



STUDENTS' AND TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE USE OF AI CHATBOT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AT THE VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL IN METHODIST 2 PALEMBANG

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the perceptions, experiences, and instructional practices of both students and teachers regarding the integration of AI chatbots into English language teaching within a vocational high school context. Employing a qualitative case study approach, the research was conducted at Methodist 2 Vocational High School Palembang. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and classroom observations involving 100 students and four English teachers. The data were subsequently analyzed using thematic analysis, with methodological triangulation employed to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. The results indicate that AI chatbots serve as valuable pedagogical tools by promoting learner autonomy, increasing classroom engagement, and providing instant, individualized feedback, particularly in the development of reading and writing skills. Nevertheless, their implementation remains predominantly task-driven, with limited integration into broader pedagogical strategies. The study also identifies several challenges, including students' excessive dependence on AI-generated responses, insufficient development of critical thinking skills, disparities in digital literacy, and concerns regarding academic integrity. The findings further emphasize the pivotal role of teachers in facilitating the ethical, purposeful, and pedagogically sound use of AI technologies. Overall, the study concludes that although AI chatbots present considerable potential for enhancing English language learning in vocational education, their effective adoption depends on systematic pedagogical integration, clear instructional guidance, and the promotion of responsible AI use.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, AI Chatbots, English Language Teaching, Vocational High School, Technology Integration, Autonomous Learning.

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, research focus and sub-focus, problem identification, research objectives, and the significance of the investigation. Indonesia's educational landscape is currently experiencing a profound transformation driven by rapid technological innovation, which has fundamentally reshaped teaching and learning practices. The traditional teacher-centered paradigm has gradually shifted toward learner-centered education,

enabling students to independently access, evaluate, and construct knowledge. Consequently, contemporary educational discourse increasingly advocates the integration of digital technologies through pedagogical frameworks such as Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) and the Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, and Redefinition (SAMR) model. Among these technological developments, Artificial Intelligence (AI), particularly AI-powered

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conversational agents such as ChatGPT and Perplexity AI, has emerged as a promising instructional resource capable of supporting English language learning by promoting learner autonomy, creativity, and self-regulated learning. Nevertheless, previous studies caution that the absence of appropriate pedagogical guidance and ethical regulation may result in academic dependency and misuse (Syarifudin, 2021; Yetişensoy, 2024; Limna, 2023).

From an educational perspective, the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become a critical driver of educational innovation and quality improvement. Rather than functioning merely as a medium for information delivery, technology serves as a catalyst for developing higher-order thinking skills, collaboration, creativity, and problem-solving competencies required in twenty-first-century education (Abedi, 2024). Similarly, Seenivasan (2024) argues that ICT has transformed teacher education by reshaping instructional practices and expanding learners' educational opportunities. Beyond pedagogical benefits, effective ICT implementation also contributes to greater educational equity, cost efficiency, and environmental sustainability by facilitating flexible and technology-enhanced learning environments.

The successful implementation of educational technology depends largely on the readiness of the entire educational ecosystem, encompassing teachers, students, and institutional infrastructure. Teacher readiness extends beyond basic digital competence to include the pedagogical capacity to integrate technology meaningfully into teaching, learning, and assessment practices (Syahdan et al., 2022; D'Agostino et al., 2022). Likewise, students' digital literacy significantly influences their ability to utilize ICT effectively, engage in self-directed learning, and develop innovative learning strategies (Zhanbirov et al., 2022).

Institutional readiness is equally essential, requiring adequate technological infrastructure, accessibility, and reliable digital networks to support sustainable technology integration (Bolaji & Adeoye, 2022; Tabar et al., 2021). Together, these dimensions determine the effectiveness of digital transformation within educational settings.

Despite the growing adoption of AI chatbots in English language learning, limited empirical evidence exists regarding how these technologies are experienced and pedagogically implemented within Indonesian vocational high schools. Existing studies have primarily focused on the technical capabilities of AI systems for supporting language production and comprehension, while relatively little attention has been devoted to examining teachers' and students' experiences, classroom practices, and instructional challenges in authentic educational contexts.

Preliminary observations conducted at Methodist 2 Vocational High School Palembang indicate that AI chatbots have begun to support English instruction; however, their implementation remains inconsistent and predominantly limited to task completion rather than comprehensive pedagogical integration. To address this research gap, the present qualitative case study investigates the perceptions, experiences, and instructional practices of teachers and students regarding AI chatbot integration in vocational English language teaching. Specifically, the study seeks to identify both the opportunities and challenges associated with adopting AI as an instructional support tool within classroom learning.

This research contributes to both theory and practice. Theoretically, it enriches the growing body of literature on AI-assisted language learning by providing empirical evidence from the relatively underexplored

context of Indonesian vocational education. Practically, the findings are expected to enhance students' digital literacy, critical thinking, and responsible use of AI technologies while offering teachers evidence-based insights into the effective pedagogical integration of AI chatbots. Furthermore, the study provides educational institutions and policymakers with practical recommendations for developing sustainable AI integration strategies that support technology-enhanced English language learning and meet the demands of twenty-first-century education. As Artificial Intelligence continues to transform educational practice, particularly in English Language Teaching (ELT), understanding its pedagogical implementation has become increasingly important. Through natural language processing and automated reasoning, AI-powered chatbots have the potential to facilitate meaningful learning interactions while complementing, rather than replacing, the essential role of teachers in language education.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Concept of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Language Education

In the context of language acquisition, AI chatbots function primarily as supplementary instructional tools rather than autonomous educators. Research indicates that these systems provide instantaneous feedback, elucidate grammatical structures, recommend vocabulary, and afford students opportunities for iterative language practice. This significantly reduces the affective filter and communicative anxiety often associated with traditional classroom participation (Al Husaeni et al., 2024; Taecharungroj, 2023). This capability is particularly significant in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, where learners frequently lack sufficient exposure to authentic target language usage beyond the classroom. This

argument is aligned with studies by (Juliana, 2022); (Rispatiningsih 2022); (Mulyah, 2020).

Studies demonstrate that this degree of independence enhances intrinsic motivation and sustains learner engagement, particularly when educators actively mediate and scaffold the integration of these digital tools (Labadze et al., 2024). However, the integration of AI is not without significant challenges. The literature identifies several critical issues, including the occasional inaccuracy of AI-generated responses, the risk of student overreliance, and emerging concerns regarding academic integrity (Ifelebuegu, 2023). Furthermore, AI chatbots inherently lack the capacity to comprehend pragmatic contexts, cultural nuances, and emotional subtext, the elements that are fundamental to holistic language acquisition.

2.2 Concept of Chatbot in English Language Learning

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has significantly transformed language acquisition, particularly through the proliferation of chatbots. These virtual agents interact with learners via text or speech, providing students with continuous, on-demand opportunities to practice their language skills.

1. Functionality and Role in English Language Learning

AI-powered chatbots function as virtual tutors and conversational partners for English language learners. Built upon Natural Language Processing (NLP) architectures, they are capable of answering inquiries and providing instantaneous feedback. This immediate assistance is particularly valuable in under-resourced educational settings; Dewi and Hastjarjo (2022) observe that chatbots can effectively bridge these instructional gaps. Furthermore, Purwaningrum et al. (2023) highlight that chatbots encourage learner autonomy,

particularly in vocabulary acquisition and writing proficiency.

2. Pedagogical Contributions

Chatbots offer substantial educational value by aligning with constructivist learning principles, which posit that knowledge is constructed through active environmental interaction. Suryani et al. (2023) found that the integration of AI chatbots provides students with enhanced opportunities for writing practice and timely feedback, resulting in higher levels of task engagement and improved overall language performance. Some studies move beyond just language skills. For instance, Aleedy, Atwell, and Meshoul (2022) and Kingchang, Chatwattana, and Wannapiroon (2024) explored how chatbots support learning management, gather feedback, and make educational recommendations. Additionally, Nopitasari et al. (2023) note that chatbots facilitate task-based learning by enabling students to simulate real-world communication, such as drafting messages, preparing interview responses, or composing professional emails. This task-oriented application ensures that interactions with chatbots remain pedagogically meaningful and contextually relevant.

3. Technological Advantages of Chatbots in English Education

From a technological perspective, chatbots offer several advantages that strengthen their role in language learning:

- a. Accessibility and Flexibility, This temporal flexibility accommodates diverse schedules and is particularly beneficial for mitigating the anxiety some students experience during traditional classroom participation (Putra et al., 2023).
- b. Immediate Feedback, Chatbots provide instantaneous corrections and suggestions, allowing students to continuously monitor their proficiency

and track their developmental progress in real-time.

- c. Personalized Learning, AI systems adapt to individual learner requirements, adjusting their responses to simulate a one-on-one tutoring experience.
- d. Digital Literacy Development, Purwaningrum et al. (2023) assert that formulating prompts and interpreting chatbot responses demands higher-order cognitive engagement.

4. Conclusion

Chatbots possess the potential to fundamentally transform English language education. They adeptly simulate authentic conversations, provide immediate feedback, and foster autonomous learning. Furthermore, their scalability and accessibility make them highly suitable for resource-constrained environments, such as vocational high schools.

2.3 Concept of ELT in Vocational High Schools (SMK)

English Language Teaching (ELT) in vocational high schools (SMK) extends beyond general linguistic competence to focus primarily on occupational preparedness. The primary objective is to facilitate workforce readiness (Hapsari et al., 2018). Consequently, ELT in Indonesia places less emphasis on broad grammatical instruction and instead prioritizes English for Specific Purposes (ESP), and more specifically, English for Vocational Purposes (EVP). Students are required to acquire industry-specific vocabulary and phrasing, applying them practically within occupational contexts rather than acquiring them theoretically (Natsir et al., 2022). ELT in vocational institutions is theoretically grounded in the ESP framework established by Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998). In the Vocational High School context, the primary aim of EVP is to cultivate authentic communication

competencies essential for the workplace, such as comprehending technical manuals, drafting professional reports, and executing professional discourse in English (Natsir et al., 2022). A persistent pedagogical challenge, however, is the continued reliance on general English textbooks typical of standard high school curricula. Consequently, this misalignment often produces graduates whose linguistic skills fail to meet the specific demands of their future workplaces (Hapsari et al., 2018).

3. METHODS

3.1 Time and Place of Research

The research was carried out for a period of two months from January to February 2026. The site for this research was Methodist 2 Vocational High School Palembang. The address is at Jl. Kolonel Atmo, 17 Ilir, Ilir Timur I District, Palembang City, South Sumatra. As a qualitative research involving a case study design with quantitative descriptive support, participant selection involved the selection method of convenience sampling. This particular method is popularly used in qualitative research on education when there is a focus on comprehension involving a particular situation and not a generalized situation (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016; Lehdonvirta et al., 2020; Shukla, 2023; Stratton, 2021). The selection method will allow the researcher access and selection involvement with a participant who is accessible and relevant to the research. This offered an advantage based on the situation involving a restriction on time and location (Etikan, 2017; Golzar, Noor, & Tajik, 2022). A research timeline is shown below.

3.2. Method and Procedure of Research

This research investigates the integration of AI chatbots in English language instruction at Methodist 2 Vocational High School Palembang, emphasizing the

perspectives and practical experiences of both educators and students. By focusing on a singular institutional setting, the study facilitates a comprehensive analysis of how these technologies are operationalized within daily classroom practices. To achieve this, the research adopts a qualitative case study design utilizing methodological triangulation. While the primary approach is qualitative which focusing on in-depth understanding, the study incorporates a structured questionnaire to obtain a broader consensus on students' attitudes. Dewi (2021) asserts that qualitative research is inherently interpretive. Furthermore, Sinha (2017) emphasizes that case studies are particularly effective for investigating "how" and "why" inquiries within real-world contexts, where the phenomenon cannot be isolated from its operational environment. Regarding data collection, this study is informed by established qualitative methodologies. Butina (2015) underscores the value of in-depth interviews in capturing authentic participant narratives and experiential nuances. Similarly, Taherdoost (2021) advocates for methodological triangulation, arguing that the integration of multiple data collection instruments significantly enhances the validity of qualitative research.

3.3 Data and Data Source

Data are collected from both students and teachers simultaneously during classroom activities. Observations of real-time interactions in vocational English classes provide evidence of how AI is applied in authentic learning environments. This approach ensures a precise representation of technology integration as it occurs in practice. The primary sources of data include structured teacher interviews, Likert-scale questionnaires for students, and systematic classroom observations. Additionally, relevant instructional documents are integrated into the analysis to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the research phenomenon.

3.4 Techniques of Collecting Data

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, supplemented by quantitative descriptive data, to investigate the integration of AI-powered chatbots in English language instruction at the vocational high school level. This argument is aligned with studies by (Pace, 2024) ;To ensure methodological rigor and data triangulation, the research utilizes three primary instruments: structured interviews, Likert-scale questionnaires, This argument is aligned with studies by (Roselidyawaty, 2021). and systematic classroom observations. The combination of these methods facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the implementation and pedagogical implications of AI chatbots within the classroom.

3.5 Validity and Reliability Test of Data

In qualitative research, validity and reliability transcend the utility of data collection instruments; they are fundamental to establishing the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. This study adheres to rigorous methodological standards to ensure data integrity. Throughout the data collection process by involving questionnaires, structured interviews, and classroom observations; Putri et al. (2022) assert that this analytical approach transcends mere summarization; rather, it requires researchers to establish systemic connections between observed student behaviors and broader pedagogical variables, including the learning environment, instructional design, and collaborative dynamics., rigorous validation is maintained. Content validity is rigorously assessed to ensure that the instruments effectively operationalize the research constructs. Furthermore, to establish reliability, methodological triangulation and a comprehensive audit trail are employed, ensuring that the research process remains transparent, systematic, and amenable to external verification.

3.6 Techniques of Analyzing Data

Upon the completion of data collection, the researcher initiates a systematic analysis by examining each research instrument individually before integrating the findings into a synthesized conclusion. This study utilizes the narrative review technique as its central analytical framework. This methodological approach facilitates the synthesis, interpretation, and description of empirical findings derived from multiple sources, including structured interviews: Participants and researchers collaboratively construct meaning during the interaction, thereby revealing the nuances of human experience (Khan & MacEachen, 2022). The flexibility to pursue follow-up inquiries, request elaboration, or seek clarification ensures a comprehensive understanding of participant perceptions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). These methods enhance accessibility, flexibility, and cost-effectiveness without compromising data quality, provided that rigorous design and ethical standards are maintained (Khan & MacEachen, 2022; Rahman, 2015), Likert-scale questionnaires: While qualitative inquiries aim to capture the depth of human experience beyond standardized metrics (Finland, 2020; Andini, 2024), structured questionnaires provide an effective means to identify general trends and consensus among a larger participant cohort (Purandare & Patil, 2023), and classroom observations: This approach is highly compatible with case study designs, which prioritize context-specific insights over broad generalizations (Mazhar et al., 2021). Jahan et al. (2016) contend that a narrative review synthesizes data through a theoretical lens, prioritizing interpretative analysis over purely quantitative metrics. This interpretative quality renders the methodology particularly suitable for exploring complex, context-dependent phenomena, such as the integration of AI chatbots within English language instruction. Through this narrative synthesis, the researcher can establish robust connections between empirical data and key theoretical

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frameworks, thereby facilitating an in-depth exploration of emerging patterns and interrelationships. Gregory and Denniss (2018) delineate a structured review process, which involves defining the research focus, conducting an iterative critical literature review, and synthesizing findings in a cohesive and organized manner.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**4.1 Result**

The integrated analysis of questionnaire data, structured interviews, and classroom observations provides a comprehensive understanding of the implementation and implications of AI chatbot use in English Language Teaching (ELT) at Methodist 2 Vocational High School Palembang. Overall, the findings demonstrate that AI chatbots have been functionally embedded in the learning ecosystem and are perceived as valuable educational tools; however, their pedagogical integration remains partial and requires further structural refinement.

Addressing the first research problem regarding user perceptions, findings from the students' perspective indicate a generally positive conceptualization of Artificial Intelligence in education. Students largely recognize AI as a meaningful, relevant, and beneficial technology that enhances learning effectiveness, motivation, and overall educational quality. This aligns with the study's focus on AI in language education, particularly regarding its perceived benefits. At the same time, neutral responses related to the rapid development of AI suggest that students are still in a phase of adaptation and critical negotiation with emerging technologies, underscoring the dynamic nature of AI development and its evolving role in educational contexts. In classroom practice, students predominantly use AI independently to understand materials and complete assignments, reflecting the growing role of AI in fostering learner autonomy and self-directed learning, a key subfocus of technology integration in language education.

However, the limited use of AI for collaborative discussion and problem-solving activities indicates that AI has not yet been fully leveraged to support higher-order interactional learning processes.

Teacher interview data further deepen this interpretation by revealing a pragmatic and cautious stance toward AI integration, which highlights both the opportunities and challenges of AI use (RQ3). Teachers conceptualize AI primarily as a digital assistant that supports instructional preparation, material development, and administrative efficiency rather than as a replacement for human instruction. This perception reinforces the theoretical positioning of AI as a supplementary pedagogical tool within technology-enhanced language learning frameworks. While teachers acknowledge AI's contribution to efficiency and personalized support, they also articulate significant concerns regarding declining student creativity, critical thinking, and intrinsic motivation. By contrasting the hurdles of traditional and online classroom, students reflect their capacity to evaluate their academic progress and the reasons behind their low performance (Makarova, 2021). These concerns correspond directly with the subfocus on the limitations and challenges of AI use in language teaching, particularly the risk of surface-level learning and overreliance on automated outputs. The interviews also highlight ethical considerations, including plagiarism, academic dishonesty, and data reliability, emphasizing the importance of ethical awareness and integrity in AI-assisted learning.

Classroom observation findings corroborate both student and teacher perspectives by demonstrating that AI chatbot use is tangibly present in daily instructional practices across grade levels and vocational programs. AI is consistently used to assist comprehension and task completion, contributing to student engagement and instructional efficiency. Nevertheless,

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concerning the teachers' pedagogical role (RQ4), observations reveal that teachers rarely model AI use explicitly or adapt instructional strategies based on AI-generated outputs. This suggests that AI integration remains operational rather than pedagogically transformative, reinforcing the need for stronger instructional design and teacher mediation in technology-integrated ELT. In terms of practical implementation across core English language skills (RQ2), AI use is predominantly focused on reading and writing, while speaking and listening skills receive minimal support. This pattern directly reflects the uneven impact of AI across language skill domains, highlighting its strengths in text-based learning and its limitations in fostering oral communicative competence.

Across all three instruments, a consistent theme emerges regarding ethical use and academic integrity. Students report awareness of ethical boundaries and institutional regulations, while teachers emphasize their responsibility to guide students toward responsible and reflective AI use. However, both questionnaire and interview data reveal that dependency risks are not yet fully recognized by students, indicating a gap between awareness and critical self-regulation. This finding underscores the necessity of integrating ethical instruction and digital literacy explicitly into the curriculum.

In synthesis, the triangulated findings indicate that AI chatbots offer substantial opportunities for enhancing efficiency, autonomy, and access to learning resources in vocational English education. At the same time, the data collectively reveal pedagogical, ethical, and practical challenges, including limited support for higher-order thinking, communicative competence, and collaborative learning, as well as risks of dependency and reduced learner agency. Therefore, while AI integration at Methodist 2 Vocational High School Palembang aligns

with contemporary trends in technology-enhanced language learning, its effective implementation depends on deliberate pedagogical planning, curriculum alignment, ethical regulation, and the sustained central role of teachers as facilitators, mediators, and moral guides. This integrated analysis affirms that AI should function not as a substitute for human instruction but as a complementary tool that enhances meaningful, reflective, and responsible English language learning.

4.2 Discussion

This study explored the integration of AI chatbots in English Language Teaching (ELT) at the vocational high school level by examining students' and teachers' perceptions, classroom practices, as well as the opportunities and challenges associated with AI-assisted instruction.

First, concerning institutional infrastructure, the classroom observations confirmed that students consistently accessed AI tools via digital devices utilizing the school's robust network. This fulfills the structural and accessibility parameters defined by Bolaji and Adeoye (2022) and Tabar et al. (2021), proving that the institution's physical readiness acts as a fundamental enabler for AI integration.

Second, the interview findings demonstrate a strong degree of teacher readiness. Educators exhibited not only basic ICT proficiency (Syahdan et al., 2022) but also the pedagogical capability to integrate technology into instructional preparation and assessment (D'Agostino et al., 2022). However, the data reveals a critical nuance: while teachers are technically ready to use AI for administrative efficiency, they exercise pedagogical caution in the classroom due to ethical concerns, illustrating a complex layer of professional readiness.

Finally, regarding learner readiness, questionnaire results indicate that students possess sufficient digital literacy to

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independently utilize AI for task completion, empowering them to explore broader educational opportunities as highlighted by Zhanbirov et al. (2022). Nevertheless, the discussion of the findings below reveals that this technical literacy must be balanced with critical thinking, as high technical readiness without guided self-regulation can lead to the overreliance observed in this study. Building upon this established foundation of ICT readiness, the subsequent findings from the questionnaires, interviews, and observations provide a deeper understanding of how these AI chatbots are practically utilized and perceived.

Furthermore, the findings from the questionnaire indicate that students at Methodist 2 Vocational High School Palembang generally perceive AI chatbots as meaningful, relevant, and beneficial tools in English language learning. This positive perception suggests that students possess a functional understanding of AI as an educational technology that supports learning effectiveness, motivation, and overall educational quality.

In terms of classroom practice, students predominantly use AI chatbots independently to understand learning materials and complete assignments, demonstrating a shift toward learner autonomy and self-directed learning. This finding resonates with technology integration frameworks that emphasize the role of digital tools in promoting independent learning and personalized instruction.

Insights from the structured interviews provide a deeper understanding of teachers' perspectives and further contextualize the student data. Teachers conceptualize AI primarily as a digital assistant that supports lesson planning, material development, assessment preparation, and administrative efficiency. This pragmatic view aligns with established theories of technology-enhanced language learning, which position technology as a supplementary pedagogical tool rather than a substitute for human instruction.

Ethical considerations emerge as a central theme in the interview findings. Teachers highlight challenges related to plagiarism, academic dishonesty, data reliability, and students' dependency on AI-generated content. These concerns emphasize the importance of ethical awareness and academic integrity within AI-assisted learning environments. While students report general awareness of ethical boundaries in questionnaire responses, teachers' apprehensions suggest a gap between students' perceived understanding and their actual learning behaviors. This underscores the critical role of teachers as mediators who guide students in responsible AI use, source verification, and reflective learning practices.

Classroom observation findings corroborate both student and teacher perspectives by revealing that AI chatbots are actively used across grade levels and vocational programs. AI is consistently employed to assist comprehension and task completion, particularly in reading and writing activities, and contributes to student engagement and instructional efficiency.

The uneven distribution of AI support across language skills further highlights both the strengths and limitations of chatbot-assisted learning. AI is perceived as effective in supporting vocabulary development, grammar mastery, reading comprehension, and writing skills. These are the areas that align well with AI's text-based processing capabilities. Conversely, speaking and listening skills receive minimal support, indicating that AI chatbots are less effective or less frequently utilized in fostering oral communicative competence.

In directly addressing the formulated research problems, the findings collectively demonstrate four key pedagogical insights. First, regarding user perceptions (RQ1), both students and teachers at Methodist 2 Vocational High School Palembang generally conceptualize AI chatbots positively, viewing them as meaningful digital assistants, though teachers maintain a more pragmatic and

cautious stance. Second, in terms of practical implementation (RQ2), AI chatbots are heavily utilized for text-based core skills (reading and writing) to enhance comprehension and task completion, while their application for oral communicative competence (speaking and listening) remains significantly underdeveloped. Third, regarding opportunities and challenges (RQ3), AI integration offers clear benefits such as increased learning efficiency and personalized learner autonomy; however, these are counterbalanced by critical challenges, notably ethical concerns, reduced classroom interaction, and a profound risk of student dependency on automated outputs. Finally, concerning the teachers' pedagogical role (RQ4), while educators actively establish ethical boundaries and utilize AI for instructional efficiency, their role in mediating AI use within the classroom remains largely operational rather than pedagogically transformative, highlighting a need for explicit modeling and critical evaluation of AI-generated content during lessons.

Overall, this study suggests that while AI chatbot integration in vocational English education aligns with contemporary trends in technology-mediated learning, its effectiveness depends on deliberate pedagogical planning, curriculum alignment, ethical regulation, and sustained teacher involvement. AI chatbots should function as complementary tools that enhance meaningful learning rather than as shortcuts that replace cognitive engagement. Strengthening teacher competence in pedagogical AI integration and embedding ethical and critical digital literacy into the curriculum are essential steps toward maximizing the benefits of AI while minimizing its potential drawbacks in English Language Teaching.

5. CONCLUSION

This study explored the integration of AI chatbots in English Language Teaching (ELT) at Methodist 2 Vocational High School Palembang using a qualitative case study supported by questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations. The findings indicate that both students and teachers view AI chatbots as valuable instructional support. Students appreciate their ability to promote autonomous learning and provide immediate feedback, whereas teachers value their contribution to lesson preparation and instructional efficiency. Despite these benefits, both groups recognize that AI should complement rather than replace the essential role of teachers. The study also found that AI is primarily used to support reading and writing activities, while its application in developing speaking and listening skills remains limited.

The findings further reveal that AI chatbots offer significant opportunities by improving learning efficiency, personalized assistance, and self-directed learning. However, these advantages are accompanied by challenges, including students' overreliance on AI-generated responses, limited critical thinking, and concerns regarding academic integrity. Moreover, AI integration remains largely functional rather than pedagogically transformative. Therefore, effective implementation requires teachers to provide ethical guidance, continuously monitor AI use, and foster students' critical digital literacy so that AI becomes a meaningful pedagogical resource rather than merely a tool for completing academic tasks.

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