

The EFL Students' Perceptions of AI Writing Tools in Academic Writing Skills at Islamic University of Palangka Raya

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ABSTRACT

The development of artificial intelligence (AI) has brought significant changes to the field of education, particularly in improving students' academic writing skills. This study explores students' perceptions of using AI-based writing tools in the English Education program at the Islamic University of Palangka Raya. The study employed a qualitative descriptive method with a phenomenological design and involved five third-semester students selected through purposive sampling. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect data, which was then analyzed thematically to understand the students' experiences deeply. The results showed that ChatGPT was the most frequently used tool for generating ideas, organizing essays, and expanding academic knowledge. Conversely, Grammarly, QuillBot, Gemini AI, and Perplexity AI were mainly used to improve grammar and style. Students concluded that while AI can enhance writing quality and confidence, excessive use can hinder creativity and critical thinking skills, necessitating wise and proportional use.

Keywords: *Student Perceptions, EFL, Artificial Intelligence, Academic Writing*

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INTRODUCTION

The modern era is characterized by rapid technological and communicative developments, resulting in innovations that affect many aspects of life, especially education. One notable innovation is artificial intelligence (AI), a computer system designed to mimic human intelligence by learning, adapting, solving problems, making decisions, and comprehending language (Devi & Rroy, 2023). With these capabilities, AI is starting to be integrated into various sectors, including education, to support a more effective and efficient learning process. This development is part of a significant educational change supported by other technological advances. Therefore, the development of digital technology and artificial intelligence has had a significant impact on the education, as both are now important part of the modern learning process. One application that is growing is in the field of language teaching, where the use of AI has been proven to help students improve their academic writing skills (Pawestri & Pratolo, 2024).

In the last decade, technology has been a driving force in transforming education and improving learning quality. Artificial intelligence (AI) is one of the most talked about innovations of all time. Its popularity has increased with the introduction of the concepts of Industry 4.0 and Society 5.0, which emphasize the use of digital technology (Zahara et al., 2023). In the context of education, AI plays an important role in improving the efficiency of the teaching and learning process and providing a more personalized learning experience for each student (Grace et al., 2023). Some AI based tools students can use include ChatGPT, Grammarly, QuillBot, Turnitin, and Mendeley. These applications provide various functions, including reference organization, grammatical correction, writing support, and plagiarism identification, all of which are valuable for academic writing purposes (Rabbianty et al., 2023). The use of AI-based writing tools is growing, especially among students and English as a

Foreign Language (EFL) learners, due to their ability to provide instant feedback that improves writing accuracy and structure. The increasing use of AI in higher education confirms its role as a support, not a replacement, for human evaluators in the learning process.

In practice, academic writing requires high cognitive abilities because it involves the production, evaluation, revision, and delivery of ideas (Fang, 2021). Nonetheless, a lot of students still struggle with various parts of academic writing, particularly those who are learning English as a second language. As stated by Wicaksono et al. (2025), students often have difficulty developing ideas, managing references, organizing arguments, and applying complex grammatical structures. Therefore, writing tools powered by artificial intelligence (AI) have emerged as a promising solution because they can provide instant feedback, correct grammatical errors, and improve the structure of arguments. However, research exploring students' perceptions of AI tools in academic writing remains limited, especially among English Education Program learners, despite the growing presence of such tools in writing classrooms.

Artificial intelligence (AI)-powered technologies are increasingly being used in the context of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). These tools, which are often used to summarize and rephrase information, provide significant support for students in developing their academic writing skills (Gayed et al., 2022). Their capacity to offer prompt and instantaneous feedback, which improves writing efficiency and saves time, is one of these tools' most noteworthy benefits. With their user-friendly interface, these tools have become an essential resource for students to overcome challenges in academic writing. Recent studies also confirm these benefits. Lee, (2025) found that ChatGPT use increased students' confidence, vocabulary, and grammatical accuracy in writing, while Takallou, (2025) reported that Grammarly significantly improved writing quality and learner autonomy among EFL students.

At the local level, pupils enrolled in Islamic University Palangka Raya's English Education Study Program, especially the third-semester students taking the writing course, have also started utilizing various AI tools in their essay writing process. AI such as Grammarly, ChatGPT, and QuillBot have become the most widely used alternative to improve grammar, structure paragraphs, and develop ideas. However, the extent to which students understand, accept, and assess the effectiveness of these tools has not been widely researched. To ascertain if the use of AI actually improves students' writing abilities, it is essential to comprehend their perspectives. Understanding student perceptions in this specific context is crucial, as local academic environments often differ in terms of technology access, learning culture, and support in the learning process compared to larger universities.

According to Searle in Hasibuan et al. (2024) perception is a subjective experience that is experienced consciously or unconsciously and is influenced by cognitive and sensory processes in the brain. Research by Dwivedi et al. (2021) shows that positive student perceptions of AI are associated with increased learning motivation and better academic results. Students who perceive AI as a tool to improve their abilities tend to be more active in utilizing it optimally. In contrast, Brougham & Haar, (2018) research found that fear and resistance to AI can lead to stress and resistance in academic settings. This remark emphasizes how crucial it is to comprehend how students see the application of artificial intelligence (AI) in the classroom. This study focuses on understanding how students at Palangka Raya Islamic University perceive the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in academic writing, as their perceptions can influence the effectiveness of using these tools in language learning.

Previous research highlights the role of technology and AI tools as effective media in supporting academic writing, artificial intelligence technology have become media in writing instruction as they can improve students' academic writing skills (Fitria, 2023; Nguyen & Dieu, 2024; Sariyani et al., 2021; Setyani et al., 2023). Research has shown that students benefit from feedback, improved vocabulary, and better organization through tools such as ChatGPT and Grammarly. Teachers also recognize that AI writing assistants are helpful in producing more efficient scientific articles (Khabib, 2022). Experimental studies further confirm the

improvement in writing quality and motivation when using AI aids in EFL contexts (Marghany, 2023; Song & Song, 2023). However, Bašić et al. (2023) through a quasi-experimental study, found different results, namely that there was no significant difference in essay scores or writing speed between the group of students who used ChatGPT and the group who wrote conventionally, possibly due to the small sample size and the fact that the participants were first-time users of the tool.

Systematic reviews and broader analyses emphasize the potential of AI while warning about over-reliance and the importance of human judgment, technological tools support the development of ideas, structure, and evaluation in writing (Gururaj & Dsouza, 2024; Ling & Salam, 2024; Nguyen et al., 2024). Positive perceptions from students have also been observed in various contexts, including Malaysia, Oman, and Indonesia, where tools assist with translation, grammar checking, and idea generation (Al-Raimi et al., 2024; Rahman et al., 2022; Zulfa et al., 2023). Studies that use automatic linguistic analysis show that discourse features significantly influence writing quality. As confirmed (Petchprasert, 2021), effective integration of technology in writing instruction is crucial. However, given the diverse research results and contextual differences, additional research is needed to gain a more comprehensive understanding of students' perceptions and use of artificial intelligence (AI)-based writing tools, especially in local academic environments where research is still limited. The present study examines the perceptions of students in the English language education program at the Islamic University of Palangka Raya. The present study provides insight into how artificial intelligence (AI) tools are perceived and utilized in the context of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) at the local level.

This study differs from previous studies in terms of location, sample size, and scope of AI tools examined. Conducted at Islamic University Palangka Raya, this study deliberately limited its sample size to allow for in-depth exploration while emphasizing the local academic context, which is often overlooked in more general research. In contrast to previous studies that focused on a single tool or broad context, this study examines multiple AI-based writing tools simultaneously. This method provides a more thorough knowledge of how students use technology while writing for academic purposes. This study aims to fill the gaps in the literature, which is the main emphasis of this research, taking into account the different demands and challenges encountered by EFL learners.

This study examines how students use artificial intelligence (AI) technologies in writing classrooms using a descriptive qualitative methodology. The study focuses on third-semester students in English Education Study Program at the Islamic University Palangka Raya to determine which AI tools are most commonly used, their accessibility and utility, and how students view AI role in enhancing their academic writing abilities. In light of this problem, the researchers formulated three research questions: 1) What kinds of artificial intelligence technologies do students typically employ while writing essays? 2) How well do students think artificial intelligence (AI) technologies help them become better academic writers? 3) What benefits and drawbacks have students noted when utilizing writing tools powered by artificial intelligence (AI)?

METHOD

This study examines students' experiences using artificial intelligence (AI) tools when writing academic essays using a qualitative methodology and a phenomenological design. Students in the third semester of the Islamic University of Palangka Raya's English Education Study Program participated in a series of semi-structured interviews to gather data. It is presented in the form of words or images, such as interview transcripts, audio recordings, without emphasizing on numbers or numerical data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The primary objective is to deeply understand the meaning conveyed by individuals or groups regarding social and humanitarian issues. Purposive sampling, which chooses people according to predetermined standards, was used to choose the study's participants. Participants participated voluntarily, and each participant filled out a consent form before data collection.

This study uses thematic analysis Braun & Clarke, (2006) as the main approach to analyze qualitative data obtained from participants experiences. Thematic analysis was chosen as the method of analysis due to its flexibility and ability to systematically identify, organize, and interpret patterns or themes that emerge in the data (Nowell et al., 2017). Using this methodology, the study aims to investigate data on the reasons behind, difficulties encountered, and concentrations of students' usage of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies in academic writing. Through the use of this analytical framework, the study seeks to offer useful perspectives and practical approaches regarding the application of AI-based writing tools as a pertinent learning aid.

Participants

The participants in this study were third-semester students at an Islamic University Palangka Raya who use artificial intelligence (AI) in writing classes. A total of five students were selected as participants through purposive sampling based on specific criteria. At first, seventeen students were contacted through a preliminary questionnaire distributed from September 16 to 18, 2025. Based on their responses and willingness to participate, five students who met the criteria were selected for interviews. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with English majors from the same level, based on criteria including third-semester students who had taken essay writing courses, had experience using AI tools, had the highest grades in writing classes, and had used AI the most frequently.

Instruments

The interview method involves direct communication between the researcher and the participant. According to Johnson & Christense, (2019), interviewing is a data collection technique involving interaction between an interviewer and a participant. The interviewer asks questions, and the participant provides answers. This approach enables researchers to collect extensive qualitative data on participants' personal perspectives, emotions, thoughts, and opinions relevant to the research objectives. Third-semester English education students at the Islamic University of Palangka Raya who had previous experience in using AI writing tools participated in semi-structured interviews for this study. The interview questions were modified to fit the study's focus from Winarti et al. (2025). Google Meet was used to conduct the interviews online, and all sessions were audio recorded to ensure the accuracy of data collection. To use purposive sampling, participants were selected according to predetermined standards and guidelines. Each interview lasted around 15–20 minutes. The online format was chosen to provide flexibility and convenience for participants. All data was kept confidential, stored securely, and accessed only by the researchers. Participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. A series of open-ended questions aimed at focusing on students' perspectives and experiences in using AI were used throughout the interviews. A total of nine questions were included in the interviews to obtain comprehensive data and detailed explanations about students' experiences in using AI-based learning media for academic writing in English. The following is a list of questions from the semi-structured interviews:

What do you think about AI in the context of academic writing?

How often do you use AI in academic writing? What are your main reasons for using it?

What kind of AI tools that have you use?

What do you think is the role of AI in helping the process of writing essays in English?

Do you think AI can really improve the quality of EFL students' academic writing? If so, what aspects improve? If not, why?

How did you feel when you first used AI to write an essay?

Does the use of AI help reduce anxiety or stress in academic writing? Please describe your experience?

Do you see artificial intelligence (AI) as a tool that helps or hinders the progress of academic writing skills? Explain.

At what stage of writing your essay do you most often use AI? (Example: brainstorming ideas, checking grammar, rephrasing, analysis, argument development, etc.)

Procedures

The data collection process is organized in stages with the focus on ensuring that the information obtained is collected in a systematic and structured manner. First, permission was obtained from the course lecturer to collect data for research purposes. Then, a questionnaire was developed as a pre-instrument screening tool. Instead than being the main method for gathering data, the questionnaire in this study was employed to choose appropriate individuals. Their responses on how frequently they utilize AI products and if they are willing to engage in audio-recorded interviews served as the selection criteria. The researchers explained the purpose of this screening stage in detail to make sure that the participants understood its function. Five students with the highest grades in the essay writing course were found to meet the criteria and agree to be interviewed online. The interviews were conducted via Google Meet at times convenient for the participants to promote relaxation and comfort during the interview. The online format was chosen to provide flexibility and convenience for the participants. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the data collection method because they provided an opportunity to gain in-depth insights into participants' experiences and perceptions regarding the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the context of essay writing classes. In addition, by conducting these interviews, it was possible to determine the type of AI to use by participants and understand how AI functioned in their overall writing process. The interviews were conducted in September 18 to 20, 2025 and lasted around 15-20 minutes per session. All audio recordings were stored securely and were accessible only to the researchers. After transcription, participants were invited to verify their responses to ensure data accuracy (member checking).

Data analysis

Thematic analysis was employed to interpret the qualitative data derived from semi-structured interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Because this study used a qualitative design, the analysis focused on the narratives and experiences of participants rather than numerical representations. Thematic analysis was chosen because it allows researchers to identify, organize, and interpret recurring patterns or themes in interview transcripts, thereby enabling a deeper understanding of students' perceptions.

The analysis process followed the framework of Braun and Clarke, which includes transcription, coding, theme identification, reviews, definition, and report preparation. Selected excerpts from the interviews were used as supporting evidence for each identified theme to ensure that the findings accurately reflected the participants' real experiences. This systematic procedure enables researchers to interpret the meaning underlying students' interactions with AI tools for academic essay writing and present the results as a coherent, theoretically supported narrative.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In order to gain a comprehensive knowledge of how EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students regard the usage of artificial intelligence (AI) in the composition of English essays, a structured interview was performed. The findings of this study are presented in this section. This conversation incorporates these results with pertinent evaluations of recent research, examining how students see AI, how well it supports writing, and the benefits and drawbacks of AI when it comes to writing essays.

AI Tools Commonly Used for Essay Writing

In the context of actual learning, many EFL students continue to struggle with improving their academic writing skills, which is a crucial skill for college and career readiness. Kovach et al. (2012) emphasize that the main difficulty lies in the ability to express ideas clearly and structurally. Demneri, (2024) similarly found that the obstacles faced by the students include limitations in grammar, use of formal language, limited vocabulary, and difficulty in finding relevant ideas to write about. Furthermore, Budjalemba & Listyani, (2020)

classify the causes of writing difficulties into two categories: The internal factors (low motivation, lack of confidence, emotional pressure) and the external factors (teaching methods, materials, and learning environment).

As technology develops further, applications based on artificial intelligence (AI) have emerged as a viable substitute for aiding EFL students in honing their academic writing abilities. A technical system that integrates intelligent software intended to assist people in carrying out a variety of tasks, like writing, is known as artificial intelligence. Digital platforms that utilize AI allow students to receive the language input and output they need, which helps them develop their writing skills (Song & Song, 2023). Its accessibility via computers and mobile devices makes AI increasingly relevant for effective writing learning.

In higher education, AI is a fascinating and relevant topic. It offers opportunities to enhance the student learning experience, including personalized learning, in-depth data analysis, and more responsive interactions with students (Ma'amor et al., 2024). According to Luckin et al. (2016) classify AI software in education into three categories: personal tutoring systems, intelligent programs that facilitate collaborative learning, and advanced virtual reality technologies. One notable form of implementation is the Intelligent Tutoring System (ITS), an AI-based computer application that mimics the way humans teach and interact with students through a question-and-answer format (Yusuf et al., 2022). With the use of neural networks, learning models, and algorithms, this system can identify the best learning route and material for every student. The Intelligent Tutoring System is particularly useful in distance learning institutions, where instructors struggle to monitor thousands of students individually (Gomes, 2024). These results demonstrate that learning is a social process that necessitates communication and teamwork, and AI is essential to getting beyond these constraints. Therefore, to learn more about how students see AI as a tool in the academic writing process, it is crucial to comprehend how it is used in education.

Based on the interview results, it was found that students use various types of artificial intelligence (AI)-based tools to assist in the process of writing academic essays. The tools most frequently mentioned by participants were ChatGPT, Grammarly, QuillBot, Gemini AI, and Perplexity AI.

Most students mentioned that ChatGPT helps them find starting ideas and outline their writing. Student A stated, "I often use AI, especially when stuck or confused. For example, I start by searching for ideas from AI to develop my ideas." This statement shows that ChatGPT is a source of inspiration when students struggle to write. In addition to ChatGPT, other applications such as Grammarly and QuillBot are also frequently used, especially in the final stages of writing. Student P1 added, "At the end, I usually use AI to check grammar." The same was expressed by Student P2, "Every time I use AI, it can provide a summary or opening sentence before I write the essay further, and it can also improve sentence structure according to grammar."

Meanwhile, P3 said that he uses ChatGPT more often because of its ease of use and comprehensive features: "I use AI quite often, especially to find ideas and more academic grammar, because I think it's faster and more practical." This statement shows that ChatGPT is the preferred choice because it provides fast and relevant results.

Some students also combine several tools at once for more optimal results. P4 stated, "I most often use ChatGPT, Gemini AI, Grammarly, and Quillbot." Meanwhile, P1 also confirmed similar usage: "I usually use ChatGPT and Perplexity to develop ideas and templates, but for grammar checking, I use Grammarly and QuillBot." In addition to these tools, some students use AI to understand lecturer assignment instructions. P5 revealed, "Sometimes I don't quite understand the assignments given by lecturers, so I ask AI to explain them so I can understand." This shows that although the primary purpose of using AI is for writing, some students also utilize AI features to obtain additional explanations related to academic assignments.

In conclusion, the interview results show that ChatGPT is the most dominant AI tool used by students because it is considered the most accessible and capable of helping in the early stages of writing, such as finding ideas, creating an outline, and providing examples of

academic sentences. Meanwhile, Grammarly, QuillBot, Gemini AI, and Perplexity AI are complementary tools, especially for language editing, grammar checking, and understanding task instructions. Some students also mentioned that combining several AI tools makes the writing process more efficient and the results more focused. In addition, the choice of AI tools tends to be tailored to the purpose of use, for example, Grammarly for grammar checking, QuillBot for paraphrasing, and ChatGPT for brainstorming ideas. This diversity of use shows that students strategically utilize various AI tools according to their needs at each stage of academic writing.

The Students' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of AI Tools in Academic Writing

Artificial intelligence (AI)-based learning tools are various tools, applications, or software designed to assist students in their learning process. These tools can also be used for academic writing, offering automatic features for correction, editing, and text completion (Perkins, 2023). According to Adams & Chuah, (2022) artificial intelligence (AI) refers to a technological system that mimics human intelligence. Similarly, Khabib, (2022) states that AI involves developing machines that can exhibit intelligent behavior and learn from data. When it comes to academic writing, artificial intelligence (AI) is seen as a means of enhancing the efficacy and efficiency with which learning objectives are met, particularly in the context of English writing. Word processors consist of computer programs that allow students to write electronically and offer grammar and spelling checks. Additionally, various online tools serve as platforms for students to write, such as blogs and e-portfolios.

One example of artificial intelligence (AI) application is ChatGPT, which provides reading references for writers to improve the quality and quantity of their academic writing (Kumar, 2023). Other AI-based applications that support academic writing include Grammarly and QuillBot. These tools help improve grammar, develop writing style, and organize ideas. Chen (2023) identifies three main categories of AI tools for academic writing: writing assistance (e.g., QuillBot), translation (e.g., DeepL Translator), and content creation (e.g., ChatGPT).

Based on the interview results, students view AI as a very useful tool in academic writing, particularly in improving grammar, sentence structure, and idea development. P1 stated, "AI is quite helpful as a supporting tool in improving grammar, sentence structure, brainstorming ideas, and finding templates or examples of essay structures, from the introduction to the conclusion." This shows that AI functions as a learning assistant that helps students understand academic writing patterns more clearly. In addition, P2 also emphasized, "AI is very helpful in providing basic ideas and improving grammar. If I already have an idea, AI helps me improve my grammar and even provides sentence variations so that the essay feels more natural." This quote shows that AI not only corrects technical errors but also enriches students' writing style to better suit the academic context. In line with this, P3 adds, "AI helps improve the quality of essay writing, especially in terms of grammar, vocabulary, and idea organization." This view shows that students use AI to facilitate the improvement of their writing quality, while also learning from the corrections provided by the system.

However, some students are also aware of the limitations and potential dependence on AI. P4 explains, "AI is very helpful, but if it is used without revision or reflection, the results often do not match the lecturer's instructions. So AI is good, but it must be used carefully." Similarly, P5 reveals, "Sometimes, because I use AI so often, I become too accustomed to automatically generated sentence structures. Eventually, it becomes difficult to write without AI assistance."

Furthermore, these results show that artificial intelligence (AI) has a positive impact on students' academic writing skills. AI helps them find ideas, improve grammar, and organize their writing more focused. However, excessive use without personal understanding and reflection can reduce critical thinking skills and independence in writing. Therefore, AI should be used to strengthen the learning process, not as a substitute for the writer's role in producing original and meaningful academic work.

Advantages and Disadvantages of AI-Based Writing Tools

Understanding the benefits and drawbacks of artificial intelligence in the context of education, particularly how it might help EFL students with their academic writing abilities, is crucial as this technology becomes more and more incorporated into the classroom. Computer-assisted instruction and learning are becoming more effective because to developments in artificial intelligence (AI). In the context of education, developers design systems as interconnected ecosystems, where changes to one system can affect the entire ecosystem (Luckin et al., 2022). A significant benefit of artificial intelligence (AI) in education is its ability to adapt to specific learning objectives based on in-depth research while remaining applicable to other systems in the educational environment (Nye, 2016).

The main limitation of artificial intelligence (AI) systems compared to human capabilities is their inability to transfer or apply the knowledge they have acquired to new contexts or environments that are very different from the data or scenarios to use in their programming or training. This ability, often referred to as transferability, remains a challenge in various contexts. AI systems have difficulty recognizing objects or activities in unfamiliar environments and struggle to adapt their skills to changing conditions (Davis & Marcus, 2015; Ersen et al., 2017)

Based on the interview results, students view AI as a very helpful tool in academic writing, especially in generating ideas, structuring writing, and improving grammar. P1 explained, "For essay writing in semester 1, the lecturer also directed us to search for or brainstorm ideas through AI, it turned out to be very helpful and also gave me a sense of relief. This is because the lecturer himself taught us how to use AI as an initial stage in organizing ideas, so that the writing is not entirely AI-generated and requires revision by humans themselves." This statement illustrates that the use of AI is not only understood as a technical tool, but also as part of a learning process that requires the active involvement of students.

P2 expressed a similar sentiment, saying, "Because essay writing involves a lot of writing, it really helps to ease my anxiety. Most college assignments have tight deadlines, especially writing assignments, and AI can also provide ideas." She added that AI is used to improve vocabulary and practice paraphrasing. This shows that AI not only helps from a technical standpoint, but also provides confidence when writing under time pressure. P3 also had a similar view. He said, "The first time I used it, I felt happy and helped, of course, so the writing process was more focused and organized." In addition, he added, "AI really helps me with my anxiety when writing, because I feel like I have assistance in writing, for example when I'm looking for ideas or starting to compose sentences." This quote shows that AI can act as a learning companion that helps students overcome confusion in composing academic writing.

However, despite the perceived benefits, students are also aware of the risk of dependence on AI. P4 shared his experience, "The first time I used AI, I was quite impressed. It turned out that AI could immediately provide neat answers, so I felt more helped. But on the other hand, I sometimes feel a little hesitant. Is it okay to use this for college assignments? I'm afraid it might be considered plagiarism". She also added. "If we become too dependent on it, it can make us lazy in our thinking." This shows that while AI facilitates the writing process, it still needs to be accompanied by understanding and reflection, not to reduce independent thinking skills.

A similar view was expressed by P5, who said, "I'm happy because it helps me and I understand my tasks better, so I don't need to ask my friends. If there is AI, we can ask AI, which will explain and correct any vocabulary and grammar mistakes." However, they also emphasized the importance of balance by adding, "If we use AI too much for the entire task from start to finish, it doesn't help, we become lazy and cannot improve our skills. So AI helps if it is used correctly."

The interview results showed that AI helped students with the academic writing process, particularly with generating ideas, improving grammar, and organizing writing structure. It helps them reduce anxiety, boost confidence, and speed up the process. However, some students realize that excessive AI use can lead to dependence and reduce critical thinking

skills. Therefore, AI should be used wisely as a supporting tool that complements the writing learning process rather than replacing students' active roles in thinking and creating.

CONCLUSIONS

According to the study's findings, students enrolled in the English Education Study Program at the Islamic University of Palangka Raya greatly benefited from the application of artificial intelligence (AI) in their academic writing. AI helped them generate ideas, organize essays, improve grammar and vocabulary, construct sentences, and understand the assignment instructions given by lecturers. With the help of AI, students become more confident in their writing, especially when faced with difficulties in starting a paragraph or constructing a logical argument. Some students also feel that AI helps them overcome anxiety and deadline pressure because it can provide examples, suggestions, and feedback quickly. In addition, AI plays an important role in improving the efficiency and quality of writing by providing more academic sentence alternatives and a more systematic writing structure. However, some students realize that excessive use can lead to dependence and reduce independent thinking and creativity. Therefore, AI needs to be used in a balanced and responsible manner, as a tool that strengthens the learning process, not replaces it. Thus, the main role of students as writers is maintained, and AI functions as a learning partner that helps produce original, critical, and high-quality academic work.

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