

Teachers' Perceptions of Artificial Intelligence Utilization in English Language Teaching at an Islamic Boarding School

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Abstract

The development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has influenced English language learning by providing various tools such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, and Duolingo. This study aimed to explore teachers' perceptions of AI use in English language learning at an Islamic senior high school in Pekanbaru. A descriptive qualitative method was employed, involving English teachers selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation and analyzed using data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings revealed that teachers generally had positive perceptions of AI. They believed that AI helped improve students' vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and learning motivation. AI also assisted teachers in preparing learning materials and creating interactive learning activities. However, several challenges were identified, including limited technological skills, internet access issues, and concerns about students' overreliance on technology. The study concludes that AI can effectively support English language learning when used appropriately and responsibly by teachers.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI), English Language Learning, Teachers' Perceptions, Digital Education, Educational Technolog

A. Introduction

The development of digital technology in the current era of globalization has brought significant changes to various aspects of human life, including education. Technological advances have not only influenced the way humans communicate and obtain information but have also transformed learning systems to become more modern, flexible, and technology-based. One rapidly developing technology that is currently attracting global attention is Artificial Intelligence (AI). Artificial Intelligence is a technology designed to mimic human thinking, comprehending information, solving problems, and making decisions automatically through computer systems. The emergence of AI is one of the greatest innovations in the Industrial Revolution 4.0 era because it can assist humans in various areas of life, such as health, economics, industry, communications, and education.

According to John McCarthy, Artificial Intelligence is the science and engineering of creating intelligent machines that can work and think like humans. As technology advances, AI continues to improve and is beginning to be applied in various daily activities. Currently, AI can be found in various forms of digital technology, such as chatbots, automatic translation machines, learning applications, speech recognition, and data analysis systems. The presence of AI provides many conveniences for humans by making work faster, more practical, and more efficient. Therefore, AI is considered a crucial technology that significantly impacts modern society.

In education, Artificial Intelligence is an innovation with significant potential to improve the quality of learning. Education in the digital era no longer focuses solely on conventional learning methods but is also beginning to utilize technology as an interactive learning medium. The use of technology in education is crucial because today's students are a digital generation intimately connected to the internet and technological devices. According to Jean Piaget, the learning process will be more effective if students are actively involved in the learning process. With AI, students can learn more independently, actively, and flexibly according to their individual needs and abilities.

Artificial Intelligence offers various benefits in education, particularly in helping the teaching and learning process become more effective and innovative. AI can provide broader learning resources, provide automatic feedback, assist teachers in developing learning materials, and facilitate student understanding. Furthermore, AI can also create personalized learning, which is learning tailored to the abilities and needs of each student. According to Vygotsky, students need support or assistance in the learning process to achieve optimal development. In this case, AI can function as a learning tool that supports students during the learning process.

In English learning, the use of Artificial Intelligence is becoming increasingly popular because it can help students improve various language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Currently, many AI-based applications are used in English learning, such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, Duolingo, and Google Translate. These applications can help students improve grammar, expand vocabulary, practice pronunciation, and provide automatic language practice. The presence of AI also makes the English learning process more engaging because students can learn through interactive digital media that is easily accessible anytime and anywhere.

In addition to assisting students, AI also benefits teachers in the learning process. Teachers can use AI to create teaching materials, find learning resources, compile practice questions, and assist in more efficient learning evaluations. The use of AI can also help teachers create more creative and innovative learning methods, thereby increasing student motivation to learn English. According to B.F. Skinner, learning will be more effective if students receive immediate responses or feedback. In this case, AI can provide rapid feedback on student learning outcomes, helping them identify errors and correct them independently.

However, the use of Artificial Intelligence in education also raises various challenges and differing views among teachers. Some teachers view AI as a technology that significantly assists the learning process because it can increase the effectiveness and efficiency of learning. However, others are concerned that excessive use of AI can stifle student creativity, lead to technology dependence, and diminish critical thinking skills. Furthermore, not all teachers have sufficient technological skills to use AI in learning. Therefore, teacher perceptions of the use of Artificial Intelligence are important to research, as teachers play a key role in determining the success of technology implementation in the classroom.

Several previous studies have shown that Artificial Intelligence has a positive impact on English language learning. Research conducted by Chen states that the use of AI in language learning can increase student motivation and help them understand the material more easily.

Furthermore, research by Holmes explains that AI has great potential in creating more personalized and interactive learning. Another study by Luckin shows that the use of AI can assist teachers in providing learning tailored to individual student needs.

In Indonesia, research on the use of AI in education is also gaining ground. Several studies indicate that students have a high level of interest in the use of digital technology in English language learning. Previous research has also found that the use of AI-based applications can improve students' learning motivation, vocabulary, and writing skills. However, there is still limited research examining teachers' perceptions of the use of Artificial Intelligence, particularly in Islamic boarding schools. Islamic boarding schools have distinct educational characteristics, combining general education and religious education, making the use of technology in learning a unique challenge.

Based on this phenomenon, research into teachers' perceptions of the use of Artificial Intelligence in English learning is crucial, particularly at the Islamic boarding school-based high school level in Pekanbaru. This study aims to determine teachers' perspectives on the benefits, challenges, and use of AI in the English learning process. Furthermore, this research is expected to contribute to the development of technology-based English learning in the digital era and serve as a reference for teachers and schools in utilizing Artificial Intelligence wisely, effectively, and in accordance with current educational needs.

B. Methodology

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design. A qualitative approach is considered appropriate because the purpose of this study is to explore teachers' perceptions toward the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in English language learning in depth and within their natural teaching environment. According to John W. Creswell (2014), qualitative research is used to understand and interpret individuals' experiences, perspectives, and social phenomena. The descriptive qualitative design enables the researcher to describe and analyze teachers' perceptions, experiences, benefits, and challenges related to the implementation of AI in English language teaching without manipulating any variables.

This research is conducted at an Islamic senior high school in Pekanbaru. The participants of this study are English teachers who have experience using Artificial Intelligence tools or digital technology in English language learning. The participants are selected using purposive sampling because they are considered capable of providing relevant and detailed information related to the research topic. The diversity of participants is expected to provide comprehensive data regarding teachers' understanding, experiences, and perceptions of AI implementation in English classrooms.

The data in this study are collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and documentation. Semi-structured interviews are conducted with English teachers to gain detailed information about their perceptions, experiences, benefits, and challenges in using AI in English language learning. According to Louis Cohen, Lawrence Manion, and Keith Morrison (2007), semi-structured interviews allow flexibility for researchers to explore participants' responses more deeply and obtain richer information. In addition, classroom observations are conducted to observe how AI is implemented during the teaching and learning process. Documentation such as lesson plans, teaching materials, and screenshots of AI applications are also used to support the research data.

The data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation are analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman (1994), which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction is carried out by selecting and simplifying relevant information from the collected data. Then, the data are organized and displayed systematically to make interpretation easier. Finally, conclusions are drawn based on the findings obtained during the research process.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, this study applies triangulation techniques by comparing data from interviews, observations, and documentation. The researcher also uses member checking to confirm the accuracy of participants' responses and interpretations. Therefore, the findings of this study are expected to be valid, reliable, and able to provide a clear description of teachers' perceptions toward the use of Artificial Intelligence in English language learning.

C. Findings and Discussion

Based on the interviews, observations, and documentation conducted with English teachers at an Islamic senior high school in Pekanbaru, the findings revealed that teachers generally had positive perceptions toward the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in English language learning. The findings were categorized into several themes, namely: teachers' understanding of AI, the benefits of AI in English learning, challenges in implementing AI, and teachers' expectations regarding the future use of AI in education.

Teachers' Understanding of Artificial Intelligence

The findings showed that most teachers were familiar with the concept of Artificial Intelligence and had used AI-based applications in teaching activities. Several teachers mentioned that AI refers to digital technology that can assist humans in completing tasks automatically and efficiently. Teachers identified some AI applications commonly used in English learning, such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, and Google Translate.

One participant explained that AI helped teachers provide learning materials more quickly and creatively. Another teacher stated that AI made English learning more interesting because students could interact directly with technology during classroom activities. These findings indicate that teachers have basic knowledge and awareness regarding the role of AI in modern education. The teachers also realized that technology has become an important part of the teaching and learning process in the digital era.

The Benefits of AI in English Language Learning

The study found several benefits of using AI in English language learning. First, teachers believed that AI helped students improve their English skills, especially vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, speaking, and writing. For example, teachers explained that applications such as Grammarly could automatically correct grammatical errors in students' writing, while ChatGPT helped students generate ideas and practice English conversations.

Second, AI increased students' motivation and engagement in learning English. Teachers stated that students were more enthusiastic when learning activities involved digital technology because students were already familiar with smartphones and online applications in their daily lives.

Third, AI assisted teachers in preparing teaching materials and classroom activities. Teachers explained that AI saved time in creating lesson plans, exercises, quizzes, and learning media. As a result, teachers could focus more on guiding students during the learning process.

Furthermore, AI supported independent learning because students could access learning materials anytime and anywhere. Teachers believed that this flexibility helped students become more autonomous and confident in learning English.

Challenges in Implementing AI in English Learning

Although teachers had positive perceptions of AI, the findings also revealed several challenges in implementing AI in English language learning.

One major challenge was limited technological skills among some teachers. Several participants admitted that they still lacked knowledge about how to use AI applications effectively in teaching activities. Therefore, teachers needed training and guidance regarding the integration of AI in education.

Another challenge was limited internet access and technological facilities. Some classrooms did not have stable internet connections, making it difficult to use online AI applications during lessons. In addition, not all students had adequate digital devices to support AI-based learning.

Teachers also expressed concerns about students' dependency on technology. Some participants worried that students might rely too much on AI tools when completing assignments, which could reduce students' critical thinking and creativity. Teachers emphasized that AI should only be used as a learning support tool rather than replacing students' own efforts.

Teachers' Expectations toward AI in Education

The findings showed that teachers expected AI to be integrated wisely and appropriately into English language learning. Teachers hoped schools would provide training programs, technological facilities, and clear guidelines for using AI in education.

In addition, teachers believed that AI should be combined with teachers' roles rather than replacing them. Participants emphasized that teachers still play an important role in guiding, motivating, and building students' character during the learning process.

Overall, teachers viewed AI as a useful innovation that could improve the quality of English language learning if implemented properly and responsibly.

D. Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that English teachers generally have positive perceptions toward the use of Artificial Intelligence in English language learning. Teachers believe that AI provides many advantages, including improving students' language skills, increasing motivation, and supporting interactive learning activities. These findings are in line with the study conducted by Holmes, which stated that AI has significant potential to create more personalized and effective learning experiences.

The findings also support the theory proposed by Jean Piaget, which emphasizes that students learn more effectively when they actively engage in the learning process. AI-based applications encourage students to participate actively through interactive exercises, automatic feedback, and self-paced learning activities. Therefore, AI can support student-centered learning in English classrooms.

In addition, the findings are consistent with previous studies showing that AI applications help students improve writing and grammar skills. Applications such as Grammarly provide immediate corrections and suggestions that help students recognize and improve their language mistakes. Similarly, Chat GPT can assist students in practicing English communication and generating ideas for writing tasks.

However, this study also found several challenges related to AI implementation, such as limited technological skills, internet access problems, and concerns about students' overdependence on technology. These findings are similar to previous research stating that the successful implementation of educational technology depends on teachers' digital competence and the availability of technological infrastructure.

Furthermore, teachers emphasized that AI should not replace the role of teachers in education. This finding supports the opinion of Lev Vygotsky, who argued that social interaction and teacher guidance remain essential in students' learning processes. Teachers still play important roles in facilitating learning, providing emotional support, and developing students' critical thinking and character.

Based on the findings and discussion above, it can be concluded that Artificial Intelligence has positive potential to support English language learning in the digital era. Nevertheless, effective implementation requires teachers' readiness, technological support, and proper supervision to ensure that AI is used responsibly and beneficially in educational contexts.

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