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Perspectives on Using Artificial Intelligence in English Language Learning for Islamic Primary Teacher Education (PGMI) Students, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The progression of artificial intelligence (AI) has significantly influence higher education. Even though AI tools (Chat GPT, google translate) gives advantages in vocabulary improvement, grammar checking, and independent learning but plagiarism, accuracy and technology addiction is become the core problem issue. This study aimed to explore the perspectives of students in the *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*. Teacher Education Program (PGMI) at Institute Agama Islam *Latifah Mubarrokiyah* (IAILM) on the utilization of AI in English learning. This study used a mixed method design, analyzed quantitatively with descriptive statistics and qualitatively using thematic analysis. Stratified sampling techniques was used to gain sample which amount 44 students across four semesters. Questionnaire with closed and open ended questions were used to collect the data. Closed data item were measured using *Likert Scale*. The findings reveal that students have basic awareness and surface level experience with AI, mainly using it for vocabulary, translation, and grammar support. In terms of views and attitudes toward AI were moderately positive. It recognizes that the role of AI support language skills and creativity but it can be replaced the role of teachers. In the terms of concerns were also note, especially about plagiarism, inaccurate information, technology addiction, uncritical thinking. Generally, students regards AI as a supportive rather than substitutive tool in language learning. This study highlights the need of conducting AI literacy training at PGMI, integrating technological knowledge with ethical considerations to encourage critical thinking. This findings have practical implications for curriculum design and digital literacy development, particularly in preparing future elementary teachers to integrate AI in English teaching effectively.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI), Teacher Education, English Language Learning, student Perspectives, *Madrsash Ibtidaiyah* Teacher Education (PGMI).

INTRODUCTION

Changing of Learning styles of higher student is forced by the development of Artificial Development (AI). Google translate, Grammar checker and the assistant of writing including chat GPT (Chat Generative Pretrained Transformer) are tools in which give significant advantages in vocabulary Improvement, helping do assignment quickly, and handling flexibility for studying outside classroom. However, some worries regarding about accuracy, plagiarism and technology addiction are appeared. Therefore, higher student need to conscious of global regulation regarding ethical AI utilization and it demand AI Literacy within teacher education institutions. Chassignol et al, 2013 (Chen et al., 2020) view artificial intelligence (AI) from two perspectives: as a field of study and as a theory. As a field of study, AI is known as a branch of computer science that focuses on solving cognitive problems typically associated with human intelligence, such as learning, problem solving, and pattern recognition. Meanwhile, as a theory, the position of AI is the basis for the progress of computer systems with human abilities which related to implement task that require human intelligence, such as voice recognition, decision making, language transitions and visual perception.

Digital Education Council (2024) reported that the utilization of AI in education is becoming usual and proper strategies and police should be established to manage its integration. Universities must prepare by establishing proper strategies and policies to manage its integration.

It is important Gaining insight into students' perceptions of AI in higher education for ensuring its successful implementation within academic institutions. Meanwhile in Indonesia, in higher education the regulation of AI utilization and academic transcript will be planned to release. This lead a foundation for formulating and implementing safe and ethical AI practices on campuses, including in teaching for teacher education including Islamic Primary Teacher Education (PGMI). In the context of national English language proficiency, the EF English Language Proficiency Index (EF EPI 2024) ranks of Indonesia is 80th out of 116 countries (category is low Proficiency), this indicates the appropriate and relevant use of AI can empower language of elementary teachers prospective to improve their English skills to equip them with global perspectives and access to international academic resources.

Theoretically, the utilization of AIfor education teacher can be reviewed from the concept of Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK). (Hastomo et al., 2024) emphasize that in utilizing AI, prospective teacher need to integrate, technological

knowledge (TK) technological pedagogical knowledge (TPK), and technological content knowledge (TCK). Their finding show that EFL pre service teachers categorized a moderate level in utilizing it. Thus, the training is needed. In addition, (Zaim et al., 2025) stated that in language learning GenAI is effective to assist them for grammar refinement, translation accuracy, content exploration, idea generation, reflecting implication. However, they caution that AI utilization must be transparent and reflective. Most of them use tools such as ChatGPT, Google translate, and Grammarly. UNESCO also emphasizes that utilizing AI in education must be human centred, transparent, accountable, and pay attention to academic ethics. similarly, (Aini et al., 2024) highlighted about the benefit of the integration of artificial intelligence in education (AIEd) in English Languange Learning focusing on Indonesian university student`s perspective, particularly in the affective and cognitive aspects. It contributes to create a positive and emotionally engaging learning environment and acts as an effective instrument for developing the cognitive and affective skills essential to language learning success.

Previous studies also reveal that both students and lectures generally hold positive attitude towards AI, and they concerned about accuracy, plagiarism, and a decline in critical thinking. (Zimotti et al., 2024) who surveyed over 100 language instructors to ask regarding their perception how this tool will impact profession and the result of study show a mixture sentiments toward utilizing AI tools in the language classroom, and some fearful for their job security and other they feel engagement about the tools. Similarly, (Uygun, 2024), based on his study shows that numerous teachers appraise AI as a benefit support in improving education, aligning with the wider movement of acknowledging technology's advantages in the learning process. (Batubara et al., 2025) argu for comprehensive AI literacy education (technical skills, ethical considerations, critical thinking, and responsible AI utilize) in Indonesia universities is needed. Other studies **(Samiha & Aksara, 2025)**; (Hastomo et al., 2024)confirm the benefits of AI for EFL motivation/ engagement, but highlight access gaps (limited infrastructure, funding, digital literacy and training need). Research in Indonesia has mostly focused on attitude of AI while studies specifically highlighting PGMI students to utilize AI to study English are still very limited. In fact, PGMI student have different characteristic, as they are prepared to become *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* (MI/SD) teachers who not only teach English but also integrate Islamic values into their teaching. It could be that English as global communication /*dakwah* and Ai help them to assist them in learning English but trustworthy is the key to be honest to use it (avoid plagiarism and cheating).

This study explore of the perspectives of PGMI students at Institute for Islamic Studies *Latifah Mubarokiyyah* (IAILM) in utilizing of AI. This study produces practical recommendations for PGMI programs in developing responsible AI literacy policies. Based on the above description, the research questions are as follows;

1. What is the level of awareness and experience of PGMI students regarding AI?
2. What are their views and attitudes toward the use of AI in learning English?
3. What challenges and concerns do they face in the process?

METHOD

Approach and Design

This study used mixed methods approach with quantitative and qualitative data to explore PGMI students' perspectives on the utilization of artificial intelligence (AI) in English language learning. The purpose of descriptive design is describing students' awareness, experience, attitude, and concerns about the utilization of AI. The quantitative approach is used to measure the dimensions of awareness, experience, views and attitudes, as well as the challenges and concerns of students through a Likert scale, while the qualitative approach is used to explore deeper understanding through open ended questions. By combining quantitative and qualitative approaches of the research, the explanation can be more comprehensive.

Participant

Students who were active current academic year in the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Teacher Education Program (PGMI) were the research participant . The sample was 44 students (representative) from 2th semester, 4th semester , 6th semester and 8th semester). Stratified random sampling was used in the sampling techniques, in which the population was divided into strata based on class/semester, and then a random selection was made in each stratum.

Instrument

There are two types of questions in the questionnaire. First, closed questions with Likert Scale (1 = strongly disagree, 4 = Disagree, 3= Neutral, 2 = agree, to 5 = strongly agree) to get quantitative data. Second, open questions to support qualitative analysis in which respondents could answers freely. Closed questions consist 14 items to determine their perspectives in 3 dimensions (the awareness, experiences, views, and attitudes, as well as the

challenges and concerns). And open questions consist 3 questions. The questions determine about the most significant advantage of using AI in English language learning, the main threat or restriction of integrating AI into English language learning, and the recommendation for prospective teachers to guarantee the effective and ethical use of AI in English language learning. The questioner was presented in Indonesian (the students` native language). A consent form is attached in the questionnaire form is accompanied. Its explaining the nature of the research, anonymity, and confidentiality of responses.

Data Collection

Data collection was conducted by distributing online questionnaires to PGMI students. And it was distributed via google form. Descriptive statistical techniques was used to gain quantitative data were analyzed, such as mean, standard deviation, and percentage to determine the respondents' answer characteristic. Meanwhile, qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which aimed to identify the main characteristic in the respondents' open answers. There are several steps, including read again the responses to the open ended questionnaire, coding recurring words, phrases, and meanings, grouping larger themes (e.g., benefits, challenges, or recommendations for AI use), reviewing, categorizing themes, and reinforcing findings by writing them down and presenting direct quotes from respondents. By using this approach, the study is expected to provide a complete description of the awareness, experiences, views, and attitudes, as well as the challenges and concerns of PGMI students.

Data Analysis

A Mixed methods approach was conducted to analyse the data. This Approach is combining quantitative and qualitative techniques. For the quantitative segment, coding is performed on closed questionnaire responses by using Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3= neutral, 4= agree to 5 = strongly agree. The data were then tabulated and analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The mean was interpreted based on the following categories: 1.00–1.80 = very low, 1.81–2.60 = low, 2.61–3.40 = moderate, 3.41–4.20 = high, and 4.21–5.00 = very high(Sekaran, Uma; Bougie, 2016). Meanwhile, the standard deviation was interpreted by(Widyanto, 2013) namely SD < 1.00 = low/homogeneous variation, SD 1.00–2.00 = moderate variation, and SD > 2.00 = high/heterogeneous variation. For the qualitative

segment, open ended responses were analysed using thematic analysis. (Braun, V. & Clarke, 2006) stated that thematic analysis comprise 3 steps namely Identification, analyzation, and categorization. The theme categorized into three main dimensions: awareness and experiences, views and attitudes, and concerns and challenges. Finally, data integration was carried out by connecting quantitative characteristic with qualitative resulting in a comprehensive view of students' perceptions of AI in English learning.

FINDINGS

The findings of this study aim to explore the level of awareness and experience of PGMI students regarding artificial intelligence, their views and attitudes toward the use of AI in learning English, and the challenges and concerns they encounter in the process.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Perceptions of AI in English Learning

	Code	Questions	Strongly Disagree (5)		Disagree (4)		Neutral (3)		Agree (2)		Strongly agree (1)
Awareness and Experiences	p1	I understand what AI is and how it generally works.	1	2%	0	0%	22	50%	18	41%	3
	p2	I know examples of AI applications for learning English.	3	7%	1	2%	19	43%	19	43%	2
	P3	I have used AI to help me learn English.	1	2%	2	5%	10	23%	25	57%	6
	p4	AI makes it easier for me to understand English materials.	2	5%	4	9%	15	34%	15	34%	8
	p5	AI helps me improve my English vocabulary.	3	7%	1	2%	14	32%	19	43%	7
	p6	AI allows me to learn more flexibly outside the classroom.	2	5%	3	7%	24	55%	12	27%	3
Views and Attitudes	p7	AI can help prospective elementary school teachers	2	5%	3	7%	15	34%	18	41%	6

			Strongly Disagree (1)		Disagree (2)		Neutral (3)		Agree (4)		Strongly agree (5)		Total
		improve their English skills.											
	p8	AI helps me create more creative teaching materials.	1	2%	2	5%	13	30%	21	48%	7		
	p9	AI helps me check grammar and spelling.	2	5%	2	5%	23	52%	11	25%	6		
	p10	AI can replace part of the teacher's role in English learning.	9	20%	14	32%	13	30%	6	14%	2		
	p11	AI can reduce students' critical thinking skills.	3	7%	3	7%	17	39%	12	27%	9		
Challenges and Concern	p12	AI sometimes provides inaccurate information.	1	2%	3	7%	10	23%	19	43%	11		
	p13	AI increases the risk of plagiarism.	2	5%	0	0%	19	43%	14	32%	9		
	p14	I am worried about becoming too dependent on AI in learning English.	1	2%	2	5%	7	16%	24	55%	10		
Mean													
Standard Deviation													

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Awareness and Experiences in Using AI

	Code	Questions	Strongly Disagree (5)		Disagree (4)		Neutral (3)		Agree (2)		Strongly agree (1)		Total
Awareness and Experiences	p1	I understand what AI is and how it generally works.	1	2%	0	0%	22	50%	18	41%	3	7%	

Code	Questions										
p2	I know examples of AI applications for learning English.	3	7%	1	2%	19	43%	19	43%	2	5%
P3	I have used AI to help me learn English.	1	2%	2	5%	10	23%	25	57%	6	14%
p4	AI makes it easier for me to understand English materials.	2	5%	4	9%	15	34%	15	34%	8	18%
p5	AI helps me improve my English vocabulary.	3	7%	1	2%	14	32%	19	43%	7	16%
p6	AI allows me to learn more flexibly outside the classroom.	2	5%	3	7%	24	55%	12	27%	3	7%
Mean											2.42
SD											0.65

The quantitative calculation for the dimensions of awareness and experience obtained an average score mean of 2.42, include the low category, with a standard deviation of 0.65 (<1), indicating homogeneous data, meaning that most respondents had similar views regarding awareness and experience in the use of AI.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Views and Attitudes toward AI

	Code	Questions	Strongly Disagree (5)	Disagree (4)	Neutral (3)	Agree (2)	Strongly agree (1)	Total

Views and Attitudes	p7	AI can help prospective elementary school teachers improve their English skills.	2	5%	3	7%	15	34%	18	41%	6	14%
	p8	AI helps me create more creative teaching materials.	1	2%	2	5%	13	30%	21	48%	7	16%
	p9	AI helps me check grammar and spelling.	2	5%	2	5%	23	52%	11	25%	6	14%
	p10	AI can replace part of the teacher's role in English learning.	9	20%	14	32%	13	30%	6	14%	2	5%
	p11	AI can reduce students' critical thinking skills.	3	7%	3	7%	17	39%	12	27%	9	20%
Mean												2.67
SD												0.80

Based on the questionnaire results counting, in the terms of the view and attitude dimension, the mean obtained 2.67, it indicates that this average falls into the moderate category (2.61–3.40), indicating that respondents' experience with AI is still lack, however, respondents have positive view on the AI utilization in English language learning. The standard deviation of <1 (0.80) indicates the data is relatively homogeneous, even though there is variation in respondents' view in their attitude toward the role of AI.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Concerns and Challenges in Using AI

	Code	Questions	Strongly Disagree (5)		Disagree (4)		Neutral (3)		Agree (2)		Strongly agree (1)		Total
Challenges and Concerns	p12	AI sometimes provides inaccurate information.	1	2%	3	7%	10	23%	19	43%	11	25%	
	p13	AI increases the risk of plagiarism.	2	5%	0	0%	19	43%	14	32%	9	20%	
	p14	I am worried about becoming too dependent on AI in learning English.	1	2%	2	5%	7	16%	24	55%	10	23%	
Mean													2.18
SD													0.72

The questionnaire results counting for in the terms of the concerns and challenges dimension showed a mean of 2.18, this average include moderate category, it's mean that AI utilization in English language learning had significant level. Standard deviation showed 0.72 include low to moderate category, it means that most respondents were consistent in their answer.

DISCUSSION

Awareness And Experiences

The function of awareness and experience in this study is to measure how far respondents are aware of AI and to find out their direct experience in utilizing it. This is the base foundation for describing the respondents' level of digital literacy, so basic understanding and experience must be explored. The data above shows that respondents indicate that students already have preliminary knowledge about AI, but their level of experience in using AI for English language learning is still limited. Their level of mastery is still at an early stage (surface level), so their experience in utilizing AI haven't unskilled yet. Respondents do not have sufficient awareness and experience in AI utilization in English

language learning. Their knowledge of AI is more conceptual than practical. Their level of AI literacy is still limited, implying the need for improvement through educational intervention or digital training. This is in line with Rivai's (2018) opinion, which states that the use of learning technology, including AI, is greatly influenced by the level of digital literacy and user awareness. Based on openended questions about the greatest benefits of AI in English language learning, respondents assessed that AI has many benefits in learning English, including expanding vocabulary, facilitating translation, providing quick feedback on grammar and pronunciation, and facilitating learning outside the classroom and independently. This is in line with what was uttered by the respondents.

("*AI Membantu saya memahami kosakata yang tidak dimengerti.*") (AI help me to understand unknown vocabularies)

("*Sangat bermanfaat karena AI saya bisa memahami bahasa Inggris dimana saja dan kapan saja.*") ("it's very useful because my AI can understand English anywhere and anytime").

("*Saya tahu AI tapi kadang cara menggunakannya kadang gak bisa apalagi yang harus berbayar.*") "(know about AI, but sometimes I don't know how to use it, especially the ones that require payment.")

Respondents recognize the big potential of AI (e.g., for vocabulary, grammar, flexibility), but after further analysis , the majority of responses still struggle around basic functions (translation, vocabulary search, grammar checking). Not many mention further applications such as critical discussion, speaking simulation, or complex teaching material design. The types of AI tools that have been used frequently in English language learning are Google Translate and ChatGPT.

Views and Attitudes

This dimension is used to determine how respondents assess and interpret the role of AI in learning. Even though their knowledge and experience are limited, respondents have both positive and negative attitudes toward AI. Their potential acceptance and readiness to use AI in learning and teaching practices can be seen in this dimension.

Overall, these results show that prospective elementary school teachers are still in the early stages of developing their views and attitudes toward the use of AI. Although there is positive potential seen in the role of AI in replacing some of the roles of teachers, its practical

benefits, such as in the creativity of teaching material development, have not been realized. This is in line with the responses of several respondents in the open ended questions.

("AI itu membantu, tetapi tetap tidak bisa menggantikan guru karena penjelasan guru lebih manusiawi dan sesuai konteks") (AI is helpful, but it still cannot replace teachers because teachers' explanations are more human and context appropriate)

("AI bagus untuk latihan, tapi saya lebih yakin kalau ada pendampingan dosen agar tidak salah paham) ("AI is indeed useful, but it still cannot replace teachers because teachers' explanations are more human and context appropriate).

Thus, there appears to be an uncertain view: AI is seen as an innovative medium, but it is still considered necessary to combine it with the role of teachers as the main facilitators of learning. Overall, the Views and Attitudes dimension shows that students view AI positively as a tool to improve English skills, especially in terms of grammar and creativity in teaching material development. However, they remain critical of AI's potential to replace the role of teachers or reduce critical thinking skills. This view is in line with research (Saini et al., 2025) which states that in the end, humans are responsible for guiding the development of AI so that it benefits society as it grows. To ensure that AI continues to serve as a tool for human empowerment, collaboration among policymakers, researchers, and business leaders is essential. With careful design, ethical awareness, and continuous learning, AI can become a positive force that supports rather than weakens human decision making.

Concerns and Challenges

This dimension serves to evaluate how far respondents are aware of the risks and weaknesses of AI. This dimension helps to see whether respondents remain critical of the potential negative impacts of AI. These concerns and challenges need to be taken seriously. This terms have reflection ethical and psychological prevent that utilizing AI do not make students feeling inhibited but feel comfortably . The average response falls into the category of uncertain to disagree. The low standard deviation indicates that respondents have relatively similar views, namely that they still express concern or uncertainty about the negative impacts of AI use. Thus, it can be concluded that prospective elementary school teachers generally have a fairly positive attitude toward AI. They are not concerned about the potential negative impacts that may arise from its use. However, there are some concerns that they expressed. For example, one respondent said that

(*"kadang AI memberi jawaban yang tidak tepat, jadi kalau langsung dipakai bisa salah"*)(Sometimes AI gives incorrect answers, so if you use it directly, you could be wrong").

Another respondent added,(" *kalau terlalu sering pakai AI, bisa membuat mahasiswa malas berpikir sendiri dan hanya menyalin jawaban"*) "If AI is used too often, it can make students lazy to think for themselves and just copy answers)."

This supports Carr's (2010) view that the development of digital technology tends to shape instant and reduces users' ability to analyze things in depth. Easy access of information makes individuals more dependent on readily available answers, rather than developing independent critical thinking. This creates uncritical mindset, resulting in a lack of ability to analyze things in depth. Our critical abilities will make someone dependent on readily available answers, rather than developing independent critical thinking. Another concern that has arisen is the risk of plagiarism and the potential for excessive dependence.

This shows that even though AI brings benefits, students are aware of the negative consequences that need to be anticipated. The suggestions given by respondents to the open-ended questions include, first, using AI in a balanced manner and not excessively, as expressed by the respondents.

" Gunakan AI saat kita benar-benar tidak memahami pembelajaran bahasa Inggris saja."
(Use AI when we really don't understand English learning alone)

"Boleh digunakan, tapi jangan terlalu berfokus pada AI, coba cari informasi lain juga.".
("it can be used, but don't focus too much on AI. Try to find other information as well")

Kedua, gunakan AI sebagai referensi, bukan pengganti guru/buku sebagaimana di yang diungkapkan oleh responden, (Second, use AI as a reference, not as a substitute for teachers/books, as expressed by respondents.)

("Calon guru menggunakan AI hanya untuk mencari referensi, bukan menjadi patokan utama pengganti buku.") (Prospective teachers use AI only to search for references, not as a primary substitute for books)

("Materi dari AI sebaiknya hanya sebagai tambahan, tetap dibarengi sumber yang terpercaya.") (Material from AI should only be used as a supplement, accompanied by reliable sources)"

Kemudian, Penggunaan AI harus konstekstual dan sesuai kebutuhan pembelajaran. Sebagaiamana yang diungkapkan oleh responden

" Isi dan materi dari AI sesuaikan dengan apa yang dibutuhkan oleh calon guru SD." ("The content and material of AI should be tailored to the needs of prospective elementary school teachers.")

"Calon guru bisa terbantu dalam menentukan bahan ajar di kelas dengan menanyakan pada AI." ("Prospective teachers can get help in determining teaching materials for their classes by asking AI ").

And continue to prioritize academic ethics such as plagiarism

"Jangan hanya copy paste dari AI, tetapi kembangkan dengan kreativitas sendiri."("Don't just copy and paste from AI, but develop it with your own creativity")

"Gunakan AI untuk inspirasi, bukan untuk mengambil alih seluruh tugas." (Use AI for inspiration, not to take over the entire task.")

Thus, based on the respondents' suggestions, it can be concluded that the use of AI must be balanced. AI is a tool to assist or support learning. AI is not a substitute for learning. In the principle of blended learning, we must understand that technology and human interaction must be balanced. AI can change cognition, but not character.

CONCLUSION

This study examines PGMI students' perspectives on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in English language learning through a mixed methods approach. Generally, the results of the study show that students generally have a fairly positive perception of the use of AI, with a relatively good level of consistency in their responses.

In terms of awareness and experience dimension it was found that students had sufficient awareness and experience of AI, particularly in supporting the English learning process, such as improving vocabulary, assisting with translation, and providing feedback on grammar and pronunciation. However, their experience in using it is still limited and at a surface level. In other words, their knowledge is more conceptual than practical.

 in terms of views and attitudes dimension, students demonstrated a moderately positive view of AI, indicating that they have positive views and attitudes towards AI utilization. They believe that AI can support learning. However, they force the main of using it wisely but without limiting independent learning and creativity.

In terms of concerns and challenges, this shows that students remain cautious in using AI. They are concerned about the risks of plagiarism, dependence on AI, and the possibility of obtaining inaccurate information. Nevertheless, AI is an effective, flexible, and relevant

learning tool for them. However, they also emphasize the need for a critical and ethical attitude so that AI does not replace the role of educators and affect the quality of learning. Generally, PGMI students demonstrate a good level of awareness and experience, not only have positive attitude to use it but also have expressed caution regarding the risks and challenges faced.

Thus, AI acts as a support rather than a replacement for lecturers. This is an important suggestion for the implementation of digital literacy training in PGMI so that prospective teacher to be able to utilize AI in language learning optimally. Lecturers are expected to be able to create learning designs using AI tools but not limiting students critical thinking. Technology, will be developed rapidly or slowly. We will come automatically virtually in every aspect of life, automated, and AI-driven. Moreover, starting in the 2027/2028 academic year, English will become a compulsory subject for third grade elementary school/MI students and their equivalents, in accordance with the policy require in Permendikbudristek No. 12/2024. At the very least, training in the use of AI in English language learning for MI teachers will serve as preparation for when they enter the field to teach at elementary schools/MI.

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Using the 4-D to Design a Public Speaking Handbook for Students at Miftahul Ulum Boarding School

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to design a Public Speaking Handbook for students enrolled at the Miftahul Ulum Islamic school Boarding. The authors employed the R&D (Research and Development) method by adopting the 4-D model. The research instruments were observation, interviews, and surveys. The research participants comprised 29 students, one teacher, and several other lecturers, who were selected using a purposive sampling method. Quantitative data was collected from surveys, while qualitative data was collected from student records and observations. The researchers conducted a needs analysis and a perception survey on the manual among students. The students' perception score was 3.41, which was considered "good." Twenty-nine respondents participated in the pilot study. The experts' verification and students' perception results meet the content, design, and format criteria and constitute attractive educational material that reflects students' needs, preferences, and deficiencies. This demonstrates that its development is feasible.

Keywords: Public Speaking, Handbook, The 4-D model

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is the act of communicating verbally with others, involving simple sentences. This activity expresses personal thoughts, ideas, and opinions through verbal language commonly used in formal and informal daily conversations. According to Harianto Erwin (2020), oral expression consists of organizing ideas logically and systematically, expressing them in linguistic codes according to the language rules and the appropriate communicative context, and listening fluently and clearly.

Public speaking is the art of persuasively and effectively communicating information, ideas, and opinions to an audience. It includes public speaking skills, understanding the

audience, and using body language, voice intonation, and good delivery techniques. According to Askanah (2023), Public speaking is the process of communicating in front of an audience to convey information, persuade, or entertain. It also includes the manner of public speaking.

Therefore, public speaking is essential in junior high schools, especially boarding schools. Islamic boarding schools educate their students to become figures who can later spread the Goodness of their religion to the broader community. Public speaking helps students convey their knowledge of religion effectively and appropriately. Public speaking is a valuable skill that can help students develop their communication, leadership, and critical thinking abilities, ultimately benefiting their academic, professional, and personal lives.

However, what often becomes an obstacle for students when learning public speaking is that they usually feel insecure when speaking in public, which makes them uncomfortable and tends to cause them to avoid the situation. According to Andriani et al. (2017), students who have not received sufficient training in public speaking often struggle to master this skill. This causes them to be unsure of their ability to speak in public. As cited in Ajeng Ayuning Tyas (2023), students often struggle to use and apply the correct understanding and language structure when speaking, which can hinder their ability to convey messages clearly and effectively. Following Taufik R. Tahalu (2022), many students experience communication apprehension, which causes them to fear being wrong or laughed at when speaking in public, so this often makes students avoid public speaking situations. According to Husnaini et al. (2024), the main obstacles in learning to talk in school include limited vocabulary, student anxiety when speaking, and pronunciation difficulties.

Recognizing this, the researcher is interested in creating a handbook to meet the needs of boarding school students and help them become more confident individuals. A handbook is a handbook that contains guidelines or instructions on a topic or procedure. In the context of public speaking, a handbook is a book that provides a complete guide to public speaking skills, including methods, techniques, and tips to improve speaking ability. According to Wahyu Untara Krisna, a handbook is a complete guide to public speaking skills. It discusses various aspects of public speaking, including its definition, purpose, methods, and benefits. A key reason for creating this book is that it contains an introduction to public speaking, providing valuable tips on skill development, boosting students' confidence, enhancing their communication skills, and cultivating their character.

While several studies discuss public speaking instruction, research focusing on Islamic boarding schools and handbooks customized to their unique environment is limited. This study aims to fill that gap by designing and validating a handbook suitable for MTs. Miftahul Ulum students. The handbook is expected to provide a structured, culturally relevant tool to improve public speaking and enhance students' confidence and communicative abilities.

METHOD

Research Approach and Design

This study employed a Research and Development (R&D) approach, specifically utilizing the 4-D model developed by Thiagarajan, Semmel, and Semmel (1974). The 4-D stages include:

1. Define: Analyzing students' needs and establishing the scope of handbook development.
2. Design: Constructing a prototype based on needs analysis.
3. Develop: Validating and revising the handbook with expert input.
4. Disseminate: Distributing the validated handbook for broader use at MTs. Miftahul Ulum.

This model was chosen for its systematic steps, ensuring educational products are theoretically grounded and practically needed.

Participants

Participants in this study were selected using purposive sampling to ensure relevance and context suitability. The sample included:

1. 29 students of MTs. Miftahul Ulum engaged in public speaking activities at the boarding school,
2. One English teacher taught at the school,
3. Three expert validators assessed the handbook.

All participants played distinctive roles in the needs analysis, piloting, and validation phases, contributing data and feedback to shape the handbook.

Instruments

Multiple instruments were implemented to guarantee comprehensive data collection and triangulation, including:

1. Needs analysis questionnaires: Quantitatively assessed student difficulties, expectations, and preferences in public speaking training.

2. Interview guidelines: Gathered in-depth qualitative data from teachers and students about obstacles, current practices, and desired features.

3. Validation questionnaires: Specific rubrics for content, language, and design were provided to the expert validators to assess the handbook's quality using a 4-point scale (Excellent-Good-Fairly-Poor).

4. Student perception questionnaires: Deployed after piloting, employing Likert scales to measure material acceptability and perceived effectiveness.

Data Collection

Data collection was conducted in several sequenced stages:

1. Stage 1: Needs Analysis. Students completed needs analysis surveys, identifying current difficulties and aspirations for the public speaking handbook. Interviews supplemented quantitative results with richer insight.

2. Stage 2: Preliminary Product Design. Handbook content and structure were drafted using input from stage 1.

3. Stage 3: Validation. Three external experts assessed the draft handbook through structured rubrics and written feedback, focusing on content relevance, accuracy, language appropriateness, and design attractiveness.

4. Stage 4: Field Testing and Perception Survey. The revised handbook was piloted among the student sample, and their perceptions were gathered to provide a user-centered evaluation.

Data Analysis

1. Quantitative data (needs analysis, validation, student perception) was analyzed using descriptive statistics, producing mean scores and percentage categories for handbook quality: Scores were classified as "Excellent" (3.6–4.0), "Good" (2.6–3.5), "Fairly" (1.6–2.5), or "Poor" (0–1.5).

2. Qualitative data (interview responses, open-ended questionnaire feedback) were examined through thematic analysis, enabling triangulation and richer interpretation of quantitative results.

3. The triangulated analysis allowed for robust revisions at each 4-D stage, finalizing a handbook that addresses both observable needs and contextual realities at MTs.

Miftahul Ulum.

In summary, this methodological framework ensured that the resulting Public Speaking Handbook was contextually grounded, systematically validated, and practically applicable for the needs of the students at MTs Miftahul Ulum.

FINDINGS

These findings reflect the needs analysis results, expert validation, and student perceptions regarding the Public Speaking Handbook developed for MTs Miftahul Ulum Boarding School.

The Result of Need Analysis Questionnaire

a. Needs

The researchers found that seventeen students (25%) chose a book that explains how to overcome nervousness and panic attacks. 20 students (29.4%) who hope this book will be designed with easy-to-understand language. Twelve students (17.6%) chose the answer "benefits," which include increased student confidence, improved English-speaking skills, and challenges such as lack of motivation and limited resources to support learning.

b. Lack

The researchers found that 15 students (21.7%) assessed their English-speaking ability at a basic level, 23 students (33.8%) indicated that they lack confidence in their English language skills, and 24 students (35.2%) rarely used proper grammar and pronunciation when speaking English.

c. Learning Activities

The percentage of benefits students may gain after practicing speaking English in public was 19.1%. 13 students chose answer improvement in English speaking skills, increased confidence in communication, and opportunities to interact with foreigners. 13 students (23.5%) decided to practice regularly with friends, carefully prepare presentation materials, and imagine the audience as friends. The percentage of learning methods most effectively helping students develop their English-speaking skills in public was 20.5%. Fourteen students chose one-way lecture and presentation methods.

The percentage of students interested in learning more about public speaking was 17.6% (12 students). The rate of public speaking skills in English that are most relevant for boarding school students to develop is the highest: 22 students (32.5%) chose in-depth knowledge of

English grammar and vocabulary. The percentage of how often students can speak English in public (in class, front of friends, dormitory activities). It was 33.8% or 23 students, who very rarely had the opportunity to speak English in public.

d. Learning Media

Nineteen students (27.9%) selected visually appealing design (images, illustrations, good layout), engaging content, and the use of various information delivery methods (text, images, audio, video) to accommodate different learning styles. They also selected examples of practical English usage in relevant contexts. The percentage of strategies that can help students overcome nervousness when performing and speaking confidently in English was 27.9% or 19 students who prepared presentation materials carefully, practiced speaking in front of a mirror, and gradually gained experience presenting in front of small audiences.

e. Settings

Eighteen students (26.4%) integrated the handbook into English language classes and related extracurricular activities, and provided time and opportunities for students to practice the speaking skills they have learned.

The percentage of benefits and challenges that Islamic boarding school students perceived in using the Public Speaking handbook to develop English language skills was 38.2%, or 26 students who hoped they would be provided special training on using the handbook and effective strategies in giving public speaking instructions in English.

The percentage of effectiveness of the Public Speaking handbook in improving public speaking skills in English, as measured in the context of Islamic boarding schools, was 29.4% or 20 students (29.4%) chose to assign presentations in English and evaluate students' speaking abilities based on clear criteria, such as pronunciation, grammar, and presentation content.

f. **The Result of Expert Judgment**

Three experts reviewed the textbook. They assessed three elements: language, layout and design, and material. The results of their reviews are elaborated below:

1. **Language Assessment**

The results of the linguist assessment showed that most language aspects in the Public Speaking Handbook were rated "Excellent" or "Good." Aspects such as effective sentences,

an easy-to-understand style, appropriate grammar, and material that enhances learning motivation received a perfect score (4 - Excellent). However, several aspects, such as the appropriateness of sentence structure, vocabulary choice, and adapting the language to student abilities, were rated Good (score 3) and required minor revision.

Table 1. The Result of Language Experts' Validation

No	Criteria	Mean Score	Description	Follow-up
1	The Public Speaking Handbook presents proper sentence structure.	3	Good	It can be applied with a little bit of revision
2	The Public Speaking Handbook uses effective sentences.	4	Excellent	It can be applied without revision.
3	The Public Speaking Handbook is presented in a style that is easy for students to understand.	4	Excellent	It can be applied without revision.
4	The vocabulary in the Public Speaking Handbook is appropriate for students.	3	Good	It can be applied with a little bit of revision
5	Public Speaking Handbook tailored to students' language abilities.	3	Good	It can be applied with a little bit of revision
6	The Public Speaking Handbook can broaden students' knowledge.	4	Excellent	It can be applied without revision.
7	The material uses correct grammar.	4	Excellent	It can be applied without revision.
8	Materials to increase students' motivation to learn English.	4	Excellent	It can be applied without revision.
9	Accuracy of grammar usage in the material.	4	Excellent	It can be applied without revision.

2. Design and Layout

Overall, the book's visual presentation was deemed attractive and systematic. The selection of images, colors, layout, use of punctuation, and presentation of the material were rated good to very good. Most aspects received a score of 4 (Excellent), while factors such as color selection, cover design, and clarity of sources received a score of 3 (Good), suggesting minor improvements.

Table 2. The Result of Design and Layout Experts' Validation

No	Criteria	Mean Score	Description	Follow-up

1	The selection of illustrative images can present the existing material.	4	Good	It can be applied without revision.
2	The choice of images in the material is appropriate for the students.	4	Excellent	It can be applied without revision.
3	The color selection in the Public Speaking Handbook is interesting.	3	Excellent	It can be applied with a little bit of revision
4	The cover of the Public Speaking Handbook is attractive.	3	Good	It can be applied with a little bit of revision
5	The Public Speaking Handbook layout is clear.	4	Excellent	It can be applied without revision.
6	The use of punctuation is correct.	4	Excellent	It can be applied without revision.
7	The material in the Public Speaking Handbook is presented systematically.	4	Excellent	It can be applied without revision.
8	The sources in the Public Speaking Handbook are clear.	3	Good	It can be applied with a little bit of revision
9	The spacing in the Public Speaking Handbook is correct.	4	Excellent	It can be applied without revision.

3. **Material**

In terms of content, the book was assessed as appropriate for its purpose. The title was appropriate for the content, and the material was authentic, motivating, accurate, easy to understand, and engaging—all received an Excellent score. However, the suitability of the illustrations, the accuracy of the material, and the alignment of the material to the cognitive level and abilities of the students remained in the good category, suggesting minor revisions.

Table 3. The Result of Material Experts' Validation

No.	Criteria	Mean Score	Description	Follow-up
1	The title of the Public Speaking Handbook corresponds to the material's content.	4	Excellent	It can be applied without revision.
2	The material adequately matches the illustrations in the Public Speaking Handbook.	3	Good	It can be applied with a little bit of revision
3	The authenticity of the material in the Public Speaking	4	Excellent	It can be applied without revision.

	Handbook for students is adequate.			
4	The material fosters students' motivation in speaking and reading.	4	Excellent	It can be applied without revision.
5	The material used in the Public Speaking Handbook is accurate.	3	Good	It can be applied with a little bit of revision
6	The material presented is easy to understand.	4	Excellent	It can be applied without revision.
7	The material in the Public Speaking Handbook is interesting.	4	Excellent	It can be applied without revision.
8	The material in the Public Speaking Handbook can broaden students' knowledge.	4	Excellent	It can be applied without revision.
9	The material in the Public Speaking Handbook aligns with students' cognitive development level..	3	Good	It can be applied with a little bit of revision or without revision.
10	All materials are tailored to the students' abilities.	3	Good	It can be applied with a little bit of revision

g. The Result of Students' Perceptions

Based on the pilot test, students found the book relevant, easy to understand, and helpful in improving public speaking skills. All criteria received an average score between 3.3 and 3.5 ("Good"), indicating it could be used with minimal revision. Aspects appreciated included the variety of activities, the sequence of exercises from easy to difficult, and the activities that encourage active participation.

The results of the students' perceptions are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. The Result of Students' Perception

No.	Criteria	Mean Score	Description	Follow-up
1	The material presented is appropriate for students at the basic level.	3,4	Good	It can be applied with a little bit of revision
2	The material is tailored to the needs of students at the MTs. Miftahul Ulum Islamic boarding school.	3,4	Good	It can be applied with a little bit of revision

3	The material presented improved students' public speaking skills at the MTs Miftahul Ulum Islamic boarding school.	3,5	Good	It can be applied with a little bit of revision
4	The overall input material is diverse.	3,3	Good	It can be applied with a little bit of revision
5	Input interesting and easy-to-understand material.	3,5	Good	It can be applied with a little bit of revision
6	The topic of the material input was in line with the students' needs, namely, public speaking.	3,4	Good	It can be applied with a little bit of revision
7	The needs of the students of the MTs determine the length and source of the entire input text. Miftahul Ulum Islamic Boarding School.	3,4	Good	It can be applied with a little bit of revision
8	The activities in each chapter vary.	3,4	Good	It can be applied with a little bit of revision
9	The exercises available are arranged from easy to challenging levels.	3,4	Good	It can be applied with a little bit of revision or without revision.
10	The commands in the entire chapter are easy to understand.	3,4	Good	It can be applied with a little bit of revision
11	The training includes individual, pair, and group exercises.	3,4	Good	It can be applied with a little bit of revision
12	Activities in the chapter encourage students to participate actively in public speaking activities.	3,5	Good	It can be applied with a little bit of revision

h. **Handbook Structure**

The final product of this study is a public speaking handbook specifically tailored to students of MTs at Miftahul Ulum Boarding School. It was developed through a rigorous Research and Development (R&D) process utilizing the 4-D model. This handbook addresses a critical gap identified in the existing instructional materials, which lacked specialized resources for teaching public speaking skills within the context of an Islamic boarding school.

Grounded in an extensive needs analysis involving 29 students and expert consultations, the handbook incorporates essential components such as overcoming nervousness, constructing effective speeches, mastering delivery techniques, and engaging with audiences in general and specifically in English. The content structure is methodically arranged into six chapters that progressively build students' confidence and competence in public speaking, integrating theoretical concepts and practical exercises.

Students' perceptions gathered during pilot testing confirmed the handbook's effectiveness and alignment with learners' needs, awarding it a "Good" overall rating. Students particularly valued the handbook's accessible language, illustrative support, and the inclusion of exercises designed to mitigate stage fright and improve public speaking skills. The handbook comprises the following chapters and learning objectives:

Table 5. The Book's Contents

No	Topic/Chapter	Learning Objectives
1	Getting to Know a Public Speaking Personal Potential	Understand public speaking, its importance, and build confidence
2	Basic Techniques of Public Speaking	Develop structured outlines and practical delivery skills
3	Overcoming Nervousness and Stage Fright	Recognize the causes of nervousness and apply relaxation and visualization techniques.
4	Effective Speaking Techniques	Use precise language, master nonverbal communication, and adjust intonation.
5	Strategies for Answering Audience Questions	Prepare for Q&A, anticipate questions, and answer confidently
6	Public Speaking in English	Practice creating and delivering English speeches, including Q&A and exercises.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study confirm that public speaking is a complex skill involving effective communication, audience understanding, and mastery of vocal and nonverbal delivery techniques, as outlined in the background literature (Askanah). The handbook

development process aligned with the theoretical knowledge that public speaking requires systematic instruction to build student confidence and competence.

Regarding the needs analysis, the strong student preference for materials dealing with overcoming nervousness and panic attacks reflects the literature's emphasis on emotional control as critical to effective public speaking. The handbook includes relaxation and visualization techniques corresponding with documented methods noted in prior studies for reducing stage fright and enhancing speaker confidence.

The structure and content coverage of the handbook—basic techniques, effective speaking strategies, and audience engagement—are consistent with the speaking teaching principles highlighted in the literature. For example, the focus on organizing speech outlines and mastering delivery is fully supported by the nature of teaching speaking discussed in Chapter 2, which stresses the importance of preparing students with content knowledge and practical delivery skills.

Expert validation scores that classify the handbook's language and content as "Excellent" or "Good" align with the criteria for effective instructional materials mentioned in the literature. The slight recommendations for revisions, especially on vocabulary appropriateness and design elements, correspond with the need for materials to be precisely tailored to learners' linguistic proficiency and interest levels as noted in the theoretical framework.

Student perception data indicating that the handbook is practical but could be enhanced through more diverse activities and precise instructions reinforce prior studies emphasizing the role of varied exercises and scaffolded learning in developing speaking skills. This outcome aligns with the literature's indication of scaffolding as essential for supporting learner autonomy and progressive skill mastery. Furthermore, the handbook's focus on public speaking in English aligns with the multilingual communication needs identified in the theoretical background, emphasizing the necessity of equipping students with language skills beyond their native language. This supports the overarching argument in the literature that effective speaking instruction requires materials responsive to learners' emotional, linguistic, and cognitive needs, all of which were carefully addressed in this handbook development process.

The expert validation indicates that the public speaking handbook meets rigorous language, content, and design standards, aligning with best instructional material development practices. Expert scores classify most criteria as "Excellent," with minor

revisions recommended for specific content and visual elements. Student perception averaged 3.41 ("Good"), with feedback highlighting the handbook's usefulness, clarity, and relevance.

The 4-D model effectively integrated students' needs and expert recommendations, resulting in a contextually relevant and pedagogically sound product. This approach can be a reference for developing similar handbooks in other educational contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study successfully designed a Public Speaking Handbook for MTs Miftahul Ulum Boarding School students. The researchers intended six key chapters covering public speaking fundamentals, techniques, overcoming stage fright, effective delivery, handling audience questions, and public speaking in English. Feedback from 29 students and one teacher showed a positive perception with a mean score of 3.41 (categorized as "Good"). Expert evaluations confirmed the handbook's content, language, and design met high-quality academic and pedagogical standards, with mean validation scores ranging from "Good" to "Excellent." This study contributes to educational practice by filling a gap in context-specific instructional materials for public speaking at Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. The handbook offers a theoretically sound and practically relevant resource that enhances students' communicative competence and self-confidence. Its development process also demonstrates how systematic needs assessment combined with expert validation can produce high-quality educational tools tailored to students' unique contexts and challenges. This methodology can guide similar endeavors in related fields and academic environments.

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Global Santri Narratives: A Study of English Language Products at Al-Yasini Islamic Boarding School as a Cultural Strategy for Students in an Automated World Ecosystem

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ABSTRACT

Amidst the rapid flow of globalization and digital transformation marked by the presence of machines, robots, and artificial intelligence, the cultural identity of Islamic boarding schools faces new challenges. This research is significant because it examines how Generation Z students at Al-Yasini Islamic Boarding School adapt to the automated world through linguistic strategies, particularly in their use of English as a symbol and tool of distinction. This research aims to understand the practices and meanings behind the linguistic products produced by students in a modern context, and how this process shapes their identity and social position in global society. This research employs a qualitative approach, utilizing case studies and in-depth interviews with students from the Foreign Language Development Institute, language dormitory mentors, and English teachers. Two theories are used to interpret this phenomenon: Pierre Bourdieu's Cultural Capital, which explains how language becomes a form of symbolic capital in the social structure of Islamic boarding schools, and Jan Nederveen Pieterse's Cultural Hybridization, which highlights how local Islamic boarding school values are reformulated into a global format through English narratives. The results show that Islamic boarding school students not only master language as a technical skill but also produce cultural artifacts such as poetry, speeches, and books in English that combine Islamic values with global expressions. The main findings demonstrate the transformation of the students' identities from local actors to global students capable of negotiating their position in the posthuman world order. The novelty of this research lies in the discovery that Islamic boarding schools, as traditional institutions, can create a foreign language-based educational model that is not assimilative, but rather hybrid, blending local values and global strategies. The theoretical implications enrich the discourse on Islamic boarding school education as a space for the production of cultural capital and a dynamic and reflective field of cultural hybridization towards the future.

Keywords: Global Santri Narratives, English Language Products, Cultural Strategy, Automated World Ecosystem

INTRODUCTION

Technological developments in the last two decades have entered a revolutionary phase with the emergence of an automated global ecosystem characterized by the dominance of machines, robotics, and artificial intelligence (AI) in various aspects of human life. A 2023 report by the McKinsey Global Institute estimates that more than 50% of global human jobs could be replaced by automation by 2035. This trend is not only changing the way humans work but also shaking up social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions. Technology is no longer a tool, but rather an agent that helps shape civilization and human relationships (Lund et al., 2021).

This phenomenon has ushered the world into an era known as posthuman society, a condition in which the boundaries between humans and machines are blurred. Technology has become not only an extension of the body, but also of the human mind and identity.(Braidotti, 2013). A posthuman society marks a shift in how humans think about themselves. In this order, spirituality, tradition, and religious identity face existential challenges as they are redefined by algorithmic devices and automated control systems. This process raises concerns about the "loss of humanity" in the rapid pace of technological advancement.

The generation most impacted by this change is Generation Z, those born between 1997 and 2012, who not only grew up in a digital environment but also inherently live with it. Gen Z experiences education, entertainment, and social interaction simultaneously on automated platforms. In the Indonesian context, this group also forms part of religious communities such as Islamic boarding school students (santri). However, being a Gen Z santri means living in two worlds: one with a deeply rooted tradition of classical Islamic scholarship, and another defined by digital dynamics, global mobility, and algorithms.

Today's santri are faced with the need to navigate their identities in an automated ecosystem that recognizes neither geographical nor cultural boundaries. They no longer face only local challenges, but also global ones, both intellectual and cultural. In this context, English language skills become a crucial tool for existence. English is not only a means of international communication but also a form of cultural capital that determines one's position in global society.(Bourdieu, 2011). Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital explains how linguistic ability, education, and cultural tastes are important assets for social mobility. For Islamic boarding school students, mastery of English can be interpreted as a transformation from traditional capital—literacy in the yellow books and memorization of

religious texts. (Braidotti, 2017). The Posthuman. Polity Press, there is a shift in the form of symbolic power in Islamic boarding school communities, which are slowly accepting the values of modernity through new cultural practices (Grenfell, 2014).

One manifestation of the Islamic boarding school students' cultural strategy in negotiating their existence is through the production of discourse in English. At the Al-Yasini Islamic Boarding School, for example, students are not only taught linguistic skills but are also encouraged to produce tangible works such as English-language dramas, poetry, speeches, podcasts, and MC scripts. These products are not merely extracurricular activities, but represent a new narrative of global Islamic boarding school students who want to prove that tradition and modernity do not have to be at odds (Panjaitan et al., 2025).

The presence of English-language works by Islamic boarding school students can be interpreted as an effort to expand their symbolic space in the global realm. Through these products, students not only learn to speak a foreign language but also convey local messages, Islamic values, and cultural identity to the wider world. This is a form of cultural hybridization, where traditional values merge with modern forms of expression (Pieterse, 2019). This process demonstrates that Islamic boarding schools are not static, but rather adapt to the context of the times.

However, this reality has not yet been fully addressed in academic studies. Many studies on English language teaching in Islamic boarding schools focus on pedagogical approaches and learning methods (Sabila et al., 2023). Very few studies have examined the English language production of Islamic boarding school students (santri) as a discourse of resistance and cultural expansion in a world increasingly controlled by the logic of automation. This is where this research is crucial, filling a gap in the literature and broadening the understanding of Islamic boarding school (santri) strategies in responding to the challenges of the times.

Furthermore, this research opens up a space for discussion about how Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), as traditional institutions, can become future laboratories in shaping religious subjects who are not alienated from the modern world. In a posthuman context, where humans are being displaced by algorithms and data, Islamic boarding schools (santri) offer an alternative: individuals who are knowledgeable, moral, and spiritually aware, yet remain adaptive and responsive to technology. Thus, Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) can become centers for the production of "soulful" individuals in a world that tends to lose its human dimension.

Based on the above description, this research is crucial. It not only documents the phenomenon of Islamic boarding school students learning a foreign language but also explores the deeper meaning of this cultural practice. This research examines the English language production of Al-Yasini Islamic boarding school students as a representation of the cultural strategies of Gen Z Islamic boarding school students in negotiating their identity, existence, and position amidst the hegemony of global automation. With an interdisciplinary approach, this research offers a new perspective on the relationship between Islamic boarding schools, language, technology, and the identity of future students.

Based on the above background, the research questions are as follows: First, what are the forms and characteristics of the English language products produced by students at Al-Yasini Islamic Boarding School? Second, how do these English language products reflect the cultural strategies of Gen Z students in facing the challenges of an automated world ecosystem? Third, what is the position of students as cultural agents in the context of cultural capital and a posthuman global society?

This research aims to: First, describe the forms and characteristics of English language products produced by students at Al-Yasini Islamic Boarding School. Second, analyze the strategic significance of these English language products as part of the students' responses to changes in an automated and global world. Third, explain the transformation of students' cultural capital in the context of Pierre Bourdieu's theory and cultural hybridization from the perspective of Jan Nederveen Pieterse.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive-interpretive study type, because the main focus is to understand the cultural meaning of the English language products of Islamic boarding school students and the social context in which these products are produced and interpreted (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Research Location

The research was conducted at the Al-Yasini Islamic Boarding School in Pasuruan, East Java, which is known for its active participation in developing foreign language skills, particularly English, for its students.

Research Subjects and Objects

The research objects were various English-language products produced by students, such as speeches, poems, plays, podcasts, and MC scripts. The research subjects were the students who produced these works and their English language tutors.

Data Collection Techniques

In-depth interviews with students and English teachers. Documentation of students' English works. Participatory observation of English-language extracurricular activities.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted interpretively using a semiotic and cultural discourse approach, analyzing the symbols, narrative structures, and values contained in these English-language works (Fairclough, 2013). Bourdieu and Pieterse's theories are used to interpret the findings sociologically and culturally.

FINDINGS

This research was conducted at the Al-Yasini Islamic Boarding School in Pasuruan, focusing on the dynamics of learning and cultural production among students in the context of English language acquisition. Through in-depth interviews with students from the Foreign Language Development Institute and the language dormitory, as well as with teaching and mentoring teachers, it was found that English learning practices are not only formal but also integrated into the students' daily lives.

According to Ustadz Lutfi, one of the Foreign Language Development Institute teachers, language learning is divided into four levels: First Semester (FS), Second Semester (SS), Third Semester (TS), and Last Semester (LS). Each level consists of several classes that students must complete in stages, such as Parts of Speech, Pronouns, and Tenses. "Students will move up a level if they pass a test at the   Foreign Language Development Institute office. For example, from Parts of Speech to Pronouns, and so on," he explained (Lutfi, personal communication, July 11, 2025).

The learning method used by the Foreign Language Development Institute focuses on strengthening grammatical aspects first before encouraging oral production. "The learning method focuses on grammar first, Ma'am," continued Ustadz Lutfi. Then, as a form

of practical application of the learning, meeting classes are held, which assign students to create language products such as MC scripts, speeches, storytelling, poetry, and reading news.

Students not only learn in class, but also apply the use of English in their daily lives through the language dormitory. Ustadz Lutfi added, "Speaking practice is prioritized in the language dormitory, Ma'am. So, at the Islamic boarding school, there is a language dormitory that supports students in practicing English every day." This demonstrates that language learning is not merely an academic aspect, but also part of the students' cultural habitus.

The presence of the language dormitory creates a strategic ecosystem for habituation. This is where Bourdieu's symbolic practice comes into play: English becomes symbolic capital acquired through daily interactions and habits. Language becomes a tool of differentiation and a marker of a new class among students who are active and able to use it well.

Students at the Foreign Language Development Institute and the dormitory are also actively producing scientific and creative products. Some have compiled short story books, learning modules, and collections of English speeches. This is a concrete form of objective capital in Bourdieu's theory—linguistic products that reflect the symbolic value and bargaining power of students in a modern, automated space.

Male students in Kluwut, for example, not only study religious texts but also interpret English-language scriptures, demonstrating a shift from traditional literacy to global literacy. "In Kluwut, it's the boys who interpret English-language scriptures," explained Ustadz Lutfi. This demonstrates that traditional values are being reinterpreted through modern media.

Strengthening English skills at the Foreign Language Development Institute and the dormitory is not merely a cognitive matter, but also a form of cultural hybridization. Students use English not to escape their pesantren identity, but rather as a strategy to expand that identity in a global context.

The works of students represent a narrative of resistance to an increasingly automated and impersonal world. By packaging local values in a global language, Al-Yasini students successfully project a fluid, contextual, and strategic identity. They demonstrate that Islamic boarding schools are not ivory towers, but rather dialectical spaces between tradition and modernity.

Through a qualitative approach, this research confirms that students are not merely religious learners but also cultural agents who create value. With English as a symbolic instrument and cultural expression, they emerge as active subjects in the ecosystem of an

automated world. Al-Yasini Islamic Boarding School, with its Foreign Language Development Institute and language dormitory, has become an adaptive and relevant future educational ecosystem.

The English language learning system at Al-Yasini Islamic Boarding School is not simply a form of linguistic mastery, but a structured cultural strategy. The Foreign Language Development Institute program and language dormitory create a dialectical space between traditional educational structures and the demands of globalization. Herein lies its novelty: English is not simply a skill tool, but a new expression of students' identities in the landscape of an automated world (Naufal, personal communication, June 10, 2025).

DISCUSSION

Within the Foreign Language Development Institute system, students undergo a multi-level process: starting with grammar classes on Parts of Speech, Pronouns, and Tenses, to a final meeting that requires them to produce tangible works: poetry, speeches, MCs, and storytelling. In the dormitory, English is practiced as a social routine. This shows that students not only receive instruction but also internalize the language as a social habit, representing what Bourdieu calls linguistic habitus (Naufal, personal communication, June 10, 2025).

Bourdieu (1986) classifies cultural capital into three forms: **(Szeman & Kaposy, 2010)** Incorporation (absorbed in the body and mind as habitus), Objectivation (manifested in objects such as books, works of art, linguistic products), and Institutionalization (recognized in the form of certificates and degrees).

Pierre Bourdieu views society as constructed by various types of capital: economic capital, social capital, symbolic capital, and cultural capital. Among these, cultural capital is a key determinant in creating class distinctions, prestige, and bargaining power within a particular social field. (Szeman & Kaposy, 2010). Cultural capital has three forms: incorporation (habitus), objectification (cultural products), and institutionalization (formal recognition such as diplomas).

In the context of this research, students at Al-Yasini Islamic Boarding School demonstrate a shift in cultural capital from a traditional model to a global hybrid model. The English language products they produce (such as poetry, speeches, drama, and podcasts) are forms of objective capital, namely symbolic representations of competencies that can be exchanged within a global value system.

Furthermore, the students' habitus, previously embedded in the tradition of yellow book literacy and classical Arabic, has undergone an expansion of meaning. They have formed a new habitus that accommodates English as a symbolic tool for their struggle to speak in the global space, without losing their Islamic identity. This is a form of habitus transformation, in which an individual's internal structure adapts to the rapidly changing social terrain caused by globalization and automation (Bourdieu, 1991).

The cultural capital of Islamic boarding school students (santri) becomes a tool for social negotiation in a posthuman society increasingly dominated by technology and automation. As global society assesses an individual's existence based on their ability to access global languages and technology, the students' mastery of English is a form of symbolic investment that elevates their bargaining position in the broader social arena. In Bourdieu's terms, this is a struggle to define the value of those values. **(Bourdieu, 1993)**. The English language production of Al-Yasini students can be positioned as the result of the construction of new cultural capital, enabling them to participate in the global arena while still upholding local values.

At Al-Yasini Islamic Boarding School, all three are evident. The habitualization of English language practices shapes the students' new disposition as both members of the Islamic boarding school and global citizens. Products such as short story books, speeches, and learning modules represent objective capital. Meanwhile, the Foreign Language Development Institute certificate signifies symbolic and institutional recognition of their abilities. This cultural capital transforms the students' internal social stratification. Students who are fluent in English gain higher social standing, are invited to emcee official events, and are recognized in forums outside the Islamic boarding school. English becomes a tool of social distinction, forming a new symbolic class within the Islamic boarding school environment.

The students' English production is not merely a form of assimilation of Western culture, but a rearticulation of Islamic values in a global format. Al-Yasini students write speeches in English about Islamic brotherhood, compose poetry about struggle, and tell stories of the Prophet in an international language. In each of their narratives, the values of the Islamic boarding school remain alive, even though they are packaged in Western symbols and grammar. The students who interpret the English-language texts are in Kluwut. They create interpretations using the Islamic boarding school narratives in a global language (Lutfi, personal communication, July 11, 2025)

According to Jan Nederveen Pieterse, this is a form of cultural hybridization, meaning the process of mixing and combining local and global elements, resulting in new cultural forms. This hybridization is not a form of homogenization, but a creative process. Students use foreign languages as a medium of symbolic struggle, presenting the values of the Islamic boarding school in the world narrative (Pieterse, 2019).

Jan Nederveen Pieterse (2009) developed the concept of cultural hybridization as a response to views of globalization that oversimplify cultural dynamics. **(Pieterse, 2019).** In his theory, he states that globalization not only spreads dominant cultures (e.g., Westernization) but also gives rise to new forms resulting from the blending of local and global cultures.

In this study, the works of Al-Yasini students using English represent a concrete manifestation of this hybridization process. They integrate traditional Islamic symbols with modern linguistic forms of expression. For example, English-language speeches discussing themes of Islamic brotherhood or etiquette toward teachers reflect local narratives in a global context.

According to Pieterse, this hybridization process is creative and inevitable in an interconnected world. Culture does not "die" due to globalization, but is instead reborn in new, reflective, and contextual forms. In this sense, Islamic boarding school students (santri) become active cultural agents, not passive victims of external culture. They produce new values that combine religiosity, nationalism, and globality within a single framework of English expression.

Interestingly, Islamic boarding school students do not simply imitate Western culture, but incorporate Islamic boarding school values and Islamic spirituality into their foreign language products. This confirms Pieterse's idea that globalization is neither linear nor hegemonic, but rather opens up space for symbolic resistance and the rearticulation of identity.

The cultural products of Al-Yasini Islamic boarding school students demonstrate the practice of active hybridization, where they create new cultural forms by combining traditional Islamic values and global languages within an automated global ecosystem.

Integrating the Two: Cultural Strategies in an Automated Ecosystem

The combination of Bourdieu and Pieterse's theories shows that Islamic boarding school students (santri) are not merely surviving, but also strategically employing them. They

use English as cultural capital and a medium of hybridization to: (1) Gain recognition on the global stage, (2) Maintain local identity, (3) Play a role in an increasingly automated and digitalized world.

This cultural strategy is relevant to the nature of the automated world ecosystem, which is characterized by the disruption of traditional values due to AI, social media, and robotics. The English produced by Islamic boarding school students is a form of counternarrative to the depersonalizing tendencies of posthuman society.

Bourdieu's theory demonstrates that cultural capital is no longer limited to Islamic books and Arabic but extends to English language proficiency as a new form of legitimacy within Islamic boarding schools. Pieterse's theory, meanwhile, deepens our understanding that Islamic boarding school culture can hybridize with global values without being uprooted, but rather expanding its reach and vitality.

Practically, Islamic boarding schools need to develop a bilingual and culturally reflective education system as part of a strategy to face a digitalized future. Institutions such as Foreign Language Development Institutes and language dormitories should be positioned as centers of cultural production, not simply linguistic instruction. Training Islamic boarding school teachers to manage this symbolic capital with an approach that respects both local and global values is crucial.

The uniqueness and scientific contribution of this research lie in, first, the reconstruction of the identity of Islamic boarding school students as global subjects, not merely local religious ones. Second, English is a symbol of cultural struggle, not merely a means of communication. Third, Islamic boarding school practices that integrate symbolic capital and cultural hybridization processes create hybrid actors in a posthuman and automated society. This research shows a new model of Islamic boarding school education that is able to respond to the challenges of technology, AI, and globalization without losing its local identity and spiritual values.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Al-Yasini Islamic Boarding School has successfully created a model of Islamic boarding school education that is responsive to global challenges, particularly in the context of an automated world marked by the presence of digital technology, artificial intelligence, and a posthuman society.

Through the Foreign Language Development Institute system and language dormitories, students are equipped with English language skills that are not only technical, but also symbolic and cultural. English becomes a new form of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986), enabling students to negotiate their identities amidst the currents of globalization.

The students' linguistic products, such as speeches, poetry, and short stories in English, are a concrete representation of cultural hybridization (Pieterse, 2009), where local Islamic boarding school values can be presented in a global format. Students are not victims of globalization, but rather active actors, recreating meaning through global language.

These findings collectively confirm that Islamic boarding schools can be dialectical spaces that integrate traditional Islamic values with modern expressions through cultural and linguistic strategies.

Furthermore, in this study, the researcher recommends that, first, students need to improve their English literacy critically and creatively, and utilize it as a medium for da'wah, global communication, and a tool to expand the influence of Islamic boarding school values in the international space. Second, guardians of students are expected to provide full support for the process of learning foreign languages, especially English, and view it as part of strengthening the character of students so that they are able to live in the global era while maintaining Islamic values. Third, it is recommended to strengthen the English learning system based on Islamic boarding school values. Programs such as the Foreign Language Development Institute and language dormitories need to be developed into incubation spaces for students' creativity to produce foreign language works with local and universal value. Fourth, it is recommended to make the experience of Al-Yasini Islamic Boarding School as a model for research and development of Islamic boarding school-based education systems that are able to address issues of sustainability and inclusivity through linguistic and cultural approaches that are relevant to the times.

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Navigating Foreign Language Anxiety within Multilingual Learning Environments in the Digital Age: Insights from Students in an Indonesian Pesantren

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ABSTRACT

Although increasing attention has been given to foreign language anxiety (FLA) in conventional classroom settings, limited research has explored how students in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) navigate multilingualism and manage FLA in digitally mediated learning contexts. This study addresses this gap by investigating how students in an Indonesian pesantren experience and respond to FLA while engaging in public speaking and English language learning in multilingual environments shaped by religious values and digital technologies. Using a qualitative case study design, data were gathered from seven participants through online observations and semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis, guided by sociocultural theory, was employed to investigate how learners manage anxiety and develop language competence. Moreover, Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) was employed to examine students' perceptions of digital tools, focusing on perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, which influence how learners engage with technology to support language learning and manage anxiety. Findings reveal that structured preparation, spiritual practices, and digital self-study collectively reduce anxiety and foster confidence. Furthermore, the pesantren setting—featuring bilingual systems, peer collaboration, and teacher support—significantly contributes to meaningful language learning. In addition, digital technologies enhance vocabulary acquisition when used both ethically and intentionally. The study offers new insights into the complex intersection of faith, technology, and foreign language learning within Islamic educational settings.

Keywords: Digital Learning, Foreign Language Anxiety, Multilingualism, Pesantren, Sociocultural theory, Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

INTRODUCTION

Multilingualism is a notable feature of contemporary societies enhanced by globalization, transnational migration, and the increasing mobility of knowledge. As Aronin and Singleton (2008) elaborate in their notion of the "new linguistic dispensation," the relationship between language and society has experienced significant changes, with

multilingual practices now constituting a norm rather than an exception in many educational and social settings. In this context, languages are not merely tools for interpersonal communication; they also provide resources for socio-economic mobility and are cultural assets for maintaining local identities (Bin-Tahir et al., 2017; X. Chen et al., 2020). Conceptualizing language as an instrument underscores its communicative and utilitarian functions; as a resource, it points to its economic and political capital; and as a cultural asset, it highlights the importance of linguistic diversity in resisting the homogenizing effects of global languages such as English (Zein, 2019). This tripartite framing is particularly relevant in multilingual educational ecologies where competing ideologies of language policy, pedagogy, and identity intersect.

The research on multilingualism acknowledges its dual dimensions that are societal and individual (Clyne, 1997). At the societal level, multilingualism refers to the coexistence of multiple languages within a community or nation, often strengthened by historical, cultural, and political dimensions. At the individual level, it highlights the ability to communicate in more than two languages to varying degrees of proficiency (Ndiribe & Aboh, 2022). While distinctions are often drawn between bilingualism and multilingualism, where the former refers to competence in two languages and the latter to three or more (de Zarobe & de Zarobe, 2015). The boundary between the two is increasingly blurred, with some scholars treating bilingualism as a subset of multilingualism (Aronin & Singleton, 2008). These debates reveal that multilingualism is not a fixed state but a dynamic practice fostered by sociocultural, ideological, and educational contexts (Heugh & Stroud, 2019). Such a perspective is meaningful for comprehending multilingual learning environments in faith-based institutions, where languages are not only educational tools but also markers of religious and cultural affiliation.

However, multilingualism often co-occurs with challenges in language learning, one of which is foreign language anxiety (FLA). FLA is a multifaceted affective response influenced by individual dispositions, situational contexts, and broader socio-educational conditions (Dewaele, 2007). Particularly, it is apparent in oral communication and performance-based tasks such as public speaking, where the fear of negative evaluation and perceived linguistic inadequacy heighten anxiety. Research has demonstrated that positive attitudes toward the target language are related to lower FLA, whereas negative experiences can inhibit participation and hinder language development (Comanaru & Dewaele, 2015;

Dewaele, 2007). This highlights the importance of studying FLA not merely as an individual psychological trait but as a socially and culturally mediated phenomenon.

The rise of digital technologies has integrated another layer of complexity to language learning and the experience of FLA. Digital tools such as online dictionaries and automated translators, language learning apps, video-sharing platforms, and virtual discussion forums provide opportunities for personalized, self-paced learning and exposure to authentic language use (Ivkovic & Lotherington, 2009; Subair et al., 2024). Nevertheless, they also reshape how students interact with peers, teachers, and target language communities, thereby influencing their motivation, confidence, and anxiety levels. While much of the existing literature on FLA has focused on traditional classroom contexts, studies emphasize the potential of digital mediation to reduce anxiety by supporting preparation and rehearsal, providing private practice spaces, and facilitating multimodal learning.

The interconnection of multilingualism, FLA, and digital learning takes on distinctive significance in Indonesia's pesantren. In this modern era, pesantren represent a unique multilingual ecology: Arabic serves as the primary language for religious instruction and classical texts; Indonesian functions as the national lingua franca for secular subjects and daily communication; Javanese remains an important regional language for cultural and social interaction; and English has been increasingly promoted as a global language for academic and professional advancement. Furthermore, this linguistic formation is enhanced by pesantren's distinctive ethos, which underscores discipline, collective living, and spiritual practices (Bin-Tahir et al., 2017). Although pesantren are central to Indonesia's educational landscape and play a key role in shaping students' linguistic repertoires, their multilingual dynamics and students' affective experiences of learning foreign languages, particularly in learning English. which remains underexplored in applied linguistics research.

Previous studies on multilingualism and foreign language anxiety (FLA) have predominantly focused on conventional educational settings (Comanaru & Dewaele, 2015; Dewaele, 2007), often in Western contexts where religion plays little or no explicit role in language learning. Research in Indonesia has examined multilingual practices in pesantren, showing that these schools employ a simultaneous-sequential instructional model guiding students from monolingualism to multilingual competence (Bin-Tahir et al., 2017), that multilingualism fosters linguistic competence and religious moderation through respect for local languages, tolerance, and national commitment (Subair et al., 2024), and that teaching occurs via a combination of approaches such as immersion, transitional, dual-language, and

pullout through teacher-student interactions, peer communication, daily routines, and language-group activities (Chou, 2018; Galante, 2018; Tahir, 2017). However, few studies have explored how the integration of digital technologies interacts with the pesantren's bilingual and faith-based traditions to shape students' language learning experiences and FLA. Consequently, there is limited understanding about how pesantren students navigate the affective challenges of learning. Without understanding the emotional challenges, students faced such as language anxiety, shyness, or lack of self-confidence teachers and policymakers may design learning strategies that are inappropriate for their psychosocial needs. Furthermore, students experiencing affective barriers may not demonstrate their full English language skills. This lack of awareness can lead us to misjudge their abilities as low, when in fact they simply do not feel safe or comfortable learning and communicating within an environment that blends religious discipline, communal peer learning, and increasingly digitalized pedagogies.

The present study addresses this lacuna by investigating how students in Indonesian pesantren experience and respond to FLA in digitally mediated multilingual learning environments. It contributes in three interrelated ways. First, it highlights a faith-based educational context that has been largely overlooked in global discussions on multilingualism and FLA, showing how local sociocultural and religious practices shape students' linguistic identities and affective experiences. Second, it explores the role of digital technologies in influencing anxiety in this distinctive setting, demonstrating how students use appropriate digital tools for preparation, rehearsal, and vocabulary development in ways aligned with religious values and institutional norms. Third, it extends sociocultural perspectives on language learning by examining how structured preparation, spiritual practices, and digital self-study collectively mediate students' affective responses and communicative competence. These contributions guide the study's focus on two key research questions:

a. How do students in Indonesian pesantren experience and manage foreign language anxiety within digitally mediated multilingual learning environments shaped by religious values?

b. In what ways do digital technologies and the pesantren's multilingual context facilitate students' navigation of multilingualism and contribute to reducing foreign language anxiety?

By critically engaging with these intersections, the study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how multilingualism, FLA, and digital mediation unfold in non-Western, faith-based contexts. It challenges the implicit assumption in much of the FLA literature that language learning anxiety is a universal phenomenon divorced from local ideologies, institutional traditions, and religious practices. Moreover, it promotes insights into how the evolving role of English in Indonesia intersects with the long-standing bilingualism of Arabic and Indonesian in pesantren, offering a new lens on the affective dimensions of language learning in multilingual ecologies shaped by both globalization and faith.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Multilingualism and Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) in Educational Contexts

Multilingualism is the use of more than one language by an individual or community, so the scope is smaller. Multilingualism focuses on the cognitive and social development of a single learner who uses multiple languages, and social multilingualism concerns the ecosystem, policies, and management of teaching multiple languages within a country or education system. In the context of English as a foreign language (EFL), a new barrier called Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) arises. Multilingualism and Foreign Language Anxiety are deeply interconnected phenomena that shape learners' emotional experiences and communicative behaviors in language classrooms (Yu, 2025). While multilingualism is often celebrated for its cognitive and cultural benefits, it can also introduce complex layers of anxiety, especially when learners are required to perform in a non-dominant or less familiar language. Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA), which includes communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety, may be intensified in multilingual learners due to cross-linguistic interference, shifting language dominance, and sociocultural expectations tied to each language(Horwitz, 2016; Özdemir & Seçkin, 2025; Park, 2014). Understanding this intersection is crucial for educators, as it highlights the need for differentiated instruction, culturally responsive pedagogy, and inclusive assessment practices that acknowledge the emotional and linguistic realities of multilingual students. By addressing FLA within the multilingual context, educators can foster greater psychological safety, promote authentic language use, and support learners in developing confidence across their full linguistic repertoire.

In multilingual classrooms, where learners often juggle multiple linguistic identities and varying proficiency levels, the impact of FLA may be more complex and layered. Therefore, understanding and responding to FLA is not only about reducing discomfort (Oflaz, 2019). It is about creating inclusive environments where multilingual learners feel empowered to use all their languages as resources for learning, rather than sources of stress. Foreign language learning anxiety is an emotional state characterized by feelings of tension, worry, and physiological discomfort when someone communicates or learns in a foreign language. Horwitz (1986) identified FLA not only as a general anxiety transferred to the language classroom, but as a complex construct consisting of three main components: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation (Wu et al., 2022). Communication apprehension is the fear or anxiety about communicating in the target language, particularly during public-facing activities like speaking in front of peers or the instructor, which is consistently reported as the most anxiety-provoking activity. Secondly, Fear of Negative Evaluation. This component involves apprehension concerning the judgment of others (teachers or peers) regarding the quality of one's language performance, frequently resulting in avoidance behaviors and reduced classroom participation. Thirdly, Test Anxiety is the worry and stress directly linked to formal academic assessment, such as quizzes, tests, and other evaluations within the foreign language class. Therefore, this concept enables educators and researchers to understand how anxiety manifests across diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Multilingual Learning and Digital Mediation in Indonesian Pesantren

Indonesian pesantren illustrate a specialized educational context where faith, multiple languages, and collective learning practices intersect. Generally, Arabic occupies a privileged position as the language of religious texts and ritual, shaping not only students' linguistic repertoires but also their discipline and spiritual orientation toward learning (Bin-Tahir et al., 2017; Tahir, 2017). In this matter, Indonesian functions as the lingua franca of formal instruction, while local vernaculars such as Javanese and Madurese facilitate social interaction and reinforce communal identity (Kidwell & Triyoko, 2024; Wahyuningsih, 2019). Moreover, English, widely considered a key to academic engagement, introduces additional linguistic and cultural expectations. This complicated ecology demands that students manage layered linguistic instructions, often switching across languages with different symbolic, cultural, and functional purposes. Multilingual exposure can shape students' cognitive flexibility and

intercultural competence. On the other hand, it can also intensify foreign language anxiety (FLA), especially when students perform in formal settings such as public speaking, classroom presentations, or digital platforms where their proficiency is evaluated or monitored. Therefore, the pesantren context can sustain and complicate students' multilingual learning experiences, raising critical questions about how language hierarchies and religious values sharpen their emotional and academic participation.

Furthermore, the existence of digital technologies in pesantren shapes another dimension of complexity that remains insufficiently portrayed in the study, especially dealing with multilingualism and foreign language anxiety. In this case, digital platforms such as YouTube, WhatsApp, Google Translate, Zoom and so forth have provided students opportunities for language exposure, self-directed practice, and participation in online learning communities (Iskandar et al., 2022; Qureshi et al., 2021). These technologies can complement pesantren's traditions, reflective learning by allowing private rehearsal, repeated listening, and asynchronous engagement, which help reduce the social tensions of immediate performance. A key source of FLA (Galante, 2018). However, the same tools also introduce new psychological and pedagogical tensions (Nisa et al., 2024). Online presentations and recorded assignments, for instance, can develop students' sense of being observed and evaluated, somehow heightening rather than reducing anxiety. Moreover, the dependence on translation tools may encourage surface-level engagement with language, potentially constraining deeper communicative competence. These dynamics highlight that digital mediation is not a neutral solution but a contextually shaped intervention whose effectiveness depends on how it is embedded within the pesantren's multilingual. Therefore, a critical insight into these intersections is crucial for designing strategies that address both the cognitive and affective dimensions of language learning in this unique setting.

METHOD

Research Design

The present study anchored in a qualitative case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of how students in Indonesian pesantren experience and respond to foreign language anxiety (FLA) in digitally mediated multilingual learning environments shaped by religious values. A case study approach was appropriate as it allowed for the exploration of complex, context-dependent phenomena specifically, the interaction between faith-based educational practices, multilingual language learning, and digital technology. Regarding the

theoretical framework, this study was guided by sociocultural theory proposed by (Vygotsky, 1978), which emphasizes that learning is socially mediated and shaped by the interplay of cultural tools, institutional norms, and interpersonal interactions. Within this perspective, digital technologies are understood as mediational tools that support or constrain language learning and influence students' affective experiences, including foreign language anxiety (FLA). This lens informed the development of the interview guidelines and the thematic analysis, allowing the study to explore how students' engagement with digital tools such as for preparation, rehearsal, and vocabulary development interacts with the pesantren's multilingual traditions, religious values, and peer collaboration to shape their language learning experiences.

Research Contexts and Participants

The study was conducted in a pesantren located in Central Java, Indonesia, that implements a multilingual system, with Indonesian as the national language, Arabic for religious studies, English as a foreign language, and local languages such as Javanese and Madurese for daily social interaction. Seven students (six female and one male) were purposively selected based on their active participation in English public speaking activities and their regular engagement with digital tools for language learning. All participants had experience navigating the pesantren's faith-oriented environment alongside multilingual language learning in increasingly digitalized classrooms. The recruitment of student participants was based on the following criteria: (1) active participation in English public speaking and other language learning activities at the pesantren, (2) regular engagement with digital tools or platforms to support their multilingual learning (Indonesian, Arabic, English, as well as local languages such as Javanese and Madurese), and (3) willingness and ability to share their experiences in managing foreign language anxiety and navigating multilingual practices in a faith-oriented, digitally mediated environment. For the sake of clarity, the profiles of the participants (English language teachers and students) were illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. The Profile of Students in Pesantren

Participant	Sex	Age (years)	Learning experiences in Pesantren (years)
S1	Female	16	4
S2	Female	16	4
S3	Female	16	4
S4	Female	21	6
S5	Female	22	1

S6	Female	20	1
S7	Male	20	4

Data Collection

Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and observations, designed to elicit in-depth insights into students' perspectives and lived experiences in navigating multilingualism and foreign language anxiety (FLA) in the digital age within Indonesian pesantren. This qualitative approach enabled the researchers to examine the complex and context-specific dimensions of how digital technologies mediate language learning and anxiety management in faith-based institutions. The interviews were conducted from August 10 to 15, 2025, via video conferencing platforms to accommodate students' availability and ensure accessibility across geographically dispersed pesantren. To further clarify responses and probe emerging themes, follow-up communication was carried out through video calls and WhatsApp. Observations focused on how students engaged with digital tools in daily communication and extracurricular public speaking sessions, documenting their strategies for navigating multilingual interactions and alleviating FLA in the pesantren context.

To support coherence while allowing depth and flexibility in responses, the interview process was guided by a structured interview guideline consisting of a structured set of open-ended questions informed by both a sociocultural perspective (Vygotsky, 1978) and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989). The sociocultural lens underscores how students' multilingual development and management of foreign language anxiety (FLA) are strengthened through social interactions, mediated by friends, teachers, and digital tools within their culturally situated learning environment. TAM complements this perspective by emphasizing participants' perceptions of technology, particularly two key constructs: perceived usefulness (the extent to which students believe digital tools enhance their language learning and reduce FLA) and perceived ease of use (the extent to which technology is perceived as accessible and effort-free). The questions were developed to capture students' experiences, challenges, strategies, and reflections on the pedagogical and institutional impacts of digital tools in English language teaching. By integrating both frameworks, the interviews allowed for a balance between thematic focus, participant-driven narratives, and the exploration of how technological and social mediation jointly influence multilingual practices and anxiety management.

To maintain ethical conduct, formal permission was received from the head of pesantren and English teachers before recruiting students. This procedure acknowledged the

institutional authority of pesantren leaders and respected the community's norms for research engagement. To maintain the trustworthiness of the data, multiple quality assurance strategies were used. Member checking was done, inviting participants to review and verify their interview transcripts to enhance accuracy and authenticity, thereby reinforcing credibility (Athens, 2010). Triangulation was also conducted by comparing data across participants to identify consistent patterns and themes, strengthening the coherence and dependability of the findings. In line with ethical considerations, ethical approval was obtained from the affiliated university's research committee, and informed consent was secured from all participants. Additionally, participants' identities were anonymized to ensure confidentiality.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) within an integrated framework of sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989). The sociocultural perspective highlights the role of social, cultural, and technological facilitations in fostering students' affective experiences and language development, while TAM underscores perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use as key factors of students' engagement with digital tools. These integrated perspectives offer us to investigate not only the affective and cognitive aspects of multilingual learning and FLA but also how students' adoption of technology was mediated by institutional culture, religious values, and peer and teacher communication.

Following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach including (1) familiarizing ourselves with the data through repeated readings of interview transcripts and observation notes, (2) generating initial codes by classifying salient and relevant excerpts, (3) organizing these codes into preliminary themes reflecting recurring patterns, (4) reviewing and improving the themes to maintain coherence with both theoretical frameworks, (5) defining and naming each theme to capture its essential meaning, and (6) integrating the themes into a cohesive analytical narrative enhanced by excerpts. This approach showcased how structured preparation, spiritual practices, and digital self-study facilitated students' experiences of FLA and fostered multilingual competence. Further, the combined use of sociocultural theory and TAM demonstrated how students' perceptions of the usefulness and ease of use of digital tools were shaped by the pesantren's religious values, thereby

influencing how technology was adopted to enhance language learning and anxiety management.

FINDINGS

Students' Experiences and Management of Foreign Language Anxiety in Multilingual Contexts

The students' experiences in an Indonesian pesantren highlight that foreign language anxiety (FLA) is not just a psychological experience, but one that is linguistically, culturally and socially integrated into the pesantren, particularly in a multilingual and religiously oriented environment. Based on the interviews and observations, participants reported that learning English alongside Arabic and local languages, such as Javanese and Madurese, in the pesantren context offers both challenges and emotional benefits. In this matter, anxiety could emerge from the demand to communicate in English during public speaking tasks, online presentations, and daily multilingual interactions with peers and teachers. The shift to technology-enhanced learning such as the use of video-conferencing platforms and online assessment tools further heightened these feelings by reinforcing the perception of being monitored. As reported by S3 regarding the combined demands of multilingual engagement and digital immersion.

> "I got nervous when I spoke English in front of my friends during public speaking classes. Somehow, I was familiar with the word in Arabic but not in English, and I worried that my friends would laugh at me" (S3).

Observation data corroborated these experiences. In this case, students often hesitated before responding in English during classroom interactions and were noticeably more self-conscious when required to present via video or other media. In the same vein, S5 emphasized the accumulated tension linked to presenting in virtual contexts such as such as recorded video assignments, YouTube-based presentations, and Zoom presentations.

> "When we had to present our speech on Zoom, my hands were shaking. I thought about my pronunciation and worried that my friends would hear my mistakes more clearly online." (S 5)

The data emphasize that what is significantly different in the pesantren context is the manner in which students' strategies for managing anxiety are closely enhanced by the pesantren's

faith-based principles and its unique multilingual community. Unlike conventional approaches that mainly emphasize academic preparation, students' coping mechanisms cover a broader spectrum of practices. These include faith-based rituals and reflections through daily prayers, spiritual readings, and meditation practices that help students manage anxiety, collaborative learning with friends, and ethically guided interaction with digital tools and online platforms. Such strategies demonstrate how the pesantren incorporates spiritual, social, and technological aspects, offering students to manage language anxiety in ways that are both culturally grounded and pedagogically effective.

In more detail, the strategies of managing foreign language anxiety in the pesantren context include structured preparation, peer collaboration and collaborative learning, and ethical and intentional digital engagement. These strategies are considerably helpful for students in managing their foreign language anxiety. As asserted by students in the excerpts below.

> "Before I give a speech, I write it down and practice again and again in front of the mirror. Practicing makes me feel calmer and less afraid." (S2)
> "Before presenting, I usually pray and read a short surah. It makes me feel calmer and reminds me that doing my best is part of worship." (S1)
> "We often practice together in the dormitory. If I make mistakes, my friends help me fix them. I feel more confident because I know I'm not alone." (S4)
> "I use a vocabulary app on my phone to prepare for speeches. It helps me find the right words and makes me feel more ready. I try to use it wisely so I don't get distracted." (S6)

The data above underscore that, in terms of structured preparation as a practical strategy, students persistently highlight the urgency of structured preparation in managing anxiety. This can be done by creating speech drafts, rehearsing in front of friends or mirrors, and utilizing digital tools to foster English pronunciation. A defining aspect of the pesantren context is the role of spiritual practices in managing FLA. Students often turned to prayer and Qur'anic recitation as sources of emotional stability and self-confidence. This integration of religious practice with multilingual learning underscores the sociocultural specificity of pesantren students' experiences. Moreover, the pesantren's culture of communal learning and peer support also reduced students' anxiety. In this sense, practicing with friends across multiple languages shaped a non-threatening and collaborative community. In addition, dealing with ethical and intentional digital engagement, digital technologies initially posed

challenges but became powerful resources for self-paced learning, vocabulary development, and rehearsal when used intentionally and in alignment with pesantren values.

These findings underscore the interconnected influence of faith-based practices, multilingual norms, and digital technologies in enhancing students' experiences and strategies for managing foreign language anxiety (FLA). In addition, students in pesantren use spiritual discipline as a psychological resource, employing practices such as prayer and recitation to cultivate composure. Moreover, the multilingual community—which integrates Arabic for religious instruction, English for academic and communicative purposes, and local languages such as Javanese and Madurese for everyday interaction—generates linguistic dynamics that affect how anxiety is experienced and regulated.

The study emphasizes that within pesantren contexts, the management of language learning anxiety extends beyond conventional pedagogical methods, encompassing religious practices, collaborative peer engagement, and ethically guided digital participation. Consequently, effective interventions to mitigate FLA must account for these intersecting dimensions—spirituality, peer collaboration, multilingual competence, and purposeful digital literacy—which are deeply incorporated into students' sociocultural and educational identity.

The role of digital technologies and the pesantren's multilingual context in facilitating students' navigation of multilingualism and in reducing foreign language anxiety

The findings indicate that digital technologies and the pesantren's multilingual context serve distinct but mutually reinforcing functions in facilitating students' multilingual engagement and in mitigating foreign language anxiety (FLA). These components are not merely pedagogical but also culturally, socially, and religiously situated, reflecting the pesantren's unique integration of faith, communal norms, and multilingual learning practices. Digital technologies play a crucial role in promoting self-paced, faith-aligned learning. For instance, Google Translate, online dictionaries, YouTube, and WhatsApp function as mechanisms for enhancing vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation practice, and language rehearsal. These resources facilitate students to prepare and review language content independently, creating a safe environment that mitigates anxiety. As emphasized by participants in the following excerpts:

"I often use Google Translate to check vocabulary and pronunciation" (S1).

"YouTube and Google Translate are very helpful because they are accessible anytime and easy to understand" (S6).
"There is a YouTube channel I created to post content in English, and WhatsApp is used to communicate in English" (S7).

The data highlight that students strategically utilize widely available digital tools—such as translation apps, video-sharing platforms, and messaging services—to enhance their multilingual learning and reduce barriers in English communication. These tools enable flexible, self-paced learning, increase exposure to authentic English input, and provide opportunities for active production. Moreover, in the pesantren context, digital technologies not only facilitate cognitive learning but also align with religiously grounded educational values that highlight preparation, discipline, and repetition. By having private practice, such tools help students adhere to pesantren traditions of careful and respectful learning while mitigating the pressure of making mistakes in front of friends or teachers. The unity between digital resources and religiously reflected learning practices fosters students' confidence, motivation, and management of foreign language anxiety.

Digital tools and the multilingual community in pesantren operate synergistically, providing both self-directed preparation and socially mediated practice. Students prepare independently using online dictionaries, translation apps, or other digital resources and then apply knowledge in authentic multilingual interactions with peers and teachers. As S5 asserted:

"I use online apps to learn new words, then practice with my friends in the dorm. They help me if I make mistakes, so I don't feel so nervous in class" (S5).

Observational notes further confirmed that students frequently rehearsed speeches individually in quiet spaces or in small peer groups in the dormitory, demonstrating a blend of personal discipline and communal support as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Students' rehearsal of English speeches through technology-assisted practice

Figure 1 reveal that the combination of such strategies reflects the pesantren's sociocultural specificity, where structured preparation and peer collaboration are framed by spiritual discipline and respect for ethical digital engagement. This dual system resonates with the pesantren's values of discipline, collaboration, and ethical learning. In this matter, technology provides careful, private rehearsal, consistent with pesantren norms of thoughtful preparation, while multilingual immersion facilitates socially scaffolded practice, reinforcing language skills and confidence within a morally, culturally, and linguistically coherent environment.

In addition, religious values enhance how students engage with both digital technologies and multilingual practices. Participants highlighted that language learning is framed by ethical and spiritual guidelines, encouraging careful selection of vocabulary and respectful communication:

> "If we learn English, we are taught good vocabulary that is appropriate for santri and in line with religious teachings" (S2).
> "Digital tools are used responsibly, choosing content that aligns with pesantren ethics" (S6).

The data above reveal that such values mediate the learning process, guiding students to navigate multilingual environments thoughtfully while maintaining focus on moral and spiritual development. By embedding religious principles into language learning, the pesantren ensures that technology and multilingual practice mitigate anxiety rather than exacerbate it. Moreover, the data highlight those digital technologies and the multilingual context function as mutually reinforcing mechanisms for navigating multilingualism and

managing foreign language anxiety in pesantren. Digital tools provide preparatory, self-paced support, while the multilingual environment offers authentic, socially and religiously mediated opportunities for practice. Taken together, they create a culturally, ethically, and spiritually coherent learning ecosystem where multilingual competence is fostered, and anxiety is transformed into manageable, constructive challenges. This underscores the urgency of incorporating digital literacy, multilingual pedagogy, and religious values to maximize language learning in the pesantren contexts.

DISCUSSION

The finding of the study highlights that foreign language anxiety (FLA) in Indonesian pesantren is a socially, linguistically, and culturally embedded experience rather than a merely individual psychological reaction. Moreover, the findings underscore that students' experiences of FLA are enhanced by the communication of multilingual practices—especially the concurrence of Arabic, English, and local languages—and the pesantren's religious tradition. Unlike in formal school contexts, where FLA is generally linked to linguistic proficiency or classroom dynamics (Dewaele, 2007; Horwitz, 2016), students in pesantren need to manage religiously informed norms of communication, the use of Arabic for religious purposes, and public performance expectations. This is in line with a sociocultural perspective advocated by Vygotsky (1978), that the aspect of sociocultural contributes to the heightened affective stakes of English communication in classroom and online settings. Moreover, the incorporation of digital tools gave another part of complexity, shaping the perception of being supervised during video-based assignments and online presentations, and increasing anxiety (Horwitz, 2016; Özdemir & Seçkin, 2025).

In addition, by linking these findings with sociocultural theory, it can be deduced that students' responses to FLA are mediated not only by internal factors such as personality but also by the cultural tools, social communication, and values incorporated in the pesantren community. The dependence on spiritual practice—such as prayer, Qur'anic recitation, and ethical values—played a meaningful role as cultural tools to mediate affective regulation, reframing language-learning efforts as acts of religious practice. This finding aligns with research that emphasises spirituality as a resource for mitigating language-learning anxiety and promoting self-regulation (M. C. Chen & Lin, 2009; Mahboob & Lin, 2016; Mambu, 2017). In this matter, sociocultural facilitation does not only happen through material tools

or social communication but also through symbolic and moral practices that provide meaning to learning and strengthen students' emotional involvement.

The findings also demonstrate that peer collaboration and the utilization of digital tools functioned as additional mediational tools. In addition, data from observations highlight that students frequently implemented structured peer rehearsal—sharing feedback, correcting mistakes, and enhancing others—mitigating the affective load of public performance. This is in line with sociocultural perspective that places emphasis on collaborative scaffolding, where learning and affective regulation are established within supportive social communication (Basith et al., 2019; Gkonou & Miller, 2019; Tour & Barnes, 2022; Wood et al., 2018; Yang, 2012). Furthermore, students' utilisation of technologies such as Google Translate, YouTube, and WhatsApp was not influenced by practical purposes but by their perceived usefulness and ease of use within the moral and disciplinary framework of the pesantren, illustrating key constructs of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) proposed by (Davis, 1989). The digital technologies provided private, self-paced rehearsal mitigating the risk of public embarrassment and resonated with pesantren traditions of disciplined and respectful learning (Colton, 2020; Hamzaoğlu & Koçoğlu, 2016; Liu et al., 2024) . This underscores that technology adoption in faith-based multilingual contexts is facilitated through sociocultural and ethical values and practices.

Moreover, the study reported that FLA in pesantren emerges at the interplay of multilingualism and digital mediation, forming tensions such as the cognitive pressure of switching between Arabic, English, and local languages, and the increased self-consciousness generated by technology-enhanced performance. While these dual tensions initially caused anxiety, they also fostered the development of culturally and pedagogically meaningful coping strategies. The combination of spiritual practice, collaborative peer support, and self-paced digital rehearsal emmphasized how sociocultural mediation transforms anxiety from a purely challenging factor into a manageable and even productive component of the learning process (Muis et al., 2025; Nisa et al., 2024). More importantly, these findings emphasize that FLA in pesantren is not just a problem to tackle, but a learning experience that, when enhanced through cultural, spiritual, and digital practices, can foster students to learn more effectively and encourage confidence.

From sociocultural and technology acceptance model perspectives, these findings shape our insights into FLA by integrating sociocultural and technology-acceptance perspectives. Sociocultural perspective underscores the mediating role of culturally grounded

practices and collaborative interaction in enhancing both learning and affective experiences (Mirzaee & Aliakbari, 2017). Moreover, TAM demonstrates how students' engagement with digital technology is influenced by perceived usefulness, ease of use, and compatibility with religious and communal norms (Abubakari et al., 2023). Consequently, these frameworks highlight that FLA is not only a function of individual linguistic competence or technological skills but also is co-constructed within a wider ecosystem of cultural values, peer dynamics, and mediated practices.

Pedagogically, this study underscores the necessity of adopting contextually responsive and multidimensional approaches to addressing foreign language anxiety (FLA), moving beyond conventional focus on linguistic competence, corrective feedback, or task instruction (Muhammad & Purbani, 2024; Subair et al., 2024). In the pesantren contexts, such interventions need to be holistically formulated, incorporating the spiritual, social, multilingual, and technological aspects that foster students' learning experiences. This perspective undermines the dominance of skill-oriented and cognitively reductionist models of FLA intervention, generally overlooking the affective, cultural, and ethical components of language learning in pesantren contexts. Considering these interconnected aspects not only confirms students' agency in managing both emotional and cognitive demands but also develops the imperative to design pedagogical and technological strategies that are ethically embedded and culturally situated, fostering both inclusivity and sustainability in educational practice.

Finally, this study shapes continuous discussion in applied linguistics and educational technology by highlighting that foreign language anxiety (FLA) in the pesantren context is comprehended through a combined sociocultural-TAM (Technology Acceptance Model) lens. Such an integrative perspective challenges the dominance of reductionist approaches that view FLA as an individual cognitive or affective factor, overlooking how culturally grounded practices, collaborative scaffolding, and value-oriented digital tools mediate students' involvement. By considering these mediating factors, the study highlights that the framework of pedagogical and technological responses to FLA cannot be separated from the sociocultural, spiritual, and institutional dimensions that enhance language learning in pesantren contexts. This approach underscores the need for a shift from universalized, proficiency-focused programs toward contextually situated, ethically responsive, and socially adaptive strategies that adopt technology to enhance, rather than marginalize, students' agency and well-being. More importantly, the findings offer the implication, including the

need for teachers and policymakers to reconceptualize conducive learning environments not merely as spaces for addressing linguistic and cognitive challenges but as ecologically embedded ecosystems in which affective, cultural, and technological dimensions are dynamically interrelated.

CONCLUSION

This study investigates how students in Indonesian pesantren experience and responds to FLA while getting involved in public speaking and English language learning in multilingual environments shaped by religious values and digital technologies. The findings provide a nuanced insight into foreign language anxiety (FLA) in Indonesian pesantren, highlighting that anxiety is not just an individual psychological response but a socially, culturally, and technologically mediated experience. By investigating students' experiences through the dual lenses of sociocultural theory and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the findings reveal that FLA emerges at the interplay of multilingual practices, religious norms, and digital-mediated learning. Moreover, students manage cognitive and affective tensions—such as language switching, public performance, and technology-enhanced self-consciousness—through strategies embedded in spiritual practices, collaborative peer support, and self-paced digital rehearsal. These findings underscore that anxiety can function as a productive and manageable component of learning, fostering both linguistic competence and emotional resilience when mediated through culturally and ethically situated practices. In addition, the study emphasizes that effective pedagogical and technological interventions need to be contextually responsive, ethically embedded, and holistically constructed, incorporating spiritual, social, multilingual, and technological aspects to enhance student agency and sustainable learning.

The study promotes implications for teachers, policymakers, and scholars. First, it underscores the importance of designing language learning environments that are sensitive to the sociocultural, spiritual, and technological realities of faith-based multilingual institutions, moving beyond universalized proficiency-focused models. Teachers and curriculum designers are encouraged to integrate collaborative scaffolding, culturally grounded practices, and ethically aligned digital tools to enhance both affective and cognitive dimensions. For policymakers, this understanding offers the need to support interventions that balance traditional pedagogical values with innovative digital practices. However, this study has limitations. The findings are based on a qualitative case study of seven students in

an Indonesian pesantren, which may limit generalizability to other faith-based or multilingual contexts. Future research could extend the sample size, include comparative studies across diverse educational settings, and examine the long-term impact of integrating spiritual, social, and technological strategies on FLA and language learning outcomes.

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Artificial Intelligence in English Learning: Voices from EFL Students at UIN Palopo

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ABSTRACT

In the digital era, AI tools such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, and Duolingo have increasingly been used to support language acquisition. However, students' experiences and attitudes toward these tools remain underexplored in the local academic context. This research aimed to identify both the perceived advantages and disadvantages of AI in English learning. A qualitative narrative method was employed, involving 16 sixth-semester English students selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using open-ended questionnaires distributed via Google Forms. The findings reveal that students generally perceive AI positively, noting its role in enhancing accessibility, personalized learning, and improvement in key language skills—speaking, writing, reading, and listening. Nevertheless, concerns were raised about over-reliance on technology, reduced classroom interaction, and limited accuracy in context-sensitive tasks. Internet connectivity issues and access restrictions on premium features were also highlighted. The study concludes that while AI offers valuable support in EFL learning, it should be integrated thoughtfully alongside human interaction and traditional pedagogies. These insights can inform educators, institutions, and future researchers in designing balanced, student-centered approaches to AI-assisted language education.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), English Learning

INTRODUCTION

In the 21st era, English serves as a global language. In the context of globalization, English has assumed a central role as the primary language of instruction in governmental institutions and serves as a dominant medium of communication in international conferences, professional forums, commercial sectors, and other formal domains (Ismayanti, D., Said, Y. R., Usman, N., & Nur, M. I., 2024). In Indonesia, English is taught not as a native or second language, but as a foreign language.

The process of learning and teaching a non-native language presents considerable challenges, as it involves more than just instructional delivery and entails a wide range of complex factors. Technological advancements in the modern era have demanded more refined approaches to teaching and learning, including the use of media as a means to enhance instructional delivery. Recent technological advancements, particularly Artificial Intelligence (AI), have transformed English language teaching (ELT) by offering tools for personalized learning, immediate feedback, and enhanced engagement (Agrawal, 2024). Tools like ChatGPT, Grammarly, and Duolingo are widely used to support students' writing, speaking, and reading skills.

While many studies highlight AI's benefits in education (Fadli & Iskarim, 2024; Sumakul et al., 2022), fewer focus on its influence on students' learning autonomy and critical thinking in the Indonesian EFL context. Nevertheless, students also encounter several notable obstacles in utilizing AI tools for learning. The primary constraint in online learning is a poor internet connection, which students and teachers try to solve by finding better network access (Kelana, R. I., et al., 2018). Unstable network conditions present a significant obstacle to the effective use of technology that relies on internet connections, including AI tools.

Conducting an in-depth analysis of the potential of AI technologies within educational contexts is of critical importance. This research is anchored in an extensive review of relevant literature and includes a critical evaluation of prior studies to identify existing gaps in scholarly understanding. Moreover, it incorporates perspectives from students who have experience using AI-based tools in the classroom, offering valuable insights into both the advantages and disadvantages of such technologies. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by exploring students' perceptions of AI in language learning at UIN Palopo, emphasizing both opportunities and challenges.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative narrative design to investigate students' experiences and opinions regarding AI-assisted English learning.

Research Design and Participants

This study employed a qualitative narrative design to capture students' experiences in depth. Sixteen sixth-semester students (3 males, 13 females; aged 21–23) from the English

Language Education Study Program at UIN Palopo were purposively selected, as they had experience using AI tools for language learning.

Instruments and Data Collection

An open-ended questionnaire consisting of 10 items was distributed via Google Forms. The questions focused on students' preferred AI tools, perceived benefits, limitations, and their influence on classroom interaction.

Data Analysis

Responses were analyzed using narrative analysis (Bruner, 1990), involving data reduction, thematic coding, and interpretation. Themes were identified based on recurring perceptions regarding AI's effectiveness and challenges.

FINDINGS

The key findings are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Students' perceptions of AI in language learning

No	Category	Students Insight
1	Effective AI Tools	ChatGPT, Grammarly, Duolingo, DeepL, Google Translate were most used for accessibility.
2	Skill Improvement	AI helped improve writing, pronunciation, grammar, and comprehension with real-time feedback.
3	Advantages	Accessibility, cost-effectiveness, flexibility, and tailored learning materials.
4	Disadvantages	Over-reliance on AI, technical issues, contextual inaccuracies, and premium feature limitations.
5	Interaction	Students noted decreased interaction with peers and teachers due to AI dependence.

Students also reported frequent use of AI applications such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, and Duolingo to support various English skills.
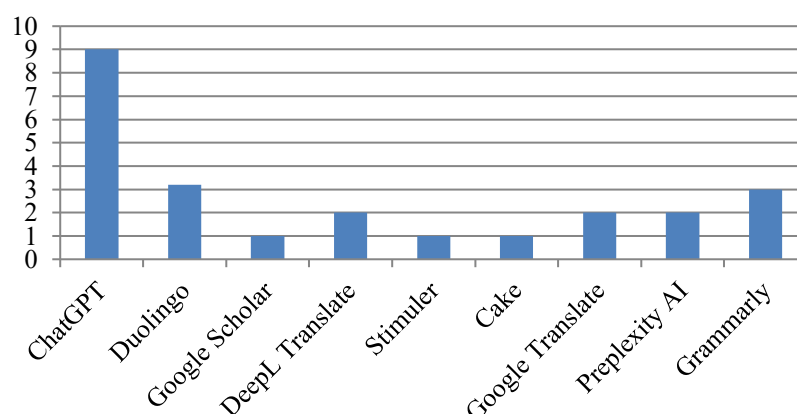
AI Application and Website

Figure 1. Most Effective AI According to Students

DISCUSSION

This research, which uses a narrative qualitative method to examine the perceptions of English students regarding the use of AI in learning English, shows that students have both positive and negative views on the utilization of AI in learning. This section presents the findings of the research, including the web or AI applications that are effective for learning, the effectiveness of AI in enhancing their skills, common problem faced when using AI, and the less effective AI features.

Based on the students' responses about effective web or AI applications for learning, most of the students have used ChatGPT, Duolingo, Grammarly, and Preplexity AI to learn English because it can answer questions quite accurately and relevantly. Students perceive AI as a beneficial resource for improving essay quality, brainstorming, and providing immediate feedback in a low-anxiety environment (Arifatin & Setyaningrum., 2024).

Respondents have a favorable opinion regarding the effectiveness of AI in enhancing their skills in writing, reading, speaking, and listening. This is because AI provides direct feedback features in the form of answers and corrections to students' writing and speaking errors, making it easier for students to correct their mistakes. For writing, AI can provide instant and detailed feedback on grammar, vocabulary usage, stylistic choices, and overall coherence, thereby guiding learners toward more effective and accurate written expression. In reading, AI tutors can adapt texts to individual proficiency levels and offer contextual

definitions, fostering deeper comprehension. For speaking and listening, AI-driven platforms can simulate conversations with realistic pronunciation, analyze speech patterns for errors, and provide immersive listening practice, making language acquisition more interactive and accessible than ever before (Zou, et al., 2023).

However, students also found some concerns of AI in their English learning process. A common problem faced when using AI, especially in learning, is internet connectivity. Students and teachers will have difficulty completing learning activities that have already started using AI if there is a connection error. In the other hand, the accuracy of AI is still lacking, such as in translation, where it sometimes does not match the context or grammar, and when providing answers, it does not explain in detail, only giving a general overview (Marito & Ashari, 2017). Additionally, some students also argue that AI limits critical thinking because its features are readily accessible, making users dependent on tools and instant media.

Several students' statements that AI has some features that are less effective in learning English, such as the premium feature, which limits the learning process for free, the text translation feature, which is contextually inappropriate and often contains grammatical errors, and the voice translation feature, which is unclear due to the pronunciation being too fast.

The findings of this research reveal that students generally perceive the use of AI in English language learning positively. A majority of participants acknowledged that AI-driven tools like ChatGPT, Duolingo, and other interactive platforms have contributed to the improvement of their English skills, including speaking, writing, reading, listening, grammar, and pronunciation. These results are consistent with earlier research entitled Students' Perception on the Use of AI in English (Arifatin & Setyaningrum., 2024) that emphasized the ability of AI to deliver personalized and continuous practice, especially in areas such as grammar and pronunciation.

The results of this study indicates that one of the most appreciated aspects of AI noted by students is the ability to provide instant feedback and its accessibility at any time and from any location. This ease of access supports the development of learner autonomy, allowing students to take greater control over their learning process. By enabling independent access to resources and real-time feedback, AI tools encourage self directed learning and continuous improvement outside the traditional classroom setting. This findings is in line with research conducted by Rusmiyanto et al. in their study entitled The Exploitation of Artificial

Intelligence in Developing English Language Learner's Communication Skills (Rusmiyanto, et al., 2023). However, the implementation of AI should be carefully managed and maximizes the benefits while remaining vigilant of its limitations is crucial for effectively fostering critical thinking skills among EFL learners (Darwin, et al., 2024).

All things considered, in conducting research on English students'perceptions of using AI for learning English, the researcher faced some challenges. These included time constraints that limited the depth and scope of data collection, low levels of student motivation in completing the questionnaire, and a number of responses that were not entirely aligned with the research objectives. These obstacles impacted the comprehensiveness of the findings and suggest the need for improved engagement strategies and clearer communication of research goals in future studies.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that EFL students at UIN Palopo generally have a positive perception of Artificial Intelligence in learning English. They recognize AI as a supportive tool that enhances accessibility to learning materials, provides real-time feedback, and helps develop English skills, including speaking, writing, reading, and listening. Students appreciate the flexibility, personalization, and efficiency that AI brings to their learning experiences.

However, this research also reveals several concerns. Some students express worry about the potential for over-dependence on AI, a reduction in social and classroom interaction, and the occasional inaccuracy or contextual limitations of AI-generated content. In addition, technical issues such as poor internet connection and limited access to premium features also pose challenges.

Furthermore, educators and curriculum developers are encouraged to use AI thoughtfully, ensuring it complements rather than replaces the essential elements of language learning. For students, they should not rely solely on AI-generated content, but instead use it as a reference to support critical thinking, creativity, and independent problem solving. Future researchers are encouraged to investigated the long-term effects of AI in language learning and comparing studies involving different educational levels and backgrounds could provide a broader and more comprehensive understanding of AI's role and effectiveness in language education.

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