

## English Education Students' Challenges Integrating Literature in Theses

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### Abstract

The study addresses the pervasive difficulties students encounter in locating appropriate, current, and topic-specific literature, synthesizing existing research with their own arguments, maintaining narrative cohesion, and navigating the complexities of the literature review chapter. A significant concern is the increasing reliance on AI tools and the associated ethical considerations. This research aims to identify and examine the specific challenges of English language Education students face in integrating literature sources, such as improper paraphrasing, overreliance on direct quotations, ineffective synthesis, and limited understanding of citation conventions. It also seeks to explore underlying causes like insufficient academic writing training, low language proficiency confidence, and lack of familiarity with scholarly literature. A qualitative narrative inquiry approach was employed, involving semi-structured interviews with four eighth-semester undergraduate students from the English Language Education Department. Data were analyzed using narrative analysis to understand participants' experiences, perceptions, and strategies in navigating literature integration challenges. Trustworthiness was the validation variable used in this investigation. Findings reveal that students struggle with finding relevant sources, adjusting quotes to fit personal arguments, and maintaining narrative cohesion, with the literature review consistently identified as the most challenging section. While AI tools like ChatGPT are perceived as effective for efficiency and ideal generation, ethical considerations regarding plagiarism are crucial. Students effectively use conceptual maps and matrices for organization. The study concludes with a strong demand for practical support, including workshops and resources, to enhance literature integration skills, emphasizing the urgent need for targeted pedagogical interventions to improve thesis quality.

**Keywords:** *academic challenges; AI in academia; English Language Education; literature integration; thesis writing*

### INTRODUCTION

Thesis is a final assignment that must be completed by every student. Many students argue that they have difficulty in completing their thesis, especially in finding strong

sources that are appropriate for their research. The pilot study revealed that seventy eight percent of eighteen English Language Education students faced challenges in connecting scholarly literature to their theses, specifically in integrating sources, incorporating them into their work, and using English accurately. This finding underscores critical challenges faced by undergraduate EFL students, including difficulties in synthesizing external research, maintaining thesis coherence, and achieving an appropriate level of academic language proficiency. Such issues may impede academic success and therefore require targeted pedagogical interventions. Consistent with this, Dina (2023) reported that undergraduate EFL students experienced substantial difficulties in writing the literature review section of their theses, particularly in locating relevant sources, organizing information coherently, and paraphrasing without committing plagiarism.

A primary issue is the lack of familiarity with academic writing conventions, which can lead to improper citation practices and a failure to synthesize information effectively (Pennycook, 1996). As formal writing, it is advisable to avoid using slang or contractions. However, each language has its own specific rules, particularly when it comes to academic writing. The use of grammar and sentence structure, as well as the appropriate vocabulary, differs between English and Bahasa Indonesia. This poses a challenge for EFL learners when it comes to academic writing (Rifai et al., 2024). Many students struggle with distinguishing between primary and secondary sources, which can result in a superficial understanding of the literature relevant to their research topics. Additionally, the pressure to produce original research can exacerbate these difficulties, as students may resort to inadequate or inappropriate sources in an attempt to meet academic expectations (Andersen & Jæger, 2020).

Several factors contribute to the challenges faced by English language education students in integrating literature sources. One significant cause is the varying levels of proficiency in academic English among students. The results of the pilot study that was conducted showed that ten out of eighteen students had a low level of English proficiency, especially in writing a paper. Difficulties in critical analysis also significantly hinder students' ability to integrate literary sources into their theses. Many students struggle to dissect complex arguments and evaluate the methodologies of existing literature, which is essential for forming a well-rounded critique. This lack of analytical skills can lead to superficial engagement with texts, preventing them from effectively synthesizing information and positioning their own arguments within the scholarly discourse. Consequently, their writing may lack depth and coherence, making it challenging to support their theses with robust literary evidence.

Research indicates that students with lower levels of language proficiency often experience challenges in understanding complex texts and articulating their ideas clearly (Grabe & Zhang, 2016). This linguistic barrier can hinder their ability to engage critically with literature and to incorporate it effectively into their thesis. Another contributing factor is the lack of formal training in research methodologies and literature review processes. Many students enter their programs with limited exposure to academic research practices, which can lead to confusion and frustration when tasked with integrating literature into their work (Creswell, 2018). Additionally, the rapid evolution of digital resources and online databases has transformed the landscape of academic research, and students may struggle to navigate these tools effectively (Bawden & Robinson, 2008). The overwhelming volume of available literature can also lead to information overload, making it challenging for students to discern which sources are

most relevant to their research questions (Jerger, 2004).

To address these challenges, several solutions can be implemented within English language education programs. The results of the pilot study that has been conducted show that quite a few of the 18 students provided suggestions to the English study program at the university to find solutions to their problems. For instance, enhancing students' academic writing skills through targeted workshops and courses can significantly improve their ability to integrate literature sources. Additionally, providing students with access to resources such as writing centers and peer tutoring can offer them the support they need to develop their skills in a collaborative environment (Andersen & Jæger, 2020). The EFL students will be aware of learning English academic writing, particularly the thesis writing genre, before writing their thesis. They should select helpful supervisors and supportive peers to motivate them to keep drafting their thesis. They must think critically, be information literate, resolve all pop-up troubles, and possess oral and written communication abilities (Rahayu & Moesarofah, 2023). Furthermore, incorporating research methodology training into the curriculum is essential. By equipping students with the tools and knowledge necessary to conduct literature reviews and engage with academic texts critically, educators can empower them to navigate the complexities of research more effectively (Creswell, 2018). This training should also include guidance on utilizing digital resources and databases, ensuring that students are well-prepared to access and evaluate the wealth of information available to them (Bawden & Robinson, 2008).

The thesis represents a critical milestone in higher education, serving as a culmination of a student's academic journey and often a prerequisite for graduation. This pivotal stage not only showcases a student's ability to conduct independent research but also reflects their mastery of the subject matter. Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (*Permendikbud Ristek*) Number 53 of 2023 concerning Quality Assurance of Higher Education removes the obligation of a thesis as a final assignment for S1/D4 students. A thesis can still be an option, but students can also choose other final assignments such as prototypes, projects, or other similar final assignments. Although a thesis has been declared non-mandatory, several universities still use a thesis for the final assignment and graduation requirements for students. However, the process of integrating literature into a thesis can pose significant challenges that may hinder both the quality and coherence of the final product. Inadequate integration of literature can lead to superficial analyses, weak arguments, and a lack of scholarly depth, ultimately compromising the integrity of the research. Given the increasing emphasis on research quality in academic settings, it is urgent to address the difficulties students face in this area. By understanding and mitigating these challenges, educational institutions can better support students in producing high-quality thesis that meet academic standards and contribute meaningfully to their fields of study. This research journal aims to illuminate these issues, providing insights that can inform pedagogical practices and enhance the overall thesis-writing experience for students in English language education programs.

This research introduces a narrative inquiry approach to investigate the experiences of English Language Education students as they navigate the complexities of integrating literature sources into their thesis writing. Unlike previous studies that have predominantly examined writing challenges through a quantitative lens or generalized qualitative assessments, this study emphasizes the power of storytelling to capture the

rich, personal narratives of students. By focusing on individual accounts, it reveals how students articulate their struggles, triumphs, and evolving identities in the context of academic writing. This narrative perspective not only highlights the diverse ways students engage with literature but also uncovers the emotional and contextual factors that influence their writing processes. By centering on these personal stories, the research provides valuable insights that can inform tailored pedagogical strategies and support systems, ultimately fostering a more empathetic and responsive educational environment that aligns with the lived realities of students.

Despite the growing body of research on academic writing and source integration, existing studies rarely focus specifically on English Language Education students, who are often assumed to possess stronger academic literacy skills due to their training in language and communication. Most previous research has tended to generalize writing difficulties across broader student populations or has centered on non-language disciplines, overlooking the unique challenges faced by language education students. This presents a critical gap, as English Language Education students are expected to demonstrate higher competence in integrating literature, yet may still struggle with paraphrasing, synthesizing sources, and applying proper citation conventions in their thesis. By focusing on this specific group, the current study addresses an overlooked area and provides insight into whether academic expectations align with students' performance in literature integration.

This research focuses on analyzing the difficulties encountered by English language education students in integrating literature sources into their thesis writing. The study aims to identify the specific challenges these students face, such as improper paraphrasing, overreliance on direct quotations, ineffective synthesis of multiple sources, and a limited understanding of citation and referencing conventions. Additionally, the research seeks to explore the underlying causes of these issues, including insufficient academic writing training, low confidence in language proficiency, and a lack of familiarity with scholarly literature. By uncovering these difficulties, the study intends to highlight areas where support and instruction can be improved, ultimately helping students develop stronger research and writing skills essential for academic success.

## **METHOD**

This study employed a narrative inquiry approach to investigate the challenges experienced by eighth semester undergraduate students in the English Language Education Department at university in Surabaya. This approach was chosen as it enabled the researcher to explore these lived experiences through the personal stories shared by each participant. This study explored the challenges students encountered in integrating academic sources into their undergraduate thesis writing. This method allowed for a deeper, contextual understanding of students' academic struggles and strategies, and helped to present each participant's voice authentically within the broader narrative of their thesis journey (Finlay & dela Cruz, 2023).

In this study, participants were purposively selected according to three inclusion criteria: (1) successful completion of their undergraduate thesis, (2) self-reported difficulties in integrating literature into their academic writing, and (3) variation in thesis grades. Based on these criteria, four participants were recruited for semi-structured interviews. All participants had completed their theses and acknowledged experiencing challenges in incorporating scholarly literature into their writing process. To ensure

representation across different performance levels, two participants had received an A grade, while the remaining two had obtained an A-. The inclusion of thesis grade variation was intended to capture a broader spectrum of student experiences in managing literature integration during the thesis writing process.

The data were collected through semi-structured interviews. The interview guide, developed based on relevant literature, consisted of 14 open-ended questions exploring: (1) difficulties in locating and selecting credible sources, (2) obstacles in integrating those sources into thesis writing, and (3) strategies used to address these challenges. The questions were validated by an expert in academic writing and qualitative research to ensure content clarity, relevance, and alignment with the research objectives. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and transcribed verbatim for analysis. Each session lasted approximately 30-40 minutes, depending on the depth of participants' responses.

The interview data were analysed using narrative analysis based on Meraz (2019) approach. The process began with transcribing the audio recordings and repeatedly reading the transcripts to gain familiarity with the stories and tone. Key episodes in each narrative, such as difficulties in finding sources, citing literature properly, or connecting theory to their topic were identified and organized to preserve the flow of the participants' storytelling. The researcher wrote narrative summaries for each participant, maintaining the coherence and individuality of their voices. While some shared challenges appeared across the narratives, the analysis remained focused on how each student framed their personal academic journey.

To ensure the rigor and validity of the findings, this study adopted the concept of *trustworthiness* as outlined by Enworo (2023). Four key criteria were systematically applied—credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The applied strategies are as follows: Credibility: Ensured by (a) conducting member checking to validate transcripts and interpretations, (b) recording and transcribing interviews verbatim to maintain accuracy, and (c) using neutral, open-ended questions to avoid researcher bias. Transferability: Addressed by (a) describing the research context involving undergraduate English Education students from the 2021 batch who were eighth semester English Education students conducting literature-based thesis, (b) acknowledging the relevance of their challenges to similar EFL academic settings, and (c) clearly presenting participants' backgrounds and experiences. Dependability: Maintained by (a) organizing research procedures from survey to analysis in a structured sequence, and (b) applying consistent interview procedures across all participants. Confirmability: Achieved by (a) grounding findings in participants' narratives through narrative analysis, (b) storing all raw data such as recordings and transcripts for reference, and (c) ensuring interpretations were based solely on participant responses rather than researcher assumptions.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section explores the challenges faced by English Language Education students in integrating literature sources into their thesis, drawing on interview data and existing research. The findings indicate that many students struggle to find and connect literature sources in the literature review chapter while using proper English. Additionally, students increasingly rely on tools like artificial intelligence (AI) to assist in this integration. These difficulties can hinder the quality of thesis writing, impacting students' ability to achieve

optimal results in their final undergraduate assignments. This emerging phenomenon was the focus of this research. The researcher believes that the challenges students face in connecting literature sources with correct English can be addressed through specific strategies and suggestions aimed at facilitating thesis writing and improving outcomes.

### **Difficulty in Finding Suitable Literature Sources**

This sub-chapter explores the numerous differences between the literature sources and their thesis. It highlights students' struggles with locating appropriate, current, and topic-specific literature for their thesis, as exemplified by Pulsar's and Nebula's responses.

When working on my thesis, there were several difficulties that I experienced. One of the difficulties I experienced was in the references section or in the section of references to certain sources. One of the difficulties I experienced when integrating literature sources into my thesis was finding the right source for my thesis title. The title of my thesis with the theme of micro teaching is a little rare to learn in the last few years which causes me to have difficulty in some places to integrate sources, especially the latest sources for my thesis. -P

Looking for the right references, if you look for references that don't match the title, you will definitely fill in the wrong literature and have to look for it again. -N

The difficulty I experienced was probably like adjusting the quotes or literature sources from the previous researchers to my own arguments related to my title, yes, for example, about speaking, yes, my arguments are like this, the quotes that I get are different, so that's it. -S

Pulsar's experience indicates a struggle to locate appropriate and current literature, particularly for niche or less commonly studied thesis topics like "micro teaching." This suggests that the availability and accessibility of relevant, recent research can significantly impede the integration process. Nebula emphasizes the critical importance of finding references that directly align with the thesis title. Misaligned sources lead to wasted effort and incorrect literature integration, highlighting the need for precise source identification. Also addressing the first interview question, this sub-chapter focuses on the difficulty students experience in harmonizing existing research findings (quotes) with their own unique arguments and perspectives within their thesis, as illustrated by Supernova's experience. Supernova's statement points to the struggle of harmonizing existing research (quotes) with her own arguments, especially when the available literature doesn't perfectly match her specific perspective or focus within a broader topic like "speaking." This indicates a challenge in synthesizing and adapting external information to fit a unique thesis narrative.

Pulsar's experience of struggling to find literature on a niche topic like micro teaching illustrates a broader issue in academic research, the scarcity of recent studies in specialized areas. Nebula's comment about the importance of aligning references with her thesis title underscores the critical need for students to develop effective search strategies and critical appraisal skills to navigate the vast array of available literature. Supernova's statement about the challenge of reconciling quotes with her perspective reveals a

common struggle among students. This process requires a nuanced understanding of how to synthesize information from various sources while maintaining the integrity of their own voice and argumentation, which can be particularly daunting for novice researchers.

The consistent identification of the literature review section as the most difficult part for integrating sources by Pulsar, Supernova, and Quasar underscores its critical yet complex nature. This aligns with common academic understanding that the literature review is not merely a summary of existing works but a synthesis that establishes the theoretical framework, identifies research gaps, and justifies the current study (Smith, 2018). Pulsar's concern about inaccurate or too old sources highlights the dynamic nature of academic fields and the necessity for students to engage with current scholarship. The difficulty in linking research results to literature, as mentioned by Pulsar, further emphasizes the challenge of maintaining a coherent argumentative thread throughout the thesis, a common struggle for novice researchers (Hammond, 2022).

### **Navigating Source Relevance and Cohesion**

This sub-chapter discusses the challenges of academic writing particularly in combining multiple sources of information effectively, details the challenge of weaving multiple relevant literature sources into a smooth, logical, and supportive narrative for the main thesis argument, as vividly described by Quasar.

One of the challenges I have faced when integrating literature sources is maintaining the flow of arguments, often I find a lot of literature relevant but it is difficult to string it together into a smooth narrative and support the main argument of the thesis. Example: I found three studies on the influence of AR media on students' speaking achievement. Research A focuses on the impact of AR motivating student learning, research B focuses on the difference between AR and VR. Integrating the two to form into one argument about the impact of AR media on students' speaking achievement is a tough challenge. Moreover, I must be able to explain how the two studies complement each other or even how it is relevant to the focus of my thesis.

Quasar's detailed example illustrates the difficulty of weaving multiple relevant sources into a coherent and flowing argument. Even when sources are individually pertinent, the challenge lies in demonstrating their interconnections, complementarities, or relevance to the central thesis argument, thereby creating a cohesive narrative.

This sub-chapter directly answers the second interview question. It consolidates the unanimous agreement among respondents (Pulsar, Supernova, Quasar) that the literature review is the most challenging section due to its foundational role, the need for accurate and current sources, and the requirement for deep theoretical understanding.

The literature review part is the most difficult to integrate literature sources into the thesis because chapter 2 of my thesis has a basis or source for the implementation of the research that I will carry out. Some are inaccurate, some are too old, and so on, that's the most difficult part, and the second is to link the results to the literature in chapter 4 or in the section that turns out to be a little inaccurate, so there must be a connection specific to the source. -P

The difficult part of literature review, solving it is difficult, so sometimes it is a bit difficult to choose the same references as my research. -S

In my opinion, literature review is the most difficult part to integrate with literature sources, why? Because here I must be required to show a deep understanding of the theory, how it is conceptualized and with previous research. -Q

Pulsar identifies the literature review (Chapter 2) as the most challenging due to its foundational role for the research implementation. He also notes difficulties in linking research results (Chapter 4) back to the literature, emphasizing the need for precise and relevant connections. Supernova concurs that the literature review is challenging, specifically in selecting references that closely align with her research, indicating a struggle with relevance and specificity. Pulsar, Supernova, and Quasar's consensus that this section is the hardest reflects its foundational role in establishing the research context and theoretical framework. The literature review requires students to engage deeply with existing scholarship, identify gaps, and justify their research, which can be overwhelming, especially when faced with the pressure to produce a comprehensive and critical synthesis. This highlights the need for targeted support in developing literature review skills.

The challenges articulated by Pulsar and Nebula regarding finding the right source and avoiding wrong literature resonate with the broader issue of information overload and the need for critical appraisal skills in academic research. In an era of vast digital databases, students often struggle to discern relevant and high-quality sources from a multitude of options (Booth et al., 2016de). Supernova's difficulty in adjusting the quotes or literature sources from the previous researchers to my own arguments points to a fundamental skill deficit in academic writing: the ability to synthesize and critically engage with existing literature rather than simply presenting it. This involves transforming information from various sources into a cohesive narrative that supports the student's unique thesis argument, a process that requires sophisticated analytical and rhetorical skills (Swales & Feak, 1995). Quasar's detailed example of integrating studies on AR media further illustrates this complexity, highlighting the need to not only identify relevant sources but also to articulate their interrelationships, complementarities, or even contradictions to build a strong, unified argument. This echoes the concept of argumentative synthesis, where writers move beyond summarizing to constructing a new argument from diverse sources (Ramage et al., 2016).

### **The Role of AI in Academic Writing(ChatGPT)**

This sub-chapter describes the use of suitable tools to identify literature sources related to the thesis. It presents students' experiences with and perceptions of the effectiveness of AI tools like ChatGPT in assisting with various aspects of literature integration, from finding sources to formulating ideas, as shared by Pulsar, Supernova, Nebula, and Quasar.

I only use a little bit for that part because I found the right literature for my thesis even though there are several parts that need AI to find literature sources for my thesis. I think it's effective for me personally because it can cut down on processing time and help me to avoid big or small mistakes in my thesis.



Pulsar finds AI effective for reducing processing time and minimizing errors, suggesting its utility in streamlining the literature search and integration process.

I usually use AI, ChatGPT, everyone must use it, right? I use it because it's a bit easy. So maybe there is one sentence or argument that I put in ChatGPT, so later I will make a prom to ask for help to find out who the researcher has said something like this that is similar. For whether it is effective or not, I think it is quite effective. -S

ChatGPT, is very helpful in everything and google to search for articles. -N

I usually use ChatGPT to work on my thesis because it is easy to formulate ideas, frameworks, or ask for explanations about certain concepts, for example, I can ask ChatGPT to explain the difference between the impact of using Ar media in student motivational learning and the impact on student speaking using Ar media. However, I will not use it to write the thesis part directly because of the risk of plagiarism. -Q

Supernova uses ChatGPT to identify similar arguments or researchers, indicating its effectiveness in finding connections and supporting her own ideas. Nebula broadly states that ChatGPT is "very helpful in everything," underscoring its perceived versatility and utility in academic tasks. Quasar uses ChatGPT for idea formulation, framework development, and conceptual explanations, acknowledging its utility while also being mindful of plagiarism risks, indicating a responsible approach to AI use.

The widespread use of AI tools, particularly ChatGPT, among the interviewed students (Pulsar, Supernova, Nebula, Quasar) signifies a significant shift in academic practices. Students perceive AI as effective for cutting down on processing time, avoiding big or small mistakes, formulating ideas, and asking for explanations. This suggests that AI is being leveraged as a productivity tool and a conceptual aid, assisting with tasks such as literature discovery, idea generation, and understanding complex concepts. However, Quasar's cautious approach, stating she will not use it to write the thesis part directly because of the risk of plagiarism, is crucial. This highlights the ethical considerations and the need for responsible AI integration in academic work. While AI can facilitate the research process, it does not replace the student's critical thinking, analytical skills, and original contribution (Del & García, 2025). The effectiveness of AI, as perceived by students, points to its potential as a supplementary tool, but also necessitates clear guidelines and education on its appropriate and ethical use to prevent academic misconduct.

### **Strategic Approaches to Literature Integration**

This sub-chapter addresses various challenges in selecting and connecting relevant sources. It highlights the common and effective strategy of using conceptual maps or matrices to organize and visualize the relationships between different ideas and sources, as reported by all four respondents.

It would be more effective if I used the matrix before I worked, because I myself also felt that in the matrix I could provide a clear arrangement

from the beginning of the title to chapter 3 where it is clear that in chapter 2 there is literature from experts that can be collected. -P

For strategy, I usually use the matrix first, so early yesterday when I made the thesis I used the matrix first so I could determine that there were already journal reference theories in it. -S

My strategy is to create a conceptual map or it can be called a matrix. -N

Create a conceptual map visualize the relationships between different ideas, theories, and research. It helps to see how various sources are interrelated or conflicting. -Q

Pulsar advocates for using a matrix to organize literature from the outset, suggesting it provides a clear structure for integrating expert literature into the thesis. Supernova also highlights the effectiveness of using a matrix to pre-determine and organize journal reference theories. Nebula similarly employs conceptual maps or matrices as a strategy for organizing information. Quasar elaborates on the benefit of conceptual maps, stating they help visualize relationships between ideas, theories, and research, aiding in understanding interconnections and conflicts among sources.

Pulsar and Supernova's experiences demonstrate that these tools can help clarify relationships between sources and streamline the integration process. Quasar's insight into visualizing interconnections among ideas further illustrates how such strategies can enhance understanding and facilitate a more coherent narrative, ultimately leading to a more effective thesis.

The consistent mention of conceptual maps or matrices as effective strategies by Pulsar, Supernova, Nebula, and Quasar demonstrates a shared understanding of the importance of organizational tools. Quasar's explanation that conceptual maps help visualize the relationships between different ideas, theories, and research and identify interrelated or conflicting sources aligns with established academic practices for literature review management. Such tools aid in structuring complex information, identifying themes, and mapping out the intellectual landscape of a research topic (Chukwuere, 2007). This proactive approach to organizing literature from the initial stages of thesis writing can significantly mitigate the challenges of integration by providing a clear framework for synthesis.

### **Recommendation for Enhanced Support**

This sub-chapter describes students' suggestions for institutions or instructors could help them become better at integrating literature into their academic writing. It compiles the students' recommendations for various forms of support, such as workshops, seminars, and online resources, to improve literature integration skills.

My suggestion might be like a workshop to make it easier to work on the thesis. -P

It's more of a matter of suggesting a workshop. So it's like knowing how to manage or make references and make the right literature review because it's still a bit lacking, I think for that knowledge, only a few people understand. -S

Pulsar suggests workshops to simplify the thesis writing process. Supernova specifically recommends workshops on managing references and crafting effective literature reviews, noting a general lack of understanding in these areas.

Seminars, increasing insight and knowledge, expanding networks with professionals and watching You Tube because there are many channels that can help us understand how to work on a thesis and find sources of literature.

Nebula suggests seminars, networking with professionals, and utilizing YouTube for broader insights and practical guidance on thesis writing and literature searching.

Read more thesis/journals to learn how other successful writers integrate literature. Pay attention to sentence structure, the use of transitions, and the way they construct arguments. Workshops are also important because they can help us find new insights so that we can better understand scripts and how to do them well.

Quasar advises reading successful thesis/journals to learn integration techniques, focusing on sentence structure, transitions, and argument construction. She also emphasizes the importance of workshops for new insights.

The students' suggestions for workshops, seminars, mentoring, and online resources (including YouTube) reflect a demand for practical, hands-on guidance in navigating the complexities of literature integration. Supernova's specific call for workshops on how to manage or make references and make the right literature review indicates a perceived gap in current academic training. Quasar's advice to read more thesis/journals to learn how other successful writers integrate literature emphasizes the value of learning by example, focusing on rhetorical strategies like sentence structure, the use of transitions, and the way they construct arguments. These suggestions collectively point towards a need for comprehensive support systems that go beyond theoretical instruction to provide practical skills development in literature management, critical synthesis, and academic writing conventions. Such support can empower students to overcome the identified difficulties and produce well-integrated and scholarly thesis (Ranjit, 2019).

## CONCLUSION

This qualitative narrative inquiry into the experiences of English Language Education students revealed significant and interconnected challenges in integrating literature sources into their thesis. A primary difficulty lies in the initial stages of research, where students struggle to locate appropriate, current, and topic-specific literature, especially for niche subjects. This is compounded by the overwhelming volume of digital resources, making it hard to discern relevant and high-quality sources. Beyond source identification, students face considerable hurdles in synthesizing existing research findings with their own unique arguments, often failing to move beyond mere presentation to critical engagement. This difficulty extends to maintaining a smooth, logical, and cohesive narrative throughout their thesis, even when individual sources are pertinent.

The literature review chapter was consistently identified as the most challenging section, given its foundational role in establishing theoretical frameworks and identifying

research gaps, often complicated by outdated or inaccurate sources. The study also noted the widespread use of AI tools like ChatGPT, which, while perceived as effective for efficiency and idea generation, introduce crucial ethical considerations regarding plagiarism. Despite these pervasive challenges, students have adopted effective strategies such as conceptual maps and matrices for organizing their literature. Crucially, there is a strong, expressed demand from students for practical, hands-on support, including workshops and seminars, to enhance their literature integration skills. This comprehensive understanding of the difficulties underscores the urgent need for targeted pedagogical interventions to improve the quality and coherence of student thesis.

The findings of this research carry substantial implications for English Language Education programs, educators, and students, aiming to bridge the gap between the identified challenges and effective academic practices. These implications are directly derived from the research findings, offering actionable strategies to enhance the thesis-writing process. To address the fundamental struggle with source identification and critical appraisal, academic institutions should prioritize and implement mandatory workshops. These workshops should focus not only on advanced literature search strategies and the effective utilization of academic databases but also on developing critical appraisal skills to help students discern high-quality, relevant sources from the vast amount of available information. This direct intervention would equip students with the necessary tools to overcome the initial hurdles in their research, as highlighted by the experiences of Pulsar and Nebula. Furthermore, to tackle the pervasive issue of synthesizing existing research with original arguments and maintaining narrative cohesion, curricula should integrate scaffolded assignments. These assignments would progressively build students' skills in summarizing, analyzing, and synthesizing literature in stages, allowing for incremental development and providing opportunities for crucial feedback and revision. This approach, supported by Quasar's detailed example, would enable students to develop sophisticated analytical and rhetorical skills, moving beyond simple summarization to constructing a new, cohesive argument from diverse sources, directly addressing Supernova's struggle with integrating quotes into her own perspective.

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