Exploring English Language Majors' Experiences of Using Artificial Intelligence to Learn English Grammar and Vocabulary

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ABSTRACT

Artificial intelligence (AI) has created new opportunities for English language learning by providing explanations, feedback and support for independent practice. However, concerns remain regarding the accuracy of AI-generated responses and students' ability to evaluate and apply the information provided. While research on AI-assisted language learning has expanded, less attention has been given to students' experiences of using AI specifically for grammar and vocabulary learning. This study explored undergraduate Applied Language Studies students' experiences of using AI to learn English grammar and vocabulary, focusing on their learning practices, perceived benefits and challenges. An exploratory qualitative approach was used to understand participants' experiences and perspectives. The study was guided by an interpretivist perspective. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted in English with 20 Semester 1 undergraduate students at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Perak Branch. The participants comprised 10 students from the September 2025 intake and 10 from the March 2026 intake. Purposive sampling considered students' academic backgrounds, English language proficiency, learning needs and Test 1 performance. The interview data were analysed thematically following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach. Six themes emerged: experiences and motivations of AI use, AI-assisted grammar learning practices, AI-assisted vocabulary learning practices, interaction, verification and trust in AI responses, perceived benefits, and challenges and limitations. Students reported using AI to obtain grammatical explanations, identify errors, generate practice exercises, explore word meanings and evaluate vocabulary choices. Perceived benefits included immediate assistance, individualised explanations, increased confidence and support for independent learning. However, participants also reported inconsistent or potentially inaccurate responses, concerns about dependence on AI and difficulties selecting appropriate vocabulary. Differences in verification practices highlighted the importance of critically evaluating AI-generated information. The findings suggest that AI can serve as a supplementary resource for grammar and vocabulary learning when its use is accompanied by critical evaluation, verification and independent practice. The study offers practical implications for integrating AI responsibly into English language teaching in higher education.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, English grammar, vocabulary learning, learner autonomy, qualitative study

INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence (AI), particularly generative AI tools such as ChatGPT, has introduced new opportunities for language learning by providing explanations, examples, feedback and support for independent practice. These tools allow students to seek clarification and revisit difficult concepts at their own pace. However, their educational value depends on how learners interpret and evaluate AI-generated responses, which may contain inaccurate information or encourage overreliance (Lo et al., 2024; UNESCO, 2023).

Good English usage demands English grammar and English vocabulary. The role of grammar is to allow the learner to produce correct sentences and the role of vocabulary is to provide meaningful communication and correct word choice. Students can use AI-powered tools to learn grammar rules, correct mistakes, look up word

meanings and practice their language use. However, being given corrections or definitions doesn't necessarily mean understanding the inner workings of the language. Kohnke (2024) found that university students valued AI-generated explanations but also raised concerns about overreliance, data privacy, and access to premium features.

1.1 Research Problem

Despite growing interest in AI-assisted language learning, research attention has not been evenly distributed across language-learning areas. Lo et al. (2024) found that empirical research on ChatGPT in English as a second or foreign language education focused predominantly on writing, with comparatively less attention given to other areas. Further investigation into students' experiences of using AI specifically for grammar and vocabulary learning is therefore warranted.

Moreover, access to AI does not necessarily ensure effective learning. Students may accept generated answers without understanding the underlying language principles, struggle to determine whether explanations are accurate, or remain uncertain about appropriate vocabulary choices (Kohnke, 2024; Lo et al., 2024). Understanding how students engage with AI, evaluate its responses, and navigate these challenges is therefore important for informing its use in language education.

To address this gap, the present study explored undergraduate Applied Language Studies students' experiences of using AI to learn English grammar and vocabulary at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Perak Branch. Unlike broader investigations of AI-assisted English language learning, this study examined grammar and vocabulary as two distinct but related areas of learning. It also explored how students interacted with AI-generated responses, including their practices of seeking clarification, verifying information, and deciding whether to trust the answers provided. By focusing on English language majors in a specific Malaysian higher education context, the study offers a context-sensitive account of AI-assisted language learning without assuming that its use necessarily improves language proficiency.

1.2 Purpose of Research

This study aimed to explore undergraduate English language majors' experiences using artificial intelligence (AI) to learn English grammar and vocabulary. The study examined how students incorporated AI tools into their learning practices, including seeking explanations, practising grammatical structures and developing vocabulary knowledge. It also investigated students' thoughts of the benefits and challenges of AI-assisted learning. By focusing on students' experiences, the study aimed to provide a better understanding of how AI is used as a supplementary resource for English language learning and the considerations involved in using it effectively and responsibly.

Research Objectives:

1. To explore English language majors' experiences of using AI to learn English grammar and vocabulary.
2. To examine how English language majors use AI tools to support their grammar and vocabulary learning.
3. To identify the benefits and challenges that English language majors perceive when using AI for English grammar and vocabulary learning.

Research Questions:

1. How do English language majors describe their experiences of using AI to learn English grammar and vocabulary?
2. How do English language majors use AI tools to support their grammar and vocabulary learning?
3. What benefits and challenges do English language majors perceive when using AI for English grammar and vocabulary learning?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Recent research has increasingly examined the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools, including ChatGPT, Gemini and Grammarly, in English language learning. Conversational AI tools can provide explanations, examples and opportunities for practice, whereas grammar-checking applications offer feedback on language use (Kohnke, 2024). A systematic review of 70 empirical studies by Lo et al. (2024) identified potential benefits of ChatGPT in ESL/EFL education, including personalised learning opportunities and additional learning support. However, the review also highlighted concerns about inaccurate information, privacy and academic dishonesty, noting that research had focused predominantly on writing, with less attention given to other language-learning areas.

Several empirical studies have explored AI-assisted grammar and vocabulary learning. Alghamdi (2025), using a mixed-methods approach with 176 Saudi university EFL students, found generally positive perceptions of AI for vocabulary learning. Students commonly used AI to translate words and phrases and identify synonyms and antonyms. Nevertheless, they reported challenges involving accuracy, contextual appropriateness, technical issues and data privacy. Similarly, Mudhsh et al. (2025) examined the use of AI tools to support English grammar and vocabulary among Omani EFL learners, demonstrating growing research interest in these two areas. Ahmed et al. (2025) also investigated ChatGPT in university-level English language learning and identified potential benefits alongside concerns about inaccurate responses and limited human interaction. Collectively, these studies suggest that AI offers opportunities for language practice, but its usefulness depends partly on how learners engage with and evaluate the information provided.

Research has also examined vocabulary learning through more specific AI applications. Aldowsari and Aljebreen (2024) investigated a ChatGPT-based application for vocabulary learning among Saudi EFL students, while Ahmed et al. (2026) explored AI-powered games for English vocabulary learning among Saudi university students. These studies illustrate the range of AI applications being investigated, from conversational assistance to interactive vocabulary activities. However, students' experiences of using these tools and the challenges they encounter remain important considerations when interpreting their educational value.

In Malaysia, Annamalai et al. (2026) conducted a qualitative thematic analysis involving 25 undergraduate students at a public university. The study found that students perceived ChatGPT as supporting aspects of English language learning, including grammar, writing and conversational practice, as well as independent learning. However, participants also encountered erroneous or nonsensical responses, highlighting limitations in the reliability of AI-generated information. More recently, Metruk (2026) examined university students' use of generative AI for English language learning and identified perceived benefits for grammar, vocabulary, reading and writing, alongside concerns about overreliance and reduced critical thinking. The study also highlighted the importance of AI literacy and source-verification skills.

Although these studies provide useful insights, further investigation into how English language majors experience AI-assisted grammar and vocabulary learning remains warranted. In particular, understanding how students use AI, interpret its explanations, verify its responses and manage the challenges they encounter can provide a more detailed account of their learning practices. Accordingly, the present study explored undergraduate Applied Language Studies students' experiences of using AI to learn English grammar and vocabulary at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM). Through semi-structured interviews, the study examined students' learning practices, perceived benefits and challenges, and approaches to evaluating AI-generated information. Rather than assuming that AI necessarily improves language proficiency, the study focused on students' reported experiences to inform a more critical and context-sensitive understanding of AI-assisted language learning.

2.2 Uses of AI in language learning

2.2.1 AI-Assisted Language Learning in Higher Education

AI-assisted language learning involves using AI tools to support language practice, feedback, explanations and independent study. Generative AI enables students to ask questions, request examples and obtain explanations

tailored to their learning needs. Research has identified potential benefits, including personalised support and self-directed learning, alongside concerns about inaccurate information and overreliance (Lo et al., 2024; Tram et al., 2024). Therefore, understanding how students use and evaluate AI is important when examining its role in language education.

2.2.2 AI for English Grammar Learning

AI tools can support grammar learning by explaining grammatical rules, identifying errors, providing examples and generating practice exercises. Students may use these functions to clarify difficult structures and obtain feedback beyond classroom instruction. Kohnke (2024) found that university English for Academic Purposes students perceived generative AI tools as providing detailed grammatical explanations and contextual information. Similarly, Rezai et al. (2024) explored university EFL students' experiences of ChatGPT and reported perceived benefits for grammar accuracy and personalised learning. However, receiving corrections does not necessarily mean that students understand the underlying rules. The accuracy of AI-generated explanations and students' ability to apply grammatical knowledge independently therefore require consideration (Lo et al., 2024).

2.2.3 AI for English Vocabulary Learning

AI can support vocabulary learning by providing definitions, synonyms, example sentences and explanations of contextual usage. These functions may help students understand unfamiliar words and explore differences between related expressions. Aldowsari and Aljebreen (2024), for example, investigated a ChatGPT-based application for vocabulary learning among Saudi secondary school students and reported improvements in vocabulary test performance. However, vocabulary knowledge involves more than memorising definitions; it also includes understanding collocations, register and contextual appropriateness. Students therefore need to evaluate AI-generated examples and develop the ability to use vocabulary independently.

2.2.4 Students' Experiences, Benefits and Challenges

Students' experiences of AI-assisted language learning may involve both perceived benefits and practical challenges. Kohnke et al. (2025) found that English language learners valued personalised support from generative AI tools but also recognised concerns about irrelevant feedback and overreliance. Similarly, Kohnke (2024) reported concerns about privacy and unequal access to premium features. These findings suggest that AI should complement rather than replace conventional learning resources and teacher guidance. UNESCO (2023) likewise emphasises a human-centred approach that promotes safe, equitable and meaningful use of generative AI in education. Building on this literature, the present study explores how undergraduate Applied Language Studies students at UiTM use AI to learn English grammar and vocabulary. Particular attention is given to their learning practices, approaches to evaluating AI-generated responses, and perceived benefits and challenges. By focusing on students' experiences, the study seeks to provide a contextualised understanding of how AI is incorporated into language learning rather than assuming that its use necessarily improves language proficiency.

2.3 Research gap

Research on generative artificial intelligence (AI) in language education has expanded rapidly, but attention has been unevenly distributed across language-learning areas. Lo et al. (2024), in a systematic review of 70 empirical studies on ChatGPT in ESL/EFL education, found that most studies focused on writing. Similarly, Li et al. (2025), in a review of 144 empirical studies published between 2023 and 2024, identified writing as the main research focus. Within the subset of studies examining language-skill development, only three focused on grammar and two on vocabulary. These findings indicate a need for more focused investigation into how learners use generative AI to support these two important aspects of language learning. Research has also examined AI-assisted English language learning in Malaysia. For example, Annamalai et al. (2026) conducted a qualitative study involving 25 students at a Malaysian higher education institution. Their study explored students' experiences of using ChatGPT across broader English language-learning activities, including grammar, writing and conversational practice, using Self-Determination Theory to examine competence, relatedness and autonomy. The findings highlighted perceived benefits for independent learning alongside concerns about

inaccurate or nonsensical responses. Although this study provides important insights into AI-assisted language learning in Malaysia, its broader focus differs from the present study's specific examination of grammar and vocabulary learning among English language majors.

The distinctive contribution of the present study lies in its focused examination of undergraduate Applied Language Studies students at UiTM, Perak Branch, with grammar and vocabulary treated as separate but related areas of learning. Using semi-structured interviews, the study explored not only the purposes for which students used AI but also how they engaged with its responses, verified information, and determined whether generated explanations and vocabulary suggestions were appropriate. Informed by learner autonomy, the analysis also considered differences between students who actively questioned and checked AI-generated responses and those who accepted answers without verification. By bringing these aspects together within a specific Malaysian higher education context, the study extends existing research through a detailed account of students' learning practices, perceived benefits and challenges. Its contribution is therefore contextual and analytical, rather than a claim that AI-assisted English learning or grammar and vocabulary research has not previously been investigated.

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.4.1 Learner Autonomy

Learner autonomy provides a theoretical perspective for understanding how students take responsibility for their own learning. Holec (1981) defined learner autonomy as the ability to take charge of one's own learning, including making decisions about learning objectives, selecting appropriate methods and resources, and evaluating learning outcomes. Similarly, Benson (2011) emphasised learners' ability to exercise control over their learning processes. In AI-assisted language learning, autonomy may be reflected in students' efforts to identify learning difficulties, formulate prompts, seek explanations, practise independently and critically evaluate AI-generated responses. Alm (2024) highlighted the importance of critical evaluation, strategic integration of AI tools and maintaining learner agency in AI-mediated language learning.

In this study, learner autonomy served as a theoretical lens for examining how undergraduate Applied Language Studies students at UiTM used AI to learn English grammar and vocabulary. The focus was on how students incorporated AI into their learning activities, sought clarification, verified AI-generated responses, and engaged in independent practice. However, the use of AI does not automatically demonstrate learner autonomy. Although AI may provide opportunities for self-directed learning, students may also rely on generated answers without critically evaluating the information. Therefore, learner autonomy guided the interpretation of participants' reported learning practices without assuming that AI use necessarily enhanced their independence or language proficiency (Alm, 2024; Benson, 2011).

2.4.2 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework was developed to organise the investigation of undergraduate Applied Language Studies students' experiences of using AI to learn English grammar and vocabulary. As illustrated in Figure 1, the framework consists of four interconnected components: student background and learning context, AI-assisted language learning practices, student interaction and learning strategies, and perceived benefits and challenges. The first component focuses on the participants' learning context, particularly their access to AI tools, previous experience with AI and individual learning needs. These factors provided a starting point for exploring why students used AI and how they incorporated it into their English language learning. The second component examines AI-assisted language learning practices, divided into grammar learning and vocabulary learning. Grammar-related practices include requesting grammatical explanations, correcting errors, examining sentence examples and completing practice exercises. Vocabulary-related practices include exploring word meanings and definitions, identifying synonyms and collocations, examining contextual examples and completing vocabulary exercises. This distinction enabled the study to examine how students used AI for two specific aspects of English language learning. The third component focuses on student interaction and learning strategies. It includes prompt formulation, follow-up questions, interpretation of AI-generated responses, verification of information and independent practice and evaluation. This component highlights the importance of examining not only the tasks

students performed using AI but also how they engaged with and evaluated the information they received. The final component concerns students' perceived benefits and challenges. The perceived benefits include convenience and accessibility, individualised explanations, immediate feedback, confidence and independent learning. The perceived challenges include inaccurate information, dependence on AI and uncertainty about appropriate vocabulary choices. These components provided a basis for understanding students' perceptions of AI as a supplementary learning resource while acknowledging the difficulties they encountered.

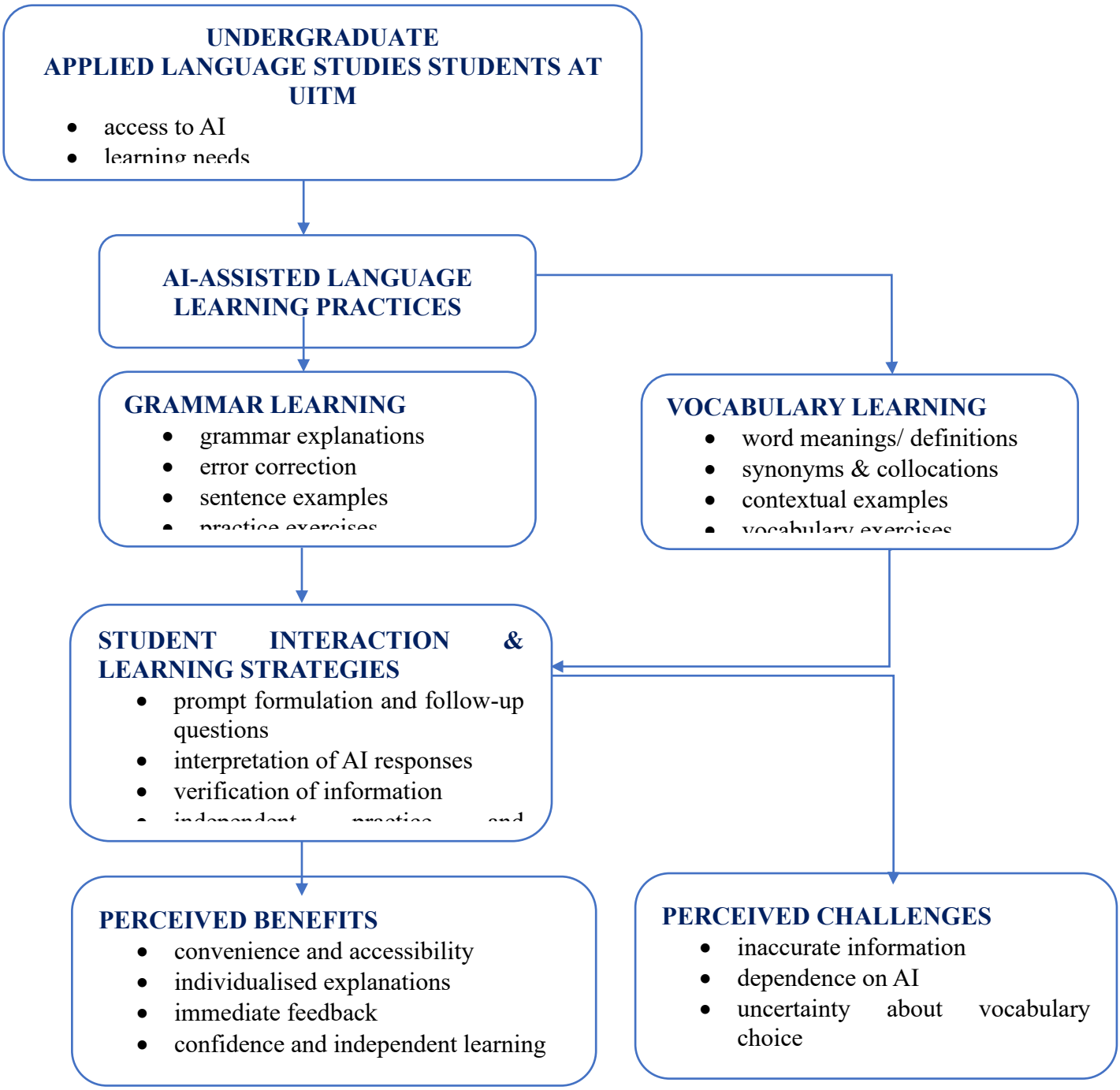

Figure 1.0 Conceptual Framework for Exploring English Language Majors' Experiences of Using Artificial Intelligence to Learn English Grammar and Vocabulary

Overall, the conceptual framework guided the development of the interview questions and the organisation of the findings. It provided a structure for examining the relationship between students' learning contexts, their AI-assisted grammar and vocabulary practices, their interaction with AI-generated information, and their perceived benefits and challenges. The framework served as an organising guide rather than a predetermined set of findings, allowing the analysis to reflect the experiences and perspectives expressed by the participants.

RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Research design

This study adopted an exploratory qualitative research design to investigate university students' experiences of using AI to learn English grammar and vocabulary. A qualitative approach was used because the study aimed to understand participants' experiences, interpretations, and learning practices rather than measure the effectiveness of AI through numerical scores.

The study was guided by an interpretivist orientation, which recognises that individuals may interpret and experience the same technology differently. Through semi-structured interviews, participants described their experiences, including their reasons for using AI, the ways they interacted with AI-generated responses and the challenges they encountered when using AI to support their grammar and vocabulary learning.

3.2 Research participants

The participants consisted of 20 Semester 1 undergraduate students enrolled in the Applied Language Studies programme at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Perak Branch. They comprised 10 students from the September 2025 intake and 10 students from the March 2026 intake. All participants had experience using AI tools to support their learning of English grammar and vocabulary. To maintain confidentiality, participants were assigned codes from P1 to P20, which were used consistently in the interview transcripts and reporting of quotations.

Purposive sampling was employed to recruit participants who could provide relevant accounts of AI-assisted grammar and vocabulary learning. Selection considered students' academic backgrounds, English language proficiency, classroom learning needs, willingness to improve their language skills, and Test 1 performance. Test 1 performance was considered alongside these factors as an indication of students' grammar-related learning needs, rather than as a sole selection criterion. Particular attention was given to students who sought additional support in understanding grammatical structures, identifying errors and developing vocabulary knowledge. This approach was appropriate because participants who had encountered language-learning difficulties could provide relevant insights into the reasons for using AI and the ways they engaged with it to support their learning.

Students from two intakes were included to obtain accounts from different cohorts within the same programme and semester level. This enabled the study to explore a range of experiences while maintaining a reasonably consistent academic context. The two cohorts were not included for formal comparison. Instead, their participation provided a wider range of perspectives on students' experiences of using AI for learning. As the study was qualitative and exploratory, the focus was on collecting detailed and meaningful responses related to the research questions rather than achieving statistical representativeness.

3.3 Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected through semi-structured individual interviews. This approach provided a consistent set of guiding questions while allowing participants to elaborate on their experiences and share additional information relevant to the study.

Each interview lasted approximately 30–45 minutes and was conducted in English to explore participants' experiences of using AI for English language learning. The interview questions focused on the AI tools students used and their reasons for choosing them, their use of AI to understand grammar rules, correct sentences, practise grammatical structures, learn vocabulary, compare word meanings, and explore contextual examples. The interviews also examined students' perceptions of the usefulness and limitations of AI-generated explanations, their strategies for verifying the accuracy of AI responses, and their concerns about dependence on AI, privacy and responsible use. Finally, participants were invited to share their recommendations for incorporating AI into English language learning.

With participants' permission, the interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis. Participants were encouraged to describe their experiences of using AI for language learning and provide relevant examples. Personal and identifying information was treated confidentially to protect participants' privacy.

Consent forms were provided to participants to explain the study and obtain their permission to participate. Only students who agreed to participate gave their consent to be interviewed. Participants' responses were treated confidentially, and their identities were protected when reporting the findings.

3.4 Data Analysis

The interview data were analysed using thematic analysis, following the six-phase approach described by Braun and Clarke (2006). The first phase involved familiarisation with the data through repeated reading of the interview transcripts. During the second phase, initial codes were generated to identify meaningful features of participants' accounts. These codes included the purposes of AI use, learning strategies, perceived usefulness, difficulties with explanations and methods of verifying information. In the third phase, related codes were organised into preliminary themes. The fourth phase involved reviewing the themes against the coded extracts and the dataset as a whole. In the fifth phase, each theme was refined, defined and named. Finally, the sixth phase involved producing an analytical account that connected the themes to the research questions and relevant literature.

The analysis combined attention to the research objectives with openness to patterns emerging from the interview data. Initial codes were reviewed and refined through repeated engagement with the transcripts, and related codes were compared across participants to identify recurring patterns and differences. The preliminary themes were subsequently reviewed against the coded extracts and the dataset as a whole to ensure that they represented the participants' accounts and addressed the research questions. Themes that overlapped or required further clarification were considered during this review before the final six themes were established. Although the conceptual framework and learner autonomy perspective informed the analysis, the themes were not predetermined by these concepts. Instead, the final themes were retained and refined according to their relevance to the research questions and the evidence available in the interview data. Documenting analytical decisions and checking interpretations against the original data supported the transparency and trustworthiness of the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017).

3.5 Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of the study was addressed through credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability, following the criteria discussed by Nowell et al. (2017).

Credibility was supported by aligning the interview questions with the research questions and using follow-up questions to clarify participants' responses. Repeated readings of the transcripts and the use of participant quotations helped ensure that the interpretations were grounded in the accounts provided.

Dependability and coding consistency were supported by applying a consistent analytical approach across the 20 interview transcripts. Initial codes were reviewed and refined through repeated comparison of relevant extracts across participants. Preliminary themes were then checked against both the coded extracts and the complete dataset. Records of the research procedures and analytical decisions were maintained to make the development of the findings more transparent.

Confirmability and researcher reflexivity were addressed by considering how the researcher's background in English language teaching and prior expectations about AI could influence the interpretation of participants' experiences. Interpretations were checked against the transcripts, and attention was given to differing accounts, including responses that challenged the perceived benefits of AI. The conceptual framework and learner autonomy perspective informed the analysis without determining the themes in advance.

Transferability was supported by describing the research context, participant characteristics, sampling procedures and data collection methods. These details enable readers to assess the relevance of the findings to other English language learning contexts, although the findings are not intended to be statistically generalisable.

Together, these strategies supported a transparent and systematic interpretation of students' experiences of using AI to learn English grammar and vocabulary (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017).

FINDINGS

The interview data yielded six themes. The tables summarise the subthemes and recurring response patterns, while the accompanying narrative presents selected participant quotations and interprets the findings in relation to the research questions.

Theme 1: Experiences and motivations of AI use

Subtheme	Summary of Response Pattern	Sample Quotations
Initial exposure to AI	How students discovered AI tools	"I started using AI after my friends showed me how to ask it about English grammar." [P4]
		"My friend taught me how to use ChatGPT" [P11]
Learning needs and motivations	Reasons for seeking support	"Sometimes I understand the lecturer's explanation, but I need another example to understand the rule." [P9]
		"AI can explain in simple language so I can understand better." [P3]
Use during independent study	When and where AI is used	"I usually use it when I revise my notes or prepare for a test." [P4]
		"I uploaded the notes and asked it to simplify or make a mind map" [P2]
Selective or infrequent use	Situations in which AI is not used	"I only use AI when I'm stuck. For simple grammar questions, I prefer my notes." [P5]
		I avoided using it when I did the past year questions." [P6]

Students' engagement with AI was shaped by peer exposure, personal learning needs, and decisions about when additional assistance was useful.

4.1.1 Initial Exposure to AI

Peer interaction played a role in introducing some students to AI tools. One participant stated, "My friend taught me how to use ChatGPT" [P11]. Another explained, "I started using AI after my friends showed me how to ask it about English grammar" [P4].

These responses indicate that students may become familiar with AI through informal exchanges with their peers rather than solely through formal instruction. Peer guidance may help students recognise how AI tools can be accessed and used to address language-learning questions. This suggests that students' initial engagement with AI may be influenced by their social environment and the sharing of digital learning practices among university students.

4.1.2 Learning Needs and Motivations

Students' responses indicate that the need for clearer explanations may motivate their use of AI. One participant explained, "Sometimes I understand the lecturer's explanation, but I need another example to understand the rule." Another stated, "AI can explain in simple language so I can understand better."

These responses suggest that students may turn to AI when they require additional clarification beyond the explanations provided during lessons. The first response highlights the value of alternative examples, whereas the second emphasises the perceived usefulness of simplified explanations. Together, they suggest that students may use AI to revisit difficult concepts at their own pace and seek explanations that they feel are more accessible. The responses also indicate that AI is perceived as a supplementary learning resource rather than necessarily a replacement for lecturers or conventional learning materials. Students' motivations appear to be connected to their individual learning needs, particularly when they require additional examples or explanations to understand grammatical concepts.

4.1.3 Use During Independent Study

The participants' responses suggest that AI is incorporated into independent study, particularly during revision and test preparation. One participant stated, "I usually use it when I revise my notes or prepare for a test." Another explained, "I uploaded the notes and asked it to simplify or make a mind map."

These responses illustrate two ways AI may be used outside the classroom. The first involves seeking assistance during revision, while the second involves transforming existing learning materials into simplified notes or visual representations. The latter suggests that students may use AI not only to obtain answers but also to reorganise information into formats that they consider useful for studying. Such practices indicate that AI may form part of students' independent learning routines. By requesting summaries or mind maps, students may attempt to identify key information and structure the material they need to review. However, the responses do not establish whether the AI-generated materials were accurate, how frequently students used them, or whether they improved examination performance.

4.1.4 Selective or Infrequent Use

Although students described using AI for additional explanations and revision, their responses also suggest that AI is not necessarily used for every learning task. One participant stated, "I only use AI when I'm stuck. For simple grammar questions, I prefer my notes." Another reported, "I avoided using it when I did the past year questions."

These responses illustrate selective engagement with AI. The first participant appears to use AI when existing resources are insufficient, while the second describes avoiding AI during a particular learning activity. This suggests that students may distinguish between tasks for which they seek external assistance and those they choose to complete without AI. The decision to avoid AI when answering past-year questions may reflect a preference for independent practice, although the participant's precise motivation requires further clarification. Overall, these accounts demonstrate that students' experiences of AI are not necessarily characterised by continuous reliance on the technology. Instead, their use may depend on the difficulty of the task, the availability of alternative resources and their preferred approach to learning.

Theme 2: AI-Assisted Grammar Learning Practices

Subtheme	Summary of Response Pattern	Sample Quotations
Grammar explanations	Requests for explanations of grammar rules and structures	"I asked AI to explain the difference between the present perfect and the simple past." [P3]
		"I always get confused between third and mixed conditionals, so I asked ChatGPT." [P11]
Error identification and correction	Use of AI to identify and correct grammatical errors	"I enter my sentence and ask it which part is incorrect and why." [P6]
		"I always use to identify the errors in a passage assigned by my lecturer." [P2]
Examples and comparisons		"I ask for several examples so I can compare the sentence patterns." [P3]

	Requests for example sentences and comparisons between grammatical forms	"I used AI to prepare my presentation slides because it can give more and variety examples." [P4]
Practice and clarification	Requests for exercises and alternative explanations	"When I still do not understand, I ask ChatGPT to explain the rule more simply." [P9]
		"Books are expensive. So I use AI to give me sets of questions to practice and check the answers along with the explanation." [P2]
Answer-seeking versus understanding	Differences between accepting corrections and examining the explanations	"Sometimes I just take the corrected sentence, but sometimes I read the explanation and try to remember the rule." [P11]
		"I merely use it to get the answers and explanation." [P15]

Students used AI for several grammar-related purposes, but their accounts also revealed differences between seeking corrections and trying to understand the rules behind them.

4.2.1 Grammar Explanations

The responses indicate that students use AI to seek explanations of grammatical structures they find difficult to understand. One participant reported, "I asked AI to explain the difference between the present perfect and the simple past." Another stated, "I always get confused between third and mixed conditionals, so I asked ChatGPT."

These examples indicate that students may use AI to clarify distinctions between grammatical structures, particularly when they experience confusion about how or when particular forms should be used. The questions mentioned by the participants concern grammatical areas that require learners to distinguish between forms according to meaning and context. The responses suggest that conversational AI provides students with an additional source of grammatical explanation. Rather than relying exclusively on classroom instruction or textbooks, students can ask specific questions about areas they find challenging.

4.2.2 Error Identification and Correction

Students also described using AI to identify and correct grammatical errors. One participant explained, "I enter my sentence and ask it which part is incorrect and why" [P6]. Another reported, "I always use to identify the errors in a passage assigned by my lecturer" [P2].

These responses suggest that AI is used to examine language at both sentence and passage level. While the first participant focuses on understanding errors in an individual sentence, the second describes using AI to identify errors in a larger piece of text. This suggests that AI-assisted grammar learning may involve both local correction and the identification of errors across connected writing. The first response is particularly relevant because the student asks not only which part is incorrect but also why. This indicates an interest in obtaining an explanation alongside the correction. However, whether students consistently examine these explanations or simply accept the suggested corrections remains an important distinction, which is explored further under the subtheme of answer-seeking versus understanding.

4.2.3 Examples and Comparisons

The responses indicate that students request examples and comparisons to clarify grammatical patterns. One participant stated, "I ask for several examples so I can compare the sentence patterns" [P3]. Another explained, "I used AI to prepare my presentation slides because it can give more and variety examples" [P4].

These responses suggest that AI is used to generate multiple examples for learning and presentation preparation. Comparing sentence patterns may help students examine how grammatical structures operate in different contexts, while the generation of varied examples may provide additional material for explaining grammar

concepts during presentations. The second response also demonstrates that AI-assisted grammar learning may extend beyond personal revision to include academic tasks.

4.2.4 Practice and Clarification

Students described using AI to obtain further explanations and practise grammatical concepts. One participant stated, "When I still do not understand, I ask ChatGPT to explain the rule more simply." Another explained, "Books are expensive. So I use AI to give me sets of questions to practice and check the answers along with the explanation."

These responses highlight two related practices. The first involves requesting clarification when an initial explanation is insufficient, while the second involves obtaining practice questions and answer explanations. The responses suggest that AI may support repeated engagement with grammar concepts by providing students with additional explanations and exercises. However, access to practice questions should not be equated with successful learning. The quality of the exercises, the accuracy of the answer keys and students' ability to apply the rules independently remain important considerations.

4.2.5 Answer-Seeking Versus Understanding

The responses reveal variation in how students engage with AI-generated grammatical information. One participant stated, "Sometimes I just take the corrected sentence, but sometimes I read the explanation and try to remember the rule." Another reported, "I merely use it to get the answers and explanation."

The first response illustrates two different approaches within the same participant's experience. At times, the student accepts a corrected sentence, whereas at other times, the student examines the explanation and attempts to remember the relevant rule. This distinction suggests that AI use may range from obtaining an immediate solution to engaging more actively with the underlying grammatical principle. The second response also indicates a reliance on AI to obtain answers and explanations, although it does not provide sufficient detail to determine how actively the participant processes the information afterwards.

Theme 3: AI-Assisted Vocabulary Learning Practices

Subtheme	Summary of Response Pattern	Sample Quotations
Word meanings and definitions	Requests for definitions and simplified explanations	"When I found an unfamiliar word in an article, I ask AI to explain its meaning in simple English." [P6]
		"I don't use dictionary to check the meaning anymore. I ask ChatGPT instead." [P9]
Synonyms and word choice	Comparisons between words with similar meanings	"I ask for synonyms because I want to know which word fits my sentence best." [P7]
		"I use AI to choose the most suitable word that fits the context." [P5]
Collocations and contextual use	Requests for natural expressions and contextual examples	"Knowing the meaning is not enough, so I ask AI to show me how the word is used in sentences." [P3]
		"AI helps me to show more examples for each word I asked." [P4]
Register and appropriateness	Questions about formal, informal and academic language use	"Sometimes I ask whether a word is appropriate for academic writing or casual conversation." [P7]
		"For example the word is enough and sufficient, I understand their meanings, but I asked AI which one to use for academic purpose." [P10]

Vocabulary practice and retention	Use of quizzes, exercises and repeated practice	"I ask AI to create a short quiz to help me practise the new vocabulary." [P9]
		"Some online worksheets did not provide the answer key. So I just do it and later get the answers from AI." [P13]

Students' vocabulary-related uses of AI extended beyond definitions to include word choice, contextual use, register and practice.

4.3.1 Word Meanings and Definitions

The responses suggest that students use AI to understand unfamiliar vocabulary encountered during reading and other language-learning activities. One participant stated, "When I found an unfamiliar word in an article, I ask AI to explain its meaning in simple English." Another reported, "I don't use dictionary to check the meaning anymore. I ask ChatGPT instead."

These indicate that AI is used to clarify word meanings through explanations that students perceive as accessible. The first response illustrates the use of AI in response to unfamiliar vocabulary encountered in a text, while the second suggests that one participant has shifted from using a conventional dictionary to relying on ChatGPT.

This pattern highlights the perceived convenience of obtaining explanations through conversational interaction. Unlike simply consulting a definition, students can ask follow-up questions if the original explanation is unclear.

4.3.2 Synonyms and Word Choice

Students also described using AI to compare words with similar meanings and identify vocabulary appropriate to a particular context. One participant explained, "I ask for synonyms because I want to know which word fits my sentence best." Another stated, "I use AI to choose the most suitable word that fits the context."

These responses suggest that students recognise that vocabulary selection involves more than knowing a word's basic definition. The participants' focus on sentence fit and contextual suitability indicates an interest in determining which expression is most appropriate for the intended meaning. AI may therefore be used as a resource for exploring lexical alternatives and making word-choice decisions. This is particularly relevant for students who are developing academic English, where synonyms may differ in register, collocation and connotation.

4.3.3 Collocations and Contextual Use

The responses indicate that students seek contextual examples to understand how vocabulary is used in sentences. One participant stated, "Knowing the meaning is not enough, so I ask AI to show me how the word is used in sentences." Another explained, "AI helps me to show more examples for each word I asked."

These responses suggest that students recognise the limitations of learning vocabulary through definitions alone. By requesting example sentences, they seek additional information about how words function in actual language use. Such requests may help students examine grammatical patterns, common word combinations and the relationship between word meaning and context.

4.3.4 Register and Appropriateness

Some students described using AI to distinguish between words that may be similar in meaning but differ in appropriateness across contexts. One participant stated, "Sometimes I ask whether a word is appropriate for academic writing or casual conversation" [P7]. Another explained, "For example the word is enough and sufficient, I understand their meanings, but I asked AI which one to use for academic purpose" [P10].

These responses suggest that students use AI to explore differences in register and contextual suitability. Rather than simply asking what a word means, they seek guidance on whether a particular expression is appropriate for

a specific communicative purpose. The example involving "enough" and "sufficient" illustrates an interest in selecting vocabulary that aligns with academic language expectations. This use of AI may be particularly relevant to university students who need to adjust their language according to different academic and everyday contexts.

4.3.5 Vocabulary Practice and Retention

The responses indicate that students use AI to support vocabulary practice and obtain answers to exercises. One participant stated, "I ask AI to create a short quiz to help me practise the new vocabulary." Another explained, "Some online worksheets did not provide the answer key. So I just do it and later get the answers from AI."

These responses show how students may use AI to supplement available learning materials. The first participant describes generating practice activities, while the second uses AI to obtain answers for worksheets without answer keys. This suggests that AI may provide additional opportunities for students to check their responses and revisit vocabulary items during independent study.

Theme 4: Interaction, Verification and Trust in AI Responses

Subtheme	Summary of Response Pattern	Sample Quotations
Prompt formulation	Ways students phrase questions and provide context	"I get better explanations when I tell it my level and include the sentence I am working on." [P4]
		"I always explain the context first before I ask what to provide." [P7]
Follow-up interaction	Use of additional questions to clarify explanations	"If I do not understand the first explanation, I ask it to give a different example." [P8]
		"I used multiple AI tools with the same prompts to get better explanation." [P9]
Verification practices	Use of notes, dictionaries, textbooks or other sources to check responses	"I compare the answer with my lecturer's notes." [P16]
		"Sometimes, I check the grammar concept with my e-book if the responses confuse me." [P13]
Acceptance without verification	Trust in AI without independently checking the response	"I usually accept the answer because it sounds convincing, although I do not always check it." [P9]
		"I just accept the answer because AI gathers information from many sources." [P7]
Conflicting information	Experiences of receiving explanations that differ from other sources	"When AI gives a different explanation from my notes, I become unsure which one is correct." [P3]
		"Sometimes, I don't understand the explanation because the answers keep changing when I ask the same question several times." [P11]

Students' interactions ranged from purposeful prompting and checking to uncritical acceptance, revealing differences in how they assessed AI-generated information.

4.4.1 Prompt Formulation

The participants' responses suggest that students consider the way they formulate questions important when seeking useful AI responses. One participant explained, "I get better explanations when I tell it my level and include the sentence I am working on." Another stated, "I always explain the context first before I ask what to provide."

These responses indicate that students may supply contextual information to help AI generate responses that are relevant to their learning needs. Providing a language-learning level or an example sentence may help students obtain explanations that address a specific difficulty rather than receiving a general answer. The responses suggest some awareness that the quality or relevance of AI-generated responses may be influenced by the information included in a prompt.

4.4.2 Follow-Up Interaction

Students described asking additional questions when the initial response did not meet their needs. One participant stated, "If I do not understand the first explanation, I ask it to give a different example" [P8]. Another explained, "I used multiple AI tools with the same prompts to get better explanation" [P9].

These responses illustrate two approaches to seeking clarification. The first involves continuing the interaction with the same tool, while the second involves comparing responses across different AI tools. Both approaches suggest that students may not always accept the first response as sufficient. Such interaction may provide opportunities to explore alternative explanations and compare different examples. However, using multiple tools does not necessarily guarantee a correct answer, particularly when the tools generate similarly misleading explanations. The responses therefore highlight the importance of combining repeated questioning with critical evaluation.

4.4.3 Verification Practices

The responses indicate that some students consult other learning resources to evaluate AI-generated information. One participant stated, "I compare the answer with my lecturer's notes." Another explained, "Sometimes, I check the grammar concept with my e-book if the responses confuse me."

These responses demonstrate that students may use conventional academic resources to clarify uncertainties about AI responses. Lecturer-provided notes and electronic books function as reference points against which students can compare generated explanations. This suggests that some students adopt a complementary approach, using AI alongside established learning materials rather than treating it as their sole source of information. Such practices may help students recognise inconsistencies and make more informed decisions about the explanations they receive.

4.4.4 Acceptance Without Verification

Despite reports of verification, other responses indicate that students may accept AI-generated information without independently checking its accuracy. One participant stated, "I usually accept the answer because it sounds convincing, although I do not always check it." Another explained, "I just accept the answer because AI gathers information from many sources."

These responses reveal different reasons for trusting AI. The first participant appears to rely partly on the persuasive quality of the explanation, whereas the second refers to the perceived breadth of information used by AI. Both suggest that confidence in the technology may sometimes substitute for independent verification. This pattern is important because an explanation can appear convincing without necessarily being correct. Students who accept responses without checking them may have difficulty distinguishing accurate information from misleading or inconsistent explanations. The findings therefore suggest a need to examine not only how students access AI but also the criteria they use to judge the reliability of its responses.

4.4.5 Conflicting Information

The responses indicate that inconsistencies between AI-generated explanations and other information sources can create uncertainty. One participant explained, "When AI gives a different explanation from my notes, I become unsure which one is correct" [P3]. Another stated, "Sometimes, I don't understand the explanation because the answers keep changing when I ask the same question several times" [P11].

These suggest that students may experience difficulties when AI provides responses that appear inconsistent with their notes or with its own earlier answers. Such experiences may undermine their confidence in the information they receive and make it difficult to determine which explanation should be accepted. The responses also illustrate a limitation of repeated interaction. Although asking the same question in different ways may generate additional explanations, it may also increase confusion when responses are inconsistent. This highlights the importance of students having suitable strategies for checking grammatical information against reliable resources or seeking clarification from their lecturers.

Theme 5: Perceived Benefits of AI-Assisted Grammar and Vocabulary Learning

Subtheme	Summary of Response Pattern	Sample Quotations
Immediate assistance	Perceptions of convenience and speed	"I can ask a question whenever I need help instead of waiting until the next class." [P2]
		"The response is very quick, better than Google search." [P4]
Individualised explanations	Perceptions of explanations tailored to their needs	"I can ask for a simpler explanation or more examples until I understand." [P10]
		"It always gives answer that exactly what I need." [P8]
Confidence and comfort	Willingness to ask questions and seek clarification	"I feel more comfortable asking AI basic questions that I might hesitate to ask in class." [P3]
		"Sometimes, I'm afraid to ask questions in class because it might sound silly. So I use ChatGPT for help." [P1]
Independent learning	Use of AI to support self-directed study	"It gives me a starting point when I revise English by myself." [P16]
		"Before I enter class, I will ask ChatGPT for a quick review of the topic that the lecturer will teach." [P8]

Participants described AI as convenient and responsive, and some associated its use with greater comfort and support for independent study.

4.5.1 Immediate Assistance

Students described the convenience of obtaining responses whenever they needed assistance. One participant stated, "I can ask a question whenever I need help instead of waiting until the next class." Another remarked, "The response is very quick, better than Google search."

These responses suggest that immediate access to explanations is a perceived advantage of AI-assisted learning. Students may appreciate being able to seek clarification at the point when a question arises, rather than postponing it until the next lesson or consulting several separate resources. The comparison with Google search also indicates that the participant perceived conversational AI as convenient for obtaining targeted responses.

4.5.2 Individualised Explanations

The responses suggest that students value the opportunity to request explanations that address their particular learning needs. One participant explained, "I can ask for a simpler explanation or more examples until I understand." Another stated, "It always gives answer that exactly what I need."

These highlight that students can request simpler language or further examples when the initial response is insufficient. This may allow them to approach difficult concepts at their own pace and seek additional support without having to formulate every question within the time constraints of a classroom lesson. The responses suggest that the capacity to request clarification contributes to students' perceptions of AI as a useful learning resource. Nevertheless, the claim that AI provides exactly what a student needs represents an individual perception rather than evidence that the responses are always accurate.

4.5.3 Confidence and Comfort

Some participants described AI as a comfortable space in which to ask questions they might hesitate to raise in class. One participant stated, "I feel more comfortable asking AI basic questions that I might hesitate to ask in class." Another explained, "Sometimes, I'm afraid to ask questions in class because it might sound silly. So I use ChatGPT for help."

These responses suggest that concerns about embarrassment or negative judgement may influence how students seek language-learning assistance. The participants described AI as an alternative setting in which they could ask questions they might otherwise withhold during classroom interactions. This perceived comfort may encourage students to seek clarification about difficult concepts and revisit questions they consider basic. However, the responses should not be interpreted as evidence that AI replaces the value of teacher support or classroom discussion. Rather, AI appears to function as an additional resource for students who feel hesitant about asking certain questions in class.

4.5.4 Independent Learning

The responses indicate that students use AI to prepare for lessons and support revision outside the classroom. One participant stated, "It gives me a starting point when I revise English by myself." Another explained, "Before I enter class, I will ask ChatGPT for a quick review of the topic that the lecturer will teach."

These responses suggest that AI may support preparatory and self-directed learning activities. By reviewing a topic before a lesson or obtaining an initial explanation during revision, students may attempt to familiarise themselves with learning content before engaging with it in class. The responses also suggest that AI can be incorporated into students' existing learning routines rather than being used exclusively to complete assignments.

Theme 6: Challenges and Limitations of AI Use

Subtheme	Summary of Response Pattern	Sample Quotations
Inaccuracy or inconsistency	Reports of incorrect, conflicting or misleading responses	"Sometimes I receive an explanation that contradicts what I learned in class." [P7]
		"The more I asked, the more confused I got because sometimes the answers were to please me rather than be correct." [P11]
Dependence on AI	Difficulty remembering or applying explanations without AI assistance	"I sometimes ask AI to correct everything before I try to identify the errors myself." [P6]
		"But I think using AI too much is risky because I might depend on it too much to get the right answers." [P4]
Uncertainty About Vocabulary Choice	Difficulty distinguishing appropriate word choice	"It gives me synonyms, but I still do not know which one sounds natural in my particular sentence." [P7]
		"I'm not really sure which word suits better even though it provides few examples." [P9]

The main concerns involved the reliability of AI responses, possible dependence on AI, and continued uncertainty about appropriate vocabulary choices.

4.6.1 Inaccurate Information

The participants' responses suggest that inconsistent or potentially misleading AI-generated explanations can create difficulties for language learners. One participant stated, "Sometimes I receive an explanation that contradicts what I learned in class." Another explained, "The more I asked, the more confused I got because sometimes the answers were to please me rather than be correct."

These responses highlight concerns about the reliability of AI-generated information. The first participant described a discrepancy between AI output and classroom learning, while the second reported increasing confusion when repeated questioning produced unsatisfactory answers. Such experiences suggest that additional interaction does not always resolve students' uncertainties. When explanations conflict with existing knowledge or change across repeated prompts, students may find it difficult to identify the most appropriate answer. This is particularly relevant to grammar learning, where students need to understand the rules and contexts governing language use. The second response also reflects the participant's interpretation of why AI produced different answers. The quotation demonstrates the student's perception that the system may prioritise agreement over accuracy.

4.6.2 Dependence on AI

The responses indicate concerns about relying on AI before attempting to identify or correct errors independently. One participant stated, "I sometimes ask AI to correct everything before I try to identify the errors myself" [P6]. Another expressed concern, "But I think using AI too much is risky because I might depend on it too much to get the right answers" [P4].

These suggest that students recognise a potential tension between the convenience of automated assistance and the development of independent language-learning skills. When students request corrections before examining their own errors, they may have fewer opportunities to practise identifying grammatical problems independently. The second response indicates that at least one participant was aware of the risk of relying excessively on AI. This awareness is noteworthy because it suggests that students may question their own use of the technology rather than viewing it as unconditionally beneficial. However, the responses do not establish that students have become dependent on AI or that their language abilities have deteriorated as a result. They demonstrate concerns about possible dependence and practices that participants themselves associated with reliance on AI.

4.6.3 Uncertainty About Vocabulary Choice

The responses suggest that AI-generated vocabulary suggestions do not always resolve students' uncertainty about word choice. One participant stated, "It gives me synonyms, but I still do not know which one sounds natural in my particular sentence." Another explained, "I'm not really sure which word suits better even though it provides few examples."

Students may find it difficult to determine which synonym is most appropriate for a specific sentence, even when AI provides alternative words and examples. The responses therefore highlight a distinction between receiving vocabulary information and developing the judgement needed to apply it appropriately. Students may require additional guidance to understand differences in collocation, register, connotation and contextual use. The respondents also implied that simply generating more examples may not always resolve the uncertainty.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study explored undergraduate Applied Language Studies students' experiences of using artificial intelligence (AI) to learn English grammar and vocabulary, focusing on their learning practices, perceived benefits and challenges. Overall, the findings suggest that students perceive AI as a flexible supplementary resource that provides accessible explanations, examples and opportunities for independent practice. However, the usefulness of AI appears to depend on how students engage with its responses and evaluate the information provided. This dual perspective aligns with Lo et al. (2024), whose systematic review of 70 empirical studies identified personalised learning opportunities alongside concerns about inaccurate information, privacy and academic integrity in ESL/EFL education.

Students' motivations for using AI were associated with peer exposure, the need for simpler explanations, and independent revision. They used AI to clarify grammatical concepts, correct errors, generate practice exercises, understand unfamiliar vocabulary and explore appropriate word choices. These practices suggest that AI serves purposes beyond immediate answer retrieval, including the organisation of learning materials and repeated clarification. Kohnke (2024) similarly found that English for Academic Purposes students perceived generative

AI tools as providing comprehensive explanations and contextual information. Nevertheless, the present findings reveal differences in students' engagement with these explanations: some examined grammatical rules and requested further examples, while others primarily sought answers. This differentiation means that having AI-generated corrections available does not automatically mean understanding the grammar rules that govern them. Vocabulary learning practices extended beyond finding out about the meaning of a word to comparing synonyms, looking at contextual instances and register. These activities illustrate the complexity of vocabulary knowledge. It is not merely knowing the meaning of the words but selecting words suitable for particular contexts. Likewise, Kohnke et al. (2025) found that learners considered generative AI tools useful for vocabulary and other English language learning activities, although the issue of irrelevant feedback and potential overreliance was raised. The present findings further suggest that receiving synonyms and examples does not always resolve students' uncertainty about appropriate word choice. Accordingly, AI-generated vocabulary suggestions should be complemented by activities that develop students' ability to evaluate contextual meaning, collocation and register independently.

An important finding concerns the differences in how students evaluated and responded to AI-generated information. Some participants demonstrated active engagement by providing contextual information in their prompts, requesting alternative explanations and checking responses against other learning resources. For example, P4 explained, "I get better explanations when I tell it my level and include the sentence I am working on," while P16 stated, "I compare the answer with my lecturer's notes." These practices suggest that some students did more than obtain immediate answers; they made decisions about how to use AI and, in certain instances, evaluated its responses against established learning materials.

In contrast, other participants reported accepting AI-generated answers without verification. P9 explained, "I usually accept the answer because it sounds convincing, although I do not always check it." Similarly, P7 stated, "I just accept the answer because AI gathers information from many sources." These responses suggest that trust in AI may sometimes be based on the apparent persuasiveness of its answers or assumptions about its access to information, rather than independent verification. This distinction is important because a fluent or convincing explanation does not necessarily guarantee accuracy. Although AI provides convenient access to information, students still need to exercise judgement when deciding whether to accept and apply its responses.

These contrasting practices can be interpreted through the concept of learner autonomy. Holec (1981) and Benson (2011) emphasised learners' capacity to take responsibility for and exercise control over their learning. In the present study, such responsibility was reflected in practices such as requesting clarification, comparing explanations and consulting lecturer notes or electronic books. By contrast, accepting responses without checking them may indicate a limitation in how students exercise evaluative control during particular learning activities. This interpretation is consistent with Alm (2024), who emphasised critical evaluation, strategic use of AI and the maintenance of learner agency in AI-assisted language learning. Annamalai et al. (2026) similarly identified the potential of ChatGPT to support independent learning while highlighting concerns about erroneous or nonsensical responses.

Importantly, these findings should not be interpreted as establishing two fixed categories of autonomous and dependent learners. Students' approaches may vary according to the task and the perceived difficulty of the language item. For example, P11 reported, "Sometimes I just take the corrected sentence, but sometimes I read the explanation and try to remember the rule." This response illustrates how the same student may alternate between obtaining an immediate correction and engaging more actively with the underlying grammatical explanation. Furthermore, P7's accounts of providing context when prompting AI and accepting an answer based on trust in the tool illustrate that active interaction does not necessarily guarantee consistent verification. Learner autonomy in AI-assisted learning is therefore better understood through the decisions students make when using and evaluating AI, rather than simply whether they use the technology independently.

These findings have practical implications for English language teaching. Lecturers should encourage students not only to formulate effective prompts but also to question AI-generated answers, compare explanations with reliable sources and explain the reasoning behind grammatical corrections or vocabulary choices. For example,

students could be required to identify their own errors before consulting AI, evaluate the suggested corrections and justify their final answers. Such activities may encourage more reflective engagement with AI while preserving students' responsibility for their learning. This approach is consistent with UNESCO's (2023) emphasis on human-centred and responsible use of generative AI in education. Nevertheless, because the present study relied on interviews, the findings demonstrate differences in students' reported practices rather than directly measured levels of learner autonomy or language proficiency.

The findings indicate that students perceived AI as useful for learning English grammar and vocabulary because it provided immediate assistance, individualised explanations, opportunities for repeated practice and a relatively comfortable environment for seeking clarification. However, these benefits represent participants' perceptions rather than demonstrated improvements in language proficiency. As the study relied on semi-structured interviews, it did not measure changes in grammatical accuracy, vocabulary retention or students' ability to apply language knowledge independently. Consequently, the findings suggest that students valued AI as a supplementary learning resource, but they do not establish its effectiveness in improving language-learning outcomes. This distinction is important because the availability of corrections and explanations does not necessarily mean that students understand or retain the information provided (Lo et al., 2024).

The findings also reveal that the perceived benefits of AI coexist with concerns about inconsistent responses, possible overreliance and uncertainty about vocabulary choice. Some participants checked AI-generated explanations against lecturer notes or electronic books, whereas others accepted responses because they appeared convincing. These contrasting practices suggest that students' learning experiences depend partly on how they engage with and evaluate AI-generated information. Kohnke (2024) and Annamalai et al. (2026) similarly highlighted concerns about overreliance and the reliability of AI-generated responses. Therefore, responsible AI integration should involve more than providing students with access to these tools; it should also develop their ability to question, verify and apply the information they receive.

Several instructional strategies can be drawn from these findings. First, lecturers could ask students to attempt grammar exercises independently before consulting AI, then compare their answers with the generated corrections and explain the grammatical rules involved. Second, vocabulary activities could require students to evaluate AI-generated synonyms and examples, verify word meanings and justify their choices according to context, collocation and register. Third, students could be encouraged to compare AI responses with lecturer notes, textbooks or reliable reference materials when inconsistencies arise. Finally, reflective activities could ask students to describe how they used AI, which responses they accepted or rejected, and how they checked the information. These strategies would position AI as a supplementary resource while maintaining students' active involvement in language learning. This approach is consistent with UNESCO's (2023) emphasis on human-centred and responsible use of generative AI in education.

This study explored undergraduate Applied Language Studies students' experiences of using AI to learn English grammar and vocabulary. The findings indicate that students perceived AI as a convenient supplementary resource for obtaining explanations, correcting errors, practising grammar and exploring vocabulary. However, participants also reported concerns about inaccurate responses, possible dependence on AI and difficulties evaluating appropriate word choices. These findings highlight the importance of critical engagement, verification and independent learning when using AI. Since the study examined students' reported experiences rather than directly measuring language performance, the perceived benefits should not be interpreted as evidence of improved grammatical accuracy or vocabulary retention. The study therefore recommends that English language educators integrate AI into structured learning activities that require students to verify information, explain language choices and practise independently. Such an approach may help students use AI more critically and responsibly while maintaining their active role in language learning.

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