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Sınırsız Eğitim ve Araştırma Dergisi, Cilt 11, Sayı 1

The Journal of Limitless Education and Research, Volume 11, Issue 1

Sınırsız Eğitim ve Araştırma Dergisi, Cilt 11, Sayı 1

The Journal of Limitless Education and Research, Volume 11, Issue 1

Sınırsız Eğitim ve Araştırma Dergisi, Cilt 11, Sayı 1

The Journal of Limitless Education and Research, Volume 11, Issue 1

Sınırsız Eğitim ve Araştırma Dergisi, Cilt 11, Sayı 1

The Journal of Limitless Education and Research, Volume 11, Issue 1

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The Journal of Limitless Education and Research, Volume 11, Issue 1

Sınırsız Eğitim ve Araştırma Dergisi, Cilt 11, Sayı 1

Dear Readers,

We are delighted to present you the March 2025 issue of the Journal of Limitless Education and Research and published. The Limitless Education and Research Association (LERA) started its publication life in 2016 and it has been continuously published for 11 years. The aim of our journal published by the LERA board members is to contribute to the field of education and research with new current scientific studies. To this end, theoretical and experimental original research, review articles, thesis summaries, and other scientific works are published for free and shared with readers at both nationwide and worldwide.

The Journal of Limitless Education and Research (J-LER) is published three times as of March, July, and November per year in both Turkish and English. Manuscripts submitted to the journal are checked and evaluated by at least two referees, editors, field editors, and also Turkish and English language editors. The members of the Referee and Scientific Committee of the journal consist of academics, researchers, experts, educators and teacher writers from different countries. Therefore, our journal is prepared for publication with the scientific efforts, contributions and support of international experts and academics. As a result of meticulous inquiries, current and new studies are included in each issue.

Journal of Limitless Education and Research (J-LER), which has been published for eleven (11) years without compromising its academic and scientific quality, is indexed in EBSCO, Education Full Text (H.W. Wilson) Database Coverage List, which is accepted as a field index by Inter-University Academic Council (UAK). In addition, it is scanned in various national and international indexes such as ASOS, DRJI, ESJI, OAJI, ROAD, SIS, SOBIAD, WorldCat and receives many citations. According to the SOBIAD impact factor, our journal ranks high among scientific journals in our country. We continue to work to scan the publication network of our journal in wider national and international indexes.

In the March 2026 issue of our journal, ten (10) scientific studies are presented to the readers. We would like to thank to all the authors, editors, referees, scientific committees and translators who contributed to the preparation and publication of this issue. We hope that our journal will contribute to scientists, researchers, educators, teachers and students in the field.

The Editor of Journal of Limitless Education and Research

The Journal of Limitless Education and Research, Volume 11, Issue 1

Sınırsız Eğitim ve Araştırma Dergisi, Cilt 11, Sayı 1

Değerli Okuyucular,

Sizlere Dergimizin Mart 2026 sayısını sunmaktan büyük mutluluk duyuyoruz. Sınırsız Eğitim ve Araştırma Dergisi (SEAD) yayın hayatına 2016 yılında başlamış ve 11 yıldır kesintisiz olarak yayınlanmaktadır. Sınırsız Eğitim ve Araştırma Derneği (SEAD) üyeleri tarafından yayınlanan dergimizin amacı, güncel çalışmalarla eğitim ve araştırma alanına katkı sağlamaktır. Bu amaçla kuramsal ve deneysel özgün araştırmalar, derleme makaleler, tez özetleri ve çeşitli bilimsel çalışmalar ücretsiz yayınlanmakta, ulusal ve uluslararası düzeydeki okuyuculara sunulmaktadır.

Sınırsız Eğitim ve Araştırma Dergisi (SEAD), yılda üç kez Mart, Temmuz ve Kasım aylarında Türkçe ve İngilizce olmak üzere iki dilde yayınlanmaktadır. Dergiye gönderilen çalışmalar en az iki hakem, editör, alan editörü, Türkçe ve İngilizce dil editörleri tarafından kontrol edilerek değerlendirilmektedir. Dergi Hakem ve Bilim Kurulu üyeleri farklı ülkelerdeki akademisyen, araştırmacı, uzman, eğitimci ve öğretmen yazarlardan oluşmaktadır. Böylece Dergimiz uluslararası uzman ve akademisyenlerin bilimsel çabaları, katkı ve destekleriyle yayına hazırlanmaktadır. Titiz incelemeler sonucu her sayıda güncel ve yeni çalışmalara yer verilmektedir.

Akademik ve bilimsel kalitesinden ödün vermeden on bir (11) yıldır yayın hayatını sürdüren Sınırsız Eğitim ve Araştırma Dergisi (SEAD), ÜAK tarafından alan indeksi olarak kabul edilen EBSCO, Education Full Text (H.W. Wilson) Database Covarage List'te dizinlenmektedir. Ayrıca ASOS, DRJI, ESJI, OAJI, ROAD, SIS, SOBİAD, Worldcat WorldCat gibi ulusal ve uluslararası çeşitli indekslerde taranmakta ve çok sayıda atıf almaktadır. SOBİAD etki faktörüne göre Dergimiz, ülkemizdeki bilimsel dergiler içinde üst sıralarda bulunmaktadır. Dergimizin yayın ağı daha geniş ulusal ve uluslararası indekslerde taranması için çalışmalarımız devam etmektedir.

Dergimizin Mart 2026 sayısında okuyuculara on (10) bilimsel çalışma sunulmaktadır. . Bu sayının hazırlanması ve yayınlanmasında emeği geçen bütün yazar, editör, hakem, bilim kurulu ve çevirmenlere teşekkür ediyoruz. Dergimizin alandaki bilim insanı, araştırmacı, eğitimci, öğretmen ve öğrencilere katkı getirmesi dileğiyle, saygılar sunuyoruz.

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The Journal of Limitless Education and Research, Volume 11, Issue 1

Sınırsız Eğitim ve Araştırma Dergisi, Cilt 11, Sayı 1

TABLE OF CONTENTS

İÇİNDEKİLER

The Journal of Limitless Education and Research, Volume 11, Issue 1

Sınırsız Eğitim ve Araştırma Dergisi, Cilt 11, Sayı 1

The Journal of Limitless Education and Research
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Investigating University Students' Perceptions and Experiences with AI-Assisted English Language Learning

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Abstract: This qualitative study examines first-year university students' perceptions and experiences of AI-assisted English language learning at a state university in Türkiye. Thirteen students who had prior experience with AI tools participated in the study. Data were collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews lasting about 30–40 minutes. Thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase process, was used to analyze the data. The analysis revealed three main themes: AI engagement practices, perceived benefits, and challenges. Students stated that AI tools supported autonomous learning by aiding planning, revision, and progress tracking. Benefits included immediate feedback, flexible practice options, increased motivation, and a boost in confidence. Challenges included overreliance on AI, inconsistent feedback, limited human interaction, and cost-related access barriers. The results suggest that AI-assisted tools can effectively enhance language learning and promote learner independence; however, careful guidance and integration are essential to mitigate potential challenges. Recommendations for educators and curriculum developers are presented, highlighting strategies to maximize the use of AI in higher-education language learning.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, Language learning, Higher education, Learner experiences.

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1. Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) is playing an increasingly vital role in language education. Tools such as chatbots, virtual tutors, and automated writing assistants are now widely used because they provide personalized (Zhang, 2025) and interactive (Kasneci et al., 2023) learning experiences. These tools also help learners develop their language skills (Fathi et al., 2024; Hsu et al., 2024; Song & Song, 2023). Research supporting their effectiveness shows that AI-assisted learning can improve learner performance (El Shazly, 2021; Wei, 2023; Xu & Wang, 2024; Yuan, 2023; Zhao, 2025). For instance, Hsu et al. (2024) observed that students using AI instruction gained vocabulary more efficiently than those in traditional settings. Similarly, Wei (2023) reported a positive impact of AI tools on overall English achievement. These results suggest that integrating AI into language teaching can effectively promote skill development and academic success in EFL environments.

AI-assisted learning not only impacts students' academic performance but also significantly influences their emotional experiences during the learning process. Research indicates that learners experience a range of emotions during AI-based instruction, including both positive and negative emotions, similar to those in traditional classroom settings (Xin & Derakhshan, 2025; Yang & Zhao, 2024). On the positive side, AI has been shown to boost motivation (Karataş et al., 2024; Kohnke & Moorhouse, 2025), increase enjoyment (Wang, 2025), build confidence (Ding & Yusof, 2025), improve well-being (Dou & Sun, 2025), and foster engagement (Wang & Xue, 2024; Yuan & Liu, 2025). It can also help reduce negative emotions, such as anxiety and stress (Ding & Yusof, 2025; Kohnke & Moorhouse, 2025). Furthermore, AI-assisted instruction has been demonstrated to positively influence learners' willingness to communicate (Y. Chen et al., 2025; Fathi et al., 2024), promoting more frequent and confident speaking practices. These collective findings suggest that AI-enhanced language learning not only contributes to the development of linguistic skills but also fosters a more positive, emotionally engaging, and supportive environment that can motivate learners, reduce anxiety, and deepen their meaningful engagement with language learning.

Building on these findings, it is essential to consider learners' perspectives, as their experiences and attitudes significantly influence the integration of AI tools and their outcomes. Examining these views offers critical insights into how AI can effectively support English language learning and help teachers address learners' needs and expectations. By understanding learners' individual backgrounds, challenges, and aspirations, teachers can tailor

AI-driven approaches to create more personalized and engaging learning experiences. Furthermore, incorporating learners' feedback into the development and implementation of AI tools ensures that these technological solutions remain relevant, user-friendly, and effective in meeting the diverse needs of various educational contexts. Recognizing the critical role of learners' perspectives ultimately fosters a more effective learning environment, where AI serves as a valuable tool in achieving language proficiency and educational success.

1.1. Literature Review

Research on AI-assisted language learning has grown substantially in recent years, highlighting both its promising benefits and the challenges of integrating these technologies effectively (Almanea, 2024; Bateman, 2025; Nugroho et al., 2024). AI has the potential to enhance language learning outcomes (El Shazly, 2021; Hsu et al., 2024; Wei, 2023; Xu & Wang, 2024), enabling learners to improve more efficiently while maintaining high interest and motivation. The advantages of AI-assisted language learning, such as personalized learning experiences, real-time feedback, and increased engagement (Kasneci et al., 2023), along with abundant educational resources and an interactive learning environment (Dai & Liu, 2024), make AI-assisted language learning suitable for more adaptive, learner-centered teaching. Previous research also highlights the positive impact of AI-supported learning on both cognitive and emotional outcomes (Wang, 2025; Wei, 2023), demonstrating that well-designed AI tools can create environments that are not only effective for language acquisition but also supportive of students' emotional well-being.

While existing research emphasizes the advantages of AI-supported language learning, the success of these technologies largely depends on how learners and teachers perceive and engage with them. Therefore, understanding both teachers' and students' perspectives is essential, as their views significantly influence the integration of AI into language education. Recent studies (e.g., Al-khresheh, 2024; Chounta et al., 2022; Derakhshan & Ghiasvand, 2024; Özer-Altınkaya & Yetkin, 2025) have increasingly explored teachers' perceptions, providing valuable insights into the potential and limitations of AI. For example, Derakhshan and Ghiasvand (2024) reported that teachers view ChatGPT as a double-edged sword: it can foster learner independence, personalize learning, and reduce workload, but it also raises concerns about creativity, academic honesty, and plagiarism. Likewise, Hartono et al. (2023) found that although teachers acknowledge AI's potential to enhance language skills and customize instruction, they worry about technological readiness and the need for adequate training and

support. In another study, Arslan (2025) surveyed 230 Turkish EFL teachers and found that they rated their AI skills as average. While highlighting the importance of improving technical and pedagogical skills, they also identified challenges related to teachers, students, curricula, and technology, emphasizing the need for professional development. Overall, these studies suggest that while teachers see AI's potential in language teaching, they face challenges related to skills, training, and classroom readiness. Addressing these issues through targeted professional development and institutional support could improve the effective integration of AI tools, ultimately creating more personalized, engaging, and efficient language learning experiences for both teachers and students.

While teachers' perceptions are essential for effective AI integration, learners' perspectives are equally important because their engagement and experiences directly influence the success of AI tools in language learning. In this regard, a study on the Speeko app examined its impact on L2 speaking skills, willingness to communicate (WTC), and learner perceptions. Sixty-six participants were divided into an experimental group that used the app and a control group that received traditional lessons. The experimental group outperformed the control group on all measures, indicating that AI applications can enhance language learning outcomes (Shafiee Rad, 2024). Similarly, a recent study on ChatGPT identified five ways it supports language learning: offering practice opportunities, providing personalized feedback, encouraging engagement and interaction, offering authentic input, and delivering real-time language assistance (Z. Chen et al., 2025). Additionally, in Northern Vietnam, 47 high school EFL students used the Writing Assistant Bot (WAB) for homework writing practice. This helped improve vocabulary, idea generation, and language refinement, leading to better writing and a perception of the tool as helpful and easy to use (Duong & Chen, 2025).

Research indicates that although AI tools offer significant benefits, learners encounter several challenges, including limited face-to-face interaction (Zou et al., 2025), issues with transparency and reliance on AI (Zhang et al., 2025), technical problems (Lin & Yu, 2025), a need for extra support (Slamet, 2024), and the risk of misusing AI tools (Fajt & Schiller, 2025). Data from first-year English for Academic Purposes (EAP) students further highlights this complexity. Approximately 66.7% of respondents frequently utilized generative AI tools, such as Grammarly and Quillbot, to enhance their grammar, writing, vocabulary, and reading skills. While students valued personalized feedback and creative assistance, they also raised concerns about irrelevant suggestions and overdependence on AI (Kohnke et al., 2025). Similarly, Monib et al. (2025) explored how learners utilized ChatGPT as a learning aid, finding that it supported personalized

learning, language practice, writing, and research tasks. Although students appreciated its efficiency and accessibility, they also worried about potential declines in critical thinking, challenges with longer texts, and the emergence of similar writing styles. Additionally, research on an AI speech evaluation system revealed improvements in pronunciation, grammar, organization of ideas, and presentation skills. However, learners reported issues such as inaccurate voice recognition, limited feedback, lack of guidance on organization, and practice materials that didn't always align with their academic needs (Zou et al., 2024).

While previous studies have demonstrated AI's promising capabilities to enhance language skills, they have primarily focused on performance outcomes or the technical specifications of individual tools, often overlooking learners' crucial perspectives and lived experiences. Understanding how students interact with AI-driven technologies and how these tools are integrated into their everyday study routines remains an area that requires further exploration. As AI technologies become increasingly prevalent in educational environments, it is vital to gain insights into students' attitudes, motivations, and the challenges they encounter to inform more effective implementations. The Turkish context offers limited insight into how students assess the benefits, challenges, and overall usefulness of AI tools when they use them independently in real learning situations. This gap is significant because students' perceptions significantly impact the success, sustainability, and educational value of AI integration.

1.2. Current Study

This research underscores the significant potential of AI tools to revolutionize language learning by making it more engaging, personalized, and effective. This study aims to explore university students' perceptions and firsthand experiences with AI-assisted tools, specifically in the context of English language learning. It not only considers the benefits AI can offer, such as improved language proficiency and personalized feedback, but also delves into the obstacles students face, including technical difficulties, unfamiliarity, and concerns about dependence on technology. By capturing students' opinions, the research aims to identify both practical and pedagogical implications, offering valuable guidance for teachers, curriculum developers, and policymakers. The goal is to facilitate the development of AI-integrated language teaching strategies that are responsive to diverse learner needs, address potential barriers, and ultimately maximize the positive impact of AI on language education. Such insights are crucial for designing future educational frameworks that leverage AI responsibly and effectively, ensuring that technological advancements translate into meaningful learning experiences and

improved outcomes. Students' experiences are interpreted through the framework of Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) (Zimmerman, 1998), which describes learning as a cycle involving planning, monitoring, and reflection. Analyzing AI usage with an SRL provides deeper insights into how students integrate these tools into their autonomous study routines, highlighting the ways in which they adapt and regulate their learning processes with technological support. This study contributes to the literature by situating AI use in the context of Turkish higher education, which is marked by high-stakes assessment and a mainly teacher-centered approach to instruction. The present study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- What advantages do students perceive when using AI-assisted tools?
- What challenges do students face when using AI-assisted tools?

2. Method

This study used a qualitative, phenomenological research approach to explore and interpret university students' perceptions and experiences with AI-assisted English language learning tools (Creswell et al., 2007). Phenomenology was suitable because the goal was to gain in-depth insights into students' personal experiences, perceived outcomes, and challenges encountered when utilizing AI tools. Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the university's ethics committee, and all participants were informed of the research's purpose and provided consent before data collection.

2.1. Participants

This study involved 13 first-year university students enrolled in Foreign Language I and II courses as part of their curriculum at a state university in Türkiye. At the time of data collection, the students had already completed Foreign Language I and were taking Foreign Language II. They had various experiences with AI tools for language learning, including chatbots and automated writing assistants, both during class and for independent practice outside of class. In class, AI-supported activities were occasionally used to reinforce core language skills, including vocabulary development, grammar practice, and writing feedback.

To gather rich and relevant data, purposive sampling was employed to select students who could provide detailed insights into AI-assisted learning, thereby enhancing the depth and quality of the study's findings. The recruitment process began with an email invitation sent to students enrolled in Foreign Language II courses. This email outlined the study's purpose, inclusion criteria, and participation requirements. In addition to email invitations, course

instructors were asked to inform their students about the research and encourage those with previous experience using AI tools to participate. Students interested in the study then completed a brief screening questionnaire to confirm they met the inclusion criteria: being enrolled in a university-level English course, having prior experience with AI-assisted language learning tools, and being willing to participate in a semi-structured interview. The questionnaire asked students to specify which AI tools they had used, explain how they used them for learning English, and detail the frequency and duration of their use. This approach ensured that only students with relevant prior experience in using AI for language learning were included. Ultimately, 13 students who met these criteria were selected to participate in the study. At the beginning of each interview, participants' prior AI experience was validated by asking them to share specific examples of how they used AI tools in language learning. This two-step process improved the reliability of the sample selection.

Each received an information sheet explaining the study's goals, procedures, ethical considerations, and their rights, including the option to participate voluntarily and the right to withdraw at any time. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before the interviews. This thorough recruitment process ensured the study included participants with relevant experience while upholding ethical standards and protecting participants' rights.

2.2. Instruments and Data Collection Procedure

Data was collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews, allowing for in-depth exploration of participants' experiences and perceptions while offering flexibility to investigate interesting or unexpected responses. An interview protocol was carefully designed to align with the study's specific research goals. This protocol mainly focused on evaluating students' familiarity with various AI tools and technologies, as well as their practical experiences and challenges faced when using these tools in the context of English language learning. To ensure the questions were valid, clear, and effectively addressed the research aims, the protocol was reviewed and improved by two experts in language education and educational technology. Their feedback helped enhance the wording, relevance, and clarity of the items, making sure they were comprehensive and aligned with the study's objectives. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 40 minutes, allowing participants sufficient time to share their experiences, thoughts, and feelings without feeling rushed or pressured. All interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' prior informed consent, enabling accurate transcription and detailed analysis afterward. Prior to the interviews, participants were reminded that participation was

completely voluntary, they could withdraw at any time without facing any negative consequences, and their anonymity would be safeguarded throughout the research process.

2.3. Data Analysis

Considering the researcher's background in language education and interest in AI integration, a reflexive memo was used to track assumptions throughout the data analysis. Coding and theme development were performed iteratively, with themes retained only if supported by multiple data extracts and distinctly different from one another. This approach improved the rigor and transparency of the analysis.

The data were examined through thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-stage framework. The researcher initially read each interview transcript multiple times to immerse themselves in the data and thoroughly understand the participants' experiences. During this familiarization process, preliminary impressions and analytical insights were systematically recorded in memos to document early observations. In the next step, the researcher developed initial codes by analyzing the transcripts line by line, emphasizing meaningful parts related to learners' perceptions, challenges, and the effects of integrating AI technologies into their English learning. These codes were generated inductively, ensuring they genuinely reflected participants' own words and viewpoints.

After initial coding, the researcher systematically compared and clustered codes into broader categories representing early data patterns. These categories underwent repeated review, refinement, and aggregation into preliminary themes that outlined the data's essential structure through an iterative, repetitive process. Each emerging theme was assessed against the coded segments and the entire dataset to ensure internal consistency and clear differentiation from other themes. The refinement continued until a final set of themes was established, thoroughly representing students' experiences with AI-supported learning.

To strengthen reliability, a second colleague independently coded a subset of the interview transcripts. The two coders compared their coding, discussed discrepancies, and reached consensus. This process strengthened the consistency and trustworthiness of the thematic analysis. Additionally, member checking involved sharing preliminary themes via email with participants. Participants reviewed the thematic summaries and confirmed whether the interpretations matched their experiences. Their feedback verified the themes' accuracy and prompted minor adjustments to the thematic labels to better align with their intended meanings. Selected quotes from the transcripts were also translated into English to facilitate

reporting in the publication. To ensure the quality and accuracy of these translations, a colleague who is proficient in both languages reviewed and verified the translated quotes. This thorough and systematic approach was designed to enhance the reliability and validity of the study's findings, providing a nuanced understanding of learners' perceptions and experiences of AI use in English language learning.

3. Results

Participants described strategies and approaches they used to effectively engage with AI tools, emphasizing how they integrated these tools into their learning routines. They also discussed the benefits of AI in enhancing language skills and promoting autonomous learning, as well as the challenges and limitations they encountered. From the analysis, three main themes emerged: AI engagement practices, perceived benefits, and challenges.

3.1. AI Engagement Practices

Many participants described various strategies and approaches they used to engage effectively with AI tools. Some reported using AI applications outside of the classroom environment to help plan their writing or speaking tasks. These tools helped them generate ideas, brainstorm, and organize content before starting their assignments, making the process more efficient. Others relied heavily on AI for detailed revisions, such as checking grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure, which improved the overall quality of their work. Additionally, some participants utilized AI to practice pronunciation and enhance fluency during speaking exercises, thereby enabling more interactive learning. Several also emphasized that using AI tools helped them monitor their progress over time, track improvements, and identify recurring errors. This reflective process encouraged greater self-awareness and more intentional learning habits. Overall, AI-assisted tools supported independent, self-regulated learning by offering students flexibility in what, when, and how they practiced, empowering them to customize their study routines based on their individual strengths and weaknesses and fostering a more personalized and autonomous learning experience.

"I use AI not just to correct my mistakes, but also to plan my essays and organize my ideas before I start writing. It helps me see the structure of my work more clearly and avoid confusion." (P2)

"I use multiple AI tools for different tasks. Some help me with grammar, some with vocabulary, and some with writing style. It feels like having several tutors guiding me through different parts of learning English." (P8)

"I like that AI helps me plan my study sessions. It makes me feel responsible and in control, so I stay motivated and committed to learning." (P4)

"AI helps me rehearse my speaking tasks repeatedly, so I can improve my pronunciation and sentence flow before presenting in class. It's beneficial because I can practice without worrying about making mistakes in front of others, and I feel more confident each time I speak." (P13)

3.2. Students' Perceived Benefits of AI-Assisted Tools

The data indicated that AI-assisted tools have a genuinely positive impact on students' learning experiences by significantly enhancing various language skills such as vocabulary, grammar, and writing, as well as overall language proficiency. Participants consistently reported that these AI tools provide immediate, real-time feedback, helping them quickly identify mistakes, understand their errors more clearly, and learn to correct them effectively. Many students also mentioned that AI tools foster independent and flexible learning environments, allowing them to extend their practice beyond scheduled classroom hours, revisit complex topics at their own pace, and tailor their learning process to their individual needs. Moreover, several participants noted that using AI tools increased their motivation and confidence, particularly in writing and public speaking. This increased motivation encouraged students to become more active and engaged learners, take on more challenging tasks, and persist in the face of difficulties. The subsequent quotes exemplify how students perceive the role of AI tools in enriching their learning experiences and supporting their language development.

"I could practice my English anytime, even at home. It feels like having a personal tutor available 24/7. I think AI helps me improve step by step at my own pace." (P2)

"AI's immediate suggestions allowed me to correct mistakes immediately, which improved the clarity of my writing and greatly reduced the amount of time I had to spend on assignments." (P4)

"I was able to identify my recurring errors and learn the proper forms by using Grammarly. It also made me more aware of patterns in my writing and helped me avoid similar errors in the future."(P8)

"Knowing that I can get feedback on my speaking before presenting makes me feel more confident. It also allows me to identify areas where I struggle and improve my pronunciation, grammar, and fluency before speaking in front of others." (P11)

"AI tools make learning more fun, which motivates me to spend more time practicing outside of class." (P12)

"I can practice speaking or writing anywhere—at home, on the bus, or whenever I have free time. It makes learning much more accessible." (P13)

3.3. Students' Perceived Challenges in Using AI-Assisted Tools

Despite the numerous benefits that AI-assisted tools offer to learners, participants also highlighted several challenges that could hinder the effectiveness of AI tools and the overall learning experience. Some participants expressed concerns about becoming overly reliant on AI technology. They warned that frequent use might reduce their ability to think independently and develop critical problem-solving skills. Additionally, they noted that the high costs of purchasing or subscribing to certain AI tools could be a substantial barrier, limiting access for some students and preventing consistent use. Such inconsistencies could negatively affect learning continuity and progress over time. Participants also noticed that the feedback provided by AI tools was not always helpful. In some cases, AI responses can be unclear, too generic, or lack detailed explanations. This made it difficult for students to understand what specific improvements they should make to their writing or speaking skills. The inconsistency and sometimes vagueness of AI-generated feedback led many students to doubt the suggestions, prompting them to double-check the results or seek additional guidance from teachers or peers to ensure they were on the right track. Furthermore, some students felt that AI tools could not fully replace the value of human interaction in the learning process. They emphasized that collaborative learning experiences, spontaneous discussions, and personalized guidance from instructors are essential components of practical education, which AI cannot fully replicate. These perceived limitations sometimes made the learning process feel less engaging and more isolating for students. Overall, while AI-assisted tools hold promises, participants believe that addressing these challenges is crucial to maximizing their benefits. The following quotes provide further insight into students' perspectives on these issues and the impact of AI-assisted tools on their learning experiences.

"Some of the AI tools are expensive, so I can't use them as often as I want." (P1)

"The feedback from AI is often very general, and it doesn't always tell me exactly what I did wrong or how to improve. It's hard to know what to focus on next." (P5)

"I feel like I don't truly think through problems or come up with solutions on my own sometimes, since I rely on the AI too much. It's beneficial, but I'm concerned that it would make me less motivated to learn." (P6)

"I don't always know whether I can trust it, so I have to double-check everything." (P7)

"AI can't fully replace talking with a teacher or classmates. I miss the real-time discussions, explanations, and guidance that help me understand things better. Sometimes, the AI gives suggestions, but it doesn't answer my questions the way a teacher would, and I can't get immediate clarification or share ideas with my peers, which makes learning feel less interactive and more isolated." (P10)

"Even though AI helps me with grammar and vocabulary, it doesn't really help me develop ideas or organize my thoughts like a teacher would. I still need human guidance to improve my writing fully." (P13)

4. Discussion and Conclusion

This study explored university students' experiences using AI-assisted tools for learning English. It focused on how students integrate these tools into their daily study routines, the benefits they perceive, and the challenges they face. The results indicate that students within this specific institutional setting actively use AI technology. They utilize it not only for planning and revising their study materials but also for tracking progress and tailoring AI features to meet their individual learning needs. These practices can be interpreted through the SRL theory (Zimmerman, 1998). Students' task planning, feedback monitoring, and output revision reflect the core phases of the self-regulation cycle. In this context, AI tools served as regulatory frameworks that facilitated both cognitive processes and emotional regulation. This finding supports previous research by Duong and Chen (2025), who found that students at different proficiency levels strategically use AI chatbots to enhance their writing through planning, refining, and improvement. The study suggests that AI tools can promote autonomous learning, empowering students to manage their own language development and help them acquire new skills at various stages of language practice. These practices highlight AI's ability to adapt to individual learner profiles, reinforcing prior findings on its potential to deliver personalized learning experiences (Kasneci et al., 2023; Zhang, 2025). The findings also suggest that AI-

assisted tools may soon become an integral part of students' study routines and independent language skill development. Additionally, the widespread availability of AI tools ensures that learners across different proficiency levels, learning styles, and time constraints can continue their language education outside traditional classrooms, making learning more flexible, inclusive, and consistent.

Students identified a wide range of benefits from AI-assisted language learning, emphasizing how these tools transform traditional educational experiences. Immediate, individualized feedback was frequently cited as especially valuable because it helps learners identify errors and make targeted improvements quickly. This aligns with previous studies highlighting AI's ability to provide real-time support and tailored feedback (Z. Chen et al., 2025), which are essential for effective language acquisition. Participants emphasized that AI tools enable them to practice at their own pace, revisit challenging tasks, and access continuous guidance outside the classroom, thereby promoting self-directed and personalized learning. It can be inferred that AI-assisted learning also fosters learner autonomy (Wei, 2023), as students can plan their own learning, select suitable resources, and monitor their progress. The autonomy and flexibility provided by AI tools were also linked to increased motivation, echoing prior research showing that personalized learning experiences boost motivation (Song & Song, 2023). The ability to monitor personal progress, set individual goals, and receive encouragement from AI tools helps build a greater sense of achievement and ownership over the learning process. As students gain more control and independence, AI helps them develop a stronger sense of mastery, which in turn enhances confidence (Ding & Yusof, 2025) and positive emotions (Wang, 2025; Yuan & Liu, 2025). Notably, the potential for AI to increase learners' willingness to communicate (Y. Chen et al., 2025; Fathi et al., 2024) suggests these tools can help students become more confident in using the target language. Furthermore, increased confidence, positive emotions, and a willingness to communicate may stem from the sense of mastery and control learners experience when they can independently manage their progress. In this context, AI-assisted tools function not only as instructional supplements but also as regulatory and motivational supports that extend learning beyond the classroom, fostering autonomy and engagement. Overall, these advantages demonstrate that AI-assisted tools do not merely supplement traditional instruction; they fundamentally improve language learning by strengthening skills, fostering autonomy, and creating a more supportive and motivating environment. The strategic integration of AI-assisted tools into language training thus enables

students to extend their learning beyond the classroom, engage in flexible, personalized practice, and ultimately achieve greater success in language acquisition.

Despite the advantages of AI tools, several significant challenges remain that must be addressed for successful integration in language learning. Students have expressed concerns about overreliance on AI, fearing it might diminish their ability to develop and maintain critical thinking skills, which are essential for overall cognitive growth (Monib et al., 2025). Overreliance on technology risks diminishing students' creativity, underscoring the need to encourage a balanced, mindful use of AI as a supplement rather than a replacement for active learning (Kohnke et al., 2025). From a SRL perspective (Zimmerman, 1998), effective learning involves learners actively planning, monitoring, and assessing their own thinking. When students rely on AI without reflection, the responsibility for learning might shift from the learner to the tool. This risk may be higher in performance-focused settings, where students tend to seek quick, correct answers. Thus, the concern isn't the frequency of AI use alone, but the decline in active cognitive engagement. Another major issue raised was the reliability and accuracy of AI-generated content (Zhang et al., 2025). While AI can offer instant feedback and suggestions, errors and oversimplifications in its output may sometimes mislead learners or reinforce misconceptions. This underscores the importance of teaching students how to approach AI critically: learners could be encouraged to craft clear, specific prompts, provide sufficient context, and always validate AI-generated information by consulting trusted external sources or human experts. Incorporating digital literacy components into curricula can help students develop the analytical skills needed to engage with AI responsibly and effectively. Furthermore, the costs associated with certain advanced AI applications pose financial barriers (Özer-Altınkaya & Yetkin, 2025), potentially limiting access for some students and institutions. To address cost issues, educational institutions could explore options such as university-wide subscriptions or integrating free, open-source AI resources into their curricula to ensure fair access. Such measures would promote equity and increase participation in AI-supported language learning activities. The absence of genuine human interaction was also highlighted as a challenge (Zou et al., 2025). While AI can facilitate individualized practice and feedback, it cannot replicate the nuanced communication, emotional support, and social skills developed through face-to-face engagement. To address this, instructors may consider designing learning experiences that blend AI-assisted activities with collaborative group work, peer reviews, teacher-led discussions, and real-time feedback sessions. Such a hybrid approach can foster motivation, emotional engagement, and the development of interpersonal skills vital to language acquisition.

Moreover, the findings emphasize the ongoing need for clear guidance and support for both students and teachers. Students benefit from structured orientation and training on effectively using AI tools, including best practices for prompt design, content evaluation, and responsible use. Teachers also require professional development and continuous support to stay informed about evolving AI technologies and to devise pedagogical strategies that meaningfully integrate AI without undermining the essential human elements of instruction. Overall, implementing comprehensive strategies can substantially improve the integration of AI into language education. These efforts will help foster student independence, boost motivation, and develop essential skills while addressing and managing the challenges of adopting AI in educational settings.

In conclusion, this study broadens the scope of research on AI in language education by exploring learners' experiences beyond just performance metrics. The research focuses on various aspects, including students' study habits, their perceived benefits from using AI, and the potential obstacles they face during integration. The findings suggest that when AI-assisted tools are deliberately integrated into learning processes and regularly evaluated, they can significantly enhance English language learning outcomes. Moreover, the study highlights that AI tools are rapidly becoming indispensable components of students' study routines and their journey toward autonomous language skill development. As AI and related technologies continue to evolve rapidly, their integration into language education is expected to deepen further. This ongoing evolution presents new opportunities to foster learner autonomy, tailor learning experiences to individual needs, and support lifelong language skill acquisition, ultimately transforming the landscape of language education.

Although the findings align with existing research on AI-assisted language learning, this study provides new, context-specific evidence from Turkish higher education. In the Turkish higher education context, which is often characterized by high-stakes examinations and teacher-centered instruction, students utilized AI tools for private practice before classroom performance. This use may help reduce performance anxiety and encourage more active engagement. Taken together, the findings highlight the value of contextually grounded research in understanding how AI tools are adopted and experienced within Turkish higher education, offering insights that may inform similar educational settings.

4.1. Implications

This study provides a comprehensive examination of the benefits and challenges of AI tools, offering educators and policymakers valuable insights into their effective implementation in higher education settings. Theoretically, the findings go beyond considering AI merely as a tool for boosting performance. Instead, they see it as a facilitator of SRL. Students' reported activities—like planning, monitoring, revising, and rehearsing with AI—mirror key aspects of SRL. Thus, AI can act as a regulatory scaffold, aiding learners' cognitive and emotional processes. The results also underscore the importance of providing structured guidance and scaffolding when integrating AI tools into learning environments. Students frequently encounter challenges in assessing the accuracy of AI-generated content and may depend on it without sufficient critical evaluation. Language teachers may therefore consider incorporating explicit training on AI literacy, including strategies for verifying information, prompting effectively, and using AI responsibly to support—not replace—language learning processes. In line with SRL, such training can also encourage students to set clear learning goals, monitor how they use AI feedback, and reflect on the reasons for accepting or revising AI-generated suggestions. This comprehensive approach helps learners maintain cognitive responsibility, strengthen metacognitive awareness, and develop the critical skills needed to navigate AI tools ethically and effectively, thereby enhancing their overall language acquisition.

Additionally, research indicates that when AI is thoughtfully integrated into meaningful learning tasks, it can greatly enhance student engagement, foster greater independence, and build confidence. This emphasizes that curriculum designers could intentionally incorporate AI-supported activities throughout the course. Such targeted integration can lead to more effective and engaging learning experiences. Since students often rely on AI for private practice before participating in class, instructors can deliberately create AI-supported preparatory activities that help lower performance anxiety while still encouraging valuable in-class engagement. Furthermore, participants' concerns about misinformation and over-reliance highlight the importance of implementing comprehensive classroom policies that encourage the ethical, responsible, and balanced use of AI in education. To strengthen SRL, teachers can include reflective activities that encourage students to explain how they used AI feedback and why they accepted or rejected specific suggestions, helping prevent over- dependence on AI. Integrating AI into the SRL framework enables teachers to harness technological innovation while enhancing learners' autonomy, strategic engagement, and sustained language development. Additionally, educational institutions can prioritize investing in professional development programs that

thoroughly prepare instructors with the necessary skills and knowledge to design and facilitate AI-integrated learning experiences. By focusing on these areas, teachers and policymakers can effectively harness the pedagogical potential of AI tools, while also actively addressing and mitigating potential risks. This holistic approach ultimately aims to create more effective and equitable language learning environments that benefit all learners.

4.2. Limitations and future studies

While this study provides valuable insights, several limitations should be noted. First, the study focused on university students from a single institution, potentially limiting the generalizability of the findings. Second, data were primarily collected through self-reports and interviews, which could have been influenced by participants' subjective perceptions or biases. Finally, the study considered only students' perspectives and did not include teachers' viewpoints or classroom dynamics, which might have offered additional insights into effective AI integration in language instruction.

Future research should overcome current limitations by involving more diverse samples across different age groups, proficiency levels, and educational settings. Long-term studies are necessary to evaluate the lasting effects of AI-assisted learning on language development, motivation, and independence. Experimental designs should compare various AI tools and teaching methods to assess student outcomes. Additional research should also explore strategies to mitigate challenges such as overreliance on AI, cost issues, and a lack of authentic interaction, which can help effectively integrate AI into language learning environments.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest in this study.

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION ETHICS STATEMENT

The author declares that research and publication ethics are followed in this study.

AUTHOR LIABILITY STATEMENT

The author declares that she has done every step of this work herself.

GENERATIVE AI USE DECLARATION

The author declares that GenAI tools (Grammarly) were used in this study for "Language editing/checking" purposes.

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