

FINAL REPORT



- 1. STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE BENEFITS OF USING CHARACTER.AI FOR SPEAKING PRACTICE**
- 2. STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF USING CHARACTER.AI IN REDUCING SPEAKING ANXIETY**
- 3. INTEGRATING LOCAL WISDOM INTO EFL CREATIVE WRITING: STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF STORY-BASED PROJECTS**

RONI KURNIAWAN
223010201008

SUPERVISORS

1. Maida Norahmi, M.Pd.
NIP. 19891012 201504 2 001

2. Dr. Akhmad Fauzan, S.Pd., M.Pd.
NIP. 19810612 200501 1 002

UNIVERSITAS PALANGKA RAYA
FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION
DEPARTEMEN OF LANGUAGES AND ARTS EDUCATION
STUDY PROGRAM OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION
2026

- 1. STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE BENEFITS OF USING CHARACTER.AI FOR SPEAKING PRACTICE**
- 2. STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF USING CHARACTER.AI IN REDUCING SPEAKING ANXIETY**
- 3. INTEGRATING LOCAL WISDOM INTO EFL CREATIVE WRITING: STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF STORY-BASED PROJECTS**

FINAL REPORT

Presented to
Faculty of Teacher Training and Education
Universitas Palangka Raya
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of
Sarjana Pendidikan

BY

RONI KURNIAWAN
223010201008

UNIVERSITAS PALANGKA RAYA
FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION
DEPARTEMENT OF LANGUAGES AND ARTS EDUCATION
STUDY PROGRAM OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION
2026

STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

I, the undersigned:

Name : Roni Kurniawan
NIM : 223010201008
Study Program : Study Program of English Language Education
Department : Department of Languages and Arts Education
Faculty : Faculty of Teacher Training and Education

Hereby, solemnly declare that the final report of the scientific articles writing and publication entitled "Students Perceptions of the Benefits of Using Character.AI for Speaking Practice; Students Perceptions of Using Character.AI in Reducing Speaking Anxiety; Integrating Local Wisdom Into EFL Creative Writing: Students' Perceptions of Story-Based Projects", which I have written, is entirely my own work and has not been copied or plagiarized, either in whole or in part, from any other source.

If, at any point in the future, it is proven or can be demonstrated that this Final Report is the work of another person or contains plagiarism, either in whole or in part, I am willing to accept the consequences for such actions in accordance with the applicable regulations.

Palangka Raya, July 21st 2026

Declarant,

Roni Kurniawan
223010201008

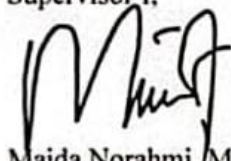


APPROVAL OF FINAL REPORT SUPERVISORS

Name : Roni Kurniawan
NIM : 223010201008
Title : 1. Students' Perceptions of the Benefits of Using Character.AI for Speaking Practice
2. Students' Perceptions of Using Character.AI in Reducing Speaking Anxiety
3. Integrating Local Wisdom into EFL Creative Writing: Students' Perceptions of Story-Based Projects

This Final Report has been approved for seminar presentation/ examination before the Final Report Examination Committee at the Study Program of English Language Education, Department of Languages and Arts Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Palangka Raya.

Supervisor I,



Maida Norahmi, M.Pd.
NIP. 19891012 201504 2 001
Date: 17.10.2026

Supervisor II,



Dr. Akhmad Fauzan, S.Pd., M.Pd.
NIP. 19810612 200501 1 002
Date:

Acknowledge by,
Study Program of Coordinator of
English Language Education

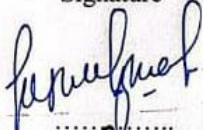
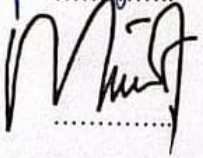


Dr. Akhmad Fauzan, S.Pd., M.Pd.
NIP. 19810612 200501 1 002
Date:

APPROVAL OF FINAL REPORT EXAMINATION COMMITTEE

Name : Roni Kurniawan
NIM : 223010201008
Title : 1. Students' Perceptions of the Benefits of Using Character.AI for Speaking Practice
2. Students' Perceptions of Using Character.AI in Reducing Speaking Anxiety
3. Integrating Local Wisdom into EFL Creative Writing: Students' Perceptions of Story-Based Projects

This Final Report has been defended before the Final Report Examination Committee of the Study Program of English Language Education, Department of Languages and Arts Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Palangka Raya on Wednesday, 15th July 2026, and has been revised in accordance with the feedback provided by the Examination Committee.

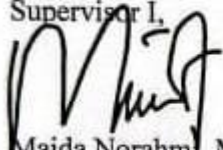
Name	Signature	Date	Committee
Lesly Martha Cecylia Meka, S.S., M.Pd. NIP. 19790320 200604 2 002		16/7/2026	Chair
Maida Norahmi, M.Pd. NIP. 19891012 201504 2 001		17/7/2026	Member
Dr. Akhmad Fauzan, S.Pd., M.Pd. NIP. 19810612 200501 1 002		20/7/2026	Member

FINAL REPORT APPROVAL

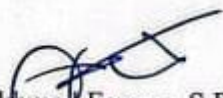
Name : Roni Kurniawan
NIM : 223010201008
Study Program : English Language Education
Department : Languages and Arts Education
Title : 1. Students' Perceptions of the Benefits of Using Character.AI for Speaking Practice
2. Students' Perceptions of Using Character.AI in Reducing Speaking Anxiety
3. Integrating Local Wisdom into EFL Creative Writing: Students' Perceptions of Story-Based Projects

Approved by,

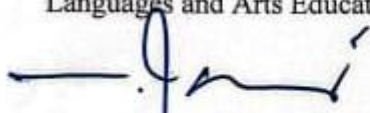
Supervisor I,


Maida Norahm, M.Pd.
NIP. 19891012 201504 2 001

Supervisor II,


Dr. Akhmad Fauzan, S.Pd., M.Pd.
NIP. 19810612 200501 1 002

Department of
Languages and Arts Education


Dr. Iwan Fauzi, S.Pd., M.A.
NIP. 19720408 200112 1 001

Study Program of
English Language Education


Dr. Akhmad Fauzan, S.Pd., M.Pd.
NIP. 19810612 200501 1 002

Acknowledged by,
Dean of Faculty of Teacher Training and Education
Universitas Palangka Raya



Dr. Kinto Alexandro, S.E., M.M.
NIP. 19760827 200801 1 013

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

All praise and gratitude are due to Allah SWT for His grace and blessings, which have enabled the completion of this final assignment report. This report was prepared to fulfil one of the requirements for completing the study program in English Language Education at Universitas Palangka Raya.

This report contains three scientific articles, including “Students’ Perceptions of the Benefits of Using Character.AI for Speaking Practice,” “Students’ Perceptions of Using Character.AI in Reducing Speaking Anxiety,” and “Integrating Local Wisdom into EFL Creative Writing: Students’ Perceptions of Story-Based Projects.” These research projects are expected to provide valuable experiences in enhancing the professionalism of prospective educators and contributing to the improvement of education quality in the future.

The preparation of this report was made possible through the support, guidance, and assistance of various parties. Therefore, the writer would like to express his deepest gratitude to:

1. First supervisor, Maida Norahmi, M.Pd., for the direction, guidance, and endless motivation during the process of carrying out the activities until this preparation.
2. Second Supervisor, Dr. Akhmad Fauzan, S.Pd., M.Pd., for the support, guidance, and endless motivation during the process of carrying out the activities until this preparation.
3. Lecturer Examiners, Lesly Martha Cecylia Meka, S.S., M.Pd., who have provided support and direction related to the results of research and final project activities.
4. Coordinator of English Language Education Study Program, Dr. Akhmad Fauzan, S.Pd., M.Pd., for providing direction during the implementation of the activity.
5. Head of the Languages and Arts Education Department, Dr. Iwan Fauzi, S.Pd., M.A. for supporting the smooth process of students’ final assignments.

6. Dean of FKIP, Dr. Rinto Alexandro, S.E., M.M., for designing the policy in the final project as a substitute for the thesis, thus opening up the opportunities for students to be able to broaden their horizons and new experiences that are more applicable.
7. The writer's beloved parents, for their endless love, care, prayers, motivation, and support throughout the writer's journey. Although they are no longer physically present, their love and kindness will always remain in the writer's heart forever. The writer is deeply grateful for their patience in nurturing, educating, and guiding the writer to become a better person and pursue success in the future.
8. The writer's entire family, for their endless love, care, prayers, motivation, and support, which have enabled the writer to complete this final project successfully.

Finally, the writer realizes that this report is still far from perfect. Therefore, constructive criticism and suggestions from various parties are highly expected for future improvements. Hopefully, this report can provide benefits for all parties, especially in the field of English Language Education.

Palangka Raya, July 10th 2026

Roni Kurniawan
NIM. 223010201008

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COVER	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
IDENTITY OF JOURNAL/PROCEEDINGS	1
ARTICLE 1.....	2
IDENTITY OF JOURNAL/PROCEEDINGS	30
ARTICLE 2	31
IDENTITY OF JOURNAL/PROCEEDINGS	49
ARTICLE 3	50
APPENDIXES	74
Appendix 1	74
Consultation Card	74
Appendix 2	75
Final Project Supervisor Appointment Letter	75
Appendix 3	76
LOA.....	76
Appendix 4.....	79
Editor Review and Plagiarism Rate	79

IDENTITY OF JOURNAL/PROCEEDINGS

- 1. Article Title** : Students' Perceptions of the Benefits of
Using Character.AI for Speaking Practice
- 2. Name of Journal** : Journal of English Language and
Education (JELE)
- 3. ISSN** : E-ISSN 2502-4132 P-ISSN 2597-6850
- 4. Accreditation Category** : SINTA 4
- 5. Doi/Article link** : <https://jele.or.id/index.php/jele>
- 6. Volume/Issue/Month/Year** : Volume 11/Issue 3/May 2026



ARTICLE 1



OPEN ACCESS

Journal of English Language and Education

ISSN 2597- 6850 (Online), 2502-4132 (Print)

Journal Homepage: <https://jele.or.id/index.php/jele/index>

Article

Students' Perceptions of the Benefits of Using *Character.AI* for Speaking Practice

 <https://doi.org/10.31004/jele.v11i3.2398>

*Roni Kurniawan, Maida Norahmi, Akhmad Fauzan, Alvionita Damayanti^{abcd} 

¹²³⁴Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan, Universitas Palangka Raya, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: ronikurniawan355@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study explores students' perceptions of the role of *Character.AI* in developing speaking skills and supporting adaptive communicative practice. Most existing studies on AI in language learning primarily focus on tools that rely on structured or predefined prompts, which tend to be monotonous and less effective in fostering adaptive speaking development. However, limited attention has been given to more interactive, persona-driven AI platforms that can simulate real-life communication. To address this gap, this study employed a qualitative phenomenological approach involving five (5) eighth-semester students of the English Education Study Program who had experience using *Character.AI* for speaking practice. Data were collected through triangulation methods, including questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, and analysed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that *Character.AI* contributes to the development of speaking skills, including improvements in fluency, confidence, motivation, vocabulary, willingness to speak, as well as a reduction in speaking anxiety. It also facilitates adaptive communicative practice by promoting adaptability, flexibility and accessibility in speaking activities. However, some limitations were identified, particularly in generating occasionally unnatural responses, indicating that it cannot fully replace authentic human interaction. Therefore, *Character.AI* is best utilized as a supplementary tool to support students in preparing for real-life communication.

Keywords: *Character.AI*, Speaking skills, Artificial Intelligence

Article History:

Received 17th April 2026

Accepted 12th May 2026

Published 19th May 2026



INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, English plays a crucial role as an international language. It enables individuals to communicate with people across different cultures and countries. Due to its global importance, learning English is particularly essential for EFL learners, who have limited exposure to the language outside the classroom and therefore depend on formal education to develop their English

proficiency. According to Fatimah et al. (2025), learners who receive direct exposure to English, including engaging in listening and speaking activities as well as using the language actively, demonstrate the greatest improvement in their English proficiency. Therefore, it is important to be exposed to English in order to strengthen language skills among EFL learners.

There are four primary skills in English: listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Compared to the other fundamental skills, speaking is especially vital for language learning and the development of communicative competence (Napitupulu & Dalimunte, 2025). Supporting this, a study by Yunianti et al. (2025) found that 85.9% of university learners expressed a strong intention to improve their speaking ability, emphasizing that speaking is essential for global communication. Furthermore, Albiansyah & Minkhatunnakhriyah (2021) highlighted that students were expected to use English in daily communication, particularly to support their future career opportunities. In this regard, students believe that they should be able to use English in their everyday conversations, which requires consistent exposure to English within their social and learning environments.

Despite its benefits for communicative competence, speaking remains challenging for many EFL learners. Research by Nurliana et al. (2022) stated that many learners encounter challenges when speaking English in front of the class, largely due to their anxiety about making mistakes, limited motivation to express themselves, feelings of shyness, and a greater sense of comfort when using their first language. It is aligned with research conducted by Meidyana et al. (2024) that EFL learners frequently encounter obstacles in improving their speaking abilities, such as insufficient opportunities to practice, challenges in pronunciation, and anxiety when speaking. In addition, for many non-native learners, communicating in English becomes particularly difficult in front of larger audiences due to heightened anxiety and feelings of inadequacy that emerge in public speaking contexts (Khafidhoh et al., 2023).

In other hand, several learners reported experiencing a lack of confidence when speaking with peers, teachers, or lecturers who have a higher level of English

proficiency, as they fear making mistakes and being negatively evaluated. These concerns are further intensified by feelings of nervousness, trembling, and shyness, which collectively contribute to students' anxiety when speaking English (Khafidhoh et al., 2023). Furthermore, many learners perceived school or university as their primary context for practicing English, since they rarely have speaking partners outside the classroom. It is further supported by Sartika et al. (2022), Indonesian EFL learners often struggle to find speaking partners because English is not commonly used in their social environment. This limited practice beyond academic environments restricts their exposure to authentic communication and consequently hinders the development of their speaking skills.

In short, there are several factors contribute to students' low speaking proficiency, including teacher-cantered instructional approaches, limited in-class practice time, a lack of interactive media to support language use, and low self-confidence resulting from minimal exposure to English in real-life contexts (Gultom et al., 2026). These conditions highlight the need for innovative English language teaching methods that offer more opportunities for meaningful practice, provide immediate feedback, and create a low-pressure learning environment. In addition, factors such as adequate preparation, increased self-confidence, supportive peer interaction, and consistent practice play an important role in reducing learners' speaking anxiety (Khafidhoh et al., 2023).

Since university students often face constraints in developing speaking competence due to limited time for communicative practice, heightened speaking anxiety, and inadequate access to adaptive learning resources, they are required to explore alternative solutions that can be adaptively implemented based on their needs (Ramasari & Ardayati, 2025). This implies that learners need to identify adaptive solutions that align with technological advancements to support the development of their speaking competence. AI technologies, including machine learning, natural language processing, and intelligent tutoring systems, facilitate more personalized and adaptive learning experiences for learners (Fauziah et al., 2025). In this context, *adaptive* refers to learning tools that can be accessed anytime

and anywhere, provide interactive engagement, minimize negative judgment, and facilitate authentic daily communication. These advantages are evident in the advancement of AI-based technologies, which offer learners opportunities to practice speaking through realistic and dynamic communicative interactions.

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in education has become increasingly important, particularly in the context of English language teaching. AI technologies enable more effective and efficient learning processes by supporting adaptive learning systems, providing immediate feedback, and facilitating automated language assessment (Asrifan et al., 2025). Another study by Sungkur & Shibdeen (2025) stated that AI is highly suitable for educational settings due to its ability to process large volumes of data and deliver instant feedback to learners. Moreover, AI integration in language learning is often manifested through adaptive learning platforms, which transform the learning process by offering personalized learning experiences tailored to individual needs. These platforms have attracted considerable attention from academic stakeholders, as reflected in research examining their applications, benefits, and challenges (Akinsemolu & Onyeaka, 2025). Furthermore, the role of AI in education has become more prominent in the post-pandemic era. Hockly (2023) highlights that AI-powered educational technologies have gained widespread acceptance in English Language Teaching (ELT), indicating a shift toward more technology-enhanced learning environments. In higher education, AI contributes to improved learning outcomes by enabling educators to deliver personalized instruction and align teaching strategies with students' diverse needs, learning styles, and preferences (AlTwijri & Alghizzi, 2024). Additionally, in the context of language learning, AI offers various advantages, including personalized feedback, flexible learning pathways, intelligent tutoring systems, and natural language processing tools (Alshumaimeri & Alshememry, 2024). Taken together, these capabilities demonstrate that the integration of AI is not only beneficial, but also essential in modern education, as it enhances learning effectiveness, supports individualized instruction, and addresses the evolving demands of 21st-century learners.

In relation to speaking skills, AI-based conversational applications provide learners with opportunities to practice spoken English through realistic and contextualized interactions, offering a promising solution to address the speaking difficulties faced by EFL learners. Previous studies have consistently highlighted the benefits of AI integration in language learning. For instance, Nguyen et al. (2025) reported that AI-based tools significantly enhance speaking fluency among EFL students. Similarly, Ridwan (2025) found that AI fosters learners' confidence by reducing social pressure, providing real-time feedback, and supporting flexible, self-directed learning opportunities. In addition, AI-powered applications offer personalized assistance and interactive practice environments tailored to learners' needs (Fauziah et al., 2025).

Furthermore, repeated practice and instant feedback enabled by AI have been shown to improve vocabulary retention and support learners' understanding of vocabulary in contextualized sentence use (Yuniar et al., 2026). Positive learner perceptions have also been documented, with students demonstrating improved speaking skills, enhanced learning experiences, and a strong willingness to continue using AI platforms for speaking practice (Zou et al., 2025). Moreover, generative AI has been identified as a valuable tool for increasing learners' motivation by creating more engaging and enjoyable learning experiences (Indrayani et al., 2022). Therefore, the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is crucial in supporting learners' speaking development.

Several AI tools offer new experiences and diverse learning styles to help learners practice their speaking skills. A study by Maysuroh et al. (2025) revealed that Chat GPT (AI chatbots) was perceived positively by most students, particularly due to its accessibility, privacy, and non-judgmental interaction, which supported their speaking practice. Moreover, the chatbot enhanced students' motivation, confidence, and engagement through its continuous availability and supportive feedback. In addition, Gultom et al. (2026) highlighted that AI-based tools such as Chat GPT, ELSA Speak, and Talkpal can enhance students' speaking skills, including fluency, accuracy, confidence, and pronunciation. Students also reported

that AI-assisted learning serves as an effective medium for independent speaking practice.

However, several AI-based language learning applications, such as ELSA Speak, ChatGPT, and TalkPal, present certain limitations. Access to comprehensive learning materials and advanced features is often restricted behind subscription-based models, requiring users to pay for full functionality. In addition, these platforms may rely heavily on structured prompts and predefined learning pathways, which can result in interactions that feel repetitive and less engaging. Furthermore, the feedback provided may lack variability, partly due to the limited range of interactive personas or conversational styles available, which can reduce the richness of learners' speaking practice experiences. These limitations may also contribute to a lack of natural and empathetic interaction, as well as a limited ability to understand users' emotions and intentions, resulting in more rigid learning experiences (Fakhri & Indriasari, 2025).

To address these limitations, it is necessary to find AI applications that are both effective and accessible as partners for practicing speaking. Unlike other AI applications, Character.AI presents a potential solution to support students in developing their speaking skills. Napitupulu & Dalimunte (2025) stated that Character.AI offers three major benefits: improved speaking fluency, increased learner confidence, and greater flexibility in practice. These advantages are closely related to Character. Ai's ability to generate real-time, human-like interactions, which support more adaptive speaking practice. This claim is further supported by Ulfa (2025), who found that AI-based real-time feedback enhances learning efficiency and accessibility while enabling more structured and effective English speaking practice. Therefore, the integration of AI applications such as Character.AI demonstrates strong potential as a medium for providing extensive language exposure to EFL learners, as increased exposure to the target language is closely associated with enhanced speaking proficiency and comprehension (Jahrani & Listia, 2023).

However, despite the growing use of AI-based applications in language learning, limited research has specifically examined the use of Character.AI in supporting speaking development and facilitating adaptive communicative practice from students' perspectives. Most existing studies tend to focus on AI tools that rely on structured or predefined prompts, which emphasize controlled responses rather than natural, non-scripted interaction. As a result, the potential of Character.AI as a persona-driven platform for simulating authentic communication remains underexplored. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by exploring EFL students' perceptions of using Character.AI in developing their speaking skills and facilitating adaptive communicative practice.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore EFL students' lived experiences in using Character.AI for speaking practice. As stated by Maulana & Budiono (2024), the phenomenological approach is used to explore and interpret participants' lived experiences, focusing on how they perceive and make meaning of the phenomenon being studied. Accordingly, this study focused on students' reflections, feedback, emotional responses, levels of comfort, and challenges encountered during their use of Character.AI for speaking practice.

This study involved five (5) EFL students from Palangka Raya University who were in their eighth semester. The participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, based on specific criteria aligned with the research objectives. The criteria included: (1) students who had learned English as a Foreign Language (EFL) as part of their academic program, and (2) students who had prior experience using Character.AI for developing their speaking skills and were willing to participate in in-depth interviews. The study was conducted over a four-week period, from March to April.

The data were collected through interviews and questionnaires, and validated through triangulation. The questionnaire was close-ended and was administered as

a supporting instrument to capture students' general perceptions toward the use of Character.AI. It consisted of Likert-scale items ranging from *Strongly Agree* to *Strongly Disagree* and was used to provide an overview of two main dimensions: developing speaking skills (including fluency, vocabulary, motivation, anxiety reduction, confidence, and willingness to speak) and facilitating adaptive communicative practice (including adaptability, flexibility & accessibility in practice). The questionnaire data served as complementary data to support the qualitative findings from the interviews. Moreover, the primary data for this study were obtained through semi-structured interviews with participants who had experience using Character.AI for speaking practice. The interviews aimed to explore students' lived experiences and focused on their reflections, feedback, emotional responses, levels of comfort, and challenges encountered during their use of Character.AI. Prior to the interviews, participants were provided with a list of guiding questions to help them prepare their responses. As the interviews employed a semi-structured format, additional follow-up questions were asked during the interview process to explore participants' responses in greater depth and to obtain more comprehensive insights. Each interview lasted approximately 15–20 minutes, depending on the depth of the information obtained, and was recorded with participants' consent before being transcribed for analysis.

All interview sessions were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. The interview was conducted in Indonesian to ensure the credibility of the data and information, and was subsequently translated into English as the final result. The interview transcripts were treated as the main qualitative data source and analysed using thematic analysis following the six-phase framework outlined by Braun & Clarke (2006), involving transcription, initial coding, theme generation, and refinement. The analysis process began with familiarization through repeated reading of the transcripts to gain an in-depth understanding of students' experiences in using Character.AI for speaking practice. This was followed by initial coding to identify meaningful statements related to students' reflections, emotional responses, comfort levels, and challenges during AI-based speaking interactions. The codes were then organized into potential themes, which were reviewed, refined,

and defined to ensure consistency and relevance to the research focus. Finally, the themes were interpreted to represent students' lived experiences in using Character.AI for speaking practice. The use of interview transcripts enabled the researcher to capture participants' authentic expressions and meanings, thereby strengthening the credibility of the findings.

Ethical considerations were carefully addressed throughout the research process. Prior to data collection, participants were informed about the purpose of the study and the procedures involved. Participation in this study was entirely voluntary, and participants were given the right to withdraw at any stage without any consequences. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before administering the questionnaire and conducting the interviews. To protect participants' privacy, all personal information was kept confidential, and anonymity was ensured by using pseudonyms or codes in the data presentation. The data collected from questionnaires and interviews were used solely for research purposes and stored securely. Additionally, participants were assured that their responses would not affect their academic evaluation or standing. These ethical procedures were implemented to ensure that the study was conducted responsibly and respectfully.

FINDINGS

The data were analysed using a triangulation technique, incorporating both questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaire served as supporting data, while the interviews provided the primary data.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed to examine students' general perceptions across two dimensions: (1) speaking skill development (fluency, confidence, motivation, vocabulary, willingness to speak, and anxiety reduction), and (2) adaptive communicative practice (adaptability, flexibility & accessibility). The

questions for the first dimension are item number 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, and 9; while for second dimension are item number 2 and 6.

Table 1. Percentage Distribution of Each Category Based on Students' Questionnaire Responses

No	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	<i>I experience limitations when practicing speaking directly with friends, teachers, or lecturers</i>	0%	60%	40%	0%
2	I feel that Character.AI is an adaptive medium that can help me practice my speaking skills in a realistic way.	60%	20%	20%	0%
3	I am able to construct simple conversational sentences better after using Character.AI as a speaking practice tool.	0%	100%	0%	0%
4	I believe my English vocabulary has improved through regular interactions with Character.AI.	0%	80%	20%	0%
5	I feel that the voice and speaking style of characters in Character.AI closely resemble the original characters, which increases my motivation to practice speaking.	40%	60%	0%	0%
6	I can practice speaking using Character.AI anytime and anywhere without having to find a direct speaking partner.	20%	60%	20%	0%
7	I feel more confident speaking English in real-life situations after using Character.AI as a practice partner.	0%	80%	20%	0%
8	I feel that practicing speaking using Character.AI helps reduce my anxiety when	20%	80%	0%	0%

	starting conversations in English.				
9	I believe I am more prepared to speak English in daily life after practicing with Character.AI.	20%	40%	40%	0%

Table 1 shows that the majority of students responded positively to the use of Character.AI for speaking practice. Most responses were concentrated in the *Agree* categories, indicating favourable perceptions of the application. The findings suggest that Character.AI successfully develop speaking skills (increase fluency 100%, vocabulary 80%, motivation & engagement 100%, confidence 80%, willingness to speak 60%, and anxiety reduction 100%) and facilitating adaptive communicative practice (adaptability 80%, and flexibility & accessibility 80%). However, these findings should be interpreted cautiously due to the small number of participants (N = 5).

Interview

The interview data serve as the primary source of this study. Semi-structured interviews were employed to gain in-depth insights into students' lived experiences in using Character.AI, focusing on two primary aspects: the perceived benefits of using Character.AI and the challenges encountered by students during the practice.

A. The Benefits of Using Character.AI for Speaking Practice

1. Adaptability to students' needs

Most informants mentioned that they found it difficult to find partners to practice speaking English, which resulted in limited exposure to the target language. Informant 4 shared his experience, stating that he still had limited time to practice outside the classroom:

“In the university environment, particularly as English major students, we are required to use English both inside the classroom and during the learning process,

which allows us to practice with our classmates. However, outside this environment, it becomes more difficult to find people to practice speaking English with.”

However, the students discovered an application called Character.AI, which serves as an adaptive solution for their speaking development. Informant 1 stated that Character.AI is better than other AI applications for practicing speaking English because it offers a wide variety of characters:

“In my opinion, Character.AI is highly adaptive, as it allows users to interact with a wide variety of characters, which may exceed the options available in ChatGPT or Gemini that sometimes feel relatively limited.”

Similarly, Informant 3 also stated that practicing through Character.AI was fun and enjoyable:

“I found it to be very engaging. It offers a wide variety of AI characters, including cartoons and anime, which makes the experience enjoyable. I also felt more confident because I was interacting with my favourite characters. This sense of familiarity made me feel closer to them, making the process of learning English through Character.AI more fun and engaging.”

The data provided by the students revealed that Character.AI serves as an adaptive solution through its wide variety of characters and the sense of comfort it offers during practice. This, in turn, creates a positive learning environment that supports the development of their speaking competence and enhances their awareness of the importance of English as an international language. Furthermore, it enables students to practice independently without requiring direct interaction with peers or other individuals.

2. Fluency improvement

Most informants reported that Character.AI provides a significant impact on their speaking competence. The benefits include improved fluency when communicating with others after consistent practice. Informant 5 mentioned that frequent exposure through the use of Character.AI helped them become more fluent in speaking:

“After several practice sessions using Character.AI, I found it easier to construct simple sentences. Initially, I made many mistakes; however, over time, I became more fluent due to frequent exposure to examples of AI-generated responses.”

Moreover, Informant 2 highlighted that it became easier for him to construct sentences and develop his vocabulary due to frequent exposure to conversations and flexible practice with Character.AI:

“Constructing sentences became easier for me because I could engage in frequent conversations with Character.AI. This helped me a lot, particularly in terms of vocabulary development. Character.AI provides responses that can be adjusted to the type of sentences we want to use.”

Based on the informants' responses, it can be concluded that Character.AI effectively supported the improvement of their speaking fluency. This improvement can be attributed to several key factors, including vocabulary acquisition, improved sentence construction, flexible practice, increased language exposure, and a greater willingness to speak.

3. Vocabulary enhancement

The majority of informants reported notable improvements in their vocabulary through consistent practice with Character.AI. They indicated that the application provides interactive conversations featuring a wide range of vocabulary, which can be effectively acquired through regular use. Furthermore, the application provides

a chat history feature that contains the entire conversation from each practice session in written form, enabling students to review and learn new vocabulary from their interactions.

Informant 5 highlighted that he acquired new vocabulary for daily communication through consistent practice with Character.AI:

“I experienced an improvement in my vocabulary, particularly in everyday expressions. When I did not know certain words, I could observe how the AI responded, which helped me learn new vocabulary in context.”

Informant 1 explained that he learned new vocabulary by reviewing the conversation history, then noting down unfamiliar words and attempting to understand their meanings:

“I have checked the conversation history, and reviewed the words I did not understand from the AI. I then noted down the vocabulary from Character.AI and tried to research or find out their meanings.”

From Informant 1’s response, it can be observed that Character.AI offers a valuable feature in the form of chat history for each conversation. This feature enables users to revisit previous interactions, making it easier to recall prior learning and identify newly acquired vocabulary, which contributes to the development of their fluency and confidence in speaking.

4. Motivation and engagement

Most of the informants reported that Character.AI helped increase their motivation and engagement in practicing speaking due to its realistic character voices. They perceived the interaction as similar to communicating with real humans or their favourite characters, which created a sense of comfort and encouraged them to practice more consistently. As expressed by Informant 1, the

characters felt very similar to his favourite characters, making the experience more engaging and immersive:

“I feel very comfortable because Character.AI presents characters that closely resemble their original versions, making the interaction feel like engaging in a real-time conversation with them.”

However, they still found that some characters occasionally spoke in a way that resembled artificial intelligence (AI). This statement is further supported by the responses of Informants 1, 2, and 5, who experienced similar situations. They reported that certain characters seemed artificial during interactions, while others were sufficiently realistic and closely resembled human communication. Informant 1 said:

“I think it quite resembles the character’s voice in the application; however, sometimes in Character.AI the voice sounds somewhat flat, and it is still possible to distinguish between the AI-generated voice and the original character’s voice.”

In relation to the statement, Informant 4 suggested that the perception of characters sounding like AI is influenced by the type of characters chosen:

“Honestly, I think it depends on the character selected in the application. Since the app provides various character options, some voices sound good and feel quite real, while others still sound like pure AI. However, overall, the pronunciation is fairly clear.”

Based on the informants’ responses, most of them felt more motivated and comfortable when practicing speaking with Character.AI. The characters provided in the application were perceived as closely resembling real human voices, creating the impression of engaging in real-time conversations with their favorite characters. However, several informants reported that some of the characters they selected occasionally sounded artificial and unnatural. As a result, selecting characters that closely match their original voices becomes important. This is because the Character.AI application is *character-dependent*, meaning that the quality, realism,

and naturalness of interaction vary depending on the specific character chosen by the user.

5. Flexibility and accessibility

All of the informants agreed that they felt comfortable practicing speaking with Character.AI due to its flexibility and accessibility. They pointed out that the application is easy to use as long as there is an internet connection, allowing them to practice anytime and anywhere without having to wait for friends or speaking partners. Another important aspect is that they do not feel afraid of making mistakes, as Character.AI can provide examples to support their learning. As stated by Informant 5, he mentioned that:

“I feel it is very easy and comfortable to use. I can practice anytime and anywhere without pressure. I do not need to be afraid of making mistakes because the AI can help by providing examples.”

Furthermore, Informant 2 emphasized that the comfort and enjoyment experienced in practicing through Character.AI are influenced by the availability of a wide range of characters in the application, allowing users to select preferred speaking partners:

“I like this application because it offers a variety of characters that I am interested in, such as anime and my favorite movie characters. As a result, learning through the Character.AI application becomes very enjoyable for me.”

Based on the responses, it can be concluded that Character.AI effectively enhances students' comfort in speaking practice due to its flexibility and accessibility. The informants highlighted that the application enables them to practice anytime and anywhere without relying on peers or speaking partners. The availability of diverse characters also contributes to a more engaging and enjoyable learning experiences.

6. Confidence and anxiety reduction

Most of the informants reported that Character.AI helped them build their confidence through its various benefits during practice. They perceived that practicing with Character.AI had a positive impact, including helped them express their intended ideas more effectively, which subsequently enhanced their confidence to engage in real-time communication with others. Informant 1 mentioned:

“I experienced clear improvement in vocabulary, was better able to express my ideas in conversations, and became more confident when speaking with native speakers.”

Additionally, Informant 3 also shared similar experience, stating that she initially felt shy when speaking English with others. However, after discovering Character.AI, she became more confident and willing to communicate with various characters available in the application. She said:

“I personally experienced a degree of shyness when speaking English in direct interactions. However, after engaging with this application, I became more confident. The system appears to understand my intended meaning despite grammatical inaccuracies and provides stimulation to continue speaking.”

Similarly, informant 1 added:

“Character.AI is very helpful in reducing anxiety when speaking in English. I personally tend to feel anxious when communicating directly with others in English; however, since using Character.AI, I have felt more relaxed because there is no pressure or judgment from others. As a result, I have become more willing to try expressing various sentences in English.”

The statements from the informants suggest that building confidence is essential, as it plays a crucial role in influencing students' willingness to communicate. When students possess higher levels of confidence, they tend to

experience reduced anxiety and fear of making mistakes, which in turn increases their willingness to engage in speaking activities. Moreover, students agree that practicing speaking through Character.AI is highly recommended as an initial step to reduce anxiety and increase confidence before engaging in communication with others. The application does not provide negative judgment; instead, it offers positive feedback and a comfortable environment during practice. Therefore, for individuals who still experience anxiety when initiating conversations, it is advisable to practice first with AI applications, such as Character.AI.

7. Willingness to speak

Most of the informants reported that they felt more prepared to communicate with real people after consistently practicing speaking with Character.AI. As stated by Informant 2:

“I feel more prepared and more willing to speak English with others after regularly practicing with Character.AI. This is because the characters facilitate daily practice, and the application is free and easy to use, making it highly accessible.”

This finding indicates that Character.AI has strong potential as a speaking partner, as it provides continuous exposure to English. As a result, students are not solely reliant on practicing speaking only in university settings. However, Informants 1, 2, 4, and 5 also acknowledged that despite this increased readiness, there are still aspects that require further improvement. These factors are related to the need for consistent practice in order to build familiarity. Although they may feel nervous when first attempting to speak, this can be gradually overcome through regular interaction with the characters available in Character.AI. As reported by Informant 5:

“Although my ability is not yet perfect, I have developed the courage and gained experience in speaking practice.”

In short, students believe that consistent practice plays an important role in improving their speaking skills. Character.AI supports this consistency by providing immediate and supportive feedback during practice. As a result, students can continuously learn from their mistakes, build confidence, and gradually develop their speaking ability.

B. Challenges Encounter during Practice with Character.AI

Most of the informants reported that they encountered several challenges while practicing speaking with Character.AI. These challenges are related to internet connection issues, unnatural AI responses, excessive advertisements (ads), and unsupported devices. Despite these obstacles, the informants were still able to continue their practice and gain benefits from using the application.

Informant 2 shared his experiences related to the challenges he faced during practice:

“The application does not run well on my phone because my device does not support it. It is an old device with very limited storage, so I tried using the application on my laptop instead. Sometimes the AI’s responses are not always in line with what I mean or what I expect. Occasionally, the answers can be inaccurate, depending on the type of AI character used.”

Based on the responses, it showed that Character.AI requires capable devices and appropriate character selection to achieve more optimal use. A capable device is important because not all devices or phones can install the application, so some users may need to access it through a laptop. In addition, users should be selective in choosing certain characters to obtain more accurate feedback and more natural conversations. Lastly, Informant 1 also added that having a stable internet connection is important to maximize the effectiveness of the application: *“We need to have a stable internet connection. If the connection is unstable, the application will not function optimally.”*

Additionally, Informant 4 mentioned that Character.AI contains a considerable number of advertisements that appear consistently during use:

“During the use of the application, one challenge I noticed is that there are quite frequent advertisements. They appear fairly consistently. However, they can actually be removed, but it requires payment.”

Even though advertisements appeared consistently, the informants reported that they did not significantly interfere with their ability to continue practicing. This suggests that the presence of ads, while noticeable, did not become a major barrier to engagement. Instead, the informants remained focused on the learning process and continued to use the application to support their speaking development.

DISCUSSION

This study is consistent with previous research which suggests that AI facilitates adaptive learning, provides immediate feedback, and supports automated language assessment (Asrifan et al., 2025). The results of this study reveal that students experienced improvements across two dimensions: (1) speaking development, including fluency, vocabulary, motivation, engagement, confidence, willingness to speak, and reduced anxiety; and (2) adaptive communicative practice, particularly in terms of adaptability, flexibility, and accessibility.

However, a deeper analysis of the data from both the questionnaire and interviews revealed several inconsistencies in students' responses. For instance, questionnaire data indicated that some students disagreed with the statement that they did not have partners to practice speaking English in their daily lives. In contrast, during the interviews, these students reported that they actually did not have any speaking partners. These discrepancies suggest that questionnaire responses may not always fully reflect students' actual experiences. Therefore, in-

depth interviews play a crucial role in providing more contextualized and accurate insights into students' real conditions and learning experiences.

All students highlighted that Character.AI serves as an adaptive solution due to its availability of a wide range of characters that can be selected based on their needs. This feature allows learners to engage in more personalized and meaningful speaking practice. The findings of this study are consistent with previous research, as Ulfa (2025) demonstrated that AI-based real-time feedback enhances learning efficiency and accessibility, while enabling more structured and effective English-speaking practice. In addition, AI-powered applications provide personalized assistance, real-time feedback, and interactive practice environments designed to meet learners' needs (Fauziah et al., 2025).

The significant improvement in students' fluency, confidence, and flexibility in practice observed in this study is in line with the findings of Napitupulu & Dalimunte (2025), who identified three major benefits of using Character.AI: improved speaking fluency, increased learner confidence, and greater flexibility in practice. Prior to using the application, students reported several challenges in practicing speaking, particularly in finding speaking partners, which affected their ability to construct sentences and speak confidently. They also experienced limitations related to time constraints and limited exposure to the target language. However, after engaging in consistent practice with Character.AI, students found it easier to construct simple sentences and became more fluent due to frequent exposure to AI-generated responses. Consistent with this findings, Nguyen et al. (2025) found that the integration of AI-based tools significantly enhances speaking fluency among EFL students. Additionally, the use of AI enabled students to express their intended ideas more effectively, which in turn enhanced their confidence. Students also perceived the application as flexible, as it can be used anytime and anywhere. These findings aligns with Ridwan (2025), who suggested that the use of AI fosters learners' confidence by reducing social pressure, providing real-time feedback, and facilitating flexible, self-directed learning opportunities.

In addition, most informants reported significant improvements in their vocabulary as a result of consistent practice with Character.AI. This improvement can be attributed to the application's interactive conversational features, which expose learners to a wide range of vocabulary in meaningful contexts. Furthermore, the availability of a "*History*" feature, which stores complete records of each practice session in written form, enables students to review their interactions and reinforce newly acquired vocabulary. These findings demonstrate the relevance of Yuniar et al. (2026), highlighting the role of AI-based applications in facilitating vocabulary retention through repeated practice and immediate feedback, as well as promoting deeper contextual understanding.

The availability of a wide range of characters in Character.AI contributes to increased student motivation and engagement, as it enables learners to interact with human-like or familiar voices, including their favourite characters. Most students in this study reported that the application created a sense of comfort and encouraged them to engage in more consistent speaking practice. The findings suggested that generative AI functions as a valuable tool in enhancing EFL learners' motivation by creating a more engaging, enjoyable, and rewarding learning experience (Indrayani et al. 2022).

Character.AI contributed to reducing students' anxiety through its supportive and comfortable learning environment. In this study, students reported feelings of shyness and nervousness when attempting to speak in real-life communication. However, after consistent practice with Character.AI, they found the application helpful and engaging, which gradually reduced their anxiety levels. Students further reported that the application provided a positive and supportive environment for speaking development, serving as a preliminary stage before engaging in real interactions with others. This environment allowed learners to practice without fear of judgment, thereby increasing their confidence and willingness to communicate. The findings of this study reinforce the results reported by Maysuroh et al. (2025), underscoring the role of AI chatbots as accessible, private, and non-judgmental tools that facilitate effective speaking practice.

Character.AI demonstrates strong potential as a speaking partner, as it provides continuous exposure to the English language. Consequently, students are not solely dependent on practicing speaking within university settings. In this study, students reported feeling more prepared and confident to communicate in real-life situations after engaging in consistent practice with the application. This finding is consistent with Zou et al. (2025), who reported that learners demonstrated positive attitudes toward the use of AI platforms for speaking practice, as reflected in their improved speaking skills, enhanced learning experiences, and increased willingness to engage in future communication.

However, in this study, the integration of Character.AI as a speaking partner highlight both its advantages and disadvantages. Students appreciated AI-assisted learning, which provides flexibility in practice, a supportive learning environment, and accessible opportunities for repeated speaking practice. Despite these benefits, the findings indicate that students also encountered several challenges, particularly related to unnatural AI-generated responses. This issue arises because not all characters are designed to accurately reflect authentic human communication. In addition, some participants reported difficulties related to unstable internet connections, excessive advertisements, and limited device compatibility. These findings suggest that, although AI demonstrates strong potential as a speaking partner, it cannot fully replace human interaction, which remains more natural, dynamic, and contextually responsive. It is in line with Devikar et al. (2025), suggested that AI tools remain limited in replicating the essential human interactions required for communicative competence, as language learning extends beyond technical skills to encompass emotional, cultural, and social dimensions that current AI systems cannot fully address. Therefore, it is important to position AI chatbots as supplementary tools rather than replacements for authentic communication with native or fluent speakers.

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, it involved only five participants from the same university, which limits the applicability of the findings to a broader population and may not adequately

represent EFL learners in general. Second, the study focused solely on one language skill, namely speaking, without exploring other fundamental language skills such as writing, listening, and reading. Therefore, for future research, it is recommended that future research involve a larger and more diverse sample to improve the generalizability of the findings. In addition, further studies should explore the use of AI in developing other language skills, such as writing, listening, and reading, in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the role of AI in language learning.

Overall, this study provides compelling evidence that Character.AI serves as a valuable speaking tool in facilitating various benefits for students, including improvements in fluency, vocabulary, confidence, motivation, comfort and flexibility in practice, reduced anxiety, and increased willingness to speak. However, the findings also highlight the limitations of AI, particularly in generating unnatural responses, which indicate that it cannot fully replace authentic human communication.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that the use of Character.AI as a speaking partner offers significant benefits for EFL learners, particularly in developing speaking skills and facilitating adaptive communicative practice. The findings indicate that students showed improvements in fluency, vocabulary, motivation, engagement, confidence, willingness to speak, and reduced anxiety. Furthermore, Character.AI was perceived as adaptable, flexible, and accessible in fulfilling students' learning needs. However, despite these advantages, this study also highlights several limitations of AI-assisted learning, including the occurrence of unnatural responses, technical issues such as unstable internet connections, excessive advertisements, and limited device compatibility. More importantly, AI tools remain limited in replicating the emotional, social, and contextual dimensions of authentic human interaction. Therefore, AI applications such as Character.AI should be positioned as supplementary tools rather than replacements for real

human communication, as a balanced integration of AI and human interaction is essential for achieving more comprehensive and effective language learning outcomes.

From a pedagogical perspective, these findings suggest that educators should strategically integrate AI-based applications like Character.AI into language learning activities to support students' speaking practice beyond the classroom. Teachers can utilize such tools to create low-anxiety learning environments, promote autonomous learning, and provide additional opportunities for interactive practice. However, it is crucial for educators to guide students in using AI critically and effectively, while still maintaining meaningful human interaction in the learning process. For future research, further studies are recommended to examine the long-term effects of AI-assisted speaking practice on learners' communicative competence by involving a larger number of participants and conducting research over a longer period of time to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Such extended and large-scale investigations would provide deeper insights into the effectiveness, consistency, and sustainability of AI use in language learning. Additionally, future researchers may explore the integration of Character.AI with various instructional approaches and across different proficiency levels, while also addressing existing limitations such as the naturalness of AI responses and technical constraints to further optimize its pedagogical potential.

REFERENCES

- Albiansyah, A., & Minkhatunnakhriyah, M. (2021). The needs analysis of English in Bina Informatika Vocational High School of Bintaro as a basis to design English teaching materials. *Edunesia: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan*, 2(1), 142-152. <https://doi.org/10.51276/edu.v2i1.88>
- Asrifan, A., Cardoso, L. M. O. de B., & Vargheese, K. J. (2025). Artificial intelligence in bilingual ESP: A mixed-methods study on English for educational technology. *Journal of English Language Teaching Innovations and Materials*, 7(1), 88-112. <https://doi.org/10.26418/jeltim.v7i1.91274>

- AlTwijri, L., & Alghizzi, T. M. (2024). Investigating the integration of artificial intelligence in English as foreign language classes for enhancing learners' affective factors: A systematic review. *Heliyon*, 10(10), e31053. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e31053>
- Alshumaimeri, Y. A., & Alshememry, A. K. (2024). The Extent of AI Applications in EFL Learning and Teaching. *IEEE Transactions on Learning Technologies*, 17, 653-663. <https://doi.org/10.1109/TLT.2023.3322128>
- Akinsemolu, A. A., & Onyeaka, H. (2025). The role of Artificial Intelligence in transforming language learning: Opportunities and ethical considerations. *Journal of Language and Education*, 11(1), 148–152. <https://doi.org/10.17323/jle.2025.22118>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Devikar, S. C., Hinge, M. M., & Shevkari, S. S. (2025). Human vs. Machine: A Review of AI's Impact on Language Learning Interaction or Replacing Human interaction. *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research (IJFMR)*, 7(3), 1-7. <https://www.ijfmr.com/research-paper.php?id=49459>
- Fakhri, D. N., & Indriasari, M. (2025). Chatbot pembelajaran bahasa inggris interaktif dengan adaptive learning dan analisis emosi pengguna. *TECHNOPEX-2025 Institut Teknologi Indonesia*, 7(3), 845-849. <https://semnas.iti.ac.id/tpx/index.php/c/article/view/421>
- Fatimah, E., Nurcholis, N., Widyastuti, K., & Maulidia, A. (2025). The influence of learning motivation, exposure to English, and learning strategies on English proficiency of Muslim students in Indonesia. *Englie: Journal of English Education and Linguistics Studies*, 6(2), 255–269. <https://doi.org/10.22219/englie.v6i2.40894>
- Fauziah, F., Diana, N., Putri, S., & Fadhli, T. (2025). Student engagement with Artificial Intelligence (AI) Chatbot in English language learning: Theory of planned behavior perspective. *JEELS (Journal of English Education and Linguistics Studies)*, 12(2), 585-613. <https://doi.org/10.30762/jeels.v12i2.4085>
- Gultom, E. S., Halu, U., & Kendari, O. (2026). Pemanfaatan Artificial Intelligent (AI) untuk meningkatkan kemampuan speaking mahasiswa Program Studi Sastra Inggris Universitas Halu Oleo. *Jurnal Pengabdian Fekultas Bahasa dan Sastra*, 7(1), 677–681. <https://doi.org/10.36728/jpf.v7i1.5821>

- Hockly, N. (2023). Artificial Intelligence in English Language Teaching: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly. *RELC Journal*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/00336882231168504>
- Indrayani, L., Utami, I. L. P., & Ana, I. K. T. A. (2025). Utilizing Generative AI to Enhance EFL Learners' Learning Motivation: A Case Study. *JETAL: Journal of English Teaching & Applied Linguistics*, 7(1), 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.36655/jetal.v7i1.1835>
- Jahrani, A., & Listia, R. (2023). The Impact of Exposure on Second Language Acquisition. *IDEAS: Journal on English Language Teaching and Learning, Ideas*, 11(1), 416–424. <https://doi.org/10.24256/ideas.v11i1.3581>
- Khafidhoh, Wijayati, D., & Risa, S. H. (2023). Investigating Anxiety in Speaking among EFL Students: A Qualitative Study. *ADJES (Academic Journal of English Language and Literature)*, 10(1), 12–28. <https://doi.org/10.26555/adjes.v10i1.212>
- Maulana, Z. A., Budiyono, A., & Info, A. (2024). Kajian Komunikasi dalam Sudut Pandang Studi Fenomenologi: Literatur Review Communication Studies from the Point of View of Phenomenological Studies: Literature Review. *Translitera*, 13(2). <https://doi.org/10.35457/translitera.v13i2.3645>
- Maysuroh, S., Fikni, Z., & Aisyah, S. (2025). EFL Students' Perceptions of AI Chatbots in Learning Speaking Skill. *Interaction: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra*, 12(3), 489–500. <https://ejournal.unimudasorong.ac.id/index.php/interactionjournal/article/view/3640>
- Meidyana, E. D., & Salsabila, F. A. (2024). AI for All Voices: A Scoping Review on Inclusive Pronunciation and Speaking AI Tools. 8(1), 428–441. <https://jurnal.unimus.ac.id/index.php/ELLIC/article/view/18466>
- Napitupulu, M. F., & Dalimunte, A. A. (2025). A study of students' perception of character AI in practicing English speaking fluency. *CELTIC: Computer-Enhanced Language Teaching and Learning*, 12(1), 384–404. <https://doi.org/10.22219/celtic.v12i1.40721>
- Nguyen, Baharlo, A., & Rahis Pasaribu, G. (2025). Integrating AI-Based Tools to Enhance Speaking Fluency in EFL Classrooms in Labuhanbatu Utara. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Linguistics*, 01. <https://jurnal.rahiscendekiaindonesia.co.id/index.php/jelim/article/view/588>

- Nurliana, I., Muth, A., & Rosana, E. (2022). The Use of Hand Puppet and Stick Figure as Media to Teach Speaking. *Journal of Teaching and Education*, 4(1), 1–15. <https://jtam.ulm.ac.id/index.php/gej/article/view/2494>
- Ramasari, M., & Ardayati, A. (2025). Empowering EFL Students with Adaptive Materials: Enhancing Speaking Proficiency and Confidence among Indonesian University Learners. 7(2), 204–220. <https://doi.org/10.31849/plvcx822>
- Ridwan, S. C. (2025). Pemanfaatan AI Dalam Pembelajaran Speaking Bahasa Inggris: Upaya Meningkatkan Kepercayaan Diri Dan Konsistensi Belajar Mahasiswa. 4, 6556–6582. <https://doi.org/10.30997/karimahtauhid.v4i9.20195>
- Sartika, D., Sudana, D., & Gustine, G. G. (2022). EFL Students' Experience in Speaking Practice on Discord Application. *Bahasa dan Seni: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, Seni, dan Pembelajaran*, 22(April), 25–36. https://doi.org/10.17509/bs_jpbs.v22i1.47651
- Sukma Shinta Yunianti, Afi Normawati, R. Y. (2025). Delving students' needs to develop English course. *SMART: Indonesian Journal of Educational Research and Technology*, 11(1), 57–67. <https://ejournal.umpri.ac.id/index.php/smart/article/view/2659>
- Sungkur, R. K., & Shibdeen, N. (2025). Pronunciation trainer for second language learning using generative AI. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 22(1), 64. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-025-00561-x>
- Ulfa, S. (2025). Upaya Penggunaan Dan Pemanfaatan AI Dalam Meningkatkan Keterampilan Speaking Pembelajaran Bahasa. 4, 4478–4501. <https://doi.org/10.30997/karimahtauhid.v4i7.19634>
- Yuniar, Syawal, & Hijrah. (2026). The Effectiveness of AI-Based Application Duolingo in Enhancing Students' Vocabulary Mastery among Indonesian EFL Learners. *Sintaksis: Indonesian Transformative Language Studies*, 4(November 2025). <https://doi.org/10.61132/sintaksis.v4i1.2463>
- Zou, B., Xie, S., & Wang, C. (2025). Students' willingness to communicate (WTC) in using artificial intelligence (AI) technology in English-speaking practice. *International Journal of Information and Communication Technology Education*, 21(1), 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.4018/IJICTE.375387>

IDENTITY OF JOURNAL/PROCEEDINGS

1. Article Title : Students' Perceptions of Using Character.AI in Reducing Speaking Anxiety
2. Name of Journal : Journal of Language Development and Linguistic (JLDL)
3. ISSN : E-ISSN 2962-6528
4. Accreditation Category : SINTA 3
5. Doi/Article link : <https://journal.formosapublisher.org/index.php/jldl/login?source=%2Findex.php%2Fjldl%2Fsubmissions>
6. Volume/Issue/Month/Year : Volume 5/Issue 5/September 2026

ARTICLE 2

Students' Perceptions of Using Character.AI in Reducing Speaking Anxiety

Roni Kurniawan^{1*}, Maida Norahmi², Akhmad Fauzan³ Alvionita Damayanti⁴
Lesly Martha Cecylia Meka⁵

Universitas Palangka Raya

Corresponding Author: Roni Kurniawan ronikurniawan355@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Character.AI, speaking anxiety, EFL learners, language learning

Received : Date, Month

Revised : Date, Month

Accepted: Date, Month

©2026 Kurniawan, Norahmi, Fauzan, Damayanti (s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Atribusi 4.0 Internasional](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate students' perceptions of using Character.AI in reducing speaking anxiety. While most existing studies focus on designing effective prompts to obtain optimal AI-generated feedback, this study employs a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore students' lived experiences in using Character.AI. The data were collected through questionnaires and interviews, and were validated using triangulation techniques. The findings revealed that most students feel more motivated and engaged during practice, as Character.AI provides a safe and non-judgmental learning environment that contributes to enhancing EFL learners' confidence and willingness to speak in the future. However, the study also highlighted several challenges, such as lengthy and sometimes unnatural AI responses, as well as unstable internet connections. It showed that AI cannot fully replace human interaction. Therefore, it is important to maintain a balance between AI and human interaction in order to create more meaningful, engaging, and natural learning experiences.

INTRODUCTION

English plays a crucial role in the educational system, as it functions as a tool for global communication and intercultural interaction (Saputra et al., 2026). By learning English, individuals can practice other subjects more easily because it allows them to access a wider range of information and learning resources across

cultures and countries. Therefore, it is important to learn English in order to prepare a highly competitive generation.

In many countries, the global expansion of English has led to its widespread use as a foreign or second language (Umam et al., 2023). As one of the English language skills, speaking is widely regarded as fundamental due to its significant role in facilitating effective communication. As stated by Felisa et al. (2023), speaking is an activity where individuals can communicate, exchange ideas, share their perspectives, and convey information in daily life. Individuals who have a good speaking skill tend to be better understood by others because they can convey meaning and information more clearly (Azizi & Yusuf, 2024). Therefore, as one of the productive skills, it is essential for learners to develop their speaking proficiency in order to achieve effective communication.

In many cases, speaking remains one of the most challenging skills to master. Some learners may experience confusion when trying to express what they want to say. They believed that before engaging in speaking activities, they must prepare their ideas, use accurate pronunciation, possess sufficient vocabulary, and construct sentences that are clearly understood (Felisa et al., 2023). Students with inadequate preparation in speaking often experience low confidence, as they fear of making mistakes and receiving negative evaluations from others (Wirentake, 2025). These conditions are considered major sources of speaking anxiety, which can hinder learners' progress in developing their speaking skills.

In the university context, Yalçın & İnceçay (2013) explained that most of foreign language learners feel anxious when speaking and tend to remain silent due to the fear of making mistakes and being corrected by others in the classroom. This condition is characterized by physical symptoms such as sweating, heart palpitations, excessive worry, and forgetfulness, which ultimately make it difficult for them to express their ideas. Moreover, Elov et al. (2025) found that several factors contribute to speaking anxiety, including feelings of shyness, lack of confidence, uncertainty, and low motivation. In addition, Norahmi et al. (2025) also

revealed that students with high and moderate levels of anxiety experience difficulties due to limited language competence, including vocabulary and grammar, lack of speaking opportunities, negative environmental experiences, and low levels of preparation and confidence. These findings show that it is crucial to find an alternative solution to reduce speaking anxiety among EFL learners.

Considering that most EFL students experience anxiety when speaking directly with others, they should have a partner that provides a safe and non-judgmental environment as an initial step before engaging in real-life communication with people. One prominent example of a safe and non-judgmental interaction can be obtained through practicing with AI chatbots. Kang & Sung (2024) stated that AI chatbots are *AI-based applications* that can interact with users using natural languages through audio or text, thereby promotes new learning opportunities and serves as an alternative solution for language learning. Therefore, the integration of AI chatbots to help EFL students reduce their speaking anxiety is recommended, as AI can facilitate flexible and adaptable learning experiences that align with students' profiles.

However, despite its strong potentials in reducing speaking anxiety, many EFL learners found that AI has several limitations, including excessive reliance on user prompts, monotonous interactions, and limited access due to premium features. Lee & Palmer (2025) pointed out that AI interactions depend on effective prompting to ensure alignment with learning objectives. Without effective prompts, AI may not function optimally. Besides that, Syafrudin & Hidayati (2025) highlighted that AI applications, such as Chat GPT, are not fully accessible to all students due to limited access to technology. These limitations include paid features, unstable internet connections, and other technical constraints. In addition, Wangdi & Pelden (2025) added that integrating AI chatbots may face several challenges, such as issues related to adaptability, accuracy, and the reliability of AI-generated content. In some cases, these systems may be less flexible and less responsive to students' needs. As a result, learners may experience boredom due to repetitive interactions when engaging with the same conversational patterns over

time. Therefore, it is important for educators and AI developers to ensure that AI tools are accessible and meaningful to all students (Lopez et al., 2025).

In response to these numerous challenges, Character.AI offers a solution in helping EFL learners to improve their speaking skills. As stated by Napitupulu and Dalimunte (2025), Character.AI, as one of the prominent examples of AI chatbots, provides several benefits, such as flexibility and interactive learning activities, which can improve students' confidence to sustaining longer conversations through regular use. Moreover, Character.AI is accessible to all users because it is available free of charge, enabling learners to practice speaking skills with a wide variety of characters provided on the platform. However, although Character.AI offers a potential solution, there is still limited research that focuses on how this application helps learners reduce their anxiety. Most existing studies focus more on designing effective prompts to obtain optimal results from AI, leaving Character.AI as a platform for natural language-driven tools underexplored. Therefore, this study aims to investigate students' perceptions of Character.AI in reducing speaking anxiety.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The integration of AI in education has become widespread, especially in the context of speaking development. A study by Ji et al. (2024) stated that AI can be considered as an advanced component of Computer-Assisted Instruction (CAI), as it can be efficiently integrated into the classroom and collaboratively support the learning process alongside teachers. In line with this, Ebadi et al. (2025) stated that the integration of AI-powered tools in language learning can enhance EFL learners' engagement in interactive speaking activities, as AI offers interactive, customized, and goal-directed learning experiences, along with personalized features that support speaking development.

One prominent example of AI technology is AI chatbots. Kang & Sung (2024) stated that AI chatbots are *AI-based applications* that can interact with users

using natural languages through audio or text, thereby promotes new learning opportunities and serves as an alternative solution for language learning. As mentioned by Tan et al. (2025) that AI chatbots refer to adaptive learning platforms that can facilitated more effective learning experiences due to its adaptability to students' learning profiles. Pertiwi et al. (2025) found that AI tools, such as chatbots, can help reduce speaking anxiety by providing personalized feedback and fostering learner autonomy. These tools create a sense of comfort during practice because they do not judge users; instead, they provide supportive feedback and help learners develop their language skills more effectively. Practicing English with AI chatbots is highly recommended, as it is beneficial for speaking development because learners can practice more conveniently using their devices compared to traditional methods (Li, 2024). In addition, a study by Kim (2024) further explained that AI chatbots provide corrective recasts, which allow them to correct users' mistakes without direct judgment, thereby contributing to the long-term improvement of students' speaking skills.

On the other hand, a study by Chen (2024) revealed that students who learn with AI chatbots show lower levels of anxiety during the learning process. It is in line with Napitupulu & Dalimunte (2025), who stated that AI chatbots provide a supportive and non-judgmental environment that helps reduce learners' anxiety and encourages them to engage in real-life communication. Additionally, Zion et al. (2025) highlighted that AI is considered a supplementary tool that provides more objective and scalable feedback in educational contexts. Therefore, as part of AI chatbots, Character.AI provides a wide variety of characters that can be accessed by users, as well as flexibility and accessibility to support learners' learning progress. As stated by Napitupulu & Dalimunte (2025), compared to other language learning apps, EFL learners found that Character.AI provides more flexible and interactive learning activities. The study also highlighted that regular interaction with Character.AI on a daily basis makes EFL learners more confident in sustaining longer conversations. In line with this findings, a study by Silvania et al. (2025) revealed that most of students have experienced that AI can improve their

motivation through its quick and accessible responses, making the learning process more enjoyable. These findings suggest that Character.AI has the strong potential to create a safe and comfortable learning environment.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore students' lived experiences in using Character.AI to reduce speaking anxiety. A phenomenological approach seeks to explore and interpret individuals' lived experiences by focusing on how they perceive and construct meaning from the phenomenon under investigation (Maulana & Budiono, 2024). Therefore, the study focuses on students' reflections, including the benefits and challenges they experience when using Character.AI to help reduce speaking anxiety.

The study involved five (5) EFL students from Universitas Palangka Raya who were in their eighth semester. The participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique based on specific criteria, including: (1) students who have learned English as a Foreign Language (EFL) as part of their academic program, and (2) students who have experience using Character.AI as a partner for speaking practice in order to reduce speaking anxiety. The study was conducted over four weeks, from March to April.

The data were collected through questionnaires and interviews, and were validated through triangulation technique. The questionnaires were close-ended and was administered as supporting instrument to capture students' general perspectives on the use of Character.AI in reducing speaking anxiety. It consisted of a Likert scale ranging from *Strongly Agree* to *Strongly Disagree* and was use to provide an overview of the role of Character.AI in reducing speaking anxiety, especially for several aspects such as comfort, confidence, and willingness to speak. The questionnaires served as secondary data to support the qualitative findings obtained from the interviews.

Moreover, the primary data for this study were obtained through interviews. The interviews were designed as semi-structured to gain deeper insights into students' lived experiences in using Character.AI to reduce speaking anxiety. The interview questions focused on students' reflections, feedback, perceived benefits, and challenges encountered during the use of Character.AI.

Prior to the interviews, students were provided with a list of guiding questions to help them prepare their responses. As the interviews were semi-structured, additional follow-up questions were asked during the process to explore participants' answers in greater depth and to obtain more comprehensive insights. Each interview lasted approximately 10–15 minutes, depending on the depth of the information obtained. All interview sessions were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis. The interviews were conducted in Indonesian to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the data, and were subsequently translated into English for reporting purposes. Finally, the interview data were analysed using thematic analysis, following the six-phase framework proposed by Braun & Clarke (2006) which includes transcription, initial coding, theme development, and refinement.

RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

a. Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed close-ended to explore students' general perceptions regarding several aspects, including anxiety level, comfort in practice, confidence, and willingness to speak.

Table 1. Percentage Distribution of Each Category Based on Students' Questionnaire Responses

No	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	I experience anxiety, nervousness, and a lack of confidence when speaking directly with someone who has a higher level of English than me.	40%	60%	0%	0%

2	I understand what I want to say, but I still feel hesitant to express it directly to others.	0%	80%	20%	0%
3	Character.AI provides a safe and comfortable learning environment, as it is free from pressure and negative judgment.	20%	80%	0%	0%
4	I feel learning through Character.AI is more fun and engaging due to the availability of various characters.	40%	40%	20%	0%
5	I feel more confidence to speak English since consistent practice with Character.AI	0%	100%	0%	0%

The questionnaire responses show that the majority of students have a positive perception of the use of Character.AI in reducing speaking anxiety. Most of them fall into *Agree* category, which indicates that the use of apps helps in creating comfortable learning environments (100%), promote to continue speaking through its various characters (80%), and increasing confidence (100%). Therefore, the potential of Character.AI stands as a valuable tool that can be used as a supplementary speaking partner, especially where human interaction is limited.

b. Interview

The interview stands as the primary data of this study. It is used to explore students' lived experiences related to the use of Character.AI in reducing speaking anxiety. There are several aspects being analyzed, including students' anxiety level and hesitation in speaking, then will gain deeper information related to the role of Character.AI in serving a fun, comfortable, and engaging learning environment, which contributes to students' confidence and willingness to speak.

The interviews revealed that most participants expressed that they felt anxious and not confident to speak English, especially to someone who has a higher level of English proficiency. They highlighted that they were afraid of making mistakes and being evaluated negatively by others. As confirmed by participant 3: *"I tend to lose confidence when speaking with someone who is more proficient than me, especially when I feel that they might judge or criticize me, which makes me hesitant from the beginning."*

Similarly, participant 4 claimed that he felt nervous speaking English with a larger audience: *“Personally, I still feel quite nervous when speaking in English, especially when I have to speak in front of many people.”* These conditions will contribute to their speaking development, which makes them feel never well prepared because of the limited time to practice. It is further confirmed by participant 5: *“I tend to overthink before starting a conversation.”* This finding is relevance to the study conducted by Wirentake (2025) which highlighted that students with inadequate preparation in speaking often experience low confidence, as they fear of making mistakes and receiving negative evaluations from others. Therefore, it is recommended that students have speaking partners to help them become more confident when speaking to a larger audience.

Benefits of Using Character.AI in Reducing Speaking Anxiety

After consistent practice with Charater.AI, students demonstrated positive attitude toward its ability to provide a fun, comfortable, and engaging learning environment, which contributes to reduce their anxiety.

1. Students felt more motivated and comfortable in practicing speaking

Students felt more motivated and comfortable practicing speaking English with others due to the ease of use and variety of characters from Character.AI. The participant 4 mentioned that:

“The reason I use it is that it is easy to use, and there are many characters to choose from, so I can adjust them to the context or topic I want.”

He further confirmed that Character.AI is recommended to use as a speaking partner, and believed that it has the potential to reduce anxiety. It is because the application provides a realistic sense of speaking practice, which is similar to humans. This claim is supported by participant 1:

“The conversation feels more realistic, and it feels like I am actually talking to someone, while also matching the character I want.”

This situation also contributes to students' lower anxiety level, where Character.AI provides their favorite characters that can be selected based on their needs. As mentioned by participant 3:

“We feel like we are talking to our favorite characters, like our favorite cartoons, which makes it fun. It feels familiar and close, so we are not afraid to speak.”

As a result, most of the participant highlighted that the Character.AI serves as a valuable tool to help them more motivated and comfortable in expressing themselves, as the application is easy to use and promotes more realistic speaking activities. These findings align with the research by Silvania et al. (2025), which highlighted that most of students have experienced that AI can improve their motivation through its quick and accessible responses, making the learning process more enjoyable. Additionally, Napitupulu & Dalimunte (2025) also added that Character.AI provides more flexible and interactive learning activities that can support EFL learners' speaking development. Therefore, the present study confirms that Character.AI offers greater accessibility, flexibility, and interactive feedback, which enhance learners' motivation and engagement, thereby contributing to the reduction of EFL learners' speaking anxiety.

2. Character.AI creates a safe and non-judgmental learning environment

Most of the participants shared similar experiences through the role of Character.AI in providing a safe and non-judgmental learning environment. Participant 3 said:

“They are AI, not humans who can judge, and I feel safe and comfortable using this application. They don't criticize, but instead provide corrections, so I feel more comfortable speaking with Character.AI.”

The statement showed that Character.AI provides positive feedback that can help reduce students' anxiety and develop their speaking skills. These conditions are crucial because the learning environment can shape learners' mindsets, which

in turn influences their willingness to speak. A safe and supportive environment encourages students to express themselves more confidently during speaking practice.

Moreover, a key factor contributing to Character. AI's role as a supportive speaking partner is its design, which is specifically intended to facilitate students' speaking practice. As mentioned by participant 2:

“There is no judgment from others, and no one makes negative comments. The characters in this application are designed to respond based on human feelings, using formal and polite language. Therefore, they do not offend users, as they are specifically created to support speaking practice.”

In short, students believe that supportive learning environments is crucial for their speaking development. They perceived that Character.AI could meet their learning needs, especially by providing a safe, non-judgmental learning environment. This is because the application is designed as a valuable tool for practicing speaking and is able to perform similarly like a human by using formal and polite language. The findings align with Kim (2024), which indicated that AI chatbots provide corrective recasts, which allow them to correct users' mistakes without direct judgment, thereby contributing to the long-term improvement of students' speaking skills.

3. Character.AI increase students' confidence and willingness to speak

Most participants found that practicing speaking consistently through Character.AI help them become more confident. They highlighted that the availability of various characters in the application encourage them to continue practicing. As a result, they felt more prepared to speak with real people in the future. Participant 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 share their similar experiences, indicating that this application can be recommended as preparatory tools for speaking practice. Participant 2 claimed:

“Character.AI is very helpful in maintaining consistency in practice because it offers a wide variety of characters that we can choose from, including ones they may like. By practicing regularly with Character.AI, we gradually become more accustomed to speaking in English. As a result, consistent practice can also help increase our confidence when speaking English with others.”

The findings suggest that students develop consistency through regular interactions with their favorite characters in Character.AI. This consistency helps them become more accustomed to speaking practice, which in turn contributes to increased confidence and willingness to speak. As mentioned by participant 1 and 4:

Participant 1: *“Character.AI can also serve as an initial tool for learning English.”*

Participant 4: *“I think it is very helpful to practice consistently using Character.AI, as it helps us construct sentences and respond to conversations in English. As a result, we can feel more relaxed and better prepared when starting conversations with real people in the future.”*

The statement confirmed that Character.AI serves as a preliminary tool before students engage in real communication in English. It can function as a preventive solution to minimize negative judgments from others, which often contribute to increased speaking anxiety. Students believe that practicing through Character.AI provides a comfortable and non-judgmental environment that helps reduce their anxiety levels. As the AI enables them to practice regularly with their preferred characters, they become more prepared and confident to communicate in English with real people. The finding is in line with Napitupulu & Dalimunte (2025), which highlighted that regular interaction with Character.AI on a daily basis makes EFL learners more confident in sustaining longer conversations.

Challenges Encountered by Students

Students revealed several challenges encountered while practicing speaking with Character.AI. Most of them reported difficulties with the AI’s long responses,

which often felt unnatural, as well as issues with unstable internet connections. They also experienced difficulty in responding to extended AI-generated conversations.

Participant 1 reported: *“Character.AI is sometimes less responsive or provides overly long explanations, making the interaction feel less natural compared to real-life conversations.”* These lengthy explanations sometimes make it difficult for students to respond to the conversation. As mentioned by Participant 3: *“The challenge I encountered was that I was sometimes confused about choosing a topic, or how to respond to the AI’s long questions. Sometimes, I also felt unsure about how to construct my sentences.”* The statements indicated that not all characters available in Character.AI align with students’ learning needs. Therefore, it is important to choose appropriate characters to obtain optimal feedback.

Although some interactions may feel unnatural, students reported that the application remains comfortable to use. Participant 5 mentioned: *“Not all conversations feel like they are human, but it is still comfortable.”* On the other hand, students also reported that unstable internet connection affects Character. Ai’s ability in providing feedback. Participant 4 mentioned: *“If the internet connection is good, the application runs smoothly. However, if the connection is poor, the responses become less optimal.”* This indicated that the application requires a stable internet connection to provide feedback optimally.

These challenges align with the findings of Syafrudin & Hidayati (2025), who highlighted that AI applications are not fully accessible to all students due to limited access to technology. Some students may experience difficulties in accessing the application because of unstable internet connections. As a result, this issue leads to less optimal performance during speaking practice. In addition, AI-generated responses, particularly in longer conversations, may sometimes appear unnatural, as the application depends on the selected characters. Not all characters are able to meet users’ needs. Therefore, it is crucial for EFL learners to have a stable internet connection and to be selective in choosing appropriate characters for their speaking practice.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study provides new insights into the implementation of AI chatbots, particularly Character.AI, in language learning as a tool to help EFL learners reduce their speaking anxiety. Since many students experience anxiety, nervousness, and shyness when speaking, Character.AI offers a potential solution through its accessibility, interactive features, and responsive feedback, which support learners' speaking development. The findings reveal several benefits, including increased motivation and engagement, as the platform creates a safe and non-judgmental learning environment that encourages students' confidence and willingness to speak. However, the study also identifies several challenges encountered by EFL learners, such as lengthy and sometimes unnatural AI responses, as well as unstable internet connections, which may hinder the effectiveness of AI's feedback and overall learning performance. These indicate that the use of Character.AI cannot fully replace real human interaction, as there are aspects of communication that AI is still unable to provide compared to human interlocutors. Therefore, AI chatbots such as Character.AI are better positioned as preliminary tools that can help users become more prepared and confident before engaging in real-life communication.

In addition, this study has several limitations, including a limited number of participants and a short research duration. The study involved only five EFL learners from the same university, which restricts the generalizability of the findings and cannot represent the broader population of users of the application. Furthermore, the study was conducted over a period of only four weeks, which may not be sufficient to capture long-term effects on learners' speaking development and anxiety reduction. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve a larger number of participants from diverse backgrounds in order to obtain more comprehensive and representative results, as well as to extend the duration of the study to better examine the sustained impact of AI chatbot use on learners' speaking performance and anxiety levels.

Overall, the findings of this study were perceived positively by EFL learners, indicating that the use of Character.AI for speaking development and anxiety reduction can effectively help learners become more prepared and willing to engage in real-life communication. This study is expected to serve as a bridge for future research to further explore and maximize the potential of AI chatbots in language learning.

REFERENCES

- Azizi, F. N., & Yusuf, F. N. (2024). Language learning strategies employed by proficient EFL students in learning speaking skills. *JOALL (Journal of Applied Linguistics and Literature)*, 9(1), 84–101. <https://doi.org/10.33369/joall.v9i1.28519>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). *Using thematic analysis in psychology*. 1–41.
- Chen, M.-R. A. (2024). *The AI chatbot interaction for semantic learning: A collaborative note-taking approach with EFL students*. *Language Learning & Technology*, 28(1), 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.64152/10125/73586>
- Ebadi, S., Velayati, S., Ramezanzadeh, A., & Salman, A. R. (2025). *Exploring the impact of AI-powered speaking tasks on EFL learners' speaking performance and anxiety: An activity theory study*. *Acta Psychologica*, 259, 105391. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2025.105391>
- Elov, B., Abdullayeva, I., Raupova, L., Kholikov, A., & Mirkasimova, M. (2025). *Speaking exams with less anxiety in Intelligent Computer-Assisted Language Assessment (ICALA): Mirroring EFL learners' foreign language anxiety, shyness, autonomy, and enjoyment*. *Language Testing in Asia*, 15, Article 3. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40468-024-00340-x>
- Felisa, Utomo, S., & Romadlon, F. N. (2023). *EFL students' learning strategies in speaking: A case study of sixth semester at English Education Department, Muria Kudus University*. *Jurnal Prakarsa Paedagogia*, 6(2), 793–804. <https://doi.org/10.24176/jpp.v6i2.11843>
- Ji, H., Han, I., & Park, S. (2024). *Teaching foreign language with conversational AI: Teacher-student-AI interaction*. *Language Learning*

- & Technology, 28(2), 91-108. <https://doi.org/10.64152/10125/73573>
- Kang, S., & Sung, M. (2024). EFL students' self-directed learning of conversation skills with AI chatbots. *Language Learning & Technology*, 28(1), 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.64152/10125/73600>
- Kim, R. (2024). Effects of learner uptake following automatic corrective recast from Artificial Intelligence chatbots on the learning of English caused-motion construction. *Language Learning & Technology*, 28(2), 109-133. <https://doi.org/10.64152/10125/73574>
- Lee, D., & Palmer, E. (2025). Prompt engineering in higher education: A systematic review to help inform curricula. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 22(1), Article 7. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-025-00503-7>
- Li, R. (2024). Effects of mobile-assisted language learning on foreign language learners' speaking skill development. *Language Learning & Technology*, 28(1), 1-26. <https://doi.org/10.64152/10125/73553>
- Lopez, I. M. G., Gonzalez, C. S. G., Ramírez-Montoya, M.-S., & Molina-Espinosa, J.-M. (2025). Challenges of implementing ChatGPT in education: A systematic literature review. *Computers & Electrical Engineering*, 123, Article 109782. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jjedro.2024.100401>
- Maulana, Z. A., & Budiyo, A. (2024). Kajian komunikasi dalam sudut pandang fenomenologi: Literatur review. *Translitera: Jurnal Kajian Komunikasi dan Studi Media*, 13(2), 98-110. <https://doi.org/10.35457/translitera.v13i2.3645>
- Napitupulu, M. F., & Dalimunte, A. A. (2025). A study of students' perception of Character AI in practicing English speaking fluency. *CELTIC: A Journal of Culture, English Language Teaching, Literature and Linguistics*, 12(1), 384-404. <https://doi.org/10.22219/celtic.v12i1.40721>
- Norahmi, M., Aristia, C. F., & Mairing, J. P. (2025). Student speaking anxiety, causal factors, and recommendations: A mixed methods research. *JEELS (Journal of English Education and Linguistics Studies)*, 12(2), 843-875. <https://doi.org/10.30762/jeels.v12i2.5754>

- Pertiwi, P. C., Segoh, D., & Rohmadhani, A. (2025). Artificial intelligence in academic environments: Reducing or increasing foreign language anxiety? *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 8(1), 100–131. <https://doi.org/10.35905/inspiring.v8i1.13009>
- Silvania, T. D., Halim, A., & Khatimah, K. (2025). Students' experiences of meaningful, mindful, and joyful learning in an AI-enhanced English classroom. *JE3H: Journal of English Language, Education, Humanities, and Health*, 8(2), 20–35. <https://dx.doi.org/10.20527/jetall.v8i2.22784>
- Syafruddin, S., Hidayati, S., & Triastuti, A. (2025). A systematic literature review: The trends and challenges of AI (ChatGPT) for reading skills in ELT/L using the HHH framework. *Indonesian Journal of Integrated English Language Teaching*, 11(1), 32–44. <https://doi.org/10.24014/ijielt.v11i1.36613>
- Saputra, T. E. Y. S., Surahim, I., Syamsuddin, S., Syahwanah, N., Zakia, A. H., & Al-Maskati, K. (2026). Pentingnya menguasai Bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa internasional. *Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat Bhinneka*, 4(3), 2882–2886. <https://doi.org/10.58266/jpmb.v4i3.902>
- Tan, L. Y., Hu, S., Yeo, D. J., & Hao, K. (2025). Artificial intelligence-enabled adaptive learning platforms: A review. *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence*, 9, Article 100429. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeai.2025.100429>
- Umam, A. H., Sugiharto, S., & Manara, C. (2023). Translingual practice in remote EFL tertiary education: How multilingual speakers create translanguaging spaces. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 13(2), 258–269. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v13i2.63065>
- Wangdi, P., & Pelden, S. (2025). The role of AI chatbots in student learning: A systematic review. *Journal of Digital Learning and Education*, 5(2), 100–112. <https://doi.org/10.52562/jdle.v5i2.1694>
- Wirentake. (2025). Students' speaking anxiety in English as foreign language (EFL) classroom and their strategies to cope with it. *JETLLi: Journal of Education, Language Teaching, Linguistics and Literature*, 2(1), 31–39. <https://jurnal.uts.ac.id/index.php/jetlli/article/view/5793>
- Yalçın, Ö., & İnceçay, V. (2013). Foreign language speaking anxiety: The

case of spontaneous speaking activities. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 116, 2620–2624.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.01.623>

Zion, Y. B., Yakov, S., Abramovitch, E., Balter, G., & Davidovitch, N. (2025). AI-based teaching evaluations: How well do they reflect student perceptions? *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence*, 9, Article 100448. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeai.2025.100448>

IDENTITY OF JOURNAL/PROCEEDINGS

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Article Title | : Integrating Local Wisdom into EFL Creative Writing: Students' Perceptions of Story Based Projects |
| 2. Name of Journal | : New Language Dimension (NLD) |
| 3. ISSN | : ISSN 2746-8968 |
| 4. Accreditation Category | : SINTA 4 |
| 5. Doi/Article link | : https://journal.unesa.ac.id/index.php/nld/index |
| 6. Volume/Issue/Month/Year | Volume 7/Issue 1/June 2026 |



ARTICLE 3



Integrating Local Wisdom into EFL Creative Writing: Students' Perceptions of Story-Based Projects



Alvionita Damayanti^{1*}, Maria Arina Luardini¹, Maida Norahmi¹, Roni Kurniawan¹

¹Universitas Palangka Raya, Palangka Raya, Indonesia

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 17/04/2026

Reviewed: 30/04/2026

Accepted: 28/06/2026

Published: 29/06/2026

Keywords:

Creative writing, writing skill, local wisdom, student perceptions, English language education

ABSTRACT

This study investigated EFL students' perceptions of local wisdom-based creative writing through narrative story projects. Using a descriptive qualitative design, the study involved 22 undergraduate students from the English Education Study Program at Universitas Palangka Raya who had completed a local story project in a creative writing course. Data were collected through a closed-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Questionnaire responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while interview data were analyzed thematically. The findings revealed two major themes: perceived benefits and challenges. Students perceived local wisdom-based creative writing as beneficial for developing creativity, increasing enjoyment, providing freedom and creative space, supporting motivation, and reducing writing anxiety. Local stories helped students generate ideas, express personal experiences, and integrate cultural knowledge into narrative texts. However, students also encountered challenges, including limited imagination, low motivation, lack of self-confidence, and concerns about grammar and language accuracy. The study suggests that local story projects can provide meaningful and culturally relevant writing experiences for EFL learners, but students still need structured guidance, linguistic support, and encouragement to balance creativity, confidence, and language accuracy.

© 2026 The Author(s)

INTRODUCTION

Writing is a complex skill that involves multiple cognitive and linguistic elements and is regarded as an important competency for EFL learners (Alharthi, 2021). Writing remains an essential means of communication, enabling individuals to express ideas using the target language and opinions, exchange information, communicate feelings, and persuade others despite its cognitively demanding nature (Derakhshan & Shirejini, 2020; Ariani & Arham, 2020). However, undergraduate students often face multiple obstacles in developing this skill, which

can hinder their academic progress and educational outcomes (Taye & Mengesha, 2024). These challenges become even more pronounced in academic writing, where students frequently struggle with generating ideas, organizing essays, using appropriate vocabulary, and paraphrasing source materials (Aldayel et al., 2026; Asnas & Hidayanti, 2024). Consistent with these findings, Mahmood (2020) reported that EFL learners in higher education experienced difficulties in locating relevant references, incorporating citations appropriately, maintaining cohesion and coherence, selecting suitable topics, and using language effectively in academic writing. Beyond academic writing, EFL learners also encounter difficulties in developing and organizing ideas when producing narrative texts that require creativity, coherence, and personal expression (Falihah et al., 2022).

To address these challenges, creative writing presents as an alternative solution that provide learners with opportunities to develop their ideas, enhance linguistic expression, and improve overall writing proficiency (Bingol, 2023). Fitria (2024) explained that creative writing is a writing activity that encourages learners to express ideas, imagination, and creativity through various forms of written expression. In line with this, Mahito (2023) found that creative writing enhanced students' motivation in learning English by allowing them to express themselves more freely and by increasing their language awareness through greater attention to their own discourse. In addition, creative writing provides learners with opportunities to express personal experiences, develop their own voice, and engage more meaningfully in the writing process (Banegas & Lowe, 2021; Aitken & Graham, 2023). Therefore, creative writing stands as an innovative form of writing that emphasizes narrative, character development, personal opinions, and the use of non-formal language styles that can be beneficial to develop learners' writing skills (Fitria, 2024).

While creative writing provides opportunities for learners to develop ideas and self-expression, its educational value can be further enhanced when it is integrated with meaningful cultural contexts such as local wisdom. Local wisdom refers to knowledge, values, traditions, and cultural practices embedded within a community (Khusyairin et al., 2024). In Indonesia, integrating local wisdom into education is considered important for preserving cultural heritage and making learning more relevant to students' lives (Sulistiyowati & W, 2020; Aprianto & Sutarman, 2026). An example of classroom activities that demonstrate efforts to preserve culture through writing projects can be seen in tasks where students create written works based on local cultural theme, such as folktales. Ansoriyah et al. (2026) found that the use of digital folktales can improve students' writing skills while strengthening cultural literacy, thereby supporting cultural continuity and promoting learner-centered writing practices grounded in local values. Thus, integrating local wisdom into written forms is essential for preserving cultural heritage and socio-cultural values.

Despite its potential to support learners' cultural literacy, there is still limited research investigating the integration of local wisdom-based creative writing in fostering learners' writing skills through the creation of narrative story projects. Most previous studies have focused on employing existing folklore, legends, or local stories as teaching materials to improve students' writing skills. However, limited attention has been given to explore how students construct and express culturally grounded narratives from their own perspectives. As stated by Chen & Wang (2025), writing personal experience narratives improved EFL learners' narrative competence, particularly in terms of narrative performance and coherence. The study also revealed that such activities encouraged emotional expression and provided meaningful literacy experiences. Therefore, further investigation is needed to understand how students perceive creative writing projects that involve constructing local narratives based on their personal experiences and cultural knowledge.

Since there is still limited research on the integration of creative writing in fostering students' ability to produce narrative stories based on their personal experiences and cultural knowledge, this study aims to investigate students' perceptions of creative writing projects in producing local narrative stories to support the development of writing skills and preserve cultural heritage among EFL learners.

METHODS

Design

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to investigate students' perceptions of creative writing projects in producing local narrative stories to support the development of writing skills and preserve cultural heritage among EFL learners. A descriptive qualitative design was chosen because it focuses on students' perceptions and experiences regarding the integration of local wisdom into creative writing through story-based projects. This approach enabled the researchers to obtain rich and in-depth data about students' responses. Data were collected through questionnaires as supplementary data and semi-structured interviews as the primary source of data.

Participants

The participants of this study were 22 undergraduate students from the English Education Study Program at Universitas Palangka Raya, batch of 2022, specifically from Class A. The participants were selected using purposive sampling, with the criteria that they had previously taken a creative writing course and completed a local story project as part of the course requirements.

The Project Stages

In this study, students participated in several stages of creative writing activities. First, they worked in pairs to encourage collaboration and idea sharing. Second, they selected a story theme based on their personal experiences. Third, they transformed their experiences into fictional narrative stories while maintaining the core values and messages of the original events. Finally, they added illustrations to their stories to enhance visual appeal and support readers' understanding of the narrative.

Data Collection

The data were collected through interviews to gain deeper insights into participants' responses to the questionnaire, particularly regarding the reasons behind their agreement or disagreement. To obtain rich and detailed data, interviews were conducted with six selected students who were chosen from the questionnaire respondents. The interview process employed a structured format consisting of six predetermined questions. In addition, semi-structured techniques were applied through follow-up and probing questions that emerged during the interview to further explore participants' responses. Prior to the interview, the researchers provided participants with a list of guiding questions to help them prepare their responses. All interviews were conducted individually and audio-recorded with the participants' consent to ensure accurate data collection. The interviews were conducted in Indonesian and later translated and summarized into English. The audio recordings were then transcribed verbatim and analyzed to identify recurring themes related to students' perceptions of creative writing through local story projects.

Instruments

This study employed data triangulation by combining a questionnaire and interviews to collect comprehensive data. The questionnaire, designed using a Likert scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree,” was used to obtain an initial overview of participants’ perceptions and experiences. The questionnaire results also served as the basis for selecting interview participants. The data were organized and analyzed using Microsoft Excel to classify participants’ responses. Responses indicating agreement were marked in green, while disagreement was marked in red to facilitate data classification. Based on this classification, six participants were selected from a total of 22 students using criterion-based purposive sampling (matrix technique), representing both agreement and disagreement responses, in order to ensure balanced data and provide more comprehensive insights into the research topic.

Thematic Analysis for Qualitative Data

The data in this study were analyzed using qualitative-supported-by-survey. The quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify the distribution of participants’ responses. The results were presented in the form of percentages to show the frequency of responses, such as “strongly agree,” “agree,” “disagree,” and “strongly disagree.” Meanwhile, the qualitative data obtained from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. The researchers transcribed the interview recordings verbatim and then conducted coding to identify significant statements. These statements were categorized into themes to capture students’ perceptions of creative writing through local story projects. Furthermore, the findings from the questionnaire and interviews were integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the data.

Ethics

This study ensured the safety and comfort of all participants throughout the research process. Prior to data collection, the researchers obtained participants’ consent for the data collection procedures, including interviews conducted through

audio recordings. Participants' identities were kept confidential and anonymized to protect their privacy. All data collected in this study were used only for academic purposes.

FINDINGS

Based on the data analysis, two main themes were identified in this study: (1) the benefits of local wisdom-based creative writing and (2) the challenges encountered by students during the writing process. These themes emerged from the students' interview perspectives and were used to provide a comprehensive understanding of their experiences and perceptions regarding local wisdom-based creative writing activities.

The Benefits

1. Creative development

Most of the students reported that their creativity in writing had developed throughout the project. It is because creative writing activities give them a space to explore the ideas more freely. As confirmed by informant 2: *"Creative writing through local story projects helps me develop my creativity because I can take ideas from stories or cultures around me. From there, I can develop the plot, characters, and background, making the story more interesting. I feel creative because I can expand and transform the original story into something different."* The finding demonstrates that engaging with local story projects provided students with meaningful inspiration while encouraging them to think creatively and express their ideas more imaginatively.

2. Enjoyment in writing

Compared to other academic assignments, most students reported being more actively engaged in creative writing activities. They perceived creative writing as a more enjoyable and flexible process, as it enabled them to create stories based on their imagination without the constraints of strict academic requirements. This view

was supported by the statement of Informant 2: *"Yes, I think creative writing is more enjoyable because it is more interesting than regular writing assignments. The topics are related to stories or cultures that I am already familiar with, which makes it easier for me to come up with ideas and feel less pressured when writing. In other writing tasks, especially academic ones, I often feel burdened because they are more formal and demanding. However, in creative writing, I have the freedom to create and develop stories, which makes the activity more enjoyable for me since I do not feel as pressured."* This finding suggests that creative writing activities increased students' engagement by providing a more enjoyable and less restrictive learning experience. Unlike traditional academic writing tasks, creative writing allowed students to express their ideas freely and draw upon familiar cultural themes, which reduced the pressure commonly associated with academic writing.

3. Freedom in writing

Most of the students felt more free to express their ideas creatively and incorporate words, expressions, and cultural elements drawn from their own cultural knowledge. As highlighted by informant 6: *"In creative writing I can use some language that cannot normally be used in academic writing, and I can also adjust the structure or grammar so that the story feels more realistic and fits the local story that already exists. So, it doesn't feel like we always have to be formal. Instead, we can make the characters feel more alive. Therefore, in my opinion, creative writing is more flexible than academic writing. With my imagination and personal ideas, I combine them so that it becomes a story that is truly authentic or according to what I want."* This statement confirms that local wisdom-based creative writing helps students use certain terms and expressions that are not typically used in academic writing. They also believed that this freedom in writing activities made their narrative stories more vivid and engaging.

4. Creative space

Most of the students reported that participating in creative writing activities provided them with greater opportunities to express their personal experiences.

They were able to draw inspiration from their childhood memories and incorporate elements of their local environment into their narratives, making the stories more meaningful and personally relevant. Informant 4 said:

“So, in creative writing, we have more freedom to shape our stories. For example, we can insert our personal experiences, such as memories or childhood moments, into the story and then develop them to make the story more interesting. We can also add elements from our surroundings, like local aspects or people around us, but with different fates or storylines from the real ones. However, those elements are still present in the story and can simply be further developed.”

(Informant 4)

Although creative writing activities provide students with opportunities to write about their positive memories, they also enable students to reflect on difficult experiences, such as bullying. Through the writing process, students can express their feelings, share personal experiences, and transform negative experiences into meaningful stories. As confirmed by Informant 6, creative writing provided her with a space to motivate herself and inspire others who may have faced similar challenges. He said:

“Some of the personal experiences I have included are times when I experienced bullying and had to struggle with many people in order to survive in that school. So, I incorporated that into my story. What I mean by ‘struggle’ is not physical fighting, but rather defending myself by studying more, making more friends, and so on. I included those experiences in my creative writing, but with additional imagination, I developed the plot to make myself appear braver, even though in reality it wasn’t exactly like that.”

(Informant 6)

The findings highlight that creative writing provided students with opportunities to share their personal experiences, ranging from childhood memories to challenging experiences such as bullying. This indicates that local wisdom-based creative writing encouraged students to write their own narrative stories in a more enjoyable way and to inspire others by integrating their personal experiences with elements of local culture and knowledge.

5. Motivational support

Several students highlighted that creative writing activities were enjoyable because they were not constrained by strict academic rules. As a result, their motivation to write increased. As confirmed by informant 2: *“In my opinion, this activity quite influences my motivation to write because the topic is interesting and related to local culture. Perhaps that is what makes me more interested in trying to write stories with more creative ideas.”*

However, some students reported that the project did not fully motivate them to write because they believed that motivation primarily comes from personal intention rather than external activities. Although they considered the creative writing activities enjoyable and engaging, they still found it difficult to maintain their motivation throughout the writing process. As stated by Informant 4: *“In my opinion, both foreign and local stories are not always interesting, although sometimes they can be more varied. So, I think motivation in writing is influenced by our own intention.”*

The findings showed that not all students reported the same experience. Some of them stated that creative writing activities helped increase their motivation to write narrative stories, while others believed that motivation primarily comes from their own intrinsic factors. However, most of the students confirmed that creative writing activities were enjoyable and engaging.

6. Reducing anxiety

Several students reported that creative writing activities help them become more confident in writing narrative stories. The projects provide them to write based on their personal experiences and combining it with cultural elements to make it more engaging. As a result, they are not afraid of making mistake again. As mentioned by informant 3: *"We created a fictional story, but we incorporated elements of Kalimantan culture, such as akar bajakah, tameng talawang, and others. So, I am not too worried about making mistakes."*

Moreover, the students also explained that another reason they became more confident was that creative writing gave them new insight that writing does not always need to be formal or perfectly structured, which encouraged them to write with greater confidence. Informant 6 said: *"Writing does not always have to be formal, and the structure does not always have to be perfect. Instead, we can express our imagination and experiences in a story, especially by incorporating local cultural elements."*

The integration of local wisdom elements into narrative story projects helped students become more confident and reduced their anxiety in writing. It also provided opportunities for them to introduce their local culture to readers and contribute to the preservation of local cultural heritage. Moreover, students felt that local wisdom-based creative writing activities helped them realize that writing does not always have to be perfect. Instead, they could express their imagination and cultural knowledge freely, making their narrative stories more meaningful.

Challenges

1. Limited imagination in story development

Limited imagination was one of the challenges encountered by students during the creative writing process. Several students reported difficulties in generating and developing original ideas, particularly when they were expected to create narratives independently. This view was supported by the statement of Informant 1: *"For me, the freedom in creative writing actually makes me feel more constrained because my imagination is limited, it becomes difficult to develop ideas. When I look at references, it no longer feels like my own imagination, but rather someone else's."* This finding suggests that the freedom offered by creative writing does not necessarily make the writing process easier for all students. While creative writing encourages originality and self-expression, some students experienced difficulties in generating and developing ideas due to limitations in their imagination. As a result, they often relied on external sources for inspiration, which sometimes led them to question the originality and authenticity of their own work.

2. Lack of self-confidence in writing

Most of the students reported feeling uncertain about the quality of their ideas and writing, particularly when comparing their work with that of their peers. As a result, they sometimes doubted their own creativity and became less confident in expressing their ideas through writing. This perspective was reflected in the statement of Informant 1: *"When I see my classmates' work, I sometimes feel that my imagination is not as good as theirs. It makes me feel less confident about my own writing. I understand that creative writing is intended to provide freedom, but seeing other students produce more creative stories sometimes lowers my confidence. As a result, I tend to compare my writing with others."* This finding suggests that peer comparison played a significant role in shaping students' confidence during the writing process. While creative writing encouraged students to express their imagination freely, some students became hesitant when they perceived their peers' work as more creative. Consequently, feelings of self-doubt reduced their confidence in their own ideas and writing abilities.

3. Low writing motivation

The interview findings indicated that creative writing activities did not significantly increase the motivation of all participants. Some students reported that their engagement in the project was mainly driven by academic obligations rather than an intrinsic interest in writing. As stated by Informant 3: *"From the beginning, I wrote because it was an assignment for the course, not because of my own desire to write."*

Similarly, some students explained that writing was not one of their strengths or preferred activities. Consequently, the project had only a limited impact on their willingness to write. This perspective was reflected in the statement of Informant 6: *"Because writing is not one of my main strengths or my most prominent skills, I honestly do not really enjoy writing. Therefore, creative writing has not significantly influenced my motivation to write more."*

This finding suggests that creative writing activities do not automatically increase students' motivation to write. Although the project provided opportunities for creativity and self-expression, some students remained primarily motivated by academic requirements rather than personal interest. For students who did not view writing as one of their strengths or preferred activities, the creative writing project had only a limited influence on their willingness to engage in writing beyond the course requirements.

4. Concerns about grammar and language structure

Some students reported experiencing concerns about grammar and language structure during the creative writing process. Although creative writing allowed them to express their ideas more freely, they remained worried about making mistakes in grammar, sentence construction, and language use. This concern was reflected in the statement of Informant 2: *"I still feel quite worried about making mistakes when writing stories, especially mistakes in language use or sentence structure, such as grammar."* This finding indicates that concerns about language accuracy remained a significant challenge for some students during the creative

writing process. Although creative writing emphasizes imagination and self-expression, some students still paid considerable attention to grammatical correctness and sentence structure. As a result, worries about making linguistic errors sometimes affected their confidence and created additional pressure when developing their stories.

DISCUSSION

This section discusses the findings of the present study by relating them to previous studies and relevant theories. The purpose is to support and interpret the findings obtained from the participants' perspectives. The discussion is organized around the two main themes identified in this study: (1) the benefits of local wisdom-based creative writing and (2) the challenges encountered by students during the writing process.

The benefits of local wisdom-based creative writing

Regarding creative skill development, the findings of this study revealed that students perceived local wisdom-based creative writing as an effective medium for enhancing their creativity. Most of the students reported that local stories and cultural elements provided meaningful sources of inspiration that helped them develop important narrative components, including plot, characters, and setting. Through the integration of local wisdom, students were able to explore ideas more creatively while constructing stories that reflected their cultural knowledge and experiences. This finding aligns with previous studies by Lekawael et al (2025), which found that students perceived that the integration of local wisdom enhanced their creative abilities, highlighting the educational benefits of incorporating local cultural content into learning activities.

In terms of enjoyment in writing, most participants reported that creative writing activities were more enjoyable compared to traditional academic writing. The freedom to use their own ideas and imagination without strict adherence to formal structures contributed to a more engaging, flexible, and less restrictive

writing experience. This condition allowed students to explore their thoughts more openly and reduced the pressure commonly associated with academic writing conventions, such as rigid structure, grammar accuracy, and formal language use. The findings relevant to Park (2020) and Mardiningrum et al. (2024), creative writing activities enhance students' positive attitudes toward writing by increasing engagement, and providing greater opportunities for self-expression. As a result, students tend to perceive creative writing as a more enjoyable compared to traditional academic writing tasks.

In relation to freedom in writing, most students perceived creative writing as a flexible medium that allowed them to express their ideas, imagination, and cultural knowledge more freely. Unlike academic writing, which is often constrained by formal structures, strict grammar rules, and academic conventions, creative writing provided students with opportunities to experiment with language and storytelling. This is in line with the previous study by Vicol et al. (2024) and Randolph (2023), creative writing encourages learner autonomy through freedom in linguistic choices, narrative structure, and stylistic expression. The flexibility offered by creative writing enables students to explore their own ideas and express themselves in more meaningful ways.

In the context of creative space, the findings revealed that creative writing provided students with meaningful opportunities to express their personal experiences and imagination more freely. Most of the students reported, they were able to draw inspiration from their own lives, including childhood memories, daily experiences, and challenges they had encountered. By integrating these experiences into their stories, students were able to create narratives that were more personal, authentic, and emotionally engaging. This result aligns with the study conducted by Randolph (2023) who argues that when students write based on personal experiences and emotions, they engage in a meaningful process that supports self-discovery and deeper expression. The findings suggest that creative writing allows students not only to construct fictional narratives but also to reflect on their lived experiences and transform them into meaningful stories. However, one important

consideration is that the project should promote a respectful and supportive environment for all narrative stories written by students. This is essential to ensure that students do not lose confidence as a result of comparing their work with that of their peers.

Regarding motivational support, the findings indicate that creative writing through local story projects served as a motivating factor for many students. The integration of local cultural themes and the opportunity to express creative ideas made the writing process more engaging and meaningful. As a result, several participants reported increased interest in writing and greater willingness to develop their stories creatively. Several students appeared to be more motivated because they were encouraged to explore topics that were familiar and personally relevant to them. The incorporation of local stories and cultural elements allowed participants to connect their writing with their own backgrounds and experiences, making the writing process more meaningful. Furthermore, the opportunity to develop original storylines and express their creativity gave students a greater sense of ownership over their work. These factors may have contributed to their increased interest and enthusiasm in completing the writing tasks. This is relevant with the previous study by Banegas & Lowe (2021), who reported that participation in creative writing increased learners' motivation and engagement by providing meaningful, student-centered writing experiences.

In terms of reducing anxiety, several participants reported that the opportunity to write based on personal experiences and integrate local cultural elements made the writing process feel more familiar and enjoyable. As a result, they were less concerned about making mistakes and more willing to express their ideas freely. Furthermore, students explained that creative writing changed their perception of writing by helping them realize that writing does not always need to be highly formal or perfectly structured. This understanding reduced the pressure often associated with academic writing and encouraged them to focus more on communicating their ideas creatively. The integration of local wisdom also contributed to this process, as students were writing about topics that were familiar

and meaningful to them. The finding aligns with Lee & Yoon (2023), who found that students perceived familiar topics as easier to write about, suggesting that familiarity can facilitate the writing process. In addition, Suprianto & Sutarman, (2026) reported that the integration of local wisdom elements can enhance students' engagement in writing activities. The combination of familiar topics and local wisdom elements may help EFL learners reduce the pressure often associated with academic writing, making the writing process more meaningful and accessible.

Challenges Encountered by Students During the Writing Process

Although students perceived various benefits from local wisdom-based creative writing activities, they also encountered several challenges throughout the writing process. Some students encountered difficulties related to idea generation, self-confidence, writing motivation, and concerns about grammar and language structure. These challenges suggest that while creative writing provides opportunities for self-expression and creativity, not all students experience the process in the same way.

Regarding limited imagination in story development, several participants reported difficulties in generating and expanding ideas when writing creative stories. Although creative writing provides opportunities for self-expression and imagination, some students felt that they lacked the creativity needed to develop original storylines, characters, and plot developments. This happened because some students felt that their imagination was stimulated by both local wisdom elements and the integration of AI. They perceived that AI helped them expand their ideas and develop it into more structured and well-developed narrative stories. *"From the AI-generated ideas, I further developed them according to my own preferences. So, it was partly AI and partly my own creativity."* (Informant 3). The difficulties encounter by students aligns to George & Lasher (2024) emphasized that idea generation is influenced by individual differences. As a result, some students may encounter greater difficulties in producing and developing creative ideas than others. In addition, Febriana et al. (2023) reported that a lack of ideas is one of the major challenges encountered by students in creative writing. Students often

struggle to generate and expand ideas, which can limit their ability to develop creative and original narratives. The findings suggest that while creative writing encourages imagination and creativity, some learners may require additional support and guidance, such as AI-assisted tools, to develop their ideas more effectively. This finding is consistent with Chen (2024), who indicated that maintaining a balance between the use of AI technology and narrative elements is essential for fostering creativity in writing. By combining technological support with culturally relevant content, students can enhance both their creative expression and their ability to organize ideas in a meaningful way.

In terms of lack of self-confidence in writing, most of the students felt uncertain about the quality of their writing and were concerned that their ideas might not be as interesting or well-developed as those of their peers. Peer comparison also emerged as a factor influencing students' self-confidence. When students perceived their classmates as having better writing skills or more creative ideas, they tended to underestimate their own abilities. Such comparisons sometimes led them to question the value of their ideas and become less confident in their writing. These feelings often made them hesitant to express their ideas fully during the writing process. Although creative writing provides greater freedom for self-expression, not all students felt confident in utilizing that freedom effectively. As a result, they were more likely to hesitate, revise excessively, or rely on external sources for reassurance before completing their work. This finding aligns with the previous study by Mitchell et al. (2021), who emphasized that writing self-efficacy is influenced not only by individual abilities but also by the social and learning environment. As students interact with their peers, they may evaluate their own writing abilities in relation to others, which can affect their confidence in writing. This finding also aligns with Cui et al. (2021), who highlighted that writing self-efficacy, or confidence in one's writing ability, plays a crucial role in writing performance. Students who perceive others as more capable writers may become less confident in their own abilities, which can discourage them from expressing their ideas freely.

In the context of low writing motivation, the findings revealed that creative writing activities did not necessarily increase students' motivation to write. Although creative writing provided opportunities for creativity and self-expression, some students remained primarily motivated by academic requirements rather than personal interest in writing. For these students, participation in the creative writing project was driven more by the need to complete course assignments than by an intrinsic desire to engage in writing activities. This finding is consistent with Alzubi & Nazim (2024) who emphasized the importance of intrinsic motivation in EFL writing. Their study found that students were more motivated to write when they were able to engage with topics that matched their personal interests and preferences. In addition, Al-Shboul et al. (2023) found that learner autonomy was positively associated with intrinsic motivation in EFL writing. However, autonomy alone may not be sufficient to enhance motivation when students do not perceive writing as an enjoyable or personally meaningful activity. Thus, students who lacked personal interest in writing tended to demonstrate lower levels of motivation. A similar perspective was expressed by Informant 4, who stated, *"I think writing motivation is influenced by our own personal interest and intention, not simply by whether the story is local or foreign."* This suggests that students' motivation to write is shaped more by their individual interests than by the source or cultural background of the writing topic itself. As a result, the local wisdom-based creative writing project had only a limited influence on the motivation of some students to engage in writing beyond the course requirements. These findings indicate that activities designed to promote creativity may not automatically enhance motivation for students who do not perceive writing as one of their strengths or preferred activities.

In relation to concerns about grammar and language structure, the findings revealed that language accuracy remained an important concern for some students despite the flexible nature of creative writing activities. Although creative writing encourages students to focus on imagination and self-expression, some students continued to pay considerable attention to grammar, sentence construction, and appropriate language use. This finding suggests that students may still associate

successful writing with linguistic accuracy, even when engaging in less formal writing tasks. This finding aligns with Fan & Wang (2024) who found that perceived writing difficulty and writing anxiety are important factors affecting EFL students' writing performance. Concerns about grammar and sentence structure may therefore create additional pressure for learners, even in relatively flexible writing activities such as creative writing. As a result, students may become more focused on avoiding linguistic errors than on developing and expressing their creative ideas. This tendency can limit the benefits of creative writing, as students may hesitate to experiment with language and fully explore their imagination. Therefore, although creative writing provides greater freedom for self-expression, some students may still require linguistic support and constructive feedback to help them balance language accuracy with creativity during the writing process.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study reveals that local wisdom-based creative writing activities make meaningful contributions to students' writing development, particularly in generating ideas and incorporating cultural elements into narrative stories. Local wisdom-based creative writing provided meaningful opportunities for students to develop their creativity, enjoy the writing process, express their ideas more freely, utilize personal experiences as sources of inspiration, increase motivation, and reduce writing anxiety. The integration of local cultural elements enabled students to create narratives that reflected their cultural knowledge and experiences while making the writing process more meaningful and engaging. However, the findings also indicated that some students encountered several challenges during the writing process. These challenges included limited imagination in story development, lack of self-confidence, low writing motivation, and concerns about grammar and language structure. The findings suggest that while local wisdom-based creative writing can support creativity and self-expression, its effectiveness may vary depending on students' individual characteristics, interests, confidence levels, and writing abilities. Therefore,

educators should provide appropriate guidance, encouragement, and linguistic support to help students maximize the benefits of creative writing while overcoming the challenges they encounter during the writing process. Future studies may investigate the implementation of local wisdom-based creative writing in different educational contexts or explore instructional strategies that can further enhance students' creativity, motivation, and writing confidence.

REFERENCES

- Aitken, A. A., & Graham, S. (2023). Perceptions of Choice in Writing of University Students. *Journal of Writing Research (JoWR)*, 15(2), 225–332. <https://doi.org/10.17239/jowr-2023.15.02.03>
- Al-, O. K., Shboul, M, L., Rababah, Ala'Eddin, Banikalef, A., Issa, M., & Mehawesh. (2023). Role of learner autonomy in intrinsic motivation in EFL writing Othman. *International Journal of English Language and Literature Studies*, 12(2), 107–116. <https://doi.org/10.55493/5019.v12i2.4756>
- Aldayel, H. S., Pravitasari, H., & Fadillah, N. (2026). Factors Affecting Academic Writing Difficulties among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) University Students Hessah. *Acta Psychologica*, 263, 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2026.106250>
- Alharthi, S. (2021). From Instructed Writing to Free-Writing : A Study of EFL Learners. *SAGE Open*, 11(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440211007112>
- Alzubi, A. A. F., & Nazim, M. (2024). Students ' Intrinsic Motivation in EFL Academic Writing : Topic-based Interest in Focus. *Heliyon*, 10(1), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e24169>
- Ansoriyah, S., Sarifah, I., Oktaviani, R., & Muawanah, U. (2026). Contextual Learning for Sustainable Education Using Digital Folktale Materials. *Discover Sustainability*, 7(1), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43621-026-02956-w>
- Aprianto, D., & Sutarman. (2026). Integrating Local Cultural Content to Enhance EFL Students' Collaborative Writing: An Explanatory Sequential Mixed-Methods Study. *JOLLT Journal of Languages and Language Teaching*, 14(2), 421–436. <https://doi.org/10.33394/jollt.v14i2.18102>

- Banegas, D. L., & Lowe, R. J. (2021). Creative Writing for Publication : An Action Research Study of Motivation , Engagement , and Language Development in Argentinian Secondary Schools. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching (SSLLT)*, 11(3), 401–421. <https://doi.org/10.14746/ssllt.2021.11.3.5>
- Bingol, M. (2023). The Role of Creative Writing in Developing Language Proficiency. *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies*, 10(3), 355–361. <https://doi.org/10.23918/ijsses.v10i3p355>
- Chen, H., & Wang, Y. (2025). The Effects of Personal Experience Narrative Writing on EFL Learners' Narrative Competence Development. *Language Teaching Research (SAGE Journals)*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688251387317>
- Chen, Y. (2024). Perceptions of AI-facilitated Creativity in Language Education : A Study on Digital Storytelling. *The JALT CALL Journal*, 20(3), 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.29140/jaltcall.v20n3.2089>
- Cui, Y., Schunn, C. D., Gai, X., Jiang, Y., & Wang, Z. (2021). Effects of Trained Peer vs . Teacher Feedback on EFL Students ' Writing Performance , Self-Efficacy , and Internalization of Motivation. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.788474>
- Derakhshan, A., & Shirejini, R. K. (2020). An Investigation of the Iranian EFL Learners ' Perceptions Towards the Most Common Writing Problems. *SAGE Open*, 10(2), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244020919523>
- Falihah, N., Rahmawati, E., & Baihaqi, A. (2022). EFL Students ' Difficulties in Writing Narrative Text. *JELTS (Journal of English Language Teaching and Cultural Studies)*, 5(1), 77–90. <https://doi.org/10.48181/jelts.v5i1.15026>
- Fan, C., & Wang, J. (2024). Configurational Impact of Self - Regulated Writing Strategy , Writing Anxiety , and Perceived Writing Difficulty on EFL Writing Performance : An fsQCA Approach. *Scientific Reports*, 14(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-024-61537-x>
- Febriana, M., Yusuf, M., & Subagya. (2023). I Don't Know The Words : Teacher Narratives on Student Challenges in Creative Writing (Evidence from Bone , South Sulawesi). *Mahakarya: Student's Journal of Cultural Sciences*, 4(2), 29–36. <https://doi.org/10.22515/msjcs.v4i2.8089>
- Fitria, T. N. (2024). Creative Writing Skills in English : Develop Students ' Potential and Creativity. *EBONY: Journal of English Language Teaching, Linguistics, and Literature*, 4(1), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.37304/ebony.v4i1.10908>
- George, T., & Lasher, K. (2024). Limited Imagination: Effects of Constraints and

- Individual Differences in Working Memory Capacity on Idea Generation. *Creativity Research Journal*, 36(4), 617–628. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10400419.2023.2182038>
- Jeong-Won, L., & Kyeong-Ok, Y. (2023). The Effects of Topic Familiarity and Language Proficiency on EFL Learners' Writing Quality. *The Journal of Studies in Language*, 39(3), 335–347. <https://doi.org/10.18627/jslg.39.3.202311.335>
- Khusyairin, Sa'ud, U. S., Sururi, & Hartini, N. (2024). Integrating Local Wisdom Into Learning in School's Curriculum: A bibliometric analysis. *Inovasi Kurikulum*, 21(4), 2155–2172. <https://doi.org/10.17509/jik.v21i4.75667>
- Lekawael, R., Que, S. R., Aritonang, P., & Ngadjien, S. A. (2025). Students' Perception on Incorporating Local Wisdom into Creative Writing Class: Impressions and Facts. *MATAI: International Journal of Language Education*, 6(1), 115–132. <https://doi.org/10.30598/matail.v6i1.23211>
- Mahito, K. (2023). Creative Writing Learning Benefits and Effective Teaching Methods in Japanese University EFL Classroom. *SELES Journal (Shikoku English Language Education Society Journal)*, 43, 57–66. https://doi.org/10.32276/seles.43.0_57
- Mahmood, K. (2020). Academic Writing Challenges of EFL Learners and Teachers' Proficiency in Pakistani Higher Education. *Journal of Research in Social Sciences (JRSS) V*, 8(2), 56–76. <https://doi.org/10.52015/jrss.8i2.55>
- Mitchell, K. M., Mcmillan, D. E., Lobchuk, M. M., Nickel, N. C., Rabbani, R., & Li, J. (2021). Development and Validation of The Situated Academic Writing Self-Efficacy Scale (SAWSES). *Assessing Writing*, 48, 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asw.2021.100524>
- Park, J. (2020). Benefits of Freewriting in an EFL Academic Writing Classroom. *ELT Journal*, 74(3), 318–326. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccaa018>
- Randolph, P. T. (2023). Breathing Enlightenment and Necessary Change into English Language Programs with Creative Writing. *Lublin Studies in Modern Languages and Literature*, 47(3), 93–105. <https://doi.org/10.17951/lsmll.2023.47.3.93-105>
- Sulistiyowati, T., & W, S. S. (2020). Introducing Local Wisdom Through Narrative: Teaching English in Higher Education. *Indonesian EFL Journal (IEFLJ)*, 6(1), 81–88. <https://doi.org/10.25134/ieflj.v6i1.2641.Received>
- Taye, T., & Mengesha, M. (2024). Identifying and Analyzing Common English

Writing Challenges Among Regular Undergraduate Students. *Heliyon*, 10(17), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e36876>

Vicol, M.-I., Gavrilut, M.-L., & 4, L. M. (2024). A Quasi-Experimental Study on the Development of Creative Writing Skills in Primary School Students. *Education Sciences*, 14(1), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14010091>

APPENDIXES

Appendix 1

Consultation Card



KEMENTERIAN PENDIDIKAN TINGGI, SAINS, DAN TEKNOLOGI
UNIVERSITAS PALANGKA RAYA
FAKULTAS KEGURUAN DAN ILMU PENDIDIKAN
JURUSAN BAHASA DAN SENI

PROGRAM STUDI PENDIDIKAN BAHASA INGGRIS
Kampus UPR Tunjung Nyabao Jalan Yos Sudarso, Palangka Raya Kalimantan Tengah (73111)
Email: guphi@upr.ac.id | Laman: www.guphi.upr.ac.id

KARTU KONSULTASI PEMBIMBINGAN TUGAS AKHIR

Nama Mahasiswa : Roni Kurniawan

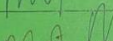
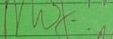
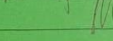
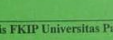
NIM : 223010201008

Jenis Tugas Akhir : Skripsi/Protype/Proyek/Jurnal
(Jurnal/Prosiding/Magang/Portofolio*)

Judul Tugas Akhir :

Pembimbing I : Maidi Norahmi, M.Pd.

Pembimbing II : Dr. Ahmad Fauzan, S.Pd., M.Pd.

No.	HARI/TANGGAL	MATERI KONSULTASI	SARAN PEMBIMBING	TANDA TANGAN PEMBIMBING
1	Senin, 2 Juni 2023	Konsultasi mengenai Perencanaan Tugas Akhir berupa Jurnal Artikel	Ditelaah Perencanaan artikel, haruslah membuat kerangka penelitian dari umum ke spesifik.	
2	Senin, 28 Januari 2023	Konsultasi Perencanaan Artikel ilmiah Bagian Introduction dan Theoretical Review	Untuk bagian intro & litrev disarankan merujuk artikel penelitian terbaru di Sinta dan Scopus.	
3	Rabu, 21 Januari 2023	Konsultasi mengenai Metode Penelitian	Phenomenological approach harus mengemukakan permasalahan nyata dari masalah.	
4	Rabu, 28 Januari 2023	Konsultasi mengenai Metode dan Teknik Penelitian	Ditelaah Pengambilan data kuesioner & interview, harus merumuskan pertanyaan lebih terarah.	
5	Kamis, 16 April 2023	Konsultasi mengenai artikel Pertama (Findings and Discussion)	Untuk bagian Findings, jelaskan bagian Findings dan Findings bisa berupa narasi tidak tabel.	
6	Senin, 20 April 2023	Konsultasi mengenai artikel kedua (menentukan Jurnal tujuan dan Standar Penulisan)	Disarankan untuk mempublikasikan Artikel di Jurnal Kuesioner Bahasa Inggris, minimal Sinta 5.	
7	Kamis, 28 April 2023	Konsultasi bagian dan disamping terkait hasil revisi dari Jurnal untuk Artikel Pertama	Pastikan semua bagian sudah direvisi sesuai arahan dari reviewer Jurnal.	

[illegible]

Appendix 2

Final Project Supervisor Appointment Letter

 KEMENTERIAN PENDIDIKAN TINGGI, SAINS,
DAN TEKNOLOGI
UNIVERSITAS PALANGKA RAYA
FAKULTAS KEGURUAN DAN ILMU PENDIDIKAN
Kampus UPR Tunjung Nyaho Jalan Hendrik Timang
Kalimantan Tengah - Palangka Raya (73111)
Email : fkup@upr.ac.id Web : www.fkip.upr.ac.id

SURAT PENUNJUKAN PEMBIMBING TUGAS AKHIR
Nomor : 262/UN24.3/DT/2026

Berdasarkan surat dari Ketua Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FKIP UPR Nomor 460UN24.3.3.1/DT/2026 Tanggal 04 Mei 2026 tentang Usulan Permohonan Penerbitan Dosen Pembimbing Tugas Akhir Mahasiswa, maka Dekan FKIP Universitas Palangka Raya menunjuk :

1. Nama : Maida Norahmi, M.Pd.
NIP : 19891012 201504 2 001
Pangkat / Golongan : Penata Tk.I, III/d
Jabatan : Lektor
Sebagai : Pembimbing I
2. Nama : Dr. Akhmad Fauzan, M.Pd.
NIP : 19810612 200501 1 002
Pangkat / Golongan : Penata Tk.I /IIId
Jabatan : Lektor
Sebagai : Pembimbing II

Dalam penulisan Tugas Akhir Mahasiswa

Nama : Roni Kurniawan
NIM : 223010201008
Program Studi : Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris
Jurusan : Pendidikan Bahasa dan Seni
Jenis Tugas Akhir : Jurnal Ilmiah
Judul Tugas Akhir :

1. STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE BENEFITS OF USING CHARACTER.AI FOR SPEAKING PRACTICE; 2. STUDENTS PERCEPTIONS OF USING CHARACTER.AI IN REDUCING SPEAKING ANXIETY; 3. STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF CREATIVE WRITING THROUGH LOCAL STORY PROJECTS

Demikian surat penunjukan ini disampaikan agar dilaksanakan sebagaimana mestinya

11 Mei 2026
a.n. Dekan
Wakil Dekan Bidang Akademik,
Eli Karlani
NIP. 19800605 200501 2 004

Tembusan :
1. Ketua Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa dan Seni
2. Koordinator Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris

Appendix 3

LOA (Letter of Acceptance)

Article 1



Journal of English Language and Education
ISSN 2597- 6850 (Online), 2502-4132 (Print)
Journal Homepage: <https://jele.or.id/index.php/jele/index>
Email: jele.universitaspahlawan@gmail.com, lusimarlenihz@gmail.com

Article

LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE

No. 2398/JELE/IV/2026

Journal of English Language and Education (JELE)

Journal of English Language and Education (JELE) editorial team at University of Pahlawan Tuanku Tambusai (UP) declared that the manuscript with the following information:

Title : **Students' Perceptions of the Benefits of Using Character.AI for Speaking Practice**
Author : **Roni Kurniawan, Maida Norahmi, Akhmad Fauzan, Alvionita Damayanti**
Affiliation : ¹²³⁴Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan, Universitas Palangka Raya, Indonesia

Has been **Accepted** for publication in Journal of English Language and Education (JELE) Volume 11 Number 2 in 2026.

Bangkinang, 22nd April 2026
Editor in Chief


Lusi Marleni

Article 2



Jl. Sutomo Ujung No.28 D, Durian, Kec. Medan Tim., Kota
Medan, Sumatera Utara 20235
WhatsApp 0878-6950-2631
admin@formasapublisher.org

LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE (LOA)

Nomor: 09.16648/FCG-JLDL/VI/2026

This is to certify that,

Name : Roni Kurniawan, Maida Norahmi, Akhmad Fauzan, Alvionita Damayanti,
Lesly Martha Cecylia Meka

Manuscript Title: Students' Perceptions of using Character.AI in Reducing Speaking
Anxiety

has been successfully accepted for publication Vol.5, No.2, September 2026. The
manuscript has passed the editor screening and if revision needs to be conducted
according to review results, author (s) are responsible to revise accordingly. The article
will be available online on September, 2026

If you require more information regarding the publication, please feel free to send me
an email at jenpenghuang25@gmail.com. Thank you very much.

Faithfully yours,
Medan, June 17, 2026



Nia D Simanjutak

Managing Editor
Journal of Language Development and
Linguistics (JLDL)



Scan this QR Code to
check the originality of
this LOA

Journal of Language Development and Linguistics (JLDL) has been widely indexed and listed by:
1. [SINTA 3](#), 2. [EBSCO](#), 3. [Google Scholar](#), 4. [COPERNICUS INTERNATIONAL \(ICI VALUE 2023: 84.56\)](#), 5. [Dimensions](#), 6.
[Directory of Research Journals Indexing](#), 7. [CrossRef \(DOI\)](#), 8. [BASE \(Bielefeld Academic Search Engine\)](#), 8.
[ResearchBib](#), 9. [WorldCat](#), 10. [Scilit](#), 11. [ROOT INDEXING](#), 12. [GARUDA](#), 13. [IUPUI Library](#), 14. [CiteFactor](#), 15. [Eurasian
Scientific Journal Index](#), 16. [Global Index for Continuing Resources](#), 17. [Sherpa/Romeo](#)



Article 3



Address:
Faculty of Languages and Arts
T2 Building 2nd floor,
State University of Surabaya, Lidah Wetan Campus
W: <https://journal.unesa.ac.id/index.php/nld/index>
E: newdimensions@unesa.ac.id

Surabaya, 26 June 2026

ACCEPTANCE LETTER

Dear authors,

Alvionita Damayanti, Maria Arina Luardini, Maida Norahmi, Roni Kurniawan

It is a great pleasure to inform you that, after peer review process, your manuscript

ID : **52902**

Title : **Integrating Local Wisdom into Creative Writing: EFL Students' Perceptions of Story-Based Projects**

has been accepted for publication in the journal of **New Language Dimensions** managed by English Department, Universitas Negeri Surabaya (ISSN: 2746-8968) in regular issue of **Volume 7 Number 1 June 2026**.

As an open access journal, all published content is made permanently and freely available online worldwide under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license. To move your manuscript forward into production (copyediting, typesetting, and digital archiving), the required Article Processing Charge (APC) must be settled. An itemized invoice detailing the publication fees and available payment methods is provided on the attachment of this document. Please ensure payment is arranged by **29 June 2026** to avoid delays in your publication timeline. Once payment is verified, our production team will contact you with galley proofs for your final review.

We thank you for choosing our journal for your scholarly work.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Slamet', is written over a horizontal line.

Prof. Slamet Setiawan, Ph.D.
Editor-in-Chief

Appendix 4

Editor Review and Plagiarism Rate

Article 1

[HOME](#) [ABOUT](#) [USER HOME](#) [SEARCH](#) [CURRENT](#) [ARCHIVES](#) [ANNOUNCEMENTS](#)

Home > User > Author > **Archive**

Archive

[ACTIVE](#) [ARCHIVE](#)

ID	MM-DD SUBMIT	SEC	AUTHORS	TITLE	VIEWS	STATUS
2398	04-17	ART	Kurniawan, Norahmi, Fauzan, Damayanti	STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE BENEFITS OF USING...	227	Vol 11, No 3 (2026)

1 - 1 of 1 Items

Start a New Submission

CLICK HERE to go to step one of the five-step submission process.

Refbacks

[ALL](#) [NEW](#) [PUBLISHED](#) [IGNORED](#)

	DATE ADDED	HITS	URL	ARTICLE	TITLE	STATUS	ACTION
☐	2026-05-23	2	https://mail.jele.or.id	Students' Perceptions of the Benefits of Using Character.AI for Speaking Practice	—	New	EDIT DELETE
☐	2026-05-23	8	https://scholar.google.com/	Students' Perceptions of the Benefits of Using Character.AI for Speaking Practice	—	New	EDIT DELETE
☐	2026-05-27	2	https://mail.jele.or.id/	Students' Perceptions of the Benefits of Using Character.AI for Speaking Practice	—	New	EDIT DELETE
☐	2026-05-29	4	https://www.jele.or.id/	Students' Perceptions of the Benefits of Using Character.AI for Speaking Practice	—	New	EDIT DELETE
☐	2026-05-31	7	https://jele.or.id/	Students' Perceptions of the Benefits of Using Character.AI for Speaking Practice	—	New	EDIT DELETE
☐	2026-06-09	6	https://scholar.google.co.id/	Students' Perceptions of the Benefits of Using Character.AI for Speaking Practice	—	New	EDIT DELETE
☐	2026-06-10	5	https://www.perplexity.ai/	Students' Perceptions of the Benefits of Using Character.AI for Speaking Practice	—	New	EDIT DELETE

1 - 7 of 7 Items

[Publish](#) [Ignore](#) [Delete](#) [Select All](#)

 **WhatsApp**
click to chat

students-perceptions-of-the-benefits-of-characterai-for-speaking-practice-1_1776395213905.docx

ORIGINALITY REPORT

16%

SIMILARITY INDEX

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	jele.or.id Internet	230 words — 3%
2	ejurnal.mercubuana-yogya.ac.id Internet	195 words — 2%
3	www.jele.or.id Internet	75 words — 1%
4	cdn.juris.id Internet	57 words — 1%
5	Subhan Zein, Fuad Abdul Hamied. "The Routledge International Handbook of English Language Education in Indonesia", Routledge, 2025 Publications	48 words — 1%
6	mail.jele.or.id Internet	41 words — 1%
7	Bin Zou, Sitian Xie, Chenghao Wang. "Students' Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) Technology in English-Speaking Practice", International Journal of Information and Communication Technology Education, 2025 Crossref	35 words — < 1%
8	Kasan, Rusnadi A.. "Integrating Technology-Enhanced Language Learning for the Quality of Pre-Service English Teachers' Education at Indonesian Universities", Alliant International University, 2025 ProQuest	30 words — < 1%
9	repository.umsu.ac.id Internet	29 words — < 1%
10	Siti Nur Azizah, Zaitun Qamariah, Nurliana Nurliana. "Students' Perception on the Use of English Textbook for EFL Learning", Journal of English Language and Education, 2025 Crossref	28 words — < 1%
11	www.igi-global.com Internet	27 words — < 1%
12	www.academypublication.com Internet	24 words — < 1%
13	Noval Aditya, Dimas Prayogo, Anggara Anggara. "Learning Beyond the Classroom: English Clubs and Students' Speaking Competence in an Indonesian EFL Context", Jurnal Tahuri, 2024 Crossref	21 words — < 1%
14	Phenikaa University Publications	21 words — < 1%
15	journal1.uad.ac.id Internet	21 words — < 1%

16 jurnal.dokikti.org 20 words — < 1 %
internet

17 Resyadilla Azkia, Nasrullah Nasrullah, Emma Rosana Febriyanti. "The New Shifting of

18 words — < 1 %

Community of Practices in Learning Speaking", Intensive Journal, 2024

Crossref

18 "Handbook of Teachers' Voices in the Global South", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2026 17 words — < 1 %
Crossref

19 eprints.walisongo.ac.id 17 words — < 1 %
internet

20 open.metu.edu.tr 17 words — < 1 %
internet

21 eprints.ugd.edu.mk 16 words — < 1 %
internet

22 journal.unilak.ac.id 16 words — < 1 %
internet

23 siakad.univamedan.ac.id 16 words — < 1 %
internet

24 www.apcore-inc.org 16 words — < 1 %
internet

25 clinical-experimental-nephrology.imedpub.com 15 words — < 1 %
internet

26 ijarw.com 15 words — < 1 %
internet

27 novainfo.ru 15 words — < 1 %
internet

28 Vivi Ayu Lestari, Anwar Hilman, Arif Budimansyah Purba, Ahmad Najib Mutawally et al. "Exploring Students' Voices on The Use of Chatgpt as A Speaking Partner

13 words — < 1 %

in English Practice", Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat dan Riset Pendidikan, 2026

Crossref

29 www.austinisd.org 12 words — < 1 %
internet

30 journal2.upgris.ac.id 10 words — < 1 %
internet

31 jurnal.stkipahsingaraja.ac.id 10 words — < 1 %
internet

32 link.springer.com 10 words — < 1 %
internet

33 Qiongqiong Wang, Liwei Zhang. "Exploring the Impact of Peer Review on Student Engagement in Online Courses:A Future Learn Case Study", Journal of Educational Evaluation & Standards, 2026 9 words — < 1 %
Crossref

34 aasb.gov.au 9 words — < 1 %
internet

35	repository.lcu.edu.ng Internet	9 words — < 1%	●
36	tojnied.net Internet	9 words — < 1%	
37	www.mdpi.com Internet	9 words — < 1%	
38	Afore Tahir Harefa, Feliks Rejeki Sotani Zebua. "Empowering Eleventh Graders' Speaking Proficiency through a Humanistic Approach", <i>Journal of English Language and Education</i> , 2025 Crossref	8 words — < 1%	

39	Jamilah Mafiah Alharbi. "The Impact of Language Exposure, Phonological Memory, and Cross- Linguistic Similarities in ESL Vocabulary Acquisition: A Multi-Group Analysis Using PLS-SEM", <i>Forum for Linguistic Studies</i> , 2025 Crossref	8 words — < 1%	
40	Powell, Jason Richard. "Human Resource Professionals' Perceptions of Trust in Explainable Artificial Intelligence Hiring Software", <i>National University</i> , 2024 ProQuest	8 words — < 1%	
41	Rida Maisani, Tahrin Tahrin, Mulyadi Mulyadi. "Digital Learning of English: EFL Learners' Perceptions and Teaching Activities", <i>Journal of English Language and Education</i> , 2022 Crossref	8 words — < 1%	
42	Rudhiana Salam, Metty Agustine Primary, Rahmat Rahmat. "Middlemen's Perceptions of Relationship Marketing Toward Main Suppliers and Main Customers in Tasikmalaya Regency", <i>Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin</i> , 2025 Crossref	8 words — < 1%	
43	dinastipub.org Internet	8 words — < 1%	
44	edunesia.org Internet	8 words — < 1%	
45	ejournal.iainpalopo.ac.id Internet	8 words — < 1%	
46	etd.uinsyahada.ac.id Internet	8 words — < 1%	
47	jurnal.unigal.ac.id Internet	8 words — < 1%	

48	rsisinternational.org Internet	8 words — < 1%	
49	uir.unisa.ac.za Internet	8 words — < 1%	



OPEN ACCESS

Article

Students' Perceptions of the Benefits of Using Character.AI for Speaking Practice

doi: <https://doi.org/10.31004/jele.v6i2.xxxx>

* Roni Kurniawan, Maida Norahmi, Akhmad Fauzan, Alvinita Damayanti ^{abcde}

Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan, Universitas Palangka Raya, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: ronikurniawan355@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study explores students' perceptions of the role of Character.AI in developing speaking skills and supporting adaptive communicative practice. As artificial intelligence (AI) in language education continues to transform English language teaching, Character.AI offers a potential solution by providing persona-driven dialogues that simulate real-life interactions through various characters. This study employed a qualitative phenomenological approach involving eighth-semester students of the English Education Study Program who had experience using Character.AI for speaking practice. Data were collected through triangulation methods, including questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, and analyzed using thematic analysis to ensure credibility. The findings revealed several benefits, such as improvements in fluency, vocabulary, confidence, motivation, comfort, flexibility in practice, reduced anxiety, and increased willingness to speak. However, limitations were found in generating unnatural responses, indicating that it cannot fully replace authentic human communication. Therefore, Character.AI is best used as a supplementary tool to prepare students for real-life interaction.

Keywords: Character.AI, Speaking skills, Artificial Intelligence

Article History:

Received

Accepted

Published



INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, English plays a crucial role as an international language. It enables individuals to communicate with people across different cultures and countries. Due to its global importance, learning English is particularly essential for EFL learners who have

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore EFL students' lived experiences in using Character.AI to practice speaking fluency. As stated by Maulana & Budiono (2024), the phenomenological approach is used to explore and interpret participants' lived experiences, focusing on how they perceive and make meaning of the phenomenon being studied. Accordingly, this study focused on students' reflections, feedback, emotional responses, levels of comfort, and challenges encountered during their use of Character.AI for speaking practice.

This study involved five EFL students from Palangka Raya University who were in their eighth semester. All participants had prior experience using Character.AI for English speaking practice. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants based on specific criteria aligned with the research objectives. The selection criteria included: (1) students who had learned English as a Foreign Language (EFL) as part of their academic program, and (2) students who had prior experience using Character.AI to develop their speaking skills and were willing to share their experiences through in-depth interviews.

The data will be collected through a triangulation technique, involving questionnaires and interviews to obtain more comprehensive and in-depth data. The questionnaire was administered as a supporting instrument to capture students' general perceptions toward the use of Character.AI. The questionnaire consisted of Likert-scale items ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree* and was used to provide an overview of students' attitudes, motivation, and comfort in practicing speaking with Character.AI. The questionnaire data served as complementary data to support the qualitative findings from the interviews. Moreover, the primary data for this study were obtained through semi structured interviews with participants who had experiences in using Character.AI for speaking practice. The interviews aimed to explore students' lived experiences and were conducted for approximately 15–20 minutes, depending on the depth of information required. The interview questions focused on students' reflections, feedback, emotional responses, levels of comfort, and challenges encountered during their use of Character.AI in speaking practice.

All interview sessions were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. The interview was conducted in Indonesian to ensure the credibility of the data and information, and was subsequently translated into English as the final result. The interview transcripts were treated

User
Your current title is clear

User April 21, 2026
Clearly state:
• Research gap
• Participants (number, if possible)
• Key findings (group similar points)

[Reply](#) [Resolve](#)

User
Add:
• A clearer research gap (what previous studies have not covered)
• More recent references (AI in language learning, chatbot-based learning)

User April 21, 2026
Specify:
• Number of participants
• Sampling technique (e.g., purposive sampling)
• Duration of data collection

[Reply](#) [Resolve](#)

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The data were analysed using a triangulation technique, incorporating both questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaire served as supporting data, while the interviews provided the primary data.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed to explore students' general perceptions regarding several aspects, including limited speaking practice, confidence, vocabulary development, motivation, flexibility in practice, anxiety reduction, willingness to speak, and the potential of Character.AI as an adaptive solution.

The following table presents students' responses to the questionnaire consisting of nine statements.

Table 1. Students' Responses Toward the Use of Character.AI in Developing Speaking Skills.

Student	Batch	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9
S1	2022	2	2	3	2	3	3	2	3	2
S2	2022	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
S3	2022	3	4	3	3	4	2	3	3	2
S4	2022	3	4	3	3	4	4	3	3	4
S5	2022	2	4	3	3	3	3	3	4	3

OPEN ACCESS

© 2021 The Author. This article is licensed under CC BY SA 4.0.
visit [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)



User

Organize findings into **clear themes**, such as:

- Fluency improvement
- Confidence and anxiety reduction
- Motivation and engagement
- Flexibility and accessibility

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that the use of Character.AI as a speaking partner offers significant benefits for EFL learners, particularly in improving speaking fluency, vocabulary development, confidence, motivation, and willingness to communicate. The findings also reveal that the application provides a flexible and supportive learning environment, allowing students to practice anytime and anywhere without fear of making mistakes. Through consistent exposure and interactive practice, students reported reduced anxiety and increased readiness to engage in real-life communication.

However, despite these advantages, this study also highlights several limitations of AI-assisted learning, including the occurrence of unnatural responses, technical issues such as unstable internet connections, excessive advertisements, and limited device compatibility. More importantly, AI tools remain limited in replicating the emotional, social, and contextual dimensions of authentic human interaction. Therefore, AI applications such as Character.AI should be positioned as supplementary tools rather than replacements for real human communication, as a balanced integration of AI and human interaction is essential for achieving more comprehensive and effective language learning outcomes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

User

April 21, 2026
Avoid repeating findings word-for-word

[Reply](#) [Resolve](#)

Article 2

Journal of Language Development and Linguistics

Submissions

My Queue 1

Archives

Help

My Assigned

Q

Search

Filters

New Submission

16648 Kurniawan et al.

Students' Perceptions of using Character.AI in Reducing Speaking Anxiety

0/0

Review

View

students-perceptions-of-using-characterai-in-reducing-speaking-anxiety_1780143806096.docx

ORIGINALITY REPORT

12%
SIMILARITY INDEX

PRIMARY SOURCES

1

Suardi Suardi. "Classroom Silence and its Meaning in English Language Learning Contexts", Journal of Language Development and Linguistics, 2026

40 words — 1%

Crossref

2

www.researchgate.net

29 words — 1%

Internet

3

www.academypublication.com

27 words — 1%

Internet

4

scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu

24 words — 1%

Internet

5

www.scribd.com

22 words — < 1%

Internet

6

openaccessojs.com

20 words — < 1%

Internet

7

wsj.westsciences.com

19 words — < 1%

Internet

8

journal.aspirasi.or.id

18 words — < 1%

Internet

9

scholar.archive.org

18 words — < 1%

Internet

- 10 Maila D.H. Rahiem. "Towards Resilient Societies: The Synergy of Religion, Education, Health, Science, and Technology", CRC Press, 2025
Publications 17 words — < 1%
- 11 Yiyi Xiong, Liwei Zhao, Japman Kaur Kandola, Linyi Zhang. "English as an Additional Language Counsellor Trainees' Experiences and Coping Strategies of Foreign Language Anxiety: A Phenomenological Study", Counselling and Psychotherapy Research, 2025
Crossref 16 words — < 1%
- 12 journal.iaincurup.ac.id
Internet 16 words — < 1%
- 13 pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov
Internet 16 words — < 1%
- 14 www.iase-ijeas.com
Internet 16 words — < 1%
- 15 www.putrapublisher.org
Internet 13 words — < 1%
- 16 link.springer.com
Internet 12 words — < 1%
- 17 ejurnal.iainpare.ac.id
Internet 10 words — < 1%
- 18 iefij.uniku.ac.id
Internet 10 words — < 1%
- 19 www.journal.al-matani.com
Internet 10 words — < 1%
- 20 Emre Uygun, Bora Demir. "A PRISMA-based systematic review of artificial intelligence in English
Crossref 9 words — < 1%

as a foreign and second language education (2023–2025)",
Discover Education, 2026
Crossref

- 21 dergipark.org.tr
Internet 9 words — < 1%
- 22 docslib.org
Internet 9 words — < 1%
- 23 journal.wiseedu.co.id
Internet 9 words — < 1%
- 24 jurnaldidaktika.org
Internet 9 words — < 1%
- 25 matheo.uliege.be
Internet 9 words — < 1%
- 26 www.cuso.ch
Internet 9 words — < 1%
- 27 Alice SIRETEAN. "Enhancing English Speaking Skills in Romanian 8th Grade Classrooms through Conversational AI: The Case of Character.AI", Interconnected Learning and Teaching International Journal for Foreign Languages, 2025
Crossref 8 words — < 1%
- 28 Ashadi, Joko Priyana, Basikin, Anita Triastuti, Nur Hidayanto Pancoro Setyo Putro. "Teacher Education and Professional Development in Industry 4.0", CRC Press, 2020
Publications 8 words — < 1%

- 29 Fiona Farr, Liam Murray. "The Routledge Handbook of Language Learning and Technology", Routledge, 2026
Publications 8 words — < 1% ●
- 30 MUSTAK AHMED. "Social Media as a Hub for Crime in Bangladesh", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2026
Crossref Posted Content 8 words — < 1%
- 31 Ramawati Ramawati, Hastini Hastini, Sukmawati Sadilia, Mukrim Mukrim. "Students Perceptions of Podcasts Used for Independent Pronunciation Learning (A Qualitative Study)", Journal of English Language and Education, 2026
Crossref 8 words — < 1%
- 32 Stamatios Papadakis. "Teaching with Artificial Intelligence - A Guide for Primary and Elementary Educators", Routledge, 2025
Publications 8 words — < 1%
- 33 e-journal.unmas.ac.id
Internet 8 words — < 1%
- 34 emissc.org
Internet 8 words — < 1%
- 35 iafor.org
Internet 8 words — < 1%
- 36 journal.gomit.id
Internet 8 words — < 1%
- 37 journals.us.edu.pl
Internet 8 words — < 1%
- 38 papers.iafor.org
Internet 8 words — < 1%
- 39 www.hjuoz.uoz.edu.krd
Internet 8 words — < 1%
- 40 Hanoi Pedagogical University 2
Publications 7 words — < 1%
- 41 "The Second International Symposium on Generative AI and Education (ISGAIE'2025)", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2025
Crossref 6 words — < 1%
- 42 Iwan Fauzi, Rudi Hartono, Dwi Rukmini, Hendi Pratama. "AI Applications for EFL Learners: Enhancing Speaking Performance and Reducing Anxiety with Gender-Based Analysis", Forum for Linguistic Studies, 2025
Crossref 6 words — < 1%
- 43 Subhan Zein, Fuad Abdul Hamied. "The Routledge International Handbook of English Language Education in Indonesia", Routledge, 2025
Publications 6 words — < 1%

EXCLUDE QUOTES ON
EXCLUDE BIBLIOGRAPHY ON

EXCLUDE SOURCES OFF
EXCLUDE MATCHES OFF

Article 3

New Language Dimensions

Back to Submissions

52902 / Damayanti et al. / Integrating Local Wisdom into EFL Creative Writing: Students' Perceptions of Story-Based Projects

Library

Workflow

Publication

Submission

Review

Copyediting

Production

Round 1

Round 1 Status

Submission accepted.

Notifications

[NLD] Editor Decision

2026-06-09 02:32 PM

[NLD] Editor Decision

2026-06-28 02:29 PM

Reviewer's Attachments

Q Search

173375

Students'+Perceptions+of+Creative+Writing+through+Local+Story+Projects+Blind+1.pdf

May 9, 2026

Revisions

Q Search

Upload File

178699

Revisi_Integrating Local Wisdom into Creative Writing EFL Students' Perceptions of Story-Based Projects.docx

June 14, 2026

Article Text

Review Discussions

Add discussion

Name	From	Last Reply	Replies	Closed
Submission of Revised Manuscript	alvionitadamayanti	-	0	☐
	2026-06-14 10:24 PM			

New Language Dimensions

Back to Submissions

52902 / Damayanti et al. / Integrating Local Wisdom into EFL Creative Writing: Students' Perceptions of Story-Based Projects

Library

Workflow

Publication

Submission

Review

Copyediting

Production

Copyediting Discussions

Add discussion

Name	From	Last Reply	Replies	Closed
Letter of Acceptance (LOA) and Article Processing Charge (APC)	adminnld 2026-06-28 03:11 PM	-	0	☐
▶ Payment Confirmation - APC Invoice	alvionitadamayanti 2026-06-29 10:40 AM	-	0	☐

Copyedited

Q Search

No Files

17%

SIMILARITY INDEX

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	core.ac.uk Internet	110 words — 1%
2	jurnal.uns.ac.id Internet	73 words — 1%
3	www.academypublication.com Internet	63 words — 1%
4	ojspanel.undikma.ac.id Internet	46 words — < 1%
5	repository.usd.ac.id Internet	44 words — < 1%
6	ejournal.unib.ac.id Internet	42 words — < 1%
7	amalilmiah.uho.ac.id Internet	41 words — < 1%
8	fpendidikan.ukm.my Internet	39 words — < 1%
9	journal.unesa.ac.id Internet	39 words — < 1%
10	ejournal.undiksha.ac.id Internet	35 words — < 1%

11	files.eric.ed.gov Internet	35 words — < 1%
12	jer.or.id Internet	35 words — < 1%
13	jurnalbaca.pdii.lipi.go.id Internet	35 words — < 1%
14	journal.uin-alauddin.ac.id Internet	34 words — < 1%
15	dergipark.org.tr Internet	32 words — < 1%
16	5dok.org Internet	31 words — < 1%
17	pjlaw.com.pk Internet	31 words — < 1%
18	journal.unismuh.ac.id Internet	29 words — < 1%
19	jiip.stkipyapisdampu.ac.id Internet	26 words — < 1%
20	ejournal.insuriponorogo.ac.id Internet	24 words — < 1%
21	repo-dosen.ulm.ac.id Internet	24 words — < 1%
22	Titis Dyah Arisanti, Agus Tinus, Arina Restian. "Developing an Interactive Digital Flipbook to Enhance Junior High School Students' Creative Thinking Skills", Scaffolding: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam dan Multikulturalisme, 2026 Crossref	22 words — < 1%

- 23 journal.stkipsubang.ac.id Internet 22 words — < 1%
- 24 jurnal.peneliti.net Internet 22 words — < 1%
- 25 www.jurnalp4i.com Internet 22 words — < 1%
- 26 ojs.uph.edu Internet 20 words — < 1%
- 27 uvadoc.uva.es Internet 20 words — < 1%
- 28 www.jlls.org Internet 20 words — < 1%
- 29 Desy Alkatiri, Albertus Purwaka, Patrisia Cuedeyeni. "Tindak Tutur Direktif Dalam Novel Ayah Karya Andrea Hirata", *Tunas: Jurnal Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar*, 2021 Crossref 18 words — < 1%
- 30 Agus Budi Santosa, Rohmat Febrianto, Lataniya Fie Dziky, Ari Metalin Ika Puspita, Femita Adelina. "The Effectiveness of Local Wisdom-Oriented Teaching Materials to Improve the Creative Thinking Ability of Elementary School Students", *Scaffolding: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam dan Multikulturalisme*, 2025 Crossref 16 words — < 1%
- 31 Candradewi Wahyu Anggraeni, Januarius Mujiyanto, Katharina Rustipa, Widhiyanto. "Effects of utilizing self-regulated learning-based instruction on EFL students' academic writing skills: a mixed-method investigation", *Springer Science and Business Media LLC*, 2024 Crossref Posted Content 16 words — < 1%

- 32 Nastitisari Dewi, Mohammad Syarif Sumantri, Firmanul Catur Wibowo. "Gamification in STEM education: The impact of escape room-based problem-solving skills on elementary students", *Multidisciplinary Science Journal*, 2025 Crossref 16 words — < 1%
- 33 dialnet.unirioja.es Internet 16 words — < 1%
- 34 journal.upgris.ac.id Internet 16 words — < 1%
- 35 Supriyati Fatma Rabia, Asrul Asrul, Nurbaiti Elita Genç, M.A.N. Azizah. "Instructional Material Design of Project-Based Learning to Train Creative Thinking Skills in Society 5.0 Era", *Profesi Pendidikan Dasar*, 2024 Crossref 14 words — < 1%
- 36 ir.uitm.edu.my Internet 14 words — < 1%
- 37 link.brokenshire.edu.ph Internet 14 words — < 1%
- 38 A.H.G. Kusumah, C.U. Abdullah, D. Turgarini, M. Ruhimat, O. Ridwanudin, Y. Yuniawati. "Promoting Creative Tourism: Current Issues in Tourism Research", *CRC Press*, 2021 Publications 13 words — < 1%
- 39 Sunarlia Limbong, Alberto, Frans Tandibura. "Lecturer's Personal and Social Competence Toward Students' Writing Proficiency in EFL Classroom", *Journal of English Education and Teaching*, 2023 Crossref 13 words — < 1%

26/31



41	jos.unsoed.ac.id Internet	13 words — < 1%
42	jurnal.poliupg.ac.id Internet	13 words — < 1%
43	repositsc.nuczu.edu.ua Internet	13 words — < 1%
44	jurnal.ulb.ac.id Internet	12 words — < 1%
45	policyrj.com Internet	12 words — < 1%
46	www.collectionscanada.gc.ca Internet	12 words — < 1%
47	Moh Nunung Sanjaya, Tirmidi Tirmidi, Ahmad Fauzi. "INCREASING STUDENTS SPEAKING SKILL USING LITERATURE: CLASSROOM ACTION RESEARCH IN MAN 1 PROBOLINGGO", Jurnal Review Pendidikan dan Pengajaran, 2025 Crossref	11 words — < 1%
48	repository.lcu.edu.ng Internet	11 words — < 1%
49	Yumei Zou, Xuemei Cui, Xiaoli Cheng, Yan Fan. "Factors influencing CET writing performance: Perspectives from college students and teachers in China", Social Sciences & Humanities Open, 2026 Crossref	10 words — < 1%
50	etd.aau.edu.et Internet	10 words — < 1%
51	ijmil.cherkasgu.press Internet	10 words — < 1%

52	Derrick Kibumba, Proscovia Daphine Okello, Muhammad Sulaiman Isa. "Grammatical skills and English language proficiency among secondary school students in Mukono district, Uganda", Discover Education, 2026 Crossref	9 words — < 1%
53	Hubert Cédric, Bonnardel Nathalie, Frey Aline. "Effects of daily creative writing practice at school on the cognitive development of children from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds", Thinking Skills and Creativity, 2025 Crossref	9 words — < 1%
54	Novani Hartati, Agus Janudin, Yusfita Yusuf. "Profile of Mathematical Creative Thinking Ability of High School Students Reviewed from Cognitive Style", Jurnal Cendekia : Jurnal Pendidikan Matematika, 2025 Crossref	9 words — < 1%
55	Nur Atikah Mohd Noor, Zamri Mahamod, Nurfaradilla Mohamad Nasri. "Systematic review of teaching methods in language education: trends and innovation", International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (IJERE), 2025 Crossref	9 words — < 1% 28/31
56	Rizka Sari, Anwar Sidik. "Digital Media Innovation For Istima' Teaching In Arabic Language Education: Literature Study", Al-Himam: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab, 2025 Crossref	9 words — < 1%
57	e-journal.iain-palangkaraya.ac.id Internet	9 words — < 1%
58	journal.lppmunindra.ac.id Internet	9 words — < 1%

59 odr.chalmers.se 9 words — < 1%
Internet

60 scholar.archive.org 9 words — < 1%
Internet

61 scholar.ufs.ac.za 9 words — < 1%
Internet

62 Aliakbar Tajik. "Integrating AI-Driven Emotional Intelligence in Language Learning Platforms to Improve English Speaking Skills through Real-Time Adaptive Feedback", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2025
Crossref Posted Content

63 Liliana Mata, Monalisa-Laura Gavrilut. "Innovative Educational Approaches to Creative Writing Skills", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2025
Crossref

64 Mailla D.H. Rahiem. "Towards Resilient Societies: The Synergy of Religion, Education, Health, Science, and Technology", CRC Press, 2025
Publications

65 Wulan Patria Saroinsong, Muhamad Nurul Ashar, Irena Y. Maureen, Lina Purwaning Hartanti et al. "Reimagining Innovation in Education and Social Sciences", Routledge, 2023
Publications

66 Yi Ren, Wei Lun Wong, Jessie Barrot, Lawrence Jun Zhang. "Learning Styles, Engagement and Anxiety in AI-Mediated Writing: A Multimodal Feedback Study", International Journal of Applied Linguistics, 2026
Crossref

67 Zeng, Fanbin. "College Students' Use, Acceptance, and Perceptions of Online Learning in the United States and China During and After COVID-19", Western Illinois University, 2023
ProQuest

68 doaj.org 8 words — < 1%
Internet

69 eprajournals.com 8 words — < 1%
Internet

70 ir-library.ku.ac.ke 8 words — < 1%
Internet

71 journal.iaincurup.ac.id 8 words — < 1%
Internet

72 sfeducation.springeropen.com 8 words — < 1%
Internet

73 www.hltmag.co.uk 8 words — < 1%
Internet

74 Easir Arafat, Nashrah Sharfuddin, John Paul Shimanto Sarkar, Tarannum Fatema Chowdhury. "University students' lived experiences of blogging as a tool for writing: A hermeneutic phenomenological exploration in the Bangladeshi context", International Journal of Educational Research Open, 2025
Crossref

75 Febby Ayu Ananda, Nurhayati Nurhayati, Mulyadi Eko Purnomo, Ernalida Ernalida. "Bringing Students' Arguments to Life: Testing the Effectiveness of Local Context-based E-Modules through a Project-Based Learning

Crossref

- 76 Tony Silva, Zhaozhe Wang, Kyle Lucas. "Selected bibliography of recent scholarship in second language writing", Journal of Second Language Writing, 2020
Crossref 7 words — < 1%

- 77 "Assessing Mathematical Creative Thinking", University of Szeged, 2025
Crossref Posted Content. 6 words — < 1%

- 78 Erdal Zengin, Stamatios Papadakis. "Language Development Problems Encountered During the Literacy Process in Primary School Students: A Systematic Review of Studies Conducted Between 2016 and 2025", Early Childhood Education Journal, 2026
Crossref 6 words — < 1%

- 79 Hera Oktadiana, Myrza Rahmanita, Rina Suprina, Pan Junyang. "Current Issues in Tourism, Gastronomy, and Tourist Destination Research", Routledge, 2022
Publications 6 words — < 1%

Students' Perceptions of Creative Writing through Local Story Projects

Author¹, Author², Author³, Author⁴

¹Universitas Palangka Raya, Palangka Raya, Indonesia

²Universitas Palangka Raya, Palangka Raya, Indonesia

³Universitas Palangka Raya, Palangka Raya, Indonesia

⁴Universitas Palangka Raya, Palangka Raya, Indonesia

ARTICLE INFO

Received: dd/mm/yyyy

Reviewed: dd/mm/yyyy

Accepted: dd/mm/yyyy

Published: dd/mm/yyyy

Keywords:

Creative writing,
writing skill, local
wisdom, student
perceptions, English
language education

ABSTRACT

This study investigates undergraduate EFL students' perceptions of creative writing using local story projects. It focuses on how integrating local wisdom into writing tasks influences creativity, enjoyment, motivation, and anxiety in English writing. This qualitative phenomenological research involved 22 students from the English Education Study Program at Universitas Palangka Raya. Data were collected through a Likert-scale questionnaire and interviews with six students, then analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. Results show that 85% of questionnaire responses were in the "agree" or "strongly agree" categories, indicating that local story projects make writing more enjoyable and help students generate ideas, express imagination, and relate personal experiences. Students felt that drawing on familiar local culture increased their sense of freedom and creativity in writing. However, the impact on motivation and writing anxiety was mixed, some students reported higher confidence and interest, while others still struggled with limited imagination, low interest, or concerns about grammar. Overall, creative writing based on local stories is perceived as an engaging and meaningful approach to support creativity and self-expression in EFL writing, but learners may still need targeted guidance and support to overcome individual motivational and linguistic challenges.

© 2026 The Author(s)

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a crucial role in developing individuals' cognitive abilities, independence of thought, and creative potential. It is widely recognized as one of the most effective ways to improve human well-being as it enhances knowledge and contributes to the quality of human resources (Santosa et al.

generate, organize, and develop ideas using the target language (Ariani & Ariani, 2020). Consequently, writing becomes a key competency, especially for students in English language education programs (Hasan et al., 2025).

However, writing is often regarded as one of the most challenging language skills, particularly for EFL learners (Randolph, 2023). Academic writing presents significant difficulties, including generating ideas, organizing essays, limited vocabulary, and paraphrasing (Aldayel et al., 2026). Students also struggle to express ideas clearly while adhering to strict academic conventions (Asnas & Hidayanti, 2024). In the Indonesian context, these challenges may be influenced by diverse educational backgrounds (Noor et al., 2022). As a result, there is often a gap between students' creative potential and the demands of academic writing, which may limit their ability to express ideas creatively and culturally.

To address these challenges, creative writing can be used as an effective instructional approach. Kuo et al. (2024) emphasize that writing should be an engaging activity for students, as it provides an open space for self-expression. Hence, creative writing emphasizes imagination, originality, and personal expression, focusing on aesthetic and expressive purposes (Widyastuti et al., 2020). It allows students to select meaningful and relevant topics, making the writing process more engaging (Aitken & Graham, 2025). In the classroom, creative writing provides opportunities for students to express ideas freely and develop their own voice (Banegas & Lowe, 2021). It also supports cultural identity development, particularly when students incorporate elements of local wisdom into their writing (Rozin & Herminingrum, 2016). When students write based on personal experiences and emotions, they engage in a meaningful process that supports self-discovery and deeper expression (Randolph, 2023).

Project-Based Learning (PjBL) is another effective approach to support creative writing development. PjBL places projects at the center of learning and aims to improve students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Shofyana et al., 2022). Research shows that Project-based learning offers authentic contexts and meaningful activities that encourage students to use their writing skills in real-

Commented [G51]: What kind of local stories? Consider adding EFL context and higher education

Commented [G52R1]: Consider this:

Integrating Local Wisdom into Creative Writing: EFL Students' Perceptions of Story-Based Projects

Commented [G53]: Word limit

Commented [G54]: Word limit: simplify to 850-900 words for introduction. Include theoretical frameworks.

Commented [G55]: PjBL appears important, but your research does not clearly examine PjBL procedures. Explain the project stages more clearly.

life situations (Andargie et al., 2025). PjBL also improves writing skills by encouraging students to explore ideas, innovate, and participate actively in the learning process (Kurniawati, 2023). In addition, creative writing through project-based activities increases student motivation and engagement (Banegas & Lowe, 2021). When local cultural elements are included in project-based writing tasks, students become more engaged and creative (Garim et al., 2023; Zahro et al., 2025).

Despite the growing attention to creative writing, project-based learning, and the integration of local wisdom, limited studies have explored students' perceptions of creative writing activities that employ local story projects, particularly in higher education contexts. Therefore, this study aims to investigate students' perceptions of creative writing through local story projects as an effort to promote culturally responsive and creative learning in English language education.

METHODS

Design

This study employed a qualitative research design with a phenomenological approach to explore students' perceptions of creative writing activities through local story projects. The phenomenological approach was chosen because it focuses on understanding participants' lived experiences and the meanings they attach to those experiences. In this context, the study aims to capture how students experience the process of creative writing using local wisdom, including their challenges, feelings, and perspectives. This approach enables the researcher to obtain rich and in-depth data through participants' personal accounts, which cannot be adequately measured using quantitative methods.

Participants

The participants of this study were 22 undergraduate students from the English Education Study Program at Universitas Palangka Raya, batch of 2022, specifically from Class A. The participants were selected using purposive sampling, with the criteria that they had previously taken a creative writing course and completed a local story project as part of the course requirements.

Data Collection

The data were collected through interviews to gain deeper insights into participants' responses to the questionnaire, particularly regarding the reasons behind their agreement or disagreement. To obtain rich and detailed data, interviews were conducted with six selected students who were chosen from the questionnaire respondents. The interview process employed a structured format consisting of six predetermined questions. In addition, semi-structured techniques were applied through follow-up and probing questions that emerged during the interview to further explore participants' responses. Prior to the interview, the researcher provided participants with a list of guiding questions to help them prepare their responses. All interviews were conducted individually and audio-recorded with the participants' consent to ensure accurate data collection. The interviews were conducted in Indonesian and later translated and summarized into English. The audio recordings were then transcribed verbatim

Commented [GS6]: The study claims to be phenomenological, but it uses Likert-scale percentages and descriptive statistics heavily.

Commented [GS7R6]: I do not think the current study is genuinely a phenomenological study in a strong methodological sense. Your manuscript uses the label phenomenological, but the actual procedures and analysis are closer to a descriptive qualitative study with survey support or a basic mixed-methods perception study.

Commented [GS8]: Phenomenology requires deep lived-experience analysis. The questionnaire-based structure weakens this claim. Please justify or revise the design.

disagreement responses, in order to ensure balanced data and provide more comprehensive insights into the research topic.

Thematic Analysis

The data in this study were analyzed using both descriptive quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify the distribution of participants' responses. The results were presented in the form of percentages, tables, and bar charts to show the frequency of responses, such as "strongly agree," "agree," "disagree," and "strongly disagree." Meanwhile, the qualitative data obtained from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. The researcher transcribed the interview recordings verbatim and then conducted coding to identify significant statements. These statements were categorized into themes to capture students' perceptions of creative writing through local story projects. Furthermore, the findings from the questionnaire and interviews were integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the data. The questionnaire results were explained descriptively and supported by in-depth insights from the interview data to strengthen the interpretation of the findings.

Ethics

This study ensured the safety and comfort of all participants throughout the research process. Prior to data collection, the researcher obtained participants' consent for the data collection procedures, including interviews conducted through audio recordings. Participants' identities were kept confidential and anonymized to protect their privacy. All data collected in this study were used only for academic purposes.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the questionnaire results, a total of 22 participants responded to the survey. All participants were undergraduate students from the English Education Study Program, batch of 2022, specifically from Class A, who had previously completed a creative writing project course. The questionnaire data were analyzed and presented using tables and pie charts to illustrate the distribution of participants' responses. The findings indicate that the majority of participants expressed agreement that creative writing based on local wisdom is beneficial and effective. However, a small number of participants showed disagreement or expressed less favorable perceptions toward this approach.

Processed Data Based on Students' Perceptions of Creative Writing through Local Story Projects

Table 1. Percentage of respondents' answers per questionnaire item

No	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----	-----------	----------------	-------	----------	-------------------

Commented [GS9]: Thematic analysis for qualitative data

Commented [GS10R9]: This contradicts the qualitative design. The manuscript should label the study as mixed-methods or qualitative-supported-by-survey.

Commented [GS11]: Tables 2 and 3?

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the questionnaire results, a total of 22 participants responded to the survey. All participants were undergraduate students from the English Education Study Program, batch of 2022, specifically from Class A, who had previously completed a creative writing project course. The questionnaire data were analyzed and presented using tables and pie charts to illustrate the distribution of participants' responses. The findings indicate that the majority of participants expressed agreement that creative writing based on local wisdom is beneficial and effective. However, a small number of participants showed disagreement or expressed less favorable perceptions toward this approach.

Processed Data Based on Students' Perceptions of Creative Writing through Local Story Projects

Table 1. Percentage of respondents' answers per questionnaire item

No	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	I feel that creative writing helps me become more creative in developing stories by integrating elements of local culture (local wisdom).	36%	59%	5%	0%
2.	I feel that the writing process becomes more enjoyable when engaging in creative writing.	32%	64%	4%	0%
3.	I feel that creative writing allows me to write more freely without the constraints of rigid academic structures.	32%	64%	4%	0%
4.	I feel that creative writing allows me to freely express my imagination and personal experiences.	55%	45%	0%	0%

Commented [GS11]: Tables 2 and 3?

agreed and 32% strongly agreed, while only 4% disagreed, confirming that students perceive creative writing as a less restrictive activity. Item 4: When asked about freely expressing imagination and personal experiences, 55% strongly agreed and 45% agreed, with no disagreement. This highlights that creative writing encourages self-expression among students. Item 5: For motivation to continue writing, responses were more varied: 23% strongly agreed, 50% agreed, 27% disagreed, and none strongly disagreed. This suggests that while most students feel motivated, a notable portion still faces challenges in sustaining writing practice. Item 6: Regarding fear of making mistakes, the responses were more diverse: 9% strongly agreed, 41% agreed, 36% disagreed, and 14% strongly disagreed. This indicates that some students still feel apprehensive about making errors, though a majority report feeling somewhat confident when writing creatively.

The overall findings demonstrate that creative writing activities integrated with local story projects are positively received by students. The high percentage of Agree and Strongly agree (85% combined) indicates that this approach successfully promotes students' engagement, creativity, and self-expression in writing. This result aligns with previous studies which suggest that creative writing provides a more flexible and less restrictive learning environment, allowing students to express their ideas more freely (Göçen, 2019; Widyastuti et al., 2020). The integration of local wisdom further enhances this experience by connecting students' cultural background with the writing process, making learning more relevant and meaningful (Setiawan et al., 2017; Sujinah et al., 2019). However, the presence of 15% negative responses (*Disagree* and *Strongly Disagree*) suggests that not all students fully benefit from this approach. Some students may still face challenges, such as lack of confidence, difficulty in generating ideas, or anxiety about making mistakes. This finding is consistent with the results in Table 2, particularly in items related to motivation and fear of errors, where responses were more varied.

Commented [GS12]: The claim is too broad because motivation and anxiety show weaker results. Discuss item-level variation more carefully.

Students' Perceptions Based on Interview Findings

To gain deeper insights into students' perceptions, interviews were conducted with six selected participants. The interviews were carried out using a structured format, followed by semi-structured techniques to further explore participants' responses. Each question was designed to address specific themes, including creative skill development, enjoyment in writing, writing freedom, creative space, motivational support, and reducing anxiety.

No	Theme	Questions	Participant Quotes
1.	Creative Skill Development	How do creative writing activities through local story projects contribute to the development of your creativity in writing stories?	<i>"For me, creative writing may not be very helpful, as I mentioned in the questionnaire, because when I do creative writing, some almost most parts of it are assisted by a machine, namely AI. So, my creativity is partly inspired by AI. However, not entirely, because I still develop it based on my own preferences. So, it is half AI and half my own creativity."</i> (Informant 3) <i>"Creative writing through local story projects helps me develop my creativity because I can take ideas from stories or cultures around me. From there, I can develop the plot, characters, and background, making the story more interesting. I feel creative because I can expand and transform the original story into something different."</i> (Informant 2)
2.	Enjoyment in Writing	Does the creative writing activity through a local story project make the writing process feel more enjoyable compared to other writing assignments? Why?	<i>"I can write more freely because I am able to use my own ideas based on my imagination without being constrained by formal academic writing rules. As a result, creative writing becomes more enjoyable compared to other assignments."</i> (Informant 6)

Commented [GS13]: Thematic analysis with selected quoted

Commented [GS14R13]: Not all quotes are relevant and put in this paper. Your paper is exceeding the maximum number. Select only important and relevant only.

Commented [GS15]: Select only relevant quotes. You said this was analyzed thematically?

Commented [GS16]: This is a major unexpected finding. AI use needs deeper ethical, pedagogical, and methodological discussion, not only brief mention.

Commented [GS17]: This finding is valuable. The analysis should explore why creative freedom may burden students with low creative confidence.

creative writing helped them "develop the plot, characters, and background, making the story more interesting," indicating that engaging with local story-based tasks supports both idea development and creative expression. This is consistent with the view that education grounded in local wisdom not only promotes character development but also enhances students' creative thinking and writing skills (Daniah, 2016; Santosa et al., 2025). By incorporating cultural values into writing lessons, students are encouraged to process information creatively and apply their cultural knowledge to meaningful academic tasks (Setiawan et al., 2017; Sujinah et al., 2019). Therefore, creative writing based on local stories not only contributes to the improvement of writing skills but also strengthens students' imaginative capacity and creative engagement.

However, other participants indicated that their creativity was partially influenced by external tools such as AI. Informant 3 explained that their work was "half AI and half my own creativity," suggesting that the creative process was not entirely self-generated. This finding reflects a nuanced understanding of creativity, where students combine personal imagination with technological assistance. Furthermore, the presence of AI technology may influence students' creative thinking processes by shaping how they generate, refine, and develop ideas. While AI can serve as a supportive tool in idea generation, it may also affect the extent to which creativity is internally constructed by the students themselves. This finding aligns with previous research by Chen (2024) showing that originality constitutes the most essential component of the creative process and further indicates that although AI can support digital storytelling in various ways the fundamental nature of creativity remains inherently human. Therefore, it is important to maintain a balance between the use of AI technology and the integration of local wisdom in order to foster creativity in writing.

Regarding enjoyment in writing, most participants reported that creative writing activities were more enjoyable compared to traditional academic writing. The freedom to use their own ideas and imagination without strict adherence to formal structures contributed to a more engaging, flexible, and less restrictive writing experience. This condition allows students to explore their thoughts more openly and reduces the pressure commonly associated with academic writing conventions, such as rigid structure, grammar accuracy, and formal language use. Previous studies have shown that academic writing is challenging, particularly in areas such as idea generation, essay organization, vocabulary limitations, and paraphrasing (Aldayel et al., 2026). In line with this, students also find it difficult to clearly express their ideas while following strict academic writing conventions (Asnas & Hidayanti, 2024). As expressed by Informant 6, "I can write more freely... without being constrained by formal academic writing rules," which made the activity more enjoyable and allowed them to feel

Commented [GS18]: Student use of AI directly affects creativity, originality, and authorship, but the manuscript treats it only briefly.

focus on accuracy or compare themselves with others are more likely to feel anxious. In line with this, Graham et al (2013) suggest that several classroom strategies can be applied to support a creative writing environment including acknowledging students' progress fostering interaction among peers and helping students generate ideas before they begin writing. Similarly, Şahbaz and Duran (2011), who argue that encouraging students' passion for writing is essential for the development of their writing skills. Therefore, it is important for educators to create a supportive classroom environment, encourage a growth mindset, and provide constructive feedback to help students manage their writing anxiety more effectively.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study reveals that creative writing activities based on local wisdom provide meaningful contributions to students' writing development, particularly in terms of idea generation, motivation, and writing anxiety. The findings indicate that culturally relevant topics enable students to generate ideas more easily, as they are closely connected to their personal experiences and background knowledge. This connection allows students to express their ideas more naturally and confidently in the writing process. In terms of motivation, the results show varied responses. While some students demonstrate increased interest due to the relevance and familiarity of the topics, others still perceive writing as an academic obligation rather than a personally engaging activity. This suggests that although local wisdom can enhance engagement, it may not fully address all aspects of students' intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, creative writing appears to reduce writing anxiety for some students by creating a more flexible and supportive learning environment that emphasizes self-expression rather than strict accuracy. However, not all students experienced a reduction in anxiety, as some still faced challenges related to linguistic accuracy, self-confidence, and social comparison. The presence of peer support and technological tools, such as AI, also plays an important role in helping students manage their anxiety and improve their writing.

Overall, the findings suggest that creative writing activities based on local wisdom are generally perceived positively by students. While the quantitative data show a predominantly positive response, the qualitative findings reveal more diverse perspectives, indicating that individual experiences may vary. Therefore, educators are encouraged to design culturally relevant writing activities while also providing adequate support to address students' different needs, particularly in terms of motivation and writing anxiety.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the lecturers of the English Education Study Program at Universitas Palangka Raya, as well as all participants who contributed to this study. Appreciation is also extended to family and friends for their support and encouragement throughout the research process.

REFERENCES

- Aitken, A., & Graham, S. (2023). Perceptions of choice in writing of university students. *Journal of Writing Research*, 15(2), 225–332. <https://doi.org/10.17239/jowr-2023.15.02.03>
- Aldayel, H. S., Pravitasari, H., & Fadillah, N. (2026). Factors affecting academic writing difficulties among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) university students. *Acta Psychologica*, 263, 106250. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2026.106250>
- Andriana, A., Amnong, D., & Tafara, E. (2025). Effects of product-based learning on EFL learners'

Commented [GS19]: This conclusion overclaims motivation and anxiety. Findings show mixed effects, so the wording should be more cautious.

Commented [GS20]: Internationally-indexed references are needed