

## CHATGPT UTILIZATION IN ACADEMIC PRACTICES: INSIGHTS FROM ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION STUDENTS IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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### ABSTRAK

Perkembangan Kecerdasan Buatan *Artificial Intelligence* (AI) menghadirkan peluang baru dalam pendidikan tinggi, termasuk pada Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris. Salah satu inovasi AI yang menonjol adalah ChatGPT, sebuah model bahasa yang mampu menghasilkan teks, menjawab pertanyaan, dan memberikan umpan balik dalam berbagai konteks akademik. Penelitian ini berfokus pada pemanfaatan ChatGPT dalam praktik akademik dari perspektif mahasiswa Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris. Metode penelitian menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif yang melibatkan mahasiswa aktif yang secara rutin menggunakan ChatGPT. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi dokumen, dan catatan lapangan, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik berbantuan NVivo untuk mengidentifikasi pola persepsi, manfaat, dan tantangan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa memandang ChatGPT sebagai alat yang efektif untuk meningkatkan kemampuan tata bahasa, memperluas kosakata, mengorganisir ide, serta meningkatkan efisiensi dalam menyelesaikan tugas akademik. Namun, beberapa mahasiswa juga mengakui adanya risiko ketergantungan, dilema etika, dan menurunnya kreativitas jika digunakan secara berlebihan. Kesimpulan penelitian menekankan pentingnya panduan etika dan literasi digital agar penggunaan ChatGPT tidak hanya meningkatkan keterampilan akademik, tetapi juga memperkuat kemampuan berpikir kritis dan orisinalitas mahasiswa.

**Kata Kunci:** *ChatGPT, Academic Practice, Artificial Intelligence, Learning Media*

### ABSTRACT

The development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) presents new opportunities in higher education, including in the English Language Education Study Program. One prominent AI innovation is ChatGPT, a language model capable of generating text, answering questions, and providing feedback in various academic contexts. This study focuses on the use of ChatGPT in academic practice from the perspective of English Language Education students. The research method used a qualitative case study approach involving active students who have used ChatGPT regularly. Data were collected through in depth interviews, document observation, and field notes, then analyzed using NVivo assisted thematic analysis to identify patterns of perception, benefits, and challenges. The results show that students view ChatGPT as an effective tool for improving grammar, expanding vocabulary, organizing ideas, and increasing the efficiency of writing academic assignments. However, some students also acknowledged the risks of dependency, ethical dilemmas, and decreased creativity if used excessively. The study's conclusions emphasize the importance of ethical guidelines and digital literacy so that the use of ChatGPT not only improves academic skills but also strengthens students' critical thinking and originality.

**Keywords:** *ChatGPT, Academic Practice, Artificial Intelligence, Learning Media*

## INTRODUCTION

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into higher education has grown rapidly over the last decade. This development not only influences how students access information but also transforms learning patterns, teaching strategies, and assessment practices within universities. One of the most widely adopted AI based innovations is ChatGPT, a natural language processing (NLP) technology that enables users to interact with the system through conversational dialogue. ChatGPT provides quick access to material explanations, assistance in academic writing, and instant grammar feedback, thereby supporting students' autonomous learning (Arista et al., 2023; Glahn, 2023).

In the context of English Language Education programs, ChatGPT offers new opportunities for students to develop both academic and linguistic skills. Students have begun to use ChatGPT as a self directed learning companion, whether for writing essays, editing assignments, expanding vocabulary, or preparing academic presentations. The strength of ChatGPT lies in its accessibility and speed in providing responses, making it a solution when students require immediate feedback that may not always be available from lecturers or peers. Thus, ChatGPT has the potential to bridge resource limitations while enhancing the quality of language learning.

Recent studies highlight the benefits of ChatGPT in academic practices. Afkarin and Asmara (2024) found that the use of ChatGPT improved students' learning motivation and the quality of their writing. Similarly, Hung (2024) and Khzouz et al. (2024) revealed that real-time grammar feedback not only reduced linguistic errors but also boosted students' confidence in producing academic texts. This is particularly relevant for English Language Education students who are required to master academic writing skills accurately and effectively.

However, alongside these opportunities, there are also serious challenges that deserve careful attention. Liu et al. (2024) and Fuller and Barnes (2024) cautioned that excessive reliance on ChatGPT could potentially decrease students' critical thinking abilities, trigger unintentional plagiarism, and foster technology dependency. These risks necessitate that educational institutions promptly formulate clear guidelines concerning its usage boundaries and expectations. Therefore, it is crucial to stress the need for a balanced integration, where students are encouraged to utilize ChatGPT ethically, critically, and strategically without ever neglecting their academic integrity and intellectual independence.

Although research on ChatGPT continues to grow, significant gaps remain. Most studies focus on global contexts, while research on Indonesian students' perspectives particularly in English Language Education remains limited (Baskara et al., 2023; Candrasari et al., 2024). In addition, previous research has largely emphasized short term outcomes, while long-term impacts on digital literacy, academic performance, and professional readiness are still rarely explored. This research gap is crucial, considering the unique dynamics of higher education in Indonesia in terms of culture, policy, and access to technology.

The urgency of this research becomes even clearer when linked to the digital era and the vision of Society 5.0, which emphasizes the use of intelligent technology to improve human quality of life, including in education (Im, 2023). Within this framework, students are expected not only to act as consumers of technology but also to use it critically, creatively, and productively. Furthermore, the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) policy implemented in Indonesia demands that students possess independent learning skills, critical thinking abilities, and strong digital literacy. Therefore, the use of ChatGPT in English

Language Education requires in-depth study to support MBKM implementation while aligning with global demands in the digital era. Based on this background, the present study is crucial and aims to comprehensively analyze how the use of ChatGPT influences the digital literacy, learning motivation, and long-term academic outcomes of English Language Education students in Indonesia. The innovative value of this research lies in the development of practical recommendations for both lecturers and policymakers. These findings are expected to guide the responsible and effective integration of AI within Indonesian higher education institutions, ensuring that technology is not only utilized but also critically internalized to foster independent learners.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative approach combined with a case study design to explore students' interpretations regarding the utilization of ChatGPT in academic practices (Hamzah, 2020; Hardani et al., 2020). The qualitative approach was selected due to its suitability for obtaining an in-depth understanding of students' experiences, perceptions, and attitudes. This approach prioritizes rich, detailed insights over quantitative measurements or generalized outcomes. Meanwhile, the case study design was deemed appropriate as it enables a thorough examination of a specific phenomenon within its real life context. In this case, the focus was on the use of ChatGPT by students in the English Language Education Study Program.

The research was conducted in the English Language Education Study Program at STKIP Islam Sabinal Muhtadin Banjarmasin during June - July 2025. The site was selected based on the consideration that students in this program actively use digital technology in their daily academic activities, including the use of artificial intelligence based applications. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, with the main criterion being active students who had used ChatGPT intensively to support their coursework and other academic activities (Ngo, 2023). Through this strategy, the researcher ensured that the participants were genuinely relevant to the focus of the study.

Data were collected through three primary techniques. First, semi structured interviews, which enabled the researcher to explore students' experiences in a flexible manner while still maintaining the focus of the research questions. Second, document observation, involving an analysis of assignments or essays prepared with the assistance of ChatGPT, in order to identify actual differences in the quality of student writing. Third, field notes, which contained direct observations recorded during the interviews and interactions with participants, thereby enriching the researcher's understanding of the research context. The data were analyzed thematically using NVivo software. The process of analysis included several stages: (1) transcription of interview data, (2) open coding to identify initial ideas or concepts, (3) grouping codes into broader categories, (4) generating main themes that represented meaningful patterns within the data, and (5) drawing conclusions related to the research focus. Thematic analysis was chosen because it is suitable for identifying thought patterns and students' experiences concerning the utilization of ChatGPT in academic practices. To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, this study applied source triangulation by comparing information obtained from interviews, documents, and field notes. In addition, member checking was conducted by returning preliminary findings to the participants in order to confirm that the researcher's interpretations accurately reflected their actual experiences. These strategies enhanced both the reliability and credibility of the findings.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

The study reveals that students enrolled in the English Language Education Study Program have increasingly integrated ChatGPT into their academic routines. This integration spans a variety of academic tasks, including essay writing (85%), grammar correction (82%), summarizing scholarly articles (68%), text translation (74%), and generating ideas for presentations (59%). Such diverse applications indicate that the use of ChatGPT extends beyond a single academic function, supporting multiple aspects of students' academic engagement.

ChatGPT is widely regarded by students as a fast, accessible, and practical tool. It is valued for its ability to provide relevant examples, enhance vocabulary choices, and offer alternative explanations that help clarify complex topics. As one participant noted:

*"ChatGPT helps me understand how to construct proper academic sentences. I learn from the examples it provides."* (P6)

Other participants emphasized similar benefits:

*"I often use ChatGPT when writing essays. Sometimes I don't know how to write a formal introduction, and ChatGPT provides examples that I can adapt."* (P4)

*"When I'm not sure about the grammar or sentence structure, I ask ChatGPT to correct it and then compare it with my own version. That's how I learn."* (P9)

**Table 1. Comparison of Average Time Spent on Academic Tasks**

Task Category	Before ChatGPT	After ChatGPT	Difference (Average)
500-word Essay	2 hours 10 minutes	1 hour 30 minutes	-40 minutes
Laboratory Report	3 hours	2 hours 10 minutes	-50 minutes
Article Summary	1 hour 15 minutes	50 minutes	-25 minutes

The table above illustrates a consistent reduction in the time required to complete various academic tasks following the adoption of ChatGPT. Among the categories, laboratory reports exhibit the highest efficiency gain, with an average time reduction of 50 minutes. This is understandable, as such reports typically demand a stricter structure and the use of formal academic language. With the assistance of ChatGPT, students are able to construct sentences more quickly and appropriately, making the writing process significantly more efficient. This finding is further supported by a participant who stated:

*"It used to take me four hours to complete a report. Now, it only takes two hours because I use ChatGPT to check sentence structure."* (P2)

*"If previously I had to search the internet for examples of research reports, now I can simply ask ChatGPT to create an example of the report structure, which makes the process much faster."* (P8)

In addition to improving efficiency, students also reported that ChatGPT provides clear examples of proper academic English usage. This exposure contributes to increased confidence in writing and encourages students to experiment with a variety of academic writing styles.

*"I feel more confident writing in English because I can see how ChatGPT uses the correct academic vocabulary."* (P1)

*"Sometimes I learn how to paraphrase from ChatGPT. From there, I understand how to avoid plagiarism." (P7)*

However, the study also revealed several challenges and ethical dilemmas that emerged during the implementation process and the application of the research findings. To provide a clearer overview, these challenges and ethical dilemmas are presented in detail in the following table.

**Table 2. Challenges Faced by Students in Using ChatGPT**

No	Type of Challenge	Percentage of Students	Brief Description
1	Concern about Academic Dishonesty	28%	Students feel that using ChatGPT may be considered a violation of academic ethics.
2	Copying ChatGPT Outputs Without Revision	41%	Some students admit to copying text from ChatGPT without reflection or modification.
3	Inaccuracy or Outdated Information	35%	Several students found responses that were irrelevant or lacked accuracy.

Approximately 28% of students expressed concerns that the use of ChatGPT could be perceived as academic dishonesty or a violation of academic integrity. Notably, 41% of respondents admitted to directly copying content generated by ChatGPT without further editing or reflection. Issues related to information accuracy also emerged as a limitation. Around 35% of respondents reported encountering answers that were either out of context or outdated, prompting them to cross-check with other sources. Field notes indicated varied attitudes among students: while some openly acknowledged their use of ChatGPT in completing assignments, others deliberately concealed it, fearing reprimand from instructors.

## Discussion

The findings reveal an interesting phenomenon: on one hand, ChatGPT is perceived as a learning companion that facilitates students' academic tasks, while on the other hand, it poses the risk of diminishing critical thinking. This reflects Rogers' diffusion of innovation theory, which explains that technology adoption typically begins with enthusiastic trial, followed by adaptation and critique. Students in this study appear to be in the early adoption stage, where ChatGPT use is still dominated by technical and efficiency oriented purposes rather than reflective learning. This is consistent with Victor (2024), who states that ChatGPT enhances learning but raises issues of overdependence.

Without proper guidance, ChatGPT use may foster passive learning patterns. Afkarin and Asmara (2024) report its benefits in improving student motivation and writing quality, yet they do not explore how lecturers can guide its use. This study adds a new layer: students who received lecturer guidance were better able to engage with ChatGPT critically. This aligns with the concept of guided learning, which emphasizes that technology becomes effective only when accompanied by lecturer directed learning (Irianto et al., 2024).

Ethical concerns also emerged strongly. Students expressed dilemmas about whether using ChatGPT constitutes academic dishonesty. This resonates with Lam and Diep (2024), who found at Van Lang University that students need clear institutional policies on AI use to avoid confusion between learning and cheating. Such dilemmas can serve as opportunities to cultivate digital literacy and academic integrity early on. Lecturers can use ChatGPT outputs as discussion material, encouraging students to critique and modify AI responses so that reflective and critical thinking processes emerge, rather than simple copying (Mamani et al., 2024).

ChatGPT also has the potential to act as a catalyst for collaborative learning. Findings show that students frequently used ChatGPT for brainstorming before group discussions. This is in line with Hung (2024) and Khzouz et al. (2024), who found that ChatGPT fosters engagement and improves essay quality in writing classes. With proper direction, ChatGPT can strengthen collaborative academic practices rather than isolate learners. This supports Zimmerman's theory of self-regulated learning, which emphasizes that learner autonomy develops when students are able to monitor and evaluate their use of learning resources.

The findings further suggest policy implications. Without clear ethical guidelines, students may tend to conceal their use of ChatGPT. This underscores the urgent need for institutions to establish written policies that balance technology utilization with academic integrity (Baskara et al., 2023; Sarker et al., 2023). Thus, ChatGPT should be positioned not only as a technical tool but also as a medium to foster critical thinking, digital literacy, and academic ethics. Its integration into the curriculum should adopt a blended human AI learning approach, in which AI generated outputs become materials for discussion, peer review, or reflection in class. This echoes Sarker et al. (2023), who stress the importance of combining technology with instructional quality to maximize its benefits.

By incorporating broader theoretical perspectives and previous findings, this discussion confirms that ChatGPT holds significant potential to enhance English language learning in higher education. However, its use must be framed by digital literacy, ethical guidance, and active lecturer involvement. When these conditions are met, ChatGPT can support reflective and creative academic practices that strengthen student competencies in the digital era, rather than merely serving as a shortcut for task completion. In a broader context, the integration of ChatGPT into pedagogical approaches requires both students and educators to engage with the technology through ethical and critical awareness. Ongoing evaluation and open dialogue between lecturers and students are essential to maximize the benefits of this technology while minimizing its potential risks.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study reveals that the use of ChatGPT in academic practices among English Language Education students provides significant benefits, particularly in improving writing quality, saving time, and enriching vocabulary. Nevertheless, challenges such as dependency risks, ethical dilemmas, and the potential decline in creativity remain pressing issues. The findings emphasize the necessity of ethical guidelines, digital literacy, and wise integration of ChatGPT into the curriculum to ensure that the technology functions as a supportive tool that enhances, rather than replaces, students' academic abilities. Future research should employ longitudinal approaches to examine the long-term impacts of ChatGPT on students' language proficiency and independent learning skills.

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