

English Literature Students' Attitude to AI-Powered Tools

Amirudin¹

Tutik Ratna Ningtyas²

Bambang Irawan³

¹²³ Universitas Pamulang, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: dosen01215@unpam.ac.id.

Abstract

AI-powered tools have been widely used in many fields, including education. The use of AI is prevalent due to its convenience offered to its users. Students in this era are among those who make use of this technology. The use can vary depending on the needs and intentions the students have. Therefore, it is necessary to find out how the students view this technology. This research aims at exploring how students see AI as beneficial tools for them as well as how students AI might cause concerns among them. This research applies a qualitative exploratory approach to collect the data. The findings show that students feel benefited from the use of AI during their learning journey including the instrumental functions and the more advanced functions of AI. On the other hand, the findings also show how students feel concerned about AI despite their regular use. The students realize that AI use may lead to overdependence causing the decline of critical thought. All in all, the use of AI must be accompanied by ethical considerations so that AI will not replace the cognitive process of its users.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence (AI), Attitude, Exploratory Research*

Introduction

English Literature major has been perceived as one of the disciplines that emphasizes close reading of various English texts to its students. Baki (2025) says that text-centric activities can help students think critically and interpret literature in detail. Regarding text exposure, Ashrafuzzaman et al. (2021) suggest the importance of it to students; text exposure is crucial to overall linguistic ability: perceptive and productive. When dealing with text exposure, students might have issues revolving around understanding unfamiliar vocabulary, comprehending complex structure of sentence, or lacking access to reading materials (Hayati, 2016), but He (2024) suggests the difficulties when reading can be overcome by the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). However, since there have not been clear and strict guidelines for students of how they can use AI during learning, students massively use AI so that they experience the upsides and downsides of AI simultaneously. This phenomenon has led to an ambivalent attitude among students where not only do they enjoy the benefits but also feel uneasy. As a result, students are trapped in a paradoxical cycle: engaging with AI, deriving its benefits, experiencing cognitive offloading, experiencing concerns, and repeating the cycle. The research might be a good start to stop this cycle.

At the present time, with the fast development of technology, teachers or lecturers have a big challenge of raising awareness to the utilization of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in language learning. The use of technology, including AI-powered tools, in teaching and learning process has been increasing rapidly since COVID-19 (Sharma & Alvi, 2021). The use of AI since Covid-19 outbreak is unavoidable due to its practicality in order to keep teachers and students connected (Waluyo et al., 2025). There should be immediate

adaptations to such a trend (Afrilyasanti & Basthomi, 2022). As a result, educators (teachers or lecturers) are required to be technology-literate. Teachers or lecturers who are not aware of this development may face hard times dealing with students who are potentially more tech-savvy. A report by Farris-Berg (2005) sums up that students are generally more sophisticated in the use of technology compared to their teachers. In a more recent study, Latif (2020) states that students tend to be more adaptive compared to their teachers in terms of technology, so it should be taken as a caution for teachers. It can be said that if teachers or lecturers do not have knowledge about this phenomenon, they might not achieve the learning objectives as planned in advance. Furthermore, some students might quickly adopt AI tools as learning aids, and others would be hesitant out of concern that new technologies might degrade the humanistic components of literature instruction, such as the appreciation of linguistic complexity and literary expression. Thus, every teacher or lecturer should acknowledge such shifts by paying attention to students' attitude toward the use of newest technology like AI-powered tools in their learning journey. Such awareness is needed since not only is it beneficial for detecting academic dishonesty, but it also enables teachers or lecturers to build a learning culture where AI is used as a knowledge enrichment resource, not a destructive tool (Bhatti, 2025).

As mentioned, Artificial intelligence (AI) is being used in language learning. It is built in tools like content creation tools, assessment tools, tutoring tools, or planning tools (Tolstikh & Oshchepkova, 2024). Based on aforementioned information, the AI-powered tools have commonly been repurposed to particular educational use beyond its original utilisation. According to a report by Borgonovi, et al (2025), AI has transformed its generic functions to a strategic tool in achieving noble educational goals like school dropout prevention and overcoming students' knowledge gaps; however, it needs a thorough planning, strict monitoring, in-depth training, and policy makers involvement. In other words, it indicates that AI can make language learners easier since AI-powered tools can be adjusted to fit each student's needs. AI can also give immediate feedback and engage students in new and interesting ways. It is claimed by Sujatna et al., 2024 that AI-powered learning platforms offer various ways of comforting students in their learning process. Therefore, it is important to find out what students think about these technologies, especially in English Literature classes.

Understanding how students perceive or deal with AI may significantly prepare countermeasures for academic dishonesty. (Parnter, 2020) contends academic dishonesty not only is harmful for the institution in which it happens, but also for its students. To put it in another way, academic dishonesty may lead to academic integrity decline. One of the factors which makes students commit to academic dishonesty is due to situational factors, including technology policies employed within educational institutions (Mutmainah & Hafina, 2022). Ultimately, finding out students' attitude to AI-powered tools in the learning process can be one of the ways to maintain academic integrity. Research by (Walter, 2024) elucidates the future of AI by looking at students' perspectives about AI and provides conceptual ideas about how students and educators should have core competencies such as AI literacy, prompt engineering, and critical thinking as a response to the rapid development of AI nowadays. It discusses the components of AI literacy, the advanced prompts that can be used as commands to AI, and how to develop critical thinking while using AI. Another research revolving around students' attitude to AI was conducted by Winarti et al. (2025), describing the positive attitude by students who used AI as an aid when writing their thesis proposal. It is shown that the student found AI is advantageous in some ways such as idea generator, grammar

correction, and paragraph organizer. However, it is also stated that the students were worried about the decline of their creativity due to AI. The current research tried to explore how students view AI as beneficial tools while raising concerns among them. The existing studies have not given specific identification of students' attitude to AI use. Thus, the research is conducted to portray that matters; the findings presented cover cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains, yet the discussion does not explicitly mention those three domains.

The research aimed at examining what students think about and deal with AI-powered tools in their learning journey. The current research was conducted as a response to a phenomenon of AI use during online discussion. In short, it tries to reveal how students place AI-powered tools in their learning journey by answering the following research questions: How do AI-powered tools not only benefit students but also raise concerns among students? To address such a mental construct, it is imperative to include three aspects as suggested by Garrett (2010): cognitive aspect, affective aspect, and behavioural aspect. The cognitive aspect refers to the belief or knowledge of an object matter. Cognitive aspects can be illustrated in the following way: a student who is familiar with AI may think that AI can give insight about its advantages/drawbacks or can raise concerns if using it. Then, it can be viewed from the affective domain when it refers to feelings or emotion: something favourable or unfavourable. The last aspect measured is its behavioural aspect: the embodiment of belief (cognitive) or favourableness (affective). In short, the findings and discussion are presented within those three aspects to answer how students perceive AI benefits them and how students' concerns to AI might arise. Then, the data found was evaluated using UNESCO AI Competency Framework for Students (2024) to bridge the findings and the global standard. This framework is relevant as UNESCO AI Competency Framework for Students (2024) offers tangible actions for further policy recommendations which could be beneficial for saving students from AI use cycles mentioned above.

Method

In this research, a qualitative approach was employed to explore what AI-powered tools mean for students. Oranga and Matere (2023) say that a qualitative approach can be used to reveal phenomena like people's attitude, beliefs, behavior in a detailed way. With regard to the nature of this research, a qualitative approach was employed to reveal students' attitude to AI-based tools. Furthermore, an exploratory case study design was utilized to investigate students' views and concerns about the use of AI in their learning experience. In this exploratory study, the discrepancies or gaps with other research were not a concern (Aithal & Aithal, 2023). Instead of drawing conclusive results or proving hypotheses, an exploratory study focuses more on understanding a phenomenon in order to gain insights further (Hunter et al., 2019).

Data were collected from open-ended questionnaires distributed to 15 students from various levels at a private university. The questionnaire allowed research participants to write any forms of expressions in the given inquiries including the language they use, so the researchers grouped the answer according to similar substance and showed the answer as is. Furthermore, the research was conducted since it was found that there had been a trend of students using AI when researchers were doing asynchronous online learning. It was indicated from the answers given during discussion forums.

The research has several limitations, particularly in the data privacy issue. First, the research depends solely on respondents' self-reports about their experiences and concerns towards the use of AI, without verifying the privacy policies and cyber security practices from the AI used. Second, the research does not investigate if the respondents have learned the privacy risks to AI they use, including its storing and processing data system. Third, the research is limited to an institutional context and does not explore the AI data governance policy in the corresponding institution.

Results

Through the questionnaire distributed to the participants, it was revealed that AI had become a part of their learning journey. The use of AI is something that cannot be avoided in today's learning activity. Even though some participants considered AI-powered tools had offered them comfort in accompanying their learning journey, there were still some aspects of AI use about which they worried. The research explored the attitude of 15 students to the use of AI in their learning processes, revealing an interesting dichotomy regarding the students' awareness of AI benefits and their concerns to AI use at once. Methodologically, the number of participants was preferred through purposive sampling, which is in line with exploratory research and population characteristics which are relatively homogeneous. To verify the validity and transparency, the researchers employed COREC 32-item checklists (Tong, 2007). The saturation data process was determined by iterative analysis where each respondents' answer was codified referring to the similar themes appearing. After the twelfth respondents, there were no new codes appearing, and the next three participants' answers (n=13,14,15) only confirmed the existing themes without giving further significant information. Below are the findings formulated from the answer distributed to the participants, presented by categorizing in three domains: cognitive, affective, and behavioral.

Table 1. AI Helps Students to Comprehend Complicated Concept in Easy Way

No	Respondent	Answers
1.	P04	<i>"Saya minta AI untuk menjelaskan secara detail dan dengan menggunakan bahasa yang mudah dipahami."</i>
2.	P09	<i>"Saya akan ke AI dan ketika 'tolong jelaskan kembali bagaimana dengan bahasa yang mudah dipahami', AI akan mengeluarkan penjelasan ulang dalam bahasa yang lebih mudah dipahami (seperti bahasa sehari-hari) dan itu sangat membantu saya."</i>
3.	P15	<i>"Saat saya kesulitan memahami konsep dari materi yang diberikan, AI dapat menjelaskan dengan cara yang lebih sederhana atau memberikan contoh visual. AI juga bisa menerjemahkan istilah teknis dalam bahasa yang lebih mudah dimengerti."</i>

Table 2. Students Are Concerned about Overreliance to AI

No	Respondent	Answers
1.	P05	<i>"My biggest concern is when people get used to the help from AI, they become lazy and do not use their brain effectively."</i>
2.	P06	<i>"Yes, I do worry about relying too much on AI because it might make me lazy to think for myself. If I always depend on AI for answers, I might not develop my critical thinking and problem-solving skills."</i>
3.	P13	<i>"Sangat khawatir, dikarenakan akan membuat kita untuk malas berfikir dan berusaha semaksimal mungkin."</i>

Table 3. Students Have Trust Issue to AI Accuracy and User Privacy

No	Respondent	Answers
1.	P01	<i>"Pernah, saya tidak nyaman dan yakin kalau menggunakan beberapa AI yang membuat jurnal atau pengetahuan fiktif."</i>
2.	P03	<i>"AI terkadang bias dalam memberikan informasi, terutama jika topik yang berkaitan dengan politik."</i>
3.	P08	<i>"Ya, ketika kita menggunakan AI. Yang saya khawatirkan adalah data pribadi yang tercuri tanpa sepengetahuan diri sendiri."</i>

Table 4. Students Use AI to Generate Ideas

No	Respondent	Answers
1.	P09	<i>"Saya tidak copy 100% dari AI's answers, biasanya saya hanya pakai sebagai ide, dan akan tambah kata-kata dari otak saya sendiri."</i>
2.	P10	<i>"Saya selalu berusaha menemukan jawaban sendiri sebelum akhirnya tidak menemukan jalan keluar."</i>
3.	P14	<i>"Saya berusaha untuk tidak menyuruh AI menjawab soal, tapi saya bertanya kepada AI bagian yang saya tidak mengerti dan membiarkan saya menjawab sendiri."</i>

Table 5. Students Admit Having Used AI to Find Quick Answers

No	Respondent	Answers
1.	P08	<i>Ya, dikarenakan AI itu sangat canggih. Sehingga mahasiswa dapat berbuat curang menggunakan AI.</i>
2.	P11	<i>"I feel uncomfortable using AI for writing or problem-solving, worrying that it crosses the line into cheating. Effortless Essay & Assignment Generation."</i>
3.	P12	<i>"Kalau ketika ujian kurang pengawasan dan tidak ada pengecekan gadget, saya pernah melihat ada yang menggunakan HP untuk menjawab."</i>

Discussion

A Tension between Perceived Benefits and Ethical Concerns of AI Use among Students

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been a promising and challenging learning tool in today's education since it is prevalent in almost all aspects of the learning journey a student has, giving unprecedented comfort for those who decide to make it as a learning partner (Du et al., 2024). AI development has been something that could give benefits as well as drawbacks for its users. On one hand it offers outstanding efficiency to students. Its ability to simplify complex and complicated concepts, provide access to find any journals and theories, and become a personal assistant in fixing grammatical structure or writing style, AI like ChatGPT and Grammarly has proven its reliability in shortening the study hours. For students who have to manage time from being a student to being a worker, or for those who feel confused by lecturers' explanation, AI accommodates him or her for self-directed learning which facilitates a more flexible and more personal approach. On the other side of the ease, the hidden dangers of AI dependence always exist, deteriorating intellectual foundations of its users. The biggest concern is on its potential in weakening or reducing the core strength of critical thinking and problem solving. When any academic questions can be answered by a single command or prompt on AI, there is a temptation within its users to disengage the cognitive effort. The phenomenon "nyontek AI" during examination mentioned in the questionnaire acts as a wake-up call of how effortlessly AI is misused. Furthermore, AI's validity in providing information is not an absolute matter. The answer given by AI might look convincing; but sometimes

conceptually inaccurate, especially when used to find out specified scientific journal articles. Thus, it is still the user who must verify it.

Consequently, the education future with AI is not a matter of embracing or rejecting AI use. Instead, it refers to properly integrating it into the learning ecosystem since education is a matter of mindset formation, not merely accumulation of information. With regard to this context, AI serves as an enabling, not disabling, catalyst in the learning process. The success of the collaboration between humans as users and AI as learning machines relies on how wisely we are not to be caught in dependency of AI. Instead, AI should be utilized as a means of brainstorming, inspiration, and efficiency. In addition, its users must also keep honing his or her analytical thoughtfulness. In other words, AI can function as the bridge of comprehension gaps. It can be said that in today's world, a well-qualified education can only be created by integrating AI's superiority in speed and human wisdom.

AI also has been operated beyond its functional utility, shown by its capability of being the place where creativity is honed and being the place where metacognition happens. For students, it might be fine to say that AI is able to provide a place where countless perspectives are produced. Besides, AI also can yield second choices of various technical solutions. Another aspect of AI use beyond its instrumental functions revolves around how AI becomes the main stage of students to explore the world of words, arousing genuine imagination. In addition, AI renowned for its sensitivity to prompts requires specific command from its users. It might affect the way how a user formulates the prompts in order to get the desired results. To put it in another way, AI also gives opportunities for users to shift from passive users to active users. However, this transformation also leads to a more complicated issue regarding authorship. There are eight out of fifteen respondents revealing their concerns about AI-mediated authorship, the vagueness of boundary between humans' works and AI's products. Chen & Fang (2025) analyzed the ChatGPT policies issued by universities in Ontario. It is revealed that even though universities stated AI cannot be a co-author, they require students to make proper citations for AI-generated contents (Chen & Fang, 2025a, p.97). As a result, it leads to a vague ethical boundary between humans' works and AI's products. It is considered as a new ethical challenge in education as Tian & Wang (2025a, p.1) stated, "On the other hand, the integration of GenAI in language education poses notable ethical and practical challenges that necessitate thoughtful consideration". It implies that AI use cannot be avoided, but there must be comprehensive mechanisms applied to maintain humans' traits in the works produced.

As seen in the notes on how AI can give personalized experience, AI has potential to become a resourceful machine that can scrutinize its users' habits in order to map out their learning styles, strengths, and weaknesses. The data depicted from the items previously mentioned can be used by campus or educational institutions to create unique curriculum and learning materials, customized to each student. However, it is not a simple task to answer complex challenges resulting from such futuristic vision. It is imperative to put forward ethical issues as the main consideration if an institution demands to integrate AI into education (Tian and Wang, 2025b, p.2). Despite deliberate attempts to formulate best practices on AI use, it was still found that significant gaps regarding privacy issues among universities' policies (Chen & Fang, 2025b, pp.97-98). It implies that their findings confirm that privacy and ethical issues are essential considerations in formulating policies, not merely a complement. In other words, the educational institution demanding to create such curriculum must prepare its role beyond technology providers. The philosophical foundation must be revisited as well since exams testing memorization

will be no longer relevant in such a future. The curriculum will require exams measuring the ability to analyze, synthesize, and apply ethics when using AI. The paradigm shift in language assessment needs to consider how AI is truly able to measure advanced synthetic and analytic skills as well as how the assessment design can affect students' critical thinking. Zhao & Dang (2026) offered a realistic and pedagogically responsible middle ground of an assessment design where we can leverage the AI's efficiency without compromising students' critical thinking, a design employing complexity-based short task, integrated genre-based task, operational verb-based task, and loose structured-instruction task.

All in all, the rapid and wide development of AI in education has been so irresistible that the education world should have an adaptive view to deal with such phenomena. In this era, it is as if we are directed to understand and normalize that being educated people is about mastering a big data of information. This paradigm is shaped by the lack of understanding about how to deal with AI-usage habits living in today's education landscape. This subtle dangerous perception should be immediately fixed so that every student realizes that education must be about developing wisdom to cultivate the big data provided by AI, essentially not about mastering a big data of information, but it is about how to develop wisdom to use that information. A clear and bold boundary of Artificial Intelligence's (AI) role in education must be set so that it serves as a means for mechanical and administrative tasks, not for a cognitive task, in the learning process. As a result, it ideally drives the human mind to concentrate on some crucial aspects of it such as developing ethical reasoning, empathy, borderless imagination, and psychological resilience against ambiguity. Finally, the collaboration of human-AI does not create a machine-dependent generation, yet it creates students who have more human touch. Students who are critical, creative, and independent thinkers using tools to widen, not to replace, their moral and intellectual capacity.

Though AI offers unprecedented efficiency, it haunts its users' independent intellectuality. The main concern surfacing is how easily this technology makes excessive dependence on its users. Students who are supposed to actively analyze and strive for understanding complex concepts are now at risk of becoming passive (Vieriu & Petrea, 2025), merely receiving instant answers shown by AI. As a result, their brains become dull; their critical thinking and problem-solving skills are gradually degrading. Noted in the findings above, a participant admitted his/her addiction to AI since elementary school so that he/she felt helpless due to AI absence. This experience shows factual portrayal of how fragile a knowledge foundation is if built upon AI.

Furthermore, it can be said that AI is the gate of academic integrity erosion. Students' concerns about how rampant the practice of cheating in the class were found in the findings. When students get their task done instantaneously due to AI, the line between learning aid and plagiarism becomes unclear. This dishonest behavior erodes their individual confidence and creativity because they do not believe in their own capability to create ideas. Even though the concern of AI's potential eroding academic integrity is something that cannot be ignored, it is necessary to have full scope to scrutinize it. As Velasco (2026) noted that there are two models of AI use, namely ghostwriter model and co-author-in-the-loop model. The first model provides a complete draft allowing students to copy and paste it whereas the latter provides features which are open to students' evaluation, modification, and revision. The co-author-in-the-loop model students are fully responsible for their rhetorical decisions. This framework is in line with the dialogic triad model developed by Cao and Lin (2025) which places AI as an active co-creator being able to provoke critical reflection and epistemic innovation.

Therefore, the distinctive characteristic of a genuine work is not determined by AI intervention in the work, but it is more on the author's accountability for the meaning produced and verifiable history.

The dependency to AI has been proven to erode human capacity for critical thinking. This happens since AI users tend to assign external tools to have cognitive tasks done. By doing so, the users might skip some fundamental processes of learning activity such as memory building and in-depth understanding. It is known that the learning process should involve intellectual journey: connecting concepts, overcoming mental blocks, and finally gaining insights. The long-term memory can be gained through such mental efforts. AI, that is known for its instant solution, omits this invaluable process, disabling the optimal knowledge absorption. A student may successfully finish the tasks given; however, he or she will fail to solve problems in the real context where AI has no access. A study by Chan & Wong (2025) evaluating the capability of AI in analyzing English literary works using Bloom's taxonomy framework shows unsatisfactory results in the higher cognitive levels. This finding confirms cognitive offloading, a condition where an unreflective use of AI leads to students' missing critical thinking process which eventually disables them to regain the analytical skills.

Another subtle threat stemming from AI usage is the potential bias and the intellectual conformity. AI is trained on a big dataset from the internet, inherently being subject to bias and particular tendency to perspectives constructed in the physical world. As a result, a student who constantly relies on AI, he or she retrieves information, perspectives, conceptual framework built in the model. It is too unworthy to lose a generation who has an authentic quality born of diverse humans' experience due to intellectual conformity that may happen. Independent thinking, the opposite of intellectual conformity, must be the final outcome in education. The argument about intellectual bias and intellectual conformity in AI use becomes more relevant if it is viewed through the AI Competency Framework for Students developed by UNESCO (2024). It explicitly states that a student is required to develop human-centered mindset and ethical awareness to address bias risk when interacting with AI. The ethical dimension of AI in this framework guides students to identify the bias in the AI System, comprehend how bias can worsen inequalities, and demand either transparency or accountability towards AI decisions.

Another concern of AI usage revolves around privacy and data security. Each interaction built on AI platforms can be data points collected, stored, and analyzed. In a world where people are beginning to raise awareness of digital footprint, intellectual and private data sharing often leads to critical questions about data ownership and usage. The data leakage case or the information misuse for further AI-model training without explicit user consent is something for which one should be cautious. A user who reluctantly finds out and understands privacy policy of AI platforms may be at the risk of losing his or her data sovereignty for ulterior motives of commercial interest. This concern is in accordance with UNESCO AI Competency Framework for Students (2024), emphasizing that in developing their competency, students must adhere to AI ethics allowing them to comprehend the privacy risks as AI users. However, there are also found discrepancies among respondents regarding privacy risks awareness. It reinforces the urgency to integrate human-centered and ethical AI literacy to curriculum.

AI which is more than a learning aid, paradoxically, has a potential to isolate students from an ample learning ecosystem. Before the era of AI, students were encouraged to have peer discussions, consult with lecturers, or go to the library to look up the answer when addressing complex problems. The social interactions and the

scourge are crucial factors in the learning process since they are not merely finding the answers (Hurst et al., 2013.). They contribute to honing communication skills, building networks, and learning from experiences and empathy of others. The previous matters are something that cannot be found when using AI. The use of AI risks reducing education to emotionless and individualistic information trade, not a social and humanistic process building characters.

The future of AI in education refers to building symbiotic relationships (Ramirez & Esparrell, 2024). AI should be wisely placed as a learning aid, not to replace the learning process. Educating students to use AI responsibly should also be supported by well-defined regulations, preventing misconduct in assessment. In the end, the learning outcome is to create academicians who not only are technologically proficient, but also intellectually robust.

Conclusion

Based on the findings and analyses previously demonstrated, AI has proven its capability as a transformative catalyst leading to a learning paradigm shift. Its existence offers a significant time efficiency by assisting its users to comprehend complex concepts, by providing a quick access to learning sources, and by helping its users in analysis writing. Furthermore, AI should be used responsibly. It means that AI should be placed as a learning aid due to its potential to make its users overdependent. It should not replace the cognitive process experienced by its users, or it may create negative impacts.

Another aspect explored in this research is how students feel worried about the use of AI in their learning journey. The use of AI creates a critical dilemma of overreliance potential and independent thinking degradation. It is revealed that there was a concern of analytical competence and problem-solving skill decline due to instantaneous feedback from AI. Furthermore, the validity of information given by AI has always been in question.

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