Students' Perceptions On The Use Of Ai In Reading Courses

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the viewpoints of 19 English Education students at Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu regarding the utilization of AI tools, specifically ChatGPT, in EFL reading classes. Based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Social Constructivism, Cognitive Load Theory, and the Theory of Planned Behavior, a mixed-methods study demonstrated that students perceived AI as beneficial for enhancing their vocabulary, comprehension, and motivation. Although AI enhanced engagement and effectiveness, worries centered around reliance, inaccuracies, and diminished critical reading skills. Qualitative data supported these findings, highlighting students' desires for more explicit direction on the ethical and effective use of AI. The results highlight the importance of a harmonious integration of AI, stressing the necessity of digital literacy, responsible usage, and human supervision in reading education.

Keyword: *Student perception; The use of AI; Reading Course; English as a Foreign Language (EFL).*

INTRODUCTION

Recently, the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) within educational environments has become a notable trend in digital teaching approaches, especially in the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education. The change is especially noticeable in reading education, where AI tools like ChatGPT, Quillbot, Grammarly, and similar smart applications provide functionalities that aid vocabulary enhancement, summarization, comprehension, and analytical reading. These technological advancements have transformed the way students engage with texts by offering immediate feedback, personalized assistance, and simulated conversations for enhanced involvement (Chan & Hu, 2023; Mohamed, 2024) In reading classes, AI tools can support EFL students by tackling difficulties in vocabulary, grammar, and inferential reasoning (Li et al., 2022). Applications such as AI summarizers assist students in pinpointing main concepts, while chatbots facilitate casual, engaging conversations (Jeon, 2024), fostering instruction that is centered on the learner. Nonetheless, challenges in implementation continue to exist, such as issues with technological access, concerns about privacy, and differing experiences among users (Kim & Kim, 2022). Significantly, how students view the usefulness, usability, and relevance of AI plays a crucial role in determining its effectiveness. Adverse opinions can

obstruct participation, no matter the features offered, making it crucial to grasp learners' viewpoints to guarantee the successful incorporation of AI in EFL reading classes (Firat, 2023). This research utilizes Davis's (1989) Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to explore the factors influencing students' willingness to embrace AI in educational settings. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) emphasizes that how useful and user-friendly a technology is influences its adoption. In EFL reading, learners are more inclined to utilize AI tools when they consider them useful and easy to access. Nonetheless, when tools appear challenging or inefficient, their adoption stays minimal, even with backing from institutions. This research utilizes Vygotsky's (1987) theory of social constructivism to demonstrate how AI technologies such as ChatGPT and Quillbot facilitate collaborative learning, improve engagement with textual materials, and encourage critical reading in the learner's Zone of Proximal Development. Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, 1988) illustrates how these tools alleviate cognitive strain by clarifying language and condensing information; however, excessive dependence on them might impede thorough processing and memory retention. To tackle this issue, instructional design needs to promote thoughtful and purposeful use of AI. The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) provides additional insights into how students' responsible engagement with AI is shaped by their attitudes, social norms, and their perception of control over their behavior.

This study also examines the influence of Self-Regulated Learning Theory (Zimmerman, 2002). As learners interact increasingly with AI tools, they enhance their skills in assessing and determining the effectiveness of these tools for various reading activities. This level of metacognitive awareness leads to more purposeful and efficient learning habits, including verifying AI-generated summaries or choosing to read a text on one's own prior to utilizing AI. These self-management techniques are crucial for promoting autonomous learning and reducing reliance on others for cognitive support. From an educational standpoint, reading encompasses decoding, understanding, interpretation, and critical assessment. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings, students frequently encounter difficulties with unknown vocabulary, cultural allusions, and intricate sentence structures, which hinders their ability to engage critically with texts (Majumdar et al., 2021). Well-implemented AI tools can address these difficulties by offering capabilities such as immediate translation and rephrasing, which improve comprehension, reading proficiency, and critical literacy. Moreover, reading instruction enhanced by AI facilitates individualized learning, particularly in large or varied classrooms where generic approaches are ineffective. Instruments such as ChatGPT and Quillbot adapt to the input provided by users, enabling students to progress at their own speed and enhancing motivation for those who may otherwise be

disinterested in learning (Limna et al., 2023).

The Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework (Mishra & Koehler, 2006) offers important insights by highlighting that successful outcomes in AI-assisted teaching arise from a cohesive comprehension of subject matter, teaching methods, and technological tools. In the absence of this alignment, there's a danger that AI tools could be misapplied or not fully utilized, leading to shallow interactions instead of genuine literacy growth.

Incorporating AI into the educational landscape should be based on solid teaching principles and ethical guidelines. Merely incorporating technology without considering the needs of learners or the overall structure of the course can result in shallow learning. The efficient application necessitates alignment with objectives, comprehension of tool capabilities, and protection of data (Kim & Kim, 2022). Cultural and situational elements are also important, as challenges such as inadequate connectivity, a lack of devices, and low levels of digital literacy can obstruct the use of AI, particularly for EFL learners in developing environments (Wang et al., 2023).

Although there have been attempts to incorporate digital tools into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes in Indonesia, there is a scarcity of research examining students' views on the use of AI for reading instruction. This research examines the experiences of university students with AI-based tools aimed at enhancing comprehension, analysis, and vocabulary skills in reading courses.

This study aims to determine students' views on the application of AI in reading classes and their experiences using various AI-based applications to support reading learning. These questions reflect the complexity of human-technology interactions in learning environments and require further examination (Jeon, 2024). The objective of this study is to explore university students' views and experiences related to the utilization of AI-driven applications in reading classes. This investigation aims to promote teaching methods that improve the effective, inclusive, and ethically responsible use of AI technologies in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education.

METHOD

This research utilized a qualitative and descriptive approach to examine students' views and experiences regarding the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools to enhance reading instruction. A qualitative approach was selected as it offers a more profound understanding of the experiences, beliefs, and emotions of participants, which are essential for comprehending the effects of AI integration on reading within the framework of teaching English as a

foreign language (Kashive et al., 2021; Limna et al., 2023). The research employed both a survey and semi-structured interviews to gather detailed and contextual information from participants (Majumdar et al., 2021). This triangulation method provided cross-validation of findings from various data sources, which strengthened the validity and reliability of the study (Chan & Hu, 2023; Hembrough, 2020). The study included nineteen undergraduate students pursuing a degree in English Education at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu. Every participant had already finished at least two reading courses, thereby guaranteeing relevant experience with the subject being studied. Purposive sampling was utilized to select English education students who employed AI tools for reading, focusing on in-depth insights rather than generalizations (Bisdas et al., 2021; Buabbas et al., 2023). Two primary instruments were employed for gathering data: a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire served to gather general background information and initial insights into students' perceptions of AI tools. It contained both closed-ended and open-ended questions related to tool usage frequency, perceived usefulness, ease of use, and role in enhancing comprehension and motivation in reading. The open-ended items allowed participants to elaborate on their experiences, thereby providing qualitative richness (Sari et al., 2020). The second instrument was a semi-structured interview guide designed to explore individual students' experiences in more depth. The interviews included describing a time when they used an AI tool to assist with a reading assignment and what was most helpful or challenging about using the AI tool for reading.

This format allowed flexibility for follow-up questions, while maintaining a focus on the research objectives (Limna et al., 2023; Mageira et al., 2022). Every interview took around 30 to 45 minutes and was carried out in Bahasa Indonesia to ensure participant comfort, followed by translation and transcription into English for the purpose of analysis.

Data was gathered over a three-week period in April 2025 through a validated online questionnaire (Jha et al., 2022; Syed & Basil A. Al-Rawi, 2023), subsequently supplemented by optional, in-person semi-structured interviews depending on participants' availability (Firat, 2023). Approval for ethical considerations was secured, and informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring that confidentiality and anonymity were rigorously upheld (Christou, 2023; Grinbaum & Adomaitis, 2024).

To analyze students' perceptions quantitatively, means and standard deviations were calculated to assess central tendencies and variations in responses regarding perceived impact on academic achievement, utility, ease of use, and overall satisfaction. In order to determine dominant viewpoints, the Likert-scale questions (which range from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 4 = Strongly Agree) were interpreted; scores greater than 3.0 were

regarded as markers of generally positive opinions. To see if usage patterns or viewpoints varied according to students' academic achievement, the data was also categorized by academic year. A statistical basis for analyzing behavioral patterns and general student sentiment toward ChatGPT was provided by this analytical method (Wulandari et al., 2023). Interpretation of the level of importance of items follows a 4-point Likert scale, namely 1.00 – 1.75 (Strongly disagree), 1.76 – 2.50 (disagree), 2.51 – 3.25 (agree), 3.26 – 4.00 (strongly agree). The qualitative data underwent analysis through Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis, utilizing both deductive and inductive methods. Main topics consisted of perceived usefulness, self-discipline, motivation, technological problems, and essential trust in AI. Utilizing triangulation with questionnaire data increased the reliability of findings, uncovering more profound insights into Quillbot's effects on understanding and academic (Chan & Hu, 2023; Kooli, 2023).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Finding

This research examined the perspectives of nineteen English Education undergraduates at Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu regarding AI, specifically ChatGPT, in courses centered on reading. A survey consisting of 25 closed-ended questions and 8 open-ended questions was employed, covering five distinct themes. Both quantitative data, measured on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 4 = Strongly Agree), and qualitative data were examined for more in-depth understanding.

Students had a favorable perception of AI in reading, achieving high ratings for its educational role (M = 3.40) and assistance with vocabulary (M = 3.33) (Chan & Hu, 2023; Mohamed, 2024). Nonetheless, worries about dependency (M = 2.60) and ethical considerations (Buabbas et al., 2023; Jha et al., 2022) were also expressed.

Table 2. Summary of Student Perceptions on AI Use in Reading Courses

No	Focus Area	Mean (M)	SD	Interpretation
1	AI helps understand difficult vocabulary	3.33	0.44	Strongly Agree
2	helps complete reading tasks faster	3.33	0.48	Strongly Agree
3	I helps identify main ideas in text	3.33	0.46	Strongly Agree

4	A AI enhances learning quality	3.33	0.49	Strongly Agree
5	AI increases reading motivation	3.20	0.55	Agree
6	AI makes the reading process more enjoyable	3.13	0.59	Agree
7	feel less confident without AI	2.60	0.71	Agree
8	I feel the need to reduce AI use to think more deeply	2.80	0.67	Agree
9	AI is an important part of today's learning	3.40	0.51	Strongly Agree
10	AI sometimes gives incorrect or unclear explanations	3.00	0.58	Agree

The quantitative results summarized in the table above illustrate a generally positive perception among students regarding the use of AI in reading instruction. High average scores indicate that students found AI helpful in understanding texts, completing tasks more efficiently, and increasing motivation for reading. However, slightly lower scores on certain items also reflect students' caution toward the potential for overreliance and their desire to preserve independent critical thinking skills. To provide deeper insight, these quantitative findings are further supported by qualitative data from interviews, which are organized into key thematic categories discussed below.

AI as a Reading Comprehension Aid

Students perceived AI as a valuable resource for addressing reading challenges, especially when it comes to intricate vocabulary and abstract concepts. In accordance with constructivist theory, ChatGPT served as digital assistance, aiding students in breaking down academic material and grasping essential ideas (Gherhes & Obrad, 2018). *"I used ChatGPT to explain difficult vocabulary. It helped me understand texts that I usually couldn't read on my own." (P7)*

"AI helps me get to the main idea faster, especially when I don't have much time to read the full passage." (P11).

The survey results indicate notable average scores, including a 3.33 for the statements *"AI assists me in grasping challenging vocabulary"* and *"AI aids me in pinpointing the main idea in a text."* Therefore, AI acts not just as a translator, but as a tool for enhancing understanding and boosting confidence (Yüzbaşıoğlu, 2021).

Motivation and Emotional Engagement

An additional notable theme is how AI influences motivation in reading participation. Numerous students indicated

that having ChatGPT available made them feel more motivated to engage with English texts that they had previously considered daunting or boring. The prompt and straightforward responses from the AI alleviated anxiety and increased assurance (Jeon, 2024).

"AI makes me more interested because reading becomes easier to understand." (P4) *"I used to skip readings that looked hard, but now I feel I can try because I know ChatGPT will help." (P6)*

These emotional responses align with the survey results indicating heightened motivation (M = 3.20) and greater enjoyment (M = 3.13). The incorporation of AI reduces emotional barriers, allowing for more genuine and prolonged interaction with scholarly materials (Tan & Cheah, 2021).

Dependency and Cognitive Risk

Even with the apparent advantages, a common worry was students recognizing their increasing reliance on AI tools. Numerous students admitted that they frequently turned to ChatGPT for help prior to making an effort to understand the text on their own. This brings up concerns regarding the possible decline of critical reading abilities if the use of AI remains unchecked (Jha et al., 2022).

"Sometimes I don't even try to understand first. I just copy the paragraph into ChatGPT and ask for a summary." (P5)

"I realize that I rely too much on AI, so now I try to read first before using it." (P12)

These insights highlight the somewhat lower yet still favorable ratings for statements such as "I feel less confident without AI" (M = 2.60) and "*I feel the need to decrease AI usage to think more independently*" (M = 2.80). The results indicate that although AI supports cognitive processing, it also poses a threat of intellectual complacency if not countered by deliberate learning approaches (Syed & Basil A. Al-Rawi, 2023).

Ethical Consciousness and Academic Integrity

It is encouraging to see that numerous students showed a significant level of ethical consciousness in their use of AI. They stated that they deliberately refrained from copying directly and opted to use ChatGPT for rephrasing or generating ideas. This suggests an increasing awareness of academic honesty and accountable online conduct (Kim & Kim, 2022).

"I never copy directly. I usually change and edit it myself because I know I have to stay academically honest." (P4)

"Using AI doesn't mean cheating, as long as we use it wisely and still do our own thinking." (P11)

These statements illustrate a wider trend where students recognize ethical boundaries and are inclined to adhere to them particularly when supported by

institutional guidelines. This highlights the significance of including AI literacy and citation ethics in university programs (Christou, 2023).

The Role of Educators and Institutional Support

A key observation from the qualitative data is the request for organized support from instructors. Students consistently communicated that although they were excited about AI, they frequently felt they did not possess the knowledge to utilize it in an effective and ethical manner. The lack of educational guidance occasionally resulted in misunderstandings or improper use (Buabbas et al., 2023). *"Lecturers should teach how to use AI as a tool, not just let students depend on it." (P6)"I want to learn how to use prompts better so that the results are more appropriate." (P14)*

These observations underscore a deficiency in digital teaching. In the absence of direction, students may encounter superficial learning. Educators ought to actively incorporate AI tools such as ChatGPT into task-driven activities, guiding students to assess outputs, question inaccuracies, and employ critical digital literacy (Wang et al., 2023).

Limitations and Continued Use

Even with the overall excitement, students voiced their annoyance regarding certain technical and conceptual constraints of ChatGPT. Certain individuals pointed out that the tool sometimes generated unclear summaries or even inaccurate interpretations of the content. Others emphasized its inability to grasp cultural or contextual subtleties, particularly in literary or idiomatic works (Mohamed, 2024). *"Sometimes the information is not specific enough, so you still have to read it yourself." (P1).*

"I don't trust it with citations or factual accuracy. It's more for guiding ideas." (P9)

These observations emphasize the importance of preserving human supervision and scholarly evaluation. The AI serves as a support system rather than an authority it's important to interact with it thoughtfully and critically. Almost all students indicated a strong desire to keep using ChatGPT for their future reading and academic endeavors. *"Yes, I'll keep using it, but I also want to understand how to make it work better for academic writing." (P7)*

This goal signifies a shift from merely using tools to actively engaging with AI in a strategic manner, which should be promoted through educational approaches and policies (Limna et al., 2023).

Discussion

The results of this research indicate that students mostly held an

optimistic perspective about integrating AI, particularly ChatGPT, into their reading lessons. The majority of them believed that AI made it easier to comprehend texts, identify key concepts in the reading, and complete tasks more quickly. The findings align with multiple prior studies conducted in higher education settings, which similarly indicated that students value AI tools for enhancing comprehension and increasing learning efficiency.

For instance, (Chan & Hu, 2023) found that students felt ChatGPT could make complex information easier to understand and aid them in accomplishing tasks more efficiently. This closely resembles the ongoing research, in which one student mentioned, "*AI helps me get to the main idea faster, especially when I don't have much time to read the full passage" (P11)*. This reinforces the notion that students perceive ChatGPT as a useful resource for enhancing their reading comprehension and conserving time.

Respondents indicated that AI enhanced their reading experience and heightened their interest in English textsA participant remarked, "AI increases my interest since reading is simplified" (P4), aligning with (Jeon, 2024) research on lower anxiety levels. One person mentioned, "ChatGPT assisted me in comprehending texts that I was unable to read independently" (P7), reinforcing (Yüzbaşıoğlu, 2021) findings that AI is beneficial for understanding complicated terminology.

Nonetheless, in spite of the numerous advantages, students also voiced their worries. Several individuals expressed that they had begun to depend excessively on AI and felt a decrease in their confidence when attempting to read or comprehend texts independently. The questionnaire results highlighted this issue, particularly regarding the statement, "*I feel less confident without AI,*" which obtained a lower average score (M = 2.60). A student acknowledged, "*Sometimes I don't even try to understand first. I just copy the paragraph into ChatGPT and ask for a summary*" (P5). These answers indicate that although AI is beneficial, it might also lead some students to be less inclined to read independently. (Firat, 2023) highlighted this concern, stating that "*if not guided properly, students may develop a habit of skipping their own thinking and relying too much on automated responses.*"

Another issue raised was the precision and clarity of the information offered by ChatGPT. Certain students noted that the summaries produced by artificial intelligence were occasionally unclear or inaccurate. One student mentioned, "*Sometimes the information is not specific enough, so you still have to read it yourself*" (P1). This issue has been addressed in previous studies (Limna et al., 2023), where it was revealed that both educators and learners were concerned about the dependability of content produced by AI and its inability to account for cultural or contextual nuances in written materials. A notable issue brought up by numerous students was the necessity for assistance from their

teachers in utilizing AI tools more efficiently. They were interested in improving their skills in crafting prompts, verifying the accuracy of the AI's answers, and utilizing AI in an ethical manner. A student mentioned, "*Lecturers should teach how to use AI as a tool, not just let students depend on it*" (P6). This aligns with the findings of (Buabbas et al., 2023), who discovered that students desired effective training and support from their instructors to fully utilize AI in educational settings. Their research indicated that "*students needed structured support from their institutions to use AI tools responsibly and effectively.*" Although students recognized the shortcomings of ChatGPT, almost all of them indicated that they would keep using it in the future. They viewed it as a beneficial aid in their studies, particularly in reading. One student summarized, "*Yes, I'll keep using it, but I also want to understand how to make it work better for academic writing*" (P7). This perspective aligns with other studies, like those by (Mohamed, 2024), which indicated that university students perceive ChatGPT as a valuable tool that can enhance learning when utilized appropriately. Learners discovered that AI tools such as ChatGPT are helpful for grasping challenging vocabulary, condensing texts, and enhancing their reading experience. As a student pointed out, "*I used ChatGPT to explain difficult vocabulary. It helped me understand texts that I usually couldn't read on my own*" (P7). This aligns with (Maryansyah, 2016) conclusion that simpler texts enhance understanding. Nonetheless, several students confessed to depending too much on AI. "*Sometimes I don't even try to understand first. I just copy the paragraph into ChatGPT and ask for a summary*" (P5). In contrast to static texts, AI is capable of engaging in interaction and giving responses. Nonetheless, both studies concur that assistance aids in keeping students motivated.

The findings of this research largely align with earlier studies. Learners value AI resources such as ChatGPT for their assistance in comprehending reading assignments, expanding vocabulary, and maintaining motivation. However, they also recognize the potential dangers, like becoming overly dependent on AI and facing incorrect or ambiguous information. Similar to other studies, this research emphasizes the significance of utilizing AI judiciously while remaining actively engaged in the learning process.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

This study discovered that the majority of English Education students at Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu had an optimistic perspective on utilizing AI tools, particularly ChatGPT, in their reading classes. They stated that AI assisted them in grasping challenging vocabulary, condensing texts, and accomplishing tasks with greater

ease, which enhanced their confidence, motivation, and understanding. Resources such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, and Quillbot were frequently utilized to elucidate vocabulary and pinpoint essential concepts. Nevertheless, students pointed out disadvantages like excessive dependence on AI, diminished critical thinking skills, and sporadic inaccuracies. A few even confessed to bypassing reading entirely in favor of directly querying AI, which raises worries about dependency. Even with these problems, students continued to show excitement about utilizing AI, as long as it is applied thoughtfully and with appropriate support. They indicated a requirement for lecturer assistance in developing improved prompts, validating responses, and employing AI responsibly. In general, students perceived AI as a beneficial support tool for learning rather than a substitute for independent thought, highlighting the importance of responsible and critical engagement in their educational path.

Suggestion

Organizations can maximize the benefits of AI in reading education while mitigating potential risks by providing AI Knowledge and Understanding Training: Instructors should provide advice on how to effectively utilize AI tools, covering areas such as rapid formulation, fact-checking, and ethical issues to avoid misuse or over-reliance. Then, Integrate AI into the Curriculum Thoughtfully: Artificial intelligence should be integrated into reading assignments with specific goals and reflective exercises that encourage critical thinking, rather than simply allowing passive reception of information. Then, Promote Fair Use: Learners should be encouraged to try to understand texts on their own before seeking help from AI. This approach supports the preservation of reading skills and reduces reliance on cognitive aids. And, Confront Technical Limitations: Teachers should talk with students about AI's shortcomings, including unclear responses or inadequate cultural understanding, so students can critically evaluate answers. And, Promote Ethical Awareness: Educational programs should include conversations about plagiarism, paraphrasing, and the ethical use of AI to promote academic integrity.

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