
Junior High School Students' Perceptions of AI Use in Supporting English Reading Skills

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Abstract

Although Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been increasingly adopted in English language learning, limited studies have specifically investigated junior high school students' perceptions of AI use in supporting English reading skills in the Indonesia context. This study investigated junior high school students' perceptions of AI use in supporting English reading skills. A quantitative survey design was employed involving 100 junior high school students from several schools in Indonesia who had experience using AI tools for learning English. Data were collected through an online questionnaire adapted from the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), covering five dimensions: Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, Attitude Toward AI, Challenges of AI Use, and Behavioral Intention. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings revealed that students generally held positive perceptions of AI in supporting English reading, with an overall mean score of 3.61, indicating a high level of acceptance. Perceived Usefulness obtained the highest mean score ($M = 3.75$), followed by Perceived Ease of Use ($M = 3.69$). although students recognized challenges related to overreliance on AI-generated responses and the need to verify information critically, they also demonstrated positive attitudes and intentions toward future AI use. These findings suggest that AI has considerable potential to complement English reading instruction when integrated responsibly. Therefore, teachers should guide students in using AI critically and ethically to maximize its educational benefits while maintaining students' independent reading and critical thinking skills.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, English reading skills, junior high school students, students' perceptions, Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

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1. Introduction

Reading comprehension remains one of the most challenging aspects of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning despite its essential role in supporting language acquisition and academic success. Many EFL learners continue to experience difficulties in understanding English texts because of limited vocabulary knowledge, unfamiliar grammatical structures, inadequate reading strategies, and low learning motivation. These challenges not only affect students' ability to comprehend written information but also limit the development of critical thinking and independent learning skills. A recent study investigating Indonesian EFL learners'

reading experiences found that students still encounter considerable obstacles in understanding English texts and expect more engaging and technology-supported learning environments to facilitate reading comprehension (Oktavianti et al., 2026). Likewise, (Shafiee Rad, 2025) emphasized that conventional reading instruction often provides limited opportunities for personalized learning support and immediate feedback, reducing students' engagement during reading activities.

The increasing complexity of students' reading challenges has encouraged educators to explore innovative technologies that can support language learning more effectively. Among these innovations, artificial intelligence (AI) has rapidly transformed educational practices by offering personalized learning experiences, adaptive instructional support, automatic feedback, and interactive learning environments. The emergence of generative AI, particularly ChatGPT, has further expanded opportunities for English language learning by enabling students to receive instant explanations, summarize texts, generate learning ideas, and practice language skills independently. Consequently, AI has become one of the most widely discussed educational technologies in recent years because of its potential to improve both teaching practices and students' learning experiences (Slamet, 2024).

Growing empirical evidence suggests that AI contributes positively to English language learning. A recent meta analysis synthesizing findings from 34 empirical studies concluded that generative AI has a statistically significant positive effect on students' English learning outcomes across various educational settings. However, the effectiveness of AI differs depending on language skills, learning contexts, and instructional implementation, indicating that further research is needed to understand how AI supports specific language skills in different educational environments (Azwar & Yunita, 2026).

Within English language education, reading has become one of the language skills that can benefit substantially from AI-assisted learning. AI-powered learning systems are capable of providing adaptive reading materials, personalized recommendations, immediate corrective feedback, and continuous learning assistance that promote learner autonomy and self-regulated learning. Experimental findings indicate that students who learned through AI-supported reading comprehension, higher learning engagement, and stronger self-regulated learning behaviors than those receiving conventional instruction (Shafiee Rad, 2025). Similarly, studies

on AI-integrated reading pedagogy suggest that AI can address learners' difficulties in vocabulary acquisition, text comprehension, and reading engagement through adaptive and learner-centered instructional support (Ironsi & Bostanci, 2026; Oktavianti et al., 2026).

Besides examining the effectiveness of AI, many recent studies have investigated students' perceptions of AI integration in language learning. Previous findings consistently indicate that learners generally perceive AI applications as useful learning assistants because they provide quick access to information, facilitate language practice, improve learning efficiency, and increase learning motivation. In addition, teachers acknowledge that AI can complement classroom instruction by offering individualized learning support beyond classroom hours. Nevertheless, researchers also emphasize that students should use AI responsibly by evaluating AI-generated information critically rather than accepting responses without reflection (Slamet, 2024; Xiao & Zhi, 2023).

To better understand students' acceptance of AI in educational settings, this study is informed by two well established technology acceptance theories: the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) proposed by (Davis, 1989) and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) developed by (Venkatesh et al., 2003). TAM suggests that users' acceptance of technology is primarily influenced by perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use, which subsequently affect their attitudes and intentions to use the technology. Meanwhile, UTAUT extends this perspective by emphasizing Behavioral Intention as an important predictor of actual technology use. Guided by these theoretical frameworks, the present study examines five dimensions of junior high school students' perceptions of AI use in supporting English reading skills: Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Usefulness, Attitude Toward AI, Challenges of AI Use, and Behavioral Intention.

Despite these benefits, AI implementation also presents several educational challenges. Excessive dependence on AI-generated responses may reduce students' opportunities to develop independent reasoning and critical reading skills if AI outputs are accepted without careful evaluation. Research conducted among Indonesian university students reported moderate reliance on ChatGPT and relatively good critical use was significantly associated with students' critical reading performance, suggesting that AI alone does not automatically improve reading ability (Pujiastuti et al., 2026). Furthermore, students' trust in AI should be

accompanied by adequate AI literacy and critical evaluation skills to ensure responsible and meaningful technology use in educational settings (Abuzar et al., 2025).

Although research on AI-assisted language learning has increased considerably during the past few years, most previous studies have concentrated on university students, experimental interventions, or the effectiveness of AI in improving language learning outcomes. Comparatively fewer studies have explored junior high school students' perceptions of AI use in supporting English reading skills, particularly within Indonesian EFL classrooms. Understanding students' perceptions is important because students' acceptance, perceived usefulness, and perceived challenges influence the successful implementation of AI-assisted learning in schools. Addressing this gap may provide valuable insights into how AI can be integrated more effectively and responsibly to support English reading instruction at the secondary school level.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate junior high school students' perceptions of AI use in supporting English reading skills. Specifically, the study explores students' perceptions regarding the usefulness, ease of use, learning support, and challenges associated with AI-assisted reading. The findings are expected to enrich the growing body of literature on AI-assisted language learning while providing practical implications for English teachers, schools, and curriculum developers seeking to integrate AI into reading instruction in meaningful and pedagogically appropriate ways.

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative survey design to investigate junior high school students' perceptions of AI use in supporting English reading skills. According to (Blackstone, 2012), survey research is a quantitative method that features the use of standardized questionnaires to collect information from a large number of people. A survey design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to collect data from a relatively large number of participants and describe their perceptions regarding the use of AI-assisted tools in English reading activities.

2.2 Participants

The participants of this study were junior high school students from several schools in Indonesia. The participants were selected using convenience sampling because they were accessible to the researcher and voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. To be eligible for participation, students were required to have experience using Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot, or similar applications, for learning purposes. A total of 100 junior high school students participated in the study.

2.3 Instrument

The instrument used in this study was an online questionnaire administered through Google Forms. The questionnaire was developed by the researchers based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) proposed by (Davis, 1989) and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) developed by (Venkatesh et al., 2003). These theoretical frameworks were selected because they explain users' acceptance of educational technology through constructs such as perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, attitude toward technology, and behavioral intention.

The questionnaire was developed through several stages. First, the researchers identified the main constructs of TAM and UTAUT that were relevant to the use of AI in supporting English reading skills. Next, these constructs were translated into measurable indicators suitable for the context of junior high school students. Based on these indicators and supported by recent literature on AI-assisted language learning, the researchers developed 24 questionnaire items to measure students' perceptions. Each item was designed to represent only one construct to ensure clarity and consistency in measuring the intended dimensions.

The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section collected participants' demographic information, including their experience and frequency of using AI for learning English. The second section consisted of 24 closed-ended statements organized into five dimensions: Perceived Ease of Use (4 items), Perceived Usefulness (8 items), Attitude Toward AI (4 items), Challenges of AI Use (4 items), and Behavioral Intention (4 items). The dimensions of Perceived Ease of Use and Perceived Usefulness were developed based on the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989), while Behavioral Intention was informed by both TAM and UTAUT (Venkatesh et al., 2003). The dimensions of Attitude

Toward AI and Challenges of AI Use were developed based on a review of recent literature on AI-assisted language learning and educational technology to ensure that the questionnaire reflected issues relevant to the current educational context.

The questionnaire was developed directly in Bahasa Indonesia to ensure that all statements were clear and easily understood by junior high school students. The wording of each item was adjusted to the participants' language proficiency while maintaining consistency with the theoretical constructs measured in this study. All items employed a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). According to (Blackstone, 2012), standardized closed-ended questions and Likert-scale responses improve the consistency and reliability of quantitative data collection.

2.4 Data Collection

Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. The questionnaire link was shared with junior high school students through WhatsApp. Prior to completing the questionnaire, participants were informed about the purposes of the study and were assured that their responses would remain confidential and be used solely for research purposes. Participation in the study was voluntary, and students completed the questionnaire only after providing their consent.

The data collection process was conducted from June to July 2026.

2.5 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics. In line with (Blackstone, 2012) perspective on quantitative data analysis, numerical data are summarized and organized systematically to reveal overarching patterns and frequencies within a large sample. Since this study aimed to describe junior high school students' perceptions of AI use in supporting English reading skills, descriptive statistical analysis was employed.

Frequencies and percentages were calculated to describe the demographic characteristic of the participants, including gender and grade level. In addition, descriptive statistics consisting of mean scores, standard deviations, minimum scores, and maximum scores were computed to examine students' perceptions of AI use in supporting English reading skills across the five dimensions of the questionnaire: Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Usefulness, Attitude Toward AI, Challenges of AI Use, and Behavioral Intention.

The mean scores were interpreted using the following criteria: 1.00–1.80 (Very Low), 1.81–2.60 (Low), 2.61–3.40 (Moderate), 3.41–4.20 (High), and 4.21–5.00 (Very High). The findings were presented in tables and interpreted descriptively to provide a comprehensive understanding of junior high school students' perceptions of AI use in supporting English reading skills.

3. Findings and Discussion

A total of 100 junior high school students participated in this study. The participants consisted of 59 male students (59.0%) and 41 female students (41.0%). Based on grade level, 23 students (23.0%) were from Grade VII, 29 students (29.0%) were from Grade VIII, and 48 students (48.0%) were from Grade IX. The demographic characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

No	Characteristics	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1.	Gender	Male	59	59.0
2.	Gender	Female	41	41.0
3.	Grade	Grade VII	23	23.0
4.	Grade	Grade VIII	29	29.0
5.	Grade	Grade IX	48	48.0

The findings indicate that the participants represented students from different grade levels, with Grade IX students comprising the largest proportion of the sample.

Students' perceptions of AI use in supporting English reading skills were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The questionnaire consisted of five dimensions: Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Usefulness, Attitude Toward AI, Challenges of AI Use, and Behavioral Intention. The mean scores for each dimension are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Mean Scores of Students' Perceptions of AI Use in Supporting English Reading Skills

No	Dimension	Mean	Interpretation
1.	Perceived Ease of Use	3.69	High
2.	Perceived Usefulness	3.75	High
3.	Attitude Toward AI	3.54	High
4.	Challenges of AI Use	3.50	High
5.	Behavioral Intention	3.46	High
6.	Overall Mean	3.61	High

As presented in Table 2, the overall mean score of students' perceptions was 3.61, indicating that junior high school students generally had a high perception of AI use in supporting English reading skills. Among the five dimensions, Perceived Usefulness obtained the highest mean score ($M = 3.75$), followed by Perceived Ease of Use ($M = 3.69$). These findings suggest that students considered AI beneficial for understanding English texts, learning unfamiliar vocabulary, explaining difficult passages, and completing reading-related tasks. Positive perceptions were also found in the dimensions of Attitude Toward AI and Behavioral Intention, indicating that students generally accepted AI as a learning resource and intended to continue using it in future English reading activities.

To provide a more granular analysis of the students' perceptions, Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics for each of the 24 questionnaire items. This table details the minimum, maximum, mean scores, and standard deviations for every statement, allowing for a precise identification of which specific aspects of AI use were most favored or perceived as challenging by the respondents. Based on the data, the mean scores for individual items ranged from 3.21 to 3.89, with the majority of the items falling within the "High" category (3.41–4.20) according to the established interpretation criteria. Notably, item Q8 recorded the highest mean score of 3.89, indicating a very strong level of agreement among students regarding that particular benefit of AI in their reading activities. Conversely, the lowest mean score was found in item Q21 ($M = 3.21$), which lower than items, still maintains a "Moderate" interpretation level. These item-level results further corroborate the overall finding that junior high school

students hold a positive and receptive view toward integrating AI tools into their English reading skill development.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Questionnaire Items (Q1 – Q24)

Item	Statement	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q1	AI mudah digunakan untuk membantu saya membaca teks Bahasa Inggris.	100	1	5	3.71	.902
Q2	Saya mudah memahami cara menggunakan AI.	100	1	5	3.58	.878
Q3	AI membantu saya dengan cepat ketika mengalami kesulitan membaca.	100	1	5	3.76	.944
Q4	Saya tidak mengalami banyak kesulitan saat menggunakan AI untuk membaca teks Bahasa Inggris.	100	1	5	3.70	.859
Q5	AI membantu saya memahami isi teks Bahasa Inggris.	100	1	5	3.82	.845
Q6	AI membantu saya menemukan informasi penting dalam bacaan Bahasa Inggris.	100	1	5	3.75	.796
Q7	AI membantu saya memahami arti kata-kata baru dalam bacaan Bahasa Inggris.	100	1	5	3.77	.815
Q8	AI membantu saya memahami kalimat Bahasa Inggris yang sulit.	100	1	5	3.89	.803
Q9	AI membantu saya menjawab pertanyaan berdasarkan bacaan Bahasa Inggris.	100	1	5	3.65	.857
Q10	AI membantu saya membuat ringkasan	100	1	5	3.64	.811

	dari bacaan Bahasa Inggris.					
Q11	AI membantu saya memahami bacaan Bahasa Inggris dengan lebih baik.	100	1	5	3.75	.833
Q12	AI membantu saya meningkatkan kemampuan membaca Bahasa Inggris.	100	1	5	3.69	.873
Q13	Saya senang menggunakan AI saat membaca teks Bahasa Inggris.	100	1	5	3.43	.891
Q14	AI membuat kegiatan membaca Bahasa Inggris menjadi lebih menarik.	100	1	5	3.52	.882
Q15	Saya merasa nyaman menggunakan AI untuk membantu membaca.	100	1	5	3.48	.797
Q16	Saya merasa AI bermanfaat untuk belajar membaca Bahasa Inggris.	100	1	5	3.73	.874
Q17	Saya kadang ragu apakah informasi yang diberikan AI sudah benar.	100	1	5	3.50	.916
Q18	Saya perlu memeriksa kembali informasi yang diberikan AI.	100	1	5	3.77	.815
Q19	AI terkadang memberi jawaban yang kurang tepat.	100	1	5	3.37	.837
Q20	Saya khawatir terlalu sering mengandalkan AI saat membaca Bahasa Inggris.	100	1	5	3.37	.872
Q21	Saya ingin terus menggunakan AI untuk membantu membaca Bahasa Inggris.	100	1	5	3.21	.856

Q22	Saya akan menggunakan AI ketika mengalami kesulitan memahami bacaan Bahasa Inggris.	100	1	5	3.74	.906
Q23	Saya bersedia menggunakan AI untuk membantu belajar Bahasa Inggris di masa depan.	100	1	5	3.52	.959
Q24	Saya akan menyarankan teman menggunakan AI untuk membantu membaca Bahasa Inggris.	100	1	5	3.38	.838
Valid N (listwise)		100				

The findings of this study indicate that junior high school students generally have positive perceptions of using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to support their English reading skills, as reflected in the overall mean score of 3.61, which falls into the High category. This finding suggests that AI has been positively accepted as a learning tool that supports students in reading English texts. The result is consistent with previous studies reporting that generative AI provides valuable learning assistance by offering immediate feedback, personalized support, and flexible learning opportunities for EFL learners (Azwar & Yunita, 2026; Vo & Nguyen, 2024; Slamet, 2024). Overall, the findings indicate that AI has considerable potential to complement English reading instruction, particularly when integrated appropriately into the learning process.

Among the five dimensions, Perceived Usefulness obtained the highest mean score ($M = 3.75$), indicating that students regarded AI as the most beneficial aspect of their English reading experience. This finding may be explained by the practical functions offered by AI, such as providing immediate explanations for unfamiliar vocabulary, clarifying difficult reading passages, and generating summaries that help students understand texts more efficiently. For junior high school students, who are still developing their English reading proficiency, these features reduce learning difficulties and enable them to complete reading tasks with greater confidence. The high score also suggests that students tend to value

technologies that provide direct and immediate learning support, particularly when they encounter challenges during independent reading. This finding is consistent with (Xue et al., 2024), who proposed that AI-supported adaptive reading systems enhance English reading by providing personalized learning support tailored to learners' needs. Similarly, (Daweli & Mahyoub, 2024) reported that EFL learners perceived AI tools as beneficial for improving reading comprehension. Likewise, (Alhazmi & Khadawardi, 2026) found that AI was viewed as an effective resource for supporting English reading through timely explanations and personalized assistance.

The second highest mean score was obtained for Perceived Ease of Use ($M = 3.69$), suggesting that students considered AI application relatively easy to access and operate. The user-friendly interfaces of AI tools, such as ChatGPT and Gemini, allow students to obtain information quickly without requiring advanced technological skills. Such accessibility may encourage students to use AI independently whenever they experience difficulties while reading English texts. This result supports (Liu & Ma, 2024), who found that perceived ease of use significantly influenced EFL learners' acceptance of ChatGPT for informal English learning. Likewise, (Faridah et al., 2026) reported that students were more willing to use AI technologies when they perceived them as simple and convenient to use.

Students also demonstrated positive perceptions regarding Attitude Toward AI ($M = 3.54$) and Behavioral Intention ($M = 3.46$), indicating that they generally viewed AI positively and intended to continue using it for future English reading activities. Positive attitude may have developed because students experienced practical benefits while using AI, including faster access to explanations and additional learning support beyond classroom instruction. The findings are consistent with (Vo & Nguyen, 2024), who found that EFL students generally expressed favorable attitudes toward the integration of generative AI into language learning. Similarly, (Tram et al., 2024) reported that students were willing to continue using ChatGPT as a self-learning tool because of its convenience and usefulness in supporting English learning.

Although students generally perceived AI positively, the Challenges of AI Use dimension also received a relatively high mean score ($M = 3.50$), indicating that students

were aware of several potential limitations associated with AI-assisted learning. These challenges include the possibility of becoming overly dependent on AI-generated responses and the need to critically evaluate the accuracy of AI-generated information. This finding is consistent with (Hasanah & Degeng, 2025), who emphasized the importance of AI literacy in helping students use generative AI responsibly and critically. Likewise, (Al-Abdullatif & Alsubaie, 2024) argued that students should develop adequate AI literacy to maximize the educational benefits of AI while minimizing potential risks associated with excessive reliance on AI-generated content.

Overall, the findings suggest that AI has considerable potential to support English reading instruction at the junior high school level. Students generally perceived AI as useful, easy to use, and beneficial for improving their reading experiences while simultaneously recognizing the importance of using AI responsibly. Therefore, AI should be integrated as a complementary learning tool rather than as a replacement for independent reading and critical thinking. Teachers play an essential role in guiding students to use AI appropriately so that technological innovation can enhance learning while maintaining students' active engagement in the reading process.

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that junior high school students generally have a high level of positive perception toward the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in supporting English reading skills, as reflected in the overall mean score of 3.61. Among the five dimensions, Perceived Usefulness obtained the highest mean score, indicating that students considered AI beneficial for assisting them in understanding reading materials, explaining unfamiliar vocabulary, and supporting their English reading activities. At the same time, students also recognized several challenges, particularly the risk of becoming overly dependent on AI and the importance of critically evaluating AI-generated information. These findings suggest that students view AI as a supportive learning resource rather than a replacement for their own learning efforts. Based on these findings, English teachers are encouraged to integrate AI into reading instruction in a guided and responsible manner. Schools may also consider promoting

AI literacy so that students are able to use AI critically and ethically while maintaining active engagement in reading activities.

This study has several limitations. First, the study involved only 100 junior high school students, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts. Second, the study focused solely on students' perceptions of AI use and did not measure actual improvements in English reading performance. Future research is therefore recommended to involve larger and more diverse samples and to examine the relationship between AI use and students' actual reading achievement through experimental or longitudinal research designs.

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DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used AI-assisted tools, including ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Quillbot, Elicit, and NotebookLM to support literature searching, language editing, and improving the clarity of the writing. The authors carefully reviewed and edited the output generated by these tools and take full responsibility for the content of the manuscript.

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