

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MEDIA STUDENTS' USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE APPLICATIONS IN LEARNING ENGLISH AT ALGERIAN UNIVERSITIES: A FIELD STUDY AT SÉTIF 2 UNIVERSITY

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Abstract: This study aimed to explore the effectiveness and challenges of using AI applications by Media Studies students to learn English in Algerian universities, in light of the recent shift toward reinforcing this language. Despite the benefits it offers—such as supporting self-directed learning anytime and anywhere, and encouraging collaborative and interactive learning—smart learning still poses certain difficulties and challenges. These require investigation in order to propose solutions that ensure optimal use of AI in the digital age, in which a university's global standing is determined by how well it integrates technology into its policies. The study employed a descriptive survey method for a sample of Media Studies students at Sétif 2 University, relying on an electronic questionnaire. The results revealed several findings, most notably the confirmation of AI applications' effectiveness in learning reading, speaking, pronunciation, listening, and writing skills. However, AI mainly serves as a supporting element—particularly for reinforcing certain advanced skills, such as conversation skills that require human interaction and communication. This underscores the need for broader, more systematic use of these applications, taking them beyond personal interest in learning English and incorporating them into academic practices, using intelligent learning systems within the educational policy of Algerian universities.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence applications, English language learning, self-learning, smart learning, media and communication students

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1. Introduction

Thanks to its ability to simulate human intelligence, AI technology has managed to meet learners' needs across diverse educational fields through the use of computers, digital mobile devices, and smartphones. It does this by providing applications and services that enhance self-directed learning and improve learners' academic performance independently, often without the need for human intervention. This approach accommodates learners' capacities, interests, and contextual factors—temporal, spatial, and individual differences—thereby offering important opportunities for them to become active participants in smart learning processes. They can continually develop themselves academically and professionally, needing only to define their educational goals and strive to achieve them. This ensures the continuity of the learning process, especially in the context of learning foreign languages. Indeed, “learning outcomes such as developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills are fundamentally influenced by the level of student engagement in learning and their capacity for self-directed learning” (Harahsheh, 2023).

English is considered the most widely used foreign language in global publishing and scientific research. Consequently, it has received significant attention in Algerian universities, as in many universities around the world. Recently, the Ministry of Higher Education in Algeria has enhanced its implementation in higher education—both in teaching, training, and scientific publishing—as part of the country's new orientation, which introduced English as a second language at the primary-school level starting from the 2022–2023 academic year. Algerian universities are progressively incorporating English into the teaching of various scientific disciplines. Besides being the language of the web, which grants students access to crucial international digital information resources—thereby enriching their specialized knowledge, broadening their experiences, and improving their skills—English also opens up considerable opportunities in both local and global labor markets. It serves as the principal global language for communication among individuals and institutions, thus providing learners with a competitive professional edge, particularly given the rise of remote work. Recent scientific studies have indicated that “English, being the first world language, is said to be the first global lingua franca and it is the most widely used language in the world in international trade, diplomacy, mass entertainment, international telecommunications and scientific publications as well as publishing newspapers and other books” (Parupalli, 2019).

In light of this transformation within Algerian universities, mastering English—especially for Media students—has become an essential requirement for completing their studies at a higher level and preparing to practice journalism or media work effectively. Mastering English in the digital age, in addition to having extensive academic exposure as part of university-level media training, can enable them to achieve numerous advantages in the media field in the future. These include swift access to varied information and data, staying informed of new developments on different events and issues, and the ability to communicate and exchange expertise with people from different parts of the world. Notably, the internet has given media professionals the opportunity to access multiple digital media platforms in English, while also expanding interactivity with user audiences from other communities—people who, despite speaking diverse languages, can communicate in this global language. This is built upon the English courses they receive within their major, as well as through the intensive language center, in addition to self-learning made possible by AI technology, which offers a variety of applications and tools.

AI applications help Media students acquire speaking, reading, listening, and writing skills and enhance their linguistic abilities in identifying the meanings of words and using them correctly when formulating sentences and texts. They also help overcome difficulties in expressing ideas in English, thereby strengthening self-directed learning through easy and diverse methods that help students resolve many problems they face in learning English. By

providing opportunities for conversations with chatbots, taking advantage of social media platforms, and engaging with educational games through applications such as “Chat GPT,” “Grammarly,” “Google Translate,” “Duolingo,” “Elsa Speak,” “Mondly,” and others, Media students can correct spelling and grammatical errors, summarize and translate texts to and from English, develop their language repertoire, and learn new vocabulary both in speech and writing. They also gain opportunities to take tests that assess their language level and track their progress, alongside interactive lessons and exercises that strengthen their English skills. In this context, a recent study highlighted "that students gained knowledge of English after studying using the AIT algorithm prototype to help teach English was higher than before, so AIT use in English language learning is more student-centered, leading to learner empowerment" (Chakrit, Chantana, & Thanin, 2021).

Based on the above, this study conducted field research at Sétif 2 University to identify the effectiveness of Media students’ use of AI applications in learning English in Algerian universities. It sought to answer the following sub-questions:

- How do media and communication students at Sétif 2 University use AI applications to learn English?
- How do AI applications contribute to learning English from the perspective of media and communication students at Sétif 2 University?
- What challenges and difficulties do media and communication students at Sétif 2 University face in learning English by relying on AI applications?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Defining the variables of the study

Artificial Intelligence Applications. Artificial intelligence (AI) represents a cutting-edge field within computer science, aiming to address the cognitive challenges traditionally associated with human intelligence. In the present era, organizations amass considerable quantities of data from a multitude of sources, including human-generated content, monitoring tools, intelligent sensors, and system logs. When combined with AI technologies, this data serves as the foundation for the creation of self-learning systems that are capable of acquiring information and formulating solutions that closely align with human thought processes (Sehlaoui, 2024).

And it can be defined as a branch of computer science that deals with understanding and applying technology based on computer simulation of the characteristics of human intelligence. It is a scientific development according to which it has become possible to make machines perform tasks that fall within the scope of human intelligence, such as learning machines, logic, self-correction, and self-programming, which is interested in designing systems capable of solving problems, logical interpretation, and learning (Haddadi & Zidane, 2024).

Hence, artificial intelligence applications can be defined operationally as a set of techniques, programs, and methods based on intelligent computer programs, and associated technology that simulates human intelligence, which is used in learning English, such as "chat GPT", "Grammarly", "Google Translate", "Duolingo", "Elsa Speak", "Mondly", and others, by providing important services, such as translation, error correction, conversation, learning new vocabulary, preparing evaluation tests, providing interactive lessons and exercises, and others, with the aim of developing writing, reading, pronunciation and listening skills among students of information and communication sciences.

Self-Learning. Self-learning using artificial intelligence applications in the process of learning English is essential for developing the learners' skills, tracking their progress, and evaluating it independently or individually, within the framework of the educational goals set from the beginning, in line with their abilities and personal circumstances.

Hence, the term self-learning strictly refers to learning oneself in a reflexive act, in the same way that the automobile is the one that moves likewise, and self-learning carried out by oneself, it is more appropriate to use the term autonomous learning, through the individual search of information and the individual realization of practices or experiments (Venecia, 2019).

It achieves the following: (Abu Muqaddam, 2024)

- Developing students' skills in critical thinking, analysis, and problem-solving.
- Stimulating students' curiosity, making them more willing to explore new topics beyond the formal curriculum.
- Independence and time management.
- Encouraging lifelong learning.
- Enhancing research skills and information inquiry
- Improving communication and interaction

Educational Effectiveness. The researcher operationally defines educational effectiveness as the ability of the methods, tools, and applications used in intelligent learning systems to bring about tangible and positive changes in learners' English proficiency, according to the goals they had previously identified. These changes are achieved through enjoyable and engaging approaches that motivate students and boost their willingness to learn, while enhancing their self-confidence through the support, guidance, and corrections they receive, in a way that aligns with their abilities and individual needs. This, in turn, helps them overcome the difficulties they encounter in learning English.

2.2 The effectiveness of artificial intelligence applications in learning English:

Previous research has consistently pointed to the effectiveness of AI applications in improving the learning process generally, and in learning English specifically. Such applications can develop students' language skills, enhance their abilities, and meet their diverse educational needs through interactive and enjoyable learning experiences. However, most studies also underscore a set of challenges in using AI technology, whether from the learners' perspective or within academic institutions. Some of these studies are:

The study by Chakrit, et al. (2021) started from the fact that English plays an essential role in a broader level of communication at the international level. Fortunately, the development of English language AI tools, although unreliable in the past, are making great strides in their accuracy due to advances in natural language processing (NLP), and the related subfield convergences of AI, linguistics, and computer science as pertains to human-machine natural language interaction. Witnessing this revolution in AIT use in the English language use authentication within the commercial and academic sectors is the English writing assistant « Grammarly ». As such, the authors developed and prototyped an AI technology (AIT) model for use in the English education of Thai students. The sample for the study consisted of one classroom of 40 upper secondary high-school students who were in their second semester of studies in the 2020 academic year. The tools of data collection consisted of an AI technology algorithm to help teach English to Thai students. Knowledge measurement understanding of sentence structure and English vocabulary was determined to have an IOC (Index of Item-Objective Congruence was implemented to evaluate the content validity) consistency from 0.60-1.00, a difficulty between 0.26- 0.75, and a discriminant power of 0.74. A t-test additionally analyzed the data on the dependent sample. Results revealed that the students gained knowledge of English after studying using the AIT algorithm prototype to help teach English was higher than before. Also, the students were satisfied with the model at the highest level. Therefore, it can be concluded that the quality is suitable and acceptable.

The study by Toqa et al. (2024) aimed to investigate the effect of using some proposed AI activities For developing EFL research writing for the third year students in MSA university (Modern Sciences And Arts University in Egypt). Participants of the study were 30 students in the third year in the faculty of languages in MSA University in the academic year 2022– 2023. The researcher's instruments included research checklist, a rubric and a pre/post research writing test. Participants were taught through using some relevant AI applications designed by the researcher that included chatbot, google colab, python codes, transformers, Mendley, grammarly and Turnitin. Participants' scores on the pre and post test were statistically analyzed using T- test and effect size. Results of the study revealed the positive effect of using AI applications on enhancing third year university students' research writing skills.

The study by Al-khreshehm (2024) started from the fact that the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into language instruction has presented new opportunities, with ChatGPT emerging as a promising tool for interactive and personalized learning. This systematic review examines the effectiveness, advantages, and drawbacks of ChatGPT in English language teaching (ELT). To achieve this objective, peer-reviewed studies published between 2023 and 2024 were sourced from the Web of Science database and focused on those that explored ChatGPT for language instruction. Using standardized criteria, data extraction covered the study design, participants, interventions, outcomes, and quality assessments .The findings indicate that ChatGPT significantly improves language teaching by providing personalized feedback, fostering learner autonomy, enhancing student motivation and engagement, and facilitating specific language skills. Moreover, its ability to simulate real-life conversations makes it an effective tool to improve language fluency and comprehension. Nevertheless, challenges have been highlighted, such as overreliance on AI, academic dishonesty, skill deterioration, biases in AI-generated content, and the digital divide affecting access to AI technology. Integrating AI into existing educational frameworks and addressing the need for teacher training have also emerged as significant concerns. The implications are provided based on these findings.

The study by Jamshed et al (2024) investigates EFL learners' opinions, attitudes and the challenges of incorporating AI-powered teaching and learning. It also examines how their ideas and attitudes are affected by demographic variables. 258 students were selected using a random sampling method from a population comprising students studying in different levels of programs at the College of Science and College of Business Administration, Prince Sattam bin Abdul-Aziz University (in Al-Kharj, Saudi Arabia). A questionnaire was self-developed using some modified items from prior studies as the study looks at how certain independent variables (e.g., study level, residential background and parents' educational level) affect the dependent variable (e.g., learners' opinions, attitudes and challenges for AI-powered learning and teaching). The quantitative approach (descriptive quantitative design) revealed that Saudi EFL students held a high level of positive opinions and attitudes towards AI-powered learning. However, the analysis found that many students thought implementing AI-powered learning was challenging. A one-way ANOVA showed no significant difference based on respondents' residential background and parental education. However, respondents differed significantly based on their level or year of study. The study findings will assist administrators and teachers in using AI-powered technologies to overcome challenges and prepare students for achievement in the English language.

2.3 Challenges of AI in English Learning

AI applications have created numerous opportunities to develop the learning process for university students because they are easy to use, require minimal effort and time, and offer engaging, interactive educational content that stimulates interest, participation, and creativity. They also fulfill various learner needs for information and data across different academic

fields. As a result, intelligent learning systems have become a key support for self-directed learning, offering multiple alternatives to human intervention in improving learners' performance at the right time and place. They do this through educational games packed with imagination, excitement, and competition, as well as intelligent technologies that summarize texts, translate them into various languages, engage in conversation, and enrich knowledge and expertise.

Additional factors reflect a range of expectations regarding the importance of AI today and in the near future, such as: (Haddadi, 2024, p.298)

- Preserving accumulated human expertise by transferring it to intelligent machines.
- Using human language to interact with machines rather than computer programming languages, which makes advanced machines accessible to all segments of society, including those with special needs—after it had once been restricted to specialists and experts only.

AI applications in foreign language learning have succeeded in fostering creative linguistic competence among learners by offering guidance, feedback, and playing many roles that help them overcome a variety of learning difficulties. This is achieved by providing intelligent educational content in diverse and enjoyable ways, utilizing multimedia (text, audio, images, video) based on learners' needs, their proficiency level, and their progress in the target language, assessed through diagnostic tests or analysis of their written texts and conversations.

According to a recent study, the AI applications outperform traditional methods in education in terms of developing learners' motivation for various reasons, chief among them being that learning through AI applications represents a form of blended learning, which activates the use of technology in education. It enables learners to receive conceptual knowledge in multiple teaching methods and from various educational sources—such as rewatching a video segment multiple times, or speeding it up to skip familiar parts—along with the possibility of taking notes. Additionally, it is characterized by its constant adaptability to meet students' needs, and learning in this way is imbued with fun and vitality, which increases their motivation. It also benefits students with low academic achievement (Al Hammadi, 2023).

Numerous scientific studies have also pointed to the importance of AI in learning English as one of the most important foreign languages today, having achieved a global status particularly in the fields of technology and scientific research. Modern intelligent educational systems are distinguished by their continual adaptation to the learner's performance and by intelligent interaction, thereby improving speaking, pronunciation, writing, and listening skills. "A study by Elghotmy & Ghoneim (2021) revealed the effectiveness of using AI applications in developing learners' listening and speaking skills in English, while another study by El Shazly (2021) showed the effectiveness of AI-supported chatbots in learning English, boosting learner engagement and flexibility" (Al-Ghunaim, 2024).

Therefore, artificial intelligence can be applied in learning English from four aspects: listening, speaking, writing, and translation: (Rukiati et al, 2023)

- Using AI to help writing: Grammarly is a good example of AI-based writing assistant. It helps students improve their writing by detecting grammar, spelling, punctuation, and style errors. It provides real-time suggestions and explanations to enhance the clarity and effectiveness of the writing.
- Using AI to learn listening and speaking: by playing role as a peer or assessor, AI technology can accurately transcribe and assess students' spoken language. By comparing their pronunciation, intonation, and fluency to native speakers, AI can provide instant feedback and suggestions for improvement. Moreover, as virtual language tutors, AI can take part in interactive talks with students.

- Using AI to learn reading English : AI-powered applications also offer features that assist students in improving their vocabulary, such as providing definitions of words and highlighting unfamiliar terms in texts. These features can help students expand their vocabulary and improve their comprehension of the texts they are reading.

Nevertheless, despite the many opportunities AI applications offer to enrich university students' experience in learning English, a number of potential risks exist. For instance, "neglecting human-based education might leave students feeling unable to compete, potentially leading to a sense of failure and weakness in their skills" (Hamayel, 2023).

Therefore, the integration of AI in education presents challenges such as privacy and security risks, lack of trust, high costs, and potential bias. Protecting student data is crucial to prevent breaches, while transparency in AI-generated feedback is essential to build trust in AI-powered systems. Financial constraints also pose a barrier, as implementing and maintaining AI systems can be costly for institutions. Additionally, AI models may inherit biases from their training data, leading to unfair outcomes, making it essential to develop unbiased and inclusive algorithms. Ethical concerns, including the absence of human interaction and fairness in AI-based education, further highlight the need for responsible implementation (Chelghoum & Chelghoum, 2025).

3. Methodology

3.1 Context

This study is descriptive, seeking to collect, interpret and analyze data about communication phenomena in their current state, and describe it in a quantitative and qualitative way. The study used the descriptive survey method, due to its ability to accurately describe and analyze the phenomenon under study and its variables, in order to know the uses of artificial intelligence applications by media and communication students in learning English at Algerian universities, and to identify their attitudes towards the effectiveness of these applications in supporting the learning process. The study relied on the survey method for a sample of media and communication students at Setif 2 University, to develop innovative suggestions that significantly enhance the English language learning process among students at Algerian universities.

3.2 Participants

The research sample in this study is represented by the students of media and communication at Setif 2 University for the academic year 2024-2025, who use artificial intelligence applications, and have knowledge of the subject of the study. Due to the difficulty of enumerating the members of the research population numerically and the inability to reach all of its members due to its large size, the sample survey method was relied upon as a sampling method, by selecting a non-probability sample of students who cooperated and volunteered to answer the online questionnaire on Facebook, and their e-mail, through which communication was conducted, the number reached was 110 respondents, within the limits of what we were able to access during the study period. In this method, the researcher selection of participants is based on factors such as convenience or specific characteristics, rather than random selection. this type of sampling is used when the goal is to focus on a particular group or specific individuals who meet certain criteria, and reached the study's objectives. The personal data of the study sample is represented in the following table:

Table 1.*The personal data of the study sample*

The age of the Respondents		
Age	Frequency	Percentage %
18 to 23	85	77.28
24 to 29	23	20.90
30 and above	2	1.82
Total	110	100
Sex		
Sex	Frequency	Percentage %
Male	37	33.64
Female	73	66.36
Total	110	100
Types of learning English		
The type	Frequency	Percentage %
formal learning	44	40.00
Self-Learning	66	60.00
Total	110	100

3.3 Procedures

The study used an online questionnaire through google forms, in order to deliver it to the largest number of participants. The questions were formulated in closed and open formats in addition to multiple choice and were arranged according to the data and objectives of the study, which enabled us to collect data about the attitudes, and trends of media and communication students towards the effectiveness of artificial intelligence applications in learning the English language at the Algerian university. It was distributed to a sample of Setif 2 University students via e-mail and Facebook during January and February 2025.

The questionnaire form consisted of three main axes, which are:

- First: How Media and Communication students at Sétif 2 University use AI applications in learning English.
- Second: How AI applications contribute to learning English from the perspective of Media and Communication students at Sétif 2 University.
- Third: Challenges and difficulties faced by Media and Communication students at Sétif 2 University in learning English through AI applications.

After distributing the questionnaire electronically, the researcher extracted the quantitative data based on the outputs of the SPSS v23 program.

4. Results

In this section, the quantitative data obtained through the following tables will be presented, analyzed and interpreted as follows:

Table 2.*Students' experience with AI in learning English*

Categories	Frequency	Percentage %
Less than two years	20	18.18
Two years ago	51	46.36
More than two years	39	35.46
Total	110	100

Table 2 indicates that the largest percentage (46.36%) of Media and Communication students have been using AI applications to learn English for two years. Those who have been using them for more than two years represent 35.46%, and those who have been using them for less than two years represent 18.18%.

These quantitative results confirm that students are interested in learning English via AI applications, in line with the significant developments AI has undergone in recent years, especially with the widespread availability of the internet and smartphones among students. Coupled with their daily involvement in university studies, these applications have provided them with important opportunities to learn according to their own circumstances, without the need to be present in a traditional classroom setting. Notably, these applications are able to offer an engaging, diverse, and interactive learning experience.

Table 3.

AI powered-tools or applications used to learn English

Categories	Frequency	Percentage %
Language learning apps	110	78.57
AI tutors	11	7.86
Chabot for language practice	19	13.57
Total	140	100

Table 3 shows that all Media and Communication students rely on language-learning applications at 78.57%, followed by chatbots for language practice at 13.57%, and finally AI tutors at 7.86%.

One explanation for all students relying on language-learning apps is the variety of tools available for learning English—such as Duolingo and ELSA Speak—which are designed to accommodate the learners’ level, and provide engaging content through intelligent games featuring images, illustrations, and colors. This makes the learning process enjoyable rather than monotonous.

The chat-bot application for language practice provides interactive learning opportunities in English, as the chat-bot converses with the learner like a human, aiming to correct errors, teach grammatical rules, and offer reading and listening exercises. AI tutors, which represent the newest tools for learning English, deliver interactive lessons tailored to the learner’s capabilities and interests in a virtual environment that mimics what one would receive from a real-life teacher. Despite their importance, however, these advanced tools see only limited usage among students, suggesting that many are unaware of all the intelligent resources available for developing their English language skills.

Table 4.

The most important artificial intelligence applications used to learn English

Categories	Frequency	Percentage %
Mondly app	00	0.00
Duolingo app	101	29.54
Busuu Busuu app	00	0.00
LingoDeer app	00	0.00
Rosetta Stone app	00	0.00
Babbel app	00	0.00
English Sentence Master app	00	0.00
Improve English app	00	0.00
chat GPT app	110	32.16
Google Translator app	110	32.16
Andy app	00	0.00
Talk pal. AI	19	5.56
Elsa	1	0.29
deepseek	1	0.29
Total	342	100

Table 4 shows that all Media and Communication students use “ChatGPT” and “Google Translator” for learning English, each at 32.16%, followed by “Duolingo” at 29.54%, then “Talk pal. AI” at 5.56%, and finally “Elsa” and “deepseek” both at 0.29%. Meanwhile, no students use “Mondly,” “Busuu,” “LingoDeer,” “Rosetta Stone,” “Babbel,” “English Sentence Master,” “Improve English,” or “Andy”.

These results can be explained by students deliberately focusing on certain applications over others, as well as some having limited awareness of the variety of AI-based tools available for mastering English. “ChatGPT,” which is used for conversational practice, and “Google Translate,” primarily used for translation, along with “Duolingo,” which employs educational games for learning grammar and vocabulary, are heavily used by students. In contrast, other applications are not widely adopted. It is worth noting that while these latter apps can also be highly beneficial for learning English, “ChatGPT,” “Google Translate,” and “Duolingo” stand out as key resources for self-directed learning thanks to their flexible, interactive, and varied approaches, as well as being free and easily accessible compared to some apps that require a subscription. This makes them the best choices for Media and Communication students at Sétif 2 University.

Table 5.

Learners frequency about using AI tools to learn English

Categories	Frequency	Percentage %
Always	48	43.64
Sometimes	62	56.36
Rarely	00	0.00
Total	110	100

Table 5 reveals that the majority of Media and Communication students use AI tools for learning English “sometimes,” at 56.36%, while 43.64% say they use them “always,” and none report using them “rarely”.

One explanation for most students using AI tools irregularly is that they are frequently occupied with academic work, research projects, and exam preparation, leading to usage that is consistent at times and intermittent at others. Still, learning English does garner significant attention from these students—likely owing to the language’s global importance in Algeria’s current educational policy. Indeed, English is a relatively new endeavor in higher education, where emphasis has been placed on publishing research in English and training university professors in the language, with a gradual aim to generalize English instruction across all Algerian universities.

Table 6.

The benefits gained by Media students from using AI applications to learn English

Categories	Frequency	Percentage %
Develop reading skills	101	15.73
vocabulary development	82	12.77
audio e-learning (correct pronunciation)	91	14.17
Learn Speaking in English	108	16.82
Writing	54	8.41
Instant error correction	43	6.70
rapid translation to and from English	99	15.43
Improving listening skills	64	9.97
Total	642	100

Table 6 indicates that speaking (Speaking) ranks highest among the benefits gained by Media and Communication students from using AI applications to learn English, at 16.82%, followed by reading (Reading) at 15.73%, rapid translation to and from English at 15.43%, audio learning (correct pronunciation) at 14.17%, enriching the student's vocabulary at 12.77%, improving English listening skills at 9.97%, then learning writing skills at 8.41%, and finally instant error correction at 6.70%.

These quantitative findings suggest that using AI applications in learning English yields multiple benefits for students—spanning reading, speaking, pronunciation, listening, and writing—making these tools vital in attaining language proficiency today.

Table 7.

Media students' perspectives on relying on AI as the sole source for learning English

Categories		Frequency	Percentage %
Yes		00	0.00
No	AI cannot replace the teacher in real-life situations	55	50.00
	in-person instruction is essential for monitoring learners, assessing their levels, and training them to practice English according to their individual weaknesses	24	21.82
	Daily language practice with classmates or friends is also necessary—particularly for speaking	19	17.27
	reading English books and collaborating with non-virtual peers on assignments reinforces knowledge more effectively	12	10.91
	total	110	100
Total		110	100

Table 7 shows that all Media and Communication students consider AI to be merely a supporting tool in improving English learning, and despite its importance, it cannot be relied on solely. They explain this by noting that AI cannot replace the teacher in real-life situations, as it cannot accommodate the learners' differences the way a teacher—who knows them personally—can do (50%). Additionally, in-person instruction is essential for monitoring learners, assessing their levels, and training them to practice English according to their individual weaknesses (21.82%). Daily language practice with classmates or friends is also necessary—particularly for speaking (17.27%). Furthermore, reading English books and collaborating with non-virtual peers on assignments reinforces knowledge more effectively (10.91%).

These results suggest that although AI is seen as important in helping students learn English, it remains an adjunct to education that relies on human interaction and cannot fully replace it.

Table 8.

The effectiveness of artificial intelligence in English language learning achievement

Categories	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	77	70.00
No	00	0.00
Sort of	33	30.00
Total	110	100

Table 8 indicates that most Media and Communication students believe AI is effective in improving the English learning process (70%), while a significant portion (30%) believe it is somewhat effective, and none consider it ineffective. This finding reaffirms the results of Table 6, which underscore the importance of these tools in supporting English language learning by offering valuable support to learners' language skills in innovative ways, through new, flexible, readily available teaching methods, delivered efficiently and swiftly. They also bolster motivation by promoting interactive and participatory activities through educational games, competitions, and more. The only requirement is a genuine desire and clear goals on the part of the learner.

Table 9.

Justifications of the students who answered 'Yes'

Categories	Frequency	Percentage %
AI applications play the role of a teacher in explaining English grammar	22	9.4
learning process enjoyable (Graphics, Games...)	39	16.67
Promote Anytime/Anywhere Learning	57	24.36
Diversity and Inclusive learning	21	8.97
increase motivation to learn English	20	8.55
Encourage collaborative and interactive learning	33	14.10
makes students independent and self-learners	35	14.96
AI simplifies and enhances learning quality because AI is specifically supportive of English	7	2.99
Total	234	100

Table 9 shows that Media and Communication students who consider AI effective in improving English learning attribute this to several factors. Chief among them are: providing educational support anytime and anywhere (24.36%), making the learning process enjoyable (images, games) at 16.67%, fostering self-directed learning (14.96%), encouraging collaborative and interactive learning (14.10%), fulfilling the role of a teacher in explaining English grammar (9.40%), offering varied and appealing educational content (8.97%), and increasing learners' desire to learn English (8.55%). Lastly, 2.99% indicate that it simplifies and enhances learning quality because AI is specifically supportive of English, as they see many AI tools and technologies developed primarily to aid English learning.

All of these reasons highlight the need to adopt modern teaching methods for learning English within knowledge-based societies, which fundamentally rely on information and how to utilize it with minimal effort and cost.

Table 10.

Difficulties faced by students while using artificial intelligence in learning English

Categories		Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	lack of a solid foundation in English from the start	2	1.82
	AI's struggle with understanding Arabic—leading to errors in translating certain terms	17	15.45
	AI applications' inability to meet all their educational needs	25	22.73
	total	44	40.00
No		66	60.00
Total		110	100

Table 10 reveals that the majority of Media and Communication students do not face difficulties in learning English through AI applications (60%), whereas 40% do face challenges. According to them, these difficulties include: AI applications' inability to meet all their educational needs (22.73%); AI's struggle with understanding Arabic—leading to errors in translating certain terms (15.45%); and a lack of a solid foundation in English from the start (1.82%).

All these difficulties, highlighted by a considerable percentage of Media and Communication students, reflect a set of challenges that limit AI applications to a supporting role in the learning process—consistent with the findings in Table 7. They point to the need for integrating smart education with traditional education to fully meet learners' needs and requirements, particularly for those with a weak command of English.

Table 11.

Students' opinions on the challenges of using AI in learning English at Algerian universities

Categories	Frequency	Percentage %
Artificial intelligence (AI) enabled learning creates unemployment and degrades the value of human talent	35	12.46
AI requires high cost in higher educational institutions	35	12.46
Dealing with technology in smart learning may create psychological and social problems	6	2.13
Raises significant privacy concerns	9	3.20
Data Privacy and Security	3	1.07
lack of awareness of AI's importance for learning	92	32.74
Lack of training and proficiency among students in using these applications	101	35.94
Total	281	100

Table 11 indicates that, according to Media and Communication students, there are multiple challenges to using AI applications for learning English in Algerian universities. Foremost among these are a lack of training and skills among students in using these tools (35.94%) and a lack of awareness of AI's importance for learning (32.74%). Next are concerns that AI-assisted learning reduces the value of human talent and requires high costs in higher education institutions (both at 12.46%), as well as significant privacy concerns (3.20%), the possibility of psychological and social issues resulting from heavy technology use in smart learning (2.13%), and, lastly, threats to data security (1.07%).

These quantitative results reflect a series of challenges facing Algerian universities in relying on intelligent learning systems to teach English from the perspective of Media and Communication students. They are primarily linked to human resources—whether in terms of low awareness or insufficient training and competence—and to the technological infrastructure, among other risks that threaten the security of the university and its constituents. This necessitates planning for innovative and advanced educational environments in the future to elevate the overall quality of university education, particularly English instruction, which stands as the global language in the digital era, where technology adoption is a key indicator of a university's international visibility.

5. Discussion

An analysis of this study's results—which aimed to identify the effectiveness of AI application use by Media and Communication students in learning English at Sétif 2 University—reveals multiple aspects related to:

5.1. Students' use of AI Powered Tools in English Language Learning at Sétif 2 University

The findings show that students' interest in using AI applications for learning English aligns with the large variety of these tools that have emerged in the past few years, especially as the internet and smartphones have become widespread among the student population. Despite their many academic commitments, media and communication students still demonstrate a marked interest in learning English, given its current status as a global language in Algerian educational policy. It occupies first place in technology and scientific research, making it crucial for students' success both academically and professionally, locally and internationally. It is also a key factor in elevating Algerian universities to the ranks of international institutions.

Hadidan et al observe that: “the importance of teaching and learning English stems not only from the large number of speakers but also from its global status: it is the language of politics and politicians in diplomatic gatherings, the language of science and scientists in scientific conferences, the language of trade and traders in business transactions and financial contracts, the language of technology and information for IT professionals, the language of knowledge and teachers in most educational institutions worldwide, and the language of communication for most people who use email and the internet. Global research and studies are conducted in and through it.” (Hadidan et al, 2024)

Consequently, Media and Communication students frequently rely on “language learning apps” such as Duolingo (which introduces fun into the learning process by using pictures, illustrations, and colors), “Google Translate” (mainly for translation), and “ChatGPT” (for conversation practice). This is consistent with Zaghlool's study (2023, p. 111) emphasizing ChatGPT's importance compared to other applications for learning grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation skills. ChatGPT provides a platform to practice speaking and writing in English—particularly as conversing in English with ChatGPT yields impressive results compared to Arabic—thus motivating users to use translation websites and learn new synonyms and terminology. It can also save time and improve students' writing skills, enabling them to produce high-quality content for academic projects. Nonetheless, although these apps are top choices for the study sample (as opposed to other applications that students do not use as frequently), making use of the entire range of AI tools is critical to mastering English. Each application has unique features, and their roles complement each other in reinforcing various learner skills. A study by Toqa et al (2024, p. 122) indicates the great importance of using various artificial intelligence applications in enhancing English writing skills as a foreign language and self-learning. The most important of these applications are (Google Colab, Python, Grammarly, Mendeley, Turnitin, and two chatbots and converters).

5.2. How AI Applications Contribute to Learning English from the Perspective of Media and Communication Students at Sétif 2 University

The study findings show a wide range of benefits and advantages that AI applications provide for effective English learning among Media and Communication students. Chief among these are improvements in reading, speaking, pronunciation, listening, and writing skills. These benefits are driven by the flexible and enjoyable digital learning environment that AI tools create, with their variety of multimedia formats (texts, images, audio, motivational videos, interactive exercises). This diversity in teaching approaches leads to interactive and adaptive learning that boosts learners' comprehension in line with their proficiency level and needs, relying on a learning process that simulates a human teacher. Modern studies indicate that “AI applications offer a range of linguistic exercises for correct

pronunciation and writing of vocabulary by providing corrections for the students' repeated mistakes. For instance, ChatGPT converses with the user in a manner resembling human interaction, teaching multiple skills such as pronunciation and vocabulary. Moreover, the 'Audio Description' of vocabulary has become essential for foreign language learners in general" (Abdel-Moneim, 2022). This aligns with the findings of Al Hammadi (2023), which showed the positive effect of these applications on learning English skills, due to the fact that they allow learners to rely on themselves for information. They spark questions that drive students to seek answers consistently without boredom; each time learners find an answer on their own, it strengthens their confidence in their abilities and academic readiness. Moreover, the availability of educational content through video lessons allows learners to revisit the material anytime, thus addressing individual differences—especially among low-achieving students. From this perspective, most students believe AI is effective in improving English learning by providing educational support anytime and anywhere, making the process more enjoyable (through illustrations, games), fostering self-directed learning, and encouraging collaborative and interactive learning—consistent with the study by Chakrit et al. (2021, p.5629), which confirms “that AI-enabled language learning systems and chatbots make learning more fun and less dull and create student motivation to learn”. These findings also concur with Al-Habib's study (2022, p.276) and recent studies such as Al-khreshehm (2024, p.54), Jamshed et al. (2024, p.135), which concluded that “enjoyable learning leads to side benefits, such as developing personal and life skills, providing positive engagement with educational requirements, inspiring hope in learners, instilling self-confidence, and offering education that underscores self-directed learning according to each learner's needs.” However, despite all these benefits, AI is considered merely a supporting factor and cannot be relied upon solely to improve English learning. According to the students, AI cannot solve all linguistic challenges or meet all educational needs. Traditional classroom settings, which promote direct interaction among the learner, teacher, and classmates, are more effective in addressing students' needs and interests. This is because students receive varied feedback from all parts in the learning process: “Through direct communication with the teacher, the student can participate in evaluating and discussing all educational content related to learning English and can easily articulate any linguistic difficulties they face, which in turn is simpler for the teacher to track and understand. Additionally, participation and collaboration enliven the learning process” (Haddadi, 2020).

5.3. Challenges and difficulties Faced by Media and Communication Students at Sétif 2 University in Learning English through AI Applications

The findings reveal that a considerable percentage of Media and Communication students encounter difficulties when learning English through AI applications. Although smart learning is crucial for developing many of their skills by employing systems that simulate human thinking based on personalized learning objectives and activities, it still cannot meet all of their educational requirements in a complete way, as confirmed by the data in Table 7—especially for students with low proficiency in English, who need direct human guidance in a traditional learning environment. In this context, Al Hammadi (2023, p. 193) argued: “Like any language, learning English requires structured steps and basic principles that must be followed so the learner can practice it and benefit from it in daily life. Whether spoken or written, language needs gradual phases and foundations that teachers and learners must observe”.

Moreover, these applications lack human interaction and communication, which limits their role in reinforcing certain skills such as critical thinking and analysis. They also cannot fully address individual differences among learners. Additionally, AI often struggles with understanding Arabic—which has complex grammatical, morphological, and rhetorical features—leading to translation issues from Arabic into English. Given these challenges, and

in order to maximize the benefits of AI applications in learning English among university students in Algeria, while improving their English skills and compensating for the shortcomings of self-directed learning, it is essential to support students' English learning with well-planned, purposeful supervision from university instructors trained and qualified in using AI systems. This requires broadening English instruction from a personal interest to an academic priority, in order to meet the recently defined objectives of the Algerian university's policy of gradually teaching all scientific disciplines in English as a second language alongside Arabic. Meeting this goal necessitates certain prerequisites—stemming from the challenges identified by the study sample—such as financial and technological resources and qualified human capital (instructors, supervisors, students), among others. Recent research indicates “the need to formulate a new educational policy that makes AI today a fundamental requirement to ensure the quality of the educational system and its outputs. Accordingly, we need to develop electronic and interactive curricula that enable students to learn about AI, its objectives, dimensions, significance, and uses, so that all strategies aim to encourage teachers to solve problems creatively, anticipate issues before they arise, and support innovative projects by relying on AI applications in universities” (AbdelFatah Abdallah, 2025, p. 113).

6. Conclusion

In light of previous studies, this research attempted to examine the effectiveness and challenges of using AI applications in learning English, based on the experiences of Media Studies students, and within the context of the new trend in Algeria's higher education sector toward empowering the English language in tertiary education. The results confirm the effectiveness of smart learning in providing educational support anytime and anywhere, making learning enjoyable (through illustrations, games), and promoting self-directed, cooperative, and interactive learning. Nonetheless, it remains only a supporting factor in acquiring reading, speaking, pronunciation, listening, and writing skills, as it cannot respond to all linguistic challenges faced by learners or fulfill all their needs. It lacks human communication and interaction, which would otherwise bolster certain skills like advanced speaking skills that require practice and participation in a traditional learning environment that respects individual differences and linguistic challenges, under the direct guidance and supervision of human instructors. Therefore, planning is needed to reinforce English language learning among university students in Algeria through structured, goal-oriented follow-up by trained and qualified teachers in using AI systems, expanding the scope of English learning from a personal pursuit to an academic imperative.

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