

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research background, research questions, research objectives, research significances, research scope, conceptual framework, and previous studies.

A. Research Background

Drama-based performance has increasingly gained recognition as a meaningful approach to teaching and learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), a trend that continues to be supported by growing empirical evidence. At the higher education level, English Education programs have seen a notable rise in the incorporation of drama projects as a vehicle for project-based learning, through which students are encouraged to engage with the language in ways that are both authentic and performance-driven (Luo et al., 2024). Participating in such activities allows students to strengthen their language skills in an integrated manner, while simultaneously experiencing broader developmental gains — including heightened creativity, greater motivation, and improved confidence in English use (Dawoud et al., 2024; Wirag, 2024). In this regard, drama projects serve as a holistic educational experience that extends well beyond the boundaries of traditional language instruction.

Yet, of all the elements that constitute a drama project, none is more foundational than the script, as it serves as the written base upon which the entire performance is built. Within this pedagogical context, the drama script becomes one of the most important components of a drama project because it serves as the written foundation of the entire performance. However, writing a drama script is not a simple task. Compared with more conventional writing tasks such as essays or descriptive paragraphs, script writing requires students to handle multiple demands simultaneously, developing a coherent plot, creating distinct character voices, writing natural dialogue, and following the structural conventions of the dramatic genre, all in a foreign language (Nisa et al., 2024). In addition, drama script writing often involves repeated revision and collaboration with peers, making the process inherently recursive and cognitively demanding (Luo et al., 2024). For

this reason, script writing is not merely a language activity; it is a genre-specific form of creative writing that requires creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration all at once (Nisa et al., 2024). Research has shown that EFL students frequently encounter difficulties in this type of writing task. As Andani et al. (2023) found, students struggled particularly with tense consistency, generic structure, and developing engaging storylines. Consequently, the script becomes not only the most important product of the drama project, but also the stage at which students' broader writing limitations become most visible — challenges that are deeply rooted in the wider difficulties EFL learners face in writing.

In line with this, drama script writing difficulties are not unique to that genre alone; they are part of a larger pattern of writing struggles that EFL learners commonly experience across different contexts. Among all language skills, writing stands out as particularly challenging because it requires learners to simultaneously generate and organize ideas while conveying meaning with grammatical precision in a foreign language (Abbas & Fathira, 2022). Studies have documented that EFL students regularly encounter obstacles related to limited vocabulary, weak grammatical control, poor sentence construction, and underdeveloped ideas, all of which undermine the overall quality of their written output (Risang, 2023). Within the Indonesian EFL setting, such obstacles tend to surface more prominently as learners move from secondary to tertiary education. Sulukiyyah et al. (2026) surveyed 315 first-year EFL university students and found that organizing ideas was the single most difficult aspect of writing, with grammatical control and sentence construction also emerging as significant areas of struggle. Faced with these foundational gaps, students are then expected to take on genre-specific tasks such as drama script writing — a form of writing that adds creative and structural layers on top of already demanding linguistic requirements.

Under such conditions, conventional writing instruction alone is unlikely to be sufficient. What students need, instead, is more responsive and targeted support, the kind that AI-powered writing tools have recently begun to offer. The rapid development of AI technology particularly tools such as ChatGPT has brought considerable change to how EFL writing is taught and practiced. Rather than

functioning solely as a grammar checker, AI has taken on a more active role, with many university students now incorporating it across multiple phases of their writing (Seo, 2024) . A number of studies have pointed to real benefits when EFL students use AI in their writing. Song and Song (2023) studied the use of ChatGPT among learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). They found that ChatGPT could provide instant and personalized feedback on aspects such as grammar, vocabulary, and text organization, contributing to higher levels of writing motivation. Mahapatra (2024) also showed that having AI support made the writing process less mentally exhausting for ESL learners, and their texts came out more accurate as a result. These findings collectively suggest that AI has become a significant presence in EFL writing contexts, making it increasingly important to understand how students themselves perceive and navigate its use.

This phenomenon of AI use in writing was also found in a more specific context, namely at an English Education program at a state Islamic university in West Java, Indonesia. In this program, fourth-semester students enrolled in the Literature in English Language Teaching (ELT) course are required to complete a drama performance project as their major course assignment, in which each class is responsible for performing a drama as well as independently writing the script. Based on preliminary observations conducted through informal conversations with several scriptwriters from the 2023 batch — who had previously completed a similar project in the form of a short movie production — it was found that they used AI tools, particularly ChatGPT, to assist them in the scriptwriting process. This finding then raised the question of whether the same pattern also occurs among the 2024 batch who are currently undertaking a drama performance project, and more importantly, how these students perceive their experience of using AI throughout that process. Therefore, this study aims to investigate EFL students' perceptions of using AI in writing their drama scripts as part of a drama project in the Literature in ELT course, specifically regarding the role, benefits, and challenges of AI use as perceived by fourth-semester English Education students of the 2024 batch.

Several studies have been conducted in areas related to the present research. Andani et al. (2023) found that EFL students experienced difficulties in writing short drama scripts, particularly intense consistency, generic structure, and storyline development, though AI involvement was not examined. Seo (2024) explored ChatGPT use in EFL narrative writing and found that students primarily relied on AI for grammar and vocabulary assistance, drama script writing was not addressed. In the Indonesian context, Werdiningsih et al. (2024) highlighted that while EFL students consider AI beneficial for writing, their study was limited to academic writing, leaving creative writing contexts unexplored. Mustika et al. (2025) further found that Gen-AI scaffolding positively supported Indonesian university students' creative writing output. However, none of these studies has specifically investigated how EFL students perceive AI use in drama script writing within a structured university course, a gap that the present study seeks to address.

Based on the studies reviewed above, the present study is proposed to address the gap identified. This gap is particularly pressing at the current moment, as generative AI tools are now widely accessible and increasingly embedded in students' academic lives, yet institutional guidance on their responsible use in creative writing tasks remains limited. Understanding how students perceive AI is not only academically relevant but also practically important for educators designing literature-based projects, for institutions developing AI use policies, and for students themselves navigating the boundary between technological assistance and creative ownership. It is therefore not enough to simply acknowledge that students use AI; what matters equally is understanding how their actual experience of using AI in that process looks like, and how they perceive the role of AI throughout their scriptwriting process, two dimensions that the present study directly seeks to explore.

B. Research Questions

Based on the background of the research, the following research questions are formulated:

1. What are the EFL university students' experiences of using AI in writing scripts for their drama project?
2. How do EFL university students perceive the role of AI tools in supporting their scriptwriting process for their drama project?

C. Research Purposes

Based on the research questions above, this research aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To explore EFL university students' experiences of using AI in writing scripts for their drama project.
2. To examine EFL university students' perceptions of the role of AI tools in supporting their scriptwriting process for their drama project.

D. Research Significances

This study is expected to provide both theoretical and practical significance in examining of EFL learning, particularly in relation to the use AI in script writing for drama projects.

1. Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, this study contributes to the discussion of AI use in EFL writing by focusing on script writing for drama projects. Previous studies have more often discussed AI in general writing or academic writing, while its use in drama-related writing tasks is still less commonly explored. Therefore, this study may offer a better understanding of how EFL students perceive and experience the use of AI in writing scripts for their drama project.

2. Practical Significance

Practically, the findings of this study may be useful for lecturers and future researchers. For lecturers, the findings may help them understand how students use AI during the scriptwriting process and support them in planning more relevant learning activities. For students this study serves as a valuable tool for self-

reflection. It encourages students to evaluate their own engagement with AI tools, helping them become more mindful and responsible in leveraging technology to improve their creative writing process and linguistic competence.

E. Research Scope

This research explores EFL students' perceptions of using Artificial Intelligence (AI) in writing their drama script projects. The scope of this research is limited to students of the English Language Education Department, specifically the 2024 cohort at one of the state Islamic universities in Indonesia. The population of this research consists of drama scriptwriters from five classes who were involved in a drama script project as part of the Literature in ELT course. All twelve scriptwriters from these five classes were involved as questionnaire respondents to gain a general overview of AI usage patterns, while scriptwriters from two selected classes were further involved in the in-depth interviews and document analysis to explore their experiences and perceptions in more depth.

The research focuses on two main aspects: students' experiences of using AI tools throughout the project and their perceptions of the role of AI in supporting their scriptwriting process. To address these focuses, the study employs a qualitative approach. The data are collected through in-depth interviews with selected participants, questionnaires and document analysis of AI prompt screenshots submitted by the students during the process of developing their drama script projects.

This study does not examine the quality of the scripts produced or evaluate the effectiveness of AI tools in a broader sense. Instead, it highlights the students' own perspectives and experiences in using AI as part of their creative writing process.

F. Conceptual Framework

This study is situated within a specific learning context, namely a drama project conducted as part of the Literature in English Language Teaching (ELT) course. In this project, students work collaboratively to design and perform a drama. The project involves several stages, including script writing, rehearsals, and the final performance before an audience, making the drama script one of the main products

that underpins the entire project (Thomas, 2000; Sirisrimangkorn, 2018). During the scriptwriting process, students may utilize various AI tools to support idea development, revision, and improvements in grammar, vocabulary, and text organization (Song & Song, 2023). Therefore, this study focuses on two key concepts: drama scripts and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Drama script writing falls within the domain of creative writing, which is an artistic form of expression that relies on imagination to convey meaning and traditionally encompasses genres such as fiction, poetry, and drama (Earnshaw, 2007). Within this domain, drama scripts occupy a distinctive position. A drama script is a genre-specific text with a clear social purpose, namely to communicate a narrative through performance. What distinguishes it from other genres is its unique structure and linguistic features, including dialogue, stage directions, character development, and the sequencing of dramatic events (Knapp & Watkins, 2005). Knapp and Watkins (2005) further argue that effective writing within a genre involves more than grammatical accuracy; it also requires an understanding of the text's social purpose and organizational structure. In this study, the term *drama script* refers specifically to the written scripts produced by fourth-semester EFL students as the final product of their drama project in the Literature in ELT course.

The second key concept in this study is Artificial Intelligence (AI). In the context of writing, AI tools refer to various artificial intelligence-based applications that can support writers throughout the writing process, ranging from grammar and spelling correction to vocabulary development and content generation. These tools are designed to provide automated feedback on different aspects of writing, including organization, coherence, grammar, and vocabulary, thereby helping writers improve the quality of their texts more effectively (Song & Song, 2023). Commonly used AI tools in writing contexts include Grammarly for grammar and style correction, ChatGPT for idea development and content generation, and QuillBot for paraphrasing and vocabulary enhancement (Song & Song, 2023). In this study, AI refers to the AI tools used by students throughout the process of writing their drama scripts, with the focus limited to their role as writing support tools in the scriptwriting process.

In the context of this study, perceptions are defined as the process by which students interpret, assess, and make meaning from their experience of using AI during the drama script writing process. To analyze these perceptions in a more structured way, this study uses the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) proposed by Davis (1989) as its primary analytical framework. Davis (1989) argues that whether someone accepts or rejects a technology comes down to two things: perceived usefulness, or the extent to which they believe the technology will improve their performance, and perceived ease of use, or the extent to which they believe it will be easy to use. With these two dimensions of TAM as the analytical lens, this study aims to build a fuller picture of how EFL students make sense of AI's role in their drama script writing, both in terms of their perceptions of AI and their experiences of using it throughout the writing process. These two dimensions directly correspond to the two research questions guiding this study.

Besides these two TAM dimensions, this study also considers perceived convenience, as proposed by Chang and Tseng (2012), who define convenience in technology use as how easily a tool can be accessed at any time and place with minimal effort. This aspect is considered important because it can also affect how students access and use AI while working on their drama scripts. These three aspects, usefulness, ease of use, and perceived convenience, are then connected to three domains of Bloom's Taxonomy, namely cognitive, affective, and psychomotor, in order to see how students' acceptance of AI appears in a more concrete way. The cognitive domain can be seen from how students judge the usefulness and ease of AI in helping them think and develop ideas for their script. The affective domain can be seen from students' emotional responses while using AI, such as their motivation or worries. Meanwhile, the psychomotor domain relates to students' skill in processing and adjusting AI output into their own writing. This approach, which combines TAM and Bloom's Taxonomy, is also in line with several studies on the use of AI in EFL writing learning, which also show that students' technology acceptance cannot be separated from their cognitive, affective, and psychomotor sides during the writing process (Wang & Stockwell, 2025; Teng, 2024; Boers et al., 2025).

Overall, this conceptual framework demonstrates that EFL students' perceptions of AI use in drama script writing are shaped by the dynamic interaction between perceived benefits, perceived challenges, and the perceived role of AI throughout the writing process in the Literature in ELT course.

G. Previous Studies

Several previous studies have examined the role of AI and writing in EFL contexts, providing a relevant foundation for the present study. The first study was carried out by Seo (2024), who explored the educational potential of ChatGPT specifically on AI-Assisted Narrative Writing for EFL College Students. Drawing on data from 44 university students in South Korea, the study looked into how these students interacted with ChatGPT during narrative writing tasks, as well as how such AI-assisted writing affected their writing outcomes. It was found that students most commonly turned to ChatGPT for help with language-related matters, making revisions, and gathering information, and that their writing fluency and general performance showed meaningful growth following the intervention. While the present study similarly explores how AI functions as a support tool for EFL learners in the writing process, it takes a different direction by centering on how students perceive AI when composing drama scripts as part of a project-based activity, as opposed to evaluating writing performance in narrative tasks.

The second study was carried out by Andani, Unsiah, and Gozali (2023). Using a quantitative descriptive approach, the study identified the most prominent difficulties encountered by 106 eleventh-grade Indonesian students as they worked on short drama scripts rooted in narrative texts, with a questionnaire probing three areas of difficulty: physiological, linguistic, and cognitive. Contrary to what might be expected, the students did not report significant struggles in any of these areas, an outcome attributed to their adequate foundational knowledge, the application of cooperative learning in class, and their familiarity with narrative texts gained through earlier practice. This study is closely relevant to the present research as it also examines drama script writing among Indonesian EFL students; however, the present study extends this by incorporating AI as a writing tool and investigating

how students perceive its role in the scriptwriting process, rather than focusing solely on the challenges of writing without technological assistance.

Mustika, Sobari, and Wikanengsih (2025) conducted a quasi-experimental study investigating the effectiveness of individual and group guided writing strategies based on Generative AI (Gen-AI) and multimedia on students' creative thinking skills and composition creativity in short story writing. The study involved 253 high school students at IKIP Siliwangi, Bandung, Indonesia. Data were collected through the Torrance Creative Thinking Test, a composition creativity scale, and focus group interviews. The results showed that Gen-AI-based guided writing strategies led to notable gains in students' creative thinking, particularly in how freely and origin.

Additionally, they could generate and develop ideas for their stories. Focus group interviews added another layer to these findings. Students themselves reported that having Gen-AI as a scaffold made it easier to come up with ideas, picture story elements in their minds, and build their narratives. That said, the study was carried out in the context of Indonesian language education rather than EFL, and understanding how students perceived AI was not the main concern of the research. Therefore, while this study provides valuable evidence of Gen-AI's contribution to creative writing, the present research extends this line of inquiry by focusing specifically on EFL students' perceptions of AI use in drama script writing within a structured university course.

Building on the studies above, the present study addresses a gap that remains underexplored in the existing literature. While previous research has investigated AI's impact on writing performance (Seo, 2024), students' challenges in drama script writing (Andani et al., 2023), and the effectiveness of Gen-AI-based strategies on creative writing (Mustika & Sobari, 2025), none of these studies have specifically examined EFL students' perceptions of using AI in the context of writing scripts for a drama project. The present study therefore seeks to fill this gap by exploring how EFL university students perceive the role of AI as a writing tool within a structured drama project, considering both the benefits they experience and the challenges they encounter throughout the scriptwriting process.