Proceeding of the International Conference on Global Education and Learning
Volume. 1, Number. 2, Year 2024
e-ISSN : 3089-8072, Page 234-246
Available online at: https://prosiding.aripi.or.id/index.php/ICGEL

Exploring Learner Perceptions and Motivation of AI-Assisted Writing Tools in English for Specific Purposes Classrooms

Dwita Laksmita Rachmawati[1*], Yufenti Oktafiah[2], Sri Hastari[3]

[1-3] Universitas Merdeka Pasuruan, Pasuruan, Indonesia.
Author Correspondence: laksmitadwita@gmail.com

Abstract. *The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education has opened new possibilities for enhancing teaching and learning, particularly in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classrooms. This study examines the perceptions and motivations of third-semester management students at Universitas Merdeka Pasuruan regarding AI-assisted writing tools in their ESP courses. Using a qualitative case study design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 20 participants. Thematic analysis identified three key themes: perceptions of AI tools' usefulness, motivational factors, and challenges. Participants viewed AI tools as beneficial for improving writing skills, providing personalized feedback, and supporting collaborative learning. Motivational drivers included simplifying complex tasks and promoting independent learning. However, challenges such as technical difficulties and limited proficiency in using AI features were highlighted. The findings emphasize the potential of AI in enhancing ESP instruction, provided challenges are addressed with adequate training and support. Despite its small sample size and focus on a single institution, the study offers insights into the pedagogical implications of AI integration in specialized language education. It also provides practical recommendations for optimizing AI use in ESP classrooms while calling for broader research in diverse educational contexts.*

Keywords: *ESP Classroom, Writing Skills, AI-Assisted Writing Tools, Perception, Motivation*.

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of technology has significantly transformed many aspects of modern life, including education. One notable shift is the emergence of the information era, where efforts are made globally to integrate rural areas, educational institutions, and community organizations into interconnected networks. This transformation, driven by the globalization of information and technological progress, aims to enhance access to resources and facilitate activities across diverse sectors (Daweli and Mahoub, 2024). The rise of innovative information technology, particularly in computer science, has improved task efficiency and productivity. Among these advancements, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a groundbreaking innovation with profound impacts on multiple fields, including education (Rachmawati and Purwati, 2022). AI technologies, especially in the form of intelligent systems, mimic human cognitive processes and decision-making capabilities, enabling automation and personalized assistance in various applications.

In the educational context, AI has the potential to transform teaching and learning. It automates routine administrative tasks, such as assessments and documentation, allowing educators to focus on core activities like mentoring, curriculum development, and student interaction (Teng, 2024). Moreover, AI facilitates personalized learning by adapting to individual student needs, providing tailored content, and delivering relevant feedback. Adaptive learning systems enhance student engagement and accommodate diverse learning

Received: October30, 2024; Revised: November 30, 2024; Accepted: December 18,2024;
Published: December 30, 2024

styles, enabling students to progress at their own pace. AI-powered tools, such as chatbots and virtual assistants, further enrich the learning experience by offering instant responses to queries, promoting collaborative learning, and supporting resource exploration. For example, students can utilize AI to research topics of interest, access relevant literature, and receive customized recommendations (Moybeka et al., 2023). These capabilities foster curiosity, motivation, and knowledge sharing, enhancing the overall learning process.

In the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), AI technologies offer significant potential to address the challenges of teaching and learning specialized language skills. ESP courses, which cater to disciplines like business, engineering, medicine, and law, demand precision, clarity, and mastery of complex terminology and genre-specific conventions (Rachmawati & Purwati, 2022). For educators, developing materials that align with these requirements can be challenging, especially in areas outside their expertise.

AI tools, such as ChatGPT, Google Chrome, and Duolingo, provide valuable support in ESP classrooms. From a teacher-facing perspective, AI minimizes workload by streamlining material design, offering diverse resources (e.g., specialized dialogues, poems, and terminology-focused exercises), and generating natural language descriptions. This assistance is particularly beneficial in teaching discipline-specific language skills (Biju et al., 2024). From a learner-facing perspective, AI tools provide automated feedback, error correction, and scaffolding, enabling students to refine their writing skills and achieve greater accuracy in their work.

Despite the potential benefits, the effectiveness of AI-assisted tools in ESP classrooms depends on learners' perceptions and motivations. Intrinsic motivation (driven by personal interest) and extrinsic motivation (driven by external rewards) are critical factors influencing engagement and academic performance (Moussa & Belhiah, 2024). However, research on how these motivational aspects interact with AI tools in ESP contexts is limited (Song & Song, 2023). Additionally, there is a gap in understanding whether learners perceive these tools as enablers of language development or obstacles to authentic learning experiences.

This study explores learners' perceptions and motivations regarding the use of AI-assisted writing tools in ESP classrooms (Erito, 2024). It seeks to understand how these tools influence learner engagement and autonomy while examining their pedagogical implications. By investigating these aspects, the research aims to provide insights for optimizing AI integration in language education, enhancing writing outcomes, and fostering

deeper learner autonomy. This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on AI in education, particularly within ESP contexts, and provides guidance for educators in leveraging AI technologies to improve teaching and learning practices.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Definition of Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a branch of computer science dedicated to developing systems and machines capable of performing tasks that usually require human intelligence, such as reasoning, learning, and decision-making. This technology uses algorithms and mathematical models to enable computers to study data, recognize patterns, and make intelligence decisions, AI includes various important concepts such as machine learning, neural networks, and natural language processing(Azennoud, 2024). Innovationsin this field have had a significant impact in various sectors, including voice recognition, facial recognition, autonomus vehicels, medical fields, and many others (Kalra, 2023).

Linguistically, the word intelligence comes from the Latin language *Intelligo*, which means “I understand”. So, the basis of Intelligence is the ability to understand and take action. Meanwhile, in other language, artificial intelligence comes from english from the word Artificial, which means is something created or produced by humans that occurs naturally. Meanwhile, the word intelligence means the ability to acquire and apply knowledge and skills (Wang et al., 2024).

According to Dilzhan, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the study of computer calculations that make it possible to understand, reason and act(Dilzhan, 2024). Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a field of computer science that has very important role at present and in the future. The field of artificial intelligence also continues to develop, studying how humans think know understand, predict and manipulate things that are more complicated than ever before (Mun, 2024).

B. English For Specific Purposes (ESP)

The concept of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) was developed by Hutchinson and Waters in 1987. In their book titled "English for Specific Purposes: A Learning-Centered Approach," they explain that ESP focuses on the specific needs of English language users in particular professional or academic contexts. Hutchinson and Waters emphasize the importance of understanding the goals and contexts of language use in order to design relevant and effective teaching materials (Basturkmen, 2019). This

approach has become the foundation for the development of curricula and teaching methods in the field of English that are tailored to the specific needs of students.

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is an approach to teaching English that is designed to meet the specific needs of users in particular professional or academic contexts (Rachmawati et al., 2021). This approach differs from General English instruction because it focuses on developing language skills that are relevant to specific fields, such as medicine, law, engineering, and business. In ESP, teaching materials and methods are tailored to the specific contexts and goals faced by students, enabling them to use English effectively in situations relevant to their professions or studies (Fălăuş, 2017). ESP not only encompasses the teaching of grammar and vocabulary but also considers aspects such as writing genres, specialized terminology, and the communication skills required in specific fields (Rachmawati et al., 2023). Thus, ESP aims to enhance students' English communication abilities effectively and appropriately within the contexts they encounter.

C. Motivation of Using AI-Assisted Writing Tools

Motivation is a key factor in the learning process which has a direct influence on students' learning achievement (Thanh et al., 2023). Without adequate motivation, students often face difficulties in achieving their academic potential. The researcher identified that learning motivation has several behavioral characteristics that can be seen in students, such as interest, attention, sharpness, concentration and perseverance. Low motivation in students can cause low learning outcomes. This is caused by a lack of interest in understanding the material, an inability to focus, and even a lack of effort in facing academic challenges (Utami et al., 2023). This negative cycle, where low learning outcomes can reduce students' self- confidence, thereby further reducing their motivation.

Motivation plays a critical role in the successful adoption of AI tools in education. Learners in ESP classrooms often exhibit instrumental motivation, aiming to acquire language skills for career advancement or academic purposes (Enesi et al., 2021). AI-assisted writing tools have been shown to enhance motivation by making learning more interactive and providing immediate, actionable feedback(Wardani et al., 2024). In addition, gamification features in some AI tools, such as progress tracking and achievement badges, contribute to increased engagement and sustained interest in learning tasks.

Often, there are several factors that influence students' learning motivation, such as teaching methods, subject matter, and learning environment. Al, with its ability to design and provide personalized learning systems, can offer new solutions to increase learner motivation (Seo, 2024). For example, Al-powered adaptive learning systems can adjust materials and activities according to students' level of understanding. Apart from that, Al can alsofacilitate group discussion and collaboration, provide feedback and assessment on students' work, and support students' independent learning.

3. METHODS

This research adopted a qualitative case study design to explore the perceptions and motivations of students regarding the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) writing classes (Creswell, 2014). A case study approach was chosen to provide an in-depth understanding of the experiences and viewpoints of a specific group of students within a defined context (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The study was conducted at Universitas Merdeka Pasuruan, focusing on 20 third-semester students from the Management program. These participants were selected because of their enrollment in ESP writing courses and their exposure to AI-based tools in academic settings.

The primary instrument for data collection was semi-structured interviews. This method allowed the researchers to gather detailed, nuanced insights into the participants' experiences while providing flexibility to explore emerging themes during the interview process . The interviews were designed to investigate the participants' perceptions of the role and impact of AI in ESP writing classes, their motivations for using AI tools, and the challenges and benefits they associated with integrating AI into their learning environment.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with each participant, lasting approximately 30 to 45 minutes. The interviews were held in a private and comfortable setting to encourage open and honest responses. The questions were open-ended, enabling participants to elaborate on their experiences and thoughts freely while ensuring the discussion remained focused on the study's objectives. With the consent of the participants, all interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim to facilitate accurate and comprehensive analysis.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, a systematic approach to identifying and interpreting key themes within qualitative data. The analysis process began with repeated readings of the transcripts to ensure familiarity with the data. Initial codes were

then generated to highlight significant themes and patterns. These themes were reviewed and refined to ensure they aligned with the research objectives and accurately reflected the participants' experiences. Finally, the findings were organized and presented in a narrative format, enriched with direct quotes from the participants to illustrate their perspectives.

Ethical considerations were carefully addressed throughout the study. Participants were fully informed about the purpose of the research, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection. To maintain confidentiality and anonymity, pseudonyms were assigned to each participant, and all data were securely stored. This approach ensured that the study adhered to high ethical standards while respecting the rights and privacy of the participants.

4. RESULTS

The analysis of data from the semi-structured interviews revealed three main themes: (1) students' perceptions of the role and impact of AI tools in ESP writing classes, (2) motivations for using AI tools in academic writing, and (3) challenges and drawbacks of incorporating AI into the curriculum. The findings are presented below, with sample excerpts from participants' transcriptions to illustrate the themes.

Theme 1: Students' Perceptions of the Role and Impact of AI Tools in ESP Writing Classes

The participants generally perceived AI tools as valuable aids in improving their writing skills and enhancing their understanding of the writing process. They highlighted the benefits of receiving instant feedback and assistance with grammar and vocabulary. However, some participants expressed concerns about over-reliance on these tools.

Participant 1: "Using AI tools like Grammarly has made it easier for me to identify my grammar mistakes. I feel more confident now when writing essays, especially in English."

Participant 2: "AI tools help me improve the quality of my writing, but I'm worried that I might become too dependent on them and stop learning the rules myself."

Participant 3: "The suggestions provided by AI tools are very useful. They often teach me new vocabulary and phrases that make my writing sound more professional."

Participant 4: "I think AI tools are great for technical corrections, but they can't always capture the meaning or tone I'm trying to convey."

Participant 5: "In group assignments, we often use AI tools to check our work. It saves time and makes sure the language is clear and correct."

Theme 2: Motivations for Using AI Tools in Academic Writing

The participants' motivations for using AI tools were primarily driven by the desire to enhance the quality of their work, save time, and reduce stress. Some students were also motivated by the tools' ability to provide personalized feedback.

Participant 1: "I use AI tools because they help me finish my assignments faster. They're like having a tutor available 24/7."

Participant 2: "When I'm stuck or unsure about my grammar, AI tools give me instant corrections. It's very motivating because I don't feel stuck for too long."

Participant 3: "I'm motivated to use AI because it helps me learn better ways to structure my essays. I can see my progress after using these tools for a while."

Participant 4: "The feedback from AI tools is very detailed, and that encourages me to improve my writing step by step."

Participant 5: "Knowing that my writing will look professional and accurate gives me more confidence to submit my assignments on time."

Theme 3: Challenges and Drawbacks of Incorporating AI into the Curriculum

While the participants acknowledged the benefits of AI tools, they also identified several challenges. These included over-reliance on AI, the risk of reduced critical thinking, and the occasional inaccuracy of AI-generated suggestions.

Participant 1: "Sometimes the corrections suggested by AI are not accurate. It can be confusing when I know the tool is wrong, but I'm unsure how to fix it myself."

Participant 2: "I'm worried that using AI tools too much might make me lazy. I don't want to rely on them for everything."

Participant 3: "AI tools are helpful, but they don't always understand the context of what I'm trying to say. That can be frustrating."

Participant 4: "In some cases, the AI suggests changes that make my writing lose its original meaning. It's hard to decide whether to accept or reject the suggestions."

Participant 5: "One challenge is that not all AI tools are free. Some of the best features require subscriptions, which not everyone can afford."

The findings indicate that students perceive AI tools as valuable resources for improving their writing skills, although they are cautious about over-reliance. Motivations for using these tools include convenience, efficiency, and personalized feedback, while challenges involve maintaining critical thinking, managing inaccuracies, and addressing cost-related issues. These insights suggest the need for a balanced approach in integrating AI tools into the ESP writing curriculum, ensuring that students benefit from the technology while continuing to develop their independent writing skills.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into how third-semester management students at Universitas Merdeka Pasuruan perceive and interact with AI-assisted writing tools in their ESP classrooms. The results shed light on their perceptions, motivations, and the perceived benefits and challenges associated with integrating AI into their learning process. The first theme, regarding students' perceptions of AI in ESP writing classes, highlights a predominantly positive attitude. Many participants recognized AI as a transformative tool that enhances their ability to write accurately and efficiently. These findings are consistent with previous research by Rachmawati and Hastari (2022), which emphasized the adaptive and innovative potential of AI in education. The participants' acknowledgment of AI's role in simplifying complex tasks and offering tailored feedback aligns with its promise of personalized learning, a critical aspect of effective language acquisition.

The second theme focuses on motivation and challenges. Intrinsic motivation, as evidenced by participants' curiosity and desire to explore AI's potential, was a significant driver in engaging with AI tools. This corroborates prior studies emphasizing the role of intrinsic motivation in fostering engagement with digital learning tools (Morska, 2017). However, the study also highlighted practical challenges, such as unfamiliarity with specific features of AI tools and concerns about their reliability. These findings suggest a need for targeted training to address technical barriers and foster confidence among learners.

The third theme explores the benefits and drawbacks of incorporating AI into the curriculum. Participants valued the convenience and immediacy provided by AI tools, such as chatbots and language processors, which enabled them to receive instant feedback and expand their vocabulary. However, concerns were raised about the potential over-reliance on AI, potentially hindering critical thinking and creativity. This duality echoes the findings

of Biju et al. (2024), who noted that while AI enhances efficiency, it requires careful integration to avoid undermining essential cognitive skills.

Overall, this study underscores the nuanced role of AI in ESP education. While it offers promising opportunities for personalized learning and enhanced engagement, the integration of AI tools must be accompanied by structured support and ethical considerations (Chen, 2024). These findings contribute to the broader discourse on AIEd, offering practical implications for educators in optimizing the use of AI tools to balance their benefits with potential limitations effectively. Future research could further explore longitudinal impacts and examine strategies to harmonize AI technology with traditional pedagogical approaches in ESP classrooms.

6. CONCLUSION

This study explored the perceptions, motivations, and challenges of using AI-assisted writing tools among third-semester management students at Universitas Merdeka Pasuruan in their English for Specific Purposes (ESP) writing classes. The findings revealed that students generally hold positive perceptions of AI tools, appreciating their ability to provide instant feedback, improve writing accuracy, and foster vocabulary development. Intrinsic motivation, curiosity, and a desire for academic improvement were key drivers for engaging with AI tools, although technical challenges and concerns about over-reliance were also noted.

The integration of AI tools into ESP classrooms has shown significant potential in enhancing learning outcomes and engagement. However, to maximize its benefits, educators must address barriers such as unfamiliarity with technology and foster a balanced approach that encourages critical thinking alongside AI-assisted learning. By carefully designing instructional frameworks and providing adequate training, AI tools can serve as a powerful complement to traditional teaching methods, helping students achieve greater proficiency in academic writing.

Future research should investigate the long-term impacts of AI use in language learning and explore strategies to address ethical and pedagogical challenges. As AI continues to evolve, its role in educational settings will likely expand, offering further opportunities for enhancing learning experiences and outcomes.

This study underscores the transformative potential of AI-assisted writing tools in ESP classrooms, demonstrating their ability to enhance writing proficiency and motivate learners. The findings reveal that these tools offer significant benefits, including improved

efficiency, reduced writing errors, and alignment with specific academic and professional objectives. By providing tailored support and real-time feedback, AI technologies facilitate a more engaging and personalized learning experience.

The insights gained from this research have important pedagogical implications. Educators are encouraged to incorporate AI tools thoughtfully, leveraging their strengths while addressing their limitations. This includes promoting critical thinking skills, fostering ethical awareness, and supporting collaborative learning environments. Future studies should investigate the long-term effects of AI integration on learner motivation and writing proficiency, as well as the role of instructors in mediating the use of these technologies.

In conclusion, while AI-assisted writing tools hold great promise for enhancing ESP learning, their successful implementation depends on a holistic approach that considers technical, ethical, and pedagogical dimensions. By addressing the challenges and leveraging the potential of these technologies, educators can create more dynamic and effective learning environments. Moreover, integrating AI literacy into curricula will prepare students to navigate an AI-driven world confidently, ensuring that they can harness these tools responsibly and effectively. Institutions must also invest in continuous professional development for educators to adapt to the evolving technological landscape, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and innovative learning ecosystem.

7. LIMITATION

While this study provides valuable insights into the perceptions and motivations of students regarding AI-assisted writing tools in ESP classrooms, it is not without limitations. First, the study was conducted with a relatively small sample size of 20 participants from a single institution and academic major, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to broader contexts or other disciplines. The experiences and perceptions of students from different universities, cultural backgrounds, or academic fields might differ significantly.

Second, the reliance on semi-structured interviews as the sole data collection method may have introduced subjective biases. Participants' responses could have been influenced by social desirability, where they might have felt compelled to provide favorable views about AI tools to align with the perceived expectations of the researcher.

Third, the study focused primarily on students' perspectives and did not include the viewpoints of instructors or an analysis of actual learning outcomes. A more comprehensive understanding of the integration of AI tools in ESP education could be achieved by

triangulating data from multiple stakeholders, such as teachers and academic administrators, as well as incorporating quantitative measures of student performance.

Lastly, the dynamic nature of AI technology and its rapid development mean that the tools and perceptions discussed in this study may become outdated as new innovations emerge. Future research should consider longitudinal approaches to capture evolving trends in the adoption and effectiveness of AI in education over time. Despite these limitations, the study contributes meaningful insights into the role of AI in ESP writing classes and highlights the need for ongoing exploration of its pedagogical implications.

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