

## **INDONESIAN EFL NON-ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS' MOTIVATION TO USE AI IN WRITING**

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**Abstract:** This study investigates the motivations of Indonesian non-English primary EFL first-year students in using Artificial Intelligence (AI) for writing. While the role of AI in academic contexts has been widely studied, most research has focused on English department students, leaving a gap in understanding how students outside these departments engage with AI tools for writing. Using a mixed-methods approach, this study combines a closed-ended survey with semi-structured interviews to investigate students' motivation for adopting AI in their writing practices. Grounded in the Technology Acceptance Model, this study surveyed 40 first-year students and conducted interviews with five selected through convenience sampling. The findings suggest that students primarily adopt AI for its perceived ease of use and its ability to assist with common writing challenges, such as grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure. However, some students reported difficulties with AI's accuracy and the need for more effective prompting techniques. Despite the benefits, the study also highlights concerns about students' growing dependence on AI, which may hinder their development of independent writing skills. These findings contribute to the ongoing discourse on AI integration in language learning and offer implications for educators and curriculum developers in supporting students' use of AI while fostering critical writing skills. Future research should investigate the long-term effects and strategies to mitigate overreliance on AI tools.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI), English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Motivation, Writing

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### **INTRODUCTION**

AI has gained increasing popularity among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. EFL students often face significant challenges learning English due to various reasons, such as limited knowledge of English grammar, a lack of vocabulary, and unfamiliarity with English writing styles (Aziez et al., 2024; Bulqiyah et al., 2021). Moreover, lacking exposure to the English language makes EFL students struggle with writing English sentences in grammatically correct structures (Angraeni et al., 2024; Zein et al., 2020). Given the challenges facing EFL students, AI has emerged as an appropriate support to scaffold students in their English learning, particularly in writing skills (Lai et al., 2023; Yifan et al., 2023).

EFL students generally adopt AI for its convenience in improving their English essay writing, particularly in generating ideas and enhancing accuracy, coherence, and cohesion (Cornish & Larter, 2024; Ge, 2024; Sun, 2023). Additionally, research suggests that AI significantly enhances students' English language skills, particularly in grammar,

vocabulary, and overall writing proficiency (Silalahi, 2025; Thao et al., 2023). EFL students also reported that they can learn more beyond classes at their convenience, as AI provides them with personalised learning tailored to their needs (Cornish & Larter, 2024; Huang, 2023). However, concerns about AI's response accuracy, credibility, data privacy, over-reliance, and plagiarism are increasing alongside its growing adoption in EFL classes (Cornish & Larter, 2024; Hsu, 2023). Therefore, it is essential for students to critically assess the information provided by AI and take measures to avoid over-reliance, as excessive dependence on AI could hinder their critical and creative thinking skills (Huang, 2023; Santiago-Ruiz, 2023).

Several studies in Indonesian higher education contexts have shown that Indonesian EFL students generally have positive perceptions of AI (Harunasari, 2023; Iskandar et al., 2024; Kurniarahman et al., 2024; Nugroho et al., 2024; Werdiningsih et al., 2024). Their positive perceptions can be attributed to their experiences of AI assisting them with grammatical and syntactic challenges, vocabulary development, mechanical accuracy, and writing skills. In particular, Indonesian EFL students perceived AI as an invaluable resource for paraphrasing, generating ideas, planning written narratives, drafting texts, rapidly sourcing references, structuring coherent essays, and refining the overall language quality of their work. Nevertheless, students are aware of AI's limitations, particularly regarding the accuracy of its responses and the ethical concerns over data safety when interacting with it (Harunasari, 2023; Nugroho et al., 2024). Hence, some studies recommend that students practice independent paraphrasing to avoid over-reliance on AI and to maintain the originality and appropriateness of their work, as well as to verify AI-generated content with peers or primary sources (Syahnaz & Fithriani, 2023; Werdiningsih et al., 2024).

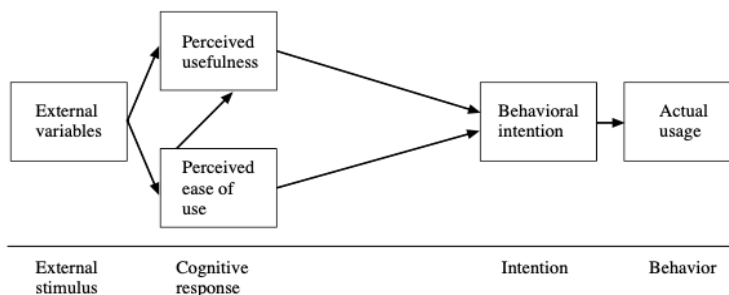
The integration of AI in language learning, particularly in writing, has gained global attention, including in Indonesia. Its role is especially emphasized in academic contexts. However, most research on AI in writing within the Indonesian context has focused on students from English departments (Harunasari, 2023; Iskandar et al., 2024; Kurniarahman et al., 2024; Nugroho et al., 2024; Syahnaz & Fithriani, 2023; Werdiningsih et al., 2024), with limited exploration of how undergraduate students outside these departments use AI tools for writing. Specifically, little research has examined how Indonesian first-year university students, who take English as a general

course and primarily write short paragraphs rather than complex academic essays, engage with AI in their writing. This study addresses this gap by examining why non-English major students use AI for short paragraph writing, a task generally simpler than academic essays. It seeks to answer the question: What motivates Indonesian non-English major students to use AI in their writing?

By examining motivation, this study can offer valuable insights into whether AI tools effectively support students' writing skills or hinder the development of essential academic writing abilities. This would enable educators to tailor their teaching strategies for non-English major students and inform curriculum developers on how to integrate AI tools into non-English language learning.

This study adopts the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) as its theoretical framework. The foundation for TAM is based on Davis's (1993) and Davis and Venkatesh's (1996) work on surveying workplace users' perceived usefulness of PC-based applications, such as electronic mail, multimedia tools, and WordPerfect, the users' perceived ease of interaction with the applications, and intention to adopt the software in professional settings. Overall, TAM identifies three key factors influencing a user's motivation to adopt a technology: perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, and overall attitude toward usage (Davis, 1993; Davis & Venkatesh, 1996). These factors are illustrated in the TAM model below.

Figure 1. Technology Acceptance Model (adopted from Davis and Venkatesh, 1996, p. 20)



TAM is relevant to this study as it examines key factors influencing EFL students' motivation to adopt AI for writing paragraphs. It helps assess their perceived ease of use and usefulness of AI, as well as its long-term impact on writing skills. Moreover, TAM has been widely applied in studying EFL students' adoption of AI tools, such as ChatGPT, for writing tasks (Ge, 2024; Thao et al., 2023). Ge's (2024) and Thao et al.' (2023) studies found that students find ChatGPT beneficial for enhancing writing skills, receiving instant

feedback, improving vocabulary, and increasing engagement. However, concerns remain about over-reliance, reduced creativity, data accuracy, and privacy risks. Despite these challenges, students acknowledge ChatGPT's role in supporting their academic writing.

## **METHOD**

This study employs a mixed-methods approach (Creswell, 2009). The study combined closed-ended survey and interview data to explore the motivations of Indonesian non-English primary EFL first-year students in using AI for writing. The survey was developed by adapting Davis's (1993) model, which examined users' perceived ease of use and usefulness of electronic mail. In this study, the modified survey items assess users' use of AI technology and their perceived usefulness of the technology. The survey collected data from 40 first-year students at a private university in Indonesia. Following the survey, five participants voluntarily participated in semi-structured interviews, conducted through convenience sampling. Prior to participation, all students provided informed consent. The researcher ensured participants' anonymity and confidentiality throughout the research process. The semi-structured interviews (Tracy, 2013) explored students' motivations for adopting AI in writing an English assignment to write a paragraph. For the data analysis, the researcher employed descriptive statistics (Creswell, 2009) to examine the data from the closed-ended survey and determine the percentages of students' agreement or disagreement with the survey items provided. Meanwhile, the qualitative data from the interviews were analyzed thematically, following Braun and Clarke's (2022) thematic analysis, to identify patterns and themes emerging from the interviews.

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

### **Findings**

#### **Findings from the Survey**

In response to the question, 'Do you use AI applications to help with your English writing?' an overwhelming majority of students (96%) reported using AI tools for this purpose. This finding suggests that most students are utilizing technology to improve their writing skills. In contrast, only 4% do not use AI. These data indicate that AI-assisted writing has become a prevailing practice among students. Regarding frequency of use, when asked, 'How often do you use AI applications to help you write English sentences?' the majority (82%) stated that they use AI sometimes. In comparison, 17% reported consistently using it. Only 1% of students never use AI for writing. These findings suggest that although AI applications are frequently utilized, students do not rely on them entirely for their English writing tasks.

The next set of survey questions explored students' perceptions of the ease of use of AI-powered tools. Students were asked to rate their agreement with four statements: (1) AI-powered tools are easy to use, (2) learning to use AI-powered tools requires little effort, (3) the user

interface of AI-powered tools is intuitive and straightforward, and (4) they feel comfortable using AI-powered tools for their studies without needing extra support or guidance. The results revealed that a significant majority (90.9%) of students found AI tools easy to use, while 80% specifically acknowledged that the user interface is intuitive and straightforward. However, opinions are more divided when it comes to the effort required to learn these tools, as 45.4% find it easy, while an equal percentage (45.4%) expresses disagreement. Additionally, while nearly half (49.1%) feel comfortable using AI-powered tools without extra support, a significant portion (51%) still requires guidance. These data suggest that ease of use does not always translate into complete independence in utilizing these tools for academic purposes.

The final survey examined students' perceptions of the usefulness of AI-powered tools in writing. Participants rated their agreement with six key statements: (1) AI tools help them write sentences in English, (2) improve the quality of their writing, (3) enhance their understanding of sentence construction, (4) provide valuable recommendations for correct sentence writing, (5) increase efficiency in completing writing tasks, and (6) contribute to overall writing skill development. These statements aimed to assess the extent to which students perceive AI as a valuable aid in their writing process.

The data reveals a clear trend in the positive impact of AI-powered tools on English writing skills. In addition to 83.6% of respondents indicating that these tools aid in composing sentences in English, a further 16.4% expressed a strong confidence in their usefulness. Additionally, 87.3% of respondents feel that AI tools help improve the overall quality of their writing, with 9.1% expressing a strong belief in their effectiveness. The findings show that these tools are perceived as an effective means of enhancing writing proficiency. In terms of understanding sentence structure, 74.5% of participants indicated that AI supports their ability to construct sentences more effectively, while 21.8% expressed high confidence in this capability. This finding highlights that AI is not only beneficial for writing but also aids in comprehension.

Furthermore, 90.9% of respondents find AI's recommendations for writing sentences correctly to be valuable. This finding highlights its practical value in guiding users toward effective writing techniques. In terms of task efficiency, 89.1% of respondents indicated that AI tools facilitate the completion of writing tasks. This result indicates a significant increase in productivity. In contrast, when considering the broader impact on overall writing skills, 65.5% affirmed that AI enhances their abilities.

In comparison, 29.1% expressed a differing view. These data highlight variability in perceptions of AI's contribution to writing improvement. Overall, while AI tools are beneficial in sentence construction, task efficiency, and providing practical recommendations, their effect on enhancing comprehensive writing skills appears more mixed.

### **Findings from Interviews**

Interviews with students revealed four key reasons for using AI in essay writing: addressing limited vocabulary, overcoming grammar challenges, improving sentence structure, and assisting with paraphrasing.

Limited vocabulary is a significant factor motivating students to use AI tools. Many struggle to express their ideas effectively and rely on AI for synonyms, alternative expressions, or translations. As Student 5 noted, "I have difficulties constructing sentences in English because of my limited vocabulary. AI helps me create creative sentences." Overall, most students favored AI for its quick responses in providing translation when needed. However, beyond vocabulary challenges, many students lack confidence in their grammar skills, as one student admitted, "I struggle with grammar and lack confidence in my understanding of English rules" (Student 4). The interviews reveal that not one of the students doubts AI's credibility in checking their grammar for accuracy, but rather in making their sentences more understandable, precise, and error-free. Therefore, they turn to AI to resolve grammatical issues in their sentences, such as checking subject-verb agreement, punctuation, and tense usage. For students, English tenses are challenging to understand, even when their teachers explain them in the classroom.

Further, the students also turn to AI to improve their sentence structure, aspiring to write "perfect sentences" (Student 1). Realising that they often end up writing sentences in simple format, the students seek AI's help to write better sentences because they believe AI can write more sophisticated sentences. Such a belief leads some students to rely too heavily on AI to write sentences for their paragraphs. However, others learn from the sample sentences provided by AI. Overall, for some students, constant exposure to AI and learning from sample sentences generated by AI enables them to develop their understanding of sentence constructions gradually. Hence, they can write their own sentences independently by then.

The ability to paraphrase is crucial in academic writing. However, the students' limitations in vocabulary and grammar encourage them to use AI for paraphrasing. The students still prefer AI to do a paraphrase for them, despite admitting that they find it problematic due to concerns about plagiarism. Due to the problematic issue, students often ask the AI to provide them with several options so that they can choose one that is most closely aligned with their needs. Nevertheless, the students recognize that having AI paraphrase sentences in simpler forms allows them to understand the sentences more clearly. Likewise, when they use AI paraphrase suggestions, their paragraph sentences become more polished and sound more professional. The students also admit that their barrier to using English tenses is no longer a significant issue, as AI fixes their tenses when it does the paraphrasing.

In conclusion, the interviews revealed that students appreciate AI's assistance in ensuring grammatical accuracy and consistency of tense throughout their paragraph writing. They found that their sentences became more precise and easier to understand with the AI's support. Nevertheless, some students reported that AI tools like ChatGPT occasionally provide irrelevant, repetitive, or unrelated responses to their inquiries, as the application "keeps giving the same answer" at times, despite not matching the students' inquiries (Student 4).

### **Discussion**

The findings indicate that most students find AI tools easy to use and valuable for their paragraph writing assignments, hence voluntarily adopting the tools. This finding supports the Technology Acceptance Model, which suggests that users are more likely to adopt a technology if it is straightforward to integrate into their tasks and helpful (Davis, 1993; Davis & Venkatesh, 1996). However, the survey also reveals that a small percentage of students do not share the same perceptions. These students still find AI applications less user-friendly and require effort to get the tools to provide the required responses. This finding suggests that some students require additional practice in crafting effective prompts to elicit relevant and accurate responses from AI applications. To this end, the interview findings reinforce the survey findings, as some students reported that AI occasionally provides repetitive or unrelated answers to their inquiries. This concern aligns with previous studies that have highlighted issues related to AI accuracy and its ethical implications (Cornish & Larter, 2024; Hsu, 2023).

Regarding the usefulness of AI in assisting students with writing English sentences correctly, the survey and interview findings complement each other. Over 90% of students agree that AI tools help them construct sentences in English, enabling them to develop well-structured paragraphs. Likewise, all interviewed students expressed positive perceptions of AI's role in addressing linguistic challenges in their writing. This finding further supports the Technology Acceptance Model ((Davis, 1993; Davis & Venkatesh, 1996), which emphasizes that perceived usefulness is a key factor in the adoption of technology. The study found that Students primarily rely on AI to overcome difficulties with grammar, limited vocabulary, sentence structure, and paraphrasing. These findings are consistent with prior research, which highlights that EFL students frequently encounter similar challenges in academic writing and therefore turn to AI for help (Chaudhary & Zahrani, 2020; Marsaulina, 2016; Nugroho et al., 2023; Silalahi, 2025; Thao et al., 2023).

Students' use of AI also suggests that they rely on it for proofreading assistance. Unlike traditional human proofreading services, which often require a fee, such as those provided by Cambridge Proofreading and Editing LLC (Cambridgeproofreading, 2025), AI-powered tools are both readily accessible and free of charge. Due to this accessibility, AI has become an attractive

option for students, particularly those who struggle with writing and require convenient, personalized assistance (Cornish & Larter, 2024; Ge, 2024; Huang, 2023).

The widespread and frequent use of AI among students indicates that it has become a fundamental tool in their academic routines. While AI enhances writing skills and fosters independence, confidence, and competence, the growing reliance on it may raise concerns about overdependence. Overreliance is a growing issue in this study, as students tend to prefer having AI perform the paraphrasing for them. Such overdependence is a common issue facing EFL students who have started to use AI for learning (Huang, 2023; Santiago-Ruiz, 2023). Such an issue is critical because over-reliance on AI can threaten students' critical thinking, creativity, and ability to develop independent writing skills (Huang, 2023; Santiago-Ruiz, 2023).

## **CONCLUSION**

This study explored the motivations of Indonesian non-English major EFL students in using AI for writing. The findings indicate that students' motivation to use AI in paragraph writing is primarily driven by its ease of use and perceived usefulness, which align with the Technology Acceptance Model. The majority of students rely on AI to overcome challenges related to grammar, vocabulary limitations, sentence structure, and paraphrasing. Additionally, AI-powered tools serve as accessible and cost-effective proofreading aids, further encouraging their adoption. However, the study also highlights concerns about AI's limitations in writing, particularly its tendency to provide repetitive or irrelevant responses, making prompt crafting somewhat challenging. Moreover, the growing dependence on AI raises concerns about its long-term impact on students' ability to develop independent writing skills.

By examining students' motivations, this study provides valuable insights into the role of AI in assisting or potentially hindering students' writing skills. These findings can help educators tailor their teaching strategies for non-English major students and guide curriculum developers in integrating AI tools into language learning effectively. However, due to the study's limitations, particularly the small sample size, future research could explore a larger population of students who have used AI over an extended period. This would help identify the most significant benefits of AI in writing and examine how students navigate challenges such as overdependence or other unintended consequences of AI-assisted learning.

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