الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية
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وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي
جامعة أكلي محند أولحاج
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كلية الآداب واللغات
القسم : الآداب و اللغة الإنجليزية

Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur
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ⵜⴰⵙⴷⴰⵡⵉⵜ ⴰⴽⵍⵉ ⵎⵓⵃⴻⵏⴷ ⵓⵍⵃⴰⵊ - ⵜⵓⴱⵉⵔⴻⵜ -
Faculté des Lettres et des Langues

قسم اللغة الانجليزية
كلية الآداب واللغات

البويرة في: 2026/06/02

إذن بالإيداع خاص بمذكرة الماستر

أنا الممضي أسفله الأستاذ(ة) المشرف(ة) شتريط حنان

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1- تامجحوبت سهام

2- / /

الشعبة: لغة إنجليزية
التخصص: التعليمية و اللغات التطبيقية

عنوان المذكرة:

The Use of AI-generated Arguments in Promoting Students' engagement, Confidence, and Performance in Classroom Debates: Teachers' and Students' Perceptions.

ملاحظة: تقدم هذه الوثيقة رفقة التصريح الشرفي ليتم ختمهما معا في نفس اليوم

الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية
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التصريح الشرفي الخاص بالالتزام بقواعد النزاهة العلمية

لإنجاز بحث

انا الممضي اسفله،

السيد(ة)......تمجوجت سهام......الصفة: طالب (ماستر / دكتوراه)

الحامل(ة) لبطاقة التعريف الوطنية: ....115180450......والصادرة بتاريخ ....2019......

المسجل(ة) بكلية / معهد........................قسم......اللغة الانجليزية......

تخصص: ......Didactics and Applied Linguistics......

والمكلف(ة) بإنجاز اعمال بحث(مذكرة، التخرج، مذكرة ماستر، مذكرة ماجستير، اطروحة دكتوراه).

عنوانها: The Use of AI-generated Arguments in Promoting Students' Engagement, Confidence and Performance in Classroom Debates: Teachers' and Students' perceptions

أصرح بشرفي اني ألتزم بمراعاة المعايير العلمية والمنهجية الاخلاقيات المهنية والنزاهة الاكاديمية المطلوبة في انجاز البحث المذكور أعلاه.

التاريخ: ......02 جوان 2026

توقيع المعني (ة)

هيئة مراقبة السرقة العلمية:

البويرة في: 02 جوان 2026

النسبة: %09

الامضاء

رئيس قسم اللغة الإنجليزية
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صفحات 108

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معرف الإرسال
trn:oid:::1:3583150256

تاريخ الإرسال
May 31, 2026, 12:56 PM GMT+1

تاريخ التنزيل
May 31, 2026, 1:05 PM GMT+1

اسم الملف
Tamahdjoubt_Sihem_Master_Thesis.docx

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تبحث خوارزميات نظامنا بعمق في المستند بحثًا عن أي تناقضات من شأنها أن تميزه عن الإرسال الأكاديمي. إذا لاحظنا شيئًا غريبًا، فإننا نقوم بالإبلاغ عنه لتتمكن من مراجعته.

التنبيه ليست بالضرورة مؤشرًا على وجود مشكلة. ومع ذلك، نوصيك بتركيز انتباهك هناك لمزيد من المراجعة.

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

University of Akli Mouhand Oulhadj, Bouira

Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages

Department of English Language and Literature

The Use of AI-generated Arguments in Promoting Students 'Engagement, Confidence and Performance in Classroom Debates: Teachers and Students' Perceptions

A Thesis Submitted to the Department of English Language and Literature - University of Bouira – in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirement of Master's Degree in

Didactics and Applied Languages

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Academic Year

2025/2026

Dedication

With profound gratitude, I begin by thanking Allah Almighty, whose grace carried me through every moment of doubt, fatigue, and uncertainty. Your presence was my strength and refuge; to You be all the glory.

This work is dedicated to my beloved husband, whose unwavering support, patience, and love guided me every step of the way. To my three wonderful children, Adam , Aris and Ayden who have grown beside me throughout this journey—whose smiles and curiosity gave me strength when I was weary. And to my family and friends, who stood by me with constant encouragement—your belief in me was a constant anchor.

As I carry this third child, preparing for motherhood again while completing this thesis, every challenge was met with your love. This achievement is as much yours as it is mine. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart.

Siham Tamahdjoubt

Acknowledgments

All praise is due to Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful whose light guided our steps and whose mercy granted me the strength to endure. Through his wisdom, I found patience in the face of hardship and clarity in times of doubt. It is by His grace that this journey has reached its end.

With profound gratitude, I extend my heartfelt thanks to Dr. Cheriet Henen, whose steady feedback guided my path. Her simple yet powerful words “Keep going and keep up the good work” echoed through my moments of fatigue and lifted my spirits when the road seemed long. I am grateful to her because her deep knowledge and thoughtful insights enriched this research. Her presence reminded me that true mentorship lies not only in instruction but in inspiration.

I would also like to express my appreciation to the board of examiners, Dr. Guerroudj Fouzia and Dr.Kacimi Chaima for their time and dedication in evaluating my work. And to every soul who whispered a word of hope, offered a smile in passing, or reminded me to breathe when everything felt too heavy, your kindness did not go unnoticed. In the quiet strength of your compassion, I found courage.

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to Dr. kerroum Fathia and Dr. Otmani Ilhem, and Dr.Sara Djaadi whose kind advice and uplifting words brought comfort and encouragement when I needed them most, as well as to all the dedicated teachers at Bouira University, who shaped my mind and touched my heart, thank you. Each lesson you delivered, each word of support you offered, became part of the foundation that carried me to this moment.

This work is not only a culmination of effort but a reflection of every voice, hand, and heart that helped me along the way.

Abstract

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education has increasingly influenced English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching and learning, especially in communicative and debate-based activities. This study investigates Algerian EFL students' and teachers' perceptions of AI-generated arguments in enhancing students' engagement, confidence, motivation, and performance in classroom debates at the University of Bouira. It also explores perceived pedagogical benefits and limitations of AI integration in debate-based learning environments. A mixed-methods approach was adopted, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. Data were gathered through questionnaires administered to EFL students and semi-structured interviews with EFL teachers at Bouira University. Quantitative data identified patterns of AI use, students' perceptions, and the impact of AI-generated arguments on classroom debates, while qualitative data provided deeper insights into teachers' observations and pedagogical concerns. Findings revealed that AI tools are widely used among EFL students, particularly for organizing ideas, generating arguments, improving vocabulary, and preparing for debates. Results showed that AI-generated arguments positively contribute to students' engagement, confidence, motivation, and debate performance by reducing anxiety, facilitating idea generation, and improving argument organization and linguistic expression. However, the study also revealed concerns about excessive dependence on AI, reduced critical thinking, weakened creativity, and limited authenticity in students' responses. The study concludes that AI-generated arguments can serve as effective cognitive and linguistic scaffolds in EFL classroom debates when integrated critically and pedagogically.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, AI-generated arguments, EFL learning, classroom debates, student engagement, motivation, self-confidence, critical thinking.

ملخص

أصبح دمج الذكاء الاصطناعي في المجال التعليمي يؤثر بشكل متزايد في ممارسات تعليم وتعلّم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، خاصة في الأنشطة التواصلية والأنشطة القائمة على المناظرات. لذلك، تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف تصورات طلبة وأساتذة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في الجزائر حول دور الحجج المُولَّدة بالذكاء الاصطناعي في تعزيز اندماج الطلبة وثقتهم بالنفس ودافعيتهم وأدائهم في المناظرات الصفية بجامعة البويرة. كما تسعى الدراسة إلى استكشاف تصوراتهم بشأن الفوائد البيداغوجية والقيود المحتملة لدمج الذكاء الاصطناعي في بيئات التعلّم القائمة على المناظرة .ولتحقيق أهداف الدراسة، تم اعتماد المنهج المختلط الذي يجمع بين جمع وتحليل البيانات الكمية والنوعية. حيث جُمعت البيانات من خلال استبيانات وُزّعت على طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، بالإضافة إلى مقابلات شبه موجهة أُجريت مع أساتذة اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة البويرة. وقد هدفت البيانات الكمية إلى تحديد أنماط استخدام الذكاء الاصطناعي، وتصورات الطلبة، والأثر المُدرَك للحجج المُولَّدة بالذكاء الاصطناعي على المناظرات الصفية، في حين وفّرت البيانات النوعية فهماً أعمق لملاحظات الأساتذة وانشغالاتهم البيداغوجية .كشفت نتائج الدراسة أن أدوات الذكاء الاصطناعي تُستخدم على نطاق واسع بين طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، خاصة في تنظيم الأفكار، وتوليد الحجج، وتحسين المفردات، والتحضير للمناظرات. كما أظهرت النتائج، من خلال أداتي البحث، أن الحجج المُولَّدة بالذكاء الاصطناعي تساهم بشكل إيجابي في تعزيز اندماج الطلبة وثقتهم بالنفس ودافعيتهم وأدائهم العام في المناظرات، وذلك من خلال تقليل القلق، وتسهيل توليد الأفكار، وتحسين تنظيم الحجج والتعبير اللغوي .ومع ذلك، كشفت الدراسة أيضاً عن وجود مخاوف مهمة تتعلق بالإفراط في الاعتماد على الذكاء الاصطناعي، وتراجع التفكير النقدي، وضعف الإبداع، ومحدودية الأصالة في إجابات الطلبة. وقد شدد كلٌّ من الطلبة والأساتذة على ضرورة دمج الذكاء الاصطناعي بطريقة موجهة وأخلاقية لضمان بقائه أداةً داعمة للتعلّم فقط . وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن الحجج المُولَّدة بالذكاء الاصطناعي يمكن أن تؤدي دوراً فعالاً كدعائم معرفية ولغوية في مناظرات اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية داخل الصفوف الدراسية، إذا ما تم توظيفها بشكل نقدي وبيداغوجي مناسب. وأخيراً، تسهم هذه الدراسة في إثراء البحوث المتنامية حول الذكاء الاصطناعي في تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، خاصة في السياق الجامعي الجزائري، كما تؤكد على أهمية الموازنة بين الابتكار التكنولوجي والتفكير النقدي واستقلالية المتعلم والاستخدام الأصيل للغة.

الكلمات المفتاحية :الذكاء الاصطناعي، الحجج المُولَّدة بالذكاء الاصطناعي، تعلّم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، المناظرات الصفية، اندماج الطلبة، الدافعية، الثقة بالنفس، التفكير النقدي.

List of Abbreviations

AI	Artificial Intelligence
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
LLMs	Large Language Models
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESL	English as a Second Language
NLP	Natural Language Processing
GPT	Generative Pre-trained Transformer

List of Graphs

Content

General Introduction

Introduction

In recent years, the rapid expansion of digital technologies has significantly transformed practices in higher education. Among these technological advancements, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a powerful and influential innovation capable of enhancing teaching practices, assessment methods, and students' learning experiences. As a result, AI-driven tools are increasingly being integrated into academic environments to support learning processes, personalise instruction, and promote cognitive engagement (Holmes et al., 2019; Luckin et al., 2016).

In the context of EFL teaching and learning, several AI-powered language tools, such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, and QuillBot, have gained considerable attention for their educational potential. These tools enable learners to generate structured arguments, improve language accuracy, and access a variety of discourse models. Consequently, they can offer valuable support for EFL students who often experience difficulties in idea generation, vocabulary use, and oral expression (Luckin et al., 2016). Furthermore, AI systems can scaffold learners' thinking processes by modelling argument structures, suggesting counterarguments, and helping students organise their ideas more effectively, all of which are essential components of successful debate performance.

However, despite their growing presence, the pedagogical implications of AI—particularly in oral activities such as classroom debates, remain underexplored. Debate tasks require not only linguistic competence but also critical thinking, organization of ideas, and responsiveness to opposing viewpoints. Therefore, examining how AI-generated arguments influence these dimensions is both timely and significant within contemporary language education research.

1. Background of the Study

Within the field of language education, AI applications have opened new possibilities for developing learners' communicative competence, particularly in contexts where students struggle with oral expression and argumentative discourse since speaking remains one of the most demanding skills to master. Unlike receptive skills, speaking requires spontaneous production, linguistic accuracy, discourse organization, and psychological readiness. Many EFL learners experience hesitation, anxiety, and lack of confidence when required to express complex ideas publicly (Horwitz et al., 1986).

In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings, specifically in Algerian universities, students are required to organize ideas coherently, defend positions, and interact critically with opposing viewpoints in debate based activities. They are expected to demonstrate a good level in oral proficiency, structured argumentation, and critical engagement throughout their participation and classroom debates in different modules. Additionally, the active participation in these classroom debates contributes to students' evaluation marks, as their engagement, preparation, and performance during these activities are assessed as part of their continuous evaluation. These classroom debate-based activities play a crucial role not just in assessing EFL students' abilities but it can also help them foster higher-order thinking, collaborative reasoning, and communicative competence (Kennedy, 2007; Snider & Schnurer, 2006).

Despite their pedagogical value, debates can be challenging for EFL learners who may struggle with generating structured arguments, supporting claims with evidence, and responding effectively to counterarguments. However, this challenge can be overcome through the use of AI tools.

The emergence of AI-generated arguments offers a potential pedagogical scaffold. AI systems can produce logically structured claims, supporting evidence, and counterarguments, which may assist learners in understanding argumentative frameworks. From a sociocultural perspective, such tools can function as mediational artifacts that support learners within their Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978). Yet, the integration of AI in higher education raises pedagogical and ethical questions. While AI may enhance engagement and confidence, concerns remain regarding dependency, critical thinking development, and authentic learning (Selwyn, 2019).

Within the Algerian university context, and more specifically among Master 2 students in Applied Linguistics and Didactics, limited research has explored how AI-generated arguments are perceived in relation to debate performance. This gap highlights the need to investigate whether students and teachers view AI as a constructive pedagogical support or as a potential threat to academic integrity and independent reasoning.

2. Problem Statement

Although debates are widely recognized as effective tools for promoting speaking proficiency and critical thinking in EFL classrooms, many EFL students encounter difficulties

in organizing arguments, maintaining fluency, and expressing ideas confidently. These challenges are particularly noticeable in different modules such as oral expression and academic presentations where expectations of coherence and sophistication are high.

Simultaneously, AI-generated content has become increasingly accessible to university students. Learners may use AI tools to prepare arguments, structure presentations, or explore debate topics. However, the pedagogical implications of this practice remain unclear. There is insufficient empirical evidence regarding how students perceive the role of AI-generated arguments in enhancing their engagement, confidence, and oral performance. Furthermore, teachers' attitudes toward the integration of such tools in debate-based activities are underexplored, especially within Algerian higher education.

This study therefore addresses the lack of research examining teachers' and students' perceptions of the use of AI-generated arguments in supporting engagement, confidence, and performance in academic debate activities at the Master level.

3. Objectives of the Study

The primary aim of this study is to investigate both Master 2 students' and teachers' perceptions regarding the use of AI-generated arguments in academic debate activities in EFL classrooms. In particular, the study seeks to explore how students perceive the integration of AI-generated arguments in debate tasks and how they evaluate their influence on their engagement, confidence, and overall performance during academic debates. By examining students' experiences, the study aims to understand whether AI-supported arguments contribute to enhancing participation, speaking performance, confidence, as well as motivation in debate-based activities.

In addition, the study aims to examine teachers' perceptions of integrating AI-generated arguments into different EFL modules. Also, it seeks to identify the benefits teachers associate with the use of AI in classroom debates, as well as the concerns they may have regarding its impact on students' learning, critical thinking, and academic integrity. Furthermore, the study intends to gather teachers' recommendations on how AI-generated arguments can be effectively and responsibly integrated into debate activities to support students' development of academic speaking skills. Finally, through exploring both students' and teachers' perspectives, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the

pedagogical potential and challenges of incorporating artificial intelligence into debate-based learning in the EFL context.

4. Research Questions

The present study addresses the following research question:

Q1: How do AI-generated arguments influence EFL students' engagement, confidence, and performance in classroom debates, according to EFL students and teachers at Bouira University?

Q2: How do EFL students perceive the use of AI-generated arguments in academic debate activities?

Q3: What are EFL teachers' perceptions regarding the integration of AI-generated arguments in classroom debates?

Q4: How does the use of AI-generated content influence students' confidence in expressing ideas during debates, according to EFL students and teachers at University of Bouira?

In addition to the main questions, other sub questions were asked:

Sub. Q1: What are EFL students' perceptions of the benefits and risks of using AI in debate preparation and participation?

Sub. Q2: What pedagogical challenges and opportunities arise from using AI tools in EFL debate-based learning?

Sub. Q3: What benefits, concerns, and recommendations do teachers identify regarding the use of AI-generated arguments in classroom debates?

5. Research Hypotheses

Based on the research questions, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- **Main Hypotheses**

H1: Both EFL students and teachers at Bouira university perceive that AI-generated arguments positively influence EFL students' engagement, confidence, and performance in classroom debates at University of Bouira.

H2: EFL students hold generally positive perceptions toward the use of AI-generated arguments in academic debate activities.

H3: EFL teachers perceive the integration of AI-generated arguments in classroom debates as beneficial for improving students' participation, preparation, and argumentative performance.

- **Sub-Hypotheses**

Sub. H1: EFL students perceive AI tools as beneficial for classroom debates.

Sub. H2: EFL students believe that excessive use of AI may negatively affect.

Sub. H3: The integration of AI tools in EFL debate-based learning can create both pedagogical opportunities, such as enhanced engagement and language support, and pedagogical challenges.

6. Significance of the Study

This study holds both theoretical and pedagogical significance. Theoretically, it contributes to the growing body of literature on the integration of Artificial Intelligence in higher education, particularly in the field of EFL learning and teaching.

While previous research has largely focused on the role of AI tools in improving writing skills, relatively limited attention has been devoted to their impact on speaking, oral interaction, and debate-based learning. By examining the use of AI-generated arguments in classroom debates, this study expands current understanding of how AI can influence students' oral performance, confidence, engagement, and argumentative abilities. It also enriches discussions surrounding technology-enhanced language learning, learner autonomy, and the relationship between AI support and critical thinking in educational contexts.

Pedagogically, the findings may help instructors better understand how students use AI applications such as ChatGPT to prepare arguments, organise ideas, and participate in oral activities. In addition, exploring both students' and teachers' perceptions can support the development of balanced teaching practices that encourage engagement and participation while maintaining independent thinking, creativity, and authentic communication. The study

also highlights the importance of ethical and guided AI integration through classroom supervision, reflection tasks, and critical evaluation of AI-generated content.

2 Research Approach, Method, and Design

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach that combines both quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate the role of AI-generated arguments in EFL classroom debates. The quantitative component focused on collecting numerical data related to students' use of AI tools and their perceptions of their impact on engagement, confidence, motivation, and performance. The qualitative component aimed to explore teachers' perspectives, classroom experiences, and pedagogical concerns regarding AI integration. The study followed a convergent mixed-methods design in which both types of data were collected during the same phase, analyzed separately, and then integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

3 Research Tools

To collect the required data, two research instruments were used: a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire was administered to EFL students in order to examine their patterns of AI use, perceptions, and experiences with AI-generated arguments during classroom debates. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with EFL teachers to explore their views regarding the benefits, challenges, and pedagogical implications of AI integration in debate activities. The combination of these tools enabled the researcher to collect both quantitative and qualitative data.

4 Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of Algerian EFL students and teachers at the University of Bouira. The sample included 80 EFL students with different levels (License and Master) from the Department of English as well as 3 EFL teachers at the same department. Participants were selected to provide relevant information regarding the use of AI-generated arguments in classroom debates and their impact on students' engagement, confidence, and performance.

5 Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation is divided into two main chapters. Chapter One, entitled *Theoretical Framework*, presents a critical review of the literature related to the role of AI-generated

arguments in classroom debates within EFL contexts. It is organized into two main sections. The first section discusses classroom debates in language education, including their definitions, purposes, formats, benefits, and challenges. The second section examines the integration of Artificial Intelligence in education, with particular focus on AI-generated arguments and their role in supporting students' engagement, confidence, motivation, and performance in classroom debates.

Chapter Two, that represents the Practical part of the study, is entitled Methodology of the Research, is likewise divided into two sections. The first section presents the methodological framework adopted in the study, including the research approach and design, the population and sample, the research instruments, data collection procedures, as well as the ethical considerations. The second section focuses on data analysis and interpretation, where the quantitative and qualitative findings are analyzed and discussed in relation to the research objectives and questions. The chapter also addresses the limitations of the study and highlights the main pedagogical implications of the research findings.

Chapter One:
The Theoretical Framework

Introduction

This chapter presents a critical review of the literature related to the role of AI generated arguments in classroom debates within EFL classrooms. It is divided into two main sections. The first section discusses classroom debates in language education, including their definitions, purposes, formats, benefits, and challenges. The second section examines the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education, focusing on AI generated arguments in debates and their role in supporting students' engagement, confidence, motivation, and performance.

The chapter also explores key concepts such as critical thinking, engagement, and self-efficacy in relation to AI enhanced learning. By connecting traditional educational constructs with contemporary discussions on technology mediated pedagogy, this literature review provides a conceptual foundation for understanding how AI supported debates can promote active and student cantered learning in EFL contexts.

Section One:
Debate in EFL classrooms

1.1 Classroom Debates in Education

Classroom debates are widely recognized as one of the most effective pedagogical techniques for promoting active learning, critical thinking, and communicative competence. In language education contexts, debates are not treated as decorative activities but as cognitive demanding tasks that require students to construct, justify, and defend positions while responding critically to opposing viewpoints. This aligns with sociocultural and interactionist perspectives on learning, which emphasize that knowledge is co constructed through meaningful interaction and dialogue (Vygotsky, 1978; Long, 1996).

In EFL and ESL classrooms, debates create conditions in which students must use language not only for basic communication but also for reasoning, evaluating, and negotiating meaning. As a result, they provide a powerful context for developing higher order thinking skills alongside oral and written proficiency.

1.1.1 Definition of Classroom Debates

Debate has been defined by several theorists not merely as a speaking activity, but as a multidimensional communicative practice that promotes interaction, critical reasoning, and intellectual engagement. Rather than reducing debate to simple oral exchange, scholars emphasize its cognitive, social, and pedagogical functions within language learning contexts.

In this respect, Kennedy describes debate *as "an excellent way of developing students' critical thinking skills and oral communication abilities"* (Kennedy, 2007, p. 183). This perspective suggests that debate extends beyond improving speaking fluency to fostering analytical abilities such as evaluation, reasoning, and decision-making. Nevertheless, the simultaneous demand for critical thinking and accurate language production may create difficulties for learners with limited linguistic proficiency.

Extending this idea, Freeley and Steinberg define debate as *"the process of inquiry and advocacy, a way of arriving at a reasoned judgment on a proposition" (*Freeley & Steinberg, 2013, p. 6). Here, debate is presented as a process of intellectual negotiation in which learners are expected not only to express opinions but also to justify and defend them logically. Consequently, debate promotes higher-order thinking skills such as synthesis, evaluation, and argument construction.

From a communicative perspective, Jeremy Harmer considers debate an activity that encourages learners to use language "*spontaneously and purposefully in real communication"* (Harmer, 2007, p. 129). Unlike controlled speaking exercises, debate places students in unpredictable situations where they must react immediately to counterarguments and defend their positions under communicative pressure. This communicative spontaneity increases authenticity and interaction.

Likewise, Stephen Brookfield and Stephen Preskill argue that debate is central to critical pedagogy because it encourages learners to *"question assumptions, challenge perspectives, and construct meaning collaboratively"* (Brookfield & Preskill, 2005, p. 18). Debate therefore shifts students from passive recipients of information to active participants in knowledge construction.

This analytical perspective is further reinforced by Joe Bellon, who argues that debates are not simply speaking activities but mechanisms that transform learners into active constructors of knowledge through research, argument construction, and critical evaluation. In practice, students must clarify concepts, gather evidence, anticipate objections, and respond fluently in real time. As a result, debate moves learners beyond sentence-level language practice toward cohesion, coherence, and rhetorical organization at the discourse level.

The effectiveness of debate can also be understood within communicative language teaching frameworks. According to Douglas Brown, communicative activities are effective because they "*focus on authentic communication and meaningful interaction*" (Brown, 2007, p. 46). Debate therefore creates authentic communicative situations in which learners actively use language to persuade, explain, defend, and negotiate meaning rather than merely practice isolated structures. Similarly, Jack C. Richards argues that communicative tasks should require learners to "*negotiate meaning, use communication strategies, and interact meaningfully*" (Richards, 2006, p. 14). In classroom debates, learners are expected to organize arguments logically, respond spontaneously to opposing viewpoints, and maintain interaction under time pressure. Consequently, debate develops both communicative competence and interactional fluency.

The cognitive dimension of debate is further emphasized by David Nunan, who explains that meaningful communicative tasks encourage learners to "*process language cognitively while using it for meaningful purposes*" (Nunan, 2004, p. 13). Debate therefore

combines linguistic performance with analytical thinking, requiring learners to evaluate information, construct arguments, and make judgments while simultaneously communicating in the target language.

Finally, the social dimension of debate can be linked to Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective, which views learning as developing through social interaction and active engagement. Through debate, learners collaboratively construct knowledge by listening to counterarguments, defending viewpoints, and responding critically to others' perspectives. Debate thus contributes not only to communicative competence but also to cognitive and intellectual development.

Based on all what have been said, debate should not be viewed merely as a classroom speaking exercise. Rather, it represents a complex pedagogical practice that integrates communication, cognition, interaction, and critical inquiry. Additionally, debate can be classified as a cognitively demanding activity. Students must think about the topic critically, anticipate objections, and organize their speech in a coherent way. They must also use language strategically, selecting vocabulary and structures that strengthen persuasion. For EFL learners, this is valuable because it pushes language use beyond sentence-level practice and into authentic academic communication. Also debate can also be understood as a form of knowledge construction. Students do not simply repeat information but they process it, evaluate it, and reframe it in relation to opposing viewpoints. This makes debate especially useful in higher education, where learners are expected to justify ideas and demonstrate analytical thinking. This activity, therefore, supports both language development and intellectual growth.

1.1.2 Types of Classroom Debates

Debate activities within the classrooms can take different forms depending on learners' proficiency levels, classroom objectives, and interaction patterns. Each type of debate develops particular communicative, cognitive, and collaborative skills while encouraging students to use English meaningfully and spontaneously (Kennedy, 2007; Harmer, 2007).

One common type is the Traditional or Formal Debate, in which students are divided into affirmative and opposing teams. Each team presents arguments, counterarguments, and concluding statements following a structured format. This type of debate develops learners'

public speaking abilities, logical organization, and argumentative skills because students must defend positions systematically under time constraints (Freeley & Steinberg, 2013).

Another widely used format is the Role-Play Debate, where learners debate from assigned perspectives rather than personal opinions. Students may represent politicians, historical figures, organizations, or social groups. This type encourages creativity, empathy, and perspective-taking while also helping learners use language in context. Moreover, role-play debates reduce personal pressure because students speak through assigned identities rather than defending their own beliefs (Brookfield & Preskill, 2005).

Similarly, Panel Debates involve a small group of students discussing a topic in front of the class while the audience listens, asks questions, or evaluates arguments. This format creates a more interactive and less rigid environment than formal debates. It also encourages spontaneous communication and active listening skills (Kennedy, 2007).

Another communicative format is the Fishbowl Debate, where a small group debates in an inner circle while the remaining students observe from an outer circle. Observers may later join the discussion or provide feedback. This type promotes reflective learning because students analyze both the content and the quality of interaction during the debate process (Brookfield & Preskill, 2005).

In addition, teachers often use Think–Pair–Share Debates**,** especially with lower-level learners. Students first think individually about a topic, then discuss ideas with a partner before sharing arguments with the whole class. This gradual progression reduces speaking anxiety and gives learners time to organize ideas before public participation (Richards, 2006).

A more flexible format is **the** Open Classroom Debate, which allows students to participate freely without strict formal procedures. Learners express opinions, agree or disagree with peers, and interact spontaneously during classroom discussions. Although less structured, this format increases participation and communicative fluency because students focus more on interaction than formal rules (Brown, 2007).

Recently, technology-supported forms of debate have also emerged in EFL classrooms. AI-assisted debates, online debates, and virtual discussion platforms allow learners to prepare arguments, receive feedback, and participate in digital communicative environments. These modern forms may increase confidence and participation by giving students additional

preparation and linguistic support before speaking activities (Derin et al., 2026; Bui Thi Thu Giang et al., 2025).

All in all, the diversity of classroom debate formats allows teachers to adapt debate activities according to learners' needs, proficiency levels, and pedagogical objectives. Regardless of the format used, classroom debates generally aim to develop communicative competence, critical thinking, interactional skills, and learners' confidence in using English.

1.1.3 Purpose of Classroom Debates

The main purpose of classroom debates is to foster critical thinking, communication competence, and analytical reasoning among students (Kennedy, 2007). In EFL and ESL contexts, debates are employed to create opportunities for meaningful interaction, where students must listen carefully to others, interpret complex ideas, and produce appropriate responses in real time. This process is consistent with interactionist views of second language acquisition, which highlight the importance of negotiation of meaning, feedback, and opportunities for output in language development (Long, 1996). Debates also require students to research topics, anticipate counterarguments, and articulate their positions clearly, which promotes deeper engagement with the subject matter and encourages the development of conceptual understanding beyond rote memorization.

In addition, debates support student centred learning by shifting the focus from teacher led exposition to learner driven inquiry, collaborative argument construction, and peer interaction (Bellon, 2000). In EFL classrooms specifically, debates provide authentic contexts for using vocabulary and grammar beyond decontextualized drills, as students must draw on a wide range of lexical and grammatical resources to express nuanced positions and respond to their interlocutors (Snider & Schnurer, 2006; Alasmari, 2012). For instance, instead of simply filling in blanks or transforming sentences, students might need to use modal verbs, conditionals, and complex connectors like "although," "despite," or "on the other hand" to express subtle contrasts and concessions in their arguments. This situational demand pushes them to integrate grammatical knowledge into meaningful discourse rather than treating it as isolated rules.

1.2 Debate in EFL Classrooms

Debate has become an increasingly important pedagogical activity in EFL classrooms because it creates opportunities for meaningful communication and active learner

participation. Unlike traditional teacher-centered approaches that focus mainly on grammar and memorization, debate encourages students to use English authentically to express opinions, defend arguments, and interact spontaneously with others. As a result, debate is widely considered an effective strategy for developing communicative competence and critical thinking simultaneously.

From a communicative perspective, debate aligns closely with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasizes authentic interaction and meaningful language use. According to Douglas Brown, communicative activities are valuable because they "*focus on authentic communication and meaningful interaction*" (Brown, 2007, p. 46). Debate therefore provides learners with realistic communicative situations in which they must persuade, explain, justify opinions, and respond to counterarguments using the target language.

Similarly, Jack C. Richards argues that communicative tasks should require learners to "*negotiate meaning, use communication strategies, and interact meaningfully*" (Richards, 2006, p. 14). In debate activities, learners are expected to organize ideas logically, react spontaneously, and maintain interaction under communicative pressure. Consequently, debate contributes to the development of fluency, interactional competence, and speaking confidence.

Beyond communication, debate also plays an important cognitive role in EFL learning. Kennedy describes debate as "*an excellent way of developing students' critical thinking skills and oral communication abilities*" (Kennedy, 2007, p. 183). Through debate, learners must analyze information, evaluate evidence, construct arguments, and defend positions logically. Therefore, debate promotes higher-order thinking skills in addition to language proficiency.

Furthermore, debate reflects sociocultural views of learning, particularly those associated with Lev Vygotsky (1978), who emphasized the importance of social interaction in cognitive development. In classroom debates, students collaboratively construct knowledge by listening to opposing perspectives, responding critically, and negotiating meaning with peers. This interactive process helps learners develop both linguistic competence and intellectual engagement.

However, despite its educational benefits, debate in EFL classrooms may also present challenges. Many learners experience anxiety when speaking publicly, especially when they must defend arguments spontaneously in a foreign language. Students with lower proficiency levels may struggle to organize ideas quickly or respond effectively to counterarguments. In some contexts, cultural and educational traditions that emphasize teacher-centered instruction may also limit students' willingness to express disagreement openly.

Recently, the integration of artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT has begun to reshape debate practices in EFL classrooms. AI-generated support can help learners brainstorm arguments, improve vocabulary, organize ideas, and prepare responses before participation. Consequently, AI-assisted debate activities may reduce speaking anxiety and increase learners' confidence and motivation. Nevertheless, some researchers warn that excessive reliance on AI may weaken independent critical thinking and learner autonomy.

Yet, debate remains one of the most effective communicative activities in EFL classrooms because it integrates language use, critical thinking, interaction, and argumentation within authentic communicative contexts.

Debate versus simple discussion in EFL

In EFL classrooms, it is important to distinguish debate from simple discussion, as they differ in structure, purpose, and outcomes. A casual discussion is often relatively unstructured; students may share ideas, ask questions, or exchange opinions without a clear requirement to defend specific positions or provide evidence. In contrast, a debate is structured around a defined topic or proposition, with clear expectations that participants will take opposing stances, construct logical arguments, and respond systematically to counterarguments (Snider & Schnurer, 2006). This structure encourages students to move beyond expressing feelings ("I like this") and toward reasoning ("This is better because…") using language that is more formal and argumentative.

From a pedagogical perspective, this distinction matters because debate places higher cognitive demands on learners. Discussions might primarily develop fluency and simple interaction, whereas debates push students to coordinate content, language, and critical thinking simultaneously. For postgraduate EFL students, the emphasis on debate rather than general discussion can help bridge the gap between everyday conversation and academic

discourse. In this way, debate is not only a speaking activity but a genre of academic communication that prepares students for conference presentations, thesis defenses, and other forms of scholarly argumentation.

1.3 Benefits of Classroom Debates

The educational value of debate in EFL classrooms extends far beyond improving oral communication, as it creates a learning environment in which language use becomes intellectually purposeful, socially interactive, and cognitively demanding. Unlike traditional language activities that often emphasize mechanical accuracy and passive reception, debate requires learners to negotiate meaning, defend viewpoints, evaluate evidence, and respond spontaneously under communicative pressure. In this sense, debate transforms students from passive recipients of knowledge into active participants in meaning construction and classroom interaction.

Empirical studies and classroom-based research indicate that debates provide benefits across cognitive, linguistic, and affective dimensions (Bellon, 2000; Kennedy, 2007; Snider & Schnurer, 2006). One major contribution of debate lies in its ability to integrate language learning with critical inquiry. According to Kennedy (2007), debate develops oral communication and critical thinking simultaneously. However, its significance does not simply lie in encouraging students to speak more frequently, but rather in requiring them to justify opinions, evaluate opposing arguments, and construct logically coherent claims. Consequently, language becomes a tool for reasoning and intellectual negotiation rather than mere grammatical production.

Moreover, debate promotes learner-centred interaction by shifting responsibility from the teacher to the students themselves. Through researching topics, preparing arguments, and responding to counterarguments, learners become more actively involved in knowledge construction and classroom participation. From a sociocultural perspective, Vygotsky (1978) emphasizes that learning develops through social interaction and collaborative engagement. Debate therefore allows learners to co-construct understanding collectively instead of receiving information passively.

Another important benefit concerns intellectual flexibility and perspective-taking. Since learners are often required to defend positions that may differ from their personal beliefs,

debate exposes them to multiple perspectives and encourages reconsideration of assumptions. As a result, debate contributes not only to communicative competence but also to intercultural awareness and analytical thinking. Furthermore, debates strengthen learners' ability to process and organize information under time pressure. Students must evaluate evidence, identify relevant points, prioritize ideas, and formulate responses quickly during interaction. This cognitive complexity reflects what Nunan (2004) describes as communicative tasks that require learners to "process language cognitively while using it for meaningful purposes" (p. 4).

From a linguistic perspective, debates also support oral development by increasing opportunities for speaking, encouraging the use of richer vocabulary, and improving discourse organization and fluency (Alasmari, 2012; Snider & Schnurer, 2006). In addition, repeated participation in debates may gradually reduce speaking anxiety and strengthen learners' self-efficacy, especially when students receive constructive feedback and perceive improvement in their performance (Horwitz et al., 1986). Debate additionally promotes collaborative learning because students often prepare arguments collectively, exchange ideas, and support one another during interaction, which strengthens peer cooperation and social engagement (Bellon, 2000). For instance, Alasmari's (2012) study revealed that students who regularly participated in debates demonstrated not only improved fluency but also greater willingness to take communicative risks in class, suggesting that the psychological and social dimensions of debate are as significant as the linguistic ones.

We conclude that, debate can function as a multidimensional pedagogical practice that integrates communication, cognition, collaboration, and critical reflection. Also, its effectiveness in EFL classrooms appears precisely in its values in developing linguistic proficiency, analytical thinking, learner autonomy, interactional competence, and socio-emotional skills.

1.4 Challenges of Classroom Debates

Despite their pedagogical value, classroom debates present several challenges that may limit their effectiveness in EFL contexts if they are not carefully managed. One of the most frequently discussed difficulties is speaking anxiety, particularly learners' fear of making linguistic mistakes in front of peers. According to Elaine Horwitz et al. (1986), foreign language anxiety can negatively affect students' willingness to communicate and participate

orally. In debate situations, learners are required to respond spontaneously under public pressure, which may increase hesitation, silence, or avoidance, especially among less proficient students.

Another important challenge concerns unequal participation. Although debates are theoretically designed to promote interaction and democratic exchange, in practice classroom discussions are often dominated by a small number of confident learners, while quieter students contribute minimally (Bellon, 2000). Consequently, debate may unintentionally reproduce classroom power imbalances instead of encouraging equal participation.

In addition, the cognitive complexity of debate can itself become an obstacle for some learners. Debate requires students not only to speak in English but also to analyze information, organize arguments logically, evaluate counterarguments, and react immediately during interaction. As David Nunan (2004) explains, communicative tasks often demand simultaneous cognitive and linguistic processing. For lower-level learners, managing these multiple demands at the same time may create cognitive overload rather than productive interaction.

Topic selection also represents a significant challenge. Debates involving abstract, controversial, culturally sensitive, or highly technical topics may exceed students' linguistic resources or background knowledge (Snider & Schnurer, 2006). In such cases, learners may focus more on understanding the topic itself than on developing communicative performance.

Another limitation concerns preparation time and classroom management. Effective debates require substantial preparation from both teachers and students, including researching information, organizing arguments, assigning roles, and providing feedback. In tightly structured curricula, teachers may find it difficult to allocate sufficient classroom time for preparation and interaction. Furthermore, without proper guidance, debates may shift from analytical discussion into superficial argument exchange focused more on "winning" than on meaningful communication or critical reflection.

For these reasons, many researchers emphasize the importance of scaffolding strategies and supportive teaching practices. Teachers can reduce pressure and improve participation through brainstorming sessions, guided preparation, collaborative group work, role assignments, and gradual speaking activities before formal debates. Such pedagogical support

helps learners manage the linguistic, cognitive, and emotional demands of debate more effectively while creating a more balanced and inclusive classroom environment.

Section Two:
The Use of AI in Education

1.5 The Use of AI in Education

In recent years, Artificial Intelligence has become an increasingly visible presence in educational institutions, transforming the way students access information, practice skills, and receive feedback. In language learning contexts, AI based tools are particularly attractive because they can support personalized practice, immediate feedback, and interactive communication. These affordances are especially relevant in EFL classrooms, where students often need more opportunities for speaking and writing practice than can be provided in face to face settings alone. However, the integration of AI into teaching requires careful consideration of both its potential benefits and its limitations, particularly in terms of equity, accuracy, and the development of critical thinking.

1.5.1 Definitions of Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as one of the most transformative developments in contemporary education, particularly within language learning environments. Although definitions of AI vary across disciplines, most scholars agree that AI refers to computational systems capable of performing tasks traditionally associated with human intelligence, including reasoning, decision making, learning, pattern recognition, and natural language processing. Stuart Russell and Peter Norvig (2021) define AI as the design of intelligent agents capable of perceiving their environment and taking actions that maximize the likelihood of achieving specific goals. This definition emphasizes the functional and problem-solving dimension of AI, portraying intelligent systems as adaptive technologies that simulate aspects of human cognition.

However, previous studies also suggest that AI should not be understood merely as a technical innovation but also as a sociocultural and educational phenomenon that reshapes the ways knowledge is produced, accessed, and evaluated. Wayne Holmes et al. (2019) conceptualize AI in education as a set of computational tools designed to support teaching, learning, assessment, and educational decision making. Their definition moves beyond purely technical descriptions by emphasizing the pedagogical role of AI systems in facilitating personalized and data-driven learning experiences. Similarly, Rose Luckin et al. (2016) argue that AI should be viewed as an augmentation technology that extends human educational capacities rather than replacing them.

In language education specifically, AI applications have expanded rapidly due to developments in natural language processing and generative technologies. AI-driven tools are now widely used for grammar correction, vocabulary development, pronunciation training, automated writing feedback, and simulated conversational practice. These systems provide learners with opportunities for immediate feedback and individualized practice that may not always be possible in overcrowded classrooms or resource-limited educational contexts. According to Luckin et al. (2016), AI technologies can increase learner autonomy by enabling students to practice language skills independently and at their own pace.

Moreover, generative AI tools such as large language models have introduced a new dimension to language learning by producing essays, arguments, summaries, and dialogue in response to prompts. From one perspective, these tools may enhance idea generation, reduce linguistic anxiety, and support students during cognitively demanding tasks such as academic writing or classroom debate preparation. AI-generated content can therefore function as a form of cognitive and linguistic scaffolding, helping learners structure their thoughts and access language resources more efficiently.

1.5.2 AI-Powered Technologies and Applications in EFL Learning

The rapid expansion of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies has significantly transformed the landscape of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education. In recent years, a growing variety of AI-powered tools have been introduced into language learning environments, ranging from intelligent tutoring systems and adaptive learning platforms to generative AI applications and automated assessment technologies. These developments reflect a broader shift toward digitally mediated and personalized learning experiences in which AI increasingly supports both teachers and learners in managing linguistic and cognitive tasks.

Among the most influential developments in recent years is the emergence of generative AI systems, particularly large language models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT and similar conversational platforms. These systems are designed to generate human-like responses based on user prompts, enabling learners to interact with AI in dynamic and flexible ways. According to Wayne Holmes et al. (2019), generative AI tools have the capacity to support idea generation, content creation, and interactive learning by producing coherent texts, explanations, and simulated dialogues. In EFL contexts, these tools are increasingly used to

assist students with brainstorming, essay drafting, vocabulary expansion, and oral practice. Learners can experiment with different writing styles, explore alternative sentence structures, and receive immediate responses that encourage active engagement with language production.

From a pedagogical perspective, generative AI tools can function as cognitive and linguistic scaffolds that facilitate learners' participation in communicative tasks. For example, students who struggle to initiate writing tasks or organize arguments may use AI-generated suggestions as starting points for further development. Similarly, conversational AI can simulate authentic interactional situations that provide learners with additional opportunities for practicing English beyond classroom time.

Additionally, recent studies conducted in Algerian higher education demonstrate that Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools have become increasingly integrated into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning practices. A study by Loubna Sebbah (2025) investigating Algerian EFL students' familiarity and attitudes toward generative AI revealed that students were widely familiar with AI-powered applications, particularly chatbots and generative tools such as ChatGPT, which they used for academic writing, idea generation, language support, and task completion. Similarly, Oussama Boukhelkhal (2025), in a study conducted at the University of Medea, found that ChatGPT was the most frequently used AI tool among Algerian EFL students, particularly for writing assistance, grammar correction, and vocabulary development. These findings suggest that AI tools are no longer marginal technologies in Algerian universities but are gradually becoming part of students' everyday academic practices. At the same time, these studies also reveal concerns regarding overreliance on AI and its possible effects on learners' creativity, autonomy, and critical thinking abilities.

Another important category of AI technologies in EFL learning is adaptive learning platforms. These systems use data analytics and machine learning algorithms to personalize educational content according to learners' individual performance, progress, and difficulties. Rose Luckin et al. (2016) explain that adaptive systems can modify the level of difficulty, recommend specific exercises, and provide tailored feedback based on students' learning patterns. In language learning environments, such platforms may suggest vocabulary activities, grammar tasks, pronunciation exercises, or listening materials that correspond to learners' proficiency levels and identified weaknesses.

1.5.3 Advantages of Artificial Intelligence in EFL Classrooms

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms has generated significant interest among researchers and educators due to its potential to enhance language learning processes. Previous studies suggest that AI technologies can support learners cognitively, linguistically, and affectively by providing personalized instruction, immediate feedback, increased learning autonomy, and expanded opportunities for interaction.

One of the most frequently cited advantages of AI in EFL classrooms is personalization. Traditional language instruction often applies the same materials and pace to all learners despite differences in proficiency, motivation, and learning needs. AI-powered adaptive learning systems, however, can analyze learners' performance and adjust instructional content accordingly. According to Rose Luckin et al. (2016), AI technologies can tailor exercises, vocabulary tasks, and feedback to individual students, thereby creating more personalized learning experiences. This personalization is particularly beneficial in EFL contexts where classrooms are often heterogeneous and teachers may struggle to address individual differences effectively. By adapting to learners' strengths and weaknesses, AI systems may increase both learning efficiency and student motivation.

Another major advantage of AI in language learning is the provision of immediate and continuous feedback. In conventional classrooms, feedback is often delayed due to time limitations and large class sizes. AI-based applications, however, can instantly analyze written or spoken language and provide corrections related to grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and coherence. Wayne Holmes et al. (2019) argue that immediate feedback enhances learning because it allows students to identify and correct errors while actively engaged in the task. In writing instruction, for example, AI tools may help learners notice recurring grammatical problems or organizational weaknesses more consistently than occasional teacher correction alone. Similarly, pronunciation software can provide repetitive practice opportunities that are difficult to achieve within limited classroom time.

AI also contributes significantly to learner autonomy and independent learning. In many EFL settings, students have limited exposure to English outside the classroom, reducing opportunities for authentic practice. AI-driven tools such as conversational chatbots, intelligent tutoring systems, and language-learning applications enable learners to practice

English independently at any time and place. These technologies encourage self-paced learning and allow students to revisit explanations or exercises according to their own needs. From a pedagogical perspective, this aligns with learner-centered approaches that emphasize active participation and self-regulation. Luckin et al. (2016) note that AI can empower learners by giving them greater control over their educational experiences and by promoting more individualized learning pathways.

Furthermore, AI technologies can reduce language anxiety and create safer learning environments for students who fear making mistakes in front of peers or teachers. Communicating with AI systems may feel less intimidating than participating in face-to-face classroom interaction, especially for shy or low-proficiency learners. Conversational AI tools can therefore encourage students to practice speaking and writing more frequently without the social pressure often associated with classroom participation. In this sense, AI may contribute positively to learners' confidence and willingness to communicate in English.

Another important advantage is the enhancement of critical thinking and creativity when AI is used appropriately. Generative AI tools such as ChatGPT can assist students in brainstorming ideas, exploring multiple perspectives, and organizing arguments for discussions, presentations, or debates. In EFL classrooms, these tools may serve as cognitive scaffolds that help learners engage in higher-order thinking tasks that might otherwise be linguistically overwhelming.

In addition, AI can increase accessibility and flexibility in education. Online AI-powered platforms allow students to continue learning beyond classroom boundaries, which is particularly valuable in contexts with limited educational resources or large student populations. AI technologies may also support inclusive education by offering multimodal learning options, such as speech recognition, text-to-speech systems, and translation assistance for learners with diverse linguistic or educational needs. Holmes et al. (2019) emphasize that AI has the potential to democratize access to educational support by making learning resources more widely available and adaptable.

1.5.4 Limitations and Challenges of Artificial Intelligence in EFL Classrooms

Previous research highlights significant limitations and challenges that complicate its pedagogical use. Although AI technologies can support personalization, feedback, and learner

autonomy, they remain constrained by technical, ethical, cognitive, and pedagogical limitations.

One of the most significant limitations of AI in EFL classrooms is the lack of genuine human understanding and emotional intelligence. Language learning is not merely a mechanical process of acquiring grammar and vocabulary; it is also a social and emotional experience shaped by interaction, motivation, identity, and cultural context. Human teachers can recognize learners' emotions, adapt explanations according to classroom dynamics, and provide encouragement or empathy when students struggle. AI systems, however, operate primarily through pattern recognition and data processing rather than authentic understanding. Selwyn (2019) argues that educational AI often creates the illusion of intelligent interaction while lacking the human sensitivity necessary for meaningful pedagogical relationships. Similarly, Luckin et al. (2016) emphasize that AI should augment rather than replace teachers because education fundamentally involves human communication and emotional support. As a result, AI cannot fully substitute the motivational and interpersonal dimensions of language teaching.

Another important limitation concerns the accuracy and reliability of AI-generated content. Generative AI systems such as ChatGPT can produce fluent and convincing responses; however, these outputs are not always factually correct, contextually appropriate, or pedagogically suitable. AI models sometimes generate misleading information, fabricated references, or oversimplified explanations because they predict language patterns statistically rather than genuinely understanding content. According to Holmes et al. (2019), AI systems remain dependent on the quality and scope of their training data, which may limit the reliability of their responses in educational contexts. Likewise, Bender et al. (2021) warn that large language models may generate "hallucinations," meaning inaccurate or invented information presented in a highly convincing manner.

Closely related to this issue is the risk of learner dependency and reduced critical thinking. Previous studies warn that overreliance on AI tools may weaken students' ability to think independently, solve problems creatively, and develop authentic language production skills. When learners depend excessively on AI-generated essays, arguments, or translations, they may engage less actively in the cognitive processes necessary for language acquisition. Holmes et al. (2019) emphasize that AI should support rather than replace learners' intellectual effort, while Kasneci et al. (2023) argue that excessive dependence on generative

AI may negatively affect students' analytical reasoning and originality. This issue is particularly concerning in academic writing and debate contexts, where critical thinking, argument construction, and creativity are central educational objectives. Consequently, uncritical use of AI may encourage passive learning behaviors rather than reflective and communicative engagement.

Another major challenge involves algorithmic bias and cultural limitations. AI systems are trained on large datasets that often reflect dominant linguistic, cultural, and ideological perspectives. As Selwyn (2019) explains, AI technologies are not neutral because the data and algorithms underlying them are shaped by human assumptions and social inequalities. Similarly, Noble (2018) demonstrates that algorithmic systems can reproduce and reinforce existing biases and forms of exclusion. Therefore, scholars emphasize the need for culturally responsive and critically informed uses of AI in education.

Privacy and data security also constitute important limitations of AI integration in educational settings. Many AI-powered educational platforms collect extensive learner data, including writing samples, performance records, interaction histories, and behavioral patterns. Although this data enables personalized learning experiences, it simultaneously raises ethical concerns regarding surveillance, consent, and the protection of students' personal information. Holmes et al. (2019) argue that the increasing dependence on educational data analytics requires stronger ethical and regulatory frameworks to ensure responsible AI practices. Likewise, Williamson and Eynon (2020) warn that educational technologies may normalize forms of digital surveillance in classrooms by continuously monitoring learner behavior. Consequently, the growing use of AI in education raises critical questions about transparency, ownership, and ethical data management.

In addition, unequal access to technological resources creates another significant challenge, particularly in developing educational contexts. Effective use of AI often depends on stable internet access, updated digital devices, and adequate technological literacy. However, many students and institutions experience infrastructural limitations that restrict access to advanced educational technologies. According to UNESCO (2021), digital inequality remains one of the greatest barriers to equitable technology integration in education globally. In many EFL contexts, limited institutional resources and insufficient teacher training further complicate the effective pedagogical use of AI. As a result, AI integration

may unintentionally deepen existing educational inequalities by privileging learners who possess greater technological and economic resources.

Another limitation concerns the reduction of authentic human interaction in language learning environments. Language acquisition is fundamentally communicative and socially constructed through interaction with teachers and peers. Excessive reliance on AI-mediated learning may reduce opportunities for spontaneous classroom discussion, collaborative problem solving, and interpersonal communication. Although conversational AI can simulate interaction, these exchanges remain fundamentally artificial because they lack genuine reciprocity and emotional engagement. Luckin et al. (2016) note that AI technologies should enhance human teaching rather than isolate learners within technologically mediated environments. Similarly, Warschauer and Kern (2000) emphasize that meaningful language learning emerges through authentic social interaction rather than purely technological exposure. Therefore, maintaining a balance between digital support and human communication remains essential in EFL education.

Furthermore, AI assessment systems also present important pedagogical limitations. Automated feedback tools may effectively identify grammatical or structural errors, but they often struggle to evaluate creativity, rhetorical effectiveness, intercultural appropriateness, humor, or nuanced argumentation. Human communication is highly contextual, and many dimensions of language use cannot easily be quantified algorithmically. According to Deane (2013), automated scoring systems tend to prioritize measurable linguistic features over deeper aspects of meaning and communicative effectiveness. Similarly, Selwyn (2019) argues that AI-based educational evaluation may oversimplify complex learning processes by reducing them to quantifiable metrics.

These limitations of AI demonstrate that educational technology is not inherently transformative or neutral; rather, its impact depends largely on how it is used, monitored, and critically evaluated (Selwyn, 2019; Holmes et al., 2019). Effective integration of AI therefore requires a balanced approach that combines technological innovation with human guidance, ethical awareness, and pedagogical responsibility. Rather than replacing teachers or traditional educational practices, AI should function as a supportive tool that enhances learning while preserving the fundamentally human dimensions of language education.

1.6 AI Generated Arguments

AI generated arguments are becoming increasingly central to discussions about how technology can scaffold higher order thinking in language classrooms. In the context of debates, they are no longer just gimmicks or shortcuts but resources that, when used thoughtfully, can support students' argumentation, language development, and confidence.

1.6.1 Definitions of AI Generated Arguments

AI generated arguments can be defined as structured claims, supporting evidence, and counterarguments produced by AI systems using natural language processing (NLP) and machine learning models (Holmes et al., 2019). These arguments are typically generated in response to a user prompt or debate topic and are organized into coherent paragraphs or bullet points. Unlike human generated arguments, which are shaped by personal experience, cultural context, and intentional reasoning, AI generated arguments are statistical reconstructions of patterns found in large training datasets. From a pedagogical standpoint, they can serve as templates or examples that show students how to structure an argument, what kinds of evidence to select, and how to anticipate and respond to counterarguments.

However, because AI does not possess genuine understanding or intentionality, its outputs must be critically evaluated by both students and teachers. For example, an AI might generate a plausible sounding argument about the impact of globalization on education without recognizing that certain empirical studies contradict it. In this sense, AI generated arguments are best viewed as starting points for discussion rather than final, unquestionable truths.

1.6.2 Generative AI and language models

Generative AI, such as large language models (LLMs) like ChatGPT, represents a specific type of Artificial Intelligence designed to produce human like text in response to prompts (Holmes et al., 2019). These models are trained on vast amounts of written text from books, articles, and websites, allowing them to recognize patterns in language and generate coherent sentences, paragraphs, and even short essays on a wide range of topics. In educational settings, generative AI tools are increasingly used to support brainstorming, writing, and explanation, as they can quickly produce ideas, rephrase text, or suggest alternative ways of expressing a point. For EFL students, this capacity can be especially useful when they struggle to find the right words or to organize their thoughts in a logical way.

However, it is important to recognize that generative AI does not truly "understand" what it produces; it operates statistically, predicting likely word sequences based on patterns in its training data. As a result, the text it generates may sometimes contain inaccuracies, simplified explanations, or culturally biased perspectives. In this sense, generative AI functions more like a powerful writing assistant than an expert tutor. For classroom debates, the usefulness of these tools lies in their ability to provide examples and starting points that students can then critique, adapt, and refine rather than simply accept as final answers.

1.6.3 Ethical issues in AI generated arguments

The use of AI generated arguments in classroom debates also raises several ethical concerns that educators and students must consider. One major issue is the risk of plagiarism or over reliance, where students present AI generated arguments as their own work or fail to acknowledge that the content originated from a machine (Selwyn, 2019). This not only undermines academic integrity but also weakens the development of independent thinking and personal voice. A second concern is the accuracy and bias of AI generated content; because these systems are trained on large datasets that may reflect social, cultural, or political biases, their outputs can reproduce stereotypes or questionable claims if used uncritically.

Furthermore, there is the question of dependence and creativity. If students rely too heavily on AI generated arguments, they may lose the habit of constructing their own positions from scratch, which can limit their originality and critical engagement with the topic (Holmes et al., 2019). To address these ethical issues, teachers can introduce clear guidelines about how AI is allowed to be used—for example, as a brainstorming tool or as a model for argument structure, but not as a substitute for independent reasoning. By encouraging students to reflect on the strengths and limitations of AI generated arguments, the classroom can become a space where technology supports, rather than replaces, responsible and critical scholarship.

1.6.4 Role of AI Generated Arguments in Debates

In debate activities, AI generated arguments can fulfill several important pedagogical roles. First, they can assist students in idea generation and structuring, especially when learners are unsure how to formulate a position or which evidence to use. By providing sample arguments for both sides of a resolution, AI can help students see the complexity of an issue and encourage them to go beyond simple "for and against" thinking (Holmes et al.,

2019). For instance, when debating the topic "AI will replace many teachers," AI might list several risks (e.g., loss of human interaction) and several benefits (e.g., personalized learning), prompting students to weigh these dimensions and refine their own stance.

Second, AI generated arguments can provide counterarguments, which are essential for developing strong critical thinking skills. By exposing students to well organized objections, AI encourages them to anticipate and prepare responses, thereby strengthening their ability to engage in dialogue rather than simply defend a fixed position (Kennedy, 2007). Third, AI can enhance vocabulary usage and discourse coherence, particularly for less confident speakers. For example, an AI might model the use of connectors such as "on the other hand," "nevertheless," or "from this perspective," which students can then adapt in their own speech and writing (Selwyn, 2019). In this way, AI generated arguments function as both conceptual scaffolds and linguistic models that support learners throughout the debate process.

1.6.5 Impact of AI Generated Arguments on EFL Students

Empirical research and emerging classroom based studies suggest that AI generated arguments can positively influence students' engagement, confidence, and performance in EFL classrooms (Luckin et al., 2016; Holmes et al., 2019; Selwyn, 2019). When students are provided with AI generated arguments as scaffolds, they often feel better prepared for debates and more willing to participate, which can reduce anxiety and increase their willingness to take risks in speaking. This scaffolding can also lower cognitive load, allowing learners to focus on higher level aspects of argumentation, such as coherence, persuasiveness, and interactional competence, rather than searching for basic vocabulary or sentence structures.

In addition, AI generated arguments can help build self-confidence by providing concrete examples of how to express complex ideas in English, which is particularly beneficial for hesitant or lower proficiency speakers (Bandura, 1997). For example, a student who struggles with connecting ideas logically might learn from an AI generated paragraph that uses clear transitions and topic sentences. At the same time, there are important drawbacks. Over reliance on AI generated arguments may reduce opportunities for independent critical thinking, as students may simply reproduce the arguments they receive without evaluating their quality or relevance (Bellon, 2000; Selwyn, 2019). There are also concerns about originality and creativity, as heavily scaffolded arguments may limit students' opportunities to develop their own distinctive perspectives and rhetorical styles. Therefore,

the most effective use of AI generated arguments in debates appears to be strategic and temporary scaffolding, gradually withdrawn as students gain confidence and competence.

1.7 Student Engagement and Academic Performance in EFL Classrooms

Student engagement and academic performance are widely recognized as central factors influencing success in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. In contemporary educational research, engagement is generally understood as the degree of learners' active participation, emotional involvement, cognitive investment, and behavioural commitment in classroom activities. Academic performance, on the other hand, refers to the measurable outcomes of learning, including language proficiency, achievement scores, communicative competence, and the successful completion of academic tasks. Previous studies suggest that these two dimensions are closely interconnected, as highly engaged learners tend to demonstrate stronger academic achievement and greater language development over time.

Scholars conceptualize student engagement as a multidimensional construct rather than a single observable behaviour. According to Fredricks Jennifer, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004), engagement includes three major dimensions: behavioral engagement, cognitive engagement, and emotional engagement. Behavioral engagement refers to learners' participation in classroom tasks, attendance, effort, and persistence. Cognitive engagement involves deeper mental investment in learning processes such as critical thinking, problem solving, and self-regulation. Emotional engagement concerns learners' affective responses to learning, including interest, enjoyment, motivation, and sense of belonging. In EFL classrooms, these dimensions are particularly significant because language learning requires continuous interaction, sustained motivation, and active communicative participation.

From a sociocultural perspective, engagement is not solely an individual characteristic but also a product of classroom interaction and pedagogical design. Lev Vygotsky (1978) emphasizes that learning develops through social interaction and collaborative meaning-making. In language classrooms, learners become more engaged when they participate in authentic communicative activities that encourage negotiation of meaning, cooperation, and active use of language. Consequently, classroom practices such as debates, discussions, collaborative tasks, and problem-solving activities are often associated with higher levels of learner engagement because they position students as active participants rather than passive recipients of knowledge.

Research in EFL education consistently demonstrates a positive relationship between engagement and academic performance. According to John Hattie (2009), students who are actively engaged in learning activities generally achieve better educational outcomes because engagement enhances attention, persistence, and cognitive processing. In EFL contexts, engaged learners tend to participate more frequently in communicative activities, practice language skills more consistently, and demonstrate greater willingness to interact in English. This increased participation contributes to vocabulary acquisition, fluency development, and communicative competence. Similarly, Skinner and Belmont (1993) argue that engaged students are more likely to develop resilience and maintain effort even when confronted with challenging learning tasks.

Academic performance in EFL classrooms is similarly influenced by multiple interconnected factors, including engagement, motivation, teaching quality, learning environment, and access to resources. Performance is often measured through grades, language proficiency tests, speaking fluency, writing quality, and classroom participation. However, many scholars argue that academic performance should not be reduced solely to examination results because language learning also involves communicative competence, intercultural awareness, and the ability to use language meaningfully in real contexts. According to Canale and Swain (1980), communicative competence includes grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competencies, all of which contribute to successful language performance.

Moreover, classroom climate and teacher support strongly influence both engagement and performance. Positive teacher-student relationships, constructive feedback, and supportive learning environments encourage learners to participate more actively and take linguistic risks. Skinner and Belmont (1993) emphasize that supportive instructional contexts increase students' sense of competence and autonomy, which in turn enhances engagement and achievement. In contrast, highly controlling or anxiety-inducing classrooms may discourage participation and negatively affect language development.

Student engagement and academic performance are deeply interconnected dimensions of successful EFL learning. Engagement enhances participation, motivation, critical thinking, and communicative practice, all of which contribute positively to academic achievement. At the same time, meaningful academic success depends not only on cognitive ability but also on supportive pedagogy, interaction, motivation, and learner autonomy. Consequently, effective

EFL instruction requires teaching practices that foster active engagement, collaborative learning, and authentic language use while addressing learners' emotional and cognitive needs.

1.8 The Use of AI in Promoting Students' Engagement and Performance in Classroom Debates

Debate activities are cognitively demanding because they require learners to generate ideas, organize arguments logically, respond spontaneously to opposing viewpoints, and use persuasive language under communicative pressure. For many EFL learners, especially those with limited linguistic proficiency or low confidence, these simultaneous demands may create cognitive overload that hinders active participation. In this regard, AI-generated arguments can function as pedagogical scaffolds that support learners during the preparation and performance stages of classroom debates.

According to Wayne Holmes et al. (2019), AI tools can support learning by reducing unnecessary cognitive burden and providing adaptive assistance that helps learners engage more effectively with complex tasks. Similarly, Neil Selwyn (2019) argues that AI technologies may facilitate participation by offering immediate access to ideas, examples, and organizational support. In debate settings, AI-generated arguments can provide students with sample claims, supporting evidence, and argumentative structures that help them initiate and sustain discussion more confidently. By reducing the cognitive load associated with generating arguments entirely from scratch, AI allows learners to allocate more cognitive resources, respond critically to counterarguments, and maintaining coherence throughout the debate. This aligns with Sweller's (1988) Cognitive Load Theory, which suggests that learning becomes more effective when instructional support minimizes unnecessary mental overload.

Furthermore, AI-assisted debate preparation may contribute significantly to learner engagement. Student engagement in EFL classrooms is strongly linked to active participation, motivation, emotional involvement, and cognitive investment in learning tasks (Fredricks et al., 2004). Also, AI-generated arguments may reduce hesitation by giving students linguistic and conceptual starting points that increase their confidence and willingness to communicate.

Previous studies on debate pedagogy suggest that structured argumentative support positively affects students' performance and communicative abilities. Kathleen Kennedy (2007) found that debate activities enhance learners' critical thinking, oral communication skills, and classroom participation by encouraging active engagement with controversial issues. Similarly, Joe Bellon (2000) argues that debate-based instruction improves analytical reasoning, argument quality, and academic achievement because students are required to construct and defend positions systematically.

Finally, the educational effectiveness of AI depends largely on how it is integrated pedagogically. When used critically and collaboratively, AI can function as a valuable scaffold that enhances participation and communicative competence while still preserving the central goals of debate-based learning: critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and authentic language use.

1.9 EFL Students' Self-Confidence and Motivation

Self-confidence and motivation are widely recognized as fundamental psychological factors influencing success in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. In language classrooms, students are often required to express ideas, participate in discussions, and communicate in a language in which they may feel linguistically limited. Consequently, learners' beliefs about their abilities and their willingness to engage in learning activities significantly affect their participation, achievement, and overall language development. Previous studies consistently demonstrate that students with higher levels of self-confidence and motivation tend to participate more actively, take greater communicative risks, and achieve better academic outcomes in EFL contexts.

Moreover, self-confidence in language learning generally refers to learners' belief in their capacity to use the target language effectively and successfully. According to Albert Bandura (1997), self-efficacy beliefs strongly influence individuals' effort, persistence, and performance in challenging tasks. In EFL classrooms, learners who believe in their communicative abilities are more likely to participate in speaking activities, initiate conversations, and persist despite linguistic difficulties. Conversely, students with low self-confidence often avoid interaction due to fear of making mistakes, negative evaluation, or embarrassment.

Additionally, research in second language acquisition highlights the close relationship between self-confidence and communicative performance. Zoltán Dörnyei (2005) argues that learners' self-perceptions strongly affect their willingness to communicate and sustain effort in language learning tasks. Similarly, MacIntyre et al. (1998) explain that self-confidence directly influences learners' willingness to communicate in a second language, which is essential for developing fluency and communicative competence. Students who lack confidence may possess linguistic knowledge but still hesitate to use the language actively due to fear of failure or social judgment.

Besides, motivation is another critical factor shaping EFL learning outcomes. Gardner (1985) defines motivation as the combination of effort, desire, and positive attitudes toward learning a language. Motivated learners are generally more persistent, engaged, and willing to invest time and energy in language learning activities. In EFL contexts, motivation influences learners' participation in classroom interaction, independent study habits, and openness to communicative practice. Dörnyei (2005) further emphasizes that motivation is dynamic rather than fixed, meaning that classroom experiences, teaching methods, peer interaction, and perceived success can strengthen or weaken learners' motivation over time.

Previous studies often distinguish between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in language learning. Intrinsic motivation refers to engaging in learning for personal satisfaction, enjoyment, or intellectual curiosity, whereas extrinsic motivation is driven by external rewards such as grades, employment opportunities, or academic success (Deci & Ryan, 1985). In EFL classrooms, intrinsically motivated students tend to demonstrate stronger engagement because they view language learning as personally meaningful and enjoyable. Extrinsically motivated learners may also perform effectively, particularly when English proficiency is associated with professional advancement, academic achievement, or social mobility.

The relationship between self-confidence and motivation is highly interconnected. Learners who experience success in language tasks often develop stronger confidence, which in turn increases their motivation to continue learning. Similarly, motivated students are more likely to persist through challenges and gradually build confidence through practice and achievement. According to Bandura (1997), successful experiences strengthen self-efficacy beliefs, while repeated failure may reduce confidence and discourage participation.

In EFL classrooms, communicative activities such as debates, discussions, presentations, and collaborative tasks can significantly influence learners' confidence and motivation. Debate-based learning, for example, encourages students to express opinions, defend arguments, and engage actively in interaction. In this regard, Kennedy (2007) found that classroom debates improve students' oral communication skills, participation, and self-confidence by encouraging active engagement and public expression of ideas. Similarly, Bellon (2000) argues that debate activities foster intellectual empowerment and increase learners' confidence in presenting and defending viewpoints.

All in all, self-confidence and motivation are central determinants of successful EFL learning. These psychological factors influence learners' participation, communicative willingness, persistence, and academic performance. While supportive pedagogy, communicative activities, and AI-assisted learning environments may strengthen learners' confidence and motivation, effective language learning ultimately depends on balancing emotional support, cognitive challenge, and opportunities for authentic interaction.

1.10 The Use of AI in Promoting Students' Confidence and Motivation in Classroom Debates

Debate activities are intellectually and linguistically demanding because they require learners to express opinions spontaneously, defend arguments, respond to opposing viewpoints, and interact publicly in the target language. For many EFL learners, these demands may create anxiety, fear of making mistakes, and low self-confidence, which often limit participation and reduce communicative engagement. In this context, AI-powered tools can provide supportive learning environments that encourage learners to participate more confidently and actively in debate-based activities.

In debate contexts, students with low confidence may hesitate to speak due to fear of negative evaluation, grammatical mistakes, or limited vocabulary knowledge. AI-generated support can help reduce this anxiety by offering learners linguistic assistance, argumentative models, and preparation opportunities before engaging in live debates. Wayne Holmes et al. (2019) argue that AI systems can enhance learners' confidence by providing personalized feedback and adaptive support that help students feel more prepared and capable of participating in academic tasks.

One important way AI promotes confidence in classroom debates is through cognitive and linguistic scaffolding. Generative AI tools such as ChatGPT can provide students with sample arguments, useful vocabulary, rebuttal strategies, and organizational frameworks that guide debate preparation. Learners who struggle with idea generation or language organization may therefore feel less overwhelmed when approaching complex debate topics. This aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which emphasizes that learners develop higher-order skills more effectively when supported by mediational tools and scaffolding within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

Moreover, AI-assisted preparation can increase learners' willingness to communicate, which is closely connected to self-confidence in EFL learning. MacIntyre et al. (1998) explain that learners are more likely to participate in second-language communication when they feel psychologically secure and linguistically prepared. AI tools can create low-anxiety learning environments in which students experiment with ideas, rehearse arguments, and practice language privately before participating publicly in debates. Consequently, AI may help shy or lower-proficiency students participate more actively in oral classroom activities.

Additionally, AI tools can help sustain motivation by making debate preparation more accessible, interactive, and manageable. According to Zoltán Dörnyei (2005), learners' motivation increases when they experience success, autonomy, and meaningful participation in classroom tasks. also, AI-assisted support can contribute to these conditions by enabling students to prepare more effectively and experience greater success during debates. Moreover, AI technologies may enhance intrinsic motivation by increasing learners' sense of autonomy and control over their learning processes. Adaptive AI systems allow students to explore debate topics independently, generate ideas at their own pace, and receive immediate feedback tailored to their individual needs. This aligns with Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-Determination Theory, which emphasizes that autonomy, competence, and relatedness are central factors in sustaining motivation. When learners perceive themselves as capable contributors to classroom discussions, they are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward debate participation and language learning more generally.

Empirical studies also support the motivational benefits of debate-based and technology-assisted learning. Kathleen Kennedy (2007) found that classroom debates improve students' oral communication skills, participation, and self-confidence by encouraging active engagement with meaningful issues. Similarly, Bellon (2000) argues that debate activities

increase learners' intellectual involvement and motivation because students become active participants in constructing and defending knowledge. When AI-generated support is integrated effectively into debate preparation, these benefits may become more accessible to learners who would otherwise remain passive or hesitant participants.

To sum up, previous studies suggest that AI can significantly promote students' confidence and motivation in classroom debates by reducing anxiety, providing cognitive and linguistic support, increasing learner autonomy, and encouraging participation in communicative tasks. However, the educational effectiveness of AI depends largely on how it is integrated pedagogically. When used critically and collaboratively, AI can create supportive and motivating learning environments that empower EFL learners to participate more actively and confidently in classroom debates while still fostering independent reasoning and authentic language use.

1.11 Previous Studies and Related Literature

Several recent studies have investigated the role of AI-generated support, particularly ChatGPT, in enhancing EFL learners' confidence, classroom participation, speaking performance, and motivation. Overall, these studies report that AI-assisted interaction positively influences learners' communicative abilities, engagement, and willingness to participate in oral activities.

Some studies focused specifically on the impact of AI on speaking confidence and classroom participation. For instance, Alshehri (2026) found that Saudi EFL university students who engaged in ChatGPT-supported speaking activities demonstrated higher speaking proficiency, stronger classroom engagement, and more positive attitudes toward oral interaction compared to learners receiving traditional instruction. Likewise, Ningrum et al., (2026) reported that ChatGPT's voice conversation feature reduced learners' anxiety and created a low-pressure environment for speaking practice. Students felt more comfortable communicating in English because AI interaction minimized fear of negative evaluation from teachers and peers. In the same vein, (Salsabil et al., 2025) revealed that AI voice chat improved learners' fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and confidence during spoken interaction while also motivating them to participate more actively in classroom discussions.

Similarly, several studies highlighted the role of AI in improving speaking performance and willingness to communicate. Many other studies demonstrated that AI-mediated speaking interactions enhanced learners' speaking fluency, pronunciation, and willingness to communicate in English. They also appreciated AI interaction because it provided continuous speaking opportunities and immediate communicative support. Correspondingly, Talapngoen and Datugan (2026) found that AI-assisted feedback significantly improved EFL students' speaking performance, fluency, and motivation. Their participants further reported that ChatGPT reduced speaking anxiety and made classroom participation more interactive and engaging.

Other studies concentrated more specifically on debate activities, argumentation, and critical engagement. In this respect, (Giang et al., 2025) investigated the use of AI tools in enhancing argumentation skills during debate activities among EFL learners. The findings showed that AI-generated support helped students organize arguments logically, generate counterarguments, and participate more confidently in classroom debates. Similarly, (Derin et al., 2026) demonstrated that AI-assisted debate practices increased learners' critical engagement, willingness to communicate, and classroom interaction because AI provided linguistic support and facilitated argument formulation.

Likewise, other researchers examined students' broader perceptions of AI integration in EFL classrooms. (Jahan & Akbar, 2026) found that students viewed ChatGPT positively because it enhanced classroom participation, reduced speaking anxiety, and increased confidence during oral interaction. Participants also stated that AI helped them prepare responses, improve vocabulary, and engage more actively in discussions. Supporting these findings, (Mai, 2026) reported that AI-generated feedback and argument suggestions improved students' reasoning abilities and argumentative performance while increasing their confidence in presenting and defending ideas.

At a more analytical level, some studies explored the relationship between AI use, critical thinking, and communicative engagement. For example, (Liu et al., 2025), in their systematic review on generative AI in EFL education, concluded that AI tools positively influence learners' critical thinking and communicative engagement by encouraging analysis, argument generation, and confident interaction in debates and discussions. Similarly, (Yaiche, 2025), in the Algerian EFL context, found that ChatGPT encouraged students to participate more actively and explore multiple perspectives before expressing opinions. Nevertheless, the

study also warned that excessive dependence on AI might negatively affect independent critical thinking and learner autonomy.

Taken all these studies together, these studies indicate that AI-generated support can enhance EFL learners' confidence, motivation, participation, and speaking performance, particularly in communicative and debate-based activities. However, several researchers also emphasize the importance of balancing AI assistance with the development of learners' independent thinking and communicative autonomy.

Despite the growing number of studies examining AI use in EFL learning, several research gaps remain insufficiently addressed. Most previous studies have focused primarily on the effectiveness of AI in improving speaking fluency, vocabulary acquisition, writing skills, or general classroom participation. Comparatively less attention has been given to the specific role of AI-generated arguments in debate-based activities and how such support influences students' confidence, motivation, and argumentative performance simultaneously.

Moreover, although studies such as (Bui Thi Thu Giang et al., 2025) and (Derin et al., 2026) explored AI-assisted debates, they mainly concentrated on argumentation skills and critical engagement without examining learners' perceptions in depth. Similarly, research conducted by (Jahan & Akbar, 2026) and (Yaiche, 2025) investigated students' attitudes toward ChatGPT integration in EFL classrooms; however, these studies addressed AI use in general communicative contexts rather than specifically within classroom debates.

Another noticeable gap concerns the geographical and contextual dimension of the research. Most existing studies were conducted in Asian or international educational settings, while limited research has explored the Algerian EFL university context, particularly regarding how students use AI-generated arguments to support debate participation and reduce speaking anxiety. Furthermore, few studies combined both quantitative and qualitative perspectives to analyze not only the perceived benefits of AI but also the possible risks related to overdependence, reduced autonomy, or weakened critical thinking.

Therefore, the present study aims to address this gap by investigating how carefully designed AI supported debate tasks influence students' engagement, confidence, motivation, and performance in a postgraduate EFL classroom. In doing so, it contributes to both the debate based pedagogy and AI enhanced language learning literatures, offering practical

insights for teachers and researchers concerned with the effective integration of technology in higher education language teaching.

CHAPTER TWO
Methodology of the Research

Section One

Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological framework adopted to investigate the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI)-generated arguments in enhancing English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' engagement, confidence, and performance during classroom debates. It begins with a discussion of the research approach, method, and design, followed by a detailed description of the population and sample. Subsequently, the research instruments are presented, along with procedures for data collection and ethical considerations. The chapter then outlines the methods used for data analysis and interpretation. Finally, it provides a framework for discussing the findings and concludes with a reflection on the limitations of the study. Overall, this chapter establishes a solid foundation for the empirical investigation presented in the next chapter.

2.1 Research Approach, Methods, and Design

Establishing a clear and systematic methodology is essential to ensure the reliability, validity, and transparency of the research process. As Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018) emphasize, the credibility of any study is largely dependent on the rigor and coherence of its methodological design.

Therefore, to address the present research problem, this study adopts a mixed-methods approach that combines both quantitative and qualitative methods. This approach is particularly suitable for educational research, where complex phenomena often require multiple forms of data to be fully understood (Creswell, 2014).

First, the quantitative method identifies patterns in students' use of AI tools and their perceived effects, whereas the qualitative method explores teachers' perspectives and classroom dynamics in depth. This integration allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 2014). Accordingly, by combining numerical data with detailed experiential insights, the study ensures a comprehensive exploration of the role of AI-generated arguments in EFL classroom debates.

As for the research design, the study follows a convergent mixed-methods design, in which quantitative and qualitative data are collected during the same phase of the research process, analysed separately, and then interpreted together. According to John W. Creswell (2014), this design enables the researcher to compare and combine different forms of data to

develop a more complete understanding of the research problem. First, the quantitative component identifies patterns in students' use of AI tools and their perceived effects, whereas the qualitative component explores teachers' perspectives and classroom dynamics in depth. This integration allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Accordingly, by combining numerical data with detailed experiential insights, the study ensures a comprehensive exploration of the role of AI-generated arguments in EFL classroom debates.

2.2 Rationale for the Approach

The choice of a mixed-methods approach is justified by the complexity of the research problem. The impact of AI-generated arguments on students' engagement, confidence, and performance involves cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions, which cannot be fully captured through a single methodological perspective.

Quantitative data provide valuable insights into the extent to which students perceive AI tools as beneficial. However, such data do not explain the underlying reasons behind these perceptions. Qualitative data, on the other hand, offer deeper insights into participants' experiences and interpretations, thereby complementing the quantitative findings.

Furthermore, the mixed-methods approach facilitates triangulation, which involves the use of multiple data sources to cross-validate findings. As Creswell (2014) argues, triangulation strengthens the credibility of research outcomes by ensuring that conclusions are not based on a single source of evidence. In this study, students' questionnaire responses are compared and supported with teachers' interview data to identify convergences and divergences in perspectives. This comprehensive approach ensures that the findings are both credible and meaningful within the context of EFL education (Creswell, 2014).

2.3 Population and Sample

The target population of this study consists of EFL students and teachers at the University of Bouira. This context can be representative of Algerian EFL students. Further, a sample of 80 students was selected for the quantitative phase using convenience sampling. This method involves selecting participants based on their accessibility and availability, which is particularly practical in educational research settings (Etikan et al., 2016). Although

convenience sampling may limit the generalizability of the findings, it remains appropriate for exploratory studies.

To enhance the diversity of the sample, students from different academic levels were included. This ensures variability in terms of language proficiency, learning strategies, and familiarity with AI tools. Such diversity contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

In addition to this, for the qualitative phase, three EFL teachers, at the department of English at Bouira university, participated in the interview of this study. These teachers were chosen based on their experience in teaching EFL and supervising classroom debates. Their participation provides valuable insights into classroom practices and complements the data obtained from students.

2.4 Research Instruments

The selection of appropriate research instruments is essential for ensuring the validity and reliability of the study. Also, the use of multiple instruments allows for methodological triangulation and enhances the credibility of the findings (Fraenkel et al., 2019. Therefore, this present research opted for two main instruments for data collection: a students' questionnaire and teachers' semi-structured interviews. These instruments were carefully designed to align with the research objectives and to capture both quantitative and qualitative dimensions of the study. While the questionnaire provides measurable data on students' perceptions, the interviews offer in-depth insights into teachers' experiences and observations.

2.4.1 Students' Questionnaire

In the first stage of this study, a questionnaire was designed online in google forms and administered to 80 EFL students at Bouira university. This questionnaire was designed to assess students' perceptions of the impact of AI-generated arguments on their engagement, confidence, and performance during classroom debates. It consists mainly of Likert-scale items, which are widely used in educational research to measure attitudes and perceptions (Dörnyei, 2007).

The questionnaire focuses on three key variables: engagement, confidence, and performance. Each variable is represented by a set of statements that participants respond to using a five-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Examples of items include statements such as “AI-generated arguments help me participate more actively in debates” and “Using AI tools increases my confidence when speaking.” These items allow to quantify students’ experiences and identify general trends.

To ensure the quality of the instrument, a pilot study was conducted with a small group of students. Based on their feedback, necessary adjustments were made to improve clarity and reliability of the questionnaire.

2.4.2 Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire

Ensuring the validity and reliability of the questionnaire is essential for producing credible findings. Content validity was established by aligning the questionnaire items with the research objectives and relevant theoretical constructs (Fraenkel et al., 2019).

First, to ensure the validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by two teachers at the department of English at Bouira University to check whether the questions were clear, relevant, and appropriate for measuring the research topic. Their corrections and suggestions helped ensure that the questionnaire covered the intended content accurately.

Then, reliability was tested through a pilot study conducted before the main data collection phase. The pilot study involved 15 participants and aimed to evaluate the clarity, relevance, and effectiveness of the research instruments. Based on the participants’ responses, several modifications were made, including rephrasing unclear questions, improving the wording of certain items, and adding missing questions to ensure greater comprehensiveness and collect enough data to answer the research questions. This initial step helped strengthen the reliability and consistency of the instruments.

2.4.3 Teachers’ Semi-Structured Interviews

In the second stage of this study, Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five teachers to explore their perspectives on the use of AI-generated arguments in classroom debates. This method allows for flexibility and depth, enabling participants to elaborate on their experiences (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

The interview included open-ended questions related to AI integration, student engagement, and potential challenges. Teachers were encouraged to provide concrete examples from their teaching practice. Moreover, all interviews were conducted individually

were responses were collected with participants' consent. This ensures accuracy and facilitates the interpretation of qualitative data.

2.5 Data Collection Procedure and Setting

Data collection for the present study was conducted at the level of the Department of English at the University of Akli Mohand Oulhajd, Bouira (2025\2026). The process was carried out in two stages: questionnaire administration and teacher interviews.

First, the questionnaire was administered online and shared during regular class sessions with the help of EFL teachers if different levels, ensuring a high response rate. Anonymity was maintained to encourage honest responses (Cohen et al., 2018).

Interviews were conducted with the three teachers in a quiet setting in different dates, allowing for in-depth discussion. Each session lasted approximately 20 to 30 minutes with each teacher.

2.6 Data Analysis and Interpretation

Different methods were employed to analyze and interpret the collected data in line with the mixed-methods approach adopted in this study. Accordingly, both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques were utilized to ensure a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the research findings.

2.6.1 Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and mean scores (Creswell, 2014). These tools provide an overview of students' responses and help identify general trends in engagement, confidence, and performance.

2.6.2 Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis. This latter is a qualitative technique used to identify, organize, and interpret recurring ideas, patterns, or themes within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This process involved coding the data, identifying themes, and interpreting patterns related to AI use in classroom debates.

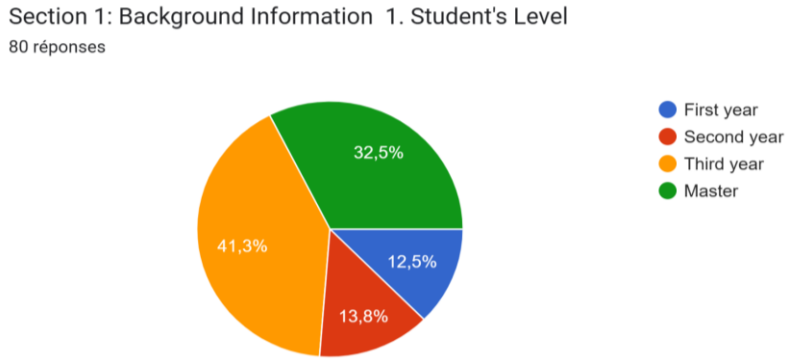
Section Two

2.7 Data Interpretation and Analysis

2.7.1 Findings of the Questionnaire

2.7.1.1 Section 1: Students' Academic Levels

Findings from the first section, related to students' academic levels, show that the majority of participants were Third-year students, accounting for 41.3% of the total sample. Master students followed with 32.5%, while Second-year students represented 13.8%. First-year students constituted the smallest percentage at 12.5%. The following pie chart represents this.

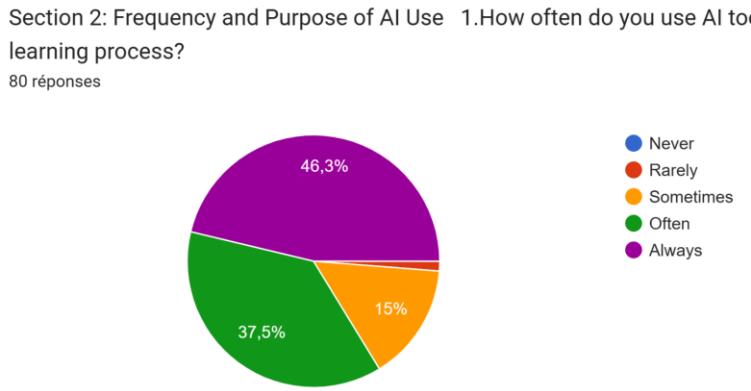


Graph 1: ***Students' Academic Levels***

Accordingly, these findings indicate that most respondents were advanced learners who already possess considerable academic and linguistic experience in EFL learning. Third-year and Master students are generally more exposed to classroom debates, research activities, and technology-based learning practices, which may explain their stronger engagement with AI tools. In contrast, lower participation from First-year students may reflect their limited experience with university learning environments and AI-assisted educational practices.

- **AI Use in the Learning Process**

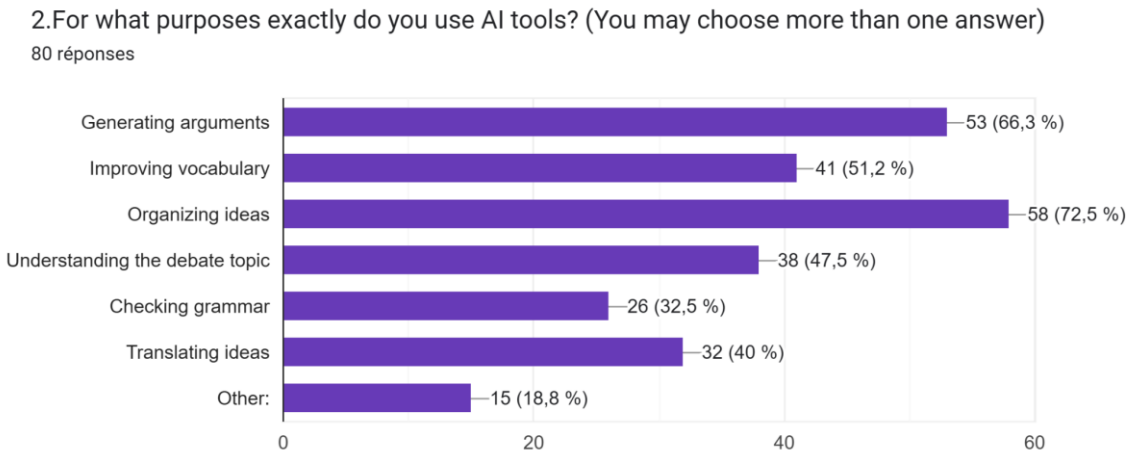
The second question of this section reveals that AI tools are widely used among students in their learning process. Nearly half of the participants (46.3%) reported that they always use AI tools, while 37.5% stated that they often use them. In comparison, 15% indicated that they sometimes use AI, whereas only a very small minority rarely or never use such tools.



Graph 2: ***Frequency of AI Use in the Learning Process***

These results demonstrate the growing integration of AI technologies into students' academic lives. The high percentages of "always" and "often" responses suggest that AI has become an essential support tool for many learners. Students appear to rely on AI for understanding lessons, organizing ideas, preparing arguments, improving vocabulary, and simplifying difficult concepts. This frequent use also reflects students' positive attitudes toward the accessibility and usefulness of AI in learning.

- **Purposes of using AI in Students' Learning Process**



Graph 3: ***Purposes of using AI in Students' Learning Process***

This graph illustrates the responses of second question aimed to identify the main purposes for which students use AI tools in their learning process and classroom participation. The results displayed in the graph reveal that the majority of students use AI tools primarily

for organizing ideas, which was selected by 72.5% (58 students). This high percentage indicates that students rely heavily on AI to structure their thoughts, arrange information logically, and prepare coherent responses before participating in classroom discussions and debates. This finding suggests that AI plays a significant cognitive support role in helping learners manage and present their ideas more effectively in English.

The second most frequent purpose was generating arguments, reported by 66.3% (53 students). This demonstrates that students frequently use AI tools to prepare arguments, brainstorm opinions, and explore different perspectives related to debate topics and classroom discussions. The result reflects the increasing role of AI in supporting critical thinking and argumentative skills in EFL contexts.

Improving vocabulary ranked third, with 51.2% (41 students) of the respondents selecting this option. This finding indicates that more than half of the participants use AI as a linguistic support tool to learn new vocabulary items and expressions. Since vocabulary knowledge is essential for effective communication and classroom interaction, this result suggests that AI contributes positively to students' lexical development and language proficiency.

Furthermore, 47.5% (38 students) reported using AI for understanding debate topics. This shows that AI tools help learners comprehend lesson content and unfamiliar subjects before participating in classroom activities. Students appear to use AI to simplify difficult concepts and gain background knowledge, which may facilitate active engagement during discussions.

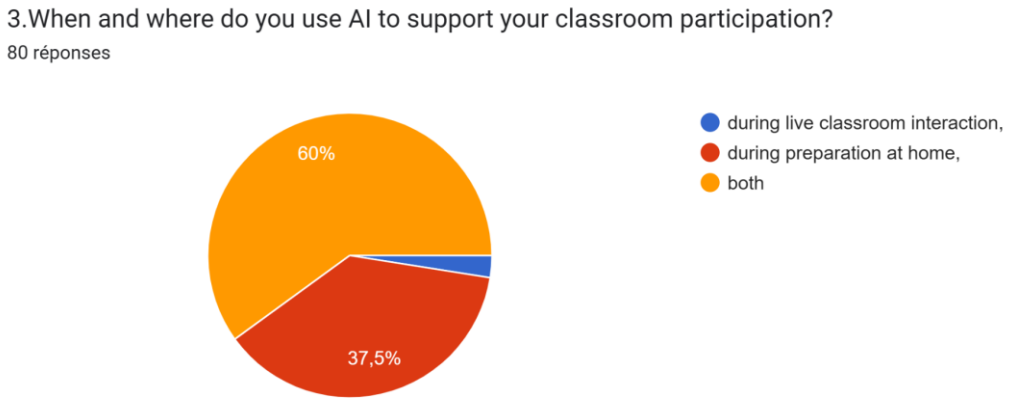
Similarly, 40% (32 students) indicated that they use AI for translating ideas. This finding reflects students' tendency to rely on AI tools when expressing their thoughts in English, especially when they encounter linguistic difficulties. Translation support therefore appears to help students communicate their ideas more confidently in EFL classrooms.

Checking grammar was selected by 32.5% (26 students), representing the lowest percentage among the major categories. This suggests that although grammar correction remains useful, students are more concerned with idea generation, comprehension, and communication than with grammatical accuracy when using AI tools.

Finally, 18.8% (15 students) selected the “Other” category, indicating that AI is also used for additional academic purposes not explicitly mentioned in the questionnaire, such as summarizing lessons, preparing assignments, or searching for extra information.

These findings demonstrate that students use AI tools mainly for cognitive and communicative purposes rather than solely for language correction. The results confirm that AI has become an important educational support tool that assists students in organizing ideas, generating arguments, understanding topics, and improving vocabulary, thereby facilitating classroom participation and engagement in EFL learning contexts.

2.7.1.2 Section2: Frequency and Use of AI in Classroom Discussions and Debates



Graph 4: ***The Use of AI in Classrooms (When and Where)***

This graph shows that the majority of students, representing 60% (48 students), use AI both during preparation at home and during live classroom interaction. This indicates that AI has become integrated into different stages of students’ learning processes, helping them prepare lessons and support participation during class activities.

In addition, 37.5% (30 students) reported using AI mainly during preparation at home. This suggests that many learners rely on AI to review lessons, organize ideas, and understand topics before attending class. Only a very small percentage of students use AI exclusively during live classroom interaction. This may indicate that students prefer using AI as a preparatory support tool rather than depending on it directly in class. Accordingly, the findings demonstrate that AI is widely used both before and during classroom activities,

reflecting its important role in supporting students' participation and engagement in EFL learning contexts.

Concerning how students use AI to learn responses in open ended questions reveal that AI is mainly used as a supportive learning tool to facilitate understanding, preparation, idea generation, and classroom participation. Most students reported using AI before class to prepare lessons, organize ideas, simplify difficult concepts, and improve their ability to participate in discussions and debates.

A large number of responses emphasized the role of AI in understanding lessons and simplifying difficult topics. For example, one student stated that AI helps "*to simplify what seems to be difficult*," while another explained: "*I use AI to understand difficult lessons and explain them in simple words.*" These responses indicate that students rely on AI to overcome comprehension difficulties and better understand classroom materials.

Another recurrent idea concerns generating and organizing ideas. Many participants mentioned using AI for brainstorming arguments and preparing responses before speaking in class. One student explained that AI helps to "*organize my thoughts into clear points*," whereas another stated: "*Brainstorm ideas quickly before speaking in class.*" Similarly, another participant mentioned "*Generating new ideas and arguments.*" This suggests that AI supports students cognitively by helping them structure and expand their ideas before classroom interaction.

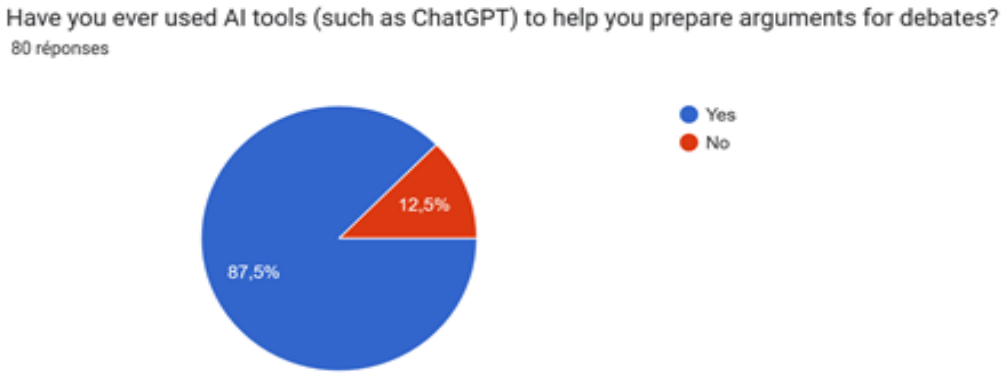
The findings also show that students use AI to improve their language skills, particularly vocabulary and expression. One participant reported using AI "*to learn academic vocabulary that I can use in the classroom,*" while another explained that "*AI suggests better words, synonyms, or expressions.*" This demonstrates that AI contributes to improving students' linguistic competence and confidence in communication. In addition, many students associated AI use with lesson preparation and confidence enhancement. For instance, one student stated: "*I prepare lessons before I attend classes,*" while another explained that "*Having prior ideas about the topic… helps me participate.*" These responses suggest that AI encourages students to feel more prepared and motivated to engage in classroom activities.

However, a few students expressed limited or cautious use of AI. One participant stated: "*I do not use AI to support my classroom participation,*" while another explained that AI

should be "*a support tool, not a replacement for your own thinking.*" This indicates that some students remain aware of the risks of overdependence on AI.

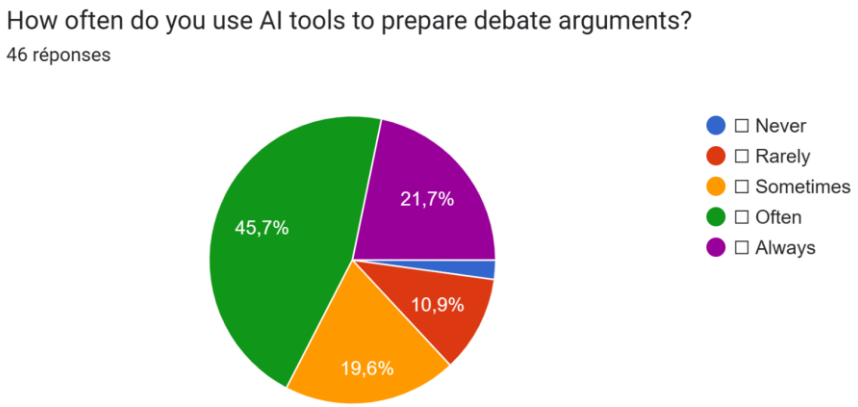
These findings demonstrate that students mainly use AI to simplify lessons, organize ideas, generate arguments, improve vocabulary, and prepare for classroom participation. The responses further suggest that AI positively contributes to students' confidence and engagement in EFL learning contexts.

Furthermore, the findings related to the use of AI tools in preparing arguments for debates reveal that the vast majority of participants rely on AI technologies for debate preparation. As illustrated in the pie chart below, 87.5% of respondents (70 students) answered "Yes," indicating that they use AI tools such as ChatGPT to help them prepare arguments for debates, whereas only 12.5% (10 students) reported that they do not use such tools. The following graph illustrates these data. Graph 5 below represents this.



Graph 5: ***Frequency of AI Use in the classroom debates and discussions***

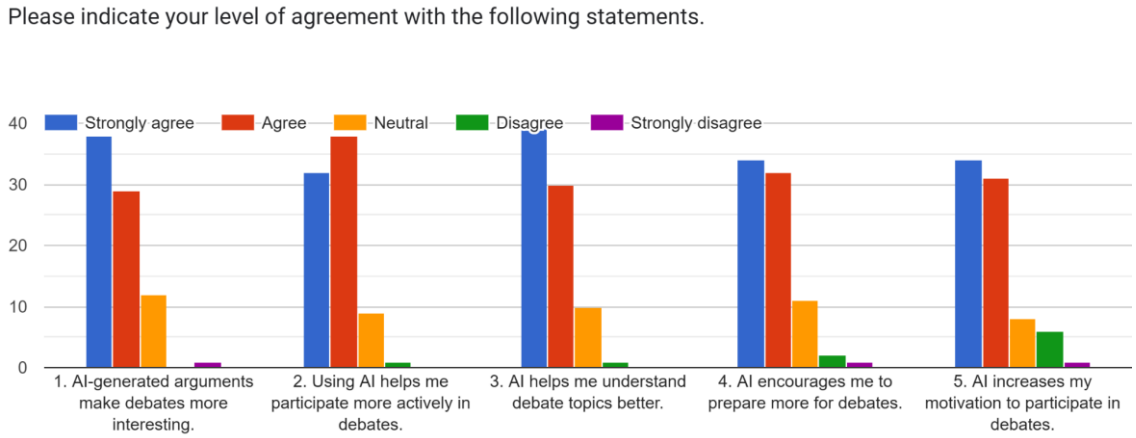
For the frequency of the use of AI tools, findings revealed that they are widely utilized by respondents when preparing for debates. Nearly half of the participants (**45.7%**) reported that they **often** use AI tools, while **21.7%** stated that they **always** use them, meaning that over two-thirds of the sample (**67.4%**) rely on AI heavily. In comparison, **19.6%** indicated that they **sometimes** use AI, whereas only a small minority **rarely** (**10.9%**) or **never** (**2.1%**) incorporate these tools into their preparation process. Graph 6 demonstrates these results.



Graph 6: ***Frequency of Using AI for Debate Arguments***

2.7.1.3 Section 3: Students' Engagement and confidence in Debates

The questionnaire also explored how AI affects students' engagement in debate activities. Students' answers show that AI generally boosts their motivation, readiness, and sense of involvement in oral tasks.



Graph 7 : Students' Perceptions on the Use of AI for Engagement in Debates

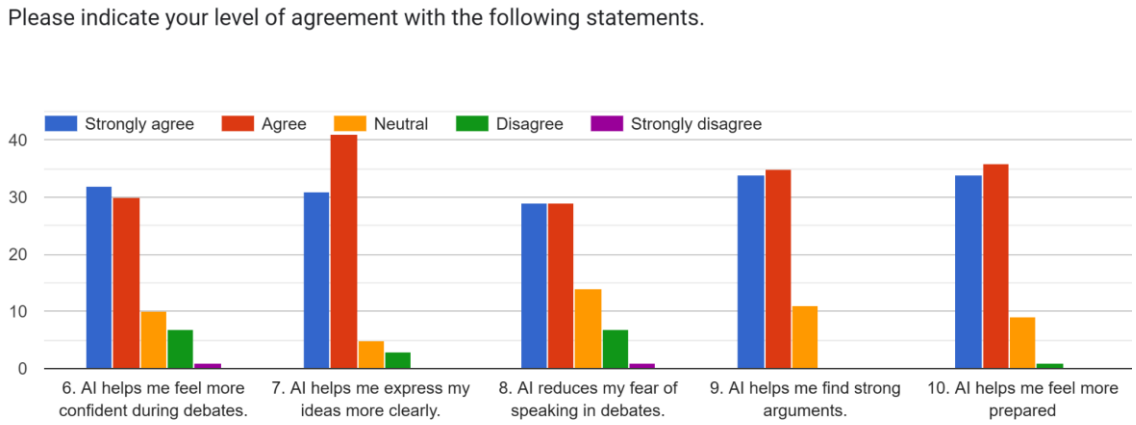
A large number of students reported that AI helps them engage more actively because it gives them "*prior ideas about the topic of the session,"* which makes them feel "*encouraged to share in the classroom."* Several learners said that AI *"helps [me] prepare lessons before I attend classes,"* and that this preparation "*helps me focus when the professor is explaining."* This matches the idea that preparation scaffolds engagement: when students know the topic

and have some arguments ready, they are more likely to listen carefully, anticipate questions, and volunteer.

Students also described AI as a tool that makes learning more dynamic and interesting. For example, they said that AI *"helps [me] practice speaking," "asks questions or simulates discussions," and "helps me correct and improve [my] answers."* One student wrote that "*AI helps me discover new information, organize my ideas, and to be fast understanding,"* which shows that AI is not only supporting language but also cognitive engagement. Other students mentioned that AI "*gives suggestions for counterarguments," "helps me anticipate probable topic inquiry," and "raises [my] self-confidence,"* which suggests that AI is helping them move beyond passive listening into more active, interactive participation.

All in all, this section indicates that AI strengthens behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement by making students feel more prepared, interested, and willing to participate in classroom debates.

A key theme that emerged was confidence. Students repeatedly reported that AI has increased their self-confidence in speaking and debating in English.



Graph 8 : Students' perception on the Role of AI in Classroom Debates

The findings presented in the graph reveal generally positive student attitudes toward the role of AI in supporting classroom participation and debates. Regarding the statement that AI "helps me feel more confident during debates," 40% (32 students) strongly agreed and 37.5% (30 students) agreed, whereas 12.5% (10 students) disagreed and 10% (8 students)

strongly disagreed. This suggests that most learners perceive AI as a tool that increases confidence and reduces hesitation during oral participation.

Similarly, the majority of respondents confirmed that AI "helps me express my ideas more clearly," with 38.8% (31 students) strongly agreeing and 50% (40 students) agreeing. In contrast, only 6.3% (5 students) disagreed and 5% (4 students) strongly disagreed. This indicates that students rely on AI to organize their thoughts and improve the clarity of their communication during classroom interaction.

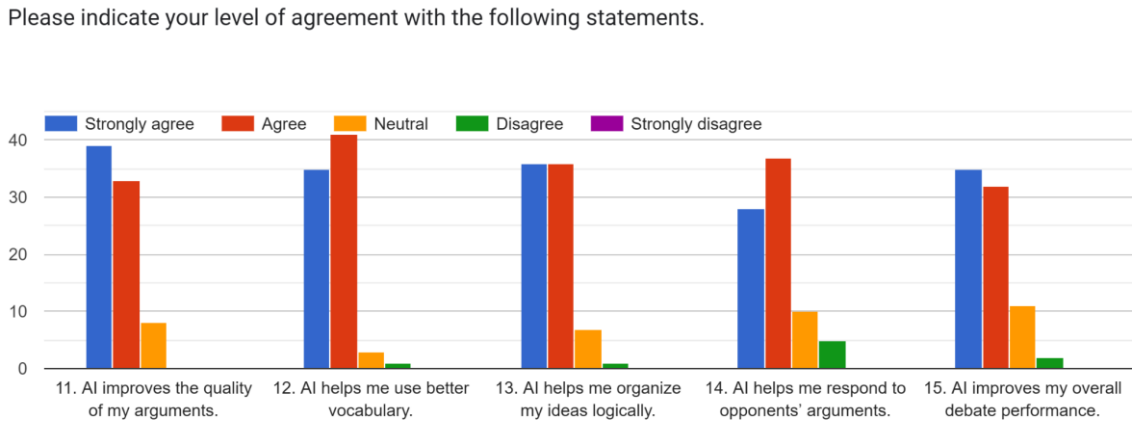
Concerning the statement that AI "reduces my fear of speaking in debates," 36.3% (29 students) strongly agreed and 36.3% (29 students) agreed. However, 12.5% (10 students) disagreed and 15% (12 students) strongly disagreed. This result implies that although AI helps many learners feel less anxious before speaking activities, its influence on reducing fear is not equally perceived by all students.

The graph also demonstrates strong agreement with the statement that AI "helps me find strong arguments," as 42.5% (34 students) strongly agreed and 43.8% (35 students) agreed, while only 7.5% (6 students) disagreed and 6.3% (5 students) strongly disagreed. This finding highlights students' dependence on AI for brainstorming ideas, generating arguments, and supporting opinions during debates.

Finally, most participants agreed that AI "helps me feel more prepared," including 42.5% (34 students) who strongly agreed and 45% (36 students) who agreed. By contrast, only 5% (4 students) disagreed and 7.5% (6 students) strongly disagreed. This suggests that AI plays an important role in lesson preparation and increases students' readiness to participate in classroom activities.

Based on these findings it can be concluded that students hold positive perceptions toward the use of AI in classroom participation. AI appears to enhance confidence, preparedness, idea organization, and argument generation. Nevertheless, the presence of some disagreement suggests that not all learners perceive AI as equally beneficial, possibly due to differences in learning preferences or concerns about overreliance on AI tools.

2.7.1.4 Section 4: Students' Performance in Debates



Graph 9 : Students' Perceptions of AI in Improving Debate and Argumentation Skills

The graph represents students' attitudes toward the role of AI in improving debate performance and argumentative skills. Regarding the statement that AI "improves the quality of my arguments," 48.8% (39 students) strongly agreed and 41.3% (33 students) agreed, while only 10% (8 students) remained neutral. However, no students expressed disagreement or strong disagreement. This indicates that students strongly perceive AI as an effective tool for strengthening and enriching their arguments during debates.

Similarly, most respondents agreed that AI "helps me use better vocabulary," with 43.8% (35 students) strongly agreeing and 51.3% (41 students) agreeing. Only 3.8% (3 students) selected neutral and 1.3% (1 student) disagreed. This finding suggests that AI contributes significantly to vocabulary enrichment and helps students use more appropriate and academic language during classroom interaction.

Concerning the statement that AI "helps me organize my ideas logically," 45% (36 students) strongly agreed and another 45% (36 students) agreed. In contrast, 8.8% (7 students) remained neutral and only 1.3% (1 student) disagreed. This demonstrates that students rely on AI to structure their ideas coherently, which facilitates clearer and more organized participation in debates.

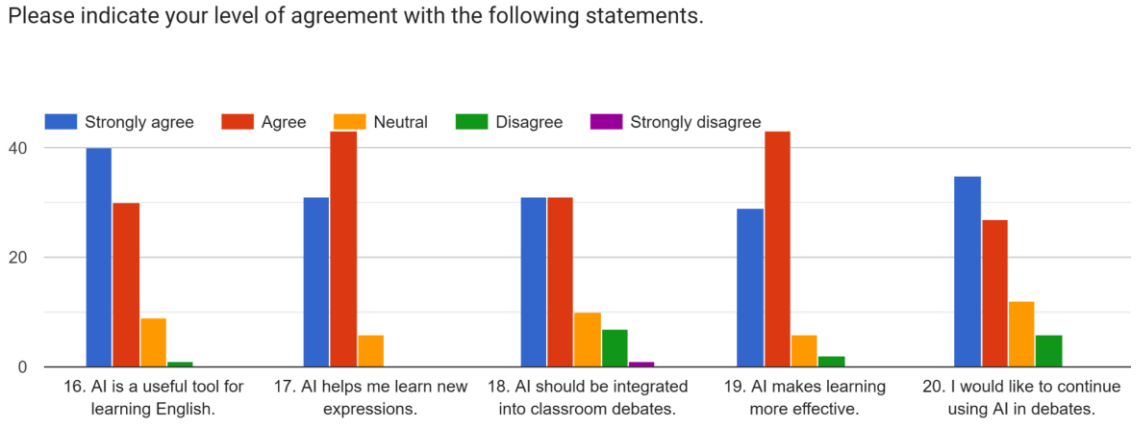
The graph also shows that 35% (28 students) strongly agreed and 46.3% (37 students) agreed that AI "helps me respond to opponents' arguments." Meanwhile, 12.5% (10 students) were neutral and 6.3% (5 students) disagreed. This suggests that AI supports students in

developing counterarguments and responding more effectively during classroom discussions, although some learners may still prefer relying on their own spontaneous thinking.

Finally, regarding the statement that AI "improves my overall debate performance," 43.8% (35 students) strongly agreed and 40% (32 students) agreed, whereas 13.8% (11 students) remained neutral and only 2.5% (2 students) disagreed. This indicates that most students perceive AI as positively influencing their general performance in classroom debates and discussions.

All in all, the findings demonstrate that students view AI as an important linguistic and cognitive support tool that enhances argument quality, vocabulary use, idea organization, and debate performance. However, the presence of some neutral and disagreeing responses suggests that the effectiveness of AI may vary according to students' learning styles and levels of dependence on technology.

2.7.1.5 Section 5: Students' Perceptions of AI Use in EFL Learning and Classroom debates



Graph 10 : Students' Attitudes toward the Use of AI in English Learning and Classroom Debates

The graph reveals highly positive student attitudes toward the educational use of AI in English learning and classroom debates. Regarding the statement that AI "is a useful tool for learning English," 50% (40 students) strongly agreed and 37.5% (30 students) agreed, while 11.3% (9 students) remained neutral. No students expressed disagreement or strong

disagreement. This indicates that students widely perceive AI as an effective support tool in EFL learning.

Similarly, most respondents agreed that AI "helps me learn new expressions," with 38.8% (31 students) strongly agreeing and 53.8% (43 students) agreeing. Only 7.5% (6 students) selected neutral responses. This finding suggests that students consider AI valuable for vocabulary enrichment and improving their communicative competence.

Concerning the statement that AI "should be integrated into classroom debates," 38.8% (31 students) strongly agreed and 38.8% (31 students) agreed. However, 12.5% (10 students) remained neutral, 8.8% (7 students) disagreed, and 1.3% (1 student) strongly disagreed. Although the majority support integrating AI into classroom activities, the presence of disagreement indicates that some students may have concerns regarding excessive dependence on technology during debates.

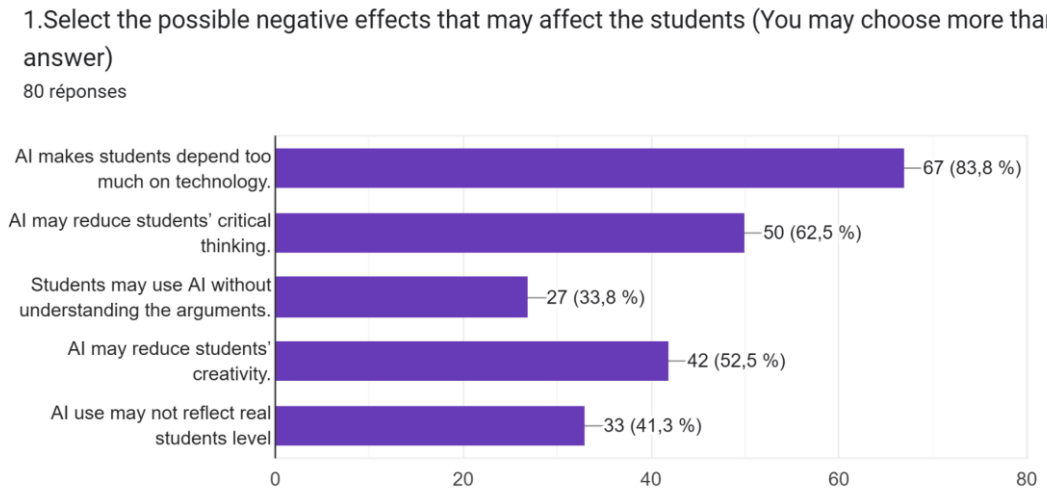
The graph also shows that 36.3% (29 students) strongly agreed and 53.8% (43 students) agreed that AI "makes learning more effective." In contrast, 7.5% (6 students) were neutral and 2.5% (2 students) disagreed. This demonstrates that students generally perceive AI as enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of learning processes.

Finally, regarding the statement that students "would like to continue using AI in debates," 43.8% (35 students) strongly agreed and 33.8% (27 students) agreed, whereas 15% (12 students) remained neutral and 7.5% (6 students) disagreed. This suggests that most learners are willing to continue using AI tools in debate activities because of their perceived educational benefits.

Overall, the findings indicate that students hold positive attitudes toward the integration of AI in English learning and classroom debates. AI is perceived as an effective tool for learning vocabulary, improving communication, and supporting participation. Nevertheless, the existence of some disagreement reflects concerns about balancing technological assistance with independent learning and critical thinking skills.

2.7.1.6 Section 6: Possible Negative Effects of AI Use in Classroom Debates

When Students were asked about **possible negative effects** of AI-generated arguments in EFL classrooms, students identified a wide range of concerns, many of which were similar to the teachers' concerns in the interview. The following graph represents the data.



Graph 11 : Students' Perceptions of the Negative Effects of AI in Education

As shown in the graph, the statement *"AI makes students depend too much on technology"* received the highest number of responses, with 67 respondents (83.8%) selecting this option. This indicates that most students believe excessive use of AI may lead to overdependence on technology and weaken independent learning skills. The responses gathered from students in the open ended question that follows this one strongly support this result. Many students used expressions such as *"laziness," "dependency," and "students may become passive."* Some respondents explained that *"students will get lazier by the day*," while others stated that AI *"may reduce students' ability to think deeply and independently.*" Another student added that "*over reliance on AI can reduce productivity."* These comments suggest that students are aware that AI can become a substitute for genuine effort and self-reliance in academic work.

The graph also shows that the statement *"AI may reduce students' critical thinking"* was selected by 50 respondents (62.5%), making it the second most identified negative effect. This finding implies that students are concerned that AI may discourage deep analysis and independent reasoning. The qualitative responses support this interpretation, as several students mentioned that learners may "*memorize answers instead of truly understanding the lesson" and "copy ideas without learning*." Others emphasized that AI can "*limit deep understanding*" and reduce the ability to evaluate information critically. These statements demonstrate students' concerns that AI-generated responses may encourage passive learning instead of thoughtful engagement with academic content.

Another important finding from the graph is that *"AI may reduce students' creativity"* was chosen by 42 respondents (52.5%). This suggests that more than half of the respondents believe AI may negatively influence originality and innovation. Students supported this concern by mentioning a "*lack of personal opinion or creativity*," indicating that learners may rely too heavily on AI-generated ideas instead of creating their own. Some respondents also noted that AI may weaken students' ability to express unique perspectives and creative solutions in academic tasks.

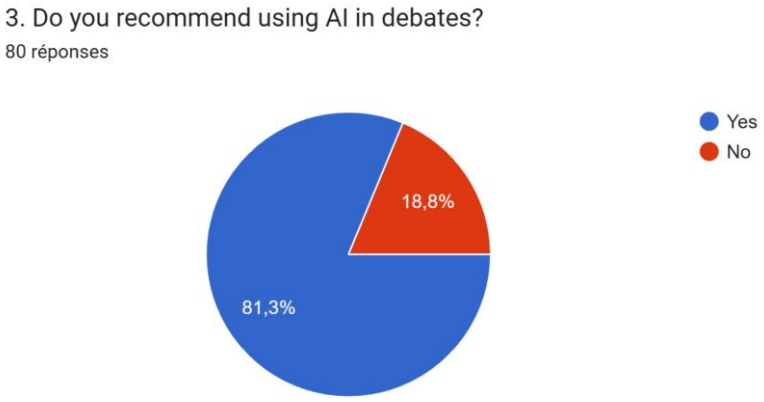
In addition, the suggestion *"AI use may not reflect real students' level"* was selected by 33 respondents (41.3%). This finding reflects concerns about academic authenticity and fairness in assessment. Students explained that "*teachers will judge students not for their own ideas but for AI-generated ideas and language*." This suggests that respondents believe AI-assisted work may prevent teachers from accurately measuring students' actual knowledge, understanding, and academic abilities.

The least selected statement in the graph was *"Students may use AI without understanding the arguments,"* identified by 27 respondents (33.8%). Although it ranked lowest among the listed effects, the responses still reveal important concerns regarding superficial learning. Some students mentioned that AI can produce "*inaccurate or misleading information,"* while others warned that students may *"copy ideas without learning*". These comments indicate fears that learners may accept AI-generated content without fully understanding the concepts being presented.

Furthermore, several students highlighted concerns related to inequality and access to technology. Some respondents stated that *"not all students have equal access to AI tools or internet,*" suggesting that unequal access may create unfair advantages for certain learners. Others believed that students who do not use AI may be disadvantaged compared to those who have access to advanced technological tools.

Overall, the graph and students' responses consistently show that the major concerns regarding AI in education are: *dependency on technology, reduced critical thinking, diminished creativity, and issues of academic authenticity.* Additionally, the findings demonstrate that students are aware of both the educational risks and the long-term consequences of excessive AI use. Accordingly, while AI can provide academic support and

convenience, the responses suggest that uncontrolled dependence on AI may negatively affect *independent learning, creativity, critical thinking, and fairness in education.*



Graph 12 : Students' Recommendations on the Use of Artificial Intelligence in Debates

The graph indicates that the majority of respondents recommend the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in debates, with 81.3% answering "Yes," while only 18.8% answered "No." This suggests that most students view AI as a beneficial tool in debate activities. The findings imply that students believe AI can help improve preparation, provide information quickly, and support the development of arguments during debates. On the other hand, the smaller percentage of respondents who did not recommend AI may indicate concerns about the possible limitations or disadvantages of relying on technology in debate activities. Accordingly, the results support the previous result indicating that students hold positive perception and attitudes towards AI use in classroom debates.

2.7.1.7 Section 7: Students' Personal Experiences

The majority of students expressed positive attitudes toward the use of AI in classroom debates and considered it a highly helpful educational tool. Their responses mainly reflected personal experiences related to debate preparation, idea generation, understanding topics, and improving communication skills.

Some students described AI as very beneficial in debates. For example, one respondent stated, *"Yes, it is very helpful. I can't stop using it because it helps me a lot in debates by providing terms, explanations, and fast responses."* Another student explained, *"AI helps me prepare strong arguments and gives me confidence before speaking,"* while another

commented, *"It helps me organize my ideas quickly and understand the topic better."* These personal reflections demonstrate that students perceive AI as an effective support tool that enhances understanding, confidence, and performance during classroom debates.

Other responses reflected awareness of the need for responsible AI use. One student explained, "*yes, it helps a lot but we need to use it wisely,"* while another clarified, *"I don't use it during debates! I only limit its use in helping summarize, explain words and sometimes express my own idea*." These comments indicate that some students recognize the importance of balancing AI assistance with independent thinking and authentic participation. The responses suggest that students do not completely depend on AI, but rather attempt to use it as a supportive tool while maintaining their own voice and understanding.

A small number of respondents also expressed neutral or negative perceptions, such as "It doesn't." Although limited, these responses demonstrate that AI may not be equally useful or necessary for all students. This suggests that individual learning preferences and technological familiarity may influence how students perceive the usefulness of AI in debate activities.

Taking all together, the findings demonstrate that students largely perceive AI as a valuable educational support tool in classroom debates. At the same time, some students emphasized the importance of using AI responsibly and not allowing it to replace independent thinking. Therefore, the findings suggest that AI can positively contribute to debate performance when used as a supportive learning aid rather than as a substitute for students' own reasoning and participation.

Regarding the problems and limitations of AI use, the majority of students identified issues related to technical access, unreliable responses, and difficulties in obtaining precise information. Several respondents stated that AI sometimes provides *"wrong or unclear information," "misleading information," or "answers not related to the topic."* One student explained, *"Sometimes AI gives wrong or unclear information, so I need to check it,"* while another respondent commented, *"AI sometimes can't understand the real need… it can mislead you."* Others mentioned that AI responses are sometimes "too general," "out of topic," or "not human-like." These responses suggest that students are aware that AI-generated content may not always meet classroom requirements or provide accurate and context-specific answers.

Students also highlighted limitations related to communication and understanding. Some respondents explained that AI "sometimes it *does not understand exactly what I want*," while others stated that it sometimes uses "*difficult words*" or provides responses "*beyond my level."* In addition, several students reported that AI-generated answers may fail to reflect "*real-life classroom situations*" or teacher expectations. These findings indicate that students perceive AI as limited in producing personalized and natural responses suitable for classroom debates.

Technical and accessibility problems were among the most frequently mentioned limitations. Many respondents referred to "*lack of internet," "network problems," "low connection," and "limited free options."* Some students stated that "*network is not always available on my phone,"* while others explained that connection problems can "*limit access to information"* or cause "*late answers when connection is not good.*" Another respondent mentioned "*device performance*" as a challenge when using AI tools. These comments demonstrate that access to AI technologies is not always stable or equally available for all students, which may reduce the effectiveness of AI use during classroom activities.

Furthermore, some students highlighted concerns related to sources and reliability. Several respondents noted difficulties such as "*finding vague sources of information" or "not knowing the source of the information."* Others explained that AI sometimes creates *"resources that do not exist"* or provides information that is *"incorrect or outdated."* These responses suggest that students recognize the importance of verifying AI-generated information before using it in academic contexts.

Overall, the findings reveal that students experience several practical and technical limitations when using AI in classroom debates. The responses mainly emphasize unreliable or vague information, difficulties in obtaining accurate and personalized answers, internet and accessibility problems, and issues related to source reliability. These findings suggest that although AI can be useful in supporting learning and debate preparation, students still face important challenges that may affect the effectiveness and reliability of AI use in educational settings.

2.7.2. Findings of the Teachers' Interview

The semi structured interviews were conducted with three university English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers from Bouira University, Algeria. Following thematic

analysis framework, this process ensured analytical depth while maintaining fidelity to participants' views (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Anonymized as Teacher 1 (T1), Teacher 2 (T2), and Teacher 3 (T3), all instructors have over five years of experience teaching English at L1–L3 and Master's levels in debate intensive modules such as Oral Expression, syllabus design, Text Analysis, Applied Linguistics, Reading and Writing Workshop, Language and Education, Didactics, and Academic Presentations.

2.7.2.1 Theme 1: AI Awareness and Use

- **Students' current use of AI tools in their academic work**

According to the interview data, all the three teachers confirmed that AI has become a prominent tool in students' academic work, especially in the context of classroom debates. T3 explicitly stated that students use AI "daily," indicating that it is no longer an occasional aid but a regular part of their study routines. T1, however, expressed a more critical attitude, noting that many students treat AI as a substitute who takes their roles stating that "*Unfortunately, most of students' appeal to AI as a substitute who takes their roles. They totally rely on the AI's ideas and answers*" meaning they rely on the AI to produce ideas and arguments with minimal personal engagement or critical evaluation. In contrast, T2 offered a more nuanced perspective, highlighting that AI is used for "*searching for information, summarizing texts, generating ideas, improving vocabulary, checking grammar, and revising written work or even preparing for tests and exams".*

For the use of AI to prepare arguments in writing and speaking tasks, T3 asserted that "*AI is especially helpful in writing oriented tasks, where students organize arguments, anticipate objections, and enrich their vocabulary*". However, she added that the use of AI in purely spontaneous speaking tasks is less than in writing, "s*ince debates still require real time interaction and quick responses*". T1 and T2 also indicated that AI is used in both tasks (written and spoken). In this regard, T2 stated that "*most students' written and spoken productions are marked by the AI style and language… I can see AI in every task I conduct in my classrooms".*

These findings indicate that teachers are aware of students' current use of AI tools in their academic work. They also confirm that nearly all students rely on AI tools for writing

and speaking tasks, highlighting the growing integration of AI into students' learning practices and classroom participation.

- **The Use of AI During debate preparation or participation**

In relation to classroom activities including discussions and debates, all teachers agreed that students use AI in both cases, for preparation at home and participation within the classroom. In this regard, T2 indicated that "*some students are using AI during preparation to understand research topics, generate arguments and counterarguments, summarize information, and organize their ideas more effectively, while other students may rely on AI-generated inside the classroom to understand topics, generate arguments or find vocabulary need to speak and discuss".* Similarly, T1 stated that "*almost all students use AI when never they need support for their language and arguments or when they don't understand either the topic or the instructions or a task*". She added that *"I can see that they prepare their homework and presentations at home also by using AI tools*". Also, T3 confirmed that AI is used during both phases, although the level of use during actual participation is constrained by the need for on the spot thinking and direct interaction but some students are actually "*using AI to generate ideas, arguments, and counterarguments before the debates and classrooms tasks".*

According to these findings, students use AI tools both for preparation at home and during classroom activities, which suggests that AI has become an integral part of their learning practices and academic engagement.

2.7.2.2 Theme 2: the Use of AI to Enhance Engagement and Confidence

All three teachers affirmed that AI has a positive impact on students' engagement and motivation in classroom debates. When asked whether AI increases engagement and motivation, T1, T2, and T3 answered "*Yes*". First, T1 explained that AI "*provides the students with new insights, ideas, and arguments, the thing"* which makes them feel more engaged and motivated. Additionally, T2 observed that AI "*makes debate preparation faster and more interactive*" which in turn increases students' interest in the activity. Further, T3 highlighted that AI "*boosts their pronunciation*" and helps with vocabulary, which fosters students' "*readiness in participating*"

All the teachers linked these gains in engagement to the sense of preparedness that AI offers. T1 noted that students feel more confident because they come to class with "*ready examples, ideas, and ways of reasoning*" while T2 pointed out that AI "*reduces hesitation, shyness, and stress, particularly for students who struggle with vocabulary or grammar"*. Similarly, T3 stressed that AI helps students feel more ready to speak and t "*often reduces anxiety, stress, and hesitation, especially for students who struggle with vocabulary, grammar, or structuring arguments in English*.

The three teachers also reported that they have noticed an increase in participation frequency among students who use AI. This was clearly introduced by T1 indicating that *"…when they use AI tools… students tend to participate more frequently because they feel better prepared and more confident…".* Likewise, T2 noted that students participate more often because they feel better prepared. T3 simply replied that "*yes, I have noticed an increase in students' participation…".*

These findings confirm that students' use of AI can boost their motivation, enhance their engagement, and strengthen their self-confidence, as it provides them with appropriate language, pronunciation support, as well as accurate ideas and arguments to support their responses.

2.7.2.3 Theme 3: The Use of AI to Improve Debate Performance

The three teachers agreed that AI can improve the quality of students' arguments, at least to a certain level. Accordingly, T1 stated that AI can "*enhance the structural quality of arguments*" by helping students "*organize assertions, provide supporting evidence, and anticipate counterarguments*". However, T1 was careful to add that this improvement is conditional: "*unless students actively modify and analyze the generated information, arguments may stay generic or lack personal analysis*". T2 similarly observed that AI helps students "*organize their arguments in a clearer and more logical way*" while also providing vocabulary and examples that enrich their contributions. T3 went further, asserting that "…*AI offers tailored feedback and many reliable resources, making students' arguments stronger, accurate, and contain valid information*".

Additionally, teachers identified several concrete mechanisms through which AI supports students' performance. T1 and T2 both mentioned improvements in vocabulary use and structural organization. According to them, students' arguments become more coherent

and logically sequenced when they prepare with AI. T2 also noted that grammar and sentence structure often improve, as many students use AI to check and revise their written notes. Furthermore, T3 highlighted that students ask AI assistants to "*explain lessons, prepare presentations, and find ways to organize their time*" suggesting that AI supports not only the immediate debate task but also broader study skills. T1 noted that some students "*enrich their vocabulary bank*," while others become dependent, "*merely copying*" AI generated ideas without reflection.

Overall, results in this theme suggests that AI functions as a cognitive support in EFL debates since it extends students' mental resources and allows them to construct more complex and well supported arguments. It also plays a crucial role in enhancing students language and structure while constructing their arguments. However, the teachers insist on the importance of students' critical engagement with AI arguments and idea. Without reflection and personalization, arguments may look refined but remain superficial and meaningless.

2.7.2.4 Theme 4: Teachers' Perceived Risks and Disadvantages of AI

Despite all the positive aspects above mentioned, all three teachers clearly expressed concerns about the risks and disadvantages associated with AI use in classroom debates. The most frequently mentioned risk was over reliance, which may lead to a decline in students' critical thinking, creativity, and independent reasoning. T1 described this as a key danger: "*over reliance on AI, a decline in critical thinking, and a loss of creativity in students' answers*." T2 similarly warned that "*overreliance on AI … can reduce students' critical thinking and originality…"* and that it may "*weaken real time speaking skills and encourage passive learning instead of active participation*." T3 used even stronger language, stating that when students overuse these tools, they may "*adopt AI points of view*" and "*stop thinking as long as the technology thinks instead of them*…" which could harm "*human intelligence, creativity and thinking abilities*."

Another major concern was academic integrity and authenticity of learning. T1 and T2 both pointed out that students may "*accept false information or erroneous stuff without checking,"* which raises questions about the reliability of their arguments.

Another negative effect might lie on the fair evaluation of students' participation, arguments, and language. In this regard, T2 added that unequal access to technology might create "*inequalities among students…"* since not all learners have the same devices or internet

connections. According to her this unequal use of AI will create a gap between students' real levels and their performance when relying on AI-generated arguments and language, which may, in its turn, to an inaccurate evaluation of their actual speaking and writing abilities. This was confirmed by T3 who noted that when AI is used too heavily, teachers may *"not be able to judge and evaluate students' real levels*" because what is being presented may be largely the product of the AI rather than the student's own mind…. T1 also highlighted that when many students use the same AI tool, their ideas become very similar, producing a "*very automatic*" classroom atmosphere instead of a lively discussion. T2 mentioned that AI assisted preparation can reduce spontaneity, as students become accustomed to *"reading from pre prepared robotic arguments"*.

All together, these comments reveal a clear result. Teachers recognize AI's benefits, but they are equally insistent on the potential drawbacks, including the decrease in critical thinking abilities, loss of creativity, threats to authenticity, unequal participation and evaluation, as well as decrease in spontaneity. These concerns are particularly relevant in an EFL context, where adaptive, interactive speaking skills are a central goal of classroom debates.

2.7.2.5 Theme 5: Pedagogical Recommendations on the Use of AI

Given this mixed picture of benefits and risks, the three teachers proposed several recommendations for using AI effectively in debate activities and clarified the teacher's role when students use AI.

First, all three interviewees agreed that AI should be integrated into EFL teaching and learning practices, but only under supervision. T1 stressed that "*AI should be integrated into EFL teaching/learning practices only under supervision*," because unsupervised use can "*have a detrimental impact on learning autonomy and analytical abilities*." T2 similarly stated that AI "*can be beneficial*" when "*directed by pedagogy,"* but that *"teacher supervision is essential*." T3 emphasized that "*without guidance, they accept AI answers without questioning*". Therefore, teachers must encourage students to critically evaluate AI outputs.

In terms of specific recommendations, T1 suggested that students should use AI mainly for brainstorming, vocabulary support, and argument organization, not for direct answer generation. This was also advised by T3 suggesting that using AI "*as a brainstorming*

partner, and as generator of ideas or arguments", with the explicit aim of helping students learn, not of replacing their own learning.

T1 also recommended reflection tasks where students analyze and modify AI generated ideas and that AI based preparation be combined with spontaneous in class debate to preserve authentic communication. T2 expanded on this idea, proposing that activities include reflection tasks and that teachers set "*clear guidelines"* for the ethical and responsible use of AI.

Regarding the teacher's role, all three teachers described similar functions. T1 saw the teacher as a "*crucial mediator and facilitator*," who must "*teach students how to challenge AI results*" and create "*guidelines for the ethical and responsible usage of AI*." Similarly, T2 described the teacher as a "*guide and supervisory*" figure, helping students "*critically evaluate and personalize*" AI generated ideas. In the same way, T3 emphasized that teachers should "guide students in critically assessing AI generated arguments and ideas, and encourage them to "*participate with their own beliefs and reasoning."*

In addition, T2 and T3 highlighted the importance of raising awareness about AI's limitations and risks. T2 mentioned that teachers should "*raise students' awareness about the use of AI and the drawback of its misuse,*" while T3 added that students should understand *"both the benefits and limitations of AI" so they can use it "responsibly and critically."* Generally, this suggests a model of guided integration, where AI is neither banned nor left uncontrolled, but integrated within a carefully designed educational framework. Such an approach encourages students to benefit from AI as a supportive learning tool while still maintaining independent thinking, critical analysis, creativity, and academic integrity. It also implies that teachers play a crucial role in monitoring and guiding AI use to ensure that technology enhances learning without replacing students' own reasoning and participation.

2.8 Discussion of the Findings

The findings of the present study strongly align with several previous studies and theoretical perspectives concerning the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in EFL learning and debate-based activities. It reveals that AI-generated arguments provide important cognitive, linguistic, and motivational support for students; however, it also raises concerns regarding dependency, reduced critical thinking, and authenticity. Therefore, the results

confirm the dual nature of AI in education as both a supportive learning tool and a potential threat to independent thinking.

One of the major findings of this study is the widespread use of AI tools among EFL students. The questionnaire revealed that 46.3% of students always use AI tools and 37.5% often use them in their learning process. In addition, 87.5% confirmed using AI-generated arguments for classroom debates. These findings are consistent with the study conducted by English as a Foreign Language researchers in Oman, who found that ChatGPT has become increasingly integrated into EFL classrooms because students perceive it as an accessible and supportive educational tool (Jahan & Akbar, 2026). Similarly, Bui Thi Thu Giang et al. (2025) found that AI tools are widely used by EFL students during debate preparation for brainstorming ideas, organizing arguments, and improving speaking performance. These similarities confirm that AI technologies are becoming central components of students' academic practices in EFL contexts worldwide.

The findings also demonstrate that students mainly use AI for organizing ideas (72.5%), generating arguments (66.3%), and improving vocabulary (51.2%). These results support Lev Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (1978), which emphasizes that learning develops through mediation and supportive tools that assist learners in accomplishing tasks beyond their individual abilities. AI, in this context, functions as a cognitive scaffold that supports students in structuring arguments and organizing thoughts before participation in debates. This interpretation is supported by Vasconcelos and Dos Santos (2023), who described AI systems such as ChatGPT as "objects-to-think-with" that promote reflective thinking, creativity, and problem-solving abilities when used appropriately. Similarly, the findings of Mai (2026) demonstrated that ChatGPT positively affects EFL students' argumentative skills by helping them produce more coherent and organized arguments.

Another important finding concerns students' engagement and motivation during classroom debates. Students repeatedly reported that AI helps them prepare lessons, understand topics, and participate more actively. Teachers also confirmed that AI increases students' readiness and participation frequency. These findings strongly correspond with the systematic review conducted by researchers in Artificial Intelligence in Education, which concluded that generative AI tools increase learners' engagement, confidence, motivation, and collaborative participation in EFL education (2025).) Moreover, Jahan and Akbar (2026)

argued that ChatGPT creates “interactive and engaging” learning environments that motivate students to participate more actively in English classrooms.

However, the present findings also reveal a more critical dimension. Although AI increases engagement, teachers emphasized that some students rely excessively on AI-generated responses rather than developing spontaneous interaction skills. T2 noted that students sometimes use “pre-prepared robotic arguments,” while T1 explained that many students “totally rely on AI ideas and answers.” These concerns are strongly supported by Derin et al. (2026), who found that unrestricted AI use in EFL debates may lead to “cognitive withdrawal” and reduced critical engagement during argumentation activities. Their study demonstrated that excessive AI reliance reduced students’ critical independence and spontaneous oral interaction. Thus, while AI may improve behavioral participation, it may simultaneously reduce authentic cognitive engagement if students become passive users.

The findings related to confidence also strongly correspond with previous research. Quantitative data showed that 77.5% of students agreed that AI helps them feel more confident during debates, while teachers observed noticeable reductions in hesitation and anxiety. These findings are supported by the systematic review on AI and critical thinking in EFL education, which concluded that AI tools often enhance students’ confidence and willingness to communicate because they provide vocabulary support, language assistance, and personalized guidance (2025). Similarly, Giang et al. (2025) found that students participating in AI-supported debate activities reported higher confidence levels and greater willingness to express ideas publicly.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings may also be explained through Krashen’s Affective Filter Hypothesis, which suggests that reduced anxiety and increased confidence facilitate language acquisition and oral participation. AI-generated support appears to lower students’ affective barriers by helping them prepare vocabulary, organize responses, and anticipate debate questions before participation.

The study additionally found that AI positively improves students’ debate performance, vocabulary use, and argument quality. For example, 90.1% of participants agreed that AI improves the quality of their arguments, while 95.1% stated that AI helps them use better vocabulary. Teachers also emphasized that AI improves organization, coherence, and counterargument development. These findings strongly support Mai’s (2026) research, which

concluded that ChatGPT enhances EFL students' argumentative writing and reasoning abilities by generating structured and logically connected arguments. Giang et al. (2025) argued that AI-supported debates significantly improve argumentation quality and speaking performance among EFL learners.

Nevertheless, despite these positive effects, the findings reveal strong concerns regarding dependency and declining critical thinking. The questionnaire demonstrated that 83.8% of students believe AI creates excessive dependence on technology, while 62.5% stated that AI may reduce critical thinking abilities. Teachers similarly expressed fears regarding passive learning, lack of originality, and reduced independent reasoning. These findings strongly correspond with Yaiche's Algerian study (2025), which found that excessive reliance on ChatGPT reduced students' ability to "reflect creatively and solve problems autonomously." The study concluded that AI may substitute rather than support critical thinking if students rely on generated answers without reflection.

Similarly, the systematic review conducted in 2025 concluded that although AI has positive educational potential, overreliance on AI tools can lead to "passive thinking," reduced analytical depth, and weaker autonomous learning abilities. These findings also correspond with recent experimental research from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, which found that students using ChatGPT demonstrated weaker neural engagement, reduced creativity, and lower cognitive involvement compared to students completing tasks independently (Kosmyna, 2025).

The findings concerning reduced creativity and authenticity are also consistent with recent research. More than half of the participants (52.5%) believed that AI reduces creativity, while teachers explained that AI-generated arguments often become repetitive and lack personal voice. T1 stated that classroom discussions become "automatic" because students produce similar AI-generated ideas. These findings are supported by Georgiou (2025), who found that ChatGPT use may produce "cognitive offloading," reducing students' deep processing and strategic thinking during academic tasks. Likewise, studies on argumentation activities have shown that although ChatGPT may initially outperform students in producing information-rich responses, students ultimately demonstrate greater originality and idea generation when actively engaged in debate processes (2026

Another important finding concerns the role of teachers in supervising AI integration. All interviewed teachers insisted that AI should be integrated under guidance and ethical supervision. These findings align closely with current pedagogical recommendations in AI-related educational research. The systematic review conducted in 2025 emphasized that AI should "enhance learning without replacing learners' critical thinking." Similarly, teachers in the present study recommended reflection tasks, brainstorming activities, and critical evaluation exercises to ensure responsible AI use. This reflects constructivist educational approaches that encourage active learner engagement rather than passive technological dependence.

To sum up this present study, and based on all what have been said and discussed, it is concluded that the findings strongly confirm the proposed hypotheses and provide clear answers to the research questions. First, the results demonstrate that AI-generated arguments positively influence EFL students' engagement, confidence, participation, and debate performance, thus confirming Hypothesis 1 (H1) and Hypothesis 4 (H4). Also, both quantitative and qualitative findings revealed that students use AI extensively to organize ideas, generate arguments, improve vocabulary, and prepare for classroom debates, which confirms Hypothesis 2 (H2) concerning students' positive perceptions toward AI integration in debate activities. Similarly, teachers acknowledged the educational value of AI in improving preparation, argument quality, and classroom participation while simultaneously expressing concerns regarding dependency, reduced critical thinking, and academic authenticity, thereby confirming Hypothesis 3 (H3).

In addition, the findings strongly support the sub-hypotheses. Students perceived AI as a beneficial cognitive and linguistic support tool for brainstorming, idea organization, and communication enhancement, confirming Hypothesis 5 (H5). At the same time, both students and teachers identified important risks related to overreliance, passive learning, weakened creativity, and reduced independent reasoning, which confirms Hypothesis 6 (H6). Furthermore, the study demonstrated that AI integration creates both pedagogical opportunities and challenges in EFL debate-based learning environments, confirming Hypothesis 7 (H7). Finally, teachers consistently emphasized the importance of ethical, guided, and supervised AI integration, which strongly confirms Hypothesis 8 (H8). Therefore, the study concludes that AI-generated arguments can significantly support EFL learning and classroom debates when used responsibly and critically under effective pedagogical guidance.

2.9 Limitations of the Study

Despite the valuable findings obtained in this study, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study was conducted only with EFL students and teachers at University of Bouira, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other universities or educational contexts.

Second, the study relied mainly on questionnaires and interviews based on self-reported data. Therefore, some participants may have provided socially acceptable responses rather than completely accurate opinions or practices regarding AI use.

Another limitation concerns the rapid development of AI technologies. Since AI tools continuously evolve, students' and teachers' perceptions may change over time, which means that the findings reflect only the situation during the period in which the study was conducted.

In addition, differences in students' technological access and familiarity with AI tools may have influenced the results. Some students reported internet connection problems, limited access to devices, and technical difficulties while using AI tools.

Furthermore, the study focused mainly on students' and teachers' perceptions rather than measuring the actual long-term impact of AI-generated arguments on students' speaking proficiency, critical thinking, or academic achievement.

Finally, time constraints and the limited number of teacher participants may have restricted a deeper exploration of all aspects related to AI integration in EFL classroom debates.

2.10 Implications of the Study

The findings of the present study have several important pedagogical and academic implications for EFL teaching and learning. First, the study highlights the educational potential of AI tools in enhancing students' engagement, confidence, argumentation skills, and classroom participation during debates. Therefore, EFL teachers may benefit from integrating AI tools into debate-based activities as supportive learning aids that help students organize ideas, improve vocabulary, and prepare arguments more effectively.

Second, the study emphasizes the importance of guided and ethical AI integration in language classrooms. Since excessive dependence on AI may reduce critical thinking, creativity, and independent reasoning, teachers should encourage students to critically evaluate AI-generated content rather than accept it passively. This suggests that AI should be used to support learning and not to replace students' own thinking and participation.

In addition, the findings imply that teacher training programs should include awareness about the pedagogical use of AI technologies in education. Teachers need appropriate strategies to supervise AI use, design reflective classroom activities, and promote responsible digital practices among learners.

The study also contributes to the growing body of research on Artificial Intelligence in EFL education, particularly in the Algerian university context where research on AI-generated arguments and classroom debates remains limited. Therefore, the findings may serve as a reference for future studies investigating the impact of AI on language learning, speaking skills, critical thinking, and academic performance.

Finally, the study suggests the need for educational institutions to establish clear guidelines and policies regarding the responsible use of AI tools in academic settings in order to maintain academic integrity, fairness, and authentic student participation.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the methodological framework adopted in the present study to investigate the role of AI-generated arguments in EFL classroom debates. It described the research approach, method, and design, explaining the suitability of the mixed-methods approach for addressing the research problem. The chapter also introduced the population and sample, as well as the research instruments. In addition, issues related to validity and reliability were discussed to ensure the credibility of the research process.

Furthermore, the chapter provided a detailed presentation and interpretation of the quantitative and qualitative data collected through students' questionnaires and teachers' interviews. The findings were analyzed and discussed in relation to the research questions, hypotheses, theoretical framework, and previous studies. The chapter also highlighted the pedagogical implications of the study as well as its main limitations, which may guide future research on the integration of Artificial Intelligence in EFL learning and classroom debates.

General Conclusion

The present study explored the role of AI-generated arguments in enhancing EFL students' engagement, confidence, motivation, and performance during classroom debates at the University of Bouira. More specifically, the research explored Algerian EFL students' and teachers' perceptions regarding the pedagogical value of Artificial Intelligence tools in debate-based learning, while also examining the potential challenges associated with excessive dependence on AI technologies. Through the use of a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative data, the study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how AI-generated arguments influence classroom interaction and language learning in EFL contexts.

The findings revealed that Artificial Intelligence tools have become deeply integrated into students' academic practices. Most participants reported frequent use of AI applications, particularly for organizing ideas, generating arguments, improving vocabulary, and preparing for classroom debates. These results demonstrate that AI technologies are increasingly perceived by EFL learners as accessible and supportive educational resources that facilitate participation in cognitively demanding communicative activities. In debate contexts specifically, AI-generated arguments functioned as forms of cognitive and linguistic scaffolding that helped students structure ideas, anticipate counterarguments, and participate more confidently in oral interaction.

The study further demonstrated that AI-generated support positively influenced students' engagement, motivation, confidence, and debate performance. Students reported feeling more prepared, less anxious, and more willing to participate in classroom debates when using AI-assisted tools. Teachers similarly observed improvements in students' readiness, vocabulary use, argument organization, and participation frequency. These findings confirm that AI can create more interactive and supportive learning environments that encourage learners to engage actively in communicative tasks. From a pedagogical perspective, AI appears capable of reducing linguistic insecurity and cognitive overload, particularly for learners who struggle with idea generation or spontaneous oral interaction in English.

At the same time, the findings highlighted important concerns regarding the negative consequences of excessive AI dependency. In this regard, both students and teachers expressed fears that overreliance on AI-generated arguments may weaken critical thinking, creativity, originality, and authentic language production. Some participants noted that students occasionally relied on "ready-made" responses rather than constructing independent arguments or engaging critically with debate topics. Consequently, although AI increased behavioral participation, it did not always guarantee meaningful cognitive engagement. These findings emphasize the dual nature of AI in education: while it can support learning and participation, it may also encourage passive learning practices if used uncritically.

The study therefore confirms that the educational effectiveness of AI depends largely on how it is integrated pedagogically. AI should not be viewed as a replacement for human thinking, teacher guidance, or authentic classroom interaction. Rather, it should function as a supplementary support tool that enhances learners' preparation, participation, and communicative confidence while still preserving opportunities for independent reasoning, creativity, and critical reflection. Effective integration requires teachers to supervise AI use carefully, encourage students to evaluate AI-generated content critically, and design classroom activities that promote active engagement rather than passive dependence.

The findings also contribute theoretically to ongoing discussions concerning the relationship between technology, language learning, and communicative pedagogy. The study supports sociocultural perspectives on learning by demonstrating how AI may function as a mediational and scaffolding tool that assists learners in accomplishing tasks beyond their independent abilities. At the same time, the findings reinforce concerns raised in recent educational research regarding the risks of cognitive offloading and reduced learner autonomy associated with unrestricted AI use. Thus, the study highlights the need to balance technological innovation with pedagogical responsibility and critical digital literacy.

Furthermore, this research contributes to the growing body of literature on Artificial Intelligence in EFL education, particularly within the Algerian university context where studies on AI-generated arguments and classroom debates remain relatively limited. By examining both the opportunities and challenges associated with AI integration, the study provides insights that may help educators, researchers, and educational institutions better understand the pedagogical implications of generative AI technologies in language learning environments.

In conclusion, the study demonstrates that AI-generated arguments can significantly support EFL classroom debates by enhancing students' engagement, confidence, motivation, and argumentative performance. However, these benefits remain dependent on responsible and pedagogically guided use. When integrated critically and ethically, AI can function as a valuable educational scaffold that enriches debate-based learning and communicative interaction. Nevertheless, maintaining learners' critical thinking, creativity, autonomy, and authentic participation remains essential. Therefore, the future of AI in EFL education should not focus merely on technological efficiency, but rather on achieving a balanced integration in which AI supports, rather than replaces, meaningful human learning and interaction.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Student Questionnaire

Dear student,

This questionnaire aims to investigate your perceptions of using AI-generated arguments (e.g., ChatGPT or similar tools) in classroom debates. Your responses will remain anonymous and will be used for research purposes only.

Please tick (✓) the appropriate answer.

Section 1: Background Information

Level of study
☐ First year ☐ Second year ☐ Third year ☐ Master

How would you rate your English level?
☐ Beginner ☐ Intermediate ☐ Advanced

Section II: Frequency and Purpose of AI Use

Have you ever used AI tools (such as ChatGPT) to help you prepare arguments for debates?
☐ Yes ☐ No

How often do you use AI tools to prepare debate arguments?
☐ Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

For what purposes do you use AI tools? (You may choose more than one answer)
☐ Generating arguments ☐ Improving vocabulary ☐ Organizing ideas ☐ Understanding the debate topic ☐ Checking grammar ☐ Translating ideas ☐ Other: _____

Section 2: Students' Engagement in Debates

Statement	**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disgree**
1. AI-generated arguments make debates more interesting.					
2. Using AI helps me participate more actively in debates.					
3. AI helps me understand debate topics better.					
4. AI encourages me to prepare more for debates.					

5. AI increases my motivation to participate in debates.					

Section 3: Students' Confidence

Statement	**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
6. AI helps me feel more confident during debates.					
7. AI helps me express my ideas more clearly.					
8. AI reduces my fear of speaking in debates.					
9. AI helps me find strong arguments.					
10. AI helps me feel more prepared.					

Section 4: Students' Performance in Debates

Statement	**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
11. AI improves the quality of my arguments.					
12. AI helps me use better vocabulary.					
13. AI helps me organize my ideas logically.					
14. AI helps me respond to opponents' arguments.					
15. AI improves my overall debate performance.					

Section 5: Students' Perceptions of AI Use

Statement	**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
16. AI is a useful tool for learning English.					
17. AI helps me learn new expressions.					

18. AI should be integrated into classroom debates.					
19. AI makes learning more effective.					
20. I would like to continue using AI in debates.					

Section 6: Possible Negative Effects

Select the possible negative effects that may affect the students (You may choose more than one answer)

- AI makes students depend too much on technology.
- AI may reduce students' critical thinking.
- Students may use AI without understanding the arguments.
- AI may reduce students' creativity.
- AI use may not reflect real students level

According to you, what are other possible negative effects of using AI generated arguments in EFL classrooms?.....

Section 7: Open-Ended Questions

How does AI help you in classroom debates?

……

What problems do you face when using AI?

……

Do you recommend using AI in debates? Why or why not?

……

Appendix 2: Teacher Interview Guide

Introduction (to read before starting)

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. This interview aims to explore your perceptions and experiences regarding the use of AI tools (such as Chat GPT) in supporting students during classroom debates in different modules. Your responses will remain

confidential and will be used only for research purposes. The interview will take approximately 15–20 minutes.

Section I: Background Information

How long have you been teaching English?

1 to 5 years 5 to 10 years more

What level(s) do you teach now?

L1 L2 L3 Master

Have you ever organized debate activities in your classroom?

Yes No

If yes, how often?

Rarely Sometimes Often Always

What are the modules that needs debate in classrooms have you taught before?

……

Section II: Teachers' Awareness and Use of AI

In your opinion, how are students currently using AI tools in their academic work?

……

Do you think they use it more for preparing arguments in writing or speaking tasks?

……

Do you think they use it during debate preparation and participation?

……

Section III: AI and Student Engagement

Based on your observation, does the use of AI increase students' engagement and motivation in classroom debates?

Yes No Not sure

If yes, please explain how.……

Have you noticed any differences in students' participation when they use AI? (differences in terms of Participation frequency increase, Motivation and Interest)

……..……

Do students appear more confident when they prepare arguments using AI?

…….. (Please explain your answer).

In what ways does AI affect students' willingness to speak during debates?

……

(Please explain your answer).…… ……

What other improvements, if any, have you observed in students who use AI?

……

(Please explain your answer).……..

Section V: AI and Students' Debate Performance

In your opinion, does AI improve the quality of students' arguments?

……

(if yes, please explain your answer).

……..……

Do you think the use of AI tools to generate arguments and ideas for classroom debates and discussions is useful or not?

What do you consider the main disadvantages or risks in the AI use in classroom debates, participation and discussions?

……

Do you think AI should be integrated into EFL teaching\learning practices?

Yes No Only under supervision

Why? ……

What role should the teacher play when students use AI for classroom debates and participation?

……

What recommendations would you give for using AI effectively in debate activities?

……

Section VIII: Future Perspective

How do you think AI will affect the future of EFL learning?

……

Is there anything else you would like to add regarding the use of AI in classroom debates?

……