

**EFL STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON AI-POWERED
PARAPHRASING TOOLS FOR UNDERGRADUATE
THESIS WRITING: A CASE STUDY AT STATE
ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF RADEN FATAH,
PALEMBANG**

THESIS

by:

Silvia Pratami

NIM: 06012682327020

Magister Program in Language Education



**MAGISTER PROGRAM IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION
FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION
SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY**

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A THESIS

by:

Silvia Pratami

06012682327020

Magister Program in Language Education

Approved by:

Advisor 1

Advisor 2,



Eryansyah, M.A., Ph.D
NIP. 196907181995121001



Machdalena Vianty, M.Ed., M.Pd., Ed.D
NIP. 197411242000122001

Certified by:

Head of Maagister Program in Language Education



Sary Silvhiany, M.A., Ph.D
NIP. 197708112002122003

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Eryansyah, M.A., Ph.D
NIP. 196907181995121001



Machdalena Vianty, M.Ed., M.Pd., Ed.D
NIP. 197411242000122001

Dean,

**Head of Magister Program Language
Education,**



Dr. Hartono, M.A.
NIP. 196710171993011001



Sary Silvhiany, M.A., Ph.D
NIP. 197708112002122003

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PALEMBANG**

A THESIS

by:

Silvia Pratami

06012682327020

Magister Program in Language Education

had been examined and passed on:

Day : Monday

Date : December 16th, 2024

EXAMINATION COMMITTEE

- 1. Chairperson : Eryansyah, M.A., Ph.D**
- 2. Secretary : Machdalena Vianty, M.Ed., M.Pd., Ed.D**
- 3. Member : Sary Silvhiany, M.A., Ph.D**
- 4. Member : Amrullah, M.Ed., Ph.D**

Palembang, December 23rd, 2024

**Approved by,
Head of Magister Program in Language Education**



**Sary Silvhiany, M.A., Ph.D
NIP. 197708112002122003**

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned,

Name : Silvia Pratami

Student's Number : 06012682327020

Study Program : Magister Program in Language Education

Certify that the thesis entitled "EFL Students' Perception On AI-Powered Paraphrasing Tools for Undergraduate Thesis Writing: a Case Study at State Islamic University of Raden Fatah, Palembang" is my work, and I did not do any plagiarism or inappropriate quotation against the ethics and rules commended by the Ministry of Education of Republic of Indonesia Number 17, 2010 regarding plagiarism in higher education. Therefore, I deserve to face court if I am found to have plagiarized this work.

Palembang, January 14th, 2025

The Undersigned,

Silvia Pratami



NIM. 06012682327020

DEDICATION

"I lovingly dedicate this thesis to my dearest parents (Syaiful and Lilis Asmayanti) whose boundless prayers and steadfast support both emotionally and materially have been the guiding light and strength throughout my Magister journey. Your love and sacrifices are the foundation of all my achievements."

MOTTO

"There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure."

-Colin Powell-

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Palembang, January 14th 2025
The Author



Silvia Pratami
NIM 06012682327020

EFL STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE ON AI-POWERED PARAPHRASING TOOLS FOR UNDERGRADUATE THESIS WRITING: A CASE STUDY AT STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF RADEN FATAH, PALEMBANG

ABSTRACT

This study examines EFL students' perceptions of AI-powered paraphrasing tools in undergraduate thesis writing. The method of the study is descriptive qualitative with case study approach, data were collected through questionnaires and interviews with 9th semester English Education students at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang. The findings show that students generally have positive views of AI paraphrasing tools, appreciating their ability to save time, improve writing quality, and reduce plagiarism risks. The main factor for using these tools include managing deadlines, simplifying complex ideas, and meeting academic requirements. Students demonstrate an awareness of academic integrity, stressing the importance of balancing AI tool usage with originality and personal effort, though concerns about over-reliance and ethical challenges remain. QuillBot is identified as the most familiar and widely used tool, with awareness shaped by peers, lecturers, and online platforms. This study highlights the value of AI paraphrasing tools in supporting academic writing while emphasizing the need for responsible use and manual refinement. It recommends that universities offer clearer guidance on ethical tool use and suggests further research to explore the long-term effects of these tools on writing development and academic integrity.


Keywords: *EFL students, AI paraphrasing tools, undergraduate thesis writing*

A thesis by Magister Program in Language Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Sriwijaya University

Name : Silvia Pratami
Student Number : 06012682327020

Approved to have a seminar of thesis examination


Eryansyah, M.A., Ph.D
Advisor 1


Machdalena Vianty, M.Ed., M.Pd., Ed.D
Advisor 2

Certified



Sary Silvhiany, M.A., Ph.D
The head of Magister Program in Language Education

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This part elaborates background, problem of the study, objective of the study, and significance of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Academic writing encompasses various forms of writing that are employed in graduate and undergraduate college-level writing courses (Johnshon, 2016). It is the process of producing, organizing, sharing, evaluating, revising, teaching, and gaining information and ideas (Fang, 2021). Certain academic disciplines require their students to complete assessment papers or proposals, such as thesis, work experience papers, or project work papers (Puspita, 2019). Overall, academic writing serves as a fundamental skill that not only supports educational assessment, but also facilitates the growth and advancement of knowledge within various fields of study.

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in Indonesia often face significant challenges when undertaking academic writing tasks, particularly when working on undergraduate thesis. Despite their proficiency in spoken English, many students struggle to express themselves effectively in written form (Uru et.al, 2021). The writing difficulties predominantly stem from language proficiency issues related to vocabulary and grammar (Bulqiyah et al., 2021). Various facets of writing that pose challenges include idea generation, content organization, language use, vocabulary, and mechanics (Agdia & Syafei, 2020). Meanwhile, paraphrasing also becomes a challenge for EFL students in academic writing (Keck, 2006; Putri, 2021). In summary, Indonesian EFL students face considerable challenges in academic writing, particularly in undergraduate theses, due to difficulties in vocabulary, grammar, idea generation, content organization, language use, and paraphrasing skills.

Since paraphrasing presents some difficulties for EFL students engaged in academic writing, it significantly impacts their ability to write effective theses. Aldabbus and Almansouri (2022) have identified key difficulties in paraphrasing, such as limited access to resources, weak English language comprehension, and

insufficient writing practice opportunities. Clarin et.al (2023) found that while paraphrasing texts, students encountered a variety of difficulties, including inadequate vocabulary, inaccurate paraphrasing tools, insufficient reading comprehension, and time-consuming. Therefore, mastering the skill of paraphrasing is crucial for EFL students to ensure proper citation and enhance overall writing proficiency in academic contexts.

Although paraphrasing presents difficulties for EFL students, it has positive aspects for them. When a student paraphrases, they rephrase concepts from a source into their own words, improving understanding and enabling a more customized way to communicate the material. Furthermore, paraphrasing ability helps the students to hinder plagiarism and improve their writing skill (Choi, 2012; Rafiqah et.al, 2023). As students work closely with the material to extract the most important ideas and rephrase them for their target audience or goal, this process fosters critical thinking. According to Khrismawan and Widiati (2013), the majority of the time, students use cognitive strategies which need critical thinking in the process when they paraphrase sentences. Thai (2021) reported that compared to those who take verbatim notes, paraphrasing leaves longer-term memory traces. In brief, paraphrasing is an important ability that promotes clear communication of difficult concepts while respecting the original source (Sidiqqe et.al, 2020).

The explanation in the previous paragraph shows that paraphrasing is the important aspect in thesis writing. It becomes important because students who paraphrase will stay away from plagiarism practices (Hasanah & Fatimah, 2019). It is relevant with the Indonesian Ministry of National Education Regulation (Permendiknas) No. 17 of 2010 about Prevention and Prevention of Plagiarism in Universities which is the rules against plagiarism that the Indonesian government has published. Under Permendiknas Number 17 of 2010 Article 12, students who are found to have plagiarized are subject to a range of punishments, such as reprimand, written warnings, and cancellation of diplomas obtained from the college. Another importance of paraphrasing is that a writer shows gratitude to other writers for using their work, and it also helps to avoid plagiarism by demonstrating that the writer has completed the reading process and examined the

reading source (Sari & Amry, 2020). In writing thesis, undergraduate students in Indonesia are increasingly concerned about avoiding plagiarism, which may be avoided with strong paraphrasing abilities (Muluk et.al, 2021).

Meanwhile, the use of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies in language learning processes is becoming more and more popular in the quickly changing field of educational technology. EFL students frequently have particular difficulties while learning the specifics of academic writing, particularly when paraphrasing texts (Mustafa et.al, 2022). An inventive solution to these problems is the application of AI-powered paraphrase tools, which provide automatic support for rephrasing information while maintaining the original meaning (Fitria, 2023). The utilization of AI-powered paraphrasing tools presents a unique intersection of technology and academia, offering students a potential resource to refine their writing skills and navigate the complexities of thesis composition. With the use of complex natural language processing algorithms, these tools help students rewrite sentences while preserving the essential idea of the original text (Fitria, 2022). Students may find it easier to overcome their challenges with syntax, structure, vocabulary, and paraphrasing technique if they have access to paraphrasing tool (Inayah & Sulistyaningrum, 2021). EFL students use paraphrasing tools because they feel that paraphrasing is harder for them as a second or foreign language learners than in their native language (Rafiqah et.al., 2023). Artificial intelligence (AI)-driven systems for paraphrasing have attracted attention as possible tools to help with the difficult work of writing undergraduate thesis, especially for students studying English as a foreign language (EFL) (Ginting et.al, 2023).

There are previous studies that investigated the perceptions that EFL students had in utilizing paraphrasing tools. For example, the study conducted by Syahnas & Fithriani (2023) reported that the students exhibited positive responses toward the utilization of *QuillBot* paraphrasing tools in academic writing. In addition, the study by Alammar & Amin (2023) also found that EFL students' perceptions toward using paraphrasing tools are favorable; they view paraphrasing tools as useful tools that have a significant impact on their academic writing process. Another study done by Aqilah & Zalfah (2023) reported that

paraphrasing tools help EFL students overcome writing challenges and also provide benefit such as convenience and time saving. While AI-powered paraphrasing tools offer potential benefits in enhancing writing efficiency and accuracy, the study of the EFL students perception in using paraphrasing tools in their writing undergraduate thesis processes, learning experiences, and academic integrity seem still limited within the context of EFL undergraduate thesis writing. That's why the researcher interested in learning more about EFL students perceptions of AI-powered paraphrasing tools in the context of undergraduate thesis writing because educational institutions work to improve the quality of academic writing and encourage creativity among undergraduate students. This research is conducted at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang because the university has a unique context in teaching English as a foreign language, which aligns with its academic and religious values. Additionally, it is important to explore how students in this environment utilize technologies such as AI paraphrasing tools, compared to students at other universities which also employ similar tools.

1.2 Problems of the Study

The problem of this present study are formulated in the following research questions.

- 1) What are EFL students' perceptions of AI paraphrasing tools in writing their undergraduate thesis?
- 2) Why do EFL students choose to use AI paraphrasing tools in their undergraduate thesis writing?
- 3) What do EFL students understand about academic integrity in the context of using AI paraphrasing tools for undergraduate thesis writing?
- 4) Which AI paraphrasing tools are EFL students familiar with, and how do they become aware of these tools?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Based on the research questions, the objectives of this present study are as follows.

- 1) To explore EFL students' perceptions of AI paraphrasing tools in the context of writing their undergraduate theses.
- 2) To identify the reasons why EFL students choose to use AI paraphrasing tools when writing their undergraduate theses.
- 3) To examine EFL students' understanding of academic integrity in relation to the use of AI paraphrasing tools for their undergraduate thesis writing.
- 4) To investigate which AI paraphrasing tools EFL students are familiar with and how they become aware of these tools.

1.4 The Significant of the Study

The significance of the study extends to various stakeholders within the academic community, including educators, researchers, policymakers, and the researcher herself. First of all, educators are essential in helping students navigate the process of writing academically. Educators will have a more nuanced grasp of how EFL students see and use AI-powered paraphrase tools when writing their undergraduate theses according to the insights gathered from this study. This information may help educators better meet the requirements of their students by informing curriculum creation, instructional tactics, and language course design. It also allows educators to customize their methods for incorporating technology into the classroom. The study's conclusions can also help educators create a welcoming climate that promotes the ethical and efficient use of AI technologies in academic writing. Second, scholars studying education, technology-enhanced learning, and languages will benefit from the study's additions to the corpus of current information. This study contributes to our knowledge of the relationship between language learning, technology, and academic writing by exploring the attitudes and determinants surrounding the usage of AI paraphrasing tools among EFL students. The results can act as a basis for the next studies, promoting more investigation into the changing dynamics of AI-assisted language instruction. Finally, the study's conclusions will be helpful to educators and technology

integration policymakers when they decide whether or not to use AI-powered paraphrase tools in language learning curriculum. Policies supporting safe and successful technology integration in educational settings may be formulated with the help of an understanding of the variables influencing the decisions made by EFL students as well as the possible effects of these tools on language competence and academic writing abilities.

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