

The Effect of ChatGPT Integrated with Role-play on Students' Speaking Fluency and Confidence

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Abstract

This study examined the effect of integrating ChatGPT with the Role-Play Technique on students' speaking fluency and speaking confidence. The study was motivated by students' difficulties in speaking English, particularly their limited fluency and low confidence during classroom speaking activities. A mixed-method research design was employed involving 35 eleventh-grade students at SMAS Nurul Iman Tanjung Morawa during the 2025/2026 academic year. The participants consisted of 17 students in the experimental group and 18 students in the control group. The experimental group used ChatGPT as a rehearsal partner before participating in face-to-face role-play activities, while the control group participated in conventional role-play without AI assistance. Data were collected through speaking tests, classroom observations, and a speaking confidence questionnaire. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, the Shapiro–Wilk normality test, the Mann–Whitney U test, and effect size analysis using SPSS version 26. The findings showed a significant difference between the experimental and control groups in speaking fluency and speaking confidence. The Mann–Whitney U test produced significance values of 0.000 for both variables. The effect sizes were 0.87 for speaking fluency and 0.74 for speaking confidence, indicating large effects. The observation and questionnaire findings also showed greater participation, willingness to communicate, and confidence among students in the experimental group. The findings indicate that integrating ChatGPT as a rehearsal partner with the Role-Play Technique provided a supportive approach to developing students' English speaking performance.

Keywords : ChatGPT, Role-Play Technique, Speaking Fluency, Speaking Confidence

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh integrasi ChatGPT dengan Teknik Role-Play terhadap kelancaran berbicara dan kepercayaan diri siswa dalam berbicara bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh kesulitan siswa dalam berbicara bahasa Inggris, khususnya dalam hal kelancaran berbicara dan rendahnya kepercayaan diri ketika mengikuti

kegiatan berbicara di kelas. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian mixed-method yang melibatkan 35 siswa kelas XI di SMAS Nurul Iman Tanjung Morawa pada tahun ajaran 2025/2026. Peserta penelitian terdiri atas 17 siswa dalam kelompok eksperimen dan 18 siswa dalam kelompok kontrol. Kelompok eksperimen menggunakan ChatGPT sebagai rehearsal partner sebelum mengikuti kegiatan role-play secara langsung, sedangkan kelompok kontrol mengikuti kegiatan role-play secara konvensional tanpa bantuan AI. Data dikumpulkan melalui tes berbicara, observasi kelas, dan angket kepercayaan diri berbicara. Data kuantitatif dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif, uji normalitas Shapiro–Wilk, uji Mann–Whitney U, dan analisis effect size dengan bantuan SPSS versi 26. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya perbedaan yang signifikan antara kelompok eksperimen dan kelompok kontrol dalam kelancaran berbicara dan kepercayaan diri berbicara. Uji Mann–Whitney U menghasilkan nilai signifikansi sebesar 0,000 untuk kedua variabel. Nilai effect size sebesar 0,87 untuk kelancaran berbicara dan 0,74 untuk kepercayaan diri menunjukkan efek yang besar. Hasil observasi dan angket juga menunjukkan adanya peningkatan partisipasi, kemauan berkomunikasi, dan kepercayaan diri siswa dalam kelompok eksperimen. Dengan demikian, integrasi ChatGPT sebagai rehearsal partner dengan Teknik Role-Play dapat menjadi pendekatan yang mendukung pengembangan kemampuan berbicara bahasa Inggris siswa.

Kata Kunci : ChatGPT, Teknik Role-Play, Kelancaran Berbicara, Kepercayaan Diri Berbicara

BACKGROUND

Speaking is an important skill in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning because it enables learners to express ideas, interact with others, and participate in meaningful communication. Speaking performance involves more than grammatical accuracy; oral fluency includes dimensions such as speech rate, pausing, processing, and the ability to sustain speech smoothly (Feng & Guo, 2022; Gokgoz-Kurt, 2023; Olkkonen et al., 2024; Suzuki & Kormos, 2023). Previous research has also shown that learners' speaking development can be affected by limited opportunities for oral practice and difficulties in maintaining fluent performance (Aziez et al., 2024).

The problem was also identified among eleventh-grade students at SMAS Nurul Iman Tanjung Morawa. Based on the researcher's preliminary observation during the teaching internship, many students showed low speaking fluency and confidence. They tended to hesitate or remain silent when they were asked to speak English. Some students were concerned about making mistakes and being negatively evaluated by their classmates or teacher. In addition, students had limited opportunities to practice English conversation outside the classroom. These conditions indicated the need for a speaking activity that could provide repeated practice while reducing psychological pressure. This need is consistent with previous findings emphasizing the relationship between speaking confidence and students' participation in English speaking activities (Bilal et al., 2025; Mbau et al., 2024).

The development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has provided new possibilities for language learning. ChatGPT can function as a conversational partner that allows learners to interact with English through simulated conversations. Previous research has reported that conversational AI can provide additional opportunities for speaking practice and can support learners' experiences in English speaking activities (Ericsson & Johansson, 2023). Studies focusing on ChatGPT have also reported positive implications for students' speaking performance and willingness to communicate (Jufriadi, 2024; Nguyen Thuy Huong, 2025; Pham et al., 2025). At the same time, AI should not be treated as a replacement for classroom interaction; its pedagogical value depends on how it is integrated into meaningful learning activities.

For this reason, ChatGPT can be integrated with a communicative classroom technique rather than being used as a replacement for face-to-face interaction. One relevant technique is role play. Role play provides students with simulated real-life situations in which they assume particular roles and use English to communicate according to a given context. It encourages students to produce spoken language, respond to their partners, and participate more actively in communication. Previous studies have shown that role play can support speaking development and students' confidence in speaking activities (Abdessallam et al., 2023; Henisah et al., 2023; Santoso & Prasetyo, 2024; Sukmara et al., 2025; Wiliani & Widhiasih, 2025; Yusuf & Setyamardani, 2020).

The combination of ChatGPT and role play may therefore provide complementary learning opportunities. ChatGPT can be used during the preparation or rehearsal stage, allowing students to practice expressions, organize ideas, and simulate conversations before performing with their classmates. Research on ChatGPT-supported communication suggests that guided AI practice can support communication skills while classroom activities remain important for meaningful interaction (Kanoksilapatham & Takrudkaew, 2025; Salsabil et al., 2025). Role play can then provide opportunities for students to transfer the language they have practiced into direct interpersonal communication. In this study, ChatGPT was therefore positioned as a rehearsal partner rather than as a replacement for teacher guidance or classroom communication.

Although previous studies have examined ChatGPT and role play as tools for supporting speaking development, fewer studies have focused on integrating the two within a single instructional sequence, particularly among senior high school students. Recent studies have separately examined AI-supported speaking practice and role-play-based speaking instruction (Ericsson & Johansson, 2023; Henisah et al., 2023; Kanoksilapatham & Takrudkaew, 2025; Salsabil et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2025). The present study addresses this gap by investigating the integration of ChatGPT-assisted rehearsal with face-to-face role-play and examining its effect on students' speaking fluency and speaking confidence.

METHOD

This study employed a mixed-method research design by combining quantitative and qualitative-supporting approaches. The quantitative component was used to examine differences in students' speaking fluency and speaking confidence through pre-test and post-

test data, while observation and questionnaire data were used to provide descriptive information about students' confidence and classroom participation.

The population consisted of 191 eleventh-grade students of SMAS Nurul Iman Tanjung Morawa enrolled in six parallel classes during the 2025/2026 academic year. One class comprising 35 students was selected as the research sample based on practical considerations, including research time, classroom scheduling, and the need to implement the treatment under similar learning conditions. The 35 students were randomly assigned to an experimental group of 17 students and a control group of 18 students using simple random assignment.

Table 1. Research Participants

Group	Number of Students
Experimental	17
Control	18
Total	35

Table 1 shows that the study involved 35 students in total. Seventeen students were assigned to the experimental group, which received ChatGPT-assisted rehearsal before role-play, while 18 students were assigned to the control group, which followed conventional role-play instruction. The two groups were therefore comparable in size and were used to examine differences in speaking outcomes after the treatment.

PARTICIPANTS

Significance level, the r-table value was 0.361. All five speaking-fluency items were valid, with r-count values ranging from 0.550 to 0.892. All five speaking-confidence items were also valid, with r-count values ranging from 0.630 to 0.708. Reliability testing produced Cronbach's alpha values of 0.738 for speaking fluency and 0.770 for speaking confidence, indicating that both instruments were reliable.

PROCEDURE

The experimental group received instruction through the integration of ChatGPT and the Role-Play Technique. First, the teacher introduced the topic of giving advice and the use of "should," including examples and contextual situations. Second, students practiced the target expressions with ChatGPT based on the assigned role-play scenarios. They could type or speak responses to ChatGPT, organize ideas, respond to conversational prompts, and repeat the interaction before the classroom performance. Third, students performed the role-play face-to-face in front of the class, while the teacher assessed their speaking performance and observed their confidence.

The control group followed conventional role-play instruction without AI assistance. The teacher introduced the topic and example dialogues, provided role-play situations, and asked students to prepare their dialogues using classroom materials, textbooks, or peer discussion. Students then performed the role-play in front of the class. The main procedural difference

between the groups was therefore the additional ChatGPT-assisted rehearsal received by the experimental group before face-to-face performance.

DATA ANALYSIS

The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 26. Descriptive statistics were calculated to obtain the number of participants, minimum and maximum scores, mean scores, and standard deviations. The Shapiro–Wilk test was used to examine the normality of the datasets. Because most datasets did not meet the normality assumption, the Mann–Whitney U test was used to determine whether there were significant differences between the experimental and control groups. The significance level was set at 0.05. Effect size was also calculated to determine the magnitude of the treatment effect. Observation and questionnaire data were analyzed descriptively to complement the quantitative findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF SPEAKING FLUENCY

The descriptive statistics showed differences between the two groups after the treatment. Before the treatment, the experimental group had a mean speaking-fluency score of 12.29, while the control group had a mean of 10.78. After the treatment, the experimental group reached a mean of 19.12, whereas the control group reached 13.17.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Speaking Fluency

Test	Group	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Pre-test	Experimental	17	11	15	12.29	1.40
Pre-test	Control	18	10	13	10.78	1.17
Post-test	Experimental	17	17	20	19.12	1.11
Post-test	Control	18	12	15	13.17	1.35

Source: Research Data Processed by the Researcher (2026).

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for students' speaking fluency. In the pre-test, the experimental group obtained a mean score of 12.29, compared with 10.78 for the control group. After the treatment, the experimental group reached a mean score of 19.12, while the control group reached 13.17. The experimental group therefore showed a larger increase in the mean score. The standard deviations, which ranged from 1.11 to 1.40, indicate that the individual scores were relatively close to their respective group means.

The descriptive results indicate that both groups started with relatively similar speaking-fluency performance, although the experimental group had a slightly higher pre-test mean. After the treatment, the difference became substantially larger. The experimental group's mean increased by 6.83 points, whereas the control group's mean increased by 2.39 points. This pattern suggests that the additional rehearsal opportunity provided through ChatGPT may have helped students prepare their ideas and language before participating in face-to-face interaction. This pattern is consistent with research emphasizing repeated and supported speaking practice in developing oral fluency (Ericsson & Johansson, 2023; Jufriadi, 2024).

The finding is consistent with research emphasizing the multidimensional nature of oral fluency. Suzuki and Kormos (2023) explain that oral fluency involves interacting cognitive and utterance-level dimensions, while Tavakoli et al. (2020) highlight aspects such as speech rate and pausing. In the present study, ChatGPT-assisted rehearsal may have reduced some of the planning pressure that students faced during direct performance. Students had an opportunity to formulate responses, repeat interactions, and become familiar with the language needed for the role-play scenario before speaking publicly. (Feng & Guo, 2022; Olkkonen et al., 2024; Suzuki & Kormos, 2023).

The result is also in line with studies on conversational AI and speaking practice. Ericsson and Johansson (2023) showed the educational potential of conversational AI for English speaking practice, while Jufriadi (2024) and Nguyen Thuy Huong (2025) reported positive implications of ChatGPT-supported learning for speaking performance. The present study extends this idea by combining AI rehearsal with a subsequent face-to-face role-play rather than using AI as the final communicative environment.

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF SPEAKING CONFIDENCE

The observation data also showed a clear difference in speaking confidence between the groups. Before treatment, the experimental group obtained a mean confidence score of 10.47, while the control group obtained 8.44. After treatment, the experimental group reached 19.41, whereas the control group reached 13.61.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Speaking Confidence Based on Observation Scores

Test	Group	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Pre-test	Experimental	17	8	14	10.47	2.21
Pre-test	Control	18	6	11	8.44	2.01
Post-test	Experimental	17	15	23	19.41	2.67
Post-test	Control	18	11	18	13.61	2.50

Source: Research Data Processed by the Researcher (2026).

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics for speaking confidence based on classroom observations. The experimental group had a pre-test mean of 10.47 and a post-test mean of 19.41, whereas the control group increased from 8.44 to 13.61. The experimental group thus demonstrated a larger increase in observed confidence. The standard deviations remained moderate, indicating that the confidence scores were reasonably distributed within each group.

The experimental group therefore showed a larger increase in observed confidence than the control group. The observation indicators suggested that students in the experimental group became more willing to communicate, participated more actively, and appeared more comfortable expressing ideas. The opportunity to rehearse before public performance may have reduced the pressure associated with producing English spontaneously for the first time in front of classmates. This interpretation is consistent with

research linking confidence and willingness to communicate with participation in English speaking activities (Bilal et al., 2025; Mbau et al., 2024; Purwaningsih & Harahap, 2025).

This finding is related to previous research connecting confidence and willingness to communicate with speaking performance. Bilal et al. (2025) discussed the role of self-confidence in English speaking, while Mbau et al. (2024) emphasized the relationship between confidence and willingness to communicate. Santoso and Prasetyo (2024) also found that role-play could support students' confidence. The present findings suggest that the combination of AI-supported rehearsal and role-play can provide both preparation and authentic classroom interaction.

INSTRUMENT TESTING

The instrument testing indicated that the research instruments were appropriate for the main study. For speaking fluency, all five items were valid, with r-count values between 0.550 and 0.892, exceeding the r-table value of 0.361. For speaking confidence, all five items were also valid, with r-count values between 0.630 and 0.708. Cronbach's alpha values of 0.738 for fluency and 0.770 for confidence indicated acceptable internal consistency.

Table 4. Validity and Reliability of the Research Instruments

Instrument	Number of Items	r-count Range	r-table	Cronbach's Alpha	Decision
Speaking Fluency	5	0.550–0.892	0.361	0.738	Valid and reliable
Speaking Confidence	5	0.630–0.708	0.361	0.770	Valid and reliable

Source: SPSS Output Processed by the Researcher (2026).

Table 4 summarizes the validity and reliability testing of the instruments. All five speaking-fluency items were valid because their r-count values, ranging from 0.550 to 0.892, exceeded the r-table value of 0.361. The five speaking-confidence items were also valid, with r-count values ranging from 0.630 to 0.708. The Cronbach's alpha values of 0.738 for speaking fluency and 0.770 for speaking confidence indicate that both instruments had acceptable internal consistency and were suitable for use in the main study.

NORMALITY AND MANN–WHITNEY U TEST

The Shapiro–Wilk normality test was conducted before the inferential analysis. Seven of the eight datasets were not normally distributed, while the post-test confidence data of the experimental group were normally distributed with a significance value of 0.119. Because the overall data did not satisfy the normality assumption, the Mann–Whitney U test was selected for comparing the experimental and control groups.

Table 5. Results of the Mann–Whitney U Test

Variable	Experimental Mean Rank	Control Mean Rank	Mann–Whitney U	Z	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Speaking Fluency	27.00	9.50	0.000	–5.148	0.000	Reject H_0
Speaking Confidence	25.76	10.67	21.000	–4.389	0.000	Reject H_0

Source: SPSS Output Processed by the Researcher (2026).

Table 5 presents the results of the Mann–Whitney U test. For speaking fluency, the experimental group produced $U = 0.000$, $Z = -5.148$, and $p = 0.000$. For speaking confidence, the values were $U = 21.000$, $Z = -4.389$, and $p = 0.000$. Because both significance values were below 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected for both variables. The results therefore demonstrate statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups.

For speaking fluency, the Mann–Whitney U test produced $U = 0.000$, $Z = -5.148$, and $p = 0.000$. Because the significance value was lower than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected. The result demonstrates a statistically significant difference in post-test speaking fluency between the experimental and control groups. The experimental group obtained a substantially higher mean rank (27.00) than the control group (9.50).

For speaking confidence, the Mann–Whitney U test produced $U = 21.000$, $Z = -4.389$, and $p = 0.000$. The null hypothesis was again rejected because $p < 0.05$. The experimental group obtained a higher mean rank (25.76) than the control group (10.67), indicating a statistically significant difference in observed speaking confidence after the treatment.

The statistical findings support the argument that the effect observed in the experimental group was not simply a result of random variation. Instead, the combination of ChatGPT-assisted rehearsal and role-play was associated with higher post-test outcomes than conventional role-play. This result is consistent with the growing literature on AI-supported speaking practice while retaining the communicative value of classroom interaction (Kanoksilapatham & Takrudkaew, 2025; Pham et al., 2025; Salsabil et al., 2025). This result is consistent with research indicating that AI-supported speaking practice can complement communicative language activities when learners still engage in meaningful interaction (Kanoksilapatham & Takrudkaew, 2025; Pham et al., 2025; Salsabil et al., 2025).

EFFECT SIZE

Effect size was calculated to determine the practical magnitude of the differences identified by the Mann–Whitney U test. The effect size was 0.87 for speaking fluency and 0.74 for speaking confidence. Both values were interpreted as large effects. Thus, the treatment demonstrated not only statistical significance but also a substantial practical difference between the experimental and control groups.

Table 6. Effect Size of the Treatment

Variable	Z	N	Effect Size (r)	Interpretation
Speaking Fluency	-5.148	35	0.87	Large
Speaking Confidence	-4.389	35	0.74	Large

Source: Calculation based on SPSS output (2026).

Table 6 presents the magnitude of the treatment effects. The effect size for speaking fluency was 0.87, while the effect size for speaking confidence was 0.74. Both values fall within the large-effect category. This means that the statistically significant differences identified by the Mann–Whitney U test were also substantial in practical terms.

The large effect for speaking fluency indicates that the combination of ChatGPT rehearsal and role-play was strongly associated with students' ability to speak more smoothly during the post-test. The large effect for speaking confidence similarly indicates that the treatment was associated with a meaningful difference in students' willingness and comfort when speaking English.

SPEAKING CONFIDENCE QUESTIONNAIRE

To complement the observation data, a 12-item speaking confidence questionnaire was administered to the 17 students in the experimental group after treatment. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree, with a theoretical score range of 12 to 60. The experimental group obtained a minimum score of 44, a maximum score of 57, a mean score of 49.41, and a standard deviation of 4.68. All 17 students were categorized in the high-confidence category.

The questionnaire responses support the observation findings. Students reported that practicing with ChatGPT made them feel more prepared before performing role-play, helped them recognize and work on speaking difficulties, and reduced hesitation when speaking in front of the teacher and classmates. These perceptions suggest that the rehearsal function of ChatGPT was particularly relevant to the affective dimension of speaking. Rather than replacing classroom communication, the tool provided a preparatory space in which students could practice before entering the higher-pressure face-to-face setting.

The qualitative-supporting findings also help explain the quantitative results. Repeated rehearsal may have increased familiarity with expressions and allowed students to organize ideas before speaking. At the same time, role-play preserved the need for authentic interpersonal interaction. The combination therefore linked private or low-pressure practice with public communicative performance. This may explain why both fluency and confidence showed large effects.

CONCLUSION

The findings demonstrate that integrating ChatGPT with the Role-Play Technique had a significant effect on students' speaking fluency and speaking confidence. Students in the experimental group achieved higher post-test mean scores than those in the control group,

with the speaking-fluency mean increasing from 12.29 to 19.12 and the speaking-confidence observation mean increasing from 10.47 to 19.41. The Mann–Whitney U test confirmed significant differences for both variables, with $p = 0.000$. The effect sizes of 0.87 for speaking fluency and 0.74 for speaking confidence indicated large effects. The observation and questionnaire findings further showed that students became more willing to participate, more comfortable expressing ideas, and more confident during speaking activities after receiving ChatGPT-assisted rehearsal. The findings suggest that ChatGPT can be used effectively as a rehearsal partner before face-to-face role-play, provided that its use remains integrated with teacher guidance and authentic classroom interaction. The main pedagogical implication is that AI can be positioned as a preparatory support that helps students enter communicative activities with greater readiness rather than as a substitute for teachers, peers, or real-world communication.

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