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**USING A CHATBOT FOR DEVELOPING ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS IN THE
7TH GRADE**

Master’s thesis

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PREFACE

Many people today use chatbots in their daily lives, work, and education. A chatbot is a computer program that engages in a dialogue with a person, often over the Internet (Longman Dictionary, n.d.). As technology progresses, its integration into education becomes increasingly topical. Chatbots represent a contemporary and evolving trend in educational technology, offering personalized learning experiences by adapting to students' individual needs and providing targeted feedback, which aligns with the shift toward personalized education.

Today's students, as digital natives, are comfortable interacting with technology. Chatbots can be employed by both students and teachers to develop speaking, reading, writing, and listening skills. In an increasingly globalized world, English language proficiency is essential. Strong communication skills, particularly speaking, are important for success in various professions.

In the English as a foreign language classroom (EFL), chatbots can be used to provide students with individualized speaking practice opportunities in and outside the classroom, catering to students with different learning paces, interests, and language skill levels. With the increasing integration of technology into education and the advancement of artificial intelligence, the potential of using chatbots for language learning purposes needs to be rigorously evaluated. It is important to examine whether and how chatbots can be implemented in the English as a foreign language classroom to develop students' speaking skills and whether interacting with a chatbot can have a positive impact on students' speaking skills development.

The study aims to explore the impact of using chatbots on developing 7th-grade students' speaking skills. This research paper includes an introduction, Chapter I "Teaching Speaking", Chapter II "Using Chatbot to Develop Speaking Skills in the 7th Grade", and a conclusion. The introduction outlines educational technologies and chatbots. Chapter I discusses the skill of speaking and its subskills, as well as various common approaches to teaching speaking. It also covers teaching speaking using technologies and chatbots. Chapter II introduces a practical research study into utilization of chatbots for speaking skills development, involving two groups of 7th-grade students. The conclusion summarizes the major findings of both theoretical and practical research regarding the hypothesis.

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INTRODUCTION

Educational Technology

Technology means new appliances, innovative equipment and methods rooted in contemporary scientific and computer-based knowledge (Longman Dictionary, n.d.). Technology is nowadays used in different areas of life. The growth of technology use and the widespread availability of devices like smartphones, coupled with the expansion of the Internet, have been instrumental in transforming different areas of human activity, such as occupation, education, entertainment, economics, healthcare and others. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly altered nearly every facet of our lives, making technology an integral part of our daily routines. Technology offers extensive possibilities to revolutionize education on a global scale, spanning all age groups. Technology in education can enrich and transform the overall learning experience by providing teachers and learners with tools to prepare, store, deliver, process, produce and assess the learning material. Technology has transformed education from a passive and reactive model into an interactive form of learning (Raja, Nagasubramani, 2018). Technology facilitates organizational aspects and the dynamics between all those involved in the educational process (Stošić, 2015). The goal of educational technology is to advance the field of education. It should streamline and bolster the learning process, enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the educational system (Shareef, Nithyanantham, 2022). Stošić claims that educational technology is underutilized, primarily due to such factors as lack of school resources and insufficient teacher training to effectively incorporate these resources (Stošić, 2015).

When utilizing educational technology, teachers' primary focus should center on the educational significance of the tools and applications employed. It is necessary to assess how well they support knowledge acquisition, whether they facilitate interaction between users and the tools, and if they yield positive learning outcomes. Several authors, such as Clements and Sarama (2003), Glaubke (2007), and Dynarski et al. (2007), propose five critical aspects of software programs that can significantly impact children's learning experiences:

- the educational effectiveness of the program
- its capacity to engage children in the learning process
- user-friendliness and ease of use
- the degree of interactivity between the child and the program

- the program's ability to monitor the child's progress.

Numerous educational software programs have been developed to help learners enhance their language proficiency. Shareef and Nithyanantham (2022) mention a number of different software tools which can help teachers to plan and deliver their lessons and improve students' language skills. These applications are aimed at developing communication skills, logical thinking, and creativity.

- Storybird: the main goal of this application is to develop writing and reading skills through storytelling. In this application, you can find books with a very simple interface. Furthermore, in this tool, teachers can create projects, write reviews and feedback, and assign marks
- Socrative: this application allows teachers to create educational games for students. Students can use smartphones, laptops, or any other device. The teacher can track the students' progress and create courses.
- TED-Ed: this tool allows for the creation of animated lessons in collaboration with students and people who are interested in a certain subject. This application includes many other apps, such as: Ted Talks, Tedx, Ted Books, Ted Open Translation Project. TED-Ed animations represent concise, acclaimed animated videos discussing concepts that ignite the inquisitiveness of learners worldwide. 650,000 teachers are actively using this software and participate in different courses (TED-Ed, n.d)
- Pixton: this application enables users to write and illustrate stories, including comics. Teachers can utilize this application for creating picture-based narratives (retelling).
- Voice Thread: this is a digital platform that allows for speaking practice. The app records students' voices, which helps improve speaking skills in both the classroom and at home. This software gives opportunity to upload and engage in conversations about various content, including documents, slideshows, pictures, audio, and videos.
- Quizlet: this digital platform provides an opportunity to enhance students' vocabulary through flashcards. The application offers various types of vocabulary practice exercises. Students can test their knowledge and improve their results at any time. Teachers can create new courses and monitor students' progress.

Moreover, a teacher can use software to monitor students' behavior during the lesson. These digital platforms help teachers maintain a well-organized and disciplined classroom

environment. They can easily identify disruptive behavior and address it promptly. It saves teachers time that would otherwise be spent manually documenting and tracking student behavior, allowing them to focus more on instruction. For example, Class Dojo application allows the teacher to provide instant feedback to students during the lesson. It can be praise or a comment. In this application, you can grant access to parents and school administration (Shareef and Nithyanantham, 2022). Bouncy Balls application is a classroom noise level meter. In case students make noise during the lesson, the balls will bounce high, after which a message saying “quieter” will appear.

Chatbots

During their 2016 Annual Conferences, the world’s Tech Giants, including Facebook, Google, and Microsoft, revealed the introduction of their individual bot platform initiatives (De Cicco et al, 2022). Chatbot means a computer program that can hold a dialogue with a person, usually over the Internet (Oxford Dictionary, n.d). Chatbots can be basic programs that give a short response to a simple question, or advanced assistants that learn and improve over time to provide more personalized help by gathering and analyzing information. The main reasons for this development are improvements in artificial intelligence fields, like the understanding and processing of natural language, and the growing number of consumers using platforms that allow conversational interaction (Maglogiannis & Iliadis, 2020). Chatbots are actively used in such areas as customer service, health, office work, education. Most chatbots can work on any type of device and can be used right away, without needing to install anything.

As technology continues to advance, its integration into education becomes increasingly relevant. Chatbots represent a current and evolving educational technology trend. Chatbots can offer personalized learning experiences by adapting to individual student’s needs and providing targeted feedback (Essel et al, 2022). Students often fear receiving negative feedback from the teacher, causing them to remain silent and not participate in the lesson. Chatbots provide students with an interactive learning experience that simulates one-on-one interaction with a teacher (Lemma, 2018). Furthermore, chatbots can serve as a platform for social learning, enabling students from diverse backgrounds to exchange their viewpoints and insights on a particular subject (Lemma, 2018). Students of today are digital natives who are accustomed to interacting with technology. According to the research conducted by the magazine “Forbes”, around 60% of teenagers have used chatbots. Out of all the young people who have tried them,

70% say they have had good experiences. Among teenagers who have not tried them, over half of them are interested in trying them out (Arnold, 2018).

Chatbots can be used to develop students' speaking, reading, writing and listening skills. Chatbots can providing additional language learning opportunities in and outside the classroom, catering to different interests and needs of students. A chatbot is capable of assisting teachers in various aspects. It can respond to students' questions, assess homework completion, and, furthermore, has the ability to interact with multiple students simultaneously during a lesson.

The research into educational technology in the Estonian context has focused on teachers' attitude toward modern technologies and their development possibilities in the future (Raidma, 2022). Kurel's (2018) master's thesis "Teacher's Appropriation Practices of Educational Technology: A Case Study in Tartu International School" looked at how teachers employ various strategies to effectively integrate educational technology, adapting it to suit their needs and make it meaningful for them. Raave et al. (2023) in their study "Classroom Digital Technology Integration-A Double-Edged Sword? Engaging and Practical yet Harmful" considered the advantages and disadvantages of integrating digital technologies in the classroom via a survey of teachers. Gadd and Rosliakova (2022) in their master's thesis "Dazed and Confused: A Comparative Case of study of Uncertainties in Technology Use in Education" reviewed this topic from a different angle and explored the uncertainties that exist when teachers and trainers engage with educational technology. It appears that no research has been conducted in Estonia into the impact of employing chatbots for developing specific language skills in the classroom.

Recently, a surge of interest has emerged in the potential of chatbots and educational technologies as an innovative educational tool in the broader global landscape. The research conducted by Han (2020) showed the potential utilization of chatbots as a means of providing fresh language input and aiding language output in an English as a Foreign Language educational setting with restricted chances for genuine interaction. Georgescu (2018) in his paper discusses the advancement and functionalities of conversational agents, along with the enhanced benefits they offer to the educational journey. Additionally, a collection of effective educational instances of chatbots is examined and an analysis of the advantages and obstacles associated with integrating chatbots into educational settings is provided. Davies and West (2013) claimed that the advantage of the current utilization of technology in education has been its enhancement. Moreover, they found out that future efforts should aim to give students and

teachers better access to technology, along with training in effective teaching practices. This includes improving technology-based assessment methods and personalized instruction.

With the increasing integration of technology into the learning process and the advancement of artificial intelligence, the potential of chatbots in language learning needs to be rigorously evaluated. Questions might arise about the quality of interactions, the chatbot's ability to provide meaningful feedback on students' learning, and whether it can replace human-to-human interaction effectively and have a positive impact on language learning. Moreover, the design and content of chatbots need to be age-appropriate and engaging for different types of learners. The aim of the present research is to examine the impact of using a chatbot on developing 7th grade students' speaking skills. The research seeks an answer to the following research question: Do chatbots affect the development of 7th-grade students' speaking skills, and what are the potential challenges and limitations associated with their implementation in the educational context? Are children interested in using technology in English class?

CHAPTER I TEACHING SPEAKING

1.1. Speaking

Speaking is a routine aspect of our everyday lives and a skill that we might take for granted. Many languages worldwide lack a written script and exist solely in spoken form. Even among languages with writing systems, the spoken language often takes precedence over the written form in public and private discourse. It is widely acknowledged that the primary method of learning a language involves speaking it, following extensive exposure to the sounds, words, phrases, and sentences in the surrounding environment through active listening (Anuradha et al., 2014). On average, individuals generate tens of thousands of words daily, with some exceeding this count. Since speech production occurs in real-time, it is inherently a linear process and holds significant importance (Thornbury, 2005). When taking into account the elements of this skill, Thornbury (2005) observes that “speaking involves a minimum of three phases: conceptualization, formulation, and articulation, in which the speaker is concurrently involved in self-monitoring” (Thornbury, 2005). During the conceptualization phase, individuals consider the discourse type, topic, and purpose. In the formulation phase, strategic decisions are made regarding discourse structure, syntax, and vocabulary. We also ready the sound patterns of the words to be utilized: pronunciation errors in the native language often include interchanging sounds between words that are not related; such exchanges imply that the pronunciation of words needs to be prepared in groups before speaking (Bygate, 1987). Articulation encompasses the physical utilization of speech organs to produce the intended sounds (Thornbury, 2005). With the multiple factors associated with these phases, the ultimate objective is to convey thoughts clearly and smoothly in the target language, i.e. accurately and fluently. Accuracy signifies the capability to employ the necessary vocabulary and grammar accurately, while fluency pertains to the smooth and effective conveyance of meaning by the learner. All these phases happen very fast and, to be successful, depend on automation. Automation is required because humans lack sufficient conscious attention capacity to control all the three types of processes.

The context in which speaking takes place significantly influences the development of speaking skills (Bygate, 1987). An important role plays the reciprocal nature of speaking, where multiple participants can contribute simultaneously and respond immediately to each other. It is crucial to highlight variability in oral communication, considering factors such as the number of participants, the balance of speaking rights, and the physical context of face-to-face interaction.

The presence of visual cues and physical signals in spoken communication allows for more implicit references compared to written. Therefore, spoken language diverges from written language in both the manner of its creation and the resulting output (Bygate, 1987).

In keeping with the complex nature of speaking, it can take different forms in a foreign language classroom: imitative, intensive, responsive, interactive, and extensive speaking. In classroom activities that involve imitation, the emphasis is on the examination and practice of language elements in isolation. For examples, students can engage with listening materials with a goal to mimic what they hear, focusing on specific sounds. Drilling is a common example of imitative speaking tasks in the classroom, enabling students to audibly repeat certain language forms. Considering that drills rely on repetition, they should be brief, straightforward, regulated, and engaging for learners (Guebba, 2021).

Intensive speaking involves engaging in speaking activities that aim to practice specific lexical or grammatical language forms. In this type of speaking practice, students concentrate on words or sentences rather than a particular sound. These intensive speaking performances can be undertaken either individually or in pairs (Guebba, 2021). In this form of speaking, understanding the meaning is crucial, while interaction with a conversation partner is limited. According to Brown (2004), when designing tasks for intensive speaking performance, speakers should present brief segments of discourse that showcase their linguistic skills at a particular language proficiency level (Brown 2004, p 140). The most common intensive activities are: reading aloud, sentences completion, translation.

Student engagement in the classroom primarily involves responsive participation. In this form of speaking, there is no extended exchange of information. Responsive tasks assess comprehension and are limited to short conversations, standard greetings, small talk, simple requests, comments, and similar interactions. Consequently, responsive practice does not extend to dialogue; instead, it mostly involves responding to the teacher's questions (Brown, 2004). The most popular responsive activities are: question and answer, giving instruction or direction, paraphrasing.

Interactive speaking involves multiple exchanges and/or participants. Interaction can manifest itself in two forms: transactional exchanges, aimed at exchanging specific information, or interpersonal exchanges, focused on fostering social relationships (Brown, 2004). The most

common interactive activities are: interview, dramatization, role-play, discussion, information-exchange games.

Extensive oral production assignments encompass activities like delivering speeches, oral presentations, and storytelling. In these tasks, the chance for oral interaction with the audience is often quite limited. The language register typically adopts a formal tone. Generally, extensive speaking tasks, especially in an academic context, involve intricate and relatively lengthy segments of discourse (Brown, 2004).

Sub-skills of speaking

Lackman (2010) outlines the following sub-skills of speaking and ways for developing those presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. *Speaking sub-skills and their applications*

Sub-skills	Application
<p>Fluency Students engage in spontaneous speaking to develop a coherent and natural flow in their communication.</p>	Activities that prompt students to prioritize the meaning in communication over immediate accuracy concerns.
<p>Accuracy Students engage in activities aimed at utilizing words, structures, and pronunciation with precision and accuracy.</p>	The most prevalent method for refining spoken accuracy is through controlled practice activities.
<p>Using function Students use specific set phrases for specific situations.</p>	Activities that emphasize that verbal communication that serves a specific purpose or function (e.g., roleplay)
<p>Appropriacy Students practice employing the language suitable for a given situation and make</p>	Activities that highlight how the reason for speaking determines the suitable language to use. Students need to decide on grammar, vocabulary, and other aspects of

decisions regarding formality and the selection of grammar or vocabulary.	communication, including intonation and the length of their speaking turn.
<p>Turn-taking Skills</p> <p>Students practice how to interrupt, prompt someone to interject, or avoid interjections altogether.</p>	Students can practice listening for suitable pauses to take their turn without interrupting the speaker. While speaking, they can practice techniques like intentionally pausing to give others an opportunity to speak.
<p>Relevant length</p> <p>Students practice speaking for a duration that is suitable for a given situation.</p>	Exercises that illustrate how the intention behind speaking or the context dictates the suitable length of one's speaking turn. Activities that prompt students to either elaborate or be concise are valuable.
<p>Responding and Initiating</p> <p>Students engage in activities where they practice steering a conversation by responding, prompting a response, or introducing a new topic or idea.</p>	Activities that encourage students to practice effectively steering a conversation using specific words and phrases in an appropriate manner. Moreover, students can use gestures.
<p>Repair and Repetition</p> <p>Students engage in exercises where they practice restating or rephrasing portions of a conversation when they suspect that the listener did not comprehend what was said.</p>	The speaker repeats individual words or groups of words. Students can practice the skill of repairing when they sense a lack of understanding. As listeners, they can repeat to seek clarification or correction from the speaker.
<p>Range of Words and Grammar</p> <p>Students practice using a variety of grammar structures and vocabulary for a particular topic.</p>	Students should be familiar with a variety of words and grammatical structures, enabling them to select the most suitable vocabulary and language patterns from their repertoire for a given task or topic.

<p>Discourse Markers</p> <p>Students engage in activities where they practice utilizing words or phrases that help structure and organize their speech.</p>	<p>Exercises can be used to instruct students on discourse markers and subsequently prompt them to use these markers appropriately.</p>
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1.2. Speaking in the Estonian National Curriculum for Basic Schools

In Estonia, English is taught as a primary foreign language, and the instruction in A-foreign language (commonly, English) begins in the first grade. According to the curriculum, the second school level (grades 7-9) entails 9 hours of instruction in the chosen A-foreign language. A primary goal in the study of the designated A-foreign language is to ignite students' interest in additional languages and cultures while fostering motivation for ongoing language acquisition. Throughout all school stages, the instruction in this foreign language is expected to equip students with linguistic proficiency, empowering them to independently advance their language skills in the future. In the second school stage, attention is predominantly directed towards six thematic areas: I and others; home and surroundings; place of residence in Estonia; countries and their cultures; everyday life; education and work; free time activities and media (National Curriculum 2023, pp. 3-4).

By the end of the sixth grade, the student is expected to reach level A2 in speaking, which means that the student (National Curriculum 2023, pp 6):

1. understands in general short and simple everyday communication when spoken slowly and clearly;
2. understands very simple, clearly structured presentations or talks on familiar topics, especially when illustrated with slides, specific examples, or diagrams, and spoken slowly, clearly;
3. grasps the main content of short, simple, and clear messages or announcements;
4. participates in simple daily communication, especially when it involves direct information exchange on familiar topics;
5. describes oneself, one's family, other people, places, and things in simple sentences;
6. talks about one's interests and preferences, as well as past and future activities, using simple sentences;
7. presents a simple, previously prepared, and memorized text;

8. uses prosodic means (emphasis, intonation, rhythm) quite effectively when pronouncing relatively familiar everyday words and phrases.

1.3. Speaking in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which signifies the Council of Europe’s commitment to language education, offers a user-friendly presentation of key aspects for teaching and learning languages, featuring an updated set of language proficiency descriptors. The CEFR categorizes language proficiency into six levels (A1 to C2) grouped into Basic User, Independent User, and Proficient User, allowing further subdivision based on local contextual needs (Council of Europe website, 2023).

According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2023), at the A2 proficiency level (the expected target level for sixth grade students studying English in Estonia), oral communication skills are evaluated according to the following criteria: range, accuracy, fluency, interaction, coherence.

Table 2. *The Common European Framework of References for Languages: A2 Level Speaking*

Range	Accuracy	Fluency	Interaction	Coherence
Communicates simple information in everyday situations using basic sentence structures, memorized phrases, small word groups, and formulas.	Correctly employs certain simple structures but consistently makes fundamental errors.	Can express oneself briefly, despite noticeable pauses, initial errors, and reformulation.	Capable of responding to questions and simple statements, able to signal comprehension, but typically lacks the ability to sustain a conversation independently.	Can connect word groups using basic linking words such as “and”, “but”, and “because”.

1.4. Teaching Speaking

It is important to encourage and stimulate students to use the language at their command. Real-life speaking tasks, such as role-play, provide students with the opportunity to experience what communicating in a foreign language feels like. Additionally, engaging in speaking activities can instill satisfaction and confidence in students. With correct guidance and feedback from the teacher, these experiences can serve as powerful motivators, inspiring students to delve deeper into language study (Harmer 1998). It is also crucial for teachers to correct mistakes during speaking activities in a different way from the mistakes made during grammar or vocabulary practice activities. Interrupting the student to correct mistakes while they are making a point can disrupt the intended purpose of the speaking activity. For this reason, some teachers take note of the mistakes students make on a sheet of paper. After the student completes their speech, they discuss these mistakes with the student and the class, analyzing them together (Harmer 1998). In addition, Lazarton (2014) claims that teachers need to consider essential aspects when dealing with the fundamentals of outlining goals, crafting instructions, offering crucial language assistance, and choosing suitable materials. These factors play a pivotal role in effective teaching and the development of language skills (Lazarton, 2014).

Bailey (2003) highlights some principles for teaching speaking. It is crucial to provide students with opportunities to practice both fluency and accuracy in language learning. Teachers should offer activities that enhance fluency, recognizing that making mistakes is a natural part of the language acquisition process. Additionally, according to Bailey (2003), it is essential to create chances for students to engage in conversations through group work, minimizing the teacher's role in the interaction. Group work not only extends the time spent speaking in the target language but also allows learners to assume various speaking roles traditionally held by the teacher. Bailey (2003) suggests that students can enhance their speaking skills by engaging in negotiations for meaning—checking for comprehension, clarifying understanding, and confirming mutual understanding (Bailey, 2003).

An appropriate speaking activity for elementary and intermediate levels involves information gaps. The fundamental concept of this speaking technique revolves around two participants possessing distinct pieces of information that, when combined, form a complete whole. A widely favored information-gap activity is termed “Describe and Draw”, wherein one student is provided with a picture and is required to describe it while giving specific instructions to their

partner. The partner, in turn, must draw the picture without referring to the original. According to Harmer (1998), this speaking approach proves highly motivating, as it serves a genuine purpose for communication, and virtually any language can be employed. It is crucial to emphasize that in such speaking activities, exchanging the roles of the students becomes significant, particularly when the activity is repeated (Harmer 1998).

Another activity to teach speaking for elementary and intermediate level is doing surveys, as it provokes conversation and opinion exchange. This activity can be more useful if students plan their surveys themselves. The use of surveys as a speaking task in language teaching offers numerous advantages. These include real-life relevance, as surveys provide authentic contexts for communication, fostering the development of various communication skills. Surveys also personalize the learning experience by incorporating topics relevant to students' lives, increasing engagement. This method enhances listening skills, critical thinking, and vocabulary acquisition, as students design questions and interact with diverse languages. Moreover, surveys encourage peer interaction, contributing to a collaborative learning environment, and provide opportunities for assessment (Harmer 1998).

According to Lazarton (2014) a commonly used speaking activity is role-playing, particularly effective for practicing speech acts or functions like complimenting, requesting, and refusing. Depending on the student's language proficiency, role plays can be conducted using pre-prepared scripts. It is essential to conduct a diagnostic assessment to gauge the student's understanding of the topic. A model dialogue provides language input, allowing students to listen, practice typical phrases used in speech, and engage in the role play (Lazarton, 2014).

Simulations closely resemble role-plays, but what sets them apart is that students are not playing any roles, but are put in a certain situation. In simulations, students can enhance the realism by bringing items to class. Both role-plays and simulations offer several advantages. Firstly, they are engaging and serve as a source of motivation for students. Secondly, following Kayi's (2006) suggestion, they can boost the confidence of hesitant students. In role-play and simulation activities, students assume different roles and speaking contexts, alleviating the pressure of speaking for themselves and lessening the level of responsibility (Kayi, 2006).

Another activity for developing speaking skills is storytelling. Storytelling means that students have the option to provide a brief recap of a tale or narrative they heard previously, or they can

generate their own stories to share with their classmates. Storytelling promotes creative thinking and assists students in articulating ideas within the narrative structure of introduction, development, and conclusion, encompassing essential elements like characters and setting (Kayi, 2006).

Discussions represent one of the most frequently employed techniques in foreign language learning. Harmer (1998) claims that this activity is mostly suitable for the intermediate or upper intermediate level of English (Harmer 1998). Initially, students are introduced to a topic through a reading or listening passage and then organized into pairs. Discussion is often not a spontaneous speech. For this reason, students need time to assemble their thoughts before any discussion. Within these pairs, they participate in discussions related to the topic, generating ideas for an ensuing writing assignment. Certain types of discussions can be structured into a formalized debate, wherein speakers take opposing sides, delivering speeches, offering comments, and culminating in a final vote (Harmer 1998). Prior guidance and subsequent follow-up are crucial elements in this process. Defining and observing success in the activity within groups should be carefully considered. Another aspect to address is whether students possess the necessary interactional skills for task completion. A preceding lesson should be dedicated to working with functional language essential for expressing opinions, agreeing and disagreeing, interrupting, and clarifying (Lazarton, 2014).

There are some accuracy-based speaking activities that are focused on developing learner's accuracy in their spoken language. Drills are one of the techniques used to improve students' accuracy, and pronunciation. Lazarton (2014) claims that drills should be brief, uncomplicated, and lively. They should pave the way for more genuine and interactive communicative activities. Activities encouraging students to become acquainted naturally provide opportunities for practicing both *yes-no* and *wh*-questions along with their appropriate responses. Numerous variations of such activities exist, including *Twenty Questions* and *Find Someone Who*, among others (Lazarton, 2014).

1.5. Teaching Speaking with the Help of Technology

The use of technology is significant in teaching foreign language speaking as it allows students to engage in real-time language use and later reflect on their language production. Certain technologies provide instructors with a means to offer feedback (Lazarton, 2014). Integrating

technology into teaching methodologies, particularly where it is accessible and available, is nowadays a common theme in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction. Recommendations have been provided for incorporating technology into the teaching of speaking skills. The utilization of computer-mediated communication in teaching pronunciation and conversation is recommended as a means to enhance students' oral proficiency (Hong, 2006). Bahadorfar and Omidvar (2014) asserted that technological resources, such as the Internet, podcasts, video conferencing, videos, and speech recognition software are deemed highly effective for teaching speaking skills. The utilization of these tools is recognized as a means to aid students in enhancing their language proficiency. Additionally, Huang and Hung (2010) stated that an e-portfolio is a technological tool enabling students to enhance lexical richness in their speaking. This allows learners to benefit from their oral performances.

Video conferencing tools serve the dual purpose of expanding and contracting the world, facilitating easier communication with both native and non-native speakers of the target language. In a language learning setting, these tools prove valuable for connecting with the speakers of the target language and honing speaking skills. Teachers can instruct students to record themselves while providing an oral response (Lazarton, 2014).

There are various applications and audiovisual content accessible on the Internet that allow students to enhance their oral proficiency in the target language. Over the Internet, students can access various learning materials, including audio, video, radio and TV shows, games, voice recordings, quizzes, and podcasts—this exposure to a wealth of target languages aids in the development of their speaking skills (Bahadorfar & Omidvar, 2014).

Podcasts serve as an excellent and cost-free resource for discovering authentic audio and video content. Certain podcasts offer a collection of files that can be downloaded for future viewing or listening. Subscribing to podcasts allows students to receive news updates from these channels. Podcasting enables students to repurpose their technology-based entertainment systems for educational objectives. This approach allows us to shift away from conventional face-to-face training while maintaining the effective student-to-trainer relationship crucial in the learning process. Podcasts empower both students and teachers to disseminate information to anyone, at any time (Bahadorfar & Omidvar, 2014). Furthermore, students can analyze the rhetorical style of a podcast and leverage voice-based technology tools to create their own channels (Lazarton, 2014).

Voice-based speech-recognition technology, which converts spoken words into machine-readable input, is another accessible tool that is user-friendly (Lazarton, 2014). This technology assesses the accuracy of the spoken words and subsequently offers positive reinforcement or prompts the user to try again, allowing the learner to gauge their speaking accuracy. This software evaluates and scores grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, providing feedback with the correct forms. It is particularly beneficial for distance learners without direct teacher correction (Bahadorfar & Omidvar, 2014). Through various applications, both synchronous and asynchronous voice recordings can be integrated into the development of oral skills, including threaded discussions, chat sessions, interviews, voice emails, and presentations (Lazarton, 2014).

In a tech-driven era, where students, adept in technology, heavily depend on social media and instant messaging tools like Instagram and Facebook Messenger, the issue of integrating chatbots for student engagement is quite relevant. The utilization of dialogue-based computer-assisted language learning (CALL) in interactionist research has gained popularity in recent years, driven by advancements in natural language processing and automatic speech recognition (ASR) technologies. In contrast to computer-mediated communication (CMC), where a learner interacts through a computer, dialogue-based CALL involves students interacting directly with a computer. CALL systems are designed to facilitate the instruction and acquisition of a foreign language through computer-based platforms. It serves as an online, self-directed learning tool, enabling individuals to study a foreign language at their convenience and from any location. Additionally, the system provides students with the capability to monitor their progress in the target language learning (Shawar, 2017). Furthermore, despite the time-consuming nature of developing oral proficiency, ASR-based systems and CALL empower learners to practice their speaking skills at their own pace in a low-anxiety environment, thereby increasing opportunities for speaking practice (Divon, 2020). While learning the L2 speaking through chatbots differs from the experience of face-to-face interactions with human partners in a classroom setting, engaging in self-regulated practice through conversations with chatbots offers learners an additional opportunity to reinforce speaking skills acquired in the classroom. The effectiveness of this practice varies depending on the learner's L2 competence and the sophistication of the specific chatbot design. The success of task completion within a specified timeframe is influenced by individual cognitive and affective factors (Çakmak, 2022).

Learning is a time-consuming process and maintaining student engagement over this extended period is crucial. The novelty of educational technologies can wear off, and students may lose interest if a chatbot does not offer varied and stimulating conversation opportunities. Thanh Ha (2021) argues that combining real-world applications of technology with academic subjects can be a powerful tool for motivating students. By bridging inquiry-based learning with relevant issues, students develop a stronger internal sense of the value of learning, leading to increased interest and motivation. By integrating technology into the classroom, teachers have the opportunity to adjust their instructional methods, actively involve students, and cater to the diverse skill levels present among their students. Merta et al. (2023) emphasize the role of educational technology in fostering students' critical thinking in online learning environments. By providing opportunities for interaction, open-ended discussions, and time for reflection, technology can enhance student engagement and encourage active participation in speaking activities. For instance, online platforms can offer structured discussion boards where students can exchange ideas, ask questions, and provide feedback. Additionally, multimedia tools can facilitate collaborative projects, allowing students to express their thoughts and opinions creatively. Through these interactive experiences, students can develop their speaking skills while also honing their critical thinking abilities in a digital learning context.

1.6.Chatbot Applications

There are various chatbot applications that can be utilized for developing speaking skills in or outside the classroom. Since the research topic is centered around the development of speaking skills, I will review chatbots created to enhance speaking proficiency in L2 among students.

Tandem GPT

Tandem GPT is an innovative AI language partner that facilitates language practice through realistic and engaging conversations. With 24/7 availability, users can learn at their own pace and integrate language practice into their schedules. The key features include voice messaging capabilities, going beyond text-based interactions to enhance the language learning experience. Tandem GPT is designed for practicing language skills in a fun and interactive manner, seamlessly incorporating language learning into users' daily routines. Its focus on voice messages to improve pronunciation and listening skills (Tandem GPT website, 2024).

HelloTalk

This web and mobile application seeks to blend the engaging nature of social media apps with the efficiency of locating a language exchange partner. It achieves this through interactive posts, an integrated interface for corrections, and guidance for language learning from authentic native speakers. Employing a social media-style interface, the app facilitates connections with native speakers proficient in over 150 languages. It offers diverse communication options, such as text messaging, voice, and video chat, fostering natural interaction in the user's target language (Christiano, 2023).

Lingbe

Lingbe, initially a language exchange app for Spanish and English, evolved into a diverse community supporting various languages. Founded in June 2015 by language enthusiasts Victor Castro, Juan Pablo Andrade, and Alberto Cruz Alonso, Lingbe is now part of iTalki, a prominent language exchange platform. The app offers unique features, providing users with an opportunity to practice language skills, experience authentic conversations, and connect globally for pronunciation and grammar improvement. It functions like a voice messaging app, offering quick calls and a reward system to encourage regular interaction. Lingbe caters to learners of all levels and provides 366 language options. Users can practice daily, earn Lingos rewards, benefit from free energy refills, and easily delete their accounts (Advincula, 2022).

Speechace

As per its website, Speechace is a sound recognition system crafted to evaluate the pronunciation and fluency of learners in their second language, with a focus on English learners. The tool was developed with the goal of providing a learning resource that operates independently without the need for instructor intervention. While not explicitly mentioned, it appears that the design of Speechace is grounded in three key principles: facilitating opportunities for both perception and production practice, offering personalized and immediate feedback, and placing emphasis on accuracy. Certain features are available to all users, but full access requires a subscription fee of \$4.99 per month (Alnafisah, 2022).

Busuu

Established in 2008, the language course and app Busuu derived its name from the Busuu language speakers in Cameroon. In collaboration with McGraw-Hill Education, the courses are structured into A1, A2, B1, B2, and C1 levels. Offering lessons in twelve languages (English,

Spanish, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Arabic, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, Polish, Turkish), Busuu employs native speakers in its courses. Users can receive feedback on pronunciation and participate in interactive dialogues. Busuu adheres to international standards, allowing it to assess learners at each level and issue formal certificates. While the free version has limitations, Busuu's approach focuses on contextual vocabulary learning within conversations (Scott, 2022).

Tandem GPT will be used in this research because I have previous experience using this application in the classroom. Furthermore, my students have experience working with this chatbot. Tandem GPT offers a user-friendly interface and a wide range of free features that will be beneficial during the research

CHAPTER II USING CHATBOTS TO DEVELOP SPEAKING SKILLS IN THE 7TH GRADE

2.1. Participants of the Study

Before conducting the empirical research, the author asked for consent from the school principal, students, and their teachers, guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality, and provided informed consent to the participants explaining what kind of research this is, their roles, and what is asked from them. If participants experienced any kind of discomfort or stress, they had the right to withdraw from this research at any time and stage. The participants were 34 students, each studying in 7th grade in Tallinn public school, during 2023-2024 academic year. The study participants had the same foreign language teacher. They were divided into two groups: experimental and control group. Both groups shared similar demographic characteristics, including age, socio-economic background, level of proficiency in English, and prior exposure to language learning tools. Throughout the study, participants from both groups were assessed using standardized speaking tests and observation to evaluate their progress in developing speaking skills.

The experimental group comprised Tallinn public school 7th-grade students who were exposed to the implementation of chatbots for the development of speaking skills. The total number of students was 17. The participants in this group had approximately the same level of speaking skills (according to the CEFR). The students in the experimental group received structured lessons and activities using chatbots to enhance their speaking skills.

The control group consisted of Tallinn public school 7th-grade students, who followed the more conventional, human-to-human, way of developing speaking skills without the integration of chatbots. The total number of students was 17. Similar to the experimental group, the students in the control group had a similar language proficiency (according to the CEFR) and willingness to participate in the study. The control group served as a benchmark to measure the effectiveness of the chatbot-assisted teaching method by providing a comparison against the more conventional teaching approach.

The division into experimental and control groups allowed for a rigorous comparison between the impact of using chatbots in the experimental group and traditional methods in the control

group, providing valuable insights into the effectiveness of technology-assisted language learning in the context of 7th-grade students' speaking skills development.

2.2 Research context

In this study, the author employed a quasi-experimental design featuring pre-test, post-test, questionnaire, experimental and control groups to investigate the impact of integrating chatbots into language learning, specifically targeting the development of speaking skills among 7th-grade students. A pre-test provides an overview of students' current speaking skills. A survey provides data on students' interest in English language learning and their experience in using technology for this purpose. For the pre-test, to evaluate students' speaking skills, the author used the Cambridge A2 oral exam in both groups.

The experiment lasted four weeks. The experimental group was talking with a chatbot one lesson per week for around 15 minutes, while the control group was talking in pairs for 15 minutes one lesson per week. The experimental group students practiced their speaking skills by engaging in a conversation with the chat-bot Tandem GPT, while the control group practiced with their classmates in pairs. During this speaking task, students received the same conversation questions. Each speaking task consisted of five questions on the topics *traveling, free time activity, daily routine, holidays, home, and neighborhood*. The questions were compiled by the author based on the material studied by the students previously and the Estonian National Curriculum. The textbook *Click on 3* was used to compose the questions. The number of questions was limited to allow for an approximately 15-minute conversation in both groups during the lesson.

After the experiment, a post-test was conducted to measure the effects or changes that occurred as a result of the experiment. The experimental and control groups had the same Cambridge A2 examination speaking task at the end of the experiment to measure their progress.

2.3. Questionnaire

A questionnaire was conducted with the experimental and control groups to gather insights into the students' self-assessment of their English language speaking skills, their enthusiasm for English language learning, and their experience of using technology for English language learning. It comprised four questions presented through a Google Form. The questionnaire

consisted of four types of questions designed to elicit specific responses from participants. The first question is dichotomous, requiring a straightforward yes or no answer. The second question seeks clarification on the research participants' usage of English learning applications, prompting them to specify which applications they use. The third question employs a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, where the respondents indicate their interest in language learning. A score of 1 indicates a minimal interest, while a score of 5 reflects a very high interest. Likewise, the fourth question employs a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, where the respondents assess their speaking skills. A score of 1 represents weak speaking skills, while a score of 5 denotes excellent speaking skills. A total of 34 participants responded to the survey.

2.4. Results of the Survey

Do you use any applications to learn English?
34 ответа

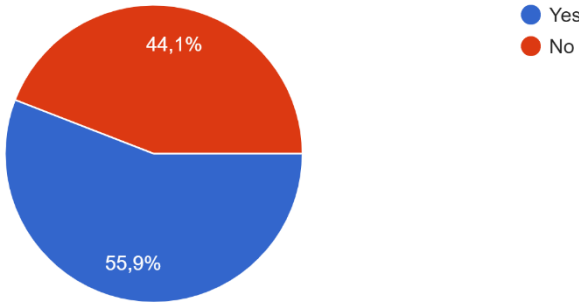


Figure 1. Use of applications for English learning in 7th grade

Among the respondents (7th graders), 55.9% of them use some applications to learn English. 44.1% of the 7th grade students do not use any applications to learn English.

If yes, which ones
20 ответов

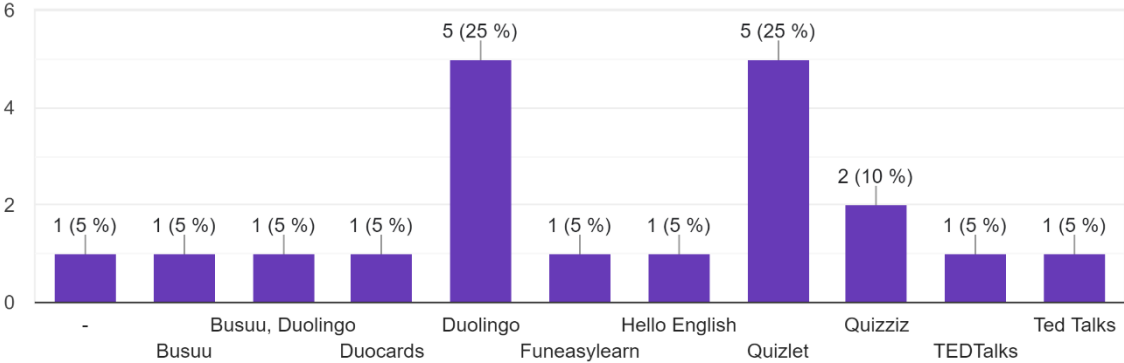


Figure 2. The most popular applications for English learning in 7th grade

In the 7th grade, 55.9% of the students reported using apps to learn English. Among these, 25% of the students specifically utilize the Duolingo app for language learning. The students highlighted several reasons for selecting Duolingo, including its convenient interface, the ability to assess their language proficiency level, and the simultaneous development of listening, writing, speaking, and reading skills. Additionally, students appreciate Duolingo's gamified approach to language learning, finding it conducive to enjoyable and playful learning experiences. The author asked the students for the reasons behind their choices orally

Among the students who use language learning apps, 25% reported utilizing the Quizlet app for English language learning purposes. The students highlighted several advantages of using Quizlet, including its playful learning approach, the capability to take tests to assess material knowledge, the effectiveness of memorizing flashcards, and the autonomy to explore and select study topics independently. The author asked the students for the reasons behind their choices orally

10% reported utilizing TED Talks for language learning purposes. The students articulated several reasons for selecting TED Talks, including the opportunity to watch videos on topics of personal interest, which aids in expanding vocabulary and enhancing speaking skills. Additionally, students appreciate the availability of subtitles and the option to adjust playback speed. Moreover, TED Talks offer the advantage of accessing podcasts or speeches delivered by prominent figures. The author asked the students for the reasons behind their choices orally

10% of the respondents reported using Quizizz as a tool for language learning. The students highlighted several reasons for their preference, including the platform's effectiveness in consolidating grammatical concepts and reinforcing new vocabulary through interactive quizzes. Additionally, students appreciated the opportunity to rectify errors and found the humorous imagery accompanying correct answers to be engaging and memorable. Among the surveyed students, 10% reported using the Busuu app for language learning purposes. The respondents highlighted two main features of the app: the ability to set and achieve learning goals, and the opportunity to communicate with native speakers. The author asked the students for the reasons behind their choices orally

5% of the students reported using each of the following applications: FunEasyLearn, Hello English, and Duocards, for language learning purposes. The students highlighted common features across these platforms, including interactive learning through gamified experiences and the convenience of spending 10-15 minutes daily on these applications. Additionally, respondents noted the availability of numerous free functions within these apps as a favorable aspect. The author asked the students for the reasons behind their choices orally

On a scale of 1 (not interested) to 5 (very interested), how interested are you in learning English?
34 ответа

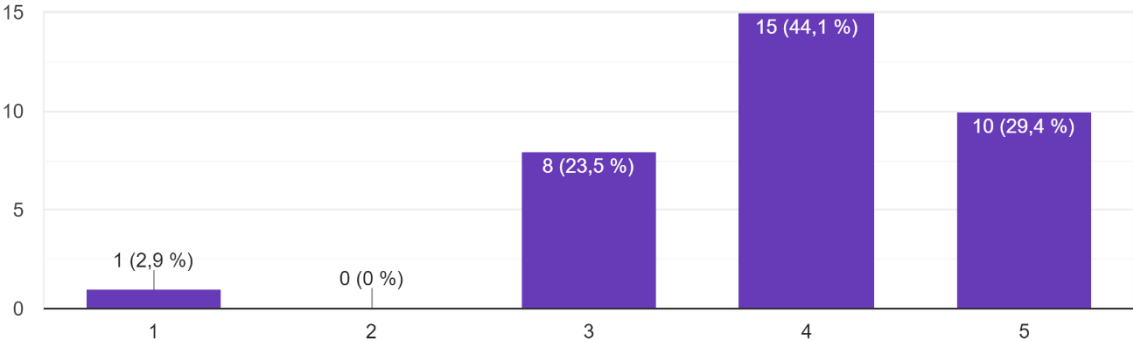


Figure 3. *The respondents' level of interest in learning English*

According to the survey results, the students' interest in learning English varied across different levels. Among the respondents, 2.9% expressed no interest in learning the language, while 23.5% indicated an average interest level (rated 3 on a scale of 1 to 5). Furthermore, 44.1% of the students rated their interest at 4 points, and 29.4% rated it at the highest level of 5 points, signifying a very high interest. Overall, the data suggest that more than 70% of the respondents are rather highly interested in learning English (4 and above).

On a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), how good are your speaking skills in English?
34 ответа

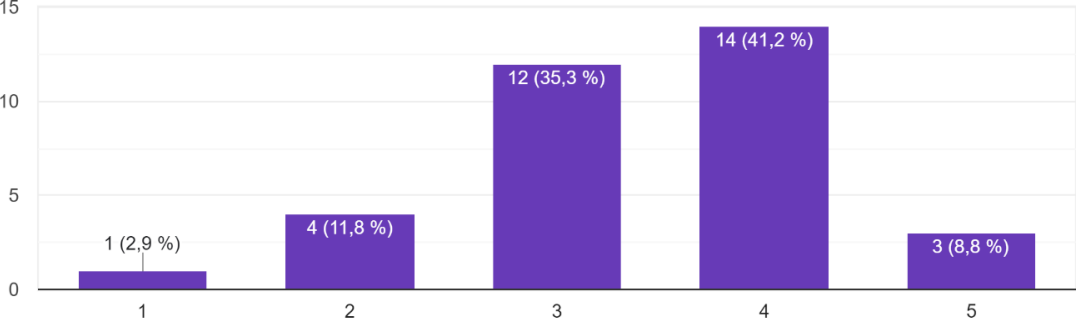


Figure 4. *The respondents' self-assessed level of proficiency in spoken English*

Based on the rating scale ranging from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), the survey revealed varying levels of self-assessed speaking skills among the respondents. Specifically, 2.9% students rated their speaking skills as 1, while 11.8% students rated them as 2. The majority of the students, 35.3%, rated their speaking skills as 3, followed by 41.2% who rated them as 4. Additionally, 8.8% of students considered their speaking skills to be at the highest level, rated as 5. Overall, 14.7% of students rated their speaking skills below average (2 and below), while the majority (85.3%) demonstrate quite a positive self-assessment of their speaking skills (3 and above).

In summary, the pre-experiment questionnaire shows that the majority of 7th-grade students utilize English learning applications, primarily attracted by their user-friendly interfaces, interactive learning features, and the convenience of short usage durations. The survey also reveals a high level of interest in learning English, with over 97% of the students expressing enthusiasm for language learning. Moreover, a significant portion of the students rate their speaking skills as average (3) or above average (4 or 5), demonstrating a generally positive perception of their linguistic abilities. Conversely, a small percentage of the students (2.9%) report no interest in learning the language, while a slightly larger proportion (14.9%) rate their speaking skills below average. These findings provide valuable insights into students' attitudes towards language learning and their self-perceived proficiency levels before the experiment.

2.5 Pre-test

A pre-test is used in experimental design to gauge certain traits of participants before they receive any intervention, and a post-test is conducted to measure the same factors after the intervention has taken place. In this particular study, the aim is to assess the speaking proficiency levels of participants and identify any statistically significant differences between the students in the experimental and control groups following the experiment. To evaluate the students' speaking skills, the author employed the Cambridge A2 examination's Speaking Part 2 task for both groups. The students were paired up within each group, and the teacher acted as both an assessor and interlocutor. The task typically lasted 5-6 minutes, during which the students engaged in a conversation. The teacher introduced the task but did not participate in the subsequent discussion phase. The task involved discussing five illustrations representing various everyday topics such as daily activities, leisure pursuits, transportation, urban environments, and holidays. Students were prompted to discuss the free time activities, things

or places, saying which they like and dislike, and why. The teacher allowed the students to converse for 1–2 minutes before stepping in to facilitate further discussion by posing relevant questions. A brief closing question was asked to both students to wrap up this phase. Following this, the teacher initiated a follow-up discussion on the same topic. Each student was asked two questions. The students were assessed according to the Cambridge A2 examination’s speaking assessment scale, which consists of six bands ranging from 0 to 5, with 0 representing the lowest level and 5 the highest (Table 3). This assessment corresponds to Level A2 of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) (Cambridge English, 2024).

Table 3. *The Cambridge Assessment Speaking Scale for A2 Level for Schools.*

A2	Grammar and Vocabulary	Pronunciation	Interactive Communication
5	Demonstrates proficiency in handling basic grammatical structures. Utilizes a variety of suitable vocabulary relevant to everyday contexts during communication.	Understandable, exhibits a degree of mastery over phonological aspects at both the sentence and word levels.	Maintains simple exchanges. Requires very little support.
4	Performance shares features of Band 3 and 5.	Performance shares features of Band 3 and 5.	Performance shares features of Band 3 and 5.
3	Demonstrates adequate command of basic grammatical structures. Utilizes suitable vocabulary to discuss common daily life.	Mostly understandable, despite limited control of phonological features.	Maintains simple exchanges, despite some difficulty. Requires support.
2	Performance shares features of Band 1 and 3.	Performance shares features of Band 1 and 3.	Performance shares features of Band 1 and 3.
1	Shows limited grammatical forms. Isolated amount of	Limited Control of phonological features.	Has considerable difficulty maintaining

	words and phrases.		simple exchanges.
0	Performance below Band 1	Performance below Band 1	Performance below Band 1

2.6 Pre-test Results

Table 4. *Pre-test Results in the Experimental Group.*

Experimental Group	Grammar and Vocabulary	Pronunciation	Interactive Communication
Participant 1	3	4	4
Participant 2	4	3	4
Participant 3	4	3	5
Participant 4	4	4	5
Participant 5	3	5	5
Participant 6	2	5	4
Participant 7	4	4	3
Participant 8	5	3	4
Participant 9	3	4	4
Participant 10	4	4	4
Participant 11	3	5	3
Participant 12	3	4	5
Participant 13	3	4	4
Participant 14	4	3	4
Participant 15	3	4	5
Participant 16	3	4	4
Participant 17	4	4	4
Average	3.2	3.9	4.1

The results of the pre-test show that the average score in the Grammar and Vocabulary section is 3.2 points in the experimental group, which is 64% out of 100%. One participant got five points for Grammar and Vocabulary, which means that the participant demonstrated proficiency in handling basic grammatical structures and utilized a variety of suitable vocabulary relevant to everyday contexts. Seven participants of 17 got four points for Grammar and Vocabulary. The main grammar errors were the incorrect use of the singular and plural, and inconsistency in the use of tenses. The participants generally used suitable vocabulary to discuss common daily life. Eight students got three points for the Grammar and Vocabulary section; they showed adequate knowledge of basic grammatical structures. The main errors consisted of singular and plural forms, verbs ending with *like*, *love*, *hate*. In addition, these students did not know when and where it is suitable to use the Present Simple or Present Continuous tenses. The participants used suitable vocabulary to discuss common daily life. One student got two points for the Grammar and Vocabulary section, who made a large number of grammatical errors that made the sentences incomprehensible, and used limited vocabulary on the topic.

In the experimental group, the average score for Pronunciation is 3.9 points out of 5. For the Pronunciation section, three students received five points, which is two students more than in the Grammar and Vocabulary section. These students' speeches were understandable and clear. The students showed a high level of control over phonological aspects at both the sentence and word levels. The participants pronounced and placed accents correctly. Ten participants out of 17 got four points for pronunciation. These students' speeches were mostly clear, but contained some challenges; for example, the participants struggled with accurately producing English phonemes that are not present in their native language (Russian), leading to difficulties in distinguishing and articulating sounds such as /θ/ and /ð/. Moreover, some students had challenges with using appropriate intonation patterns in sentences, leading to flat or monotone speech. One third of the participants who got four points for pronunciation had challenges with word stress. Four participants got three points for pronunciation. Their speech was mostly understandable, despite limited control of phonological features. The students also had problems with vowel sounds that do not exist in their native languages.

The average point for Interactive Communication in the experimental group was 4.1 points. This is the highest score in all three categories. Almost all participants got four and five points, which means that the conversations maintained fluency and they required very little support.

Five students got five points, while nine students received four points. One participant got three points and required support at the moment of speaking. Moreover, the participant maintained simple exchange, despite some difficulty. The main problem was the challenge in understanding spoken English, which hindered students' ability to engage in interactive communication. Moreover, some participants had difficulties to speak confidently and coherently, leading to pauses and breaks in the conversation flow.

Table 5. *Pre-test Results in the Control Group.*

Control Group	Grammar and Vocabulary	Pronunciation	Interactive Communication
Participant 1	3	5	5
Participant 2	3	4	4
Participant 3	4	3	5
Participant 4	4	4	4
Participant 5	4	5	5
Participant 6	2	4	4
Participant 7	5	4	3
Participant 8	4	3	4
Participant 9	3	4	3
Participant 10	3	3	4
Participant 11	3	5	4
Participant 12	3	4	5
Participant 13	3	4	4
Participant 14	4	3	5
Participant 15	3	4	4
Participant 16	3	4	4
Participant 17	4	4	4
Average	3.3	3.9	4.2

The results of the pre-test in the control group shows that the average score for grammar and vocabulary is 3.3 points. One participant got five points for this criterion. The student used correctly and appropriately different grammar structures. Six participants got four points for grammar and vocabulary. They used appropriate vocabulary, but their speech contained some grammatical incorrectness. The main grammar errors were the incorrect use of the singular and plural, and inconsistency in the use of tenses. Nine students got three points for grammar and vocabulary. They demonstrated basic grammatical structures and their speech contained grammatical errors. The participants overgeneralized grammar rules and applied them incorrectly in certain contexts, leading to errors in agreement, tense, or word order. In addition, students transferred grammar rules and structures from their native language into English. They used appropriate vocabulary to discuss common daily life. One participant got two points for grammar and vocabulary because there were a lot of inconsistencies in applying grammar rules across different contexts that resulted in inaccuracies in spoken communication. Furthermore, there was very limited grammar, which means that the student used only 1-2 grammar structures according and transferred the rules from their native language; their vocabulary was also limited.

The average point for pronunciation in the control group was 3.9 points. Only two participants got five points for this section, which means that their speech was understandable. They showed a mastery over phonological aspects at both the sentence and word levels. Ten students got four points for pronunciation. Their speech was clear, but contained some inaccuracies, such as using inappropriate intonations, challenges with word stress. Three points for pronunciation got four participants. Their speech was mostly understandable, despite limited control of phonological features. The most common mistake was struggling with accurately producing English phonemes such as /θ/ and /ð, /ɪ/ and /i:/. Moreover, students had challenges in differentiating between similar vowel sounds, such as /ɪ/ and /i:/, or /æ/ and /ε. Some of the participants had problems with word stress and intonation.

Interactive Communication in the Control group had the highest score compared to Grammar and Vocabulary and Pronunciation sections. The average score in this section was 4.2 points. Five participants out of 17 got five points for interactive communication and their communication skills fully met the criteria of the speaking scale. Four points for interactive communication received ten participants, which means that their interaction involved simple exchanges, but they required very little support. Two students got three points for interactive

communication because of difficulties in understanding spoken English, which hindered students' ability to engage in interactive communication. Moreover, some participants had problems with vocabulary knowledge. For this reason, students struggled to find the right words to express themselves effectively, leading to hesitations and disruptions in conversation.

According to the pre-testing results in the experimental and control groups, the author can conclude that the difference in Grammar and Vocabulary section in the experimental and control groups is minimal (0.1 points). The average result in this section in the control group is higher than in the experimental group. When considering the quantitative results for Grammar and Vocabulary, the same number of participants (1) got five points and two points. The difference in the number of participants with four points results in one participant. The number of participants who received four points for grammar and vocabulary in the experimental group is higher than in the control group. Seven participants in experimental and control groups got three points for the Grammar and Vocabulary section. The most common inaccuracies in both groups consisted of the incorrect use of the singular and plural, and inaccurate use of tenses. Some participants had challenges in native language transfer errors, and overgeneralization of grammatical rules.

The average points for Pronunciation in the experimental and control groups are the same, which is 3.9 points. The number of participants who received five points is three students in both groups. Ten students in both groups got four points for pronunciation, while four participants in the experimental and control group received three points. Based on this data, it can be concluded that the level of pronunciation skills is almost the same in the experimental and control groups. The common mistakes contained phoneme pronunciation, word stress, intonation, and inaccurate articulation of vowels.

The average result in Interactive Communication is 0.1 point higher in the control group than in the experimental group. The average result in the control group for Interactive communication is 4.2 points, while in the experimental group it is 4.1 points. The number of students who got five points for Interactive Communication is the same in the experimental and control groups (5 students in each group). Ten participants in each group got four points of Interactive Communication. Furthermore, three participants received three points in the experimental group, while two participants received three points in the control group for Interactive Communication. Thus, the number of students whose skills were assessed at three

points is higher in the experimental group. The main challenges contained limited listening comprehension skills and vocabulary knowledge.

Based on the comparison of data given in two tables above, it can be concluded that the level of speaking skills before the start of the experiment are approximately the same. The highest difference in data is 0.1 points in Grammar and Vocabulary and Interactive Communication sections.

The experiment lasted for four weeks. The experimental group engaged in a 15-minute conversation with the Tandem GPT chatbot once a week. The control group undertook the same speaking task in pairs for 15 minutes. The control group participants presented their answers to the class. Every week, the participants in the experiment received a new set of questions (Appendix 1) on a topic they had recently studied. Each set of questions contained five questions. The questions were based on what students were learning in class. The students studied using *Click On 3* textbooks and workbooks. The first-week topic related to indoor and outdoor activities, free time, adverbs of frequency, and Present Simple. The second-week questions covered the topic of holidays. Moreover, students revised Present Simple and adverbs of frequency. The third-week topic was the countryside and city, Present Perfect, comparatives, and superlatives. The fourth-week topic focused on Present Perfect revision.

2.7. Observation of students' interaction with a chatbot

This study explored the impact of utilizing a chatbot on students' speaking skills development. The experimental group interacted with a chatbot for four weeks. Initially, introductory sessions were conducted with the teacher to familiarize the students with the chatbot's functionalities. During the first week, a high level of interest and enthusiasm in using the chatbot was observed. The participants actively engaged in conversations, sharing their experiences and seeking clarifications from the teacher. However, student interaction with the chatbot remained somewhat limited. This was attributed to a combination of initial uncertainty regarding the chatbot's operation and insufficient exploration of its features. To address this, the teacher assumed a supportive role, monitoring task completion and ensuring accuracy. A significant challenge encountered during this phase was the lack of internet access and smartphones for some students. To mitigate this disparity, school laptops were provided.

The second week witnessed a marked increase in independent chatbot usage. The students navigated the platform with proficiency, no longer requiring teacher's guidance on interaction. The teacher adopted an observational role, monitoring students' engagement with the chatbot. A positive learning environment was fostered, with participants actively involved in the speaking process and minimal distractions present. The students who completed the speaking task early were encouraged to practice further on self-selected topics. Additionally, students with limited access to mobile devices continued to utilize the provided laptops.

During week three, the students demonstrated a strong grasp of the technology, independently navigating the platform without requiring teacher's assistance. A noticeable shift towards increased user confidence was observed, with students readily clarifying unfamiliar vocabulary, actively contributing to the dialogue, and self-correcting their spoken errors. However, a disparity in participation levels emerged, with some students exhibiting a lack of active engagement. To counter this, and ensure continued engagement in the experiment, the instructor implemented external motivational strategies based on the observed student-chatbot interactions.

The final week of the research saw students confidently interact with the chatbot, readily sharing their progress with both the teacher and their classmates. The teacher primarily assumed an observational role, while also addressing any technical equipment deficiencies reported by students. Recognizing the diverse learning paces, the students were encouraged to utilize their remaining time to review past queries with the chatbot.

2.7. Post-test

At the end of the experiment, a post-test was conducted to measure the study participants' speaking skills, including grammar and vocabulary, pronunciation, and interactive communication. The purpose of the post-test was to define the level of participants' speaking skills after the experiment. To evaluate students' speaking abilities, the author employed the same Cambridge A2 Speaking Part 2 task for both groups, which was used to assess students' speaking skills in the pre-test. As in the pre-test, students had the same task and assessment scale. The participants were assessed according to the Cambridge Assessment Scale of the A2 level for schools examination.

Table 6. *Post-test Results in the Experimental Group.*

Experimental Group	Grammar and Vocabulary	Pronunciation	Interactive Communication
Participant 1	4	4	4
Participant 2	4	3	4
Participant 3	4	4	5
Participant 4	4	4	5
Participant 5	3	5	5
Participant 6	3	5	4
Participant 7	4	4	4
Participant 8	5	4	4
Participant 9	3	4	4
Participant 10	4	4	5
Participant 11	4	5	4
Participant 12	3	4	5
Participant 13	3	4	4
Participant 14	4	4	4
Participant 15	4	4	5
Participant 16	3	4	4
Participant 17	4	4	4
Average	3.7	4.3	4.3

The results of the post-test in the experimental group show that the average score for grammar and vocabulary is 3.7. One participant got five points, which means that the student showed proficiency in handling grammatical structures and used grammar structure appropriately, almost without making mistakes. The student used a variety of suitable vocabulary relevant to everyday contexts during communication. The participant's speech contained a variety of words and expressions on the topic, and the answer was reasonable and complete.

Ten participants (59%) got four points for grammar and vocabulary. This suggests that in terms of grammar and vocabulary, their answer was adequate but contained some mistakes. The most

common grammar mistake was word order in the sentences. Some of the participants had problems with Present Continuous. Sometimes, they forgot to add the “be” verb forms *am, is, are*. Considering the vocabulary of the students who received four points, it can be said that they had a large vocabulary, but sometimes there were inaccuracies in the vocabulary usage.

Six participants (35%) got three points for grammar and vocabulary. It means that the students demonstrated an adequate command of basic grammatical structures. The frequent mistakes contained inaccuracies in using Present Continuous. Some of the students had difficulties with plurals. In addition, these participants used suitable vocabulary to discuss common daily life.

The average point for pronunciation was 4.3. Three participants (17%) got five points for pronunciation. Their speech was clear and all phonological aspects at both the sentence and word levels were understandable. Most of the participants (76%) received four points for pronunciation. Their speech was almost clear but contained some inaccuracies. A typical mistake in pronunciation was word stress. My experience shows that word stress poses a challenge primarily due to the irregularity and variability of stress patterns in English words for EFL learners. Additionally, the same combination of letters may have different stress patterns depending on the word’s part of speech. One participant got three points for pronunciation during the post-test. This student’s speech was understandable despite a limited control of phonological features. The most challenging aspect was word stress and intonation. Moreover, some participants had problems with vowels, such as /ɪ/ and /i:/, or /æ/ and /ɛ/.

The average score for interactive communication was 4.3. All participants got either five or four points for this section. Six students (35%) completed the task with the highest score and got five points. Their answers maintained fluency and included verbal and non-verbal exchanges. These exchanges covered common interactions encountered in everyday life, providing foreign language learners with essential communication skills for various situations. Eleven participants (64%) received four points for this section; their answers contained exchanges, but there was a lack of flow in communication.

Based on this table, it can be concluded that the average point for grammar and communication in the experimental group is 14 % lower than for pronunciation and interactive communication. The average amount of points for pronunciation and interactive communication are the same.

The average point for all sections is 4.1 points. There are not any participants who got two points for any of the criteria.

Table 7. *Post-test Results in the Control Group.*

Control Group	Grammar and Vocabulary	Pronunciation	Interactive Communication
Participant 1	4	5	5
Participant 2	3	4	4
Participant 3	4	3	5
Participant 4	4	4	4
Participant 5	4	5	5
Participant 6	2	4	4
Participant 7	5	4	4
Participant 8	4	3	4
Participant 9	3	4	3
Participant 10	3	3	4
Participant 11	3	5	4
Participant 12	3	4	5
Participant 13	3	4	4
Participant 14	4	4	5
Participant 15	3	4	4
Participant 16	3	4	4
Participant 17	4	4	4
Average	3.3	4	4.2

The results of the post-test in the control group show that the average point for grammar and vocabulary is 3.3. One participant (5%) got five points for grammar and vocabulary. It means that students showed proficiency in the use of basic grammatical structures and the amount of grammar errors was minimal. The student had a sufficient vocabulary level relevant to everyday contexts during communication. Seven participants (41%) got four points for the grammar and vocabulary section. These students had good grammar skills in speech but made minor mistakes

related to Present tenses. Some of the 4-point participants had problems with Present Simple, others had challenges with Present Continuous. The students who received four points had sufficient vocabulary and could use it in speech. For grammar and vocabulary, eight students (47%) got three points, the biggest number of students for this section. These participants demonstrated basic knowledge of grammatical structures, but their answers contained errors. The main grammar challenges were related to tenses (Present Continuous, Past Simple), some of the participants had problems with plurals and pronouns. The students used suitable vocabulary to discuss common daily life. One participant (5%) got two points for the Grammar and Vocabulary section as the student's answer consisted of limited grammatical forms and a lack of words and phrases on the topic.

The average point for pronunciation in the post-test was 4, which is 0.7 higher than for the Grammar and Vocabulary part. Three participants (17%) got five points for pronunciation. These students' speech, intonation, and word stress were clear. Eleven students (64%) got four points for pronunciation, which is the majority in this section. The participants' speech was understandable, but word stress made it difficult to understand them sometimes. The word stress patterns in English differ from those in the student's native language, making it challenging for them to adjust to English stress patterns. Three points for pronunciation got three participants (17%). Their speech was mostly understandable despite a limited control of phonological features; these students had problems with word pronunciation, intonation, and word stress.

The average score for interactive communication was 4.2, which is the highest score for all three sections. For interactive communication, five students (29%) got five points, meaning the participants maintained simple exchanges and required very little support. Eleven students (64%) got four points for interactive communication, which is the average score in this section. These participants actively used verbal and non-verbal exchanges but had challenges with listening comprehension, which is a key element of interactive communication. One student (5%) got three points for interactive communication. The student maintained simple verbal exchanges, but there was a lack of non-verbal exchanges, and the student required support.

Based on these results, it can be concluded that the most developed speaking sub-skill in the control group is interactive communication. The study participants got the highest points for this section. The average point for pronunciation is 4% lower than for interactive communication. The lowest score is for grammar and vocabulary. It is 21 % lower than for

interactive communication and 17% lower than for pronunciation. The average point for all three sections is 3.8.

Table 8. *The differences between the pre and post-test results in the experimental group*

Group	Category	Pre-test average	Post-test average
Experimental	Grammar and Vocabulary	3.2	3.7
	Pronunciation	3.9	4.3
	Interactive Communication	4.1	4.3

Based on the data obtained as a result of the pre-and post-tests in the experimental group, a comparison was made to determine the impact of using chatbots on speaking skills development in the 7th grade. Table 8 shows that before the experiment, the average score for grammar and vocabulary was 3.2, which is 64% of the highest result (5 points). Comparing with the data after the experiment, the average score for grammar and vocabulary increased by 0.5, which is 13%. There is an improvement from the pre-test to the post-test in the Grammar and Vocabulary category. This suggests that the experimental group made progress in their understanding and application of grammatical structures and vocabulary during the intervention period. The pre-test results for pronunciation were 3.9 out of 5. The table shows that after the experiment this result increased by 0.4, which is 9%. There is a progress of 0.4 points from the pre-test to the post-test in the Pronunciation category. This indicates that the experimental group improved their pronunciation skills, resulting in somewhat clearer and more accurate spoken English. The average score for interactive communication in the pre-test was 4.1, while the post-test average score was 4.3, which is 4% higher than in the pre-test. This suggests that the experimental group became more proficient in engaging in interactive spoken communication, such as discussions.

Overall, the table demonstrates a positive progress across all three categories in the experimental group from the pre-test to the post-test. The improvements indicate the effectiveness of using chatbots to enhance students’ speaking skills, including grammar and vocabulary, pronunciation, and interactive communication.

Table 9. *The differences between the pre and post-test results in the control group*

Group	Category	Pre-test average	Post-test average
Control	Grammar and Vocabulary	3.9	3.3
	Pronunciation	3.9	4
	Interactive Communication	4.2	4.2

Table 9 presents the differences between the pre-test and post-test scores in the control group across the three categories: Grammar and Vocabulary, Pronunciation, and Interactive Communication. Based on the data collected from both the pre-test and post-test in the control group, the impact of more conventional human-to-human interaction on students’ speaking skills development can be evaluated. The table shows that the control group’s average score for grammar and vocabulary was 3.9 out of 5. After the experiment, this indicator decreased by 0.6 or 15%. This suggests that the control group may have experienced a decline in their understanding and application of grammatical structures and vocabulary throughout the intervention period. The average pre-test result in the control group for pronunciation was 3.9. The average post-test result is 4 points. Comparing with the data after the experiment, the average score for pronunciation increased by 0.1, which is 2.5%. This shows that the control group slightly enhanced their pronunciation skills, resulting in slightly clearer and more accurate spoken English. The average point for interactive communication in the pre-and post-tests was 4.2. There is no change in the score from the pre-test to the post-test in the Interactive Communication category. This suggests that the control group maintained their proficiency level in engaging in interactive spoken communication.

Overall, the table indicates mixed results in the control group across the three categories. While there was a decrease in performance in Grammar and Vocabulary, there was a slight improvement in Pronunciation and no change in Interactive Communication. These findings highlight a variability in the effectiveness of implementation of more conventional, human-to-human, speaking skills development techniques.

2.8. Challenges and limitations of using a chatbot to develop speaking skills in the 7th grade

During the experiment, several challenges related to the implementation of chatbots arose. While several students initially found the interactions with a chatbot engaging, sustaining consistent engagement over time proved difficult. The novelty of chatbots can wear off, and students may lose interest if the chatbot does not offer varied and stimulating conversation opportunities. Although chatbots are capable of answering questions effectively, instructors should integrate mini-games, quizzes, and polls relevant to the subject matter to maintain students' interest. Moreover, teacher can cater to various learning styles by offering options for text-based interactions and multimedia elements, like images or short videos. A significant challenge in utilizing chatbots for education is that their automated feedback, while prompted, may lack the depth and nuanced understanding that a human teacher can provide. Teachers can review and refine the chatbot's responses, ensuring they provide increasingly insightful feedback to students. A challenge arises when not all students possess equal access to technology or the necessary preparation to engage with chatbots effectively. Teachers may offer students access to necessary technology by providing devices such as tablets or laptops for use in the classroom. In addition, schools are increasingly equipping teachers with digital technologies for organizing classwork activities. Managing time effectively for the experimental group to interact with chatbots while ensuring that other curricular requirements were met posed a challenge. One way to overcome this challenge is to align chatbot activities with the existing curriculum to complement and reinforce other teaching materials. This integration can make the chatbot sessions more relevant and efficient, saving time in the process.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the impact of utilizing chatbots to foster English speaking skills among 7th-grade EFL learners. The significance of this research lies in its contribution to the field of language learning technology. It demonstrates the potential of chatbots to revolutionize the way we teach and learn spoken English, particularly with 7th-grade EFL learners. The findings reveal that using chatbots may lead to rather significant improvements in grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and interactive communication for students in the experimental group compared to the control group. These results suggest that chatbots can be a valuable tool for educators, fostering a more engaging learning environment and promoting speaking skills development (Essel, 2022; Lemma, 2018)

The analysis of the background sources has shown that the use of technology in teaching foreign language speaking allows students to engage in real-time speaking practice and reflect on their language production. Educational technologies, such as computer-mediated communication, and various software options provide students with opportunities to enhance pronunciation, conversation, and lexical richness in speaking. In addition, technologies enable students to access a wealth of resources to improve their oral proficiency. Voice-based technology tools also offer personalized feedback and practice in a low-anxiety environment.

Integrating chatbots and dialogue-based computer-assisted language learning (CALL) systems provides students with an interactive, technology-driven method to practice language skills outside traditional classroom settings. These systems allow for self-regulated learning and conversation practice, enabling learners to reinforce their speaking skills and monitor their progress. While these technological tools offer many benefits, their effectiveness can vary depending on the learner's L2 proficiency and the design of the chatbot or CALL system.

The use of chatbots in language learning offers several advantages over the more traditional textbook based approaches. Essel (2022) claims that chatbots offer personalized student learning experiences by adapting to each student's needs and allowing them to receive distinct feedback. Lemma (2018) thinks that chatbots make the learning process interactive by simulating a one-on-one conversation and provide students with another chance of speaking practice either inside or outside of the classroom, which takes into account the different interests and needs of each student. Chatbots can help teachers by answering students' questions, assessing the completion of homework, and engaging with a large number of students

concurrently. Besides, they help self-controlled learning and enhance conversation, thus students master their speaking skills and monitor their achievement. Furthermore, chatbots may offer lower anxiety speaking practice opportunities, allowing students to undertake self-paced and directed language study without face-to-face engagement.

Nevertheless, integrating chatbots into education presents several challenges and limitations. While chatbots offer exciting possibilities for personalized learning experiences and extended practice opportunities in education (Essel, 2022), some limitations need to be considered. Çakmak (2022) argues that chatbots may struggle to replicate the richness of natural human interaction, a key element in language acquisition. This includes challenges in providing nuanced and insightful feedback crucial for complex topics, as Essel et al. (2022) point out. Additionally, chatbots cannot fully replace human teachers, particularly in areas like emotional support and mentorship, as highlighted by Bahadorfar and Omidvar (2014). The effectiveness of chatbots hinges on their design. Lemma (2018) emphasizes the importance of age-appropriate and engaging content that caters to diverse learning styles.

The practical part of the research focused on how chatbots influence the development of 7th-grade students' speaking skills. The questionnaire allowed to assess the participants' interest in educational technology, interest in learning English, and self-assessment of their speaking skills. The survey results showed that the 7th-grade students are interested in using technology in the classroom and quite actively use English learning apps to improve their skills.

The practical part of this research sought to evaluate the impact of using a chatbot on the speaking skills development of 7th-grade students. Using the Cambridge A2 examination's speaking part format and speaking assessment scale, the students' speaking skills were measured before and after the research in both the experimental and control groups. The findings from the study revealed that the experimental group, which engaged with chatbots, experienced quite noticeable improvements across grammar and vocabulary, pronunciation, and interactive communication categories. This improvement suggests the efficacy of chatbots in enhancing students' speaking skills.

In contrast, the control group showed a slight decline in performance in grammar and vocabulary, with only a slight improvement in pronunciation and no change in interactive communication. These findings highlight the limitations of conventional speaking skills

development techniques and their varying impact on the development of different speaking subskills.

Comparing the results of the experimental and control groups, the experimental group exhibited more positive outcomes across all assessed criteria. This demonstrates the potential benefits of incorporating chatbots into language learning for improving students' speaking skills and providing an innovative and effective approach to language teaching and learning. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that chatbots cannot fully replicate the richness of human interaction or provide nuanced feedback on complex topics.

The current study implementing chatbots for speaking skills development encountered certain challenges. Initial student engagement waned due to limited conversational variety. The author can suggest incorporating mini-games and multimedia elements to maintain students' interest. Additionally, addressing the limitations of automated feedback and unequal technology access among students is crucial. Finally, aligning chatbot activities with the existing curriculum can optimize efficiency.

Since it is a case study, it is limited by place and the number of participants; thus, it may be difficult to apply the gained data to a larger population. To understand the influence of using chatbots on developing speaking skills, it is necessary to engage more participants, as well as assess other speaking criteria, involving external assessors. The limited duration of the study can be seen as a constraint. The intervention period in the current research was only four weeks due to time restrictions. In addition, this research could have accounted for learner variables, such as learning styles and technology preferences, as these factors may have influenced participants' speaking performance. Examining these affective domains would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the outcomes. This study provides preliminary evidence for the potential of chatbots to enhance speaking skills within an educational context. Further research is warranted to explore the long-term impact of this approach and its suitability for different learning styles.

SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN

KOKKUVÕTE. INGLISE KEELE RÄÄKIMISOSKUSE ARENDAMINE 7. KLASSIS VESTLUSROBOTI ABIL.

Tänapäeva õpilased, kui digitaalsed põliselanikud, tunnevad end tehnoloogiaga suhtlemisel mugavalt. Vestlusrobotid ehk chatbotid võivad olla kasulikud nii õpilastele kui ka õpetajatele kõnelemise, lugemise, kirjutamise ja kuulamise oskuste arendamisel. Kaasaegses kiiresti muutuv maailmas inglise keele valdamine on hädavajalik. Tugevad suhtlusoskused, eriti kõnelemise oskus, on kriitilise tähtsusega edu saavutamiseks paljudes erinevates elukutsetes.

Vestlusrobotid saavad haridusprotsessi rikastada, pakkudes dünaamilist ja mitmekesist õpikogemust. See uurimisteema on oluline ja aktuaalne, kuna seni on vähe uuritud chatbotide kasutamist kõnelemisoskuste arendamisel inglise keele tundides. On vaja põhjalikult uurida, kuidas vestlusrobotid aitavad kõnelemisoskusi parandada. Käesoleva töö eesmärk on uurida vestlusrobotite kasutamise mõju 7. klasside õpilaste kõnelemisoskuste arengule.

Käesolev uurimistöö otsib vastuseid järgmistele uurimisküsimustele:

1. Kas chatbotid mõjutavad 7. klasside õpilaste kõnelemise oskuste arengut?
2. Millised on chatbotide kasutamisega hariduskeskkonnas seotud potentsiaalsed väljakutsed ja piirangud?
3. Kas õpilased on huvitatud digitehnoloogia kasutamisest inglise keele tundides?

Magistritöö on jaotatud neljaks osaks. Sissejuhatus käsitleb tehnoloogia strateegilise kasutamise olulisust hariduses õppimise toetamiseks ja positiivsete õpitulemuste saavutamiseks (Stošic, 2015; Raja, Nagasubramani, 2018; Shareef, Nithyanantham, 2022, Sarama, 2003; Glaubke, 2007). Sissejuhatus käsitleb ka chatbotide potentsiaali innovaatilise õppevahendina, eriti keelte õppimisel (Maglogiannis & Iliadis, 2020; Essel, 2022; Lemma, 2018; Arnold, 2018). Esimene peatükk "Rääkimise õpetamine" käsitleb rääkimist ja rääkimise alamoskusi, rääkimise õpetamise tehnoloogiaid ning chatboti rakendusi (Thornbury, 2005; Bygate, 1987; Brown, 2004, Harmer 1998). Teine peatükk "Chatbotide kasutamine rääkimisoskuste arendamiseks 7. klassis" käsitleb uuringu praktilisi aspekte, sealhulgas enne- ja järelteste, küsitlust ja eksperimenti.

Uuringu tulemused näitavad, et katseline grupp, kes kasutasid chatbot'i, parandasid üsna märkimisväärselt oma grammatikat ja sõnavara, hääldust ja interaktiivset suhtlemist. See

parandamine viitab chatbotide tõhususele õpilaste rääkimisoskuse arendamisel. See näitab, et chatbotide kaasamisel keeleõpetusse on potentsiaalselt kasulik mõju õpilaste rääkimisoskuste parandamisel ning see pakub uuenduslikku ja tõhusat lähenemist keeleõpetamisele ja õppimisele. Kuid on oluline tunnistada, et chatbotid ei suuda täielikult jäljendada inimeste vahelise suhtluse rikkust ega pakkuda nüansirikkast tagasisidet keerukatel teemadel.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Questions for discussion

WEEK 1

What kind of activities do you usually do outdoors?

What kind of activities can you do indoors?

What do you always/usually/never do after school?

Do you have a hobby? How often do you do your hobby? Tell me about it.

How would you describe yourself as a person?

WEEK 2

What is your favourite holiday and why?

Which type of accommodation do you usually stay in? Why?

Where do you usually/sometimes/never eat while on holiday?

How do you typically spend your days on holiday?

Do you enjoy shopping? What do you usually buy?

WEEK 3

Would you like to live in a city or in the countryside? Why?

What places should your friend visit in your city?

Describe the most popular places to visit in Tallinn (shopping centers, museums, etc.).

Have you ever visited other cities in Estonia? What are the differences between these cities?

What are the pros and cons of living in the city?

WEEK 4

How many countries have you travelled to? Could you describe your experiences?

What interesting foods have you eaten?

What languages have you studied? Which one do you find the most difficult? Which one is the easiest?

Who is the nicest person you have ever met?

Where have you been this week?

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