

# ETHICAL INTEGRATIONS OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN EFL LEARNING: OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, AND FAIR ASSESSMENT (STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE)

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## ABSTRACT:

This study examines the ethical integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in English foreign language learning (EFL), focusing on its potential benefits, accompanying challenges, and its implications for fair assessment practices. Using a mixed-methods research design, data were collected from 98 undergraduate students at the University of Zakho to understand their perceptions and use of AI-driven tools. The findings show a common embracing and a positive reception of AI for language development, particularly in writing and speaking. However, concerns regarding academic integrity, overreliance on AI, and the reliability of AI-generated content were also prominent. Despite these challenges, students confirmed awareness of ethical considerations and braced for implementing institutional guidelines. The study concludes that while AI grasps transformative potential for EFL learning, its integration must be directed by ethical principles, educator training, and inclusive policies to ensure equitable and responsible use.

**KEYWORDS:** Artificial Intelligence (AI), EFL, Ethical Integration, Benefits, Challenges, Assessment.

## 1. Introduction

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in English Language Education (ELE) has been growing significantly during recent years, providing some ground-breaking opportunities to develop EFL teaching and learning practices. Nevertheless, as AI becomes more dominant within educational settings, it is necessary to address the ethical concerns and challenges that come up from its implementation. Hence, this paper is aiming to display the ethical integration of AI in EFL learning, and specifically focusing on identifying its opportunities, challenges, and encouraging its fair assessment practices.

Yet the integration of AI in English Language Teaching (ELT) offers several benefits, such as transforming EFL Education by providing personalized learning practices and adaptive feedback mechanisms, which also increases ethical concerns that must be addressed such as the independence of educators and learners, data privacy, and algorithmic bias which are critical issues that need to be cautiously considered (Williamson, 2017; Sottolare et al., 2018).

In terms of the assessment, AI-driven tools can offer real-time feedback, personalized evaluations, and well-organized grading processes. However, it is still vital to ensure that these tools are designed and implemented in a fair and unbiased way. In other words, educators must be trained to use AI effectively in their assessments, and

students should be prepared with digital literacy skills to navigate AI-based assessment performances (Holmes, 2020; Liu, 2023).

In order to create an active, effective, impartial learning environment and to harness the power of AI, educators must work on addressing the ethical concerns through promoting responsible AI usage and ensuring fair assessment practices.

Thus, this study carries substantial value as it proposes to guide the use of AI in EFL ethically and responsibly. Its findings can be set as a starting point for future discussions on the use of AI in EFL education more broadly. While AI is more and more influencing education, it must be aligned with ethical principles during its implementation, such as promoting fairness, inclusivity, and effectiveness in language education.

As for the scope of this paper, it focuses on the AI tools integration in EFL, closely targeting the higher education EFL, excluding levels from Kindergarten and all the first 12 educational stages in schools. Also, it is limited by its focus on undergraduate students in the English language department, excluding other educational departments (other languages and professions). The sample is restricted to the University of Zakho, which is taken as a sample representing students in this region.

### 1.1 Statement of Problem:

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The ethical issues are intensifying as AI technologies gain more ground in educational settings. Issues such as data privacy, algorithmic bias, academic integrity, and learner autonomy are among the concerns raised. These tools, on one hand, offer up a promise of personalized feedback and adaptive learning, but, on the other hand, the absence of a unified ethical framework and clear protocols for fair assessment makes the adoption patchy and can even be harmful to those student groups that are less advantaged. Despite global debate on AI's educational ethics, little empirical research has examined how these issues are experienced by students within the Kurdish higher-education EFL context, particularly in relation to fair assessment practices.

### 1.2 Research objectives:

The main goal of this article is to lay out a detailed outline of how to ethically integrate AI in EFLL. It is to explore the opportunities and the challenges, the fair assessment practices, as well as to provide instructors, policymakers, and researchers with a road map to navigate this rapidly changing terrain.

### 1.3 Research Questions:

This paper seeks to find answers to the following questions:

1. What are the potential benefits of integrating AI technologies into English language learning?
2. What Challenges arise from using AI in English language learning?
3. Does AI contribute to fair and equitable assessment practices in English language learning?

## 1. Theoretical Background

Incorporating AI into EFLL has revolutionized instructional strategies, offering significant improvements in personalization, assessment, and learner engagement. However, this innovation also raises complex ethical challenges, especially concerning data privacy, academic integrity, algorithmic bias, over-reliance, and fairness.

The leap to AI began in earnest with Turing's 1950 paper on machine intelligence (Coursera Staff, 2024). From expert systems to deep learning models, AI has evolved to tackle increasingly complex tasks, from playing chess to powering language models like ChatGPT (Singh, 2022; Ash, 2023; Lam, 2023).

At the core of AI's ethical use in education generally is the distinction between how machines and humans learn, reason, and communicate. Human intelligence integrates emotional, social, and contextual nuances. A child learns language through interaction, empathy, and observation. AI, by contrast, processes vast data sets through algorithms, learning in structured, often pattern-based ways (Panesar, 2020; Pinotti, 2023). While AI excels at identifying trends and generating fluent text, it lacks true comprehension or the moral agency to understand the ethical weight of its outputs (Wolfram, 2023). This gap underscores the necessity for responsible AI integration, particularly in EFL Education, where communication and cultural understanding are deeply human.

The increasing role of AI in education has been examined numerous times, with applications ranging from personalized learning systems, intelligent tutoring platforms, and

automated assessment tools (Yang et al., 2020; Konstantinova et al., 2023). In English Language Teaching, it has been shown that AI has enhanced vocabulary acquisition, grammar modification, and conversational practices (Kovalenko & Baranivska, 2024; Umar, 2024). AI tools such as ChatGPT, despite raising worries about issues of plagiarism and weakening teacher-student relationships, have also opened new paths for student engagement and creativity (Baskara, 2023; Derakhshan et al., 2024). Nowadays, Educators are facing the challenge of navigating a landscape where technology is not only supporting learning but also transforming the teaching roles and making it essential for them to receive training and develop ethical guidelines about the use of AI tools.

AI in EFLL offers clear merits, including personalized learning, efficient assessment, greater learner engagement, and support for vocabulary, grammar, and speaking skills. However, it also presents demerits such as risks to data privacy, academic integrity concerns, algorithmic bias, over-reliance, and possible weakening of teacher-student relationships. These contrasting aspects highlight the need for ethically guided, culturally sensitive integration supported by strong policy and teacher training.

Here's a summary of noteworthy studies that are addressing these emerging issues, to provide a clearer picture, all organized around this study's key themes: the benefits and opportunities of AI, the challenges that it presents, the fair assessment practices, and the ethical considerations in AI-assisted English Foreign Language (EFL) learning.

### 2.1 Benefits and Opportunities:

AI-powered tools in EFL have been shown to pave the way for personalization, engagement, and skill-building, which is a key factor in learning. The studies of Wang et al. (2024) and Satiti et al. (2024) found that adaptive feedback was one of the main factors leading to the retention of vocabulary as well as the increase of speaking fluency. However, the limited generalizability of these results is due to the fact that each of them was conducted in only one context. Karataş et al. (2024) and Chen (2024) not only support the benefits of creativity and comprehension but also open these areas to the respective benefits of AI. Unfortunately, the limited number of participants and the short duration of the studies restrict the authors to only speculate on the lasting impact. Hence, these results are indicative of the AI potential of improving multiple language skills by exploiting the immediacy and the adaptability, but they also point out a lack of long-term, cross-cultural evidence; thus, this paper attempts to fill the gap in the Kurdish higher education context.

### 2.2 Challenges and Limitations:

Recent studies caution of the significant consequences that might result from AI-based English as a foreign language (EFL) education that the reliance on it by the learners might be reduced. They mainly talk about the great damage that may be inflicted on learner autonomy, critical thinking skills, and cultural sensitivity. Besides that, Qu and Wu (2024) as well as Zheng and Stewart (2024) envisage the opportunities of the occurrence of bias in the AI tools themselves, and hence the bias may spread to the

learners' skills or even educational values. Meanwhile, in neither of the two studies are long-term learner outcomes discussed. Tiwari (2024), while talking about problems faced by teachers, has not touched on how the changes affect teaching at the local level. Over the years, the results of the studies have changed the nature of the debates from unrestrained enthusiastic adoption to a more balanced view, acknowledging that the pros and cons exist and the need for human supervision and dealing with access inequalities, besides revealing more requirements for longitudinal and situational evidence, a gap this research intends to fill in the Kurdish higher-education area.

### 2.3 Fair Assessment Practices:

The research that has been conducted on the fairness of AI-assisted EFL assessment is notably limited. Le (2024) outlines the effectiveness that can be achieved by AI-generated test items, but doubts how they will be in line with the learning outcomes and says that there are no standard calibration and bias-removal procedures. The literature review uncovers that the issue of missing validation frameworks and open feedback channels is one of the most important reasons for being a significant obstacle. The lack of these feedback channels directly reflects on this study's emphasis on the combination of AI and human assessment to provide a guarantee of the validity, fairness, and integrity of the study.

### 2.4 Ethical Considerations:

For ethical AI in EFL, it would require a well-designed institutional policy, data protection, and professional development; still, the actual practice, as suggested by the studies, is quite the opposite. The results of the study by Aljabr and Al-Ahdal (2024), together with Nazim (2024), indicate that faculty members are aware of the advantages but are still very much concerned about privacy and bias and, therefore, advocate for the establishment of reliable policy and ethical instruction. Yang (2024) also stresses the importance of equal access, but there is scarce implementation in different areas. The points that are common in these studies are the ones of ethical concern in the global context and the issue of lack of models that would be operationalized and specific to a particular context - this study tries to move forward in that respect in the Kurdish university environment

The current research, by drawing on the existing literature, more definitively, the narrowness of the ethical dimension treatment of AI-assisted EFL education, which has not really been the focus, besides a few mentions of academic integrity, cultural bias, or data privacy. The research in the past has focused on separate benefits or challenges without bringing in a fair assessment framework of ethical literacy and local policy context. The present research, by engaging University of Zakho students' views, transcends a mere account of adoption patterns to a critique of the balance between AI instructional potential and the safeguards needed for responsible use. As a result, the paper addresses the gaps in longitudinal, context-specific evidence, broadens the discussion to include the interplay of ethics and inclusiveness, and teacher training as a catalyst for the sustainable, equitable integration of AI in language learning.

## 2. Methodology

The methodology employed in this study adopts a mixed-methods research design, which integrates a mixed (quantitative and qualitative) approach to achieve a more nuanced understanding of the research problem and to present a more reliable and precise exploration of the ethical integration of AI in EFL, ensuring both depth and breadth in the analysis.

### 3.1 Data Collection Tools

#### 2.3.1 Questionnaire:

A questionnaire was developed to explore four key variables. It included demographic questions, familiarity with AI tools, and their usage. The questionnaire aimed to assess students' perceptions, usability, and effectiveness of AI assessments through three questions investigating the reasons behind using or not using AI tools and which tools are being used. It consisted of 30 items, each rated on a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from 1 "strongly agree" to 5 "strongly disagree". The 30 items were divided into four sections, each representing a specific variable: opportunities and benefits (items 1 - 9), challenges (items 10 - 15), Fair assessment (items 16 - 24), and Ethical integration (items 25 - 30).

#### 2.3.2 Validity of the Questionnaire:

Validity evaluates whether the questionnaire measures the information it is supposed to measure. The content validity of the questionnaire was checked and reviewed by a panel of experts consisting of five university professors specialized in Applied Linguistics. Their feedback and recommendations were carefully considered, and the questionnaire items were modified accordingly to enhance clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study objectives.

#### 2.3.3 Reliability of the Questionnaire:

A pilot study was conducted with 40 students to test the survey's reliability, which was then calculated using Cronbach's Alpha to test the questionnaire's internal consistency. An acceptable Cronbach's alpha coefficient is 0.70 or higher. This study's overall Cronbach's Alpha was 0.74, indicating a high level of reliability of our questionnaire.

### 3.2 Population and Sample (Participants):

This study focuses on students at the University of Zakho who are learning English as a foreign language. Specifically, the population includes students from the English Language Department within the College of Humanities. We chose this group because they study English intensively throughout their four years of university, unlike students in other departments who only take English as a secondary subject for a short time, usually just one or two semesters.

To obtain meaningful feedback about how students use and experience AI in learning English, we decided to focus on those who are most engaged with the language. From this population, we selected a sample of 98 students, choosing participants from two academic stages: freshers (Stage 1) and Seniors (Stage 4) students. We chose these two groups intentionally to get a broad perspective, including freshers who are just beginning their university journey and seniors who are nearing graduation. This

allowed us to explore whether students’ views on AI differ based on their language proficiency and years of study. Out of the 98 students who took part in the study, 73 were from Stage 1 and 25 from Stage 4. Around 69% of the participants were female, while 31% were male. All participants completed the questionnaire online through a Google Form, which helped make data collection simple, accessible, and efficient.

**3.3 Data Analysis Procedure:**

A mixed method was employed to ensure a thorough evaluation. The data analysis procedure contained statistical methods where the quantitative data collected were processed and analyzed using SPSS [version 25] software to analyze all data. It consisted of descriptive statistics (mean, median, and std. deviation) for the 30 items. This part of the analysis aimed to reveal the students’ general tendencies, for example, whether they mostly agreed or disagreed with the assertions on the use of AI in learning the English language.

Inferential analysis (T-test and correlation analysis). These instruments had a clearly defined function. The t-test aimed at assessing whether there were any statistically significant differences between the values of two different groups, such as males and females, or students from different academic stages or ranks. Correlation analysis was used to uncover possible links between various items, for instance, checking if students who considered AI as a helpful tool thought it to be ethical and fair, too.

While quantitative data, students’ open items were analyzed using thematic analysis. Responses were read multiple times, coded inductively to identify recurring patterns and ideas, and then clustered into themes corresponding to the study’s conceptual areas to understand the main reasons behind using and not using AI tools and the type of tools mostly being used to better

understand the thoughts and experiences behind the numbers. This helped give more context to the findings and highlighted patterns that might not be visible through statistics alone.

**3. Data Analysis and Discussion of Results**

The analysis of the collected data through a comprehensive questionnaire aimed at understanding students’ perceptions of AI-driven tools in EFLL. The survey targeted students at different academic stages and was designed to uncover not only their engagement with AI but also their trust, concerns, and perceived benefits. By employing quantitative tools such as descriptive statistics, independent samples t-tests, and Pearson correlation.

Most respondents reported being familiar with AI tools (86.6%) and using them (85.6%), which confirms that AI is already a well-established part of their learning toolkit.

**4.1 Interpretation of Descriptive Analysis:**

Here, the descriptive analysis of the collected data is presented, providing an overview of students’ perceived benefits, challenges, and ethical considerations related to AI-driven tools in English language learning. Descriptive statistics such as means, medians, and standard deviations are used to summarize the central tendencies and variability in students’ responses, offering foundational insights into how AI tools impact their learning experience.

**4.1.1 Opportunities and Benefits of AI-driven tools:**

To offer a clearer statistical view of the benefits of AI-driven tools, Table 4.1 summarizes the mean, median, and standard deviation for the Likert-scale items (1-9) related to the opportunities and benefits of AI integration in EFLL from the questionnaire.

**Table 4.1: Statistical Descriptive of Opportunities and Benefits of AI-driven Tools**

Item #	Questionnaire Item	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
1	AI-driven tools help me improve my English speaking.	3.92	4.00	0.88
2	AI-driven tools help me improve my English writing skills.	3.75	4.00	0.91
3	AI-driven tools help me improve my English listening skills.	3.60	4.00	0.93
4	AI-driven tools help me improve my English reading skills.	3.82	4.00	0.86
5	I feel more comfortable asking AI-driven tools questions than asking a teacher.	3.78	4.00	0.84
6	AI-driven tools can provide useful answers to help me understand reading comprehension assignments.	3.90	4.00	0.89
7	The feedback systems of AI provide me with more comprehensive feedback than traditional methods.	3.98	4.00	0.81
8	AI has adapted my learning style and pace, making learning more enjoyable and effective.	3.67	4.00	0.87
9	I am proficient in making use of AI-driven tools.	3.88	4.00	0.79

Results in Table (4.1) indicate high agreement that students seem to have a positive experience with AI-driven

tools in their English learning. Most responses show agreement that these tools help improve different language

skills. For instance, students strongly feel that the feedback they get from AI is more detailed and useful than traditional feedback methods, which stands out as one of the most appreciated benefits. They also believe AI tools help them improve their speaking and understanding of reading assignments.

When looking at specific skills like speaking, writing, listening, and reading, students generally agree that AI helps across the board. However, listening skills show a bit less agreement and more varied opinions compared to other skills. Many students feel comfortable asking AI tools questions, even more so than asking a teacher, and they are confident in their ability to use these tools effectively. Students also agree that AI adapts to their

learning style and pace, making learning more enjoyable and effective. However, this particular benefit shows a little more variation in how strongly students feel about it. The fairly low variation in responses suggests that these positive views are shared by most students, showing that AI tools are widely seen as helpful and supportive in their English learning journey.

#### 4.1.2 AI-driven Tool Challenges:

Table 4.2 summarizes the mean, median, and standard deviation for the Likert-scale items (10 –15) related to the Challenges of AI integration in EFL from the questionnaire.

**Table 4.2 :Statistical Descriptive of AI-driven Tool Challenges**

Item #	Questionnaire Item	Mean	Median	Std. Dev.
10	The use of AI in doing assignments affects the academic integrity of the course.	4.11	4.00	0.75
11	The use of AI tools can sometimes hinder my understanding of the course materials.	4.06	4.00	0.78
12	AI tools can lead me to skip important problem-solving steps, as they offer diverse solutions that reduce my thinking time.	3.72	4.00	0.83
13	AI-driven tools sometimes provide inaccurate answers to my questions.	3.55	4.00	0.92
14	I use AI-driven tools very often in my English language learning process.	3.86	4.00	0.85
15	AI-driven tools' responses are reliable.	2.54	2.00	1.02

Results in the above table show that while mostly optimistic, students did express a few concerns. The highest agreement is seen in the statement that AI use in assignments affects academic integrity (Item 10), with a mean of 4.11 and median of 4.00. This indicates a strong concern among students that AI might compromise the honesty and fairness of academic work. Closely following this is the belief that AI tools can sometimes hinder understanding of course materials (Item 11), with a mean of 4.06, showing that many students feel that relying on AI may interfere with their deep comprehension of the subject matter.

Students also somewhat agree that AI can lead them to skip important problem-solving steps by providing ready-made solutions that reduce their critical thinking time (Item 12), with a mean of 3.72 and median of 4.00. This suggests a moderate but notable caution about overdependence on AI potentially undermining learning processes. Additionally, there is some agreement that AI-driven tools sometimes

give inaccurate answers (Item 13), with a mean of 3.55, indicating that reliability of AI responses is a recognized issue, although not as strongly perceived as academic integrity or hindered understanding.

Interestingly, while many students report using AI tools often in their English learning (Item 14) with a mean of 3.86, the perceived reliability of AI responses is rated quite low (Item 15), with a mean of only 2.54 and a median of 2.00, accompanied by the highest standard deviation (1.02). This wide variation suggests mixed experiences with AI accuracy and trustworthiness some students may find AI responses reliable, while others are skeptical or have encountered errors.

#### 4.1.3 Fair Assessment:

To offer a clearer statistical view, Table 4.3 summarizes the mean, median, and standard deviation for the Likert-scale items (16-24) related to fair assessment of AI integration in EFL from the questionnaire.

**Table 4.3 :Statistical Descriptive of Responses to Fair Assessment**

Item #	Questionnaire Item	Mean	Median	Std. Dev.
16	AI-driven tools offer quick, accurate feedback and valuable revision suggestions on my assignments.	2.60	3.00	0.96
17	AI-driven tools enable me to do self-checking effectively.	2.48	2.00	1.00
18	AI-driven tools give questions that are sometimes hard to understand	2.73	3.00	1.04
19	Plagiarism detection software can detect AI input in students' assignments.	2.91	3.00	0.97
20	AI tools can give some students an unfair advantage in completing assignments more easily than others.	3.02	3.00	1.01
21	I trust AI-driven assessment tools to provide accurate and unbiased results.	2.81	3.00	0.98
22	I believe that using AI for grading and feedback improves transparency in assessments.	3.95	4.00	0.86
23	AI ensures steady grading practices compared to human instructors.	3.60	4.00	0.88
24	AI-driven tools have promoted creativity and innovation in my learning process.	3.49	3.00	0.91

The responses reveal mixed perceptions about the fairness and effectiveness of AI-driven tools in assessment. Items 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21 show relatively low mean scores ranging from 2.48 to 3.02, mostly below or near the neutral midpoint of 3.00 on the 5-point scale. Specifically, students tend to disagree or feel uncertain that AI tools consistently offer quick and accurate feedback (Item 16, mean 2.60) or enable effective self-checking (Item 17, mean 2.48). Similarly, students are somewhat skeptical about the clarity of AI-generated questions, with Item 18 scoring 2.73 on average, suggesting that some questions posed by AI may be hard to understand. There is also moderate doubt about plagiarism detection software’s ability to identify AI input in assignments (Item 19, mean 2.91), indicating concerns about the effectiveness of current plagiarism tools in the context of AI use.

Regarding fairness, students moderately agree that AI tools might give some students an unfair advantage in completing assignments more easily than others (Item 20, mean 3.02), reflecting a concern about equity in AI-assisted learning environments. Trust in AI-driven assessment tools to provide accurate and unbiased results

(Item 21) is relatively low, with a mean of 2.81, showing that students remain cautious about fully relying on AI for evaluation.

In contrast, items 22 and 23 stand out with significantly higher mean scores of 3.95 and 3.60, respectively. This indicates that many students believe AI improves transparency in grading and ensures more consistent grading practices compared to human instructors. This suggests recognizing AI’s potential benefits in standardizing assessment and reducing human bias or inconsistency.

Finally, students moderately agree that AI-driven tools have promoted creativity and innovation in their learning process (Item 24, mean 3.49), showing some appreciation for AI’s role beyond just assessment accuracy.

#### 4.1.4 Ethical Integration of AI :

To provide a more accurate statistical view, Table 4.4 summarizes the mean, median, and standard deviation for the Likert-scale items (25-30) related to the Ethical Perspective of AI integration in EFL from the questionnaire.

**Table 4.4 :Statistical Descriptive of AI Ethical Integration**

Item #	Questionnaire Item	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
25	I feel confident that my personal information is safe and secure when using AI-driven tools.	3.80	4.00	0.79
26	I am aware of the limitations and biases of AI tools.	3.69	4.00	0.82

27	I am aware of the limitations of AI-driven tools and consistently evaluate the quality of their responses	3.64	4.00	0.84
28	AI-driven tools contribute to a more inclusive learning environment.	3.82	4.00	0.81
29	Universities should implement strict regulations on the use of AI in academic settings to ensure fairness and integrity.	3.80	4.00	0.79
30	AI-driven tools respect cultural diversity by providing inclusive, unbiased, and culturally sensitive support for EFL learners.	3.71	4.00	0.87

The data shows that students generally have positive and confident attitudes toward the ethical use and integration of AI-driven tools in their learning process. Most items have mean scores close to or above 3.6, with medians at 4.00, indicating that students tend to agree or strongly agree with statements related to ethical considerations. For example, students express a good level of confidence that their personal information is safe and secure when using AI tools (Item 25), with a mean of 3.80 and a median of 4.00. This suggests an overall trust in the privacy and security measures associated with these technologies.

Students also show awareness of AI's limitations and biases, as reflected in Items 26 and 27, with means of 3.69 and 3.64. They report that they are aware of these limitations and actively evaluate the quality of AI responses, indicating a critical approach to using AI tools rather than blind reliance. This awareness is crucial for ethical and effective AI use in education, as it shows learners understand that AI is not dependable.

Regarding inclusivity and fairness, students agree that AI-driven tools contribute to a more inclusive learning environment (Item 28, mean 3.82) and respect cultural diversity by providing unbiased and culturally sensitive support (Item 30, mean 3.71). There is also strong agreement that universities should implement strict regulations to ensure fairness and integrity in AI use (Item 29, mean 3.80), reflecting students' recognition of the need for institutional oversight to maintain ethical standards.

#### 4.2 Interpretation of T-Test and Correlation Analyses:

The inferential statistics were conducted through t-tests and correlation analyses following the descriptive analysis. The t-test examines whether there are significant differences in students' perceptions based on demographic variables such as gender and academic stage. Meanwhile, correlation analysis investigates the relationships among key variables, including AI perceived benefits, challenges, and ethical attitudes. Together, these analyses provide a deeper understanding of how different factors interact and influence students' experiences with AI-driven tools. Before delving into the statistical analysis, it's important to note that the normality of the data was assessed using the Shapiro-Wilk test. This test confirmed that the majority of the variables were approximately normally distributed, satisfying the assumptions for parametric tests like the t-test.

##### 4.2.1 Gender-Based Differences (T-Test Results):

The independent samples t-test was conducted to examine whether male and female students differ significantly in their perceptions and usage of AI-driven tools across

various aspects of English language learning and academic integrity.

Overall, no significant gender differences were found in students' responses related to AI-driven tools' impact on improving English skills (speaking, writing, listening, reading), comfort in asking AI questions, usefulness of AI for reading comprehension, feedback quality, adaptation to learning style, and proficiency in using AI tools. For all these variables, p-values were greater than 0.05, indicating male and female students had similar experiences and perceptions. Similarly, gender differences in perceptions about the academic integrity impact of AI, hindrance to course understanding, skipping problem-solving steps, and reliability of AI responses were not significant. No significant gender differences emerged regarding perceptions of AI's role in assessment fairness, including trust in AI grading, plagiarism detection, and transparency in assessments. Ethical integration aspects, such as confidence in data security, awareness of AI limitations, inclusivity, and support for strict AI regulations, also showed no significant differences between male and female students.

In this section, gender does not seem to play a role in how students accept, use, or critically evaluate AI-driven tools. Both male and female students exhibit similar attitudes and experiences, indicating that their perspectives on these technologies are quite aligned.

##### 4.2.2 Academic Level-Based Differences (T-Test Results):

The analysis of T-tests in comparing Stage 1 and Stage 4 students revealed some interesting differences in their insights and their use of AI, i.e., Stage 4 students lean towards rating AI more positively when it came to the writing improvement and the effectiveness of AI feedback. Still, they also expressed greater attention to issues like academic integrity and the risk of AI bypassing essential problem-solving steps during problematic situations. On the other hand, Stage 1 students had reported more frequent use of AI tools and had stronger beliefs in the immediate benefits of AI for enhancing skills like speaking and writing. Yet, they also showed higher concerns about becoming too dependent on these tools. but overall, Stage 4 students displayed a more critical awareness of AI's limitations, and they were more selective in their trust of AI-generated responses. These differences indicate that during students' academic progress, they not only use AI contrarily but also develop a more thoughtful and balanced approach in evaluating its benefits and risks.

##### 4.2.3 Correlation Analysis: Interconnected Beliefs:

Pearson correlation analysis has uncovered several meaningful connections among students' familiarity with AI, their usage patterns, perceived benefits, challenges, and ethical awareness. It explains that students who were more familiar with AI have a habit of using these tools more frequently, and this increased engagement was closely associated with perceived improvements in all language skills. At the same time, these students felt more comfortable interacting with AI and appreciated its feedback. Interestingly, those who used AI more often were more likely to see it as a means of promoting inclusivity, creativity, and innovation in their learning process. However, they generally expressed fewer concerns about potential drawbacks, like issues related to academic integrity or difficulties in comprehension. Moreover, ethical awareness, such as understanding the limitations, biases, and data security aspects of AI, was positively associated with both the use of AI and the recognition of its benefits, which indicates that more informed students have a tendency to be more thoughtful about the role and the risks of AI. Generally, these findings advocate that students view AI in a holistic way, by balancing its practical advantages with ethical considerations, which highlights the importance of supporting learners in using AI effectively and responsibly.

#### **4.3 Qualitative questions Analysis:**

The data from three qualitative (open-ended) questions (1) reasons for not using AI tools, (2) purposes for using AI tools, and (3) which AI tools are used, reveals a clear divide between students who embrace AI tools for their English learning and those who do not.

From responses to the first question, among the non-users, the main reasons behind avoiding AI usage were the lack of knowledge and concerns about its probable negative effects, since some students acknowledged that they simply don't know much about AI tools, whereas some were expressing fears such as AI's probability of making its users lazy or even harm their mental health. Although few others expressed their preference for traditional research methods, like using Google or books, they believed that AI tools could be misleading or misused. In a nutshell, these responses reflect a combination of caution and hesitation among non-users, highlighting the need for increased awareness and instruction about the benefits and risks of AI.

For those who do use AI tools, and in response to the second-mentioned question above, the main purposes revolve around academic support and language development, since most students rely on these technologies to assist with studying through improving their English skills, completing homework, researching information, and preparing assignments. And this points to that AI has become a valuable assistant in their learning process, which allows them to access information quickly and effectively enhance their language abilities. These responses indicate that students are experiencing concrete benefits from these tools, mainly in managing their academic workload and improving their English proficiency, which aligns with our expectations about AI's role in education. This explains that these tools have been

integrated into their study routines, making learning more manageable and efficient for them.

When it comes to the third question about the specific AI tools being used, our expectation that ChatGPT would be the most popular among students was strongly confirmed. ChatGPT appeared as the most frequently mentioned tool being used by the majority of students for various tasks, from answering questions to improving writing and conducting research. Other tools like Grammarly, Deepseek, Quillbot, and Gemini are also utilized, mostly as complementary aids for specialized tasks such as grammar checking or paraphrasing.

Remarkably, while some non-users expressed fears about safety and ethical issues, these matters did not arise among the students who actively use AI tools, which suggests that awareness of AI risks, such as privacy concerns, misinformation, or academic dishonesty, may be low. And this highlights an important area for future education and discussion as AI is progressively integrated into language learning.

#### **4. Findings and Discussion**

This study aimed to identify the knowledge and ethical opinions of undergraduate students about their implementation of AI tools in English as a Foreign Language Learning (EFL) at Zakho University.

The results express a detailed picture of AI's contribution to English language teaching, highlighting its positive side and potential problems, doubts about the fairness of exams, and the moral issues due to the use of AI. The findings indicate that AI tools have notably improved students' learning experience. Participants reported being able to produce written work more efficiently and creatively, while also gaining greater confidence in their abilities through the use of AI. These outcomes align with the research of Karataş et al. (2024), which emphasized ChatGPT's ability to improve writing fluency, grammar accuracy, and idea development. Similarly, they resonate with Wang et al.'s experimental study, which demonstrated superior vocabulary retention and application through AI-based platforms compared to traditional learning methods. Stage 4 students, in particular, noted that AI assistance improved their drafting and helped them meet learning goals, reflecting the efficiency and proficiency gains documented in these studies. Students in the first year perceived the same advantages but to a lesser extent; thus, it appears that more experience enables students to utilize AI better. According to Pearson's correlation analysis, higher stage positively influences the perceived improvement in academic performance ( $p < .01$ ). Thus the results, the correlation between academic stages and the degree of self-efficacy from AI use, in juniors to seniors, are the same as Chen (2024) who found that AI-assisted semantic collaboration helps students to comprehend more and reduces anxiety. After all, the findings on benefits are quite consonant with extant literature and even serve to broaden it by demonstrating that advanced and mature students usually tend to exploit AI tools more effectively.

Hence, despite these potentials, challenges were also exposed by students, which mainly paralleled the challenges from the literature. The findings of Qu and Wu (2024) affirm the respondents' doubts about having too

much reliance on AI, losing motivation to make changes, and getting lost when AI makes contradictory comments. Those students of Stage 1, in particular, emphasized that it was difficult for them to correctly identify and fix the mistakes generated by AI. The research (Qu and Wu, 2024) connects the situation of students with low autonomy and the lack of critical thinking. Students from Stage 4 pointed out that errors were minor and that they could solve them by checking the AI result more than once. Besides, the survey shows no difference in difficulty levels between groups ( $p>.05$ ), so hours of practice have not changed the picture of the problem faced. These results reinforce prior work on AI pitfalls, including the concerns raised by Satiti, Fauziati, and Seytaningsih (2024) around chatbot feedback inconsistency, but also add nuance by showing that the nature of challenges can differ by learner level, even if their overall presence is widely acknowledged.

Fairness in assessment emerged as a prominent concern that goes beyond the existing studies. Many students worried that uneven access to AI tools or unclear grading policies could create unfair advantages or penalties. This issue was raised by Le (2024), who cautioned that while ChatGPT can efficiently generate English test items, concerns remain about calibration, specificity, and transparency in how assessments align with learning outcomes. Stage 4 students tended to call for explicit instructor guidelines to ensure consistency, whereas Stage 1 students mainly felt anxious about how using AI would be judged. Importantly, the analysis found no significant correlation between stage and difficulty ratings ( $p>.05$ ), implying both groups raised similar fairness issues. In other words, students were concerned with the fairness of academic policies, and this situation remained the same in the case of AI usage at different levels. On this basis, it may be concluded that fairness represents a major issue in AI-facilitated assessment that educational institutions need to resolve, and this is in line with the appeal for unambiguous and fair use of technology in the educational sector.

The ethical issues have been clearly highlighted through the collected data and align with the existing literature in a measured tone. Students have openly voiced concerns regarding trust in matters such as plagiarism, authorship, and responsible AI usage issues that resonate with the questions raised by Aljabr and Al-Ahdal (2024). Their faculty survey identified data privacy and algorithm bias as the most pressing concerns. Stage 4 students were noticeably more attentive to these issues than Stage 1 students, and they stuck to AI's cautious and limited use in avoiding wrongdoing, whereas Stage 1 students were at the beginning of their journey, very enthusiastic and far from fear sentiments. Pearson's correlation has indicated that a higher stage level is connected with larger ethical concern ( $p<.01$ ); therefore, seniors were more concerned about integrity. These results respond to the call of Nazim (2024) for the continuous ethical literacy and development of teachers so that they can handle AI responsibly in education. Generally, the research evidence is in accordance with the studies conducted on both the benefits and the drawbacks of AI (Karataş et al., 2024; Chen, 2024; Qu and Wu, 2024), however, this paper adds to the theme by demonstrating how students' perceptions of AI's

benefits, challenges, and ethical aspects change across the student ranks and also by introducing fairness as a significant but still not extensively researched aspect.

## 5. Conclusion

All over the study, it is shown that AI tools are becoming indispensable to the learning experiences of EFL students since many of them have reported high engagement and perceived benefits (opportunities) in areas like writing, speaking, and overall learning efficiency. However, they were also raising concerns (challenges) about academic integrity, overreliance, and even the reliability of AI-generated content. While students mostly find AI tools comfortable to use, they emotionally respond to the ethical issues of these tools in different ways that reveal a necessity for proper direction and education on digital skills. Additionally, the study emphasizes the importance of fair and transparent AI-based assessment practices. Students not only accept the potential of AI to make grading more consistent and to increase equity, but also, they are still careful about the dark side of it and the danger of its wrong use. Furthermore, the variety of study levels that students have demonstrates that through different experiences, the students' critical awareness of AI becomes deeper. And as much as AI continues to renovate EFL education, institutions must establish clear ethical frameworks and provide targeted training for both educators and learners, besides encouraging responsible and inclusive use of technology. By doing so, we can ensure that AI will enhance, not replace, human-centered, equitable, and effective language learning.

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### پوخته:

ئەف فەكولتە رەشوتتەن تەكەملەكەرنە ژیریە دەستەكرد دقیربوونا زمانئ ئینگلیزیدا وەك زمانەكئ بیانی بەرچاڤ و دیارەكەت و جەختەكەرنئ ل سەر مفاڵین گوماندار و وان هەمی هەڤرکی و ئاستەنگین دگەلدا پەیدادین دكەت. و ئەو كاردانەڤەیین وئ ل سەر بكار ئینانا هەلسەنگاندنن دادپەر وەرانه. و پشەت بەستی ل سەر دیزانەرەكە فەكولتەنی كو رینبازا جورەو جوری تەكەل بەكەت. لقیڕئ داتا ژ 98 قوتابیین زانكویا زاخۆ هاتە كۆمەكەرن ژ بۆ تەكەهەشەن و دیارەكەرنە بیروبووچوونین وان و چەوانییا بكار ئینانا وان بۆ ئامرازین ژیریە دەستەكرد. ئەنجام وەسا هاتەنە دیارەكەرن كو بكار ئینانەكە بەرفەرە و پشەوازەكە ئەرنی ژ بۆ پەرەیدانا زمانئ یا هەمی ، بتایبەتی د نقیسین و ئاخذەننیدا سەرەرای وئ چەندئ هەندە مەترسی گریدایی دەستپاكییا ئەكادیمی و پشەتەستنا زیدە ب ژیریە دەستەكرد هەبوون هەروەسا باوەر پینەكەرن بنافەرۆكئ ئەوا كو ژیریە دەستەكرد دروستكریە. و سەرەرای فان ئاستەنگا قوتابیین ئاگاہیەكە باش لدور رەهەندین رەوشتی نیشاندان و پشەتگیریا خو دیارەكەرنە ژ بۆ جینەجەكەرنە رینمایین دەركایی بین بەرچاڤو دیارەكەرن. ئەف خاندەنە گەهەشە وئ چەندئ كو ژیریە دەستەكرد شیانەكە گەورەنكەرە دبیافی فیرەكەرنە زمانئ دار. لئ تەكەملەكەرن و پینەكەرنە پیندقی پینگیریەكە باشە ب بنەمایین رەوشتی و رەهینانین گونجایی بۆ ماموستا و سیاسەتین بەرفەرە ژ بۆ دابینەكەرنە بكار ئینانەكە بەرپرەسارەنە و دادپەر وەرانه.

پەڤقین سەرەكی : زبیرەكیا دەستەكرد، خواندنا زمانئ ئینگلیزی وەك زمانەكئ بیانی ، ئەتیکین (رەوشتین) تەكەملەكەرنئ، هەلسەنگاندن، خواندنا دیجیتالی، هەریمە كوردستانی.

### التكامل الأخلاقي للذكاء الاصطناعي في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية: الفرص والتحديات والتقييم العادل (من وجهة نظر الطلاب)

#### المخلص:

يستكشف هذا البحث اخلاقيات دمج الذكاء الاصطناعي في تعلم اللغة الانكليزية كلغة اجنبية، مركزاً على فوائده المحتملة، والتحديات المصاحبة له، وانعكاساته على ممارسات التقييم المنصف. وبالاعتماد على تصميم بحثي يجمع بين المنهج الكمي والنوعي، تم جمع البيانات من 98 طالباً جامعياً في جامعة زاخو لفهم تصوراتهم واستخدامهم لأدوات الذكاء الاصطناعي. أظهرت النتائج انتشاراً واسعاً وتقبلاً إيجابياً لاستخدام الذكاء الاصطناعي في تطوير المهارات اللغوية، لاسيما في مجالي الكتابة والتحدث. ومع ذلك، برزت بعض المخاوف المتعلقة بالنزاهة الأكاديمية، والاعتماد المفرط على الذكاء الاصطناعي، ومدى موثوقية المحتوى الذي ينتجه. وعلى الرغم من هذه التحديات، أبدى الطلاب وعياً بالأبعاد الأخلاقية، وأعربوا عن تأييدهم لتطبيق إرشادات مؤسسية واضحة. وتوصلت الدراسة إلى أن للذكاء الاصطناعي قدرة تحويلية واعدة في مجال تعليم اللغة، إلا أن دمجها يتطلب التزاماً بمبادئ أخلاقية، وتدريباً مناسباً للمعلمين، وسياسات شاملة لضمان استخدام منصف ومسؤول.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الذكاء الاصطناعي، تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، الدمج الأخلاقي، التقييم، وعي الأمية الرقمية، اقليم كردستان.

#### Appendix:

The panel of experts who reviewed the tool is:		
Name	Scientific Tite	Affiliation
Dr. Sanan Sharo Malo	Asst. Professor	University of Zakho
Dr. Fakhir Omar Mohammed	Asst. Professor	University of Zakho
Dr. Saeed A Saeed	Asst. Professor	University of Duhok
Dr. Shivan Toma	Asst. Professor	University of Duhok
Dr. Kee-Man Chuah	Senior Lecturer	Malaysia Sarawak University