CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

With the increasing prominence of digital learning environments, the way in which students engage with writing has dramatically evolved. Traditional classroom-based writing instruction is increasingly being supplemented, and in some cases reshaped, by alternative forms of learning. However, this shift presents new challenges for both students and educators, particularly in maintaining academic writing standards. One potential solution lies in strengthening interactive instructional support throughout the writing process, guided by lecturers and tailored to students' individual needs. This thesis seeks to explore how enhanced instructional support can help develop academic writing skills in evolving learning environments. By the meaning of enchanced here is the way the academic writing skills were also supported by both lecturer as the expert and the help of AI as a digital support of students' writing.

1.1 Rationale

The rise of digital learning environments has transformed the way students develop writing skills, offering new tools and platforms that enhance engagement and accessibility. Moreover, Artificial Intelligence (AI) nowadays can help students or any academic writer to develop their ideas more. Typing on a digital device offers automatic writing support that isn't available to students using pencil and paper (Spilling, 2023). Even though basic writing tools can help with things like grammar and spelling, many students still find it difficult to improve their overall writing skills, especially when they're learning on their own in online courses that don't offer much instructional support. In traditional classroom settings, students benefit from immediate feedback and direct guidance, which are key to building strong writing abilities. But this kind of support often isn't available in remote learning environments. This study looks at how providing more structured and personalized instructional support, like clear feedback, step-by-step guidance, and opportunities to work with others and lecturer, can help students become better writers in academic learning settings. However, in this academic writing class, besides using digital tools such as AI to help students' ideas, both instructional

support from the expert such as lecturers and the help of others (peers) was done to be a one collaborative writing. Hence, students could get more guidance than to be dependent on a mere digital tool such as AI.

Truong & Nguyen (2024) discusses how instructional support in EFL classrooms helps bridge the gap between Western pedagogical approaches and local teaching practices, allowing teachers to effectively adapt instructional strategies. Hence Instructional support in writing involves tailored strategies that address individual student needs, ensuring that learners with difficulties receive structured and adaptive guidance. In writing, Instructional support refers to the structured guidance provided to learners to enhance their writing skills, particularly in digital or classroom settings. This support can take various forms, including scaffolding, feedback, modeling, and the use of digital tools to aid learning. Despite the increasing integration of digital tools in education, students often face difficulties in structuring their ideas, maintaining coherence, and refining their writing. While existing digital platforms provide automated grammar checks and plagiarism detection, they do not adequately support higher-order writing skills such as argument development, critical thinking, and stylistic refinement. Additionally, many digital writing environments lack real-time, personalized support that mirrors the role of an instructor. However, no matter how smart AI is, students need to be guided by the expert such as lecturer in how to have a proper writing process started from deciding what to write, research, and how to conduct it. Hence, as Luckin et al. (2022) examines that AI readiness for lecturers and educators, especially in academic writing, isn't just about knowing how to use tools like ChatGPT or Grammarly. It's more about how thoughtfully and responsibly they integrate AI into the writing process.

Right now, readiness varies a lot. Some educators are already using AI effectively, for brainstorming, outlining, language refinement, even giving feedback. In that sense, AI can support efficiency and help non-native English writers' express ideas more clearly. For students, it can also model structure and academic tone when used properly.

Some students may feel uncertain about their abilities when they struggle to express their ideas clearly, especially in writing. This can impact their

confidence and sense of ownership over their work. That's why the role of the lecturer in guiding and supporting the writing process is so important. With the increasing use of digital tools like online communities, translation services, and collaborative platforms, it becomes even more essential to have clear instructional support and ethical guidelines in place to help students develop original, thoughtful work. Academic writing is a process of critical thinking, reflection, and communication that is best developed through sustained guidance from educators. This kind of support helps ensure that students not only avoid plagiarism but also find and express their own academic voice in assignments like essays, articles, and research theses.

In academic writing, students often face challenges that go beyond grammar and structure, they also need help with developing ideas, choosing suitable research topics, and selecting appropriate methods. This is where lecturers' insight becomes essential. Through instructional support such as recommending research titles, offering one-on-one consultations, and guiding students in choosing suitable methodologies, lecturer help students shape their work from the earliest stages. This kind of support not only helps maintain academic integrity but also ensures the originality and relevance of student research.

Rather than only relying solely on digital tools or automated writing assistance, students benefit more when these resources are used alongside consistent feedback and expert guidance from their instructors along with the use of digital tools together. Without this support, students may risk producing work that lacks depth, critical thinking, or a clear academic voice. Lecturer help bridge this gap by encouraging students to reflect on their ideas, refine their arguments, and stay aligned with ethical academic practices such as proper citation and avoiding plagiarism.

By actively involving themselves in students' writing processes—helping with topic selection, research direction, and methodological advice—lecturers create a learning environment where students can grow into independent and thoughtful academic writers. This type of structured, personalized support allows learners, especially in EFL contexts, to build confidence and develop higher-order writing skills like argument development, coherence, and critical analysis.

Spilling et al. (2023) explored the differential effects of handwriting versus digital writing on young learners in their article titled *Writing by hand or digitally in first grade: Effects on rate of learning to compose text*, published in *Reading and Writing*. This study found that first-grade students who practiced handwriting showed a faster rate of improvement in composing coherent texts than those using digital tools. The results support the idea that the motoric and sensory experiences involved in handwriting may enhance cognitive processes associated with learning to write. The study emphasizes the educational implications for choosing instructional tools in early literacy development.

Ruffini et al. (2023) how executive functions (EF) such as inhibitory control, working memory, and cognitive flexibility impact children's text comprehension and writing in both digital and paper modes. Involving 175 students from grades 3–5, it found that children with lower EF performance gained more from the digital environment, especially in reading and writing tasks. Specifically, working memory was key in explaining differences in comprehension, while cognitive flexibility accounted for challenges due to increased task complexity and word use. The findings support using digital modes for low-performing readers and writers, emphasizing that digital tools may serve as cognitive support.

Truong & Nguyen (2024) explored the classroom practices of Western-trained Vietnamese EFL teachers using an activity theory lens. The study revealed a tension between the teachers newly acquired pedagogical beliefs (favoring student-centered, communicative approaches) and their implementation in Vietnamese classrooms, where institutional expectations and student passivity were prevalent. This misalignment resulted in adaptations and compromises in classroom practices. The study highlights how sociocultural factors mediate the application of foreign-acquired pedagogical knowledge in home teaching contexts

Chen & Jong (2025) investigated peer assessment helps improve students' writing and supports self-regulated learning, but it can still cause anxiety and writing difficulties. A study with 77 elementary students in China found that combining peer assessment with augmented reality (AR) improved writing performance, metacognitive skills, and reduced writing anxiety compared to peer assessment alone. The AR-supported approach also increased students' motivation and helped them overcome writing challenges. This relates to instructional support because structured tools like AR and

guided peer feedback act as scaffolding that strengthens the quality of instructional support. When teachers provide clearer guidance and supportive learning environments, students engage more confidently and effectively in writing tasks.

Yeki et al. (2025) explored how AI has changed academic writing by helping students with tasks such as idea generation, structuring, and editing. One widely used tool is ChatGPT, which students perceive as useful and easy to use. A study of 205 students from Tanjungpura University found high positive perceptions and strong intention to continue using AI for research writing. However, AI also has clear limitations in academic writing. It cannot fully replace critical thinking, originality, and deep academic analysis. It may produce inaccurate information or weak arguments, and overreliance on it can reduce students' writing and reasoning skills. Therefore, AI should be used as a support tool, not a replacement for students' own intellectual work.

Although each study addresses writing instruction, they differ in focus, context, and learner population, revealing important gaps for future research. Spilling et al. (2023) and Ruffini et al. (2023) examined handwriting versus digital writing, with Ruffini highlighting that students with weaker executive functions benefit more from digital tools, a nuance often overlooked. In contrast, Nguyen (2024) shed light on how sociocultural constraints affect Western-trained teachers' ability to apply student-centered writing pedagogy, suggesting a need for better support systems. Studies by Wang (2024) and Ikawati (2020) emphasized individualized instruction, through diagnostics or differentiation, as effective, yet more research is needed on scalable, long-term implementations. Chen & Jong (2025) added that motivation plays a key role in writing success, an area underexplored compared to cognitive approaches. Lastly, Yeki et al. (2025) raised concerns about AI tools like ChatGPT, which may help output but reduce students' sense of authorship.

This research addresses a gap by exploring the role of instructional support frameworks tailored to digital writing environments, this study looks at how working closely with lecturer during the academic writing process can help students improve their work. Lahza et al. (2025) had a perception that student in the scripted condition produced more detailed and higher-quality feedback, while also demonstrating a more critical approach in their evaluations than those in the self-

monitoring condition. It focuses on the kind of instructional support lecturer give—such as suggesting research topics, helping with structure, and giving feedback—and how this guidance supports students step by step. While many past studies have focused on students working independently or general writing strategies, this research highlights the importance of ongoing collaboration between lecturer and students.

The novelty is its focus on how this collaboration actually happens in the classroom and how it shapes students' writing. Rather than seeing writing as a task student do alone, this study shows how the writing process becomes stronger when students and lecturer work together throughout. Furthermore, this collaborative instructional approach immerses students directly in the practical act of writing rather than focusing only on theoretical frameworks for producing academic texts, such as research articles or mini-projects. By receiving lecturer feedback, supported by AI tools, and enriched through peer discussion, students learn by doing: they engage with the authentic writing process itself, transforming abstract knowledge into lived academic practice. The research offers useful strategies that other lecturer can apply to help students gain confidence, improve their writing skills, and feel more supported in their academic journey.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the rationale, the research questions to be addressed are as follows:

1. How does lecturer provide instructional support to help students writing process in academic writing course?
2. How does collaboration between students and lecturers contribute to students' academic writing development?

1.3 Research Objectives

This research aims to:

1. To investigate how lecturer provide instructional support to assist students in the writing process within an academic writing course.
2. To analyze the contribution of lecturer–student collaboration to students’ academic writing development in an academic writing

course.

1.4 Scope of The Research

The scope of this research focuses on the writing skill out of 4 skills in learning English by EFL learners which is the students at English Education Department in Universitas Kuningan. The research is conducted in Academic Writing class of second semester students in 2025. The main part of this research is to find out how the lecturer conduct instructional support in writing for EFL learners by assisting it since the start until the process of writing.

1.5 Significance of The Research

This research holds importance in two main ways, addressing both theoretical and practical aspects.

Theoretically, this study is expected to contribute to the understanding of Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, particularly the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), in the context of academic writing instruction among EFL learners. The study seeks to enrich the literature on how instructional support may facilitate students' engagement with complex academic writing tasks through interactions with more knowledgeable others. By examining the role of lecturer guidance within the academic writing process, this study is expected to provide further insights into the application of scaffolding as a pedagogical strategy that supports students' progression toward greater comprehension in academic writing. Furthermore, the study may contribute to contemporary discussions on academic writing development by exploring how collaboration and instructional support can foster learning within students' Zone of Proximal Development in higher education contexts.

Practically, this study is expected to provide valuable insights for lecturers, students, and educational institutions regarding the implementation of instructional support in academic writing courses. For lecturers, the study may serve as a reference for designing learning environments that provide appropriate scaffolding and guidance throughout the writing process. For students, the study may offer a better understanding of how collaborative learning and instructional

support can assist them in developing academic writing skills and greater learning autonomy. For educational institutions, the study may contribute to the development of instructional practices that encourage meaningful interaction, collaboration, and support in academic writing instruction, particularly within EFL learning contexts.