

Navigating English Learning with AI: A Qualitative Study of University Students Experiences

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Abstract: The accelerated development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies has had a substantial impact on educational practices, particularly in the field of English education. This study investigates the experiences of university students at a UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu in the process of navigating English learning through AI. The study examines the challenges and benefits those students experience when utilizing the most frequently used AI tools, as well as their perceptions of these technologies. Interviews with nine students in the fifth semester of the English program at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu are conducted using a qualitative methodology. The results indicate that students have a positive attitude toward AI in the context of English learning and employ a variety of AI tools to resolve various aspects of language acquisition. This study is a unique exploration of the manner in which university students simultaneously incorporate multiple AI tools in their English learning, providing new insights into the role of AI in promoting self-directed learning and practical language application. The study offers new insights into the transformative potential of AI in supporting students' autonomous learning journeys while learning English by providing a comprehensive view of AI's role in English education.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, English Learning, Navigating, Qualitative Study

A. Introduction

The era of society 5.0 brings life inevitably into contact with technology. the current generation is inseparable from digital devices and the internet. In today's digital era, artificial intelligence (AI) technology is increasingly playing an important role in various aspects of life, including education. In the context of English language learning, AI offers a range of tools and platforms designed to assist students in improving their language skills. From AI-based learning apps, interactive chatbots, to automated language analysis platforms, these technologies have the potential to transform the traditional way of learning English to be more personalized, adaptive, and efficient. AI has the ability to disrupt traditional education and usher in a new era of individualized learning. Results of the review reveal an increasing interest in using

AI for educational purposes from the academic community (Duan & Dong, 2023). In education, AI is portrayed as a potentially powerful instrument that can supplement or even replace teachers' job by automatically tracking students' progress, assessing their performance, and offering individualized assistance (Wang et al., 2023). Al-Tkhayneh et al (2023) states that the use of artificial intelligence in education has two main goals. The first is to prepare students to be responsible workers and citizens in a world where artificial intelligence systems rule, and the second is to use artificial intelligence's potential to revolutionise training and teaching methods. By utilising contemporary technologies, including AI, the research underscores the potential of educators to revolutionise the manner in which we teach and learn, thereby enhancing the quality of education and fostering student success (Shi et al., 2023).

Xu (2024) stated that Education is incorporating AI for a number of reasons. First and foremost, it seeks to enhance learning outcomes by offering students individualized learning pathways that adjust based on their development and comprehension. AI systems continuously evaluate students' proficiency and knowledge levels, allowing teachers to pinpoint areas that need more help and implement focused interventions. Second, AI improves teaching effectiveness by automating administrative duties like data administration and grading, freeing up teachers to concentrate on developing deep connections with their pupils. Thirdly, AI ensures that no learner is left behind by fostering inclusive learning environments that accommodate varying learning tempos and capacities. Furthermore, AI encourages lifetime learning by offering tailored suggestions for ongoing skill enhancement and development. In addition, Reiss (2021) stated that The application of AI in education will have an expanding impact on lives beyond only students. What the ramifications will be for (human) teachers is hard to foresee. Perhaps AI results in students who are more motivated, which is something that almost all teachers want, if only because it frees them up to focus more on facilitating learning and less on classroom management concerns. However, teachers may also be affected by the privacy problems and growing surveillance culture. A teacher's classroom used to be their sanctuary. Although the walls are already getting thinner, teachers may find that as data on student performance and success increases. from this case researcher assume that AI literacy is very important to adapt with this globalization era. AI literacy is a complex notion covering not only the knowledge of AI technologies but also their responsible and successful use together with the application of critical thinking to their design and implementation.

Tzirides et al (2024) explored the integration of AI literacy among university students. They analysed the perspectives of 156 students who were taking web programming courses that utilized blended learning during the COVID-19 period in a department of informatics and computer engineering. The study employed a proportional sampling technique to disseminate a Google survey that investigated the participants' perspectives on different facets of AI literacy. The findings indicated that the students

possessed a moderate degree of comprehension regarding AI principles and practical implementations. Furthermore, He and his colleagues proposed that comprehending the benefits and drawbacks of AI, the consequences of AI implementation, and the ethical and legal dimensions of AI might greatly influence the protection of data and privacy in blended learning instruction. Furthermore, the experts argue that more study is necessary to investigate the intricate connections among AI literacy, ethics, legislation, and data security and privacy in blended learning models.

The readiness to use AI is tied to both teachers and their students. AI differs from traditional technologies in that it models human reasoning and learning, whereas traditional technologies give full control to humans (Wang et al., 2023). Summers et al (2024) said generative artificial intelligence (AI) use deep learning to produce content that is human-like in response to a variety of intricate inputs. Utilizing pre-existing data from the sources it can access, it produces material in a certain manner in response to user input. Common plagiarism checkers might have trouble identifying this work because of the originality of the content produced by generative AI techniques (Tam et al., 2023). It's significant that generative AI systems like Wordtune, Dall-E2, Scribe, ChatGPT, and others are seeing more use in academic settings. However, given how easily accessible they are to students, there are worries about how this can affect the quality of outcomes in the higher education sector, including things like accuracy, efficient learning, opportunities for personal growth, and career possibilities. The situation in Indonesia offers a special instance for analyzing the effect of AI on critical thinking in EFL classes. Their study looked at how students could utilize AI chatbots to improve their critical thinking skills, illuminating how AI could enhance academic pursuits in Indonesia. The study concludes that AI can be an asset in the development of critical thinking skills, but with caveats that require careful management. A balanced approach that capitalizes on AI's strengths while being aware of its limitations is necessary for cultivating robust critical thinking abilities among EFL students (Darwin et al., 2024).

AI has the potential to completely transform the way that educational content is delivered and consumed, making learning more personalized⁹ and engaging for each individual student. Its capabilities range from intelligent tutoring to personalized learning pathways. The integration of AI into educational settings is not without its challenges. Concerns regarding equity, accessibility, ethical use of data, and the potential for AI to supplant human educators raise critical questions about how best to leverage this technology in a manner that benefits all (Mukhamedov, 2024). Despite the enormous promise for AI in English language learning, it is critical to understand how university students react to and experience the use of this technology. Student experience is critical for assessing the success and engagement provided by AI tools in education. Often, the success of integrating instructional technology is defined not only by its quality, but also by students' acceptance and adaption to it.

There have been many studies on the use of AI in English language learning, mainly focusing on the effectiveness of this technology in improving language skills for example research conducted by Kim et al (2021), his study aimed to investigate the effects of using AI chatbots in class activities according to students' proficiency levels. This study aimed to investigate the effects of using AI chatbots in class activities according to students' proficiency levels. However, most previous research has focused more on quantitative aspects, such as increasing students' scores or time spent in applications. This research brings novelty by using a qualitative approach to further explore students' subjective experiences in using AI.

Based on the results of pre-observations carried out on Monday, September 9th 2024 with 9 students representing three classes at the UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu, it was found that the students were familiar with AI, had access to some AI and mostly used Ai in English learning and Observations also reveal that some other students experience difficulties in utilizing AI technology optimally. Therefore, this study focuses on university students of UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu experiences in using AI to learn English. Through a qualitative approach, this research aims to explore the perceptions, challenges and benefits felt by students in utilizing AI as a tool in learning English and to find out the way they integrate AI in English learning. By understanding student experiences, it is hoped that this research can provide deeper insight into how AI can be effectively integrated into higher education curricula especially for English learning, as well as provide recommendations for the further development of AI-based learning technologies in the future. Therefore, this research will answer research questions in the form of:

1. What types of AI are most commonly used by fifth semester English student at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu?
2. What are the perceptions of fifth semester English student at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu regarding the use of AI in learning English?
3. What challenges and benefits do fifth semester English student at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu face in utilizing AI as a tool for learning English?
4. How do fifth semester English student at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu integrate AI with in English learning?

B. Methods

Understanding the human condition in various circumstances and a perceived situation is aided by qualitative research (Bengtsson, 2016). Nine UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu students from fifth semester who actively use AI to learn English will participate in this study. Only students who have utilised various applications or AI platforms to learn English will be invited to participate in the purposive sample technique that will be used to choose participants. In-depth interviews hat are semi-structured will be used to gather data obtain deep information. Through these interviews, the researcher will be able to delve deeply into the opinions and

experiences of the participants while also giving them the freedom to freely express their viewpoints. There will be in-person interviews. We will employ data triangulation techniques, i.e., combining the findings of observations, interviews, and document analysis (where relevant), to reinforce research findings, in order to assure the validity and reliability of the study. In order to make sure that the researcher's interpretation aligns with the participants' experiences, the researcher will also do member checking, which entails consulting the intermediate analysis results with the participants once more.

C. Results and Discussion

From the results of research that has been carried out, it was found that almost all students already know and use AI to support English language learning. they define AI as an advanced technological tool that helps in the educational process; technology that makes it easier to obtain information; A computer system that is artificial intelligence; AI makes work more effective and efficient with the help of artificial intelligence. It was in line with the research conducted by Dewi et al (2021) The majority of informants (students) in her research say that AI is artificial intelligence used to help human activities. Students of fifth semester of UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu feel helped by AI. They are motivated to use it in learning. Research conducted by (Wei, 2023) with the result of quantitative analysis, the experimental group outperformed the control group in every area measured for English learning results. They also demonstrated higher L2 motivation and more widespread application of self-regulated learning techniques. These findings imply that English learning achievement, L2 motivation, and self-regulation are all positively impacted by AI-mediated instruction. Qualitative research sheds light on the AI platform's transformative effects. It was discovered to provide tailored learning experiences and improve engagement, which in turn increased motivation and promoted self-regulated learning. These results highlight how AI-mediated language training can enhance language learning outcomes, inspire students, and foster independence.

Types of AI are most commonly used by fifth semester English student at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu

The results obtained from interviews with students about AI which is most often used by them in learning English are ChatGPT. Various types of AI that are familiar among 5th semester students of English education UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu in learning English include, ChatGPT, Gemini, DeepL, Gamma, Grammarly, Canva, perplexity, worldwall and Slidego. All of these are types of Ai that are known and often used by 5th semester students of the English tadriss study program at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu. there are still some of them who answer several applications that they classify as AI even though they are not. for example: i love pdf and e-dictionary. This indicates that their literacy about AI must be increased, even

though they have already mastered some AI. The AI that occupies the top position most frequently used by students based on interview results is chatGPT, Gemini, DeepL, Grammarly and Canva. According to them, this AI application is what really helps them in learning English.

GPT chat is still a favorite for fifth semester English language education students at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu. For the reason that GPT chat helps them in making assignments and answering questions they don't know, they think that GPT chat can always answer what they ask. Some others answered that GPT chat was easy to use because it was very easy to access and in an interesting chat form. Apart from being easy to access, GPT chat also has simple answers according to them. although several previous studies discussed several weaknesses of GPT chat compared to other AI, as conducted by Ma et al (2024) his study observed that ChatGPT frequently provides information that is too generic, irrelevant, erroneous, redundant, or verbose, necessitating further verification work, such as, "The information from ChatGPT lacks references." I need to consult more sources to ensure its veracity." Teachers also expressed concerns that using ChatGPT might diminish students' individual learning efforts, e.g., "Students rely on ChatGPT to elaborate findings, failing to develop analytical skills"; "Once ChatGPT provides an answer, students often cease further learning," and "ChatGPT use may lead to student laziness."

The finding in this research are slightly different from the results of research by (Fitria, 2022) where in her research, she propose Some examples of AI technology that can be used in English language learning such as google translate, text to speech, english able, chatbot and dualingo. Those kinds of AI have not been used by students at fifth semester of English language education UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu. According to (Li, 2021) The advantages of AI in the acquisition of English, including the enhancement of efficiency, intelligent evaluation, data tracking, pronunciation correction, and accurate testing and it was proved by the result of the research.

The perceptions of fifth semester English student at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu regarding the use of AI in learning English

Students of UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu on fifth semester perception regarding the use of AI in learning English, they claimed that AI can help students to get ideas, but they also regret that students really use AI as the main benchmark, making them think less critically and lose creativity. AI is like two blades that have positive and negative impacts. In learning English, according to students, beside Chat GPT, DeepL is one of the things they use most often and is very helpful for understanding texts and translating texts, however, the sophistication of AI makes them feel that the task is easier because they can easily do it only with the help of AI.

Several students wisely stated that in the modern world, if used well, AI could

increase their knowledge and insight. They also hope that in class learning they can use AI and be taught AI in various variations so that it motivates them to learn English because it provides new experiences for them. especially things related to technology are very interesting for Gen Z like them. Almost all respondents thought that AI's presence helped them in learning and getting ideas. Students appreciate the flexibility provided by AI, allowing them to learn anytime and anywhere. Students believe AI can effectively support their individual learning. Without depending on a lecturer's presence, AI enables students to rapidly fix their errors and continually improve their language skills through personalised lessons and instant feedback. It means that they feel a positive impact from AI's presence in English learning.

Research conducted by Ningsih et al (2024) suggest that Indonesian students generally hold positive perceptions towards AI tools in English learning. It strengthen this research result. In addition, Salloum et al (2024) in his research found the benefit of AI in education include the potential to transform traditional classrooms into more dynamic, engaging, and inclusive environments. According to Chandra et al (2024) The capacity of AI to offer ongoing and easily accessible learning opportunities is a key benefit for language learners. AI-powered systems have the capacity to provide 24/7 assistance, enabling students to practice their English at their own convenience and speed.

In other hand, A few students voiced worries that they would become overly reliant on AI, which would limit their access to learning opportunities through face-to-face interactions with peers or professors. They think it's critical to preserve a balance between conventional learning methods and the use of technology.

Challenges and benefits do fifth semester English student at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu face in utilizing AI as a tool for learning English?

In using AI, students still have challenges. From interviews conducted, students realized that self-control and being wise in its use is sometimes difficult to do because the more often you use it, the more you feel dependent. Another challenge according to students is that some AI such as GPT and Gemini chat makes them rarely read. Students assume that all assignments can be completed quickly so they always complete assignments within deadlines. Students also felt that some of the sources provided by AI were less valid because inappropriate citations and references were found. A few students mentioned challenges related to technical issues, such as software glitches or the need for a stable internet connection, which can disrupt the learning process. Additionally, not all students may have equal access to advanced AI tools, which can create a gap in learning opportunities. *"Sometimes the app crashes or my internet connection isn't strong enough, and that really disrupts my learning. It's frustrating when technology gets in the way."*

Concerns were raised by a few students regarding the possibility of learning to become overly reliant on AI, which could limit their opportunity to interact with other students or improve their language skills in authentic settings. If AI is used too much, learning could become more passive and students might miss out on opportunities for social and active learning. "I'm concerned that depending too much on AI could reduce my confidence while speaking English in face-to-face interactions. I don't want to stop having those in-person conversations." Some students have claimed that AI systems frequently produce generic or occasionally irrelevant responses since they are unable to understand the context or nuances of the language. This restriction can make learning more difficult, especially in instances involving more complicated or advanced language use. The AI occasionally fails to grasp the context of what I'm attempting to convey. It responds, but it's not necessarily applicable to the circumstances."

Compare to the research conducted by Moulieswaran & Kumar (2023) His research study used a quantitative approach with survey instruments to gather specific data from 81 engineering stream students, including important major research objects. To get the information, a 5-point Likert scale survey was used. The majority of students, especially those studying English said primary issue is the poor quality of smartphone language-learning apps driven by AI. Moulieswaran & Kumar (2023) also found their respondent encountered a diverse array of obstacles while employing AI tools to acquire the English language. One of the most significant challenges is the absence of any effective AI language learning applications for devices.

Nonetheless, it is anticipated that AI-powered language-learning applications will be used as one of the teaching tools that might effectively assist students in learning English as a second language. AI faults, biases, and a shortage of AI professionals all pose substantial barriers to its successful application. Courses and AI teams, the creation of AI-integrated courses, and teacher training programmes are among the proposed answers. Addressing the difficult scenarios associated with AI's flaws, biases, and knowledge gaps is critical to reaping its full benefits. By using AI ethically and proactively, universities can establish modern learning environments that benefit both students and institutions (Salih & Mohammed, 2024). In line with the research result, Wang et al (2023) found that The application of artificial intelligence technology, particularly speech recognition, language translation, and language assessment, in the language service industry has introduced new opportunities and challenges for language teaching in colleges and universities.

The way fifth semester English student at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu integrate AI with in English learning

Students frequently integrate these AI tools to resolve various aspects of language acquisition. For instance, they may employ ChatGPT to acquire information, generate

ideas for writing, engage in conversation practice, Grammarly to verify the structure of sentences, and DeepL to conduct translation exercises. This integration generates an all-encompassing educational experience. Here are the way students integrate AI in English Learning

ChatGPT is frequently employed to gather information and generate concepts for writing assignments or projects. It facilitates the development of students' conversational skills by replicating real-time discussions, as well as their ability to brainstorm and organize their thoughts. "When I was uncertain or require additional information regarding a subject, I employ ChatGPT to solicit suggestions." Additionally, it facilitates my practice of English dialogues. While another students said that when they have task from lecturer especially for writing, "we search the answer of the questions trough chat GPT or Gemini. Gemini's capacity to customize learning content in accordance with students' progress and unique requirements is highly valued by students. Gemini customizes lessons or exercises to enable students to concentrate on areas that require refinement. "Gemini adjusts to my learning pace and provides exercises that target my weak spots in English, like tenses and sentence structure." Additionally, students stated that they frequently compare and contrast the information they obtain from Gemini and conversation GPT. Students frequently depend on the combination of Gemini and chatGPT to complete assignments in English learning, particularly. Gemini offers exercises, exams, and learning modules that are personalized for each user to help students establish a more robust foundation in vocabulary and grammar. "The personalized quizzes on Gemini help me improve my vocabulary and grammar in a structured way."

DeepL is typically employed by students to translate complex texts between their native language and English, thereby enabling them to more effectively comprehend idiomatic expressions and context. In comparison to fundamental alternatives, this tool offers more precise and context-aware translations, thereby facilitating a more profound understanding of both languages by students. Students enhance their vocabulary, sentence structure, and ability to articulate ideas in English by contrasting AI-generated translations with their own comprehension. students stated that to translate their language they had switched from Google Translate to DeepL which according to them was better at translating. I use deepL to translate Indonesian to English or vice versa. Before getting to know DeepL, I usually used Google Translate. As AI develops, we prefer the deepL application as a translation tool because I feel that deepL is more accurate".

Additionally, students frequently employ Grammarly to review essays, reports, and other written assignments. It helps them fix grammar, spelling, punctuation, and even alter the tone, resulting in more professional and polished writing. Grammarly also improves the lucidity and coherence of their writing, enabling them to construct sentences more effectively and concisely. As soon as I have completed an essay,

submit it to Grammarly to identify any errors and enhance its overall clarity.

When students are required to develop presentations, Canva is incorporated into the process, enabling them to combine the content they have generated with ChatGPT or other tools into well-organized, visually appealing slides. "I design presentations in Canva after gathering content with AI tools, making sure it's clear and easy to follow. The integration of Canva into English education offers a dynamic and interactive approach that improves both language and creative abilities. Students are not only honing their English proficiency in a variety of ways as they design presentations or projects using Canva, but they are also engaging in visual communication. For example, in order to guarantee that their message is readily comprehensible, students must prioritize the clarity of their language when developing visual materials or slides. This entails the selection of suitable vocabulary, the effective structuring of sentences, and the consideration of the alignment of the English text with the visual elements. They frequently employ tools such as Grammarly to evaluate the content they incorporate into Canva, thereby guaranteeing the professionalism and accuracy of their writing.

Furthermore, students may employ ChatGPT to generate English text, generate ideas, or develop conversational content that they can subsequently integrate into their Canva designs. Students are able to more effectively conceptualize and present complex ideas as a result of Canva's versatility. This is especially beneficial when presenting in English, summarizing research, or explaining topics. Students can enhance their writing, presentation, and communication abilities simultaneously by integrating AI language tools with Canva, thereby facilitating a more comprehensive and engaging English learning experience. Additionally, this integration improves their overall proficiency by providing practical, real-world applications, while also bolstering their confidence in expressing ideas. Compare to research conducted by Dhouha Choukaier (2024) examines the innovative application of AI technologies, including Natural Language Processing (NLP), machine learning, and adaptive learning systems, in ESL/EFL settings. In this case the integration of AI seem more completed.

D. Conclusions

In conclusion, incorporating AI into English language instruction is a significant advancement in teaching methods since it encourages independent study and equips students with the knowledge and abilities needed to communicate effectively in everyday settings. It was discovered that various AI types, like ChatGPT, Gemini, DeepL, Grammarly, and Canva, are most frequently utilized by fifth semester English students at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu. Students view AI in English learning positively. There are advantages and disadvantages to employing AI in English learning, as well as ways to integrate AI to support students' English language

acquisition. In order to maximize AI benefits and mitigate any potential drawbacks as it develops, further research is needed to determine the long-term implications of AI on language teaching.

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