

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Theoretical Framework

1. English Speaking Skills

a. Definition of Speaking Skill

Speaking is recognized as one of the four fundamental language skills. It is classified as a productive skill because learners are required to produce spoken language in order to communicate meanings, ideas, emotions, and information to others (Jeremy, 2007). Direct interaction between speakers and listeners is primarily facilitated through speaking. In the field of English as a foreign language (EFL), speaking is regarded as the key indicator of language proficiency, as it demonstrates learners' ability to use their language skills spontaneously in real communication situations. According to Mehta & Sharma (as cited in M.F. Napitupulu & Dalimunte, 2025), speaking is "the most immediate and visible form of language proficiency" that serves as a medium of communication and a demonstration of communicative competence.

According to Brown (2004) and Thornbury (2005), speaking is not limited to the simple process of producing lexical units orally. Speaking presupposes the organization of ideas and their selection, the application of grammatical rules, the pronunciation of words properly, providing appropriate responses, and maintaining fluent interaction. Therefore, effective speaking requires the combination of linguistic knowledge and communicative competence.

b. Components of Speaking Skill

English as a Second Language Testing according to Harris (1974), there are five main components that are commonly used to measure speaking abilities: comprehension,

grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency. Those components have been widely accepted as significant measures in speaking tests. Similar to previous literature, hesitation, anxiety, and low self-confidence remain common problems among Indonesian EFL learners while using the English language orally.

As mentioned by Abrar et al. (2020), there were many problems with speaking in English, including fear of making errors, restricted vocabulary, and low confidence. Therefore, analysis of speaking skills components becomes essential in order to determine ways AI technology may help students in developing their oral communication skills.

1) Comprehension

According to Harris (1974), comprehension refers to learners' ability to understand spoken language and provide appropriate responses during communication. It involves understanding messages, questions, opinions, instructions, and contextual meanings in interaction. In speaking performance, learners are not only expected to speak but are also required to understand what others say so that meaningful communication can be maintained. Harris (1974) considers comprehension an essential component because communication may fail when oral input is not properly understood.

In EFL classrooms, students often experience comprehension difficulties because of limited vocabulary, unfamiliar accents, or insufficient listening practice. When learners cannot understand spoken messages, hesitation may arise, and participation in speaking activities is often reduced (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). Students' comprehension may be improved through AI tools such as chatbots, speech assistants, and interactive conversation

platforms, which provide repeated input, adjustable speaking speed, and immediate responses (Kohnke, Moorhouse, & Zou, 2023; Hashemifardnia, 2025).

In this research, comprehension refers to students' ability to understand prompts, follow conversations, and respond appropriately during AI-assisted speaking activities.

2) Grammar

Grammar refers to learners' ability to apply correct sentence structures and grammatical forms in spoken communication. According to Harris (1974), grammar is related to the accurate use of language patterns in speaking so that ideas and messages can be communicated clearly and appropriately. It includes tense usage, subject-verb agreement, word order, articles, prepositions, and sentence structure (Thornbury, 2005). Grammar plays an important role in speaking because unclear or incorrect structures may lead to misunderstanding (Larsen-Freeman, 2003).

Harris (1974) includes grammar among the main indicators of speaking quality since learners need to produce structurally correct sentences during oral interaction. If grammatical control is weak, ideas may not be conveyed clearly.

Grammatical difficulties are still common among Indonesian students in speaking activities because many learners focus more on avoiding mistakes than on communicating ideas fluently. According to Octaberlina & Anggarini (2024), grammatical accuracy remains one of the major challenges in EFL speaking performance. This issue may be addressed through AI tools that identify errors, offer corrections, and provide better sentence models.

In this study, grammar relates to students' views on the role of AI in helping them use appropriate sentence structures during speaking activities.

3) Vocabulary

Harris (1974) conceptualizes vocabulary as a fundamental linguistic pillar comprised of the comprehensive lexicon required for situational accuracy, structural fluency, and overall language competence.

According to Harris (1974), effective speaking depends heavily on vocabulary, as speakers need suitable words to communicate opinions, arguments, emotions, and responses. In speaking tasks that involve opinions, students need vocabulary related to agreement, disagreement, reasoning, examples, and discussion topics, such as *beneficial*, *harmful*, *agree*, *disagree*, *advantage*, *disadvantage*, and *solution*.

Vocabulary limitation is one of the most frequent problems encountered by EFL learners. Many students know what they intend to say in their first language, yet they cannot express the same ideas in English (Nation & Newton). As a result, hesitation and silence often occur during speaking tasks. Abrar et al. (2020) found that limited vocabulary frequently reduces students' confidence in speaking.

Vocabulary development can be supported by AI tools that generate synonyms, recommend context-based words, and provide examples of useful expressions (Haryono et al., 2025). In this study, vocabulary points to students' views on the role of AI to help them improve and use appropriate vocabulary during English-speaking activities.

4) Pronunciation

Harris (1974) identifies pronunciation as a central component of speaking because unclear sound production

can cause misunderstanding. Incorrect stress or intonation, for instance, can alter meaning or reduce comprehensibility. In addition, pronunciation strongly influences learners' confidence because many students feel embarrassed when they mispronounce English words.

Pronunciation difficulties are frequently faced by EFL learners because the English sound systems often differ from Indonesian. Words are sometimes pronounced exactly as written, or first-language sound patterns are transferred into English speech. Consequently, speaking anxiety may increase. Dewi (2023) reported that fear of pronunciation mistakes contributes significantly to students' speaking anxiety. Pronunciation in this study refers to students' perceptions of how AI supports their pronunciation practice during speaking activities.

5) Fluency

According to Harris (1974), fluency is an essential component of speaking because communication may become ineffective when speakers pause excessively, repeat too often, or stop frequently due to uncertainty. During classroom discussions, students who speak fluently are generally able to explain ideas, respond to others, and defend opinions more confidently.

Fluency refers to the ability to speak smoothly, naturally, and continuously with minimal hesitation or unnecessary pauses (Thonbury, 2005; Nation & Newton, 2009). It does not indicate perfect speech, but rather the ability to communicate ideas at a reasonable speed with confidence. Fluency reflects how comfortably learners can maintain speech flow during interaction.

Fluency is often difficult for EFL learners because grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation must be managed

simultaneously while speaking. Napitupulu & Dalimunte (2025) found that fluency remains an important challenge in students' English oral communication.

Repeated speaking opportunities in low-pressure settings can be provided through AI conversational tools, enabling students to rehearse responses, simulate discussions, and build confidence gradually (Tai & Chen, 2024). In this study, fluency relates to students' perceptions of how AI helps them speak more smoothly and confidently.

c. Difficulties in Speaking

1) Limited Vocabulary

Limited vocabulary mastery is one of the main problems for students in speaking English. Students often find it difficult to express their ideas because they do not know enough English words or expressions. As stated by Robah and Anggrisia (2023), insufficient vocabulary can hinder students from communicating their thoughts effectively in speaking activities.

2) Pronunciation Problems

Pronunciation is another challenge commonly experienced by English learners. Differences between English pronunciation and students' native languages may cause incorrect pronunciation and misunderstandings during communication. Purwati et al. (2023) explained that poor pronunciation became one of the major obstacles encountered in speaking classrooms.

3) Grammar Difficulties

Students frequently struggle with difficulties in using correct grammar when speaking English. They may feel afraid of producing incorrect sentence structures or tenses during conversations. Robah and Anggrisia (2023) noted that confusion in grammar usage and a limited understanding of

tenses affected students' speaking performance.

4) Lack of Fluency

Fluency problems occur when students cannot speak smoothly and naturally. Many students need extra time to arrange sentences and choose appropriate vocabulary before speaking. According to Trinh (2021), students often experience difficulty organizing ideas logically and forming sentences effectively, which affects their fluency in speaking.

5) Low Comprehension

Some students also face comprehension difficulties in speaking activities. They may struggle to understand questions, instructions, or conversations in English, making it difficult for them to respond appropriately. Robah and Anggrisia (2023) mentioned that a limited understanding of spoken English reduced students' participation during classroom communication.

6) Lack of Confidence

Lack of confidence becomes a psychological barrier for many students when speaking English. Students often feel shy, embarrassed, or insecure when speaking in front of classmates. Purwati et al. (2023) identified low self-confidence as one of the psychological factors that negatively influenced students' speaking performance.

7) Speaking Anxiety

Anxiety is another factor that affects students' speaking ability. Students feel nervous, worried, or afraid when they are required to speak English publicly. Robah and Anggrisia (2023) found that students commonly experienced fear of making mistakes and fear of being laughed at during speaking activities.

8) Limited Practice Opportunities

Students often have insufficient opportunities to practice speaking English both in and out of the classroom. Trinh (2021) explained that speaking practice is often limited because classroom activities tend to focus more on grammar and vocabulary learning rather than oral communication.

9) Fear of Making Mistakes

Fear of making mistakes can reduce students' willingness to participate in speaking activities. Students are frequently worried about making errors in pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary usage. Trinh (2021) stated that fear of making mistakes in front of classmates became one of the major psychological difficulties experienced by learners.

2. Perceptions

Perception is commonly understood as the process by which individuals select, organize, and interpret sensory information to create a meaningful understanding of their environment. Lindsay and Norman (1977) explain that perception is not merely receiving stimuli, but also interpreting experiences based on prior knowledge, expectations, and context. In educational settings, perception influences how students respond to learning materials, classroom environments, and technological tools. Therefore, students' perceptions toward learning media may affect their attitudes, engagement, and willingness to use such tools in the learning process.

Furthermore, perception is closely related to students' attitudes toward technology-assisted learning. In modern education, technological tools are increasingly integrated into language learning to support students' understanding and communication skills (Chan & Hu, 2023). Students' perceptions of educational technology can determine whether they are willing to adopt and use the technology effectively in the learning process. According to

Davis (1989), users are more likely to accept technology when they perceive it as useful and easy to use.

Recent studies also revealed that positive student perceptions of AI-supported learning tools can increase engagement, motivation, and willingness to participate in language-learning activities (Sutrah et al., 2025; Putri & Marhum, 2026). In accordance with Purwati et al. (2023), supportive learning environments and positive learner responses toward technology can encourage students to participate more confidently in speaking activities.

In the context of educational technology, perception is frequently explained through the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), introduced by Fred D. (Davis, 1989). TAM proposes that users' acceptance of technology is mainly determined by two key beliefs: *perceived usefulness* and *perceived ease of use*. Later studies have shown that emotional responses and user satisfaction also influence technology acceptance, especially in AI-supported learning environments (Wang & Wen, 2025).

In this study, students' perceptions of AI tools are important because positive perceptions may increase students' willingness to use AI for speaking practice, while negative perceptions may reduce participation. Thus, perception serves as a central variable in examining how learners respond to AI tools to enhance their English speaking skills.

a. Dimensions of Perception

1) Perceived Usefulness

Perceived usefulness relates to the degree to which a student believes that using a particular technology can improve learning performance. Davis (1989) defines it as the extent to which a person believes that technology enhances task achievement. In the present study, perceived usefulness refers to students' beliefs that AI tools can improve their speaking ability, help them generate ideas, correct grammar,

enrich vocabulary, and support the delivery of opinions more effectively.

Recent studies have also confirmed that students tend to accept AI tools when they perceive clear academic benefits. Wang and Wen (2025) found that AI tools positively influenced EFL learners' speaking performance, motivation, and confidence. Similarly, Indonesian learners perceived AI positively because it supported flexible practice and autonomous learning (Rosyada & Taopan, 2025).

If students believe that AI genuinely helps them improve speaking skills, they are more likely to use the technology consistently. Therefore, perceived usefulness is highly relevant to this research.

2) Perceived Ease of Use

Perceived ease of use refers to the extent to which students believe that using a technological system requires little effort. Davis (1989) explains that users are more likely to adopt technology when it is easy to understand, simple to operate, and accessible.

In this study, perceived ease of use is associated with students' perceptions of how simple, practical, and accessible AI tools are for supporting English-speaking practice. Fred D. Davis explained that perceived ease of use is the extent to which users believe that a technology can be utilized with little effort (Davis, 1989).

In AI-assisted language learning, students tend to develop favorable perceptions when AI platforms are easy to operate, provide immediate responses, and can be accessed conveniently at any time and place (Rosyada & Taopan, 2025). For instance, students may respond positively to AI tools when they can easily enter prompts, receive fast feedback, and practice speaking without facing technical

problems. Previous studies also reported that user-friendly features and easy accessibility encouraged students to use AI tools more actively in English learning activities, particularly for speaking practice (Chan & Hu, 2023; Sutrah et al., 2025).

Research has shown that ease of use significantly influences learners' attitudes toward digital tools. Venkatesh and Davis (2000) state that simple interfaces and low operational difficulty increase users' behavioral intention to adopt technology. Likewise, students tend to use AI tools more frequently when platforms are intuitive and convenient (Sok et al., 2025). Therefore, if students perceive AI as easy to use, their engagement and frequency of use are likely to increase.

3. Motivation in Language Learning

According to Dörnyei (2001), motivation is one of the most influential factors in second language learning because motivated learners usually demonstrate greater effort, persistence, and active involvement in learning activities. Dörnyei also explained that “the impact of motivation, or the lack of it, is particularly salient in student learning,” indicating that motivation is a crucial factor in educational success.

In language learning, Robah and Anggrisia (2023) found that motivated learners were more willing to participate in speaking activities even though they experienced linguistic and psychological difficulties. Purwati et al. (2023) also stated that low motivation could reduce students' participation in speaking classes. Likewise, Andriani et al. (2025) explained that effective speaking strategies could increase students' involvement in learning activities, improve their speaking skills, and create more enjoyable learning experiences.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT), developed by Ryan & Deci (2000), explains that motivation ranges from intrinsic to

extrinsic forms. According to SDT, learners are more motivated when their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are fulfilled.

In this research, motivation is important because students' willingness to use AI tools for speaking practice may depend on both personal interest and external goals.

a) Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation refers to doing an activity because it is inherently enjoyable, interesting, or satisfying (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Dörnyei (2001) explained that motivated learners tend to invest greater effort and participate more actively in language learning activities because they enjoy the learning process itself.

In this study, intrinsic motivation connects to students who use AI tools because they enjoy practicing English, feel curious about technology, or experience personal satisfaction when improving speaking ability (Wei, 2023). Students with intrinsic motivation are likely to practice more consistently even without external pressure (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Ryan and Deci (2000) state that intrinsic motivation is strongly associated with deeper learning, persistence, and higher engagement. Wei (2023) found that AI-supported learning environments enhanced learner engagement and created more enjoyable and personalized learning experiences, which positively influenced students' motivation in language learning. Furthermore, Chan and Hu (2023) explained that AI-assisted learning tools increased students' interest and engagement in language learning by providing interactive, flexible learning experiences.

b) Extrinsic Motivation

Extrinsic motivation involves performing an activity in order to obtain external outcomes or rewards (Ryan & Deci, 2000). These outcomes may include grades, praise, teacher

approval, academic achievement, or future career benefits (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

In this study, extrinsic motivation refers to students who use AI tools to improve speaking scores, complete assignments, fulfill academic requirements, or prepare for future educational and professional opportunities (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Wei, 2023). Students may also use AI tools because teachers encourage technology-assisted learning activities in English classrooms (Chan & Hu, 2023). Wei (2023) reported that AI-mediated language instruction positively affected learners' motivation because AI tools provided practical, flexible, and accessible learning opportunities.

Although externally driven, extrinsic motivation can still contribute positively to learning when students recognize the value of the activity. Ryan and Deci (2000) explain that external motivation may gradually become internalized when learners see personal relevance.

4. Artificial Intelligence (AI) in English Learning

a. Types of AI Tools for Speaking

1) Generative AI

Examples include OpenAI ChatGPT and Google Gemini. These tools can serve as brainstorming partners by helping students generate ideas, draft arguments, model responses, and receive grammar corrections. This can help learners organize their thoughts before speaking.

2) AI Chatbots

Examples include Grok and other conversational bots. These tools create simulated interaction environments where students can role-play conversations, debates, or opinion-sharing tasks. Because interaction occurs privately, students may feel less anxious than when speaking in front of classmates.

3) Speaking Applications

Examples include ELSA Speak. These tools focus on technical speaking aspects such as pronunciation, fluency, stress, and intonation through automated feedback. Students can repeat speaking tasks multiple times and receive instant corrections. This supports gradual speaking improvement.

b. The Role of AI as a Speaking Partner

AI tools can serve as asynchronous speaking partners, allowing learners to practice English anytime, anywhere, without relying on teachers or classmates. This flexibility gives students more opportunities to repeat speaking exercises outside of classroom hours and encourages independent learning. Zhou et al. (2025) interpreted that AI chatbot-integrated learning environments offer “a flexible learning environment not bound by time or space” while providing opportunities for interactive speaking practice. Similarly, Wang and Zou (2025) stated that AI-powered speaking systems enable learners to practice speaking “anytime, anywhere” through automated feedback and real-time interaction. Tariq et al. (2025) also described conversational AI chatbots as “time and location independent practice” tools that function as “always-available” language partners for learners.

In addition, AI can reduce the pressure caused by real-time social evaluation, which is frequently associated with speaking anxiety. Learners may feel more comfortable making mistakes when interacting with AI compared to speaking in front of classmates or teachers. F. Wang et al. (2025) explained that AI creates “a free and relatively private human-machine interaction environment,” allowing learners to practice speaking with less pressure. The study also reported that AI-supported speaking environments helped reduce learners’ speaking anxiety “to a large extent.” Likewise, Ningrum et al. (2026)

found conversational AI tools were reported to provide low-pressure speaking environments that help reduce learners' fear of making mistakes and gradually enhance their communicative confidence. Tariq et al. (2025) further explained that the absence of direct human judgment in AI interaction could lower language anxiety because learners become less worried about being negatively evaluated.

As a consequence, learners' confidence and willingness to communicate may gradually improve over time. Wang and Zou et al. (2025) found that students generally expressed positive perceptions toward AI platforms for speaking practice and reported improvements in both speaking ability and learning experience. In the same way, Zhou et al. (2025) revealed that students demonstrated "high engagement and satisfaction" when practicing oral English with AI chatbots. Previous studies also indicated that AI-assisted speaking activities contributed positively to learners' fluency, confidence, and communicative competence.

In this study, AI is viewed as a supportive speaking partner that assists students in practicing English speaking skills through flexible, low-pressure, and feedback-oriented interaction. AI-supported speaking tools provide immediate responses, interactive communication, and repeated opportunities for speaking practice, which may help students improve their oral English ability. Zhou et al. (2025) emphasized that AI chatbots provide "real-time feedback and interactive dialogue" that can enhance learners' oral English proficiency. Additionally, Zou et al. (2023) explained that AI-assisted speaking applications support speaking development through interactive and communicative learning experiences.

B. Previous Research

Previous studies hold an important role in this research by providing empirical evidence on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), the development of speaking skills, students' perceptions, and motivation in English language learning. By reviewing earlier investigations, the researcher can identify established findings, compare different research emphases, and identify gaps that warrant further exploration. In this section, five relevant studies published within the last five years are presented to strengthen the foundation of the present study.

The first study was conducted by Octaberlina and Anggarini (2024) titled "*Discussion-Based Speaking Tasks and Students' Communicative Ability in EFL Classrooms.*" The objective of this research was to examine the influence of discussion-based speaking tasks on students' communicative competence and confidence in English speaking activities. A classroom-based design was applied, involving EFL learners as participants. The data were gathered through classroom observations, speaking performance assessments, and interviews to obtain comprehensive information regarding students' progress during the implementation of discussion tasks.

The findings showed that discussion-based speaking activities significantly enhanced students' confidence, oral participation, and ability to communicate ideas more clearly. Students demonstrated greater willingness to speak when they were encouraged to share personal viewpoints, respond to classmates' arguments, and engage actively in group discussions. The study also revealed that collaborative speaking activities created a supportive classroom atmosphere that helped reduce hesitation during oral interaction. This study is relevant to the present research because it highlights the importance of speaking practice and students' engagement in improving English speaking skills, which is also a main focus of this study.

The second study, carried out by Wang and Wen (2025), entitled *“The Role of Artificial Intelligence Tools on Chinese EFL Learners’ Speaking Skills, Speaking Anxiety, and Motivation.”* This research aimed to investigate the effectiveness of AI tools in improving learners’ speaking performance and to examine their influence on anxiety and motivation. A quantitative design was employed, and the data were collected through speaking tests, anxiety scales, and motivation questionnaires administered to EFL learners in China.

The results indicated that students who practiced speaking through AI tools achieved notable improvement in fluency, pronunciation, and speaking confidence. Moreover, lower levels of speaking anxiety were experienced because learners were able to practice privately without fear of negative judgment. Motivation was also strengthened since AI was perceived as practical, flexible, and accessible at any time for independent learning. This study is highly relevant to the present research because it directly discusses AI use in speaking development and psychological factors such as anxiety and motivation.

The third study was conducted by Rosyada and Taopan (2025) titled *“Using AI in English Language Learning: Perspectives of Indonesian EFL Learners.”* The purpose of this study was to explore Indonesian students’ perceptions regarding the use of AI in English learning. A qualitative descriptive method was implemented, with data collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews involving Indonesian EFL learners.

The findings revealed that most students showed positive perceptions toward AI tools. They believed that AI provided immediate feedback, flexible access to learning materials, and opportunities for autonomous practice beyond classroom hours. Students also reported feeling more comfortable practicing English with AI because mistakes could be made without embarrassment. However, some participants expressed concerns about inaccurate responses and the necessity of

teacher supervision when AI tools were used. This study is relevant because perception constitutes one of the main variables investigated in the present research.

The fourth study was conducted by Sok, Heng, and Pum (2025), entitled *“Investigating High School Students’ Attitudes Toward the Use of AI in Education: Evidence from Cambodia.”* This study examined secondary school students’ attitudes toward the integration of AI in educational settings. A survey design was applied, and structured questionnaires were distributed to high school students in Cambodia to measure their views regarding usefulness, accessibility, and challenges related to AI in learning.

The findings demonstrated that students generally possessed favorable attitudes toward AI in education. Many respondents perceived AI as beneficial for academic support, easier information access, and more engaging learning experiences. Students also appreciated the efficiency and convenience offered by AI tools. Nevertheless, several concerns were identified, including overdependence on technology, limited digital literacy, and ethical issues related to academic honesty. This study is relevant because it specifically involved high school students and discussed students’ attitudes toward AI, which are closely related to the present research.

The fifth study was conducted by Qureshi et al. (2024), entitled *“Developing Students’ Critical Thinking through Discussion-Based Speaking Activities in EFL Classrooms.”* This research aimed to analyze the relationship between speaking activities involving opinion exchange and the development of students’ critical thinking skills. A mixed-method design was employed, and the data were gathered through classroom observation, speaking assessments, interviews, and reflective student responses.

The findings indicated that speaking activities requiring students to express opinions, defend arguments, evaluate alternative viewpoints, and respond critically to others significantly improved both critical

thinking and speaking interaction. Students became more confident in presenting ideas logically and systematically. Furthermore, learners demonstrated stronger reasoning ability and greater willingness to participate in classroom discussions. This study is relevant because it highlights the importance of interactive speaking practice to improve students' English speaking skills.

Based on the studies reviewed above, it can be concluded that recent research has widely discussed AI in English learning, students' perceptions toward technology, motivation, speaking development, and discussion-based speaking instruction. Most previous studies reported positive outcomes, indicating that AI and interactive speaking activities can support confidence, fluency, participation, and learner autonomy. However, limited attention has been given to high school students' perceptions and motivation toward using AI to enhance English speaking skills, particularly in the Indonesian EFL context.

Therefore, this study is expected to set the research gap by combining two important psychological variables, specifically perception and motivation, within the context of English-speaking skills. In addition, this research is anticipated to provide practical contributions for teachers in integrating AI tools into speaking instruction and theoretical contributions to the growing body of literature on AI-assisted language learning.