Students' Perception of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Usage in Academic Writing

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Abstract

This study examines the perceptions of English Education students regarding the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Academic Writing. Utilizing a qualitative research design, the investigation was conducted through semi-structured interviews by FGD (Focus Group Discussion) and questionnaires among students from the English Education Department at University "A" in Banyuwangi, East Java. Findings reveal that AI considerably enhances students' efficiency and writing quality by offering tools that assist with grammar correction, reference finding, and generating ideas. The results of the survey indicate that ChatGPT is the most popular platform, with over 90% of students using it to produce writing assignments. Students reported improved confidence in their writing, attributing these advancements to AI platforms such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, and Gama. However, concerns regarding the potential misuse of AI, such as plagiarism and over-reliance were also highlighted. The study underscores the necessity for digital literacy in effectively integrating AI into academic practices. Overall, the findings suggest that while AI significantly supports academic writing, its ethical usage is crucial to maintaining academic integrity.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence; Academic writing; Students' perception; Ethical usage*

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) increases productivity and efficiency, allowing humans to concentrate on more inventive and complex tasks even in the field of education (Astutik et al., 2023; Risnina et al., 2023). AI is meant to support and enhance the writing process of students (Teng, 2024). AI helps develop new ideas, structure writing, correct grammar, and even summarize relevant literature, from the planning stage to the final completion (Vera et al., 2024). Previously, students

had to spend a lot of time searching for references and correcting grammar.

Today, AI allows students to concentrate on the creative elements of writing such as creating strategy and data analysis because it can process information quickly and accurately. Therefore, students' papers and learning strategies become more qualified, relevant, and innovative (H.I.A., 2023; Rachmayanti & Alatas, 2023). The educational landscape has been altered by AI. AI started to offer learning and teaching solutions in the field of education in new and innovative ways (Fitria, 2021; Guan et al., 2020).

In many facets of teaching and learning, AI can benefit both educators and learners. Effective use of AI can enhance learning results, efficiency, and student and teacher interest. Gama, Duolingo, Kahoot! and Wordwall are examples of AI systems that are frequently utilized in the educational field. The platform is very helpful in creating PowerPoints, learning plans, and learning tools to enhance English language proficiency. It also offers practice questions in the form of games. Utilizing some of these platforms can effectively increase students' motivation to learn (Kadwa & Alshenqeeti, 2020; Rowiyah, 2024; Safitri et al., 2022).

In the increasingly developing digital era, one of the technologies that have developed rapidly, AI has become a significant part, including the world of education, also to academic writing. In the field of education, new learning and teaching solutions have begun to be produced and are now being tested in practice in several contexts (Ashraf, 2022). University students must produce academic papers as part of their studies. Writing academic writing can help students enhance and broaden their critical thinking and understanding (Mat Daud et al., 2013; Vyncke, 2012; Wale & Bishaw, 2020).

Academic writing is an essential ability for students, it trains students to use standard language that is simple, clear, focused, and formal (Chauhan, 2022). The writing process improves critical thinking, analysis, and communication skills. Academic Writing procedures are structures that can certify that the students can grasp what has become the rule of the college (Dewi & Andriani, 2024). Writing also helps students develop creative and problem-solving skills, which are extremely important in both academic and professional settings. Thus, if students do not contribute to academic writing, we will miss out on crucial knowledge and insights, as well as our understanding of learning and teaching (Healey et al., 2021).

Along with the development of technology, students are increasingly utilizing AI in academic writing assignments. AI in academic writing requires writers to ensure transparency, originality, and honesty in the process and avoid violations of academic ethics and plagiarism (Bjelobaba et al., 2024; Okebukola & Muazu, 2024). Even though AI can increase writing productivity, academics must preserve the crucial part that humans play in thought and analysis in order to avoid becoming overly dependent on technology and uphold scientific integrity.

There are several studies that relate to AI usage in writing skills. A paper by (Fitria, 2021) entitled "'Grammarly' as AI-powered English Writing Assistant: Students' Alternative for English Writing". This paper aimed to reveal an overview of one of AI platforms 'Grammarly' as an English writing assistant for EFL students in English writing. This research found that using Grammarly in English writing increases students' test scores from 34 to 77. In similar research of (Dergaa et al., 2023) searches about examining the prospects and potential threats of ChatGPT in academic writing.

The result of the paper showed that ChatGPT and other NLP technologies have the potential to enhance writing and research efficiency. In a similar finding, a paper written by (Malik et al., 2023) titled Exploring Artificial Intelligence in Academic Essay: Higher Education Student's Perspective emphasizes a balanced approach to AI integration, where AI collaborates with human writers and identifies popular AI tools used by Indonesian students. The paper also discusses students' perspectives on how AI platforms can help them in learning. The results showed that more than 50% of students agreed on the use of AI Platforms in writing for various reasons. Starting from capabilities, time-saving aspects of AI, producing content quickly, working on multiple projects simultaneously, suggesting appropriate essay ideas, extracting meaningful data from large datasets, and many other supporting reasons. This supports the author in finding out the perspectives of students at the University "A" that is currently being studied.

The increasing integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into academic writing offers students tangible benefits in terms of efficiency and writing quality. However, understanding students' perceptions of these tools is paramount, as these perceptions directly influence their willingness to adopt AI, their understanding to its appropriate and ethical application, and ultimately, the technology's impact on their learning and academic integrity. This study directly addresses this crucial gap by investigating the perceptions of university students, specifically within the English department, regarding the use of AI in their academic writing tasks.

The central research questions guiding the study are: (1) what are the perceptions of university students regarding the use of AI in their academic writing? and (2) what are AI platforms that are commonly used by students? The findings of this research hold significant implications for educators, providing essential insight to inform the design of effective AI-integrated writing curricula and pedagogical strategies that harness the benefits of AI while fostering critical thinking and academic honesty.

Method

This research was designed as a qualitative study to get detail comprehension of the research (Creswell, 2009). This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to better understand the perceptions of English language students regarding the usage of AI in college assignments. To investigate students' opinions

regarding the use of AI platforms in college assignments, the researcher determined that a case study would be the most suitable research methodology. (Basˇkarada, 2014) defines a case study is a kind of research that makes it easier to examine a phenomenon in its context by outlining and comprehending different facets of the phenomenon using data from diverse sources.

The research will discover which AI platforms are being used and obtain a comprehensive grasp of how students view these platforms by employing this method. Multiple sources of information will prove helpful in explaining the phenomenon and allow for in-depth research into the contextual aspects that will influence perceptions, by utilizing the case study's information sources.

The research was conducted at University "A", one of the Islamic Universities located in Banyuwangi, East Java. The research was conducted in the second semester to the eighth semester of English Education department in the academic year 2021/2022 until 2024/2025 academic year. Purposive sampling was applied to choose a sample of four students for this investigation. The consideration of participants was based on their level of English proficiency. All English students were given access to the questionnaire, which was distributed over a WhatsApp group, allowing them to freely respond.

In this qualitative study, the researcher used two primary data sources, those are semi-structured interviews utilizing Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and questionnaires. From the data collected, there were 4 students who would later be referred to as students 1, 2, 3, and 4 as the research persons. The selection criteria for FGD participants aimed to include students with a range of self-reported experience levels with AI tools to ensure a variety of viewpoints were captured. Semi-structured interview protocols guided the FGD, focusing on key areas such as direct experiences with AI, perceived benefits such as efficiency and idea generation, perceived drawbacks such as ethical concerns and over-reliance, and the potential impact on their writing process.

Examples of interview questions included: "Can you describe specific instances where you have used AI in your academic writing?" and "What is the impact of using AI to your writing quality on your college assignments?". FGD transcripts were read repeatedly to identify keywords, phrases, and themes relevant to the research questions. Afterward, a coding process was conducted to group the data based on the themes identified in the discussions. Data from the questionnaire was described to explain more details about the data, such as frequency and percentage.

The researcher also analyzed the background of the students and found that each student had the same background of English experience, namely having been in an English dormitory. Thus, research with the object of students majoring in English and with an English skill background will greatly support the implementation of research on the perceptions of English majors and AI users. Through group discussion, the researcher was able to capture the complex details

of the participants' experiences, such as the reasons, values, and beliefs that underlie their perceptions.

Meanwhile, the questionnaire was formed using Google Form, which was shared by link via WhatsApp group, so that all students were free to fill out the questionnaires. The questionnaires were used to collect broader data, measuring the frequency and patterns of most frequent AI usage. Thus, the researcher was able to gain a more comprehensive and thorough understanding of students' perceptions of the use of AI in academic writing as the students' assignment at the college.

To get broader data on AI usage patterns and general perceptions, a questionnaire incorporating both open-ended and close-ended questions was distributed to 42 students from the same department. Ethical considerations were crucial during the research. Participants were fully informed of the study's purpose and procedures, and their participation was voluntary. To safeguard individuals' privacy, all data was anonymized during analysis and publication. Thematic analysis was conducted on the transcribed FGD data and the open-ended responses from the questionnaires. This involved a systematic process of initial coding, followed by the identification of recurring themes and patterns related to students' perceptions of AI. The identified themes were subsequently reviewed and refined to ensure accuracy and coherence.

Results

Students' Perspective of AI usage in Academic Writing Improved Efficiency and Productivity One of the key findings from the respondents of the Google Form and interview of the study was that the use of AI significantly improved students' efficiency and productivity in completing academic tasks. After coding the answers of respondents, the researcher found that students claimed that AI helped them with variety of tasks, from finding references to drafting outlines.

"AI platforms facilitate students to do college assignments" (student 1).

As a college student, they have to do their coursework to fulfil their obligations. With the support of AI, students were able to do their assignment, improving their work in a more time-efficient manner. By using AI, students' efforts that were previously spent on repetitive tasks, can allow them to focus on the more creative aspects of the writing process, such as data analysis and argument development. Besides, AI can service students to be more productive and think critically, instead of just providing easy-to-use answers. For example, AI tools can ask challenging questions or present information from multiple points of view, helping students learn to analyze and assess information.

Improved Students' Confidence and Writing Quality

In addition to improving efficiency, the use of AI also contributes to improving the quality of students' writing. AI tools such as plagiarism checkers and grammar correctors help students produce better writing in terms of grammar and writing style (said students 1, 3 and 4). From the data analyzed students in University "A" agreed that AI helps them to write academic writing better, so it also increases their confidence in doing their tasks.

> *"To help open the windows of my brain so that I can think more creatively and increase my insight and knowledge. Also improve my left-behind way of thinking" (student 4).*

AI offers advice on sentence construction, word choice, and coherence, enabling students to produce writing that is more comprehensible and stronger. So that, students can develop vocabulary and then enhance their writing style. Students also claimed that using AI trains them in brainstorming, finding new points of view, and creating stronger arguments. AI has a large information about many things from business to education.

In the educational context, AI can help students to enlarge their knowledge and increase critical thinking with that. Students agreed that writing academic writing needs critical thinking. It helps them create good writing such as papers, articles, theses, and research writing. Consequently, AI helps a lot to enhance their critical thinking to have better quality on their writing.

Fixing difficulty

Students stated that AI helps them to fix their problem in their writing. Such as starting to write, stuck in a discussion or they do not understand the lesson well, then they use AI to fix them. AI platform like Grammarly helps them a lot to fix the language structure (said all the interviewees). It corrects the grammatical of the student's writing and gives suggestions for better words or sentences.

> *"Grammarly helps me in correcting my sentences" (student 1), "I use Grammarly to get suggestion of better words" (student 2), "I use Grammarly to check the language structure of my paper" (student 3), "I have been using Grammarly for 2 years, it trains me to have better language structure" (Student 4)*

Some platforms of AI agreed by students which the platforms are really helpful. Those are Chat GPT, Gama, and Slides Go.

> *"Gama is really helpful to create simple and save-time PowerPoint. It helps a lot when the time is limit and I have to create the presentation slide quickly" (Student 2).*

Gama is a platform to create PowerPoint presentations. The users can create, add, and edit the content as the user needs.

> *"I use Slides Go and Gama to present my material in the class, it makes my presentation more interesting and understandable" (Student 3).*

Gama and Slides Go provide comparable purposes. The user must first download the template in Slides Go, after which they can use their own resources to change the presentation's content. Many of the themes and templates offered by slides go are both free and premium.

> *"Chat GPT helps me to solve my obstacle of arranging sentences. I use it mostly to get ideas to start my writing" (Student 4).*

One of the language-based chatbot models introduced by OpenAI is ChatGPT. Its functions, which include composing essays, paraphrasing, answering a variety of queries, and impersonating human speech, are essential for assisting students with their assignments.

> *"Helping to find information that cannot be found in the campus library" (student 3).*

Some students said that there are some materials that they could not find in their campus library so they use AI to help them seek material sources. AI with the large information that it provides help students to fulfill students need. With that, students are not confused to get materials and able to fix their obstacle to do their assignment.

Shifting Students' Role and Abusing

Students are concerned about the use of AI despite its advantages. The employment of AI in academic writing has transformed the role of students in the writing process according to student 2. Students are no longer just consumers of information, but also collaborators with technology. Thus, students need to have the skills to select the information and use the AI tools as well as the ability to evaluate the output produced by AI. It requires students to have high digital literacy and critical thinking skills. Other anxiety of students about AI is about the challenges and potential abuse.

> *"As an AIuser, Iworry about the one who uses AI in the other ways, I mean, they just copy what they got from the platform and paste it to their paper, students need ethics in using AI." (Student 2).*

While the use of AI offers many benefits, there are also some challenges that need to be considered. Based on the interview result, students agreed that one of the main challenges is the potential for misuse of AI, such as plagiarism, addiction, and over-reliance on technology (students 1, 2, and 3).

"I use AI just to get references, I don't use it for others. I'm worried about being addicted to using AI, so that I limit myself to use it" (Student 3).

Student 2 said in the interview session that students sometimes use AI without considering the content. Whereas, students need to understand the ethics of using AI and take responsibility for their written work. Therefore, students will not just only copy the texts and put them into their paper. In addition, it is important to ensure that the use of AI does not hinder the development of students' critical and creative thinking skills.

AI platform Used by Students

5. AI platform apa yang biasanya anda gunakan? (bisa pilih lebih dari 1)
42 jawaban

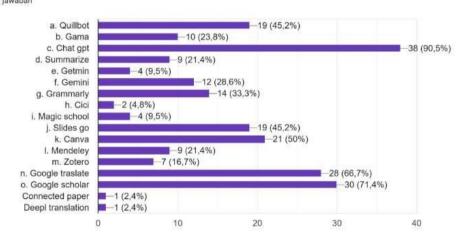| Platform	Count (%)
a. Quillbot	19 (45,2%)
b. Gama	10 (23,8%)
c. Chat gpt	38 (90,5%)
d. Summarize	9 (21,4%)
e. Getmin	4 (9,5%)
f. Gemini	12 (28,6%)
g. Grammarly	14 (33,3%)
h. Cici	2 (4,8%)
i. Magic school	4 (9,5%)
j. Slides go	19 (45,2%)
k. Canva	21 (50%)
l. Mendeley	9 (21,4%)
m. Zotero	7 (16,7%)
n. Google traslate	28 (66,7%)
o. Google scholar	30 (71,4%)
Connected paper	1 (2,4%)
Deepl translation	1 (2,4%)

Figure 1. Respondent's percentage result

According to the bar chart, ChatGPT is the AI platform that respondents utilise the most, accounting for 90,5% of all respondents (38 out of 42). This demonstrates that ChatGPT's broad range of capabilities in supporting tasks like writing, question responding, and information analysis make it best choice for utilizing it.

In addition to ChatGPT, Google Translate, and Google Scholar are also widely used platforms by students, with 66,7% and 71,4% of respondents using them, respectively. Google Scholar facilitates the search for appropriate academic references, while Google Translate serves students as an automatic translation tool that helps in learning foreign languages.

With a 50% share, Canva is among the most popular AI platforms. Canva is probably used because of its AI-Based design tools, which let users generate infographics, presentations, and other visual needs more quickly. At 45,2% respectively, Quillbot and SlidesGo also saw an outstanding increase in users. SlidesGo supports students in offering visually appealing and expert AI-based presentation templates, while Quillbot is frequently utilised to paraphrase material and enhance writing quality.

The usage rates for Gemini and Grammarly are 28,6% and 33,3%, respectively. While Gemini is likely to be used for a variety of tasks, such as text analysis and information retrieval. Grammarly is frequently used to fix grammar and enhance writing clarity. Other platforms, including DeepL Translation and Connected Papers, were used by only 2,4% respondents. This demonstrates that, while there are numerous of AI platforms available, most users are more likely to select a tool that is well- known and has a broader range of functionality to fulfil their requirements.

ChatGPT's immense popularity among students, as evidenced by 90,5% usage rate. In this study, students claimed that ChatGPT is the first AI platform that they visited to get an answer. students utilize it not only to produce ideas and overcome writing obstacles, but also to comprehend difficult topics, summarize lengthy materials, and even obtain feedback on their work. The result of the respondents' survey images shows that the variety of AI Platforms used is evidence that students' need in using them have different reasons.

Translation AI platform such as DeepL Translation and Google Translate help students in translating foreign languages which is very helpful for them as students majoring in English. Therefore, AI platforms related to design such as Gama, Canva, and SlidesGo, help students to develop creativity and support the quality of college materials. Additionally, to develop creativity, some of these platforms help students prepare assignments more efficiently in time because the utilization of them is easy. Students majoring in English who work on academic writing assignments need tools to advance their ideas, paraphrase, cite writing sources, and even discover references and sentence progression.

This is evidenced by the survey results which show that AI platforms such as Grammarly, Mendeley, Zotero, Google Scholar, and Connected Paper help students with their features. Using the AI platform, it helps students to write academicwriting to becomemore qualified and structured. Not only that, the sources of writing cited will also be more renewed and reliable.

Discussion

The findings of the research highlight the significant impact of AI on students' academic writing, particularly in terms of efficiency and writing quality. AI tools allow students to complete their assignments more quickly by assisting with organizing ideas, generating outlines, and finding relevant references. This

increased efficiency enables students to allocate more time to complex aspects of writing, such as argument development and analysis. AI also encourages critical thinking by giving various viewpoints and raising interesting queries, which motivates students to work more thoroughly on their assignments.

Scientists, especially those working on large-scale research projects, can now handle enormous amounts of data quickly and effectively through artificial intelligence, which makes it easier to extract valuable insights from the data (Dinçer, 2024). These results imply that AI is an essential assistance system that improves students' cognitive growth and learning experience rather than just being a handy tool. AI provides real-time feedback on word choice and clarity, which help students enlarge their vocabulary and improve their writing style (Kheder, 2025; Loor et al., 2024). Furthermore, AI supports the brainstorming process by introducing fresh viewpoints and assisting the construction of stronger arguments, fostering more creative and insightful academic writing.

Another significant finding is that students are no longer passive recipients of information but rather active collaborators with AI technology, which calls for a reconsideration of traditional academic practices because students need to learn how to critically evaluate AI-generated content and differentiate accurate information from biased or inaccurate output. However, the results also draw attention to worries about the abuse of AI in academic work. Learners voiced worries that an over-dependence on AI would cause their creativity and critical thinking to deteriorate.

With several students admitting that AI could be abused for plagiarism or the total automation of academic work, ethical issues were also brought up. The report emphasizes that for students to appropriately incorporate AI into their academic work, they must acquire digital literacy abilities. Digital literacy is a crucial thing that students should have as an academician. According to (Sugiarto & Farid, 2023), strengthening character education in this day and age requires digital literacy. The ability to use, assess, and engage with the digital world, is known as digital literacy.

Supporting result by (Nurhayati et al., 2024), students with digital literacy skills will be able to critically assess AI-generated content, which could mean that they are using the tool to improve their writing rather than replace the tool to improve their independent thinking. Similar research by ('Amala et al., 2023), supports that AI literacy is important for students. Students should maintain ethics in using AI in academic writing by having digital-based literacy. Thus, it ensures that they do not simply copy the result of AI, but use it as a tool to improve the understanding, analysis, and originality of their work.

Addressing the balance of both AI and human creativity needs a pedagogical approach that emphasizes AI as a tool for supporting users and not being automated. Educators can plan activities that utilize AI as a brainstorming and ideas generator, while explicitly requiring students to develop and refine these ideas with their own unique perspectives and crucial analysis. As an example,

students might use AI to produce initial drafts o explore various stylistic options, but the final deliverables will require substantial original context and critical engagement with the AI- generated material. This approach teaches students to view AI as a starting point or source of inspiration, not a replacement for their creative thinking.

Moving forward, the future of AI in academic writing depends on the development of responsible innovation. Based on the research result, the campus should provide a guidebook on Artificial Intelligence used, so students will have knowledge and guidance to use AI well. Students also will get a better understanding of the ethical context of using AI. Ethical implications of artificial intelligence are becoming more and more significant in a time when fast technical advancements rule the day (Hastuti & Syafruddin, 2023).

While AI offers tremendous potential to improve students' writing skills, its use must be balanced with ethical considerations. Thus, besides the Artificial Intelligence guidebook, the campus had better supply digital literacy for the students so they can receive the information from AI critically and selectively. We can take advantage of the potential of AI to provide more effective and interesting learning environments for all students if it is applied appropriately and ethically (Vavekanand & Guriro, 2024).

Conclusion

The findings of this study highlight the significant role of AI in enhancing student's efficiency and writing quality in academic backgrounds. AI tools such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, and Gama help students with various aspects of academic writing, including grammar correction, reference retrieval, and idea generation. These tools allow students to focus on more complex tasks, such as critical analysis, and argument development, ultimately improving their confidence and writing skills. AI also fosters creativity and supports students in overcoming writing difficulties, making academic tasks more manageable and effective.

Despite its benefits, the study also reveals concerns regarding the misuse of AI, including plagiarism, over-reliance, and the potential decline of critical thinking skills. Some students worry that excessive dependence on AI could hinder their intellectual growth and reduce their ability to evaluate information critically. Ethical concerns, such as the lack of awareness about proper AI usage and the potential for academic dishonesty, emphasize the need for responsible AI integration. Digital literary and academic integrity must be reinforced to ensure that AI remains a supportive tool rather than a replacement for students' cognitive efforts.

This study has limitations, including its focus on a single university and limited number of participants, which may not fully represent the diverse experiences of students in different academic contexts. Future research should explore AI's long- term impact on students' writing development critical thinking,

and learning autonomy. Additionally, educational institution should establish clear guidelines on ethical AI use and incorporate AI literacy into courses to help students maximize AI's benefits while minimalizing academic integrity and independent learning.

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