ANALYZING STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) IN WRITING ENGLISH ESSAYS AT ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF INDRAGIRI

Nisva Okta Selly[1], Samsul Amri[2], Sri Erma Purwanti[3]
English Education Study Program
Universitas Islam Indragiri, Indonesia
E-mail: [1]*nisvatembilahan@gmail.com*, [2]*mr.amri85@gmail.com,*
[3]*sri88erma@gmail.com*

ABSTRACT

The importance of conducting this research is to determine whether AI can be a possible tool for students to assist them in writing English essays. There is a gap between the theoretical potential of AI tools in improving English essay writing and the practical challenges faced by students, such as the issue of plagiarism, inaccurate information, and unstable internet access in using AI when writing English essays. This study aims to identify students' perception on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in writing English essays at Islamic University of Indragiri. The method used in this study is a quantitative descriptive approach with data collection techniques through a questionnaire consisting of 25 statement items, which were given to 64 students. Data were analyzed using a 4-point Likert scale. The results showed that the majority of students had a positive perception of their familiarity and understanding of AI, as well as its benefits in writing English essays. However, their perceptions of the originality and accuracy of the information provided by AI tended to be neutral, considering that some of the information obtained was not always in accordance with the topic or was inaccurate. On the other hand, obstacles such as unstable internet connection quality also affected the effectiveness of using AI. Overall, students' perceptions of the use of AI in writing English essays can be categorized as moderate, with differences of opinion regarding its advantages and limitations.

Keywords: *Student Perception, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Essay Writing, English*

INTRODUCTION

One of the factors influencing change in education is the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), according to Mahato (2022: 197), "Artificial Intelligence is a study of how human brain think, learn, decide, and work, when it tries to solve problems." The phenomenon of the use of AI in education has become a highlight, including in writing English essay. AI offers innovative solutions to help students

find the material and provide corrections or feedback on their English essays. There are many AI tools that can help students when writing English essays, for example ChatGPT, AI Writer, and Claud AI. This type of AI is very easy to use, students only need to type what they need and AI will provide answers directly. In addition, there are also Grammarly and Quillbot, both of which are useful for helping students detect errors in writing and suggest how to write the correct sentence structure.

Essay writing is an important skill that students need, especially in learning English. As stated by Ario (2020: 8) that an essay is a short piece of writing that presents a topic from the author's point of view. English essays mainly highlight the author's personal thoughts or opinions on a particular subject or event and are written in English. It involves creating a well-organized piece of writing that clearly expresses ideas, with correct grammar and structure.

However, it is not certain whether AI really helps students in writing English essays due to the many difficulties in writing. One of the issues is that students often struggle to find relevant ideas and information through AI, leading to confusion and frustration when the results are not accurate to the required topic. In addition, the issue of plagiarism where students make quotes or information without citing the source is also a problem in the use of AI in writing English essays. Since AI can generate text based on databases and previous sources, it is possible that data may be presented without clear citation of its sources. Another challenge that students often experience when using AI in writing English essay is an unstable internet connection. Poor internet connection can hinder students' ability to access AI tools or retrieve relevant information in their English essay writing process. This becomes very frustrating for students when relying on AI for timely assistance in writing. As a result, students may find it difficult to get the full benefits of AI technology when faced with this problem in writing English essays.

Despite these challenges, the potential benefits of AI in helping students improve their writing skills remain significant. Students' interaction with AI while writing English essays could enhance their abilities. By understanding students'

perceptions of AI, we can assess whether AI is a helpful tool for them. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to identify students' perception on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in writing English essays at Islamic University of Indragiri.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of Perception

Perception is the cognitive process by which individuals interpret and make sense of sensory information from the environment. According to Kenyon & Sen (2015:1), "Perception is a process where a person selects, organizes, identifies and interprets the sensory information he receives in order to understand his environment." Demuth (2013: 23) stated that the top-down perception theory is a process that involves knowledge or information that already exists in memory in processing information obtained from the environment to produce perception. While the bottom-up perception is a psychological theory that explains how people understand the world around them by starting with sensory information and building up to higher-order perceptions.

The perception indicators in this research can be linked to several factors that describe how students feel and evaluate the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in writing English essays. One of them is familiarity with AI (Mahato, 2022: 197), which measures how familiar students are with the use of AI. This familiarity is very important because the level of understanding of AI tools will affect students' comfort and confidence in using the technology in writing essays. Furthermore, the usefulness of AI in writing English essays (Jen & Salam, 2024: 92) focuses on students' perceptions of the extent to which AI is useful in helping them complete essay writing assignments. This indicator will explore whether students feel that AI makes a significant contribution to improving the quality of their essays, both in terms of searching for material, compiling arguments, and improving language.

Originality of AI in writing English essays (Jen & Salam, 2024: 92) is also an important indicator, which measures the extent to which students feel that AI is capable of producing original and unduplicated content. The issue of originality is

very relevant because it can relate to the potential for plagiarism which is often a concern in the use of AI. In addition, the accuracy of information obtained from AI (Rahayu, 2023: 2136) is an indicator that describes the extent to which students believe that the information provided by AI is accurate and in accordance with the topic being worked on. The accuracy of information is very important in essay writing because it can affect the quality of the argumentation and validity of the essay produced. Finally, the accessibility of AI in writing English essays (Akmad & Abatayo, 2024: 282) measures the extent to which students can easily access the AI tool, both in terms of platform availability and a stable internet connection. This accessibility is important because technical barriers such as poor internet connections can reduce the effectiveness of using AI in the writing process.

By combining all these indicators, this research aims to explore students' perceptions of the use of AI in writing English essays, as well as understand the factors that influence the extent to which AI can help improve their writing skills.

Artificial Intelligence

According to Mahato (2022: 197), "Artificial Intelligence is a study of how human brain think, learn, decide, and work, when it tries to solve problems." Furthermore, AI is the basis of various concepts in the field of computer science and technology. Eriana & Zein (2023: 1) stated that AI is a branch of computer science that aims to develop systems and machines that are able to learn from data, recognize patterns, and make intelligent decisions by involving the use of algorithms and mathematical models.

The history of the emergence of AI began in the 1950s, when scientists and researchers thought about how machines could do their jobs like humans could. According to Khan (2024: 126), "AI, a concept first introduced by American computer scientist John McCarthy during the 1956 Dartmouth Conference, encompasses the study of computational models capable of mimicking human cognitive functions, notably reasoning and behavior." The conference also defined the main goal of AI, it is to understand and model human thought processes and design machines that can imitate human behavior.

Artificial Intelligence in Education

One type of AI application that has been implemented in education to improve the teaching and learning process is the use of chatbots. As stated by Haristiani (2019: 1) that chatbot is a computer program or artificial intelligence that converses with users via text or audio and engages them in a certain topic or domain by providing insightful responses in natural language. Although AI has great potential to improve the learning process, unstable internet connections in some rural or remote areas are a significant obstacle. In fact, Akmad & Abatayo (2024: 282) stated that the internet has a significant impact on accessing information, facilitating communication, and changing learning methods.

Artificial Intelligence in Writing English Essays

Writing English essays refers to students' ability to organize ideas, develop arguments, and use proper grammar. According to Imastuti, Sujoko, & Suparno (2014: 30), "Writing ability is capacity of someone to produce written message from words, into sentences, into text, into coherence whole where the readers can understand the meaning." AI tools have become valuable for improving writing quality. Jen & Salam (2024: 92) stated that AI helps gather information, provide relevant sources, offer new insights, and give feedback to writers. Some examples of AI for writing English essays are ChatGPT, AI Writer, Claud AI, Grammarly, and Quillbot.

However, the use of AI in English essay writing can increase the risk of plagiarism, according to Jen & Salam (2024: 92), "There are cases of students copying the essays from AI tools mainly ChatGPT as it can provide personalized answers based on the students' manuscripts." In addition, inaccurate AI information can be a significant problem in writing English essays. As stated by Rahayu (2023: 2136) that the use of AI is still challenges because AI is not yet fully able to imitate and adapt to human intelligence.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research used descriptive quantitative method. The population of this research consisted of 64 students English Education study program, Teachers Training and Education Faculty, Islamic University of Indragiri. In this research, the researcher used proportionate stratified random sampling technique. As stated by Hikmawati (2017: 64) that proportionate stratified random sampling is used when a population is stratified and not homogeneous. The researcher took 64 samples consisting of 18 students from 4th semester, 14 students from 6th semester, and 32 students from 8th semester.

The researcher used questionnaires as a data collection technique. As stated by Abubakar (2020: 117) a questionnaire is a list containing questions that will be asked to respondents to obtain answers in order to obtain the data needed in the study. This questionnaire consisted of 25 statements, the answer choices consist of a Likert scale model with four answer choices consisting of strongly agree (score 4), agree (score 3), disagree (score 2), and strongly disagree (score 1). As stated by Widoyoko (2016: 106) that by using a four-answer Likert scale, there is no opportunity for respondents to be neutral, thus forcing respondents to determine their attitude towards the social phenomena asked or stated in the instrument. The data gathered were analyzed by finding the mean score of the questionnaire result.

Table 1: Frequency Table and Score Range Categories

Total Score	Perception Level	Description
25 – 43%	Low	Students show negative attitudes or less agreement towards the use of AI.
44 – 62%	Moderate	Students showed a neutral attitude towards the use of AI.
63 – 81%	High	Students tend to agree or be positive about the use of AI in writing essays.
82 – 100%	Very High	Students strongly agree or are very positive about the use of AI

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The result obtained on each of the survey questions are presented below:

Table 2: Percentage of Student Perception Responses to All Indicators

No.	Indicators	Percentages	Classification	Mean Score	Criteria
1.	Familiarity with AI	67%	High		
2.	Usefulness of AI in Writing English Essays	61%	Moderate		
3.	Originality of AI in Writing English Essays	45%	Moderate	58.8%	Moderate
4.	Accuracy of Information Obtained from AI	55%	Moderate		
5.	Accessibility of AI in Writing English Essays	66%	High		

Based on the data obtained regarding students' perceptions of the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in writing English essays, there are several interesting findings to analyze. The main findings show that although most students have a high level of familiarity and accessibility with AI, their perceptions of the usefulness, originality, and accuracy of the information generated by AI tend to be more moderate. These findings indicate that although AI has great potential to assist students in writing essays, there are several challenges that need to be overcome. Students tend to see AI as a useful and accessible tool, but they also have concerns about the originality and accuracy of the information provided by AI.

On the first indicator about familiarity with AI, students have a positive perception and understanding of AI. This shows that students have a good understanding of this topic. The result is similar to the research conducted by Rizkika (2024: 17-34), the findings showed that most students had a positive attitude towards AI. This indicates that AI has begun to be accepted and understood by most students as a tool to help them write English essays. They realize that AI can help them in various aspects of writing, such as planning essay writing, organizing ideas, choosing the right words, or even checking grammar and spelling. This shows that students are not only familiar with AI, but also understand how to apply it practically in writing English essays. Although the majority of students felt quite confident with their understanding, there was also a

small number of students who felt that they still needed more knowledge to optimally utilize AI in writing English essays. This shows that although most students feel ready to use AI, there is still room for improvement in their understanding of AI.

Then, on the second indicator, students have a neutral perception towards the usefulness of AI in writing English essays. The neutral perception is caused by the varied answers from students. Differences in levels of experience or knowledge are one of the factors that influence them to tend to answer positively or negatively. Although the majority of students consider the use of AI to be very useful, some of them still choose to write essays manually without the help of AI.

Similarly to the third indicator, students have neutral perception towards the originality of AI in writing English essays. Although AI is used as a tool to facilitate the search for relevant ideas or topics in English essay writing, students still have enough awareness of the ethics and originality of using AI in English essay writing. This shows that most students understand the importance of proper writing etiquette and citation in academic writing. They realize that copying work without giving proper credit is a violation of academic rules.

Based on the fourth indicator, students also have neutral perception towards the accuracy of information obtained from AI. The neutral perception is caused by the varied answers from students. Although AI is able to present various information, sometimes students get information that is inaccurate or inappropriate to the English essay topic they are looking for. Therefore, students have the awareness to double-check the information they get through AI when writing English essays. This could also be an indication that students do not fully rely on AI when writing English essays.

Then, based on the last indicator, students have a positive perception towards the accessibility of AI in writing English essays. Students agree that unstable internet networks hinder the effectiveness of using AI when writing English essays. The quality of the internet network is one of the things that affects the use of AI. In district areas, the quality of internet speed is often lower than in the capital city. Unstable internet connections often also occur due to the long

distance from the main network center. This is what makes it difficult for students to access AI when writing English essays. Students believe that a good internet connection can improve the performance and effectiveness of using AI in the process of writing English essays.

Based on the overall mean score on the five indicators is 58.8% which is classified as moderate. This indicates that students' perceptions of the use of AI in writing English essays tend to have many variations. Overall, most students have a positive perception of the use of AI in writing English essays. However, the mean score which is classified as moderate indicates that there are differences of opinion among students regarding the advantages and disadvantages of this technology. Positive perceptions are more related to the familiarity and usefulness that AI can provide when writing English essays, while negative perceptions are related to the quality of originality and accuracy of information which are still questionable, as well as obstacles to unstable internet access when using AI in writing English essays.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study was conducted to determine the perception of students of the English Language Education Study Program, Islamic University of Indragiri about the use of Artificial Intelligence in writing English essays. In this research, the researcher used questionnaire as research instrument, it consists of 25 statements. The instrument was answered by 64 students consisting of 4th, 6th, and 8th semester students from the English Language Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Islamic University of Indragiri.

After conducting research and obtaining data, it can be concluded that students' perceptions of the use of AI in writing English essays are in the moderate classification. This can be interpreted that students' perceptions tend to have many variations. Overall, most students have a positive perception of the use of AI in writing English essays. However, the mean score which is classified as moderate indicates that there are differences of opinion among students regarding the advantages and disadvantages of this technology. Positive perceptions are more

related to the familiarity and usefulness that AI can provide when writing English essays, while negative perceptions are related to the quality of originality and accuracy of information which are still questionable, as well as obstacles to unstable internet access when using AI in writing English essays.

It is important for students to deepen the understanding of the wise use of AI in English essay writing. Students must ensure that the information from AI is accurate, relevant, and ethical, such as avoiding plagiarism and citing sources correctly. On the other hand, it is recommended that lecturers provide training to students on the effective and ethical use of AI in English essay writing. Lecturers can emphasize the importance of verifying information from AI and help students use this technology responsibly, as well as understand its limitations and potential in English essay writing. Finally, the researcher suggests that future researchers consider other research methods, such as experiments method, it can be conducted to measure the long-term impact of AI use on students' English essay writing skills and essay quality. With more diverse methods, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of this topic.

REFERENCES

Abubakar, R. (2020). *Pengantar Metodologi Penelitian.* Yogyakarta: SUKA-Press UIN Sunan Kalijaga.

Akmad, A. P., & Abatayo, A. V. (2024). Caught in the Slow Lane: Effects of Unstable Internet Connectivity on Accessing Academic Resources and Collaborative Learning. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives Vol. 2 No. 9*, 282.

Ario, F. (2020). *Kritik dan Esau Bahasa Indonesia Kelas XII.* Jakarta: Direktorat SMA, Direktorat Jendral PAUD, DIKDAS, dan DIKMEN.

Demuth, A. (2013). *Perception Theories.* krakow: Trnavskej univerzity v Trnave.

Eriana , E. S., & Zein, A. (2023). *Artificial Intelligence (AI).* Pamulang: CV. Eureka Media Aksara.

Haristiani, N. (2019). Artificial Intelligence (AI) Chatbot as Language Learning Medium: An inquiry . *Journal of Physics: Conference Series* , 1.

Hikmawati, F. (2017). *Metodologi Penelitian.* Bandung: Rajawali Pers.

Imastuti, M. W., Sujoko, & Suparno. (2014). Improving Students' Writing Ability in Narrative Text Using Picture Series. *English Education: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Sebelas Maret*, 30.

Jen, S. L., & Salam, A. R. (2024). Using Artificial Intelligence for Essay Writing. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ) Special Issue on ChatGPT*, 92.

Kenyon, G. N., & Sen, K. (2015). *The Perception Process.* London: Springer, London.

Khan, M. R. (2024). The Role of AI in Enhancing Accessibility for People with Disabilities. *Journal of Artificial Intelligence General Science JAIGS Vol. 3 Issue 01*, 126.

Mahato, R. (2022). Artificial Intelligence, What is It? *Outcomes of Best Practices in Classroom Research*, 197.

Rahayu, S. (2023). The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Education: Opportunities and Challenges. *Jurnal Educatio Vol. 9 No. 4*, 2136.

Rizkika, M. M. (2024). *Students Perception of Artificial Intelligence as English Learning Tools at Sriwijaya University.* Palembang: Universitas Sriwijaya.

Widoyoko, E. P. (2016). *Teknik Penyusunan Instrumen Penelitian.* Lampung: Pustaka Pelajar.