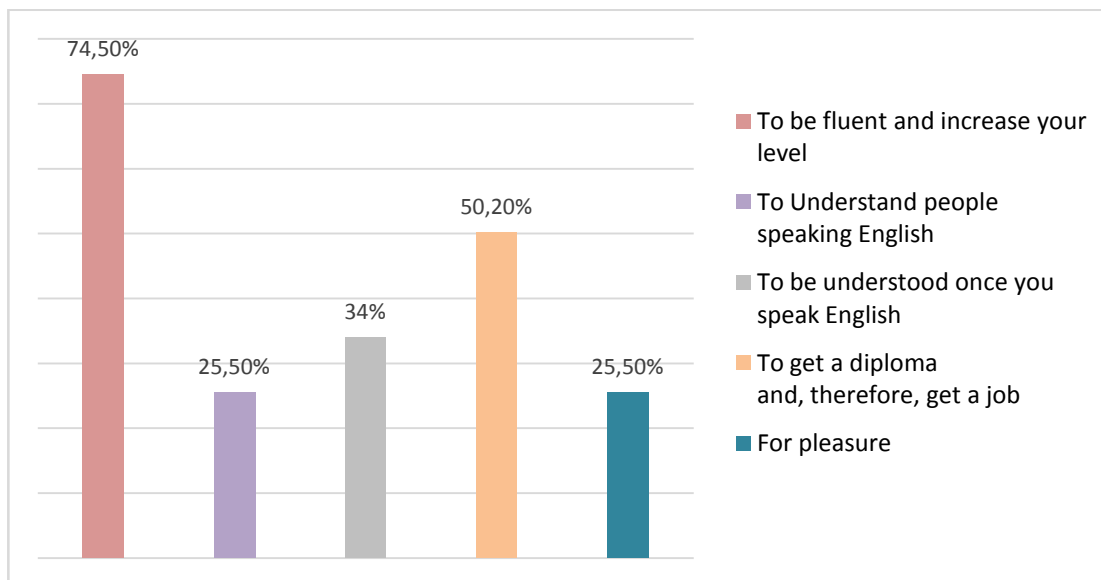
Figure 2-10: EFL Students' motives for improving their speaking skills

The aim of this question is to identify and understand the key factors that drive EFL students to enhance their speaking abilities. The majority of students (74.5%) are motivated by the desire to achieve fluency and improve their overall proficiency in English. This indicates a strong internal drive to enhance their speaking skills,   followed by 50.2% of the students who are motivated by practical goals such as obtaining a diploma and securing employment. This reflects the importance of English proficiency in academic and professional advancement. 34%of the students are driven by the need to be understood when they speak English. This highlights the importance of clear and effective communication. Whereas 25.5% of the students learn English just to understand people speaking English, similarly for personal pleasure. This group values the intrinsic pleasure of learning and using the language.

Section Three: AI-powered Language Learning Apps for Speaking Skill Development

1. **Are you familiar with AI-powered language learning apps for speaking skill development?**
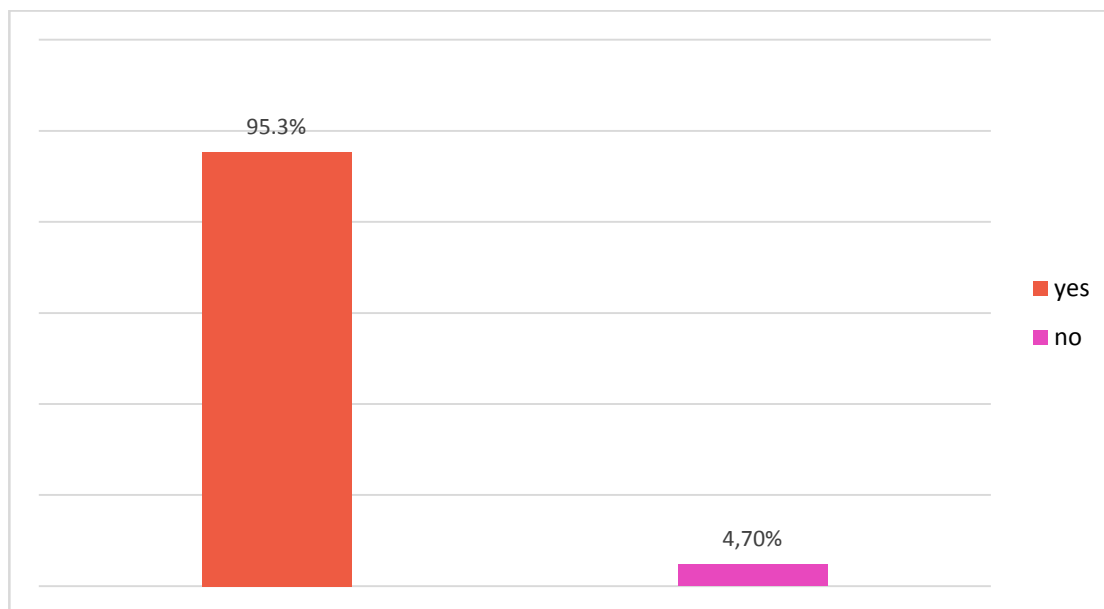
Figure 2-11: Students' Familiarity with the Use of AI Applications in Learning

This question sought to identify whether EFL students are familiar with AI-powered language learning apps for speaking skill development or not. As demonstrated in figure 11, 95.3% of the students answered with 'yes' and only 4.7% of the students answered with no. The analysis of this question displays a clear image that most of the students have enough knowledge of what the AI-powered language learning apps is probably used for, which gives positive signs for the answers to the remaining questions.

2. **How comfortable are you with using technology, including AI, for language learning purposes?**

45,70%

40%

10,70%

3,60%

■ confortable

■ very confortable

■ neutral

■ uncomfortable
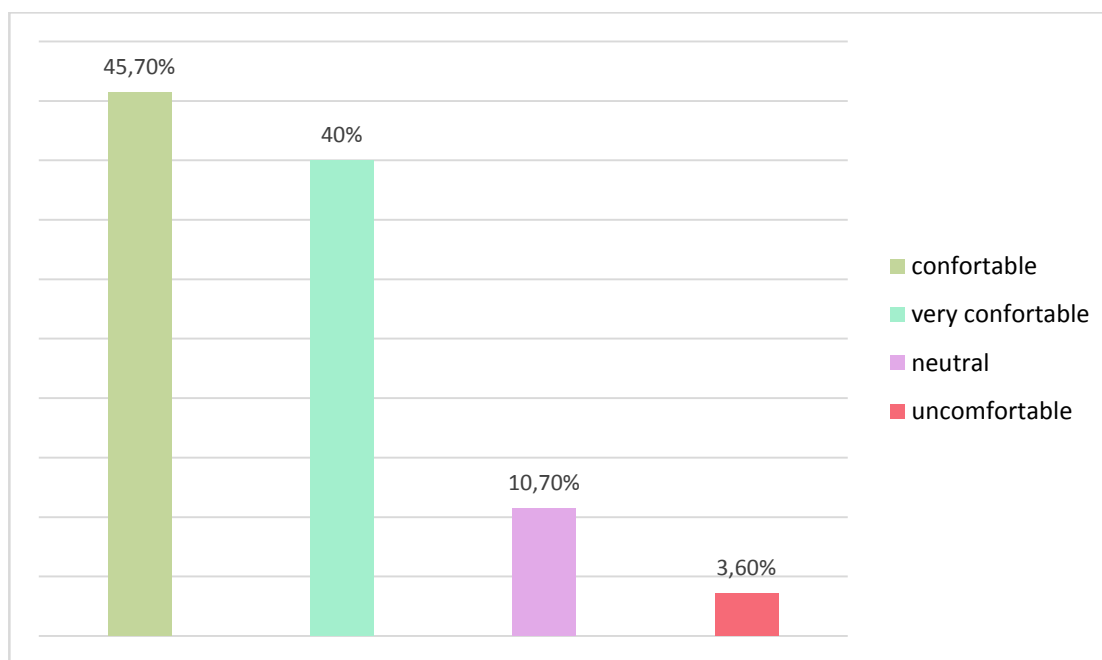
Figure 2-12: Level of Comfort with Using Technology, Including AI, for Language Learning Purposes

The aim of this question is to explore the comfort levels of EFL students regarding the utilization of technology, including AI, for the purpose of language learning. The figure indicated that a notable proportion of respondents (40%) feel extremely comfortable utilizing technology, including AI, for language learning purposes. Additionally, 45.7% of respondents express a satisfactory level of familiarity and ease with incorporating technology, including AI, into their language learning attempts. A smaller segment of respondents (10.7%) remain neutral regarding their comfort level with utilizing technology, including AI, for language learning. Furthermore, a minority of respondents (3.6%) express discomfort with the concept of using technology, including AI, for language learning purposes. Notably, none of the respondents report feeling highly uncomfortable with using technology, including AI, for language learning. Generally speaking, the data confirm a predominantly positive outlook on

the integration of technology, including AI, into language learning, with a significant portion of respondents indicating comfort or high comfort levels with incorporating such tools into their language learning experiences. This indicates a primarily favourable stance on integrating AI-powered language learning apps and technology into language learning approaches, suggesting a willingness among the EFL students to embrace technological advancements as beneficial aids for improving spoken language skills. Nevertheless, there are also minor reservations or uncertainties acknowledged among a small subset of respondents.

3. In your opinion, what is the main used AI-powered language learning app for speaking skill development?
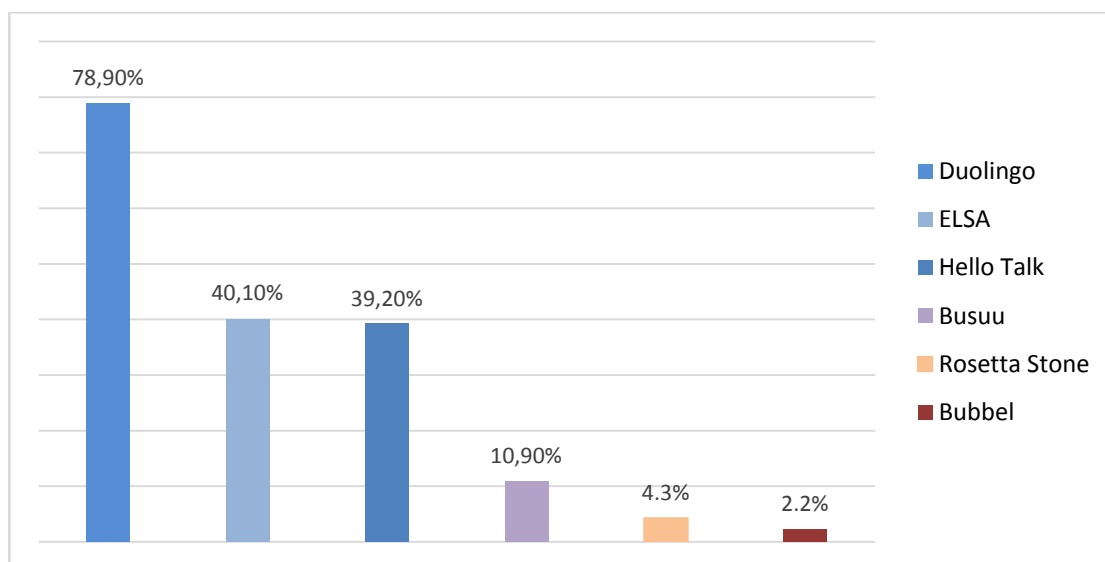
Figure 2-13: Students' Attitudes towards the Main Used AI-Powered Language Learning Apps for Speaking Skill Development

This question aims to gain insights into which specific platforms are favoured among EFL students. This helps researchers understand the popularity and usage patterns of different apps in the language learning domain. The overwhelming majority of respondents (78.9%) indicated Duolingo as the main AI-powered language learning app for speaking skill development. This suggests that Duolingo is widely recognized and favoured among EFL

students for its effectiveness in improving spoken language proficiency. A small percentage of respondents (2.2%) mentioned Babbel as the main AI-powered language learning app for speaking skill development. While this percentage is low compared to Duolingo, it still indicates some level of recognition or preference for Babbel among a subset of respondents. Similarly, a small percentage of respondents (4.3%) identified Rosetta Stone as the main AI-powered language learning app for speaking skill development. This suggests that Rosetta Stone also has some level of recognition or usage among EFL students, although it is less prominent compared to Duolingo. Nearly half of respondents (40.1%) mentioned ELSA as the main AI-powered language learning app for speaking skill development. This indicates that ELSA is highly regarded and widely used among EFL students for its focus on pronunciation improvement and speaking fluency. Nearly equivalent to ELSA, a substantial percentage of respondents (39.2%) specified 'Hello Talk' as the main AI-powered language learning app for speaking skill development. This suggests that Hello Talk, which emphasizes language practice through social interactions with native speakers, is also highly valued and frequently utilized among EFL students. A smaller but still notable percentage of respondents (10.9%) cited Busuu as the main AI-powered language learning app for speaking skill development. This indicates that Busuu, known for its interactive language courses and personalized study plans, has a presence among EFL students, albeit to a lesser extent compared to other apps like Duolingo, ELSA, and Hello Talk. The data reveals a diverse range of main used AI-powered language learning apps for speaking skill development among EFL students, with Duolingo, ELSA, and Hello Talk emerging as the most prominent choices. These findings suggest that different apps cater to varying preferences and learning needs, providing EFL students with a variety of options to enhance their speaking skills through AI-powered language learning platforms.

The researchers asked the participants to mention other apps that they use that were not listed.Only two participants named an app called Speeko.

4. Do you believe AI-powered language learning apps can accurately assess and provide feedback on speaking skills?
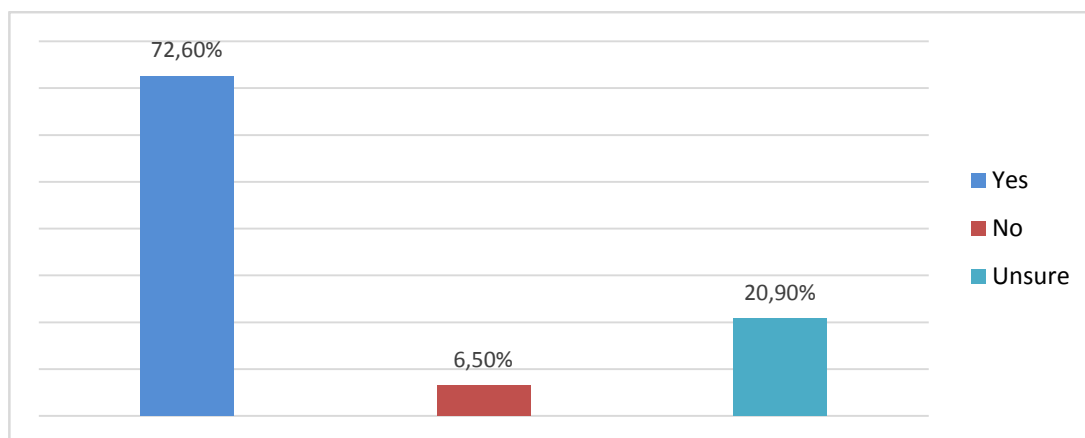
Figure 2-14: EFL Students' Attitudes towards the Feedback Provided by AI apps

The aim of this question is likely to gauge the attitudes of EFL students towards the effectiveness of AI-powered language learning apps in assessing and providing feedback on speaking skills. The majority of EFL students (72.6%) expressed confidence in the capacity of AI-driven language learning applications to effectively evaluate and offer feedback on speaking abilities. This indicates a broad trust within this demographic regarding the efficacy of such technology for this purpose. Conversely, the minority (6.5%) who had doubts about the accuracy of AI-based assessment and feedback likely had reservations concerning the technology's competence or dependability in accurately assessing spoken language proficiency. Their suspicion may arise from various factors including pronunciation, or the limitations of AI in grasping context or cultural differences. Furthermore, a notable segment (20.9%) of students who remain unsure may signal a lack of familiarity with AI-powered language learning applications or a need for additional information or experience to develop a firm standpoint.

5. To what extent do you trust the accuracy of feedback provided by AI-powered language learning apps for speaking skill improvement?
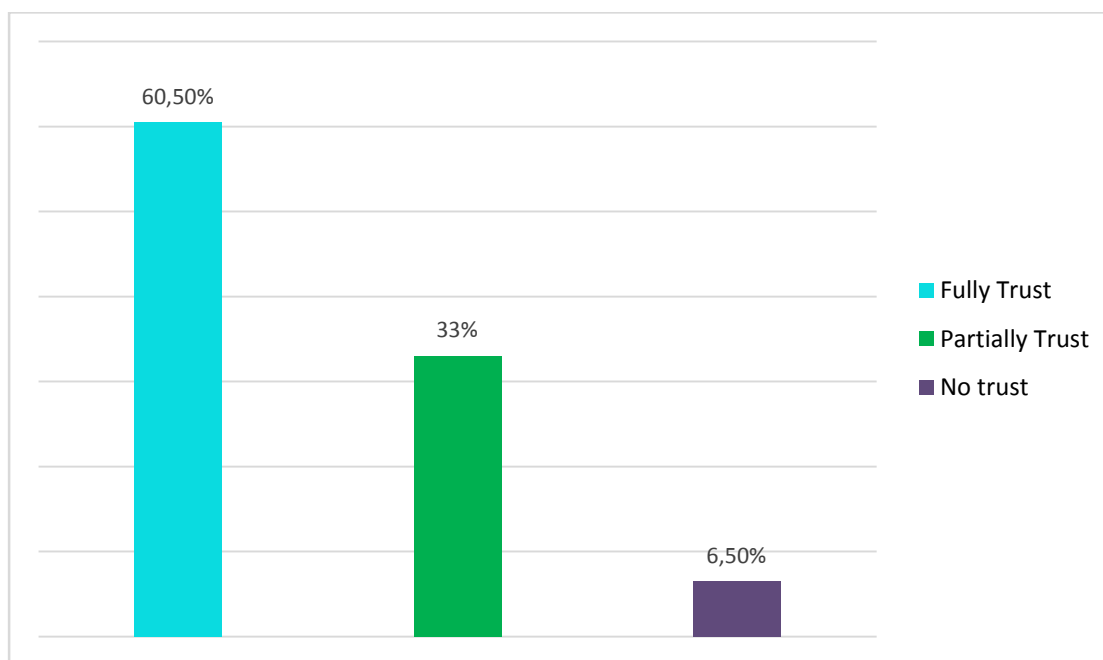
Figure 2-15: Students' Level of Trust in the Accuracy of Feedback Provided by AI-Powered Language Learning Apps

The aim of this question is likely to assess the level of trust that EFL students have in the accuracy of feedback provided by AI-powered language learning apps specifically for improving speaking skills. The majority of EFL students (60.5%) exhibited a strong level of confidence in the accuracy of feedback delivered by AI-powered language learning apps for enhancing speaking skills. This implies a considerable reliance on the capability of such technology to offer dependable and beneficial feedback in this aspect of language acquisition. Furthermore, a notable segment (33%) of students expressed partial trust in the accuracy of feedback provided by these applications. This signifies that although they hold some reservations or uncertainties, they still perceive value in the feedback provided and view it as advantageous for enhancing their speaking proficiency. Conversely, a smaller proportion (6.5%) of EFL students lacked trust in the accuracy of feedback provided by AI-powered

language learning applications for improving speaking skills. This indicates a lack of confidence in the efficacy or dependability of these applications in evaluating and offering feedback on speaking abilities.

6. **How effective are AI language learning tools compared to traditional methods?**
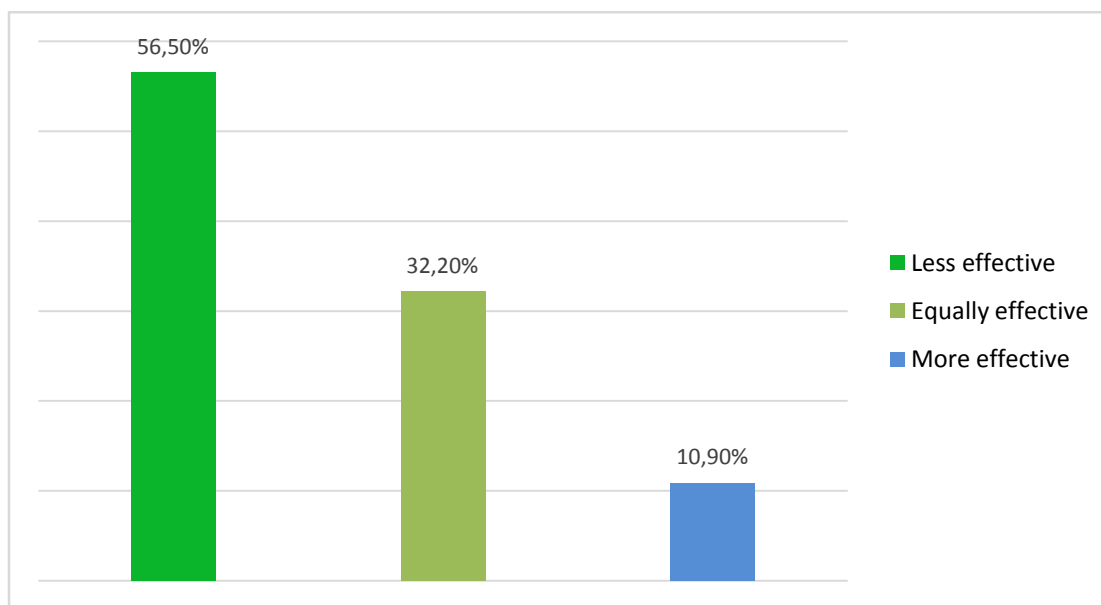
Figure 2-16: Students' Attitudes Regarding the Efficacy of AI- Powered Language Learning Apps in Comparison to Traditional Methods

The question above aims to uncover the students' attitudes and opinions regarding the utility and efficacy of AI- powered language learning apps. On the one hand the data revealed that56.5% of respondents view AI language learning tools as less effective than traditional methods. This suggests a prevailing sentiment among a significant portion of the respondents that traditional methods of language learning may be more impactful or successful compared to AI-driven tools. However, a notable proportion (32.6%) perceived AI language learning tools to be equally effective as traditional methods. This indicates that these students see the possibility of AI-driven tools to be on an equal path with traditional approaches in terms of effectiveness. On the other hand, a smaller yet considerable percentage (10.9%) believed that

AI language learning tools are more effective than traditional methods. This suggests a minority opinion among respondents that AI-driven tools offer superior outcomes in language learning compared to traditional methods.

7. Can AI language learning tools replace human teachers?
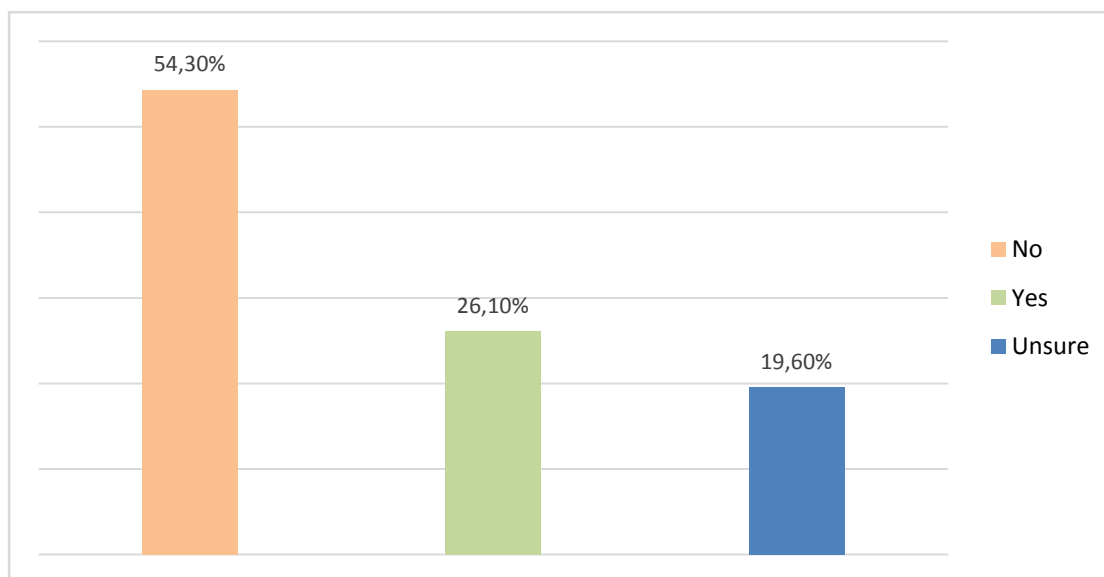
Figure 2-17: EFL Students' Opinions about AI Apps' Ability to Replace Human Teachers

This question aims to assess the opinions and attitudes of EFL students regarding whether AI language learning tools can substitute human teachers. More than half of EFL students (54.3%) believe that AI language learning tools cannot replace human; this suggests a prevailing sentiment among this group that human interaction, guidance, and support are indispensable elements of language learning that cannot be adequately replicated by AI technology. Their doubt may stem from factors such as the complexities of language acquisition, the need for personalized instruction, and the role of human empathy and understanding in teaching. Conversely, a notable minority (26.1%) of EFL students believe that AI language learning tools have the capability to replace human teachers; this suggests a level of confidence in the capabilities of AI technology to effectively deliver language

instruction and support learners in their language learning journey. Their belief may be influenced by factors such as the advancement of AI technology, convenience of access to learning resources, and the perceived effectiveness of AI-driven language learning platforms. Additionally, a significant portion (19.6%) of EFL students was unsure about whether AI language learning tools can or cannot replace human teachers. This uncertainty may reflect a lack of familiarity with AI technology, ambiguity about its capabilities, or a need for more information or experience to form a definitive opinion.

8. Do you feel motivated while using AI-powered language learning apps for speaking skill development?
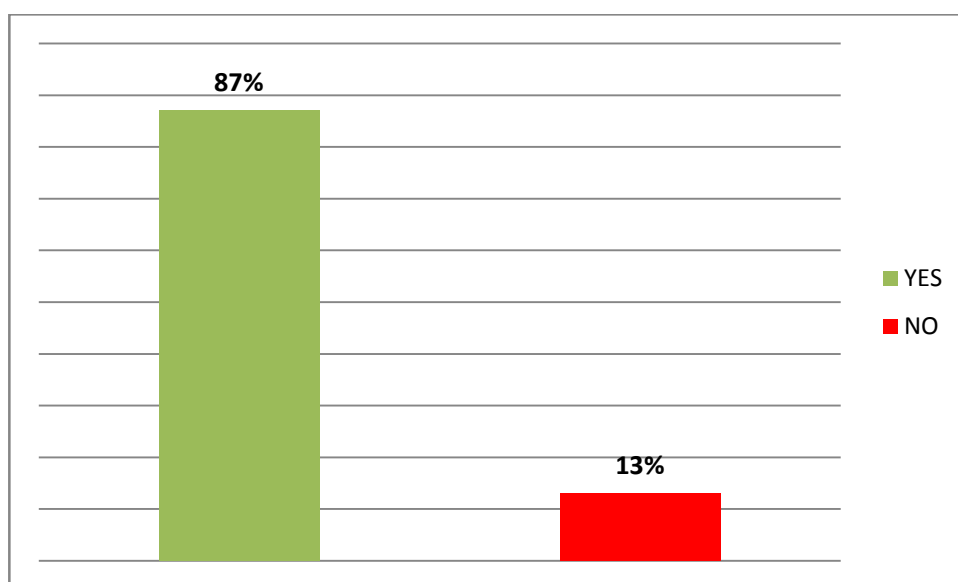
Figure 2-18: EFL Students' Feeling of Motivation while Using AI-powered Language Learning Apps

This question aims to gather insights into the effectiveness of AI technology in engaging learners and fostering motivation in the context of speaking skill development. The overwhelming majority of EFL students participated in this study (87%) reported feeling motivated while using AI-powered language learning apps for speaking skill development. This indicates that these apps effectively engage and motivate a significant portion of

learners to practice and improve their speaking abilities.This motivation could stem from various factors such as gamification, interactive features, personalized feedback, or the convenience of access to learning resources. However, it is worth noting that a minority of EFL students (13%) do not feel motivated while using AI-powered language learning apps for speaking skill development. This could indicate that these students may not find the apps engaging, may struggle with the format or content, or may prefer other methods of language practice and improvement.

9. What are your main concerns, if any, about using AI-powered language learning apps for speaking skill development?

The aim of this question is to uncover the primary concerns that individuals have regarding the use of AI-powered language learning apps specifically for developing speaking skills. According to the collected responses, only 15% of students answered this question. Students' concerns can be summarised as the following points:

1. Accuracy of Feedback: Concerns about the reliability and accuracy of feedback provided by AI-powered apps in assessing speaking skills, including pronunciation, intonation, and fluency.

2. Limited Interaction: Concerns that AI-powered app may not facilitate sufficient interaction or conversation practice with real speakers, leading to a lack of opportunities to develop conversational skills and overcome communication barriers.

3. Technology Reliability: students have worries about technical malfunctions, connectivity issues, or software bugs that may hinder the smooth functioning of AI-powered language learning apps and disrupt the learning process.

10. Would you recommend AI-powered language learning apps to your peers for improving speaking skills?
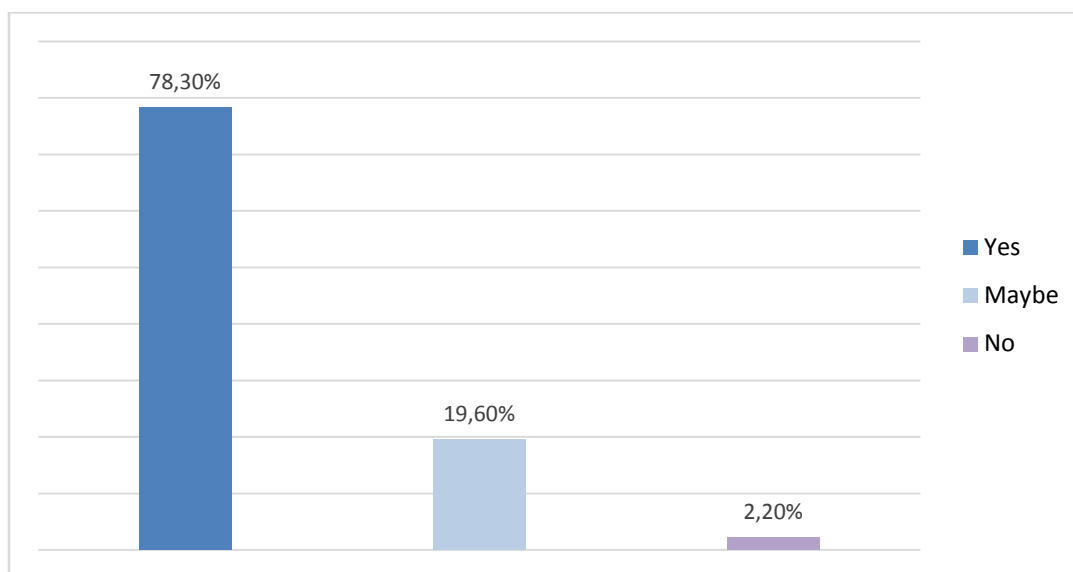
Figure 2-19: EFL Students' Willingness to Recommend AI Language Learning Apps for Speaking Skills

The aim of this question is likely to assess the willingness of EFL students to recommend AI-powered language learning apps to their peers specifically for improving speaking skills. The majority of respondents (78.3%) expressed a willingness to recommend AI-powered language learning apps to their peers for improving speaking skills. This suggests a high level of satisfaction or confidence in the effectiveness of these apps among a significant portion of respondents. They likely perceive AI-powered apps as valuable tools for enhancing speaking proficiency and believe that their peers can benefit from using them. A small percentage of respondents (2.2%) would not recommend AI-powered language learning apps to their peers for improving speaking skills. This indicates some level of dissatisfaction or uncertainty among a minority of participants regarding the effectiveness or suitability of these apps for speaking skill development. Additionally, a notable portion of respondents (19.6%) are unsure and would maybe recommend AI-powered language learning apps to their peers for

improving speaking skills. This uncertainty may stem from various factors such as mixed experiences with these apps, lack of confidence in their effectiveness, or a need for more information or exploration before making a recommendation.

Section Four: Suggestions

In section four students were asked to share their experiences or to provide any suggestions that are relevant to the aim of the work regarding AI-powered language learning apps for speaking skill development. After reading all the learners 'answers, we have noticed that only 10 of 160 students offered suggestions which are summarised in one point: "Supplement, Do not replace". The concept of "Supplement, Do not replace" suggests that AI-powered language learning apps should be considered as additional tools in one's language learning toolkit rather than primary method of learning. While these apps offer valuable benefits such as convenience, accessibility, and personalized feedback, they should not entirely replace traditional learning methods.

2.2.2. Discussion of the Results

The analysis of the students' questionnaire provided valuable insights and results concerning the exploration of EFL students' attitudes towards AI-Powered language Learning Apps for speaking skills development.

The analysis of section one revealed that students freely chose to study English,which points to their motivation and interest in studying English as an independent specialty and delving into its linguistic aspects. This was asserted when most of them claimed that their level of English is beyond good.

The students were interrogated about their speaking skills in the second section of the questionnaire. The results showed that EFL students commonly perceive their speaking proficiency as satisfactory, often engaging in speaking activities as part of their learning routine. The majority of these students prefer practicing speaking with peers or in group settings, emphasizing the importance of interactive communication in language acquisition. Their criteria for a good speaker extend beyond mere linguistic accuracy; they value individuals who can captivate an audience's interest while communicating clearly and effectively. However, despite their willingness to engage in speaking activities, many students face challenges with vocabulary and fluency. This difficulty often stems from a fear of making mistakes, leading them to avoid speaking in classroom settings and instead opt for preparing their sentences in advance. Nevertheless, the desire to achieve fluency and elevate their speaking abilities serves as a primary motivation for students to overcome their apprehensions and actively work towards improvement.

The analysis of section three proved that the landscape of English as a Foreign Language learning has been significantly influenced by the rise of AI-powered language learning apps. It is evident that a vast majority of EFL students are not only familiar with

these apps but also feel comfortable using them. Among the most popular choices for enhancing the speaking skills are Duolingo, Elsa, and HelloTalk. What characterizes these apps is their ability to accurately assess and provide feedback on speaking skills, a feature that the majority of EFL students trust. However, despite this trust, more than half of them still perceive AI language learning tools as less effective compared to traditional methods. Nonetheless, motivation seems to be a key factor in their usage, with most students feeling inspired when engaging with these apps and even going as far as recommending them to their peers. Yet, concerns remain there, primarily revolving around the accuracy of feedback, limited interaction, and the reliability of technology. These apprehensions confirm the delicate balance between embracing technological advancements and maintaining confidence in the efficacy of language learning methodologies.

Prior to reporting a number of limitations and recommendations, it is only fitting to provide answers to the research questions raised in the present study. In regard of the question about what are the EFL learners' attitudes towards the use of AI-powered language learning apps concerning the improvement of their speaking skill, it was evident that EFL students hold positive attitudes towards the use of AI-powered language learning apps for speaking skill development, this attitudes reveal in the sense of the majority of learners trust the ability of AI apps to accurately assess their speaking skills and provide feedback. Concerning the research question about what are the EFL students 'opinions regarding the effectiveness of AI-powered language learning apps on students' achievements in speaking proficiency compared to traditional methods, it was found that despite that EFL students agreed on the efficacy of AI-powered apps in enhancing the speaking skill to a great extent, these apps may not fully replicate the complexity of human interaction and communication contexts, which are essential components of speaking proficiency, thus, the majority of them may not fully embrace them as a superior alternative to the traditional methods and they still have some

noticeable concerns. As an answer to the research question about how can AI-powered language learning apps serve as complementary tools for improving EFL learners' speaking skill, the findings of the study revealed that the majority of the students trust and appreciate the convenience and feedback offered by AI apps, AI-powered apps for speaking skills also can assess pronunciation and grammar, in addition to enriching the vocabulary repertoire.

2.2.3. *Limitations and Recommendations*

2.2.3.1. **Limitations of the Study:** In the course of carrying out the present study, several difficulties were confronted. The most prominent of these is the problem encountered in the process of collecting the data needed for the practical part of the research. Firstly, in order to carefully manage the study; it was delimited only to EFL students at Mila University. We would have added more generalized information if it had included wider samples of different universities throughout the country. Secondly, due to some circumstances, the researchers are prevented from making an experimental study in which they delve into the field of app-based learning. Thirdly, despite time constraints, this study has delved into the attitudes of EFL students towards AI-Powered language learning apps for the enhancement of speaking skills. While it couldn't encompass all aspects it initially intended, the collected insights from the research offer valuable groundwork for further exploration.

2.2.3.2. **Pedagogical Recommendations:** Relying on what is revealed through running the analysis of the data obtained through the research tool involved in this study of crucial importance is the account for a set of recommendations that touch upon pedagogy and further research. Future researches which might share the same interest with the present study are addressed with some recommendations:

✓ Using another research method such as an observation or an experiment for a considerable period of time in order to gain more insights about investigating the use of AI-

Powered language Learning Apps for speaking skills development, would guarantee more reliable results. Despite the fact that questionnaires are regarded as practical for gathering data from a large population in a short period of time, it is not enough to announce a confirmed hypothesis. In other words, using an experiment hand in hand with a questionnaire gives more strength to the obtained results.

✓ Looking to integrate app-based learning into the field of FL for policymakers. In which they align app-based learning with existing FL curricula to ensure coherence and continuity in the educational experience. Apps should complement classroom instruction and support the achievement of learning objectives inside and outside the classroom. Taking into account several considerations of app-based learning to ensure its effectiveness and successful implementation.

✓ Emphasizing the role of the teacher in guiding and monitoring students' use of the AI-powered app. Teachers can provide valuable insights, scaffold learning experiences, and offer personalized support to maximize the effectiveness of the app in developing speaking skills.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has explored the practical aspect of the current study, focusing on EFL students' attitudes towards AI-powered language learning apps for speaking skills development. It has provided valuable insights into the complex relationship between technology integration and language acquisition, through the analysis and interpretation of the questionnaire, then the discussion of the results, moving to some difficulties that faced the research fieldwork, to conclude with some pedagogical recommendationsto help teachers integrate AI tools into language learning activities in a way that increases student engagement and motivation, and helps learners understand when and how it is appropriate to use these tools.

General Conclusion

It is widely acknowledged that EFL students need to develop their foreign language speaking skills to achieve language mastery. In this regard, AI-Powered language Learning Apps are considered promising tools for enhancing speaking skill, as learners commonly use them. This study aims to explore EFL students' attitudes towards AI-Powered language Learning Apps for speaking skills development. It also sought to discover the students' opinions concerning the effectiveness of these tools for improving speaking proficiency compared to traditional learning methods.

For the purpose of achieving the aims of this research, data is obtained by designing a questionnaire that is administered to 160 students from the department of English at Mila University Centre. Consequently, our dissertation questions are answered through the collected findings and results from the research instrument used.

This study consists of two chapters. On the one hand, the first chapter refers to Theoretical Perspectives on Speaking Skills and AI-Powered Language Learning Apps in Language learning, in which theoretical issues related to both speaking skills and AI apps are discussed. On the other hand, the second chapter presents a description of this research's field work, including an overview of the research methodology, in addition to the analysis and the discussion of the main obtained results.

To conclude, it becomes evident that there is a general positive inclination towards AI-powered apps for speaking skill development among EFL students. Moreover, it is found that despite EFL students agreed on the efficacy of AI-powered apps in enhancing the speaking skill to a great extent, these apps may not fully replicate the complexity of human interaction and communication contexts, which are essential components of speaking proficiency, thus, the majority of them may not fully embrace them as a superior alternative to the traditional

methods and they still have some noticeable concerns. Furthermore, AI-powered language learning apps serve as useful complementary tools that enhance EFL learners' speaking proficiency by offering trusted and convenient feedback, comprehensive assessments of pronunciation and grammar, and vocabulary enrichment features. This multifaceted support can help learners achieve greater fluency and confidence in their speaking skills. It is highly recommended the need for further research to delve deeper into the factors influencing students' attitudes and the effectiveness of app-based learning approaches in language learning. These findings motivate researchers for future attempts aiming at optimizing the integration of technology in language learning and empowering students to actively participate in their FLL journeys.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Students' Questionnaire

Dear student,

This questionnaire attempts to gather information needed to accomplish a Master's dissertation, which explores EFL students' attitudes towards AI-Powered language Learning Apps for speaking skills development. Your honest and thoughtful responses are pivotal in ensuring the validity of this research.

Your answers will be kept anonymous and the date from the research will be used only for research purposes.

Please put a tick (✔) in the corresponding chosen answer, and make full statements whenever necessary.

Thank you in advance.

Section One: General Information

1. Current English Proficiency Level:

A) Beginner ☐

B) Intermediate ☐

C) Advanced ☐

2. Did you willingly choose English as your specialty, or was it imposed upon you?

A) Yes ☐

B) No ☐

Section Two: The Speaking Skill

1. How would you describe your speaking abilities?

A) Very good ☐   B) Good ☐   C) Average ☐   D) Bad ☐

E) Very bad ☐

2. How often do you engage in speaking practice sessions?

A) Always ☐   B) Usually ☐   C) Often ☐

D) Sometimes ☐   E) Rarely ☐

3. Do you prefer practicing speaking

A) Alone ☐   B) With others ☐

4. What types of speaking activities do you find most beneficial for your learning? (You can choose more than one)

A) Role-plays ☐   B) Debates ☐   C) Presentations ☐

D) Interviews ☐   E) Problem-solving tasks ☐

F) Picture descriptions ☐   G) Storytelling ☐

If your type does not exist, please mention it

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5. In your opinion, who is a good speaker? (You can choose more than one)

A) A good speaker communicates clearly and effectively ☐

B) A good speaker displays confidence in his delivery ☐

C) A good speaker is able to capture the audiences' interest and keep them engaged throughout the speech ☐

D) A good speaker is able to adapt his delivery to suit the audience and the situation ☐

E) A good speaker demonstrates empathy while discussing ☐

F) A good speaker is genuine and sincere ☐

6. What aspects of speaking do you struggle with the most? (You can choose more than one)

A) Comprehension ☐   B) Grammar ☐   C) Vocabulary ☐

D) Pronunciation ☐   E) Fluency ☐

7. If you are asked to speak in the classroom and you do not, it's because: (You can choose more than one)

A) You fear making mistakes ☐

B) You prefer preparing your sentences ☐

C) Your teacher is always blaming ☐

D) You are very shy even with your closest friends ☐

E) You are not interested in the topic itself ☐

8. What motivates you to improve your speaking skills in the English language? (You can choose more than one)

A) To be fluent and increase your level ☐

B) To understand people speaking English ☐

C) To be understood once you speak English ☐

D) To get a diploma and, therefore, get a job ☐

E) For pleasure ☐

Section Three: AI-powered language learning apps for speaking skill development

1. Are you familiar with AI-powered language learning apps for speaking skill development?

   A) Yes ☐   B) No ☐

2. How comfortable are you with using technology, including AI, for language learning purposes?

   A) Very Comfortable ☐   B) Comfortable ☐   C) Neutral ☐

   D) Uncomfortable ☐   E) Very Uncomfortable ☐

3. In your opinion, what is the main used AI-powered language learning app for speaking skill development? (you can choose more than one)

   A) Duolingo ☐   B) Babbel ☐   C) Rosetta Stone ☐

   D) ELSA ☐   E) Hello Talk ☐   F) Busuu ☐

   If your favourite apps are not mentioned, please mention them.

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4. Do you believe AI-powered language learning apps can accurately assess and provide feedback on speaking skills?

   A) Yes ☐   B) No ☐   C) Unsure ☐

5. To what extent do you trust the accuracy of feedback provided by AI-powered language learning apps for speaking skill improvement?

   A) Fully Trust ☐   B) Partially Trust ☐   C) Do Not Trust ☐

6. How effective are AI language learning tools compared to traditional methods?

   A) Less Effective ☐   B) Equally Effective ☐   C) More Effective ☐

7. Can AI language learning tools replace human teachers?

   A) Yes ☐   B) No ☐   C) Unsure ☐

8. Do you feel motivated while using AI-powered language learning apps for speaking skill development?

   A) Yes ☐   B) No ☐

9. What are your main concerns, if any, about using AI-powered language learning apps for speaking skill development?

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10. Would you recommend AI-powered language learning apps to your peers for improving speaking skills?

   A) Yes ☐   B) No ☐   C) Maybe ☐

Section Four: Suggestions

Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences or opinions regarding AI-powered language learning apps for speaking skill development?

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Thank you for your cooperation

ملخص

اليوم وفي زمن العولمة ،أصبح تطوير مهارات التحدث بطلاقة أمر بالغ الأهمية للتواصل الفعّال والنجاح المهني. وبالتالي أصبح دور التكنولوجيا؛ وخاصة الأدوات المدعومة بالذكاء الاصطناعي، أكثر أهمية في تعزيز عمليات تعلم اللغة. تسعى الدراسة الحالية إلى استكشاف مواقف طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية تجاه استخدام تطبيقات تعلم اللغة المدعومة بالذكاء الاصطناعي لتطوير مهارات التحدث، تهدف الدراسة كذلك إلى تحديد مدى اعتبار طلاب اللغة الانجليزية كلغة ثانية تطبيقات تعلم اللغة المدعومة بالذكاء الاصطناعي كأدوات فعالة لتحسين كفاءة التحدث مقارنة بأساليب التعلم التقليدية. بناءً على ذلك، تم طرح ثلاثة أسئلة في سياق هذه الدراسة: (1) ما هي مواقف طلاب اللغة الانجليزية كلغة ثانية تجاه تطبيقات تعلم اللغة المدعومة بالذكاء الاصطناعي فيما يتعلق بتحسين مهارتهم في التحدث؟ (2) ما هي آراء طلاب اللغة الانجليزية كلغة ثانية بشأن فعالية تطبيقات تعلم اللغة المدعومة بالذكاء الاصطناعي في إتقان التحدث مقارنة بالطرق التقليدية؟ (3) كيف يمكن أن تكون تطبيقات تعلم اللغة المدعومة بالذكاء الاصطناعي أدوات تكميلية مفيدة لتحسين مهارة التحدث لدى متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية ؟ للإجابة على هذه الأسئلة، تم جمع البيانات من خلال استبيان شمل مائة وستين طالبًا في قسم اللغات الأجنبية بالمركز الجامعي ميلة. تشير النتائج إلى وجود موقف إيجابي عام نحو التطبيقات المدعومة بالذكاء الاصطناعي لتطوير مهارات التحدث بين طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. علاوة على ذلك، وُجد أن طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية متفقون على فعالية التطبيقات المدعومة بالذكاء الاصطناعي في تعزيز مهارة التحدث إلى حد كبير، ولكنهم قد لا يتبنونها بالكامل كبديل يفوق الطرق التقليدية حيث لا يزال لديهم بعض المخاوف الملحوظة. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تعمل تطبيقات تعلم اللغة المدعومة بالذكاء الاصطناعي كأدوات تكميلية مفيدة تعزز كفاءة متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في التحدث من خلال تقديم تقييمات موثوقة وشاملة حول النطق والنحو وإثراء المفردات. استناداً إلى نتائج البحث، تُقترح عدة توصيات مثل النظر في دمج التعلم القائم على التطبيقات في مجال تعلم اللغات الأجنبية من طرف أصحاب القرار .

الكلمات المفتاحية: تطبيقات تعلم اللغة المدعومة بالذكاء الاصطناعي، مهارات التحدث، تعلم اللغة، طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، المواقف.

Résumé

Dans le monde globalisé d'aujourd'hui, développer des compétences orales est crucial pour une communication efficace et pour le succès professionnel. Par conséquent, le rôle et l'importance de la technologie, en particulier des outils alimentés par l'IA, sont devenus de plus en plus significatifs dans l'amélioration des processus d'apprentissage des langues. La présente étude vise à comprendre les perceptions des étudiants en langue Anglaise concernant les applications d'apprentissage des langues alimentées par l'IA et leur efficacité dans le développement des compétences orales par rapport aux méthodes traditionnelles. En conséquence, dans le cadre de cette étude, trois questions de recherche sont soulevées : (1) Quelles sont les attitudes des étudiants en langue Anglaise à l'égard des applications d'apprentissage des langues alimentées par l'IA pour améliorer leurs compétences orales ? (2) Quelles sont les opinions des étudiants en langue Anglaise sur l'efficacité des applications d'apprentissage des langues alimentées par l'IA par rapport aux méthodes traditionnelles concernant les performances des étudiants en compétence orale ? (3) Comment les applications d'apprentissage des langues alimentées par l'IA peuvent-elles servir d'outils complémentaires pour améliorer les compétences orales des apprenants en langue Anglaise? Pour répondre à ces questions, des données ont été collectées par le biais d'un questionnaire administré à cent soixante étudiants en langue Anglaise du Département des langues étrangères du Centre universitaire de Mila. Les résultats indiquent qu'il y a une inclination générale positive envers les applications alimentées par l'IA pour le développement des compétences orales parmi les étudiants en langue Anglaise. De plus, bien que les étudiants en langue Anglaise reconnaissent généralement l'efficacité des applications alimentées par l'IA dans l'amélioration significative des compétences orales, beaucoup peuvent ne pas les considérer entièrement comme un remplacement supérieur aux méthodes traditionnelles. Les résultats révèlent également que les applications d'apprentissage des langues alimentées par

l'IA servent d'outils complémentaires utiles qui améliorent la compétence orale des apprenants en langue Anglaise. Sur la base des résultats de la recherche, des recommandations sont suggérées, telles que l'intégration de l'apprentissage basé sur les applications dans le domaine des langues étrangères pour les décideurs politiques.

Mots-clés : applications d'apprentissage des langues basées sur l'IA, compétences orales, apprentissage des langues, étudiants en langue Anglaise, attitudes.