

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter delineates the technique employed in executing the research. The document encompasses the research design, research environment, participants, instruments, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques. This chapter aims to deliver a coherent and methodical account of the study's execution to address the research questions. Each element is meticulously detailed to guarantee the transparency and dependability of the study methodology.

A. Research Design

According to research approach theory, there are two primary approaches for designing research projects, the qualitative approach and the quantitative approach. Creswell (1994) described qualitative research as an investigative process that seeks to comprehend a social or human issue using certain methodological approaches. The study is conducted in a natural environment, language and discourse are analyzed, and participant perspectives are presented in detail. The goal of this type of research is to create a comprehensive and complex depiction.

The researcher utilised a descriptive qualitative research design in this study. This approach is suitable for exploring and describing participants' perceptions, attitudes, and experiences related to a particular phenomenon in depth. Descriptive qualitative research does not rely on numerical data but

emphasizes understanding the meaning and context behind participants' responses. As Merriam (2009) explains, this method seeks to provide rich descriptions of a phenomenon as experienced by individuals in their real-life contexts.

This study aims to describe English language education students' perceptions of the ethical issues related to the use of AI tools in writing assignments and to explore how these students apply responsible practices when using such tools. The data were gathered using semi-structured interviews with chosen individuals and analysed thematically. This technique facilitates a thorough comprehension of the ethical implications of AI in academic writing from the students' perspective by emphasising precise, context-specific viewpoints. This study followed several procedures in accordance with descriptive qualitative research principles. The steps were adapted from the qualitative research framework proposed by Creswell (2014) and Merriam (2009), which emphasize flexible, yet systematic processes to gather and analyze data in natural settings.

1 Identifying the Research Problem

The researcher initiated the study by pinpointing a pertinent issue within the domain of English language education, focussing on students' ethical perceptions regarding the utilisation of AI tools in academic writing.

2 Determining the Participants

Participants were selected through purposive sampling. This method allows researchers to intentionally choose individuals who have rich knowledge and direct experience related to the research topic (Merriam, 2009).

3 Collecting the Data

Data collection was carried out through semi-structured interviews. This technique provided flexibility for participants to express their thoughts openly, while also allowing the researcher to maintain focus on key topics. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and organized for analysis.

4 Analyzing the Data

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis, which involves coding and identifying emerging patterns or themes in the participants' responses. Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework guided the analysis, comprising familiarisation with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report.

5 Presenting the Findings

The findings were presented descriptively to illustrate the students' perceptions and the ethical concerns they experienced when using AI tools. The researcher ensured that participants' voices were highlighted through direct quotations and rich narrative descriptions.

6 Drawing Conclusions

The researcher concluded, based on the analysed data, the characteristics of students' ethical awareness and responsible strategies in their engagement with AI in academic writing.

B. Research Setting

The research was carried out within the English Language Education Study Program at the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, Antasari State Islamic University (UIN Antasari). The study was conducted in 2025.

The choice of this setting was based on several academic considerations. Firstly, UIN Antasari is a prominent Islamic higher education institution in Indonesia that integrates modern pedagogical approaches with Islamic values, making it a suitable environment for exploring ethical considerations in technology use. Secondly, the English Language Education Study Program is recognised for its active incorporation of educational technology, including AI tools, within the teaching and learning process. This made it an ideal context to investigate students' perceptions of AI usage in writing assignments. Finally, the accessibility of participants who have had direct experience using AI tools in academic writing ensured the feasibility and relevance of data collection.

C. Participants

This research involved four students from the English Language Education Department within the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training at

UIN Antasari Banjarmasin, all of whom had experience utilising AI tools for their writing assignments. All participants had fulfilled their coursework requirements prior to their thesis defence. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, a method commonly used in qualitative research to ensure the inclusion of individuals with specific characteristics relevant to the study. The researcher identified students who met the following criteria: (1) active enrollment in the English Language Education Program, (2) documented experience using AI tools such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, or QuillBot for academic writing tasks, and (3) willingness to provide reflections through interviews. This selection approach was intended to gather rich, focused insights from participants who could speak directly to the ethical issues surrounding AI use in academic writing.

The data include the students' perceptions of the ethical issues of using AI and how the students use them responsibly, which are obtained from the semi-structured interviews and interview transcript provided by four students as the sources of data.

D. Technique of Data Collection

The primary method employed for data collection is a semi-structured interview. The primary aim of the interviews conducted for this study is to explore students' experiences with utilising AI technologies to assist them in completing their academic assignments. Interviews are carried out with four

users of AI tools to collect data. Unstructured interviews facilitated open dialogues and allowed for clarification requests as necessary, whereas structured interviews established a framework for gathering specific data. Structured interviews provided a systematic approach for gathering accurate information, while unstructured interviews facilitated open-ended discussions and opportunities for clarification.

In this research, the researcher used an interview guideline for obtaining and collecting data. The type of interview chosen by the researcher is an interview and is combined with semi-structured interview. The researcher compiled this interview guideline based on the research questions. The researcher divided the interview guideline into four sections, each focusing on different research objectives. there were two indicators designed to answer specific research questions. The first section is demographic information, the second section discusses students' perceptions of ethical issues, the third section discusses students' responsible use of AI Tools, and the fourth discusses impact of using AI use on writing skills. The results of this interview are written in an interview script which be used as discussion material in fourth chapter.

E. Data Collecting Procedure

The data collection procedure for this research involves several steps to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the data:

1. Preparation:

- a. An Interview guide should be developed from the research questions.
- b. Choose participants that have experience in use AI tools for writing academic tasks

2. Conducting Interviews:

- a. Conduct semi-structured interviews with 4 participants.
- b. Record and transcribe the interviews for analysis.

3. Data Analysis:

- a. Apply thematic analysis in determining major themes and patterns in the data of the interview.
- b. A Divide the data into categories in line to the research questions and the theoretical framework.

F. Data Analysis

According to Caulfield (2023), thematic analysis is a method utilised for the examination of qualitative data. Typically, it is applied to a compilation of texts, including transcripts or interviews. Identifying recurring themes—topics, concepts, and patterns of meaning—necessitates a thorough examination of the data.

Braun and Victoria (2022) developed this procedure as a foundational element for their psychological research. Nevertheless, thematic analysis serves as a versatile method applicable to various research endeavours. Here are additional details regarding each procedure:

1. Familiarization

The researcher began the analysis by immersing themselves in the data. This process involved transcribing all audio-recorded interviews into written form and reading the transcripts multiple times. Through repeated readings and note-taking, the researcher became familiar with the content and developed a preliminary understanding of the participants' perspectives.

2. Coding

After familiarization, the researcher systematically coded the transcripts. Coding was conducted by identifying significant statements, phrases, or sentences that related to the research questions. Each code represented an important feature of the data, such as “dependence on AI,” “plagiarism concerns,” “originality,” “transparency,” or “responsible use.” These codes were applied across all four participants’ responses.

3. Generating themes

Once the codes were developed, the researcher grouped similar codes together to form broader categories known as themes. For example, codes related to students' reliance on AI were grouped under the theme “Dependency on AI,” while codes about grammar correction, language improvement, and idea development were combined into the theme “Perceived Benefits of AI Tools.”

4. Reviewing

The themes were then reviewed to ensure they accurately represented the coded data and the overall dataset. During this phase, the researcher re-read

the transcripts to confirm whether the themes were consistent with the data. Some themes were refined or merged for clarity and coherence. For instance, themes related to rules and educator guidance were combined into “Institutional and Educational Responsibility.”.

5. Defining and naming themes

Each final theme was carefully defined and named to encapsulate its core idea. The following are the key themes identified:

- a. Perceived Benefits of AI Tools
- b. Dependency on AI
- c. Plagiarism and Originality
- d. Transparency and Academic Integrity
- e. Responsible Use of AI
- f. Institutional and Educational Responsibility

Each theme was supported by sub-themes and key quotes from participants, allowing for rich descriptions and deeper analysis of students' ethical awareness.

6. Writing up

Ultimately, the results were presented narratively in Chapter IV, where each theme was discussed in detail with supporting quotations from participants (P1 to P4). The discussion was interwoven with relevant literature to contextualize the findings. Each section began with the presentation of findings and was followed by an interpretation that connects to existing ethical and

pedagogical debates in academic writing and AI usage. The chapter concluded by synthesizing the key insights and showing how they addressed the research questions regarding students' ethical perceptions and responsible use of AI tools.