

**THE FINAL REPORT OF THE SCIENTIFIC ARTICLES WRITING
AND PUBLICATION**



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

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

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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

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FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION
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STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

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Hereby, solemnly declare that the final report of the scientific articles writing and publication entitled "Integrating Local Wisdom into EFL Creative Writing: Students' Perceptions of Story-Based Projects; Students' Perceptions of the Role of Local Wisdom-Based Creative Writing in Generating Creative Products; Students' Perceptions of the Benefits of Using Character.AI for Speaking Practice", 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

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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.

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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 Monday, 13th July 2026, and has been revised in accordance with the feedback provided by the Examination Committee.

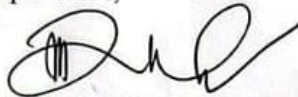
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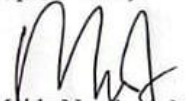
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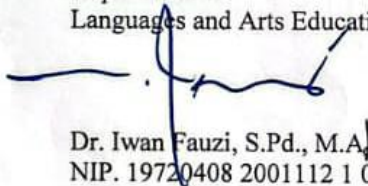
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Finally, the author realizes that this final report is not perfect. Therefore, the author sincerely welcomes constructive criticism and suggestions for its improvement. The author hopes that this final report will make a meaningful contribution to the field of English language learning and serve as a useful reference for future researchers.

Palangka Raya, July 10th 2026

Alvionita Damayanti

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Article 1

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

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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.

Keywords: *Creative writing, writing skill, local wisdom, student perceptions, English language education*

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). Classroom efforts to preserve culture through writing can be seen in tasks in which students create written works based on local cultural themes, such as folktales (Sari et al., 2024). 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 using existing folklore, legends, or local stories as teaching materials to improve students' writing skills. However, limited attention has been given to exploring 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.

Given the limited research on creative writing projects that require students to produce local narrative stories based on personal experiences and cultural knowledge, this study investigates students' perceptions of such projects as a means of supporting writing development and cultural heritage preservation 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 were 22 undergraduate students from Class A, batch 2022, in the English Education Study Program at Universitas Palangka Raya. 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.

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.

The Project Stages and Data Collection

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.

Interview data were collected to gain deeper insights into participants’ questionnaire responses, particularly the reasons for 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.

Thematic Analysis for Qualitative Data

The data were analyzed using a qualitative design supported by survey-based descriptive statistics. 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.

Students' Perceived Benefits of Local Wisdom-Based Creative Writing

Enhancing Creative Development through Local Story Projects

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.

Increasing Enjoyment and Engagement 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.

Expanding Freedom of Expression in Narrative Writing

Most students felt freer to express their ideas creatively and incorporate words, expressions, and cultural elements drawn from their 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.

Providing Creative Space for Personal and Cultural Storytelling

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.”

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."

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.

Supporting Students' Motivation to Write

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.

Reducing Writing Anxiety through Familiar Cultural Themes

Several students reported that creative writing activities help them become more confidence in writing narrative stories. The projects allowed them to write based on personal

experiences and combine these experiences with cultural elements to make their stories 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.

Students’ Challenges in Local Wisdom-Based Creative Writing

Limited Imagination in Developing Original Storylines

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.

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.

Low Motivation to Continue Writing

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.

Concerns about Grammar and Language Accuracy

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. These findings are consistent with Park (2020) and Mardiningrum et al. (2024), who reported that 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 106 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 had difficulty generating and expanding ideas for creative stories. Although creative writing supports self-expression, some students felt they lacked the creativity to develop original storylines, characters, and plots. AI helped some students expand their ideas into more structured narratives. As Informant 3 stated, “From the AI generated ideas, I further developed them according to my own preferences. So, it was partly AI and partly my own creativity.” This finding aligns with George and Lasher (2024), who noted that idea generation is influenced by individual differences. Febriana et al. (2023) also found that limited ideas are a common challenge in creative writing. Therefore, AI support should be balanced with narrative development (Chen, 2024).

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.

Regarding 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

This study concludes that local wisdom-based creative writing activities contributed 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.

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Article 2

Students' Perceptions of the Role of Local Wisdom-Based Creative Writing in Generating Creative Products

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Abstract

Creative writing plays a crucial role in developing students' creativity and writing skills. However, students encounter difficulties in generating ideas and expressing them effectively due to the lack of relevant learning materials. This study aimed to investigate the implementation of local wisdom-based creative writing in generating creative products and improving students' writing skills. A phenomenological design was employed to explore students' experiences. The participants consisted of 18 students who completed a questionnaire and five students who participated in semi-structured interviews selected through purposive sampling. All participants were students of the English Education Study Program at Universitas Palangka Raya who had completed a creative writing course and produced writing products. Data were collected through questionnaires and interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis, with method triangulation applied to ensure credibility. The findings revealed that integrating local wisdom provided familiar contexts that supported students in generating ideas, organizing their writing, and expressing thoughts more authentically. Students also demonstrated increased confidence, emotional engagement, and satisfaction with their writing. Furthermore, local wisdom-based creative writing enhanced creativity and writing skills while enabling students to produce culturally grounded creative products reflecting personal experiences and cultural identity. Nevertheless, challenges related to language use, coherence, and cultural representation remained.

Keywords: *Creative Writing, Local Wisdom, Writing Skills, Culural Identity, Creative Products*

Abstrak

Menulis kreatif memiliki peran penting dalam mengembangkan kreativitas dan keterampilan menulis mahasiswa. Namun, mahasiswa masih menghadapi kesulitan dalam menghasilkan ide dan mengekspresikannya secara efektif karena kurangnya bahan pembelajaran yang relevan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menginvestigasi implementasi menulis kreatif berbasis kearifan lokal dalam menghasilkan produk kreatif dan meningkatkan keterampilan menulis mahasiswa.

Desain fenomenologi digunakan untuk mengeksplorasi pengalaman mahasiswa. Partisipan penelitian terdiri atas 18 mahasiswa yang mengisi kuesioner dan lima mahasiswa yang mengikuti wawancara semi-terstruktur yang dipilih melalui teknik purposive sampling. Seluruh partisipan merupakan mahasiswa Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Palangka Raya yang telah mengikuti mata kuliah menulis kreatif dan menghasilkan produk tulisan. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner dan wawancara, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik dengan menerapkan triangulasi metode untuk memastikan kredibilitas temuan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa integrasi kearifan lokal menyediakan konteks yang familier sehingga mendukung mahasiswa dalam menghasilkan ide, mengorganisasi tulisan, dan mengekspresikan gagasan secara lebih autentik. Mahasiswa juga menunjukkan peningkatan kepercayaan diri, keterlibatan emosional, dan kepuasan terhadap hasil tulisan mereka. Selain itu, menulis kreatif berbasis kearifan lokal meningkatkan kreativitas dan keterampilan menulis serta memungkinkan mahasiswa menghasilkan produk kreatif yang berlandaskan budaya dan mencerminkan pengalaman pribadi serta identitas budaya mereka. Meskipun demikian, tantangan yang berkaitan dengan penggunaan bahasa, koherensi, dan representasi budaya masih ditemukan.

Kata kunci: Menulis kreatif, kearifan lokal, keterampilan menulis, identitas budaya, produk kreatif

Introduction

In the context of higher education, thinking plays a crucial role in the learning process. Through thinking, students generate ideas, develop arguments, perspectives Furthermore, and in express their meaningful ways. demonstrating creative thinking reflects a process of responding to knowledge and having the ability to communicate outcomes effectively (Oktavia et al., 2023). In other words, creativity refers to the process of producing new ideas, concepts, and solutions that may not have previously existed (Alkhaldi et al., 2022). In line with this, higher education institutions are increasingly importance of emphasizing fostering the students' creative thinking abilities as part of their learning objectives (Yun, 2020). This ability becomes particularly important in language learning, especially in writing activities that require not only linguistic competence but also creativity. Writing is the act of expressing thoughts, ideas, and emotions in a structured and organized way so that they can be easily understood by readers (Fransori & Haryanti, 2021). Previous studies highlight that writing and thinking are closely intertwined and can even be considered inseparable, as writing serves as a medium through which individuals express ideas, knowledge, and emotions (Naveed et al., 2025).

Similarly, Menary (2007) argues that writing is not merely the outcome of thinking but an active cognitive process through which individuals develop and refine their thoughts. According to this view, the act of writing enables writers to organize, manipulate, and reconstruct ideas, making writing an integral part of thinking itself. Therefore, writing functions both as a process of thought and as a tool that supports complex cognitive activities. This aligns with the previous study, in which writing is not merely concerned with handwriting or technical skills but functions as a medium for expressing and making sense of one's knowledge (Fitria, 2024).

However, despite its importance, many students still experience difficulties in developing their writing skills, particularly in generating ideas and expressing them effectively. This problem often arises from the use of teaching materials that lack contextual relevance and do not reflect students' cultural backgrounds (Oktafiana et al., 2026). Students frequently struggle to convey complex ideas in English, which limits their ability to participate actively in academic contexts (Herz, 2025). This difficulty is often caused by the need to coordinate multiple aspects of writing, such as language use, genre, text organization, composition, and communication (Roscoe et al., 2020). In addition, limitations in vocabulary and grammar are further complicated by the challenge of translating ideas from students' first language into English (Li, 2024). Differences in writing conventions across languages may also result in inappropriate word choices and unnatural sentence structures, making texts appear less coherent (Ma, 2021). It is evident that non-English major students often view English as merely a tool for communication; consequently, they may not fully recognize the importance of creative writing in language learning or its role in developing thinking skills for other academic or practical purposes (Alkhaldi, 2019).

One approach that has been widely recognized to address these challenges is creative writing. Students can improve their writing abilities by engaging in creative writing activities (Hu & Choi, 2023). Creative writing, which is rooted in imagination, enables students to express ideas more freely without being constrained by rigid rules (Mardiningrum et al., 2024). Through narrative writing, students not only develop their imagination but also enhance important cognitive skills such as problem-solving, analyzing cause and effect relationships, and making informed decisions in complex situations (Mammadova, 2025). In addition, learning creative writing enables EFL students to foster their creativity and produce engaging and enjoyable pieces of writing (Dewi & Siregar, 2022). However, despite the benefits of creative writing, students still often encounter difficulties in the writing process, such as lacking ideas for their own compositions, experiencing challenges in developing a coherent plot, and

struggling when the topics provided are not closely related to their experiences. Furthermore, an excessive focus on rote memorization, particularly in key writing tasks restricts the development of imaginative thinking (Fatima et al., 2024). Moreover, the multiple components involved in creative writing, including critical thinking, emotional awareness, and imaginative ability, can be challenging (Fitria, 2024). These difficulties are further supported by Elvina & Putri (2021), who identified a range of challenges encountered by students in writing, including uncertainty regarding their writing purpose, a lack of confidence in their writing abilities, and difficulties in constructing coherent sentences, expanding vocabulary, and expressing creativity.

In this regard, integrating local wisdom into creative writing activities can serve as a meaningful approach to overcome these challenges. Local wisdom refers to the knowledge, traditions, and values unique to a particular community or region, which play an important role in shaping cultural identity. Its integration into education, particularly in creative writing, has gained increasing attention, as it helps preserve cultural heritage and deepen students' understanding of their own culture (Lekawael et al., 2025). Such integration, especially in foreign language instruction, is also viewed as an effective means of preserving and transmitting local knowledge across generations (Fathan et al., 2023). Incorporating cultural values into learning materials helps students link academic content to their everyday experiences, which enhances the meaningfulness and effectiveness of the learning process (Oktafiana et al., 2026).

Furthermore, students' writing is shaped by their cultural backgrounds, as their social and cultural experiences inform their understanding of what is considered effective writing (Fathan et al., 2023). This perspective is in line with Dharma et al. (2021), who state that local wisdom represents knowledge derived from everyday experiences and reflects the values and realities of daily life within a community. By incorporating familiar cultural contexts, students may find it easier to generate ideas and relate their experiences to the writing task. In addition, integrating local cultural elements can support students and novice writers in developing creative ideas, while also nurturing cultural values and strengthening their sense of national identity (Kusuma, 2022). Moreover, the use of creative products as learning outcomes can enhance students' motivation and provide a tangible representation of their creativity, making the writing process more engaging and relevant. This is in line with previous research conducted by Emelfa & Ramadhan (2024), who found that integrating local wisdom into writing activities enables students to produce narrative and fantasy texts as creative outputs. It can lead to the production of creative writing products, such as short stories, poetry, and even

supplementary books as extended learning outputs (Emelfa & Ramadhan, 2024; Hastuti et al., 2023; Rinjani et al., 2025; Aji & Pujiastuti 2022). This indicates that local wisdom-based writing does not only improve skills but can also be transformed into instructional or literary products.

Nevertheless, despite the potential of integrating local wisdom and creative products in writing instruction, previous studies have predominantly examined these aspects separately, with limited attention given to their combined implementation in creative writing activities. While a number of studies have highlighted the role of local wisdom in supporting idea generation and cultural understanding, and others have emphasized the importance of creative products as learning outcomes, there is still a lack of empirical evidence on how these two elements can be integrated to support students' writing development holistically. To address this issue, the study was guided by the following research question: How does the integration of local wisdom in creative writing activities influence students' perceptions and satisfaction in producing creative products, such as storybooks?

Accordingly, investigate this the study aims to implementation of creative writing integrated with local wisdom in generating creative products, particularly in improving students' writing skills and their ability to produce meaningful and creative written outputs.

Research Method

This study employed a qualitative research design supported by descriptive quantitative data to explore students' perceptions of local wisdom-based creative writing in generating creative products. A phenomenological approach was applied to examine students' lived experiences after participating in creative writing activities that integrated local wisdom elements. Through this approach, the researchers aimed to gain a deeper understanding of how students perceived the use of local cultural values in creating fictional and non-fictional stories based on their personal experiences and imagination.

The participants of this study were students of the English Education Study Program at Universitas Palangka Raya, particularly students from the 2022 Class A who had previously taken a Creative Writing course. These participants were selected because they had direct experience with creative writing activities and were considered relevant to the objectives of this study.

To collect the data, the researchers used two instruments: a questionnaire and interviews. First, consisting a questionnaire of six statements was distributed to all participants to identify general perceptions regarding local wisdom-based creative writing. The

questionnaire used a four-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Agree (3), and Strongly Agree (4). A total of 18 students completed the questionnaire.

After obtaining the questionnaire results, purposive sampling was used to select participants for the interview stage. This technique enabled the researchers to choose participants who represented different perspectives, including those who showed agreement and disagreement in their questionnaire responses. As a result, five participants were selected for further interviews to provide more in-depth explanations regarding their responses.

The interview process combined structured and semi-structured formats. The researchers prepared six predetermined interview questions as the main guideline to maintain consistency during the interview process. In addition, follow-up questions were asked when necessary to explore participants' responses in greater depth. Prior to the interview sessions, participants were informed about the interview questions to help them prepare their responses. The interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia to ensure participants felt comfortable expressing their opinions and experiences. The researchers also obtained participants' consent to audio record the interviews for documentation purposes. The interview recordings were then transcribed and translated into English.

The data were analyzed using triangulation techniques by combining both questionnaire and interview findings. The questionnaire data were analyzed using descriptive quantitative analysis and presented in tables to describe students' overall responses. Meanwhile, the interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes related to students' experiences, perceptions, and satisfaction toward the creative products they created. This combination of methods helped ensure the credibility of the findings and provided a more comprehensive understanding of the role of local wisdom-based creative writing in generating creative products.

Result and Discussion

Questionnaire

Based on the questionnaire results presented in Table 1, it can be seen that students generally showed positive responses toward the use of local wisdom-based creative writing. Most of the responses are dominated by "agree" and "strongly agree" across all six statements, indicating that students perceive this approach as beneficial in supporting their creative writing process.

Table 1. Percentage of Respondents' Answers per Questionnaire Item

No	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	I feel that creative writing helps me generate more original story ideas.	17%	83%	0%	0%
2	I feel that my ability to develop storylines has become more structured while remaining creative.	6%	89%	5%	0%
3	I feel more confident sharing my writing with others.	11%	56%	33%	0%
4	I feel that the use of local wisdom in creative writing makes my writing more meaningful and authentic.	11%	83%	6%	0%
5	I feel that local potential-based creative writing helps me to recognize and understand local cultural values.	33%	67%	0%	0%
6	I feel that story ideas are easier to develop when using elements of local culture.	17%	72%	11%	0%

Specifically, all students expressed positive agreement that creative writing helps them generate more original ideas, with 17% strongly agreeing and 83% agreeing. Similarly, the majority of students (95%) agreed that their ability to develop storylines has become more structured while still maintaining creativity, although a small percentage (5%) indicated disagreement.

In terms of confidence, the responses were more varied. While 67% of students agreed that they felt more confident in sharing their writing, 33% of students expressed disagreement. This suggests that although creative writing activities are generally perceived positively, some students still experience hesitation when presenting their work to others.

Furthermore, students also responded positively to the integration of local wisdom. A total of 94% agreed that local wisdom makes their writing more meaningful and authentic. In addition, all students (100%) agreed that local potential-based creative writing helps them better recognize and understand local cultural values. Likewise, 89% of students agreed that incorporating local cultural elements makes it easier to develop story ideas, although a small portion (11%) still found it challenging.

Overall, the questionnaire results indicate that students tend to perceive local wisdom-based creative writing as helpful in generating ideas, organizing their writing, and enhancing cultural understanding, despite some remaining challenges, particularly in building confidence.

Following the questionnaire findings, the students' perceptions were further explored through interview data to gain deeper insights into their experiences. The analysis revealed several themes that describe how students perceive the use of local wisdom-based creative writing in generating creative products.

Interview

The interview findings from five participants revealed several key themes, including creative space, creative skill development, value of local culture in creative writing, cultural understanding, writing product perception, and writing production.

Creative Space

In the theme of creative space, students explained that local wisdom helped them generate ideas more easily due to their familiarity with the surrounding environment. This is reflected in their responses to the question, *"How does the use of local wisdom in creative writing activities help you discover or develop story ideas?"*

One participant stated:

"So, in my opinion, elements of local culture are quite helpful in finding story ideas because we are already familiar with the culture around us. It becomes easier to imagine the story. For example, I am inspired by folklore or life around the Kahayan River, so the story ideas feel closer to my everyday life." (Informant 2).

Similarly, highlighted another the role participant of personal experience in idea development:

"For me personally, the use of local cultural elements in my story is derived from my own experiences, particularly during a past relationship in which my partner's family strongly believed in weton. From this experience, I developed a story idea that closely reflects real-life situations. This belief then became the central conflict, making the story more vivid and emotionally engaging, as it is based on my personal experience." (Informant 4).

These responses indicate that familiarity with local culture experiences supports and personal students in generating meaningful and relatable story ideas.

Creative Skill Development

In terms of creative skill development, students described how they developed their ideas into complete stories. When responding to the question, *“How do you develop this idea into a complete story or a fully developed written text?”*, one participant explained:

“First, I start by finding the idea or the main concept. For example, if I take from local wisdom, I might use a story from a particular region. Then, I determine the characters and the conflict, and create an outline, including the introduction, the problem or conflict, and the resolution. After that, I begin writing and reread the text to identify parts that need improvement in terms of flow. When I was asked about the most challenging part of the writing process, I would say that organizing ideas and finding ideas are the most difficult aspects. Additionally, arranging sentences in a way that makes the storyline flow smoothly can be quite challenging. This also relates to elements such as setting, as well as determining the characters and the theme.” (Informant 3).

Another participant added:

“Since my story is based on personal experience, the process begins by recalling a memorable experience. Then, I identify the main conflict I want to highlight, which is the difference in beliefs about weton within a relationship. After that, I organize the storyline, starting from the introduction, the emergence of the conflict, and finally the resolution. I also determine the point of view to make the story feel stronger. Then, I write it step by step until it is completed and revise it to ensure the flow is more coherent and easier to understand. When it comes to the most challenging part, I would say that in terms of characters, it is not too difficult because they are based on real people from my personal experience, including myself as the main character. However, the most challenging aspect is that this is a piece of creative writing written in English, so translating certain elements can be quite difficult. For example, weton, which originates from Javanese culture, is not easy to translate into English. Additionally, when developing the conflict, it feels like revisiting past experiences, especially in the conflict section.” (Informant 4).

However, challenges were also identified:

“Although local culture can help me develop ideas, it can sometimes also become a limitation. This is because I have to consider whether the story is appropriate to be read by others or not. As a result, I sometimes become too focused on local culture, which makes my story more restricted and difficult to develop further, as I am concerned about potential conflicts related to cultural representation. Therefore, the process does not always run smoothly and still requires multiple revisions. When asked whether this concern relates to the fear of deviating from the original cultural values, I would say that it is true.” (Informant 5).

These findings show that while local wisdom supports writing development, students still face difficulties related to organization, language, and cultural sensitivity.

Value of Local Culture in Creative Writing

Regarding the value of local culture, most students perceived it as enhancing originality. In response to the question, *“Does the use of local wisdom contribute to making your story more original or unique?”*, participants stated:

“In my opinion, it is quite unique, as readers may not be familiar with certain traditions from specific regions. Since each region has its own distinct stories and cultural practices, this allows writers to create stories that have their own characteristics and originality. When we write stories based on local culture that we are familiar with, people from outside our community may not have prior knowledge of it. Therefore, they can discover the uniqueness of the story through the cultural elements presented in our writing.” (Informant 3).

“Yes, the use of local culture makes a story more original, as not everyone raises the same theme. Each region has its own uniqueness, which makes the resulting story feel different and more distinctive.” (Informant 4).

“Yes, because not everyone uses the same local cultural elements. Therefore, the story I create becomes more distinctive and authentic compared to others. Although there are instances where similar local cultural elements are used, the way they are incorporated or expressed in the story differs. As a result, it is rare to find identical stories in creative writing.” (Informant 5).

However, a contrasting view was also expressed:

“The use of local wisdom does not always make a story more original or unique, as some local cultural elements have already been frequently used in various stories. Therefore, the

uniqueness of a story depends more on how the writer develops the plot and presents the narrative." (Informant 1).

This indicates that while local culture is generally seen as a source of originality, some students believe creativity depends more on storytelling techniques.

Cultural Understanding

In the theme of cultural understanding, students emphasized that local wisdom helps convey meaningful values. When asked, *"How do local cultural elements influence the message in your story?"*, participants explained:

"Local cultural elements can help me convey messages about life values, such as togetherness, respect for nature, and appreciation of traditions. Therefore, the story is not only entertaining but also contains meaningful values to be delivered. I believe it is because they can be applied in our daily lives. By doing so, we can learn to respect and appreciate the culture presented in the story." (Informant 2).

"Local cultural elements, such as the belief in weton, strongly influence my story. Through this, I aim to show that in a relationship, it is not only emotions that play a role, but also cultural factors and family beliefs significantly shape the relationship. Therefore, the story conveys that differences in values can become major challenges, and not all relationships can proceed as expected, even when both individuals care deeply for each other." (Informant 4).

"As we know, local culture often carries moral and life values. Therefore, when I incorporate local cultural elements into my story, the message becomes deeper, more meaningful, and more relevant to readers, especially those who share the same cultural background presented in the story. I would mention traditional ceremonies from the Dayak tribe. Even if we do not directly use local culture as the main focus, we can still refer to such cultural practices and elaborate on them by explaining their meanings and purposes. By doing so, messages that might otherwise be unclear can be conveyed more effectively. In addition, readers tend to appreciate stories more when local cultural elements are described in detail, as it enhances the depth and significance of the narrative." (Informant 5).

However, one participant noted:

"In my opinion, the use of local culture is not particularly significant and does not greatly contribute to conveying the intended message, as the impressions or messages can still be

effectively communicated through more formal language or constructed situations. Therefore, it is not necessarily the strong presence of cultural elements that determines how well the message is delivered, and it may even be easier to convey meaning without relying heavily on local cultural elements.” (Informant 3).

This suggests that while local culture enriches meaning, its importance may vary depending on the writer’s perspective.

Writing Product Perception

In terms of writing product perception, students expressed positive feelings toward their work. In response to the question, *“How do you feel about your written product?”*, participants stated:

“For me, I feel quite happy and satisfied because I was able to create my own story based on ideas derived from local culture. Although it is still simple, I consider it to be a valuable experience in writing.” (Informant 2).

“I feel that emotions which had been suppressed for years were gradually released and expressed through this piece of writing, leaving me with a sense of relief. After rereading it from a third person perspective, where the main character is actually myself, I felt both sympathy and pride for being able to go through those experiences. I am also proud that I was able to complete this story, and this has made me more confident in writing and in expressing ideas for future stories.” (Informant 4).

“I feel that creative writing has increased my confidence, as it allows me to feel more assured about what I write. Although there are times when the structure may not be entirely accurate, as long as it aligns with the context, it is still acceptable. Therefore, through creative writing, I am able to express my imagination and personal ideas in a story. Even if others may perceive my work as less refined, I still feel proud because I can produce a piece of writing that truly reflects my creativity, my identity, and the local culture I understand. It allows readers to gain a better understanding of the culture from a particular region.” (Informant 5).

These responses indicate that creative writing fosters emotional expression, satisfaction, and increased confidence among students.

Writing Production

Finally, in writing production, most students believed that local wisdom enriched their creativity. In response to the question, *“How does local culture based creative writing help you produce a writing product?”*, participants stated:

“In my opinion, local culture-based creative writing is helpful because we have many sources from our local culture, which allows us to be more imaginative and develop unique stories, especially by incorporating elements of tradition or community life from our region.” (Informant 2).

“Yes, I would say that this creative writing activity is very helpful in enabling me to produce a creative writing product, as it combines my freedom to imagine, personal experiences, personal ideas, and also inspiration from local culture. As a result, the writing or work I produce becomes richer and more creative.” (Informant 6).

However, a different perspective was expressed:

“For me, I do not frequently use local culture, as I feel that creativity can be expressed more freely when writing on open themes without being limited by specific cultural boundaries. The presence of local cultural elements sometimes makes me feel constrained and less free in developing my imagination. In my opinion, fantasy or fiction stories that are not bound by cultural elements tend to be more creative, as they are not restricted by specific cultural values or norms. Therefore, the themes can be explored more broadly.” (Informant 3).

Overall, these findings indicate that local wisdom-based creative writing supports idea generation, skill development, and creative production, while also presenting challenges related to language, cultural sensitivity, and creative freedom.

Benefits and Challenges in Producing Creative Writing Products

Benefits

The use of local wisdom provides significant benefits in producing creative writing products. First, it offers rich and meaningful sources of ideas, enabling students to develop stories that are closely connected to their personal experiences and cultural background. As a result, students are able to produce texts that are more authentic, relatable, and contextually grounded. Second, local wisdom enhances the originality and uniqueness of the writing product. Since each region has distinct cultural elements, students can create stories that are different from others, making their work more distinctive and engaging for readers. Third, it contributes to the quality of the creative product, as students are able to integrate moral values,

cultural meanings, and real-life issues into their narratives. This makes the writing not only imaginative but also meaningful. Finally, local wisdom supports students' confidence and emotional engagement, which positively influences their ability to complete and present a creative writing product. When students feel connected to their stories, they tend to be more motivated and expressive in their writing.

Challenges

Despite these benefits, several challenges were identified in producing creative writing products based on local wisdom. One major challenge is related to language barriers, especially when students have to translate culturally specific terms into English. This can affect the clarity and effectiveness of the final product. Another challenge is the limitation of creative freedom. Some students feel restricted when they have to follow cultural values or ensure accurate representation, which can make it harder to explore broader or more imaginative ideas. Additionally, students experience difficulties in organizing and developing ideas into a coherent narrative. Although local culture provides inspiration, transforming it into a well-structured story remains challenging. There are also concerns about cultural sensitivity, where students fear misrepresenting or deviating from authentic cultural values. This often leads to hesitation and requires multiple revisions. Lastly, emotional challenges may arise, particularly when stories are based on personal experiences. Revisiting past events can make the writing process more complex and emotionally demanding.

Conclusion and Suggestion

This study concludes that the implementation of local wisdom-based creative writing positively contributes to students' creativity, writing skills, and ability to produce creative writing products. The integration of local wisdom provides meaningful and familiar contexts that help students generate ideas more easily, organize storylines, and express their thoughts authentically. Students also showed positive perceptions toward the activity, such as increased confidence, emotional engagement, and satisfaction with their written products. In addition, the use of local cultural elements enabled students to create more distinctive and meaningful stories that reflect their personal experiences and cultural identities, while also contributing to the preservation and appreciation of local culture. However, several challenges were still identified, including difficulties in language use, coherence, translation of concerns about cultural terms, and accurate cultural representation. Therefore, students still require guidance and support in overcoming linguistic and cultural challenges during the writing process.

Based on these findings, several suggestions are proposed. Lecturers are encouraged to integrate local wisdom into creative writing activities more consistently by providing culturally relevant materials and guiding students in language use, coherence, and cultural representation. Students are suggested to continue practicing creative writing and explore their local cultural values and personal experiences to develop more authentic and meaningful stories while improving their English writing skills. Furthermore, future researchers are recommended to conduct studies involving larger participants, different educational contexts, or different creative writing genres to gain broader insights into the implementation of local wisdom-based creative writing. Future studies may also apply quantitative or mixed-method approaches to examine its effectiveness more comprehensively.

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Article 3

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

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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*

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-centered 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 and Discussions

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 experience limitations when practicing speaking directly with friends, teachers, or lecturers	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 starting conversations in English.	20%	80%	0%	0%
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.

The Benefits of Using Character.AI for Speaking Practice

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Discussions

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.

Conclusions

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.

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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 Nyaho Jalan Yos Sudarso, Palangka Raya Kalimantan Tengah (73111)
Email: psbi@upr.ac.id Laman: www.psbi.upr.ac.id

KARTU KONSULTASI PEMBIMBINGAN TUGAS AKHIR

Nama Mahasiswa : Alwanita Damayanti

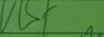
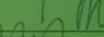
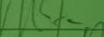
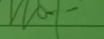
NIM : 223010201025

Jenis Tugas Akhir : Skripsi/Prototipe/Proyek/Jurnal
(Ilmiah/Profesional/Magang/Portfolio*)

Judul Tugas Akhir : 1-Students' Perceptions of creative writing through local story projects
2-students' perceptions of the role of local wisdom-based creative writing in generating creative products
3-students' perceptions of the benefits of using Character AI for steaming practice

Pembimbing I : Prof. Dr. Mania Arina Luadina, M.A

Pembimbing II : Maiba Nordhmi, S.Pd., M. Pd

No.	HARI/TANGGAL	MATERI KONSULTASI	SARAN PEMBIMBING	TANDA TANGAN PEMBIMBING
1.	Kamis, 5 Juni 2025	Konsultasi mengenai Penentuan tugas akhir berupa Jurnal artikel	Disarankan untuk <u>menarik</u> <u>feelings</u> yang relevan dengan bidang penelitian.	
2.	Senin, 26 Januari 2026	Konsultasi mengenai Judul artikel	Pastikan Judul artikel yang dipilih sesuai dengan minat penelitian & ketersediaan data.	
3.	Rabu, 28 Januari 2026	Konsultasi mengenai rencana penelitian artikel	Susun Poin-poin Penting untuk kuisioner dan wawancara agar lebih terarah.	
4.	Senin, 23 Februari 2026	Konsultasi mengenai rencana penelitian artikel.	Jelaskan temuan / findings secara to the point dan hindari Pengulangan kata.	
5.	Senin, 2 Maret 2026	Konsultasi mengenai rencana penelitian artikel	Untuk publikasi artikel disarankan minimal SIMTA 5 khusus bidang pendidikan.	
6.	Senin 9 Maret 2026	Konsultasi mengenai Penelitian artikel	Revisi seluruh bagian artikel sesuai masukan reviewer Jurnal.	
7.	Selasa, 21 April 2026	Konsultasi terkait revisi tugas akhir artikel	Pastikan dalam artikel ada teori/grand teori yang dipakai untuk mendukung penelitian.	

[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 : fkp@upr.ac.id Web : www.fkip.upr.ac.id

SURAT PENUNJUKAN PEMBIMBING TUGAS AKHIR
Nomor 264/UN24.3/DT/2026

Berdasarkan surat dari Ketua Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FKIP UPR Nomor 458/UN24.3.3.1/DT/2026 Tanggal 04 Mei 2026 tentang Usulan Permohonan Penerbitan Dosen Pembimbing Tugas Akhir Mahasiswa, maka Dekan FKIP Universitas Palangka Raya menunjuk :

1. Nama : Prof. Dr. Maria Arina Luardini, M.A.
NIP : 19650514 199303 2 001
Pangkat / Golongan : Pembina Utama Madya, IV/d
Jabatan : Guru Besar
Sebagai : Pembimbing I

2. Nama : Maida Norahmi, M.Pd.
NIP : 19891012 201504 2 001
Pangkat / Golongan : Penata Tk.I, III/d
Jabatan : Lektor
Sebagai : Pembimbing II

Dalam penulisan Tugas Akhir Mahasiswa

Nama : Alvionita damayanti
NIM : 223010201025
Program Studi : Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris
Jurusan : Pendidikan Bahasa dan Seni
Jenis Tugas Akhir : Jurnal Ilmiah
Judul Tugas Akhir :

1. STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF CREATIVE WRITING THROUGH LOCAL STORY PROJECTS ; 2. STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE ROLE OF LOCAL WISDOM-BASED CREATIVE WRITING IN GENERATING CREATIVE PRODUCTS; 3. STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE BENEFITS OF USING CHARACTER.AI FOR SPEAKING PRACTICE

Demikian surat penunjukan ini disampaikan agar dilaksanakan sebagaimana mestinya

07 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

Article 1



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**.

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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



UNIVERSITAS ALWASHLIYAH MEDAN
FAKULTAS KEGURUAN DAN ILMU PENDIDIKAN
PROGRAM STUDI PENDIDIKAN BAHASA INGGRIS
EXCELLENCE : Journal of English Department
Sekretariat : Gedung FKIP lantai 2 Jl. Sisingamangaraja km. 5,5 no. 10
Website OJS : [EXCELLENCE: Journal of English and English Education \(univamedan.ac.id\)](http://EXCELLENCE:JournalofEnglishandEnglishEducation(univamedan.ac.id))
Email : inggris@univamedan.ac.id

Nomor : 01/excellence/VI/2026
 Lamp : -
 Hal : *Letter of Acceptance (LoA)*

Medan, 15-06-2026

Assalâmu'alaikum Wr. Wb.

Dengan ini, pengelola **EXCELLENCE: Journal of English Department** dengan e-ISSN: **2807-2103** dan p-ISSN: **2807-6389** memberitahukan bahwa naskah Anda dengan identitas:

Judul	: Students' Perceptions of the Role of Local Wisdom-Based Creative Writing in Generating Creative Products
Penulis	: Alvionita Damayanti ¹ , Maria Arina Luardini ² , Maida Norahmi ³ , Roni Kumiawan ⁴
Afiliasi/institusi	: ^{1,2,3,4} Universitas Palangka Raya, Palangka Raya - Indonesia,
Email	: ¹ alvionitadamayanti17@gmail.com
Tanggal <i>Accept</i>	: 15 Juni 2026

Telah memenuhi kriteria publikasi di **EXCELLENCE: Journal of English Department** dan dapat kami **terima** sebagai bahan naskah untuk penerbitan jurnal pada Volume 6 Nomor 1 Juni 2026 dalam versi elektronik.

Untuk menghindari adanya duplikasi terbitan dan pelanggaran etika publikasi ilmiah terbitan berkala, kami berharap agar naskah/artikel tersebut tidak dikirimkan dan dipublikasikan ke penerbit jurnal/majalah lain.

Demikian surat pemberitahuan ini kami sampaikan, atas perhatiannya kami ucapkan terima kasih.

Wassalâmu'alaikum Wr. Wb

Editor in Chief

Yunita Mutiara Harahap, S.Pd., M.Hum.





Journal of English Language and Education

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

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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

Appendix 4

Editor Review and Plagiarism Rate



Students' Perceptions of Creative Writing through Local Story Projects

Author¹, Author², Author³, Author⁴

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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.

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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.

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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
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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?

4

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.

5

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)	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.
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 [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.

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

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ABSTRACT

Creative writing plays a crucial role in developing students' creativity and writing skills. However, many students still encounter difficulties in generating ideas and expressing them effectively due to the lack of culturally relevant and contextualized learning materials. This study aims to investigate the implementation of creative writing integrated with local wisdom in generating creative products and improving students' writing skills. This study employed a qualitative approach using a phenomenological design to explore students' experiences and perceptions. The participants consisted of 18 students who completed a questionnaire and five students who participated in semi-structured interviews selected through purposive sampling. All participants were students of the English Education Study Program at Universitas Palangka Raya, specifically from the batch of 2022 in Class A, who had participated in a creative writing course and produced writing products. Data were collected through questionnaires and interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis, with method triangulation applied to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. The findings reveal that the integration of local wisdom provides meaningful and familiar contexts that support students in generating ideas, organizing their writing, and expressing their thoughts more authentically. In addition, students demonstrated positive perceptions, including increased confidence, emotional engagement, and satisfaction with their writing. Importantly, the study found that creative writing based on local wisdom not only enhances students' creativity and writing skills but also enables them to produce creative writing products, such as short stories and culturally grounded texts, which reflect their personal experiences and cultural identity and have the potential to contribute to the preservation of local culture for future generations. However, several challenges were identified, including difficulties in language use, coherence, and cultural representation.

Keywords: Creative Writing, Local Wisdom, Writing Skills, Cultural Identity, Creative Products

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A. Introduction

In the context of higher education, thinking plays a crucial role in the learning process. Through thinking, students generate ideas, develop arguments, and express their perspectives in meaningful ways. Furthermore, demonstrating creative thinking reflects a process of responding to knowledge and having the ability to communicate outcomes effectively (Oktavia et al., 2023). In other words, creativity refers to the process of producing new ideas, concepts, and solutions that may not have previously existed (Alkhaldi et al., 2022). In line with this, higher education institutions are increasingly emphasizing the importance of fostering students' creative thinking abilities as part of their learning objectives (Yun, 2020). This ability becomes particularly important in

language learning, especially in writing activities that require not only linguistic competence but also creativity. Writing is the act of expressing thoughts, ideas, and emotions in a structured and organized way so that they can be easily understood by readers (Fransori & Haryanti, 2021). Recent studies highlight that writing and thinking are closely intertwined and can even be considered inseparable, as writing serves as a medium through which individuals express ideas, knowledge, and emotions (Naveed et al., 2025). This aligns with the previous study, in which writing is not merely concerned with handwriting or technical skills but functions as a medium for expressing and making sense of one's knowledge (Fitria, 2024).

However, despite its importance, many students still experience difficulties in developing their writing

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Furthermore, students' writing is shaped by their cultural backgrounds, as their social and cultural experiences inform their understanding of what is considered effective writing (Fathan et al., 2023). This perspective is in line with Dharma et al. (2021), who state that local wisdom represents knowledge derived from everyday experiences and reflects the values and realities of daily life within a community. By incorporating familiar cultural contexts, students may find it easier to generate ideas and relate their experiences to the writing task. In addition, integrating local cultural elements can support students and novice writers in developing creative ideas, while also nurturing cultural values and strengthening their sense of national identity (Kusuma, 2022). Moreover, the use of creative products as learning outcomes can enhance students' motivation and provide a tangible representation of their creativity, making the writing process more engaging and relevant. This is in line with previous

these aspects separately, with limited attention given to their combined implementation in creative writing activities. While a number of studies have highlighted the role of local wisdom in supporting idea generation and cultural understanding, and others have emphasized the importance of creative products as learning outcomes, there is still a lack of empirical evidence on how these two elements can be integrated to support students' writing development holistically.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the implementation of creative writing integrated with local wisdom in generating creative products, particularly in improving students' writing skills and their ability to produce meaningful and creative written outputs.

B. Research Method

This study employed a qualitative research design supported by descriptive quantitative data to explore students'

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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

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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

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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



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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



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