

EFL Learners' Perceptions of *Glighish* as an AI-Powered Language Learning Tool for Speaking Practice: A tam-based deductive thematic analysis

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ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in language education has altered learners' approaches to practicing English-speaking skills. Among various AI-powered applications, *Glighish* has emerged as an educational tool that provides interactive, engaging speaking practice through real-time conversations and offers immediate, engaging feedback. This study aims to investigate EFL learners' perceptions and experiences with *Glighish* as an AI-powered language learning tool for speaking practice. It uses the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), with Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, Attitude Toward Use, and Behavioral Intention to Use as the theoretical framework. This is qualitative research with deductive thematic analysis, and data were collected from 50 EFL learners who had experience using *Glighish* for English-speaking practice. The results demonstrate that learners perceived *Glighish* as an advantageous tool for developing linguistic competence, promoting spontaneous communication, and supporting cross-skill development. Regarding perceived ease of use, participants also noted the platform's accessibility and user-friendly navigation, although minor technical glitches and freemium limitations were identified as challenges. The study concludes that *Glighish* is positively perceived as an effective AI-powered language learning tool that supports speaking development and encourages sustained language learning engagement.

Keywords: *Glighish*, Technology Acceptance Model, deductive thematic analysis, EFL learners

INTRODUCTION

The interconnected among linguistic competence, psychological factor, pedagogical, and sociocultural factors conceive a systemic web of barrier that cumulatively hinder the learners' ability to speak English as a Foreign Language. These obstacles are always continuous, thus creating challenges in the process of using English communicatively.

Previous studies, have demonstrated the findings in the similar topic specifically on learners' difficulties in developing speaking skill (Rahmawati, 2021; Fachrunnisa and Nuraeni, 2022; Pratiwi and Kusuma, 2022; Franscy and Ramli 2022). They highlighted on insufficient linguistic competence including recurring grammatical mistakes, inability to recall vocabulary led to the speaking anxiety, reducing self-confidence then retire from communicative situation. In this point, pedagogical approach emerges to overcome by providing the proper Communicative Language Learning with supportive environment and cooperative learning approach. Collaborative and systemic transformation strategy involving curriculum designer, teacher, communities, inclusive effort can be empowered the learners' confidence and competence in speaking English (Melansari, et.al 2025).

Driven by rapid technological advancements, various learning tools and applications are available which are designed to help learners overcome linguistic, psychological and pedagogical barriers in English speaking skills. A study showed that AI-based and application such as Duolingo, Elsa Speak, and TalkPal have capacity to boost English speaking skill through independent practice, instant feedback, vocabulary growth, and improved pronunciation (Izza et.al, 2026). Furthermore, AI technologies, including ChatGPT and Google Gemini, have the potential to support the development of English-speaking skills through providing adaptive feedback, reducing speaking anxiety, and increasing learning independence (Billah and Sunra (2025). Another study also stated that AI-based chatbots increasingly being used in language learning. This technology allows students to practice speaking independently, get direct feedback, and learn in a safe environment free from fear of other people's judgment. This condition has the potential to increase the self-confidence and oral communication skills of English language learners (Dokukina and Aliyeva (2025). With strategically utilizing technology, it has an impact on changing what was initially a difficulty into a convenience, an

innovative solution in overcoming various kinds of obstacles to learning speaking English.

Many studies explore in AI Powered Language Learning tool, named ELSA Speak, Duolingo, Speak, Cake, Langua, Speak, Univerbal, Praktika, and Talkpal. Recent research persistently reveals the employment of AI technology in learning English speaking facilitate to improve pronunciation, fluency, vocabularies, grammar accuracy, confidence, speaking anxiety, and willingness to communication. Laksana et.all (2024) stated that Artificial Intelligence has potential to strengthen student's speaking skill even though there are numerous constraints of obstacles that need to be considered. This aligns with Ramadhani (2025) artificial intelligence (AI) provide instant feedback to learners by customizing the learning experience in improving confidence and fluency, as well as creating a comfortable practice space. Research consistently shows when AI tools are implemented in the classroom, students demonstrate significant improvement in various aspects such as vocabulary mastery, pronunciation fluency, and overall communication skills.

Despite growing research on speaking skill improvement with AI Powered language learning tool, there is still insufficient evidence regarding in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) where it explores learner's experience in the perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, attitude behavioural intention and actual system use (Davis, 1985) with qualitative descriptive research method. Moreover, the number of AI tool such as ELSA Speak, Duolingo, Speak, Cake, Langua, Speak, Univerbal, Praktika, and Talkpal have been supported in some speaking English studies. Therefore, the *Gliglish* AI is selected as an AI tool to explore student's view on perceived usefulness, ease of use and behavioural intention.

The research gap appears in the use of Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) which has been widely used to assess technology acceptance. The majority of previous studies were dominated by quantitative approaches focusing on statistical hypothesis testing (Hassna, 2023). Furthermore, in the context of generative AI such as *Gliglish*, emotional and psychological interactions in language learning cannot be measured accurately only through Likert scale numbers. Therefore, this research aims to fill this methodological gap by applying qualitative thematic analysis based on the TAM framework. This approach aims to thoroughly examine 'how' and 'why' users feel helped or hindered by AI. *Gliglish* is a voice-based interactive Generative AI for learning languages. The technology is dynamic, mimics humans, and triggers emotional responses (such as the elimination of the fear of speaking incorrectly to a robot). Using

qualitative TAM in generative AI is something new because the Ease-of-Use variable is no longer about "easy to click a button", but rather "how smoothly the AI understands the user's speaking accent"

METHOD

Research design on this study employed descriptive qualitative, is defined as a method that aims to provide a rich, straightforward description of an experience or event, rather than focusing on thick description, theory development, or interpretative meaning (Creswell, 2009). This study also employed deductive thematic analysis; it is one way to analyse data with the aim of identify patterns or to find themes through data that has been collected by researcher, analysing qualitative data that uses predetermined themes derived from existing theories. Deductive thematic analysis in situations where the objectives are clear and the research theoretical framework is pre-established (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

To explore the thematic analysis, it implemented six stages including familiarizing with data, generating initial codes, searching for theme, defining and naming, and producing report (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

This research was also supported by the data taken from single open-ended question which was designed to investigate the detailed experiences without any distraction of other things. Informants were 50 students from communication science students in private university in Semarang. The consideration was those 50 informants were adequate enough to show data saturation.

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) was used along with *Glighish* AI-Powered Language Learning. It tried to explore learner's experience on *Glighish* in the perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, attitude behavioural intention and actual system use (Davis, 1985) descriptively.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

On finding and discussion, the results of the qualitative analysis were presented with a discussion regarding the acceptance of using AI *Glighish* in English speaking activities with six deductive phases of TAM-based thematic analysis.

Phase 1: Familiarization

Familiarization was carried out by repeatedly and in-depth reading of the transcripts from 50 informants regarding the use of AI *Glighish*. Guided by TAM theory Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU), Perceived Usefulness (PU), Attitude Towards Using (ATU), and

Behavioural Intention to Use (BI). The results of a comprehensive reading of the raw data show the following initial pattern and trend distribution.

Table 1. Familiarization

TAM (Technology Acceptance Modal)	Initial Pattern
Perceived ease of use (PEOU)	From the PEOU aspect, informants/students said that <i>AI Gliglish</i> is user friendly, fast response and clear voice, but is hampered by limited access.
Perceived usefulness (PU)	<i>Gliglish AI</i> is considered very useful for improving fluency and vocabulary. The main advantage is the availability of a comfort study space without fear of being judged.
Attitude toward using (ATU)	Student attitudes are positive. They felt this exercise was very exciting and so much fun, it is like chatting with their own friends. even though some students felt awkward at first, they soon felt comfortable after trying it.
Behavioural intension to use (BI)	From the behavioural intension to use, they have positive thought and feel motivated keeping their own practice, furthermore they more confidence speak in front of many people

Initial familiarization results show that the data from these 50 students is very rich and covers all aspects of TAM. This initial pattern becomes the basis for researchers to proceed to the coding stage in the next phase.

Phase 2 and 3: Generating initial codes and Theme Development

At the generating initial code stage and theme development, they can both implement together because it is deductive thematic analysis. This study uses the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) concept consisting of PU, PEOU, ATU, BI is used as the basis for the analysis framework. What is meant by initial code at this stage is as a tool for capturing variations in real data, identifying the specific content of TAM, reducing very long raw data so that it becomes more concise and meaningful, capturing unique phenomena for learning speaking using *AI Gliglish* that are not predicted by TAM theory. Considering the number of pages, the transcript shows in the coding data only one in

each TAM aspect than can represent on sub-theme categorization.
(Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Table 2. Coding and Theme Development

Informants/ Students	TAM (Technology Acceptance Model)	Coding	Sub-theme	Transcript (one example in each)
R_01, R_03, R_04, R_10, R_11, R_14, R_16 , R_17 R_19, R_25, R_27, R_30 R_34, R_41, R_42, R_45, R_46, R_47	Perceived ease of use (PEOU)	✓ Technical Interactivity, Accessibility, and System Constraints ✓ Contextual Interaction and AI Emotional Limitations ✓ Realistic Scenario Navigation and Operational Challenges	Navigation, Micro glitch, Freemium AI platform	“Create a learning environment free of social judgment and a sense of security without a formal assessment system”
R_02, R_03, R_04, R_05, R_06, R_07, R_08, R_09, R_12, R_13, R_14, R_15, R_17 R_18 R_20, R_21, R_22, R_23, R_24, R_25, R_28, R_29, R_30, R_31, R_32 R_33, R_34, R_35, R_36, R_37, R_38, R_39, R_40, R_41, R_42, R_43, R_44, R_47, R_48 R_49 R_50	Perceived usefulness (PU)	✓ Technology- enhanced speaking development ✓ Cross-skill transfer and competency acquisition ✓ Linguistic accuracy and autonomous evaluation	Linguistic, Spontaneity, Cross-skill	“Helps enrich vocabulary, improve grammar and correct pronunciatio n”

R_19, R_21, R_22, R_23, R_26, R_27, R_28 R_29 R_36, R_38, R_40, R_43, R_45 R_36, R_38, R_40, R_43, R_45	Attitude toward using (ATU)	✓ ✓ ✓	Affective Factors and Learning Experiences Psychological Comfort and Learning Experiences Affective Dimensions of Learning	Pressure free, app comparison	“Create a learning environment free of social judgment and a sense of security without a formal assessment system”
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R_01, R_04, R_05, R_08, R_09, R_11, R_12, R_13, R_18 R_26 R_37, R_39	Behavioural intension to use (BI)	✓ ✓ ✓	Communication Self-Efficacy and Continuous Practice Self-Efficacy Enhancement and Independent Speaking Practice Commitment to Sustained Fluency Development	Sustainable	Build a high level of self- confidence to speak English in real world situations.
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Phase 4: Reviewing Theme

Mapping has been carried out from stages 1-3. In this part, reviewing themes use 2 step level of review (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

- At the first level, the researcher reread all the coding texts of 50 informants to ensure that there was internal coherence (internal homogeneity) in each sub-theme.
- At the second level, evaluate the thematic map at a macro level to ensure external heterogeneity, namely ensuring that each sub-theme has clear conceptual boundaries and does not overlap with each other.

Phase 5: Defining and named theme

Based on the theme structure that was validated in the fourth step, the researcher proceeded to the stage of defining and naming the final theme. The main objective of this step is to formulate the conceptual essence of each sub-theme and provide a name that is concise, academic, and directly represents the substance of the empirical data. Furthermore, it also prepared operational definitions for each sub-theme as a standard guide in the discussion narrative.

The preparation of this operational definition is crucial to maintain theoretical consistency so that the discussion does not expand beyond the context of technology acceptability. The final naming results and conceptual references from the entire data analysis process are presented together in the table.

Table 3. Defining and Named Theme

TAM (Theme)	Final Subtheme	Definition
Perceived Usefulness	linguistic improvement	informant/students/learner perceive from <i>AI Gliglish</i> enhance the vocabularies, pronunciation, grammar, and fluency.
	communication spontaneity	real time interaction with <i>AI Gliglish</i>
	cross-skill development	get advantages beyond speaking such as listening, critical thinking, writing
Perceived ease of use	navigation	easy to access
	micro-technical glitches	minor technical issues such as error and instability
	freemium limitation	restriction in free version
Attitude to word use	confidence	confident and less anxious
	app comparison	compare AI on the feature and experience
Behavioral intention to use	sustainable	intended to continue as AI speaking partner in developing speaking english

Phase 6 : Producing report

In this phase, reporting results is the final part of writing the thematic analysis which is tasked with explaining the findings narratively. the presentation is used to find out students' experiences using *AI-Gliglish* with the TAM theoretical framework. The final steps in the theme are explained in detail with only one direct quote from informants. This research aims to provide detailed information about the experience of using *AI Gliglish* implemented with TAM.

A. Perceived usefulness

In this perceive usefulness has a subtheme including linguistic improvement, communication spontaneity, and cross skill development.

linguistic improvement:

“After practicing speaking with AI in Gliglish I feel my speaking skills have improved especially in terms of confidence and fluency. AI in Gliglish provides fast responses and clear corrections so I can understand my mistakes and correct them directly. In addition, AI in Gliglish also helps me increase my vocabulary and improve my pronunciation which makes me feel more comfortable when speaking in real situations. This practice makes the learning process more comfortable and enjoyable.” (Informant 4)

There is an increase in linguistic abilities such as speaking fluency, self-confidence, vocabulary and pronunciation. Informants said that *AI Gliglish* helped them understand errors directly and responded immediately quickly and clearly. From the results of the quote above, it is clear that *AI Gliglish* has high use value in the technology-based speaking learning process.

Communication spontaneity:

I recently used AI Gliglish to practice my English-speaking skills. The process was very simple and easy to follow. First, I visited the website and clicked on “Speak Now for Free.” Then, I selected “English (United States)” as my language. (Informant 6)

Students stated that they did not experience any difficulties in using *AI Gliglish*, the clear process made it easier for them so they focused on speaking practice. *AI Gliglish* is easy to follow so that the perception formed is that it has the highest level of ease of use so informants will always use *AI Gliglish*.

Cross skill development:

After that, I chose a scenario for practice. I selected “Ordering at a Fast Food Restaurant” because I wanted to improve my conversation skills in real-life situations. The AI gave me some example sentences, and I spoke into my microphone to reply. The system provided instant feedback and responses, which made the practice feel like a real conversation. (Informant 8)

The informant stated that in the *AI Gliglish* conversation scenario it seemed as if it were real because there was a choice of daily life conversation context. The statement above represents that the feedback scenario feature can encourage students to develop speaking skills.

B. Perceived ease of use

Navigation

overall, I found AI Gliglish very helpful. It allowed me to practice my pronunciation and speaking fluency without feeling nervous. I think this tool is great for anyone who wants to improve their English in a fun and interactive way. (Informant 41)

The informant said that *AI Gliglish* does not just improve speaking skills but also creates a learning environment that is fun and not stressful. The aspect that is really felt is the lack of anxiety when practicing speaking. The learning environment is interactive and does not judge right or wrong and increases learning motivation.

Micro-technical glitches:

while the AI Gliglish don't hear what you said, yu just speak up then it will fix no more repeataion more than one time (Informant 44)

Informant stated that there is less trouble while using it meant it easily use by informant.

Oh my gosh, I just found out there is a website like that, where I can practice realistically as if I were having a two-way conversation with someone (even though it's AI). Usually, I only knew the Duolingo app to practice my English, but I got bored because there were no conversations, just basic vocabulary at the beginning of Duolingo. Until finally, I deleted the Duolingo app.(informant 46)

Students stated that *AI Gliglish* provides a better speaking practice experience compared to Duolingo which focuses on basic vocabulary practice, *AI Gliglish* is more interactive, thereby increasing the perception of the usefulness of technology for English speaking learners.

Freemium limitation

Throughout the conversation, the AI gave different responses, which helped me learn new vocabulary and improve my speaking skills. However, the downside is that I could only practice until my free credits ran out. (Informant 37)

It is stated that informant need longer time for practicing speaking English because it limited.

C. Attitude to word use

Confident and less anxious

Practicing with AI *Gliglish* is really fun, I feel like I'm talking to a friend, not an AI. It also gives me the opportunity to practice speaking without the fear of making mistakes or being judged. This AI helps me speak while also teaching me how to structure sentences and choose the right words in English. As a result, my communication skills have improved a lot compared to before. (Informant 33)

He stated that AI *Gliglish* make a positive vibe to speak english without judgment

D. Behavioral intention to use

Sustainable

AI this is so much fun, because I can chat, and pretend to order coffee at a coffee shop. at AI *Gliglish* too, taught how to ask questions, how to answer in proper English, it was very exciting. Maybe sometime again I will try to chat with AI *Gliglish* again (Informant 5)

Conversation scenarios such as a simulation of ordering coffee make it seem real. Intention to Return to AI reflects the positive impact and good reception of *Gliglish AI*

CONCLUSION

From the informant's perception of using AI *Gliglish*, it states that it is useful in improving linguistics including fluency, pronunciation and vocabulary because from an operational perspective it is easy to use, apart from that it is a feature that provides daily conversation through spontaneous interaction and is fast in providing feedback. There are a few technical obstacles that do not reduce the use value of the platform and limited usage time on the free version.

AI Gliglish provides an interactive learning space that creates a feeling of confidence and less anxiety because *AI Gliglish* provides non-judgmental feedback when providing feedback. The psychological experience is as if talking to one's own friend so that the informant is encouraged to use it continuously as a speaking partner

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