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The students' perspectives on the use of chatgpt as an academic aid

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Abstrak. Perkembangan teknologi Artificial Intelligence (AI), khususnya ChatGPT, telah memberikan pengaruh besar dalam dunia pendidikan tinggi. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengeksplorasi persepsi mahasiswa semester enam Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Madako terhadap penggunaan ChatGPT sebagai alat bantu akademik. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan teknik wawancara semi-terstruktur kepada sepuluh mahasiswa yang aktif menggunakan ChatGPT. Data dianalisis melalui model Miles dan Huberman yang mencakup reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa memiliki persepsi positif terhadap ChatGPT, terutama pada aspek kemudahan penggunaan, efisiensi waktu, akses cepat terhadap informasi, serta kontribusinya dalam meningkatkan pemahaman, motivasi, dan rasa percaya diri. Namun, mahasiswa juga menyadari tantangan dan risiko, seperti potensi plagiarisme, menurunnya kemampuan berpikir kritis, ketidakakuratan informasi, dan kurangnya interaksi sosial. Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa ChatGPT dapat menjadi alat pendukung akademik yang efektif, tetapi perlu digunakan secara bijak dan beretika agar tetap menjaga integritas akademik.

Kata Kunci: Persepsi Mahasiswa; Chatgpt; Alat Bantu Akademik.

Abstract. The development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology, particularly ChatGPT, has had a significant impact on higher education. This study aims to explore the perceptions of sixth-semester students of the English Education Study Program at Madako University regarding the use of ChatGPT as an academic aid. The research employed a descriptive qualitative approach with semi-structured interview techniques involving ten students who actively use ChatGPT. Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings revealed that students have positive perceptions of ChatGPT, especially in terms of ease of use, time efficiency, quick access to information, as well as its contribution to enhancing understanding, motivation, and self-confidence. However, students also acknowledged challenges and risks, such as potential plagiarism, a decline in critical thinking skills, information inaccuracy, and reduced social interaction. This study affirms that ChatGPT can be an effective academic support tool, but it should be used wisely and ethically in order to maintain academic integrity.

Keywords: Students' Perspective; ChatGPT; Academic Aid.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology, particularly Artificial Intelligence (AI), has brought significant transformations to the landscape of higher education. AI-based applications are increasingly integrated into teaching and learning processes, influencing how students access information, construct knowledge, and complete academic tasks. One of the most prominent AI tools currently used in educational settings is ChatGPT, a natural language processing-based chatbot developed by OpenAI in 2022. ChatGPT is designed to generate human-like responses, enabling users to interact with it in a conversational manner. Its ability to provide instant feedback, explanations, and language assistance has made it especially attractive to students across various disciplines (Chen et al., 2020).

For university students, ChatGPT offers considerable convenience in supporting academic activities such as understanding lecture materials, generating ideas, translating texts, and assisting with academic writing. Generation Z students, who have grown up in a digitally connected environment, tend to be highly adaptive to new technologies and have become the most active users of AI-based applications in learning. In the context of English language education, ChatGPT is often utilized to improve language skills, particularly in writing and reading comprehension, due to its capacity to generate coherent texts and explanations in English (Ngo, 2023).

Previous studies have demonstrated that ChatGPT has strong potential as an academic support tool. Martha et al., (2025) reported that students perceive ChatGPT as helpful due to its ease of use and its ability to enhance learning motivation. Similarly, Afzal et al., (2023) found that the use of ChatGPT contributes to increased efficiency and creativity in completing academic tasks. These findings suggest that ChatGPT can function as a supportive learning companion when used appropriately. However, other studies have also pointed out several challenges associated with its use. Wibowo et al., (2023) identified risks such as plagiarism, the possibility of inaccurate or misleading information, and the potential reduction of students' critical thinking skills when reliance on AI becomes excessive. These contrasting findings indicate that students' perceptions of ChatGPT are not uniform and depend on how the technology is used in academic contexts.

Based on preliminary observations conducted by the researcher among sixth-semester students of the English Education Study Program at Madako University, ChatGPT has been widely used for various academic purposes, including writing essays, translating academic texts, searching for references, and understanding complex course materials. While many students acknowledge the benefits of ChatGPT in supporting their learning, some also express concerns regarding over-dependence on the application, reduced academic social interaction, and the ethical issues related to plagiarism. These mixed perceptions highlight the importance of examining students' views more comprehensively to understand both the benefits and challenges of ChatGPT as an academic aid.

Therefore, this study aims to explore in depth the perspectives of sixth-semester students in the English Education Study Program at Madako University regarding the use of ChatGPT in their academic activities. By investigating students' experiences and perceptions, this research is expected to contribute to the growing body of literature on the role of AI in education. Furthermore, the findings are anticipated to provide valuable insights for students, lecturers, and educational institutions in formulating guidelines and strategies for utilizing AI-based tools such as ChatGPT in an ethical, effective, and responsible manner.

METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design, as proposed by Sugiyono, (2023), which aims to describe and interpret phenomena based on participants' perspectives in a natural context. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the research focused on exploring students' experiences and perceptions in depth rather than measuring variables

quantitatively.

The participants of this study consisted of four students from the English Education Study Program at Madako University who actively use the Tolitoli dialect in their daily communication. The participants were selected using purposive sampling, with the criteria that they were active students, native or habitual users of the Tolitoli dialect, and willing to share their experiences related to language use. This selection was intended to ensure that the data obtained were relevant and rich in information.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, which allowed the researcher to guide the conversation using predetermined questions while still providing flexibility for participants to express their thoughts and experiences freely. The interviews were conducted individually, recorded with the participants' consent, and transcribed verbatim to ensure data accuracy. This method enabled the researcher to obtain detailed and meaningful insights into the participants' perspectives.

The data analysis process followed the interactive model proposed by Miles et al., (2018), which consists of three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. During data reduction, the researcher selected, focused, and simplified the raw data obtained from the interview transcripts. The reduced data were then organized and presented in the form of descriptive narratives and thematic categories during the data display stage. Finally, conclusions were drawn by interpreting the patterns and themes that emerged from the data, while continuously verifying the findings to ensure their credibility.

FINDINGS AND DISSCUSION

a. Result of Interview

The Students' Perspective on The Use of ChatGPT as an Academic Aid

1. Ease of Use of ChatGPT (Easy to Use)

Students acknowledged that ChatGPT is very easy to use. Respondent HA stated, "Initially, it was, how should I say, quite easy to understand. And sometimes, if we ask frequently, ChatGPT will provide several options that make more sense to us. So it becomes easier. ChatGPT can adjust to our preferences when we ask questions there." This indicates that students do not experience significant obstacles when operating ChatGPT and even feel that the system can adapt to user needs. This finding aligns with Mairisiska & Qadariah, (2023), who mentioned that "students responded positively to the ease of use of ChatGPT."

2. Improving Time Efficiency and Effectiveness

Students felt that ChatGPT helps them complete tasks faster. Respondent AM explained, "I've noticed a real change. I now complete tasks faster because I know where to start. ChatGPT gives me ideas or examples to begin with, so the whole process becomes easier." This finding is consistent with Abouammoh et al., (2025), who stated that "Respondents revealed that ChatGPT was very helpful, especially in providing specific answers, facilitating complex tasks, increasing assignment efficiency, and offering new knowledge. These perception findings showed that students responded positively to the presence of ChatGPT in their academic activities."

3. Quick Access to Information and References

Students mentioned that ChatGPT facilitates access to academic information. Respondent FA added, "I used ChatGPT as a tool to get initial information and reliable references." This shows that ChatGPT is seen as an alternative learning source. Firat, (2023) reported that "72% of respondents stated that ChatGPT made it easier for them to search for relevant information and references for their college assignments."

4. Improving understanding of difficult lecture materials

Some students admitted that ChatGPT helps them understand difficult materials. HA added, “When the material gets a bit difficult, I just give ChatGPT a prompt and ask it to explain it using easier words. That really helps me understand better.” This finding supports Stöhr et al., (2024), who revealed that “78% of students reported that ChatGPT helped them understand difficult course material.”

5. Enhancing New Knowledge

Students perceived that ChatGPT helps broaden their knowledge. Respondent IR added, “I’ve used ChatGPT to learn how to write essays, develop topics, and understand how to make better questions. It’s really helpful because I used to struggle with how to even begin.” This finding aligns with Margono et al., (2024), which stated that “ChatGPT was very helpful, especially in providing specific answers, handling complex tasks, increasing task efficiency, and delivering new knowledge.”

6. Satisfaction with The Speed and Accuracy of Answers

Most students were satisfied with ChatGPT’s answers. FR added, “The answers came very fast, just a few seconds, and they appeared. Most of the answers were accurate, although I still double-checked the sources to ensure correctness.” This aligns with Firaina & Sulisworo, (2023), who stated that students felt satisfied with the speed and accuracy of ChatGPT’s responses because it efficiently fulfilled their academic needs.

7. Improving Motivation and Learning Engagement

ChatGPT increased students’ enthusiasm for learning. FA added, “With ChatGPT’s help, I’ve become more active in learning. Whenever I don’t understand something, I can immediately find an answer, which keeps me motivated and less lazy to review my lessons. By being more active, I mean I’ve started searching for explanations on my own when facing difficult materials. I turn to ChatGPT and try to really understand what I didn’t grasp before.” This finding supports Chau et al., (2024) who stated that “ChatGPT was considered to provide additional knowledge easily, deliver accurate answers that satisfied students, and increase their motivation and activeness.”

8. Increasing Confidence in Completing Tasks.

Students felt more confident in completing assignments. IR added, “I feel more confident because after asking ChatGPT, I have a clear picture of the assignment before I even begin. It’s not just me figuring it all out on my own; I have a reference that helps guide me through the task.” Ravšelj et al., (2025) also reported that “as many as 65% of students felt more confident in completing academic assignments after using ChatGPT.”

9. Supporting Independent and Flexible Learning

Some students used ChatGPT for independent learning. HA added, “It’s quite helpful, especially for independent assignments. With ChatGPT, I don’t need to bother anyone else to understand something.” This aligns with Doris M. & Brennan, (2018) which stated, “Students felt that ChatGPT was very helpful in independent learning because it provided quick access to information and clear explanations. This allowed them to study more flexibly and according to their individual needs.”

10. Concerns About the Decline in self-Directed Learning and Critical Thinking Skills

Respondent FI said, “Sometimes I just accept the answers without thinking much. I realize that it’s not good, so I try to keep my brain working and not rely too much on ChatGPT.” This indicates a potential risk of reduced independent learning and critical thinking skills. Wahyudi et al., (2025) also emphasized that excessive dependence on technology can weaken students’ motivation for self-directed learning and analytical skills.

11. Concerns About Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

Respondent MA said, "From what I've seen, the level of plagiarism in ChatGPT's answers is quite high. I once tried copying directly without editing, and it was detected as pure plagiarism. So it definitely needs to be revised." This shows that students are aware of the risk of violating academic ethics if ChatGPT is used without paraphrasing. Mennalla & Quadros-Mennalla, (2024) also emphasized that using ChatGPT can raise issues of plagiarism and academic integrity, especially when students rely too much on technology and accept answers as they are without evaluation.

12. Concerns About the Accuracy and Reliability of Information

Respondent FI said, "I usually check first. I compare it with my lecture notes. Sometimes I open a book or search online to make sure the information is correct or not. And it really aligns with my assignments." This indicates that students are aware that ChatGPT is not always accurate, so verification is necessary before using it for academic tasks. Doris M. & Brennan, (2018) also highlighted concerns about the accuracy and reliability of ChatGPT's information, particularly because the AI does not always provide clear sources and may not originate from valid academic literature.

13. Concerns About reduced Social Interaction and Personal Engagement

Respondent FR said, "If we keep using ChatGPT, sometimes we become less active in asking questions in class. Since we already know the material beforehand, it feels like there's no need to ask. But I realize that discussion is important." This suggests that using ChatGPT may reduce students' motivation to actively participate in class discussions because they already know the answers in advance. Nisa et al., (2025) also emphasized that some students were concerned that the use of this technology could decrease social interaction and personal engagement between lecturers and students, as well as reduce motivation to participate actively in academic discussions.

CONCLUSION

The study of sixth-semester students in the English Education Program at Madako University revealed that students generally have a positive perception of ChatGPT as an academic tool. They found it easy to use and practical, helping them access information quickly, complete assignments efficiently, and better understand challenging materials. ChatGPT's fast and accurate responses also boosted students' confidence and motivation in learning. At the same time, students were aware of potential challenges, including the risk of plagiarism, inaccurate information, reduced independent learning, and less interaction with lecturers and peers. Overall, these findings suggest that ChatGPT can be a valuable academic aid when used wisely, supporting effective learning while maintaining academic integrity.

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