

Using AI in English Language Learning: Perspectives of Indonesian EFL Learners

Penggunaan AI dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris: Perspektif Pembelajar EFL di Indonesia

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Abstract

The world of rapid and advanced technology has pushed every aspect of life to transform and keep up with the era, including the transformation of education. The transformation of education that is currently unstoppable is the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the world of education. This study aims to learn more about the use of AI in English Language Learning (ELL) based on the perspective of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in Indonesia. Involving 29 EFL students from two private universities in Jakarta and East Nusa Tenggara, this study conducted a qualitative case study research approach. Data in this study were collected using a set of questionnaires with eight open-ended questions given to EFL students online through the Google Form application. The results showed that all EFL students in Jakarta and East Nusa Tenggara were familiar with AI and used it in the ELL process. The learners have various perspectives on AI's benefits and obstacles. This study has provided insight into the perspective of EFL students in using advanced technology, especially AI, as a medium or tool to support the English Language Learning (ELL) process in Indonesia.

Keywords

Artificial Intelligence; English as a Foreign Language; English Language Learning; Learners' Perspectives

Abstrak

Dunia dengan teknologi yang pesat dan maju telah mendorong setiap aspek kehidupan untuk bertransformasi dan mengikuti perkembangan zaman, termasuk transformasi pendidikan. Transformasi pendidikan yang saat ini tidak dapat dihentikan adalah penggunaan Artificial Intelligence (AI) dalam dunia pendidikan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mempelajari lebih lanjut tentang penggunaan AI dalam English Language Learning (ELL) berdasarkan perspektif mahasiswa English as a Foreign Language (EFL) di Indonesia. Melibatkan 29 mahasiswa EFL dari dua universitas swasta di Jakarta dan Nusa Tenggara Timur, penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan penelitian studi kasus kualitatif. Data dalam penelitian ini dikumpulkan melalui seperangkat kuesioner dengan delapan pertanyaan terbuka yang diberikan kepada mahasiswa EFL secara daring melalui aplikasi Google Form. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa seluruh mahasiswa EFL di Jakarta dan Nusa Tenggara Timur mengenal AI dan menggunakannya dalam proses ELL. Para pembelajar memiliki pandangan yang beragam tentang manfaat dan tantangan penggunaan AI dalam ELL. Penelitian ini telah memberikan wawasan tentang perspektif mahasiswa EFL dalam menggunakan teknologi canggih, khususnya AI, sebagai media atau alat untuk membantu proses pembelajaran bahasa Inggris (ELL) di Indonesia.

Kata Kunci

Artificial Intelligence; English as a Foreign Language; Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris; Perspektif Pembelajar Indonesia

1. Introduction

Learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Indonesia has been vastly challenging for Indonesian learners, even at a higher educational level. Mastering several English skills with different challenges and developments could make learners exhausted and anxious. Fortunately, rapid, and advanced technology has flourished in academic settings, including English Language Learning (ELL), where learners seem highly supported by abundant English materials, tools, and applications. One of the most progressive tools is Artificial Intelligence (AI), which is forecasted to replace the human brain in the coming years.

In English Language Learning, AI has been applied and proved effective in supporting ELL learners, particularly in higher education (Bearman et al., 2022; Ghafar et al., 2023). One example application is the use of ChatGPT in learning written English. A case study by Khampusaen (2025) on how AI supports undergraduates' writing revealed that ChatGPT significantly enhanced the learners' writing performance. However, the study recommended the need for sequential instruction to make writing more systematic and concise.

A similar study with other AI implementations, such as ChatGPT, Quillbot, and Grammarly, has evaluated their systematics and accuracy. A thorough qualitative review by Losi et al. (2024) on those three AI integrations for written English uncovered that students could write academically more rapidly and correctly. Integrated AI for writing enables students to compose comprehensive, concise, and accurate writing. Nonetheless, AI integration concerns some boundaries of students' development in critical thinking, where AI may not take over the human brain.

Regarding critical thinking, an experiment study examined integrated AI and critical thinking to promote undergraduates' writing skills. With a quantitative experiment research, Supeno et al. (2024) discovered that AI supported students' writing quality and encouraged students' motivation to learn and experience various digital tools that broadened their creative thinking. Related to the student's motivation and how AI assists in writing has also been proven by another study (Tica & Krsmanović, 2024). However, a more comprehensive

inquiry into using AI in different English skills is needed to look for significant integration between AI and students' critical thinking, as previous studies have primarily focused on writing alone.

All the above studies may prove several advantages and disadvantages of using AI in English Language Learning, particularly for written English. However, the study of learners' perspectives on AI and its utilization is scarcely evaluated, particularly among Indonesian learners in the eastern part of Indonesia or even in the big city of Jakarta. Therefore, to highlight some boundaries in using AI in ELL, this study tries to identify students' perspectives about AI on the following questions:

- a) How did the EFL learners perceive the role of AI in ELL?
- b) What specific AI tools do the EFL learners prefer in ELL?
- c) What are the reported experiences of EFL learners when integrating AI technologies into their ELL?

2. Methods

Inspired by prior studies, this research applied a qualitative case study design with purposive sampling and descriptive analysis (Creswell, 2012; Mahmud et al., 2022). The design involved respondents from two English classes, one in East Jakarta and another in Alor, East Nusa Tenggara, where the authors were also the lecturers for the ELL respondents. Choosing two different locations with different context enhances the generalizability of findings and informs tailored approaches to integrating AI in language education, addressing unique challenges in diverse context. Through descriptive analysis, the design allowed this study to collect and interpret the data during classroom interactions in their natural circumstances (see Figure 1).

The study selected a purposive sample that included the authors' EFL students. The sample included respondents from two private universities in Indonesia, 20 respondents from East Jakarta, and nine respondents from Alor, East Nusa Tenggara. All respondents were in the fourth semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. They were treated equally as a single subject and took an online open-ended questionnaire to express their perspectives. Hence, the authors noted several notes during classroom observation.

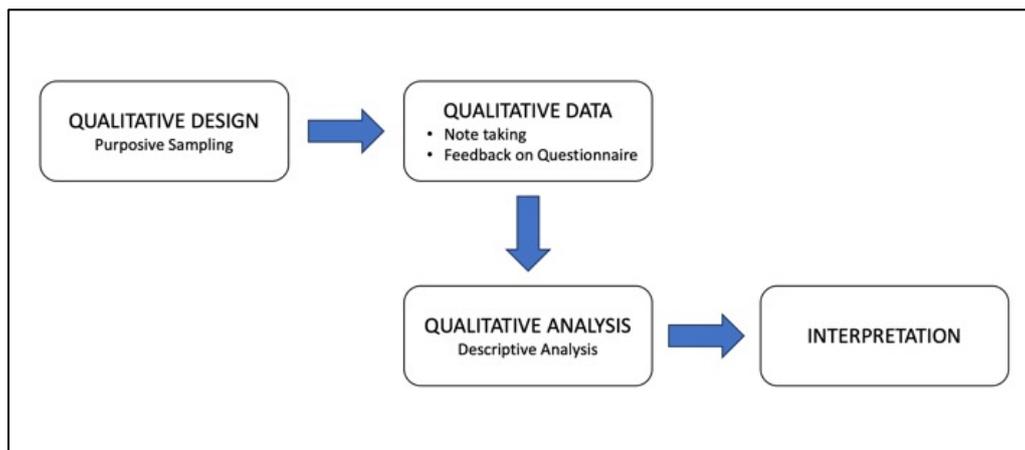


Figure 1. A Qualitative Case Study Design (Source: Authors, 2025)

The research questionnaire consisted of eight open-ended questions and was delivered to the respondents through Google Forms. The respondents expressed their feedback for a one-time meeting with limited time. Accordingly, the study analyzed the collected data descriptively and presented the findings in figures and tables supported by clear and concise explanations. In this way, this study enables readers to understand the interpretation and find insights for further research.

3. Results and Discussion

Based on the collected data, this section portrays the research findings in a normative and descriptive manner. It is also grounding the discussion in relevant theoretical and analytical frameworks to reinforce the interpretation of the findings. This study divided this section into three sub-sections based on the research questions for a chronological and concise understanding. Each sub-section answers and discusses each research question.

For the demographic data, this study comprised 29 participants from the urban and remote regions, 20 from Jakarta and nine from Alor, East Nusa Tenggara. Among 20 participants, there were 13 females and seven males. Meanwhile, among nine participants from Alor, there were eight females and only one male.

3.1. EFL Learners' Perceptions on AI in ELL

Based on the participants' responses, all 29 respondents expressed that AI is a widespread tool to support education, particularly English Language Learning (ELL). All respondents declared that AI is an assistant

machine or application that helps humans complete many tasks, including thinking, learning, and answering, all like human beings. Among 29 respondents, only one respondent considered using AI wisely.

This descriptive finding illustrates learners' current understanding of AI, which aligns with the constructivist learning theory, emphasizing the role of technology as a cognitive tool that supports active knowledge construction and problem-solving. However, it is essential to critically analyze how these perceptions align with existing theoretical frameworks, such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which posits that perceived usefulness and ease of use significantly influence technology adoption. This model can provide a more contextual understanding of why learners view AI positively.

This study selected 10 respondents purposively to express the definition of AI in the eyes of the EFL learners from two universities. To have an equal viewpoint, the ten respondents comprised five females and five males. Seven respondents were from the private university in Jakarta, while the other three were from Alor, East Nusa Tenggara. Table 1 shows the details of the respondents' perceptions.

Based on Table 1, most respondents could define AI as a machine or application designed to support humans, such as thinking, learning, and problem-solving, just like human beings. The findings are in line with several prior studies that proved AI as a tool to assist EFL learners in ELL, such as English pronunciation and writing content and development (Hartono et al., 2023; Marzuki et al.,

Table 1. Respondents' Perceptions on AI in ELL

Respondents (M/F)	AI Perceptions
1 (F)	AI refers to the simulation of human intelligence in designed to think, learn, and make decisions like human.
3 (M)	AI is robot on data in the apps for easy help to human.
9 (F)	AI is a magical technology that has the advantage of helping to carry out certain tasks automatically, faster and sometimes more accurately than humans.
12 (M)	An Artificial Intelligence which is created to perform various tasks that typically require human intelligence.
17 (F)	AI is an application that is made to make it easier for someone to find something without the need to be complicate, but sometimes we have to use it wisely.
19 (M)	AI is a type of technology that helps machines think and act like humans.
21 (M)	Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to a branch of computer science focused on creating systems and machines capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence. These tasks include reasoning, decision-making, problem-solving, learning, and even creativity.
23 (M)	AI, or Artificial Intelligence, refers to the simulation of human intelligence in machines programmed to think, learn, and problem-solve. It involves algorithms and models that enable machines to process data, recognize patterns, make decisions, and improve over time. AI can perform tasks such as language translation, voice recognition, image analysis, and even autonomous decision-making. It is used in various industries to enhance efficiency, creativity, and personalization. Essentially, AI is designed to mimic cognitive functions that humans associate with the mind, like reasoning, learning, and understanding.
24 (F)	AI is the ability of machines to perform cognitive functions that we associate with the human mind.
25 (F)	AI is an advanced technology that can perform automated tasks and think like a human.

Source: Authors (2025).

2023; Mohammadkarimi, 2024). In particular, AI with an appropriate learning model is needed based on the learner's specific goals and subjects (Tseng & Warschauer, 2023; Wulyani et al., 2024). It means that learning English due to the learners' targets is very easy with the support of AI. This also indicates a gap in the literature regarding the development of tailored AI learning models that consider the unique context of Indonesian EFL learners.

Normatively, this finding suggests the necessity of developing clear frameworks for AI use in education, to align with ethical standards and maximize learning outcomes. For instance, Respondent 17's comments about 'using AI wisely' underlines the need for governance frameworks based on UNESCO's learning dimensions (knowledge, process, output), AI's responsible implementation ensuring AI responsible implementation (UNESCO, 2024b, 2024a). Thus, the theoretical underpinning supports a dual perspective; descriptive understanding of user perceptions combined with normative guidelines to direct future practice.

3.2. EFL Learners' AI Preferences in ELL

Among 29 respondents, one respondent in Jakarta stated that she did not use AI in ELL. Nonetheless, when this study explored more, she utilized AI to enrich her

vocabulary mastery. Table 2 displays the details of all respondents' preferences for using AI in ELL.

According to Table 2, the respondents selected 13 AI tools. Most respondents preferred ChatGPT for the AI assistant, both as a single or combined AI tool. Meanwhile, other preferences for AI assistance include Gemini, Duolingo, Elsa Speak, Grammarly, DeepL, Meta AI, Perplexity, Memrise, Gliglish, POE AI, Question AI, and Takpal AI. Figure 2 exhibits the AI preference distribution.

The findings are relevant to previous studies that discovered the impetus of generative AI-based feedback for higher students' writing (Chan et al., 2025; Wang, 2024). The study unveiled ChatGPT in delivering feedback automatically on students' writing. In this way, ChatGPT benefited the ELL in improving students' writing and diminishing instructors' workload. A study by Alhajji et al. (2024) recommended ChatGPT in English courses for EFL learners to achieve better learning objectives.

Besides ChatGPT, other AI tools, such as Grammarly, have been applied in ELL, particularly for written English. According to Sukmawan et al. (2021) and Setyowati & Sukmawan (2021), combined Grammarly, authentic materials, and writing instruction in learning written English for EFL Indonesian learners are needed to improve writing quality. The study proved that

Table 2. Respondents' Preferences on AI in ELL

Resp.	AI Preferences	Resp.	AI Preferences
1	No name	16	Takpal AI, Gemini, ChatGPT
2	Gemini, ChatGPT, Duolingo	17	Elsa, Gliglish
3	ChatGPT, Gemini, Meta	18	ChatGPT
4	ChatGPT, Grammarly, Duolingo, Elsa Speak	19	Memrise
5	ChatGPT, Gemini	20	Perplexity
6	ChatGPT, Gemini, Duolingo, Grammarly, DeepL	21	POE AI
7	ChatGPT	22	ChatGPT
8	ChatGPT	23	Elsa AI
9	Duolingo	24	ChatGPT
10	ChatGPT	25	ChatGPT
11	Google Gemini Live	26	ChatGPT
12	Question AI	27	ChatGPT
13	Perplexity, Gemini	28	ChatGPT
14	ChatGPT, Grammarly	29	Meta AI
15	ChatGPT, DeepL		

Source: Authors (2025).

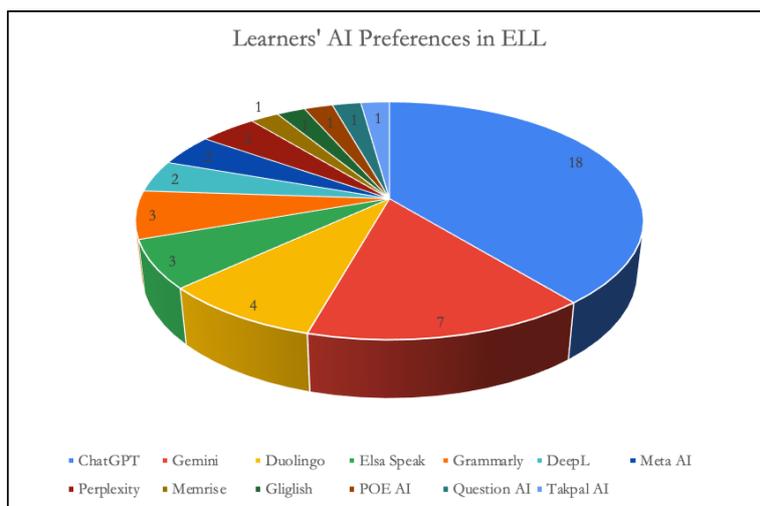


Figure 2. AI Preferences in ELL (Source: Author, 2025)

preparing appropriate learning content, affiliating it with sequential writing instruction, and finally administering Grammarly as the final review stage is substantial for teachers and learners.

Moreover, scholars investigated other AI technologies like Duolingo and Gemini AI in ELL. Prior studies proved that Duolingo, as well as Gemini AI, was an effective tool in supporting EFL learners in vocabulary mastery and increasing learners' motivation to communicate and engage with the classroom learning process (Ouyang et al., 2024; Rouabhia & Kheder,

2024). The findings are similar to a study evaluated by Alnasib & Alharbi (2024), who revealed high motivation and vocabulary mastery of EFL learners using Gemini AI as a single tool or combined. For that reason, the findings of this current study add to the long list of AI preferential tools and advantages in ELL. However, a critical analysis of these studies reveals a lack of comprehensive framework that guide the effective integration of these tools into the curriculum, which is essential for maximizing their potential benefits.

3.3. EFL Learners' AI Experiences in ELL

After identifying and reviewing learners' perceptions and preferences on AI implementation in ELL, this study would answer the final research question. This study explored learners' experiences on both sides of stories: the advantages and obstacles of using AI in ELL. Based on the questionnaire's responses, this study chose ten respondents to express advantages and barriers in the eyes of the EFL learners. The selected respondents involved Respondents 1, 3, 9, 12, 17, 19, 21, 23, 24, and 25. The expressions are as follows.

Sometimes I like to use AI to search for some words or sentences that I don't understand. AI is so easy to use that anyone can use it. (R1)

AI helps me in ELL like easy search to find my stuff, while sometimes AI cannot find out my thing. (R3)

AI makes it easier for me when I don't know vocabulary that I don't know and the correct pronunciation. Sometimes there are some that are less accurate. (R9)

I can engage in text-based and voice-based conversations on virtually any topic I choose. This helps me practice forming sentences, using vocabulary in context, and improving my fluency and responsiveness in English. Learning using AI requires consistent internet access and a suitable device. Hence, technical issues, server problems, or updates can interrupt the learning flow. (R12)

AI facilitates vocabulary that I might not know or interpret a sentence that is foreign to me. Sometimes the answers in AI with Google are far proportional, not entirely the answers in AI are always true they just make an explanation so don't completely do a task with AI. (R17)

AI helps make it easier when I want to find out things that are a bit difficult to find on the internet. Sometimes AI give an answer whose source is unclear. (R19)

The advantages are personalized learning, instant feedback, and confidence building. Sometimes the desired answer is not appropriate. (R21)

AI provides several benefits for English learning, including Instant Feedback – AI-powered tools can correct grammar, spelling, and pronunciation in real time; Personalized Learning – AI adapts to individual skill levels and suggests customized exercises; Availability – Learners can practice anytime without needing a teacher; Interactive Practice – AI chatbots allow learners to engage in conversations to improve fluency; Improved Pronunciation – AI speech recognition helps users refine their pronunciation; Vocabulary Expansion – AI suggests new words and phrases based on context; Listening & Reading Support – AI provides translations, summaries, and explanations for better comprehension; Engaging Learning Methods – Gamified apps, quizzes, and interactive exercises make learning more enjoyable. Some common obstacles in using AI for English learning including Lack of Context Understanding – AI may struggle with nuanced meanings, cultural references, or idioms; Limited Speaking Practice – AI can help with writing and listening, but it may not fully replace real conversation practice; Over-Reliance on AI – Learners might become dependent on AI instead of actively practicing language skills; Inaccurate Translations – AI-generated translations may not always be precise, especially for complex sentences; Grammar and Style Limitations – AI may not always follow the best grammar rules or provide stylistically appropriate suggestions; Technical Barriers – Internet access, software limitations, or unfamiliarity with AI tools can hinder learning; Lack of Personalization – AI may not always tailor lessons to an individual's specific learning style or needs. (R23)

For example, AI can help with assessment and evaluation so that teachers have more time to design strategies. Data privacy concerns AI applications require large data sets to operate effectively, which can compromise the security and privacy of student information. Educational institutions should have clear policies and procedures to protect student data privacy, such as user authentication, restricted access to sensitive information, and encryption of stored data. (R24)

AI can serve as a speaking partner, helping to improve speaking and listening skills. Dependence on technology, the use of AI requires access to devices and stable internet connection. (R25)

Based on the expressions, all respondents agreed that AI helps them with vocabulary mastery, practicing pronunciation, structuring sentences, translating sentences, personalized learning, instant feedback, building confidence, improving listening skills, and practicing speaking skills. All the advantages are relevant to previous studies (Črček & Patekar, 2023; Fitria, 2021; Rane, 2024) that are also concerned with ethical boundaries.

Regarding ethical issues, Barth et al., (2025), emphasized the potential dangers of insufficient oversight in important areas of human life. According to them, AI can indeed help humans to improve experience and simplify work, but there is still a risk of malfunction in application. Therefore, educational institutions should strictly evaluate the suitability of AI for the educational environment in schools and universities. Institutions should also thoroughly examine the ethical and social implications to ensure the responsible use of AI.

Ethical concern such as data privacy, user authentication, and information security raised by Respondent 24 further emphasize the need for institutional policies and governance framework to mitigate risks. The development of such frameworks should be informed by existing literature and best practices in AI ethics, ensuring that they are comprehensive and contextually relevant. Denote the issue, adoption and implementation are the keywords for using AI in every region, country, university, and diverse educational setting. The adoption and implementation cover the impact on quality, learners' experience and access, and efficiency (Barth et al., 2025). The impact on quality concerns to provide a clear and concise guideline for AI utilization in education. Meanwhile, the effect on learners' experience and access shows that learners could be involved in learning courses at any time and from any place. The experiences and access bring several efficiencies for learners, like energy, time, and financial savings.

Despite AI advantages, respondents experienced several obstacles, from technical hindrances like internet connection stability to content drawbacks, such as inappropriate and fallacy answers, task completeness, and limited practices. It continues to policy barriers of clear procedures related to data security and restricted access. In this way, learners require institutional support in providing stable internet connections and concise learning instructions as the least facilities. The facilities are substantial for learners, particularly for EFL learners in the eastern part of Indonesia. The support is part of the global and transformation costs.

4. Conclusion

This study explored the perceptions, preferences, and experiences of EFL learners regarding the use of AI in English Language Learning. The finding indicates a strong consensus among participants from Jakarta and Alor, East Nusa Tenggara, who defines AI as a valuable tool for enhancing their educational experiences. They emphasized that AI could serve as an effective learning assistant, but it should be utilized wisely to maximize its benefits. Learners employed various AI tools to meet their diverse needs and goals, reflecting their different preferences and learning circumstances. This diversity in tool usage highlights the necessity for tailored AI-based learning models that consider the unique contexts of Indonesian EFL learners.

The study highlights that while AI offers numerous advantages, it also presents obstacles that cannot be overlooked. These regulations should include training programs for teachers on effectively integrating AI tools into their teaching practices, ensuring that they can guide students in using these technologies responsibly and effectively.

Furthermore, institutions should invest in developing AI-Based learning models that are culturally relevant and context-specific for Indonesian EFL learners. Such models could incorporate local language aspect, cultural references, and pedagogical strategies that related with learners in both urban and rural setting. Therefore, it is crucial for the governments and educational institutions to prepare regulations for the use of AI in all levels of education. These regulations can help learners navigate the rapid disruptions caused by AI and more prepared to

survive in a digital technology-driven world. With the contribution of all educational stakeholders, learners are not alone in dealing with the fast-paced AI disruption and can be more well-prepared for face the digital technology era.

Research on AI utilization is not a new concern. However, this study reveals the issue based on learners' perspectives and preferences, particularly in the eyes of EFL learners, either in the big city of Jakarta or the farthest city of Alor, East Nusa Tenggara. This research is one of a kind that has scarcely been investigated. Several limitations appeared throughout this study, such as limited time, sample, and data analysis. Future research should involve larger samples, extended durations, and more comprehensive analyses to yield a generalized understanding of how to enhance the quality of Indonesian EFL learners' performances through effective AI integration.

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