

**INVESTIGATING THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN
THESIS WRITING OF ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM
STUDENTS AT SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY**

A THESIS

By

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English Education Study Program

Language and Arts Education Department



FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION

SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY

2024

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DECLARATION

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Certify that thesis entitled "Investigating the Use of Artificial Intelligence in Thesis Writing of English Education Study Program Students at Sriwijaya University" is my own work and did not have any plagiarism or inappropriate quotation against the ethics and rules commended by the Ministry of Education of Republic 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, 2024

Undersigned,


Salsabila Adawiyah Ripa Syahirah

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the writer's family who always supports the writer financially and mentally while studying at Sriwijaya University.

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All praise is to Allah SWT for helping the writer achieve the target to finish her thesis on time. The easiness, patience, and health when she conducted this study were all from His blessing. Although there were some challenges, He still could direct the writer achieve her goals so that she finally completed her final project and finished her study very well. Moreover, she would like to thank some people who have done a big contribution during her study, especially when she wrote this thesis.

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Salsabila Adawiyah Ripa Syahirah

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**INVESTIGATING THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN THESIS
WRITING OF ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM STUDENTS AT
SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY**

ABSTRACT

The development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a recent situation where many students use it to ease them in doing academic tasks. While it could aid students in their learning, there is a potential that it could hinder their creativity in accomplishing tasks, particularly thesis. This qualitative study investigated the use of AI in thesis writing of final semester students of English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University. It aims to find out how students sort out and use information from AI in thesis writing as well as the challenges they encountered when using AI. There were 10 students who participated in the study. The data were obtained from semi-structured interview and analyzed thematically through coding by using the framework from Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). The findings highlighted three key points. First, students sorted out information from AI by considering its alignment with their thesis topic and by still using contents from AI. Second, when students would like to use AI-generated information, they paraphrased it and aligned it with their thesis. Third, various challenges which students encountered were complex AI language, inaccurate information, overgeneralization of AI-generated information, limited access to AI features, and discrepancy between the generated information and students' expectation. The findings indicated that most students did not rely mainly on AI in thesis writing. This study provided recommendations for lecturers, students, educational institutions, and future researchers in ELT.

Keywords: *AI, thesis writing, information, English students*

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

For many years, a thesis is one of requirements for every undergraduate student to graduate. It is a study done by each student at a university level. Tiwari (2019) mentioned that a thesis is a report which contains about the researcher's study as well as its result and it is submitted to achieve an academic degree or professional certification. Writing a thesis has significance for student. Miranti et al. (2022) stated that thesis writing promotes student's learning experience to solve problems in their own field through research, analysis, conclusion making, and thesis compilation.

A thesis should be written formally by following academic writing rules. Academic thesis writing is usually characterized as a process of development and growth (Henttonen et al., 2023). An academic writing which is important to write a thesis has several things that must be considered by the researcher, such as, punctuation, grammar, spelling, the structures of sentences and paragraph, and the layout (Lestari, 2020). Due to those considerations, it is essential to pay attention in writing a thesis. Having a good writing skill could lead to a better thesis writing for conducting research. Yunus et al. (2023) emphasized that the relationship between the skill to apply a good written language and the skill in academic writing is closely related since academic writing has essential roles for students, such as, helping them to be an effective reader, fostering their writing culture, encouraging them to develop a systematic mindset, and making them more familiar with literature. Therefore, to have a good writing skill in writing a thesis, a student could learn more and practice a lot.

There are some ways to help students develop their ability in writing. First, they can choose an appropriate method to enhance writing skill. Students may use brainwriting method in which they ask others to tell their thoughts while discussing more about them through brainstorming strategies in order to generate ideas more quickly (Yulianti et al., 2019). Moreover, students may use metacognitive method which encompasses four phases known as CPAPE, such as, centering, prewriting, arranging and planning, and evaluating. Many studies agree that it is effective in enhancing writing skill (Cer, 2019; Kazemian et al., 2021; Ramadhanti & Yanda, 2021). Second, students can do a self-assessment by assessing their own writing and a peer assessment in order to receive some feedbacks toward their

writing. A study by Yanti et al., (2022) suggested that both self-assessment and peer assessment contribute to enhance writing skill among students even though peer assessment has more significant impact. Last, students can utilize technological advancement to aid them in writing. The contribution of ICT as one of technological advancements enhances students' ability in English writing (Karunakaran & Jebakumar, 2021). Other technological advancements that the students can use include social media platform, digital library or other digital platforms, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to enrich more ideas and to develop writing skill.

The newest technological advancement in educational setting is AI. AI is the capacity of a computer in identifying patterns and making actions from statistical models and available data (Hassani et al., 2020). For education, Zhai et al. (2021) stated that the AI system's generation of hierarchical reasoning improves students' learning because it could aid students in best understanding the connections between the many parts of a given subject and it has the potential to facilitate contentious interactions, which are crucial for creating a collaborative learning environment. Furthermore, AI is used for language learning. An example of AI in assisting students' language learning is the AI chatbot which has positive impacts for students (Kohnke, 2023; Mageira et al., 2022; Nghi et al., 2019). Chatbot is a computer program which functions as a virtual assistant and a communication tool between the human and the bot and it has gained a lot of popularity in recent years, mostly because of significant advancements in AI, machine learning, and other underlying technologies like neural networks and natural language processing (Gupta et al., 2020).

In relation to language learning, AI could aid students in writing. There are AI-based paraphrasing tool and AI chatbot which the students can utilize to help them in writing. Paraphrasing tool powered by AI enables students to paraphrase or replace words in sentences from other sources without changing the meaning that makes students easier in doing writing. As an example, AI-based paraphrasing tool for writing is QuillBot. QuillBot is an AI tool which aids students in paraphrasing texts and overcoming problems that come with it (Mohammad et al., 2023). Using it could improve students' writing (Amyatun & Kholis, 2023; Fitria, 2021; Syahnaz & Fithriani, 2023). In addition, AI chatbot, program which responds to its users' queries that facilitates interaction, may benefit students in writing. It can provide source and generalize prompts that the students can use to find out more ideas toward their writing. A study by Kwon et al. (2023) indicated that most experimental group participants in their study who had written with a chatbot told that the

usage was helpful and good for enhancing their writing abilities. There are many AI chatbots which the students can use for writing. One of the examples that could ease students in writing activities is ChatGPT. Fitria (2023) stated that one of the features of AI ChatGPT is it can create texts for writing, such as, movie scripts, literary work, and academic articles. Since AI has advantages for writing, students can employ it to complete writing tasks like essay, research paper or article, and even thesis.

Using AI in thesis writing may become easier, but it requires special attention by students. Since a thesis is a formal writing which must be written academically, it is essential for the students to ensure the credibility of the information they put in their thesis if they use prompt or information generated by AI. Just because AI is being employed or making judgments in a multi-agent system, it does not mean that its system can be trusted (Ryan, 2020). Due to that, AI literacy is an important skill for students when using AI to aid them in thesis writing. Long and Magerko (2020) explained AI literacy as a set of skills that people may use in utilizing AI as a tool through online, at home, and at work, interacting and collaborating with AI in an efficient way, and critically evaluating AI technologies. Therefore, if students would like to utilize AI, having an AI literacy will guide them to carefully select information for thesis writing in order to ensure a credible information.

There have been studies about the use of AI in educational field, especially in teaching and learning process. In the field of language instruction, some studies have also been conducted. In international context, studies from various countries have examined the area of Generative AI like ChatGPT for writing, such as in China (Song & Song, 2023; Wei, 2023), in Taiwan (Tseng & Lin, 2024), in the United States of America (Wang, 2024), in Croatia (Črček & Patekar, 2023), and in South Africa (Maphoto et al., 2024). Moreover, in Indonesian context, studies about AI tools for writing have also been carried out (Malik et al., 2023; Marzuki et al., 2023; Rahma & Fithriani, 2024; Syahnaz & Fithriani, 2023). Furthermore, in South Sumatra regional context, studies about AI in language learning have not been found yet. However, training related to the use of AI in the field of education has been initiated (Marcellino et al., 2023; Yulianti et al., 2024). Particularly, a study related to the use of AI in thesis writing of undergraduate students, especially in the field of English Education has not been of interest for students. Therefore, this study is meant to investigate the use of AI in thesis writing at university.

1.2 The Problems of the Study

In relation to the background of this study, the problems of the study are formulated into the following research questions:

1. How do students of English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University sort out information from AI in thesis writing?
2. How do students of English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University use information obtained from AI in thesis writing?
3. What challenges do students of English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University encounter when using AI in thesis writing?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

From the problems of the study, this study aims to:

1. Find out how students of English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University sort out information from AI in thesis writing.
2. Find out how students of English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University use information obtained from AI in thesis writing.
3. Find out the challenges that students of English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University encounter when using AI in thesis writing.

1.4 The Significance of the Study

The result of this study can be beneficial for future researchers, lecturers, and students.

For future researchers, the study could provide information and serve as an additional source about the students' manners in using AI for thesis writing including the challenges and the solutions which the future researchers can use for conducting future research related to the use of AI by the students in writing.

For lecturers, the study encourages the lecturers to understand students' attitudes toward information generated by AI in thesis writing and the challenges the students encounter while writing thesis, so they can guide and direct them better in making a good thesis.

For students, the study benefits them in providing the information about the appropriate way to use AI in thesis writing especially in sorting out and using the information obtained by the AI so that they will not misuse AI in their academic writing. It also provides the

information about the challenges in using AI for thesis writing which the students can prepare more to encounter them.

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