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RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Impact of Artificial Intelligence In English Class: Real Assistance or Real Learner?

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Abstrak

Kecerdasan buatan atau AI diam-diam telah merevolusi cara siswa mendekati pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, namun akademisi masih berjuang dengan pertanyaan mendasar tentang nilai pendidikannya yang sebenarnya. Penelitian ini meneliti 48 mahasiswa PGSD semester II FKIP Universitas Nias melalui observasi kelas yang cermat selama tahun akademik 2024/2025. Dalam melakukan penelitian ini, peneliti memilih untuk mengamati dan mendokumentasikan perilaku siswa nyata seperti yang terungkap secara alami dalam lima belas minggu kelas mata pelajaran bahasa Inggris. Seperti yang diprediksi, situasi yang muncul adalah alat AI tidak dapat disangkal membantu siswa menyelesaikan tugas bahasa Inggris dengan lebih efisien dan menangani materi yang menantang dengan lebih percaya diri. Namun, peneliti melihat pola ketergantungan berlebihan yang mengkhawatirkan yang tampaknya mengurangi nilai pemikiran kritis dan produksi bahasa yang otentik. Subjek penelitian tenggelam dalam pola yang ditakuti: meraih bantuan AI sebelum mencoba memecahkan masalah secara independen, bahkan untuk tugas termudah. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa AI berfungsi paling baik sebagai alat pendukung (bukan sebagai asisten sepanjang masa) ketika siswa tetap memperhatikan keterbatasannya, tetapi implementasi saat ini tidak memiliki struktur pedagogis yang diperlukan untuk hasil belajar yang optimal.

Key Word:
AI, English language learning, PGSD, educational technology

Abstract

Artificial intelligence or AI has quietly revolutionized how students approach English language learning, yet academics still fighting with fundamental question about its true educational value. This study examined 48 second-semester PGSD students of FKIP at Universitas Nias through careful classroom observation during 2024/2025 academic year. In conducting this research, the researcher chose to observe and document real students' behaviors as they naturally unfolded in fifteen weeks of English subject class. As predicted, the emerged situation was AI tools undeniably help students completing any English tasks more efficiently and tackle challenging materials with greater confidence. However, the researcher viewed worrying patterns of over-dependence that seemed to reduce the value of critical thinking and authentic language production. The research subjects drown into feared pattern: reaching for AI assistance before attempting independent problem-solving, even for the easiest tasks. The research findings suggest that AI functions best as a supportive tool (not as all-time assistant) when students remain mindful of its limitations, but current implementation lacks the pedagogical structure necessary for optimal learning outcomes.

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INTRODUCTION

Entering into English class nowadays has shown new and common situation: students effortlessly switching between traditional learning activities and AI-assisted applications, consulting digital assistants for grammar questions, and using translation tools to navigate complex texts. This technological integration has become so natural that even lecturers barely pause to consider its profound implications for language education.

At Universitas Nias, specifically within the Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar (PGSD) program, this transformation carries particular weight. These students are not just learning English because of the students have to pass the subject but preparing to become educators who will shape the next generation of Indonesian learners. Class C in PGSD, FKIP-Universitas Nias, with its 48 energetic second-semester students, represented this current educational shift. During the second semester of 2024/2025 academic year, these future elementary school teachers have embraced AI tools with varying degrees of enthusiasm and benefits.

The researcher watched as the students navigated vocabulary challenges, wrestled with grammar concepts, and attempted to express complex ideas in English. Surprising thing was the students even struggled to compose basic English sentences and easily switched to AI for help, mostly without any care of its side

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effect. There were common AI tools they consulted: Google Translate serves as dictionary, ChatGPT functions as real-consultant, Grammarly acts as final reviewer, and various pronunciation or listening apps provide immediate feedback on spoken English. Each tool promises to make language learning easier and fast, and this reality drawn the students into both elevating self-capacity and demoting self-awareness toward the highly expected language learning.

However, accessibility and effectiveness are simply not always aligning with authentic learning. The researcher noticed patterns that concerning: students who seemed lost without their digital assistants, those who decreased collaboration between peers, and students' soul-less writing. These observations prompted deeper questions about the true impact of AI integration in language education.

This study emerged from a desire to understand these complex dynamics through a careful, systematic observation. As for the purpose, this research intended to find the real impact of Artificial Intelligence in English class: Real Assistance or Real Learner. Are students developing genuine language skills, or are they becoming sophisticated users of technological shortcuts. The distinction matters enormously, particularly for future educators who must model authentic learning practices.

Review of Literature

Learning language in today's time is not difficult anymore. Students can access any supports and assistance from digital platforms or shortly, AIs. Students are undoubtedly switching between traditional learning activities and AI-powered applications, consulting digital assistants for grammar questions, and using translation tools to navigate complex texts without hesitation. This technological integration has become so natural and common habit that students hardly take a break to consider its profound implications for language education.

If reviewed few steps back, AIs were real helpers in the field of academics, scholars, lecturers, teachers and students, lower grades until universities. Since its appearance and development, AIs have becoming the transformative tools to educational field, as well as language teaching and learning (Bahroun et al., 2023). These AIs provides platforms of applications that provide almost all tools to help language learners gain confidence to deal with language class in rapid and efficient way (Srinivasa et al., 2022). The learning experience is getting into broader and ensures all possibilities that every language learner wishes to achieve far beyond their capabilities in traditional way of learning (Pace, 2023). This also proven that the students who are not keen readers at all can get all access to the knowledge of language learning in various context and issues, including shortcuts to learn, examine and evaluate their pre-knowledge toward the learning topics (Pokrivcakova, 2019). In its practical use, AIs are able to provide faster responses, identify errors and offer various possible solutions (Nandha & Widiastuty, 2024).

The previous explanation has glided the researcher into serious concern, particularly related with the issues of educators' role displacement toward AIs, which might be feared of becoming "robotic educator" between human academics (Chung JY, Jeong SH, 2024). Yet, as this issue is only theory so far, there is another important issue that appeared as the most concerning matter: students are incapacitated without the help from AI. A comprehensive investigation across multiple Asian universities revealed fascinating patterns in AI adoption. Their work demonstrated that students using AI-powered applications showed remarkable improvements in vocabulary retention and grammatical accuracy. However, their research also uncovered something unexpected: students became increasingly reluctant to attempt challenging tasks without AI support (Chen & Liu, 2023). This finding resonates with the researcher's ongoing observations and hence suggests that AI's immediate benefits might come with hidden, if not terrible, costs.

Another critical perspective research also revealed that university students in the last two years showed where heavy AI users gradually lost confidence in their own language abilities. These students performed well on standardized tests but struggled with authentic communication tasks that required spontaneous language production. The implications for teacher education are particularly troubling, as future educators must be able to model natural language use. (Rodriguez &Martinez, 2024;

Other studies identified specific behavioral indicators of technology dependency that can be observed in classroom settings. Students who exhibited these patterns, such as immediate device-reaching behaviors and anxiety when technology was unavailable, showed decreased performance on independent learning tasks (Wilson and Brown, 2024). Moreover, there was a research that highlighted cultural and linguistic factors that influence AI effectiveness in Indonesian educational settings. Many AI tools were developed for Western contexts and may not adequately address local linguistic patterns or cultural references. This limitation became apparent in the observations when students encountered AI-generated content that seemed grammatically correct but culturally inappropriate (Sari and Wijaya, 2024).

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Thompson and Singh (2023) researched on the framework for balanced AI integration finally offers hope for navigating these challenges. Their model emphasizes strategic implementation rather than wholesale adoption or rejection. They argued that AI tools work best when integrated thoughtfully within existing pedagogical structures, serving as supplements rather than replacements for human instruction and peer interaction. This perspective aligns with the researcher observation that successful AI integration requires careful guidance and clear boundaries.

From a different angle, Kim and Park (2024) research with Korean EFL learners suggested that AI tools can enhance autonomous learning when used strategically. Their participants developed stronger self-directed learning habits and increased motivation for language practice. However, this positive outcome required structured guidance and explicit instruction about appropriate AI use; elements often missing from current implementations.

Sadly, the students' motive to rely fully on AIs apparently based on carelessness. The validity of the data provided, answers and solutions offered and also all information needed to access these smart tools are not gaining concern from the students' side. They apparently trust all the information and process to get them without taking a small thought of the risks and impact on their future self as model teachers (Pedro, 2019).

Referring to the theories and explanation above, it is a sure thing that English language learners and educators face unique challenges in AI integration. Future educators must develop both personal language competencies and pedagogical knowledge about appropriate technology use. This dual requirement creates complex learning dynamics that require careful examination. Students must learn to use AI tools effectively while also understanding their limitations and potential pitfalls. As well as watched during English sessions, the researcher aware for the rapid shift of self-belief and motivation of the students in learning.

RESEARCH METHOD

Qualitative methodology was chosen for this research since the researcher wanted to capture the subtle dynamics of AI integration that might be missed through surveys or interviews. Authentic learning behaviors can only be understood through careful observation of natural classroom interactions (Anderson, et al, 2023; Davis, et al, 2024). By positioning the researcher as careful observer-participant, genuine learning interactions were the main target to achieve in its most natural way. The second semester of class C of the PGSD department at FKIP, Universitas Nias provided an ideal setting for this investigation. The class consisted of 30 female and 18 male students. These 48 students, ranging in age from 19 to 22 years, represented diverse backgrounds and varying levels of English proficiency. Some arrived with enough foundational skills, while others even struggled with basic vocabulary and grammar concepts.

The research observation was conducted during the entire second semester of the 2024/2025 academic year, fifteen intensive weeks of data collection. The researcher attended every English class session to observe individual student behaviors while maintaining minimal disruption to natural learning flows. This extended timeframe allowed the researcher to document not just initial AI adoption patterns, but also how usage evolved over time. The targets were tracking individual usage patterns, noting which applications students preferred and how frequently they accessed them. These patterns were documented while also observing the behavioral indicators that might suggest dependency or autonomy in learning approaches. The analysis process involved multiple iterations of data review and pattern identification. The researcher created codes to identify initial categories, and then moved to more focused analysis as patterns emerged.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

AI Integration

The observations quickly revealed predictable patterns in how and when students reached for AI assistance. The most popular tool, Google Translate, appeared in 95.8% of observed sessions, used by 46 of the 48 students. ChatGPT followed closely behind, with 41 students (85.4%) accessing it regularly for various language tasks. Grammarly maintained steady usage among 38 students (79.2%), while pronunciation applications attracted 29 students (60.4%). Students typically accessed AI tools 12-15 times per 100-minute class session, with each interaction lasting between 60 seconds and 10 minutes. The timing was not random; peak usage occurred during writing activities and vocabulary exercises, while speaking activities and group discussions saw significantly less AI interaction.

AI Reliance

As to reliance, students reached for AI assistance before they attempted independent problem-solving. This pattern emerged in 67% of the students (32 individuals), who consistently turned to AI tools even for tasks well within their demonstrated capabilities. The physical manifestations of this dependency were also

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striking. When internet connectivity faltered, devices malfunctioned or instruction to put aside phones, the students showed signs of distress such as fidgeting, repeated attempts to reconnect, and notably decreased engagement with learning activities. Their confidence was compromised by simple matter.

Group work, as instructed in RPS was not effective enough to replace AI reliance. The students even forgot the real function of group work, where they only relied in AI. Simple instruction of group work without phones in several meetings gained dramatic looping response. About one-third of the class adapted quickly, turning to traditional resources and peer collaboration. Another third struggled initially but eventually found alternative approaches. The remaining third, however, appeared genuinely paralyzed, unable to proceed with activities that they had successfully completed with AI assistance in the previous meeting.

Proficiency Pattern

The impact of AI integration varied significantly across different proficiency levels. *Lower-proficiency students* (15 individuals) showed the most dramatic behavioral changes. They gained confidence to engage with challenging materials and completed tasks they previously avoided. However, they also exhibited the strongest dependency patterns and showed the most anxiety when AI tools were unavailable. Next, the *Intermediate-proficiency students* (28 individuals) demonstrated more balanced integration approaches. They used AI tools strategically for specific challenges while maintaining independence for familiar tasks. However, even within this group, 43% showed concerning trends toward reduced critical thinking in complex analytical activities. Finally, the *Higher-proficiency students* (5 individuals) approached AI integration most strategically. They used tools primarily for verification and enhancement rather than primary problem-solving. These students maintained stronger independent learning behaviors and showed less anxiety when AI tools were unavailable. However, they represented only a small fraction of the observed population.

Guidance and Complexity

The absence of clear boundaries between acceptable AI assistance and academic system created ongoing confusion. Students struggled to distinguish between appropriate tool use and inappropriate dependence. This uncertainty sometimes led to conservative approaches that underutilized AI benefits, or to over-reliance that compromised learning objectives.

The research findings created simple categorization into positive or negative impacts. AI tools clearly provided valuable support for specific learning tasks while simultaneously creating challenges for developing independent language competencies. The key insight from the observations is that effectiveness depends heavily on implementation approach and individual usage patterns. The most successful AI integration occurred when students maintained conscious awareness of tool limitations and used them strategically to complement rather than replace traditional learning processes. However, achieving this balance required guidance and support that was often missing from current educational structures.

CONCLUSION

AI applications function as powerful learning assistants when used thoughtfully, but they can become barriers to authentic language development when used uncritically. Total reliance on AI will only dull the full potential of becoming the real teacher. The second semester students of class C in PGSD of FKIP-Universitas Nias in 2024/2025 were observed to see their full capabilities in various elements and skill in English learning, and yet they were fantastic because of AI, not merely their original capabilities. The majority of students fell into patterns of total dependency on AI, with the absence of self-conscience to attempt independent problem-solving. This behavior was highly concerning as the students were losing confidence in their own capabilities and missing opportunities for authentic learning struggles that build genuine competence. Even more, the students showed neglect on how they should behave on the use of AI during English class. As clear as it gets, the subject of this research eventually brought the fact of the arrival on disturbing state that AIs they used as a tool had finally placed itself as the real learner and were not just the helping tools. AIs had made itself sinister "humanized-academic students" that might fully replace real human in real academic field someday.

Suggestion

Regarding this revelation, the researcher proposed simple acts. First, educational organization has to create structure and guidance on the use of AI. Second, authentic learning opportunities have to be maintained and kept in education system. Third, there have to be more attention on cultural and contextual needs. Fourth, building pedagogical framework and focused on process and project; and the last is supporting students' development at all cost.

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