

CHAPTER II

LITERATUR REVIEW

This chapter presents a review of related literature, including the definition of AI writing tools, challenges in using AI writing tools for academic writing, common challenges faced by EFL students in the thesis writing process, a summary of the literature review, and previous studies related to the topic.

2.1 Theoretical Description

This section provides an overview of key concepts related to the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) writing tools in the context of thesis writing. As these tools become increasingly present in academic life, especially among undergraduate students, it is important to understand the potential challenges they may pose. The discussion in this section is organized into three parts: the definition and functions of AI writing tools, the difficulties that students may encounter when using them for academic purposes, and the common obstacles faced by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students during the thesis writing process. Rather than focusing solely on the benefits, this section aims to highlight the issues that can affect students' writing development and academic performance.

2.1.1 Definition of AI Writing Tools

AI writing tools are digital platforms that use artificial intelligence, especially machine learning and natural language processing, to help users generate, edit, or improve written text. These tools are designed to produce human-like language, allowing users to enter a prompt or question and receive a well-structured, grammatically correct response. According to (Amani and Bisriyah 2025), many EFL students find these tools helpful for checking grammar, spelling, and word choice, although they still rely on human feedback for deeper understanding. Common examples include ChatGPT, Grammarly, and QuillBot. These tools can perform various functions such as paraphrasing, summarizing, grammar correction, and even generating content from scratch (Yogesh 2019).

In academic contexts, students often turn to AI writing tools to brainstorm ideas, structure essays, and rephrase sentences for improved clarity and correctness. For non-native English speakers, these tools help reduce language barriers and improve the overall quality of writing. A study by (Abdulkareem et al. 2024) found that EFL students in Yemen

reported improved writing fluency, accuracy, and confidence after using ChatGPT, though they also expressed concerns about excessive reliance on AI tools. Similarly, (Gustilo, Ong, and Lapinid 2024) highlighted that while many educators acknowledged the usefulness of AI tools in enhancing vocabulary and organization, they remained cautious about issues such as plagiarism, reduced originality, and students' overdependence on technology.

2.1.2 Challenges in Using AI Writing Tools for Academic Writing

Although AI-based writing tools can assist students in completing academic tasks more efficiently, excessive use raises concerns about dependency. When students rely too heavily on these tools, they tend to experience a decline in critical thinking, argument development, and the ability to organize ideas independently (Sahabuddin et al. 2025). Studies indicate that dependency on AI has a significantly negative impact on students' critical thinking skills, which are essential academic competencies in higher education. Furthermore, students who frequently use AI for academic writing risk losing analytical and creative abilities that are crucial for future academic and professional success (Ulfah 2024). Therefore, the integration of AI in education must be accompanied by proper monitoring strategies and the development of digital literacy.

Another challenge in the use of AI tools in higher education is closely related to issues of originality and plagiarism. While AI can generate text quickly, it also opens opportunities for academic dishonesty, such as automated plagiarism through paraphrasing or essay creation without the student's intellectual contribution (Ihekweazu, Zhou, and Adelowo 2023). AI-generated content often fails to reflect the student's language style, comprehension, or conceptual ability, thereby creating a gap between the quality of submitted work and the student's actual competence. Moreover, AI tools are still prone to producing incorrect, inaccurate, or even fabricated information a phenomenon known as hallucination which can mislead users and compromise the reliability of academic outcomes (Jamaluddin et al. 2023).

2.1.3 Common Challenges Faced by EFL Students in the Thesis Writing Process

Writing a thesis is one of the most challenging academic tasks for undergraduate students, as it involves various stages such as topic selection, research, literature review, argument construction, and the application of academic writing conventions. For students who use English as a Foreign Language (EFL), the process becomes even more complex due to difficulties in vocabulary, grammar, and text coherence. A study by (Farizawati,

Cendana, and Nuraiza 2024) found that 66.7% of students faced language barriers as a primary challenge, and 75% struggled with grammatical accuracy and understanding academic terminology, which affected their ability to clearly express complex ideas. Additionally, research by (Alkhasanah and Kholis 2024) stated that EFL students also encountered difficulties in explaining the conceptual framework and background of their theses, which subsequently impacted the overall structure of their academic work. Thus, language and vocabulary barriers not only affect the clarity of writing but also undermine the academic credibility of the thesis produced.

Beyond language issues, EFL students often struggle to understand academic writing conventions such as paraphrasing, citation, and logical argument development. (Oktaviani, Raflesia, and Yulfi 2024) found that EFL students faced challenges in grasping the structure of thesis writing, including choosing a title, constructing arguments, and applying appropriate academic grammar and vocabulary, which contributed to their low writing confidence. Additional obstacles include time constraints and limited access to academic writing support, such as guidance from supervisors or digital writing facilities. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the full scope of thesis writing challenges within the EFL context to design interventions that genuinely address students' academic and practical needs.

2.2 Summary of Literature Review

The literature reviewed in this chapter highlights the complex role of AI writing tools in academic writing, particularly in the context of thesis writing among EFL students. AI tools such as Grammarly, ChatGPT, and QuillBot have been widely used by students to improve grammar accuracy, expand vocabulary, enhance sentence clarity, and structure academic texts more effectively. For English Education students, especially those whose first language is not English, these tools provide valuable support in overcoming language-related barriers.

However, existing studies consistently point out that the use of AI writing tools also brings significant challenges, particularly when students rely on them excessively. Overdependence on AI can lead to a decline in students' critical thinking, creativity, and academic autonomy. Furthermore, there are concerns regarding the originality of AI-generated content, potential plagiarism, and the inaccuracy of information produced especially when students accept AI suggestions without proper evaluation. These issues

pose risks to the quality and authenticity of students' academic work, including their undergraduate theses.

In addition to the general issues of AI usage, EFL students face specific difficulties during the thesis writing process. These include struggles with academic vocabulary, grammatical precision, paraphrasing, constructing logical arguments, and applying proper citation styles. Although AI tools can assist in surface-level corrections, they are not capable of replacing human academic supervision, particularly in areas that require deep understanding and personal interpretation.

While many previous studies have explored these challenges in various educational contexts, there is limited research focused on the experiences of undergraduate English Education students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu. Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by investigating the specific challenges they face when using AI writing tools during their thesis writing process, with particular attention to issues such as dependency, originality, and digital literacy.

2.3 Previous Studies

Several empirical studies have highlighted the challenges faced by EFL students when using AI writing tools, particularly in complex academic tasks such as thesis writing. For instance, (Fathimatuzahro and Rizkiyah 2025) conducted a phenomenological qualitative study involving six EFL students from three Indonesian universities who used Grammarly. The study found that while the tool was helpful in improving grammar and overall writing quality, students reported several concerns, such as overreliance on the tool, reduced critical thinking, and limited creativity in their writing process.

Similarly, (Zuhriah et al. 2024) explored the experiences of final-year university students in Indonesia who utilized Grammarly during their thesis writing. Their qualitative findings showed that although Grammarly provided fast and accessible grammar feedback, it also led to issues such as dependency on automated suggestions, the limited functionality of the free version, inaccurate tense correction, and technical problems related to internet access.

In another study, (Salsabilla and Maulina 2025) from Universitas Muhammadiyah Kendari conducted a descriptive qualitative study with six final-year English Education students. These students used the free version of Grammarly while writing the background section of their undergraduate theses. The results indicated that although Grammarly helped correct common grammatical mistakes such as verb tense misuse and article

placement and boosted students' confidence, it also presented several challenges. These included receiving irrelevant or confusing suggestions, developing an overdependence on AI assistance, and the tool's inability to replace the academic guidance provided by thesis supervisors.

(Nhan et al. 2025), conducting a study in the Mekong Delta region of Vietnam, also identified key challenges related to AI use in EFL writing instruction. Their findings revealed that AI tools often failed to account for cultural nuances and stylistic choices in writing. Additionally, the tools were unable to evaluate creative expression or tone effectively, which raised concerns about students becoming overly dependent and less engaged in developing their own critical thinking skills. The study underlined the need for better technological literacy and active pedagogical support to ensure that AI tools are used effectively without compromising essential academic skills.

Although these studies provide valuable insights into the challenges of using AI in academic and thesis writing, they mostly focus on students from specific institutions or regions. To date, no research has closely examined how English Education students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu experience these challenges. Therefore, this study aims to explore the issue more deeply by focusing on specific problems such as students' dependency on AI tools, concerns about the originality of their writing, and limited digital literacy during the thesis writing process.

Based on the previous studies, it can be seen that the main challenges of using AI writing tools among EFL students include overdependence on the technology, reduced critical thinking skills, issues of originality and academic integrity, limited features, and technical problems. While these studies provide useful insights, most of them focus on specific universities in different regions or countries, and often examine only one tool, such as Grammarly. This study seeks to fill that gap by focusing on the experiences of English Education students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu. It specifically explores three main challenges dependency on AI, concerns about the originality of writing, and limited digital literacy as well as the strategies students use to overcome them. In this way, the study aims to provide more contextual and detailed understanding of how AI writing tools affect the thesis writing process in the Indonesian higher education setting.