

## **The Students' Perception of Using ChatGPT Towards English Language Learning**

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**Abstract:** This research seeks to explore the perception of the fourth-semester Social Sciences students regarding the use of ChatGPT as a tool for English language learning at UINFAS Bengkulu, particularly concerning learning autonomy, critical thinking skills, and ethical considerations. The study utilized a descriptive qualitative method within the UTAUT2 framework. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis with ten purposively sampled participants. Students largely view ChatGPT primarily as a transactional tool for quickly gaining access to vocabulary, translation, and even the completion of assignments. While there are perceived outputs and limitations such as inaccuracies (90% of respondents), risks of output creativity (70%) that are noted, there is still a practical adoption owing to the device's usability and immediacy. Performance expectancy along with peer influence, hedonic motivation, and institutional guidance that is absent also remain as key adoption drivers. There are fears of stunting personal initiative and promoting skill stagnation through unrestricted autonomous control. This study applies UTAUT2 for the first time regarding the use of ChatGPT in learning English in a non-Western multilingual setting – Indonesia. It constructs distinct user profiles “critical pragmatists,” “intellectual minimalists and describes “critical passivity,” which is the behavioral unresponsiveness to limitations of awareness, which has not been captured in previous literature. The research results set forth tangible approaches to address the AI-academic integrity imbalance, such as the development of pedagogical frameworks incorporating AI, curricula on digital literacy, and institutional governance. This addresses the myriad shortcomings of the theories of acceptance of technology and is a contribution towards Global South educational settings grappled with AI incorporation.

**Keywords:** ChatGPT, English Language Learning, Students' Perception, UTAUT2

### **A. Introduction**

The application of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies in education began with computer-assisted instruction (CAI) systems like PLATO and has evolved into modern NLP-based adaptive learning systems (Journal & Ed, 2024). Open AI's ChatGPT, a large language model (LLM), emerges as a new educational technology

paradigm with features such as real-time translation of languages, assisting in vocabulary development, grammar checking, and tailored engagement (Zhang et al., 2023). Its efficiency enhancing transactional x-pact such as translation and task completion alongside providing resources has been documented (Habibi et al., 2024). In English language learning (ELL), ChatGPT acts as a multi-functional tutor that helps learners speak and engages them actively using linguistically stimulating dialogues (Ahmadi, 2018).

The UTAUT2 model (Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology), sheds light on AI usage within the educational sphere. It concentrates on the key user expectations of technology's social and academic roles, including performance expectancy, effort expectancy, and social influence (Venkatesh et al., 2012). Moreover its importance. Students using ChatGPT tend to order their priorities around to emphasize decisiveness and usability, often deploying it for practical purposes and accepting its shortcomings (Annur & Sujarwati, 2023). At a global level, investigations point to Az factors: the AI enhances learners' access to information while poorly supervised appropriateness could undermine the development of critical thinking skills as well as academic honesty (Rachbini et al., 2023).

Notable gaps remain regarding the role of ChatGPT in English language learning (ELL) in multilingual, non-Western contexts such as Indonesia, even with the growing body of literature on AI in education. The usefulness of ChatGPT for completing academic tasks has been documented (Rachbini et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2023), but its multifunctional application for teaching specific ELL skills, including vocabulary and grammar accuracy as well conversational fluency, is still a gap in the literature. While technology's role in creating conducive language learning environments has received attention (Ahmadi, 2018), there is no research examining whether the transactional efficiency of ChatGPT promotes active linguistic skill development or fosters passive dependency on technological support.

Moreover, the contextual factors shaping adoption within Indonesia's socio-educational ecosystem remain scantily investigated. Although Habibi and his friends (Habibi et al., 2024) confirm UTAUT2's applicability in studying the acceptance of ChatGPT in Indonesian higher education, their crossover analysis overlooks sector-specific Social Sciences student interactions where linguistic balancing between a language and non-language-centric curriculum occurs. Also notable is the unmapped intersection of hedonic motivation, in this case the enjoyment derived from interactions with AI, and critical digital literacy that harms efforts aimed at responsible usage (Venkatesh et al., 2012), which is relevant for sustainable integration.

Also outstanding are the undocumented gaps in the competencies comprising prompt formulation and output validation. As noted by Wahid and Hikamudin (Wahid & Hikamudin, 2023), 93% of Indonesian students regard urgency as the most important

feature of ChatGPT. Not addressed, however, is the inequity skill gap disparity devoid of streamlined educational scaffolding. The lack of structural frameworks, reported by 100% of informants in this study, also makes it difficult to understand how the absence of policy frameworks fosters ethical gaps in the system such as academic integrity violations and erosion of higher-order thinking.

The implementation of modern artificial intelligence systems in education, especially generative models such as ChatGPT, transforms the methods employed for teaching English language learning (ELL). Recent studies particularly emphasize the benefits of ChatGPT on vocabulary mastery, grammar helping, and writing assistance (Zhang et al., 2023). Observations in the context of higher education in Indonesia, for example, Annur and Sujarwati's (Annur & Sujarwati, 2023) study at the University of Bengkulu, show students largely view ChatGPT as an efficiency device. At the same time, there are apprehensions about compromised academic rigor and critical thinking skills. On a broader scale, concepts such as the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (UTAUT2) have been used to understand technology adoption motivators. As an example, Habibi and his friends (2024) explored Indonesian university students and pointed out social impact and performance expectancy as primary motivational factors while highlighting the lack of guidance from the institution as a major gap.

In light of these developments, however, there are still gaps that need to be addressed. First, there is no clarity on social sciences students' distinct non-English major supports as compared to language departments. Considering the scope of ELL especially within the Global South application logic motivations, habit, and even hedonic elements remain untested. In addition, while the overarching narrative of ChatGPT fostering passive dependency in juxtaposition to its purported democratization of access exists, not much has been done to create pedagogical approaches that would mitigate the highlighted risks (Wulandari Pranawengtias, 2022). From a different yet equally important angle, peer influence within collectivist cultures, such as Indonesia's, invites further scrutiny (Liang & Hwang, 2023).

To date, little to no research has been done on the application of AI in educational settings, specifically focusing on AI's acceptance within education. This study uses the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (UTAUT2) framework for the first time in relation to ChatGPT and English Language Learning (ELL) pedagogy. As an overarching framework, UTAUT2 has previously not been applied to the AI acceptance literature (Habibi et al., 2024; Venkatesh et al., 2012), which leaves motivational factors such as hedonic enjoyment (the processes which bring joy and fun) from ChatGPT usage, habit (behavioral automation) of use and learning in ELL, unaddressed.

This study is different from previous research in that it moves away from broad ethical and judgmental discourse to precision teaching. The focus of this paper examines

chatGPT's functions and assesses its effectiveness for teaching vocabulary, grammar correction, and conversation practice. These areas have mostly pervasive research on perception of plagiarism or tasks completion at (Annur & Sujarwati, 2023; Zhang et al., 2023). The research is also an attempt to fill the gap by using UTAUT2 factors pertaining to specific language learning skills and competencies and providing a framework toward understanding the influence of AI skills development. The study focuses on a new group of people: fourth-semester Social Sciences students in a non-Western, multilingual setting (UINFAS Bengkulu, Indonesia). This group is different from previous studies that looked at groups with similar backgrounds (like Computer Science or Linguistics majors). This shows how cultural and institutional factors affect how people use technology. For example, the results show that peer-driven diffusion of ChatGPT in Bengkulu leads to peer-locked innovation, which is when usage stays limited to basic translation because there is no institutional support.

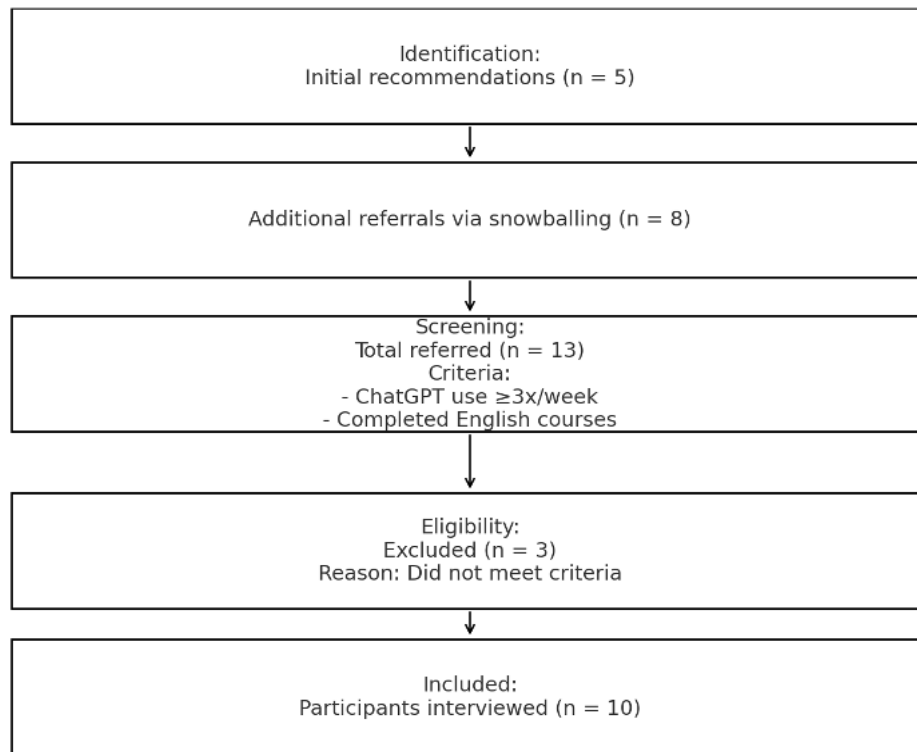
This study adds a lot to the ongoing conversation about how to use AI in education, especially in English language learning (ELL) settings where English is not the first language. In theory, it builds on the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (UTAUT2) framework (Venkatesh et al., 2012) by putting its concepts – Performance Expectancy, Effort Expectancy, Social Influence, Hedonic Motivation, Facilitating Conditions, and Habit – into the context of using generative AI tools like ChatGPT. UTAUT2 has been used a lot to study how people adopt new technologies, but not so much to study how people learn languages using AI, especially in schools in the Global South (Habibi et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2023).

As for the research questions, researchers seek a deep answer on 1) How do fourth-semester Social Sciences students at UINFAS Bengkulu perceive ChatGPT's role in English language learning, 2) What factors influence their adoption and usage of ChatGPT, as analyzed through the UTAUT2 framework?, and 3) What key challenges and limitations do they encounter when using ChatGPT for language learning tasks?

## **B. Methods**

This study adopted a descriptive qualitative research design to conduct a thorough and nuanced investigation into students' perceptions regarding their use of ChatGPT for English language learning. The research was situated within the Social Sciences Study Program at the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Tadris, UIN Fatmawati Sukarno (UINFAS) Bengkulu, Indonesia. To ensure the inclusion of information-rich participants, purposive sampling with a snowball technique was used. A total of ten fourth-semester Social Sciences students (three males and seven females) were selected based on the following predefined criteria: a. Regularly using ChatGPT (at least three times per week) for academic English language learning tasks. b. Having completed foundational English courses within the program. c. Willingness to participate and provide documented informed consent.

The diagram below illustrates the PRISMA-style flow of participant selection for this study, from initial identification through final inclusion.



This approach successfully identified ten fourth-semester Social Sciences students, comprising three males and seven females, who met specific predefined criteria essential for addressing the research objectives. Finally, documented informed consent was obtained from all individuals prior to their inclusion. Thematic saturation was achieved after 10 participants (90% homogeneity) in the core experiences related to ChatGPT use for English learning among this population.

Data collection activities were concentrated over a one-month period, spanning from 23 May to 23 June 2025, and employed a multi-faceted approach to triangulate findings and enhance the study's credibility. The primary instrument consisted of \*in-depth, semi-structured interviews, guided by a 14-item protocol. This instrument was thoughtfully adapted from Ayu Annisa's (2024) framework on technology acceptance in learning and significantly expanded to incorporate key constructs from the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (UTAUT2) model. The integrated UTAUT2 indicators included performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, facilitating conditions, hedonic motivation, price value (particularly relevant given potential accessibility issues), and habit. Recognizing the importance of linguistic comfort for authentic expression, all interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia, the participants' native language. These sessions averaged 25 minutes in duration, were audio-recorded with explicit permission for subsequent transcription and analysis, and yielded rich narrative data on students' experiences and perceptions. Complementing the interviews was participant observation. An initial

pilot observation session was conducted earlier, on 17 February 2025, to refine the observational protocol. Subsequent observational sessions during the main data collection phase focused on documenting students' naturalistic behaviors and interaction patterns with ChatGPT during actual academic activities related to English language tasks, providing valuable contextual insights beyond self-reported interview data. The third pillar of data collection involved documentation. This included the collection of anonymized screenshots capturing representative student-ChatGPT interactions relevant to English learning, detailed field notes compiled during both interviews and observations, and relevant anonymized institutional records pertaining to course structures or language requirements. This triangulation of data sources interviews, observations, and documents was fundamental to capturing a comprehensive and multi-dimensional view of the phenomenon under study.

The analysis of the collected data followed the systematic and rigorous framework proposed by Miles and Huberman, involving four interconnected phases implemented iteratively. The process commenced with triangulation, where the research team actively cross-verified emerging insights and evidence across the three distinct data streams: the transcribed and translated interview texts, the detailed observational notes capturing real-world usage, and the documentary evidence such as interaction screenshots. This initial step was crucial for identifying consistencies, discrepancies, and contextual nuances. Subsequently, data reduction was meticulously performed. All interview audio recordings were transcribed verbatim. Recognizing the need for analysis in English, relevant segments of these transcripts were then professionally translated, with careful attention paid to preserving the original meaning and nuance of participants' Bahasa Indonesia responses. The translated data, along with observational notes and documentary evidence, were then systematically categorized and coded according to the predefined UTAUT2 constructs (e.g., coding statements related to time savings under "performance expectancy," comments about ease of use under "effort expectancy," mentions of peer influence under "social influence"). Throughout this process, segments of data deemed irrelevant to the core research questions, such as instances where ChatGPT was used for purposes unrelated to English language learning, were deliberately identified and excluded to maintain analytical focus. Following reduction, \*data presentation\* involved organizing the distilled findings into coherent and meaningful thematic patterns. Emerging themes, such as "efficiency benefits in drafting and research," "concerns about response accuracy and reliability," "hedonic motivation through interactive learning," or "challenges related to habitual dependence," were clearly defined and substantiated with illustrative, anonymized verbatim quotes from participants, excerpts from observational notes, and pertinent documentary examples. Finally, verification constituted an ongoing, iterative process where tentative conclusions were constantly checked against the raw data, the structured UTAUT2 framework, and the original research questions. This involved revisiting transcripts, re-examining observational contexts, and ensuring that the final interpretations were

robustly grounded in the empirical evidence gathered from all sources, thereby enhancing the trustworthiness and validity of the study's conclusions.

Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research process. Participant autonomy was rigorously respected; individuals were fully informed about the study's aims, procedures, potential risks, and benefits prior to providing written consent, and they retained the unequivocal right to withdraw their participation or data at any stage without penalty. Confidentiality was stringently maintained. All audio recordings were stored securely using encrypted digital storage solutions accessible only to the core research team. During transcription, translation, analysis, and reporting, all potentially identifying information was removed. Participants are referred to solely by anonymized identifiers (e.g., "IM," "SC") in any research outputs. Furthermore, all collected data, including audio files, transcripts, observational notes, and documentation, were handled and stored according to institutional ethical guidelines and data protection protocols to safeguard participant privacy and data security. This comprehensive ethical framework ensured the research was conducted responsibly and with due respect for the rights and well-being of the student participants.

### **C. Results and Discussion**

This study investigated the perceptions, adoption drivers, and challenges of ChatGPT use among fourth-semester Social Sciences students at UINFAS Bengkulu within English language learning (ELL). The findings reveal a complex landscape where students pragmatically leverage ChatGPT's efficiencies while expressing significant concerns about its reliability and pedagogical impact, ultimately reflecting a critical yet transactional relationship with the technology.

Regarding perceptions of ChatGPT in ELL, students predominantly viewed it as a tool for transactional efficiency. They frequently utilized it for vocabulary acquisition, translation, and assignment completion, as exemplified by informant IM's statement, "lebih mudah menemukan kosa kata" (easier to find vocabulary) and LU's admission, "untuk translate aja" (just for translation). "90% (9/10) praised speed, but 70% (7/10) reported output inaccuracies "jawabannya sering ngawur" (answers often nonsensical IM) or "kadang nggak nyambung" (sometimes irrelevant SU). Crucially, 70% acknowledged risks to creativity and critical thinking, with several noting emerging dependency, such as YA's ("terus ketergantungan" then dependence) and SC's ("bikin ketergantungan" creates dependence). Hedonic motivation, primarily derived from stress reduction during task completion (e.g., SC: "Senang! Ngerjain tugas jadi kayak main game" Happy! Doing assignments feels like playing a game), was evident but rarely translated into deeper intrinsic motivation for language learning itself.

The factors influencing adoption were strongly aligned with the UTAUT2 framework.

Performance Expectancy driven by speed and task efficiency was a primary motivator, captured by FA's comment "cepat nyelesain tugas" (quickly finishes assignments). Effort Expectancy highlighted surface-level usability ("Sangat mudah!" Very easy! MU), though this masked significant challenges in prompt engineering, as YA noted ("harus pandai meracik pertanyaannya" must be skilled at crafting questions). Social Influence emerged as the dominant adoption trigger, with 80% of informants citing peers ("dari teman" from friends) as their introduction point, contrasting sharply with a complete absence of institutional guidance or promotion. While Hedonic Motivation stemming from task-completion relief was prominent, genuine intrinsic motivation related to language acquisition was scarce. Furthermore, Habit formation was observed among frequent users like LU ("Tiap tugas pakai ChatGPT" Every assignment uses ChatGPT), leading to concerning cycles of dependency.

Significant challenges and limitations tempered the initial utility. A critical accuracy-reliability trade-off was pervasive; fabricated outputs ("ngarang" making things up SC) necessitated manual verification, often eroding the time savings initially gained. Heavy users reported dependency without commensurate skill growth, leading to stagnation in writing and analytical abilities, as EL starkly admitted ("cuma copy paste" just copy paste). This institutional void was unanimously cited (100% of informants), resulting in unregulated use and unresolved ethical dilemmas like plagiarism. Additionally, hidden competency gaps in prompt literacy disadvantaged linguistically weaker students, exacerbating existing inequalities within the classroom.

These findings position ChatGPT within ELL as a double-edged sword, offering efficiency gains while posing substantial pedagogical risks. Discussion in relation to extant literature clarifies these tensions. Students' framing of ChatGPT as a transactional efficiency tool aligns strongly with UTAUT2's performance expectancy construct (Venkatesh et al., 2012). This mirrors Shoufan's (2023) observations where learners prioritized speed for vocabulary and translation tasks but remained wary of output accuracy, necessitating verification. This resonates with Kasneci and friends (Kasneci et al., 2023) characterization of ChatGPT acting more as a "digital scribe" than a genuine cognitive partner in language education. The peer-driven adoption amidst an institutional guidance vacuum echoes Habibi et al.'s (Habibi et al., 2024) findings on social network-driven AI normalization in Indonesia. However, the total lack of scaffolding here amplified ethical risks, supporting Farrokhnia et al.'s (2024) urgent call for institutional policy frameworks. This stands in stark contrast to contexts like engineering education, where Qadir (Qadir, 2023) reported significant educator involvement guiding ChatGPT use. Here are comparison of findings with previous studies.



**Table 1. Comparison of Findings from Previous Studies**

Study	Key Findings	Comparison with This Study
Shoufan (2023)	Focus on speed and translation tasks	Similar: Students prioritized speed over accuracy
Kasneci et al. (2023)	ChatGPT as digital scribe	Aligned: Used for task automation, not deep learning
Habibi et al. (2024)	Peer-driven AI adoption in Indonesia	Echoed: Institutional vacuum, peer influence dominant
Farrokhnia et al. (2024)	Need for AI policy and scaffolding	Supported: Lack of guidance increased ethical risks
Qadir (2023)	Educator-guided use in engineering	Contrasted: No educator involvement in this context

The prominence of hedonic motivation linked to stress reduction, yet its failure to foster intrinsic learning motivation, corroborates Yan’s (2023) research on L2 writers. Similarly, Kohnke et al. (2024) observed that ChatGPT’s “gamified” interface reduced anxiety but did not stimulate deeper cognitive engagement with language. The widespread concern over accuracy and hallucination (reported by 90% of informants) aligns with Cooper’s (2023) analysis in science education, where inaccuracies significantly undermined user trust. Furthermore, the perceived suppression of creativity (noted by 70%) reinforces Jeon and Lee’s (2023) warnings that over-reliance on AI tools can stifle linguistic innovation and original thought.

The observed pattern of dependency without skill growth strongly supports Rudolph et al.’s (2023) concept of “competency illusions” fostered by generative AI. The stagnation in core skills like critical analysis among frequent users (e.g., YA, LU) validates Baidoo-Anu and Owusu Ansah’s (2023) caution regarding detrimental “cognitive offloading.” The challenge of prompt engineering as a hidden barrier, disadvantaging less proficient users (as experienced by YA), extends Su and Yang’s (2023) findings. This directly contributes to inequity, as Imran (2023) documented in academic writing contexts, where prompt literacy disparities reinforced existing academic divides.

Contrasting findings with the literature highlight contextual nuances. While Grimaldi et al. (2023) argued ChatGPT boosts creativity in brainstorming tasks, our participants reported reduced originality (e.g., SC: “nggak meningkatkan kreativitas” – doesn’t increase creativity). This divergence likely stems from task design: our informants primarily used ChatGPT transactionally for closed tasks (vocabulary, translation, assignment completion), unlike the open-ended brainstorming activities Grimaldi et al. studied. Similarly, whereas Qadir (Qadir, 2023) observed intrinsic motivation spikes in programming education using ChatGPT, our participants cited only extrinsic rewards (e.g., deadline relief), suggesting discipline-specific factors (ELL vs. engineering) and task nature significantly influence motivational outcomes.

This study’s comparative analysis with five related works reveals distinct contributions to the literature on ChatGPT adoption in education (Reza, Hidayat,

Saputra, Aini, Qurrotul, 2018; 2021; 2023). While existing research consistently emphasizes user perceptions among educators and students, utilitarian benefits for task efficiency, and social influence as adoption drivers, this work introduces significant innovations. Crucially, we narrow the focus to English language learning, specifically examining activities like vocabulary acquisition, translation, and presentation structuring a departure from prior studies centered on general academic writing or literacy exercises.

The application of the UTAUT 2 framework further differentiates this research, enabling a multidimensional analysis of adoption factors (e.g., performance expectancy, hedonic motivation) and uncovering unique behavioral dynamics. Notably, we identify the zero-hedonic profile (functional satisfaction without intrinsic motivation) and critical passivity (continued usage despite recognizing limitations), phenomena absent in studies lacking structured theoretical lenses. Beyond theoretical advancements, we document previously unclassified user archetypes, including the Critical Pragmatist (intensive yet unmitigated dependency), Intellectual Minimalist (restricted adoption with rigorous quality control), and Pressured Pragmatist (dependency driven by peers), offering granular insights beyond generalized user perceptions.

Equally pivotal is our exposure of systemic gaps where 100% of participants reported an institutional void in guidance, resulting in self-regulation failures and peer-locked innovation (limited feature exploration). This finding contrasts with related work acknowledging peer influence but neglecting institutional accountability. Additionally, we reveal hidden competency barriers such as prompt literacy gaps and verification burdens, which reduce efficiency complexities overlooked by studies emphasizing accessibility over technical challenges.

In synthesis, students' utilitarian adoption of ChatGPT confirms the predictive power of UTAUT2 for technology acceptance (Venkatesh et al., 2012) but starkly exposes its limitations in addressing pedagogical sustainability. The reliance on peer networks for adoption, coupled with a complete institutional void, underscores systemic gaps in Indonesia's approach to integrating generative AI in higher education. Left unaddressed, the risks of critical passivity, skill erosion, and heightened inequity loom large. To transform ChatGPT from a perceived "joki tugas" (assignment crutch) into a genuine "katalis pembelajaran" (learning catalyst), we propose three evidence-informed recommendations: First, implementing mandatory Critical AI Literacy Modules covering prompt engineering, output verification, bias detection, and ethical use, as advocated by Kasneci et al. (2023). Second, pedagogically rebalancing task design: utilize ChatGPT for preparatory or lower-order tasks (e.g., vocabulary generation, initial research) but require unaided application, synthesis, and critical analysis in assessed work, ensuring skill development as urged by Yan (2023). Third, universities must develop and enforce clear Institutional Policies and guidelines on the ethical and effective use of generative AI in learning, drawing on models

implemented successfully in STEM disciplines (Qadir, 2023). Only through such structured, literacy-focused, and policy-backed approaches can the potential efficiencies of ChatGPT be harnessed while safeguarding the core critical and creative competencies essential for language learning and academic growth.

#### **D. Conclusions**

Based on the findings of this study, fourth-semester Social Sciences students at UINFAS Bengkulu primarily view and use ChatGPT in English language learning as a pragmatic, efficiency-driven tool for transactional tasks like vocabulary lookup, translation, and assignment completion, driven largely by peer influence and the appeal of speed; however, this adoption is critically tempered by widespread concerns over output inaccuracy, risks to creativity and critical thinking, emerging dependency cycles leading to skill stagnation, and a complete lack of institutional guidance, necessitating structured interventions in critical AI literacy and ethical policy frameworks to mitigate risks and harness its potential responsibly. To address these issues and responsibly harness the potential of generative AI tools in higher education, the following structured interventions are recommended:

1. **Curriculum Development:** Institutions should integrate mandatory AI literacy modules (e.g., a 2-credit course or a 4-week training on prompt engineering, as proposed by Kasneci et al., 2023) to foster students' critical understanding of AI tools and their appropriate use in academic contexts.
2. **Policy Reform:** Institutions should establish clear ethical guidelines, including a prohibition on using ChatGPT for summative assignments to maintain academic integrity and ensure independent student work.
3. **Assessment Design:** Lecturers should incorporate AI output verification components into grading rubrics, prompting students to justify, revise, or critically evaluate AI-generated content as part of their learning process.

These interventions aim not to suppress the use of AI, but to equip students with the critical competencies needed to engage with it ethically, effectively, and reflectively in their academic and future professional lives.

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