

**EFL STUDENTS' PERCEIVED IMPACT OF LETTERBOXD ON
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR ENGLISH WRITING SKILLS
THROUGH FILM REVIEWS**

THESIS

Submitted By

BALOIS AL ZAHRA

NIM. 220203139

Student of *Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan*

Department of English Language Education



**FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI AR-RANIRY**

BANDA ACEH

2026 M/1447 H

**EFL STUDENTS' PERCEIVED IMPACT OF LETTERBOXD ON THE
DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR ENGLISH WRITING SKILLS THROUGH FILM
REVIEWS**

THESIS

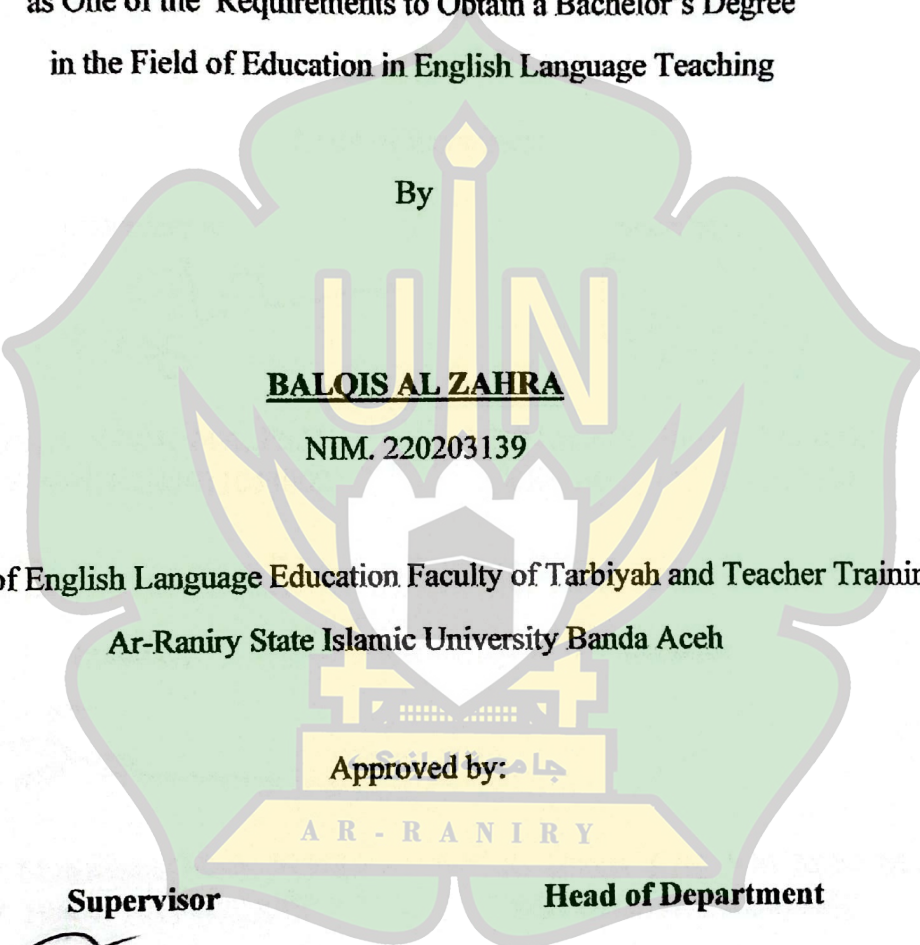
Has been Approved and Submitted to the Thesis *Munaqasyah* Defense
as One of the Requirements to Obtain a Bachelor's Degree
in the Field of Education in English Language Teaching

By

BALOIS AL ZAHRA

NIM. 220203139

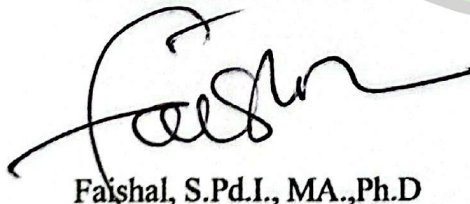
Student of English Language Education Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training
Ar-Raniry State Islamic University Banda Aceh

Approved by: 

A R - R A N I R Y

Supervisor

Head of Department



Faishal, S.Pd.I., MA., Ph.D
NIP. 198010242011011002



Syarifah Dahliana, M.Ag., M.Ed., Ph.D
NIP. 197504162000032001

It has been defended in *Sidang Munaqasyah*
in front of the board of the Examination for the working paper
and has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Bachelor Degree of Education in English Language Teaching

On:

Wednesday

January 7th, 2026
Ra'jab 18th, 1447 H

Board of Examiners

Chairperson,

Faishal, S.Pd.I., MA., Ph.D
NIP. 198010242011011002

Secretary,

Cut Dara Ilfa Rahila, M.Pd.B.I
NIP. 198801272014032004

Member,

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Nasir, M.Hum
NIP. 196601131994021002

Member,

Prof. Dr. Jarjani S.Ag., S.Si., M.Sc., M.A
NIP. 197208122000031002

Certified by:



The dean of *Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan*
Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh

Prof. Safri Muluk, S.Ag., M.A., M.Ed., Ph.D
NIP. 1973010219970310

SURAT PERNYATAAN KEASLIAN KARYA

(Declaration of Originality)

Saya bertanda tangan dibawah ini:

Nama : Balqis Al Zahra

NIM : 220203139

Tempat/Tanggal Lahir : Sigli, 20 Juni 2004

Alamat : Peurada Utama, Banda Aceh

Menyatakan dengan sesungguhnya bahwa skripsi yang berjudul:

**EFL Students' Perceived Impact of Letterboxd on the Development of Their
English Writing Skill through Film Reviews**

adalah benar-benar saya, kecuali semua kutipan dan referensi yang disebutkan sumbernya. Apabila terdapat kesalahan dan kekeliruannya didalamnya, maka akan sepenuhnya menjadi tanggung jawab saya. Demikianlah surat pernyataan ini saya buat dengan sesungguhnya.

جامعة الرانيري

AR - RANIRY

Banda Aceh, 12 Desember 2025

Saya yang membuat pernyataan:



Balqis Al Zahra

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Allah SWT for endless grace and blessings throughout the process of completing this thesis. *Shalawat and salam* are extended to the Prophet Muhammad, the best example and guidance for all mankind.

I would like to convey my sincere appreciation to my supervisor and also my academic advisor, Faishal Zakaria, S.Pd.I., M.A., Ph.D, for his continuous guidance, invaluable support, and constructive feedback during the development of this research. His expertise and encouragement have greatly contributed to the completion of this research project and my studies at UIN Ar-Raniry.

My sincere gratitude is also extended to the Head of the English Language Education Department, Ms. Syarifah Dahliana, Ph.D and the Secretary of the Department, Mrs. Azizah, M.Pd for their continuous guidance and administrative support throughout the completion of this research. Their assistance, encouragement, and willingness to help at every stage of the process have been highly valuable in ensuring the smooth progress of my academic journey. Also, to all lecturers and staff of the Department of English Language Education at UIN Ar-Raniry, who have provided knowledge, assistance, and support throughout my academic journey.

My deepest thanks are dedicated to my beloved parents for their endless prayers, unwavering support, and valuable advice. I am also sincerely grateful to all the participants who willingly took part in this study and helped me in the data

collection process. Their contributions played an important role in the successful completion of this research. Lastly, I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to my friends for their constant support, motivation, and the positive environment they have provided throughout my academic journey.

Banda Aceh, 12 December 2025

Author

Balqis Al Zahra



ABSTRACT

Name : Balqis Al Zahra
NIM : 220203139
Faculty : Education and Teacher Training
Thesis Title : EFL Students' Perceived Impact of Letterboxd on the
Development of Their English Writing Skills through Film
Reviews
Supervisor : Faishal Zakaria, S.Pd.I., M.A., Ph.D
Keywords : Writing skill, Letterboxd, film reviews

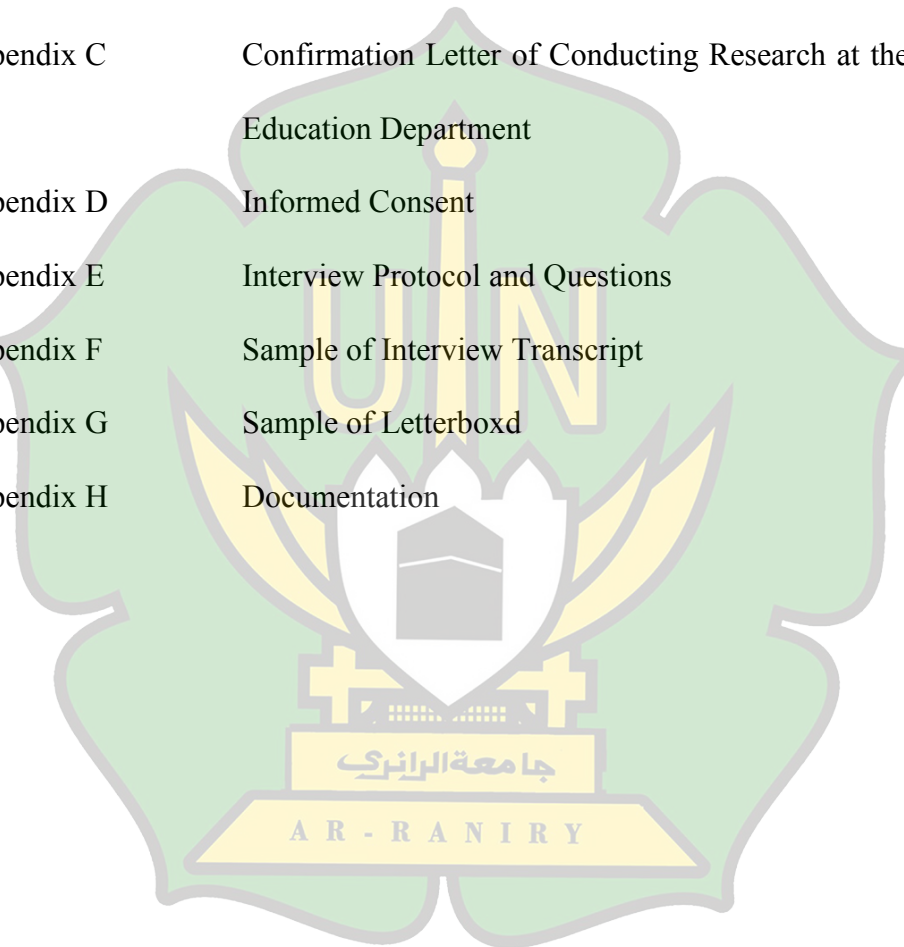
This study investigated EFL students' perceptions of the use of Letterboxd to develop their English writing skills through reviewed films. It was aimed at exploring students' perceptions and experiences regarding how the platform supported their writing improvement, particularly in relation to autonomy, competence, and relatedness as framed by Self-Determination Theory, and social interaction and scaffolding as explained in Sociocultural Theory. This research employed a qualitative descriptive design involving ten seventh-semester students of the English Education Department at UIN Ar-Raniry who actively used Letterboxd and had written English film reviews. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews and were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that Letterboxd provided an engaging, authentic, and low-pressure environment that encouraged students to write more frequently, enhanced their vocabulary acquisition, improved writing fluency, built confidence, and allowed them to develop a personal writing style. Interactive features such as likes, comments, and peer-generated content further supported students' sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Despite facing challenges such as limited vocabulary, difficulty expressing ideas precisely, and minor platform limitations, students adopted strategies such as using online dictionaries, drafting their reviews beforehand, and learning from other users' writing. Letterboxd was perceived as a valuable technology-enhanced learning tool that integrated social interaction, authentic input, and creative expression to support EFL writing development.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	v
ABSTRACT	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii
LIST OF APPENDICES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	x
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	1
A. Background of Study.....	1
B. Research Questions.....	5
C. Aims of the Study.....	5
D. Significance of Study.....	6
E. Research Terminology.....	7
CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW	10
A. English Writing.....	10
B. Letterboxd as a Platform for EFL Writing.....	13
C. Previous Studies.....	22
D. Theoretical Framework.....	25
CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	31
A. Research Design.....	31
B. Research Participants.....	32
C. Data Collection.....	34
D. Data Analysis.....	35
CHAPTER IV FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	37
A. Research Findings.....	37
B. Discussion.....	48
CHAPTER V CONCLUSIONS	57
A. Conclusion.....	57
B. Pedagogical Implications.....	59
C. Suggestions.....	60
REFERENCES	62
APPENDICES	69

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A	Appoinment Letter of Supervisor
Appendix B	Recommendation Letter from The Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan
Appendix C	Confirmation Letter of Conducting Research at the English Education Department
Appendix D	Informed Consent
Appendix E	Interview Protocol and Questions
Appendix F	Sample of Interview Transcript
Appendix G	Sample of Letterboxd
Appendix H	Documentation



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1 The Main Interface of the Letterboxd Platform.....	16
Figure 2.2 The Film Description.....	17
Figure 2.3 The Diary Feature for Logging Films and Reflections.....	18
Figure 2.4 The Five-Star Rating System on Letterboxd	19
Figure 2.5 Film Review	20
Figure 2.6 The Comment Section for Peer Feedback and Interaction.....	20
Figure 2.7 Popular List and Recent Stories.....	21



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

In the digital age, writing remains a vital skill for students, not only as a means of academic achievement but also as a tool for global communication. Historically, writing is more than the transcription of spoken language, it is a structured system that has shaped human knowledge and culture. As Sampson (2015) explains, writing systems are linguistic inventions that allow communication to transcend time and space, enabling ideas to be recorded, preserved, and transmitted across generations. This view highlights why writing is considered one of the most complex and essential aspects of language learning. Moreover, Crystal (2003) emphasizes that the role of English in global communication has further increased the importance of writing, making it a central skill for both academic and professional contexts.

Despite its importance, writing continues to be a challenging area for many EFL students. Numerous learners face difficulties in expressing their ideas, organizing sentences using appropriate grammar, and maintaining coherence. One of the most common obstacles is generating ideas to begin with, as students often feel stuck at the starting point of a writing task (Fhonna, 2014). Additionally, many learners struggle with structuring their writing according to the conventions of English, which differs significantly from their native language (Fithriani, 2017).

In response to these issues, educators have explored various methods to improve students' writing ability. One promising approach is integrating multimedia tools and social media into the writing process. For example, the use of Instagram in the classroom has been shown to increase students' motivation, encourage idea development, and foster more authentic language use (Saleh & Muhayyang, 2021). Through features such as caption writing and commenting, students practice written English in a socially interactive and low-pressure environment, which helps build confidence and fluency. Similarly, watching English-language films has been proven to enhance students' imagination, vocabulary, and understanding of narrative structures. When learners are encouraged to write after watching a film, they can draw on visual cues and contextual knowledge to form more developed and expressive texts. Forsia (2022) demonstrated that film-based activities, such as writing film reviews, help students overcome writer's block by generating ideas and providing a model for storytelling and language use.

Building on these methods, the emergence of niche social media platforms such as Letterboxd offers a new opportunity to support writing in EFL contexts. Letterboxd is a digital space designed for film enthusiasts to log, review, and discuss movies. Users create written reflections on the films they watch and interact with a global community of cinephiles (Yavuz, 2024). This environment naturally encourages writing for real audiences, fosters a sense of identity and participation, and promotes language practice through authentic engagement.

Unlike general platforms like Instagram or blogs, Letterboxd offers a genre-specific, community-centered digital space that encourages focused and purposeful writing. Previous research has shown that social media and digital media more broadly can support EFL students' writing development by providing frequent opportunities for writing practice, feedback, and peer interaction (Noviany et al., 2024; Wijayatiningsih & Erito, 2025). In similar digital contexts, the use of structured writing tasks in a media-rich environment has been found to improve writing quality and creative expression (Fidian, 2020). These characteristics make Letterboxd a distinctive platform that blends social interaction with structured critical writing practice, offering unique pedagogical potential not easily replicated in other online environments.

While platforms like Instagram have been widely studied for educational purposes, research on the pedagogical potential of Letterboxd, especially for developing writing skills in EFL settings, remains limited. Previous studies on Letterboxd and online film reviews have primarily focused on film communities and cultural perspectives rather than language learning or pedagogy. For example, Brania (2025) investigated how Letterboxd users perform a cinephile identity, referring to individuals with a strong interest and engagement in films, and accumulate cultural capital, understood as socially valued knowledge and practices related to film culture, through practices such as reviews writing, films rating, and watch-lists curating. The study draws on theories of cultural capital and participatory media to demonstrate how digital cinephilia on Letterboxd transforms traditional notions of film fandom.

Similarly, Yavuz (2024) explores how Letterboxd shapes users' film-watching habits and cinephile behavior by influencing preferences, film-selection decisions, and communal interactions yet the study remains within the scope of film consumption and community dynamics, without addressing writing skill development or pedagogical uses of the platform.

These studies highlighted that existing scholarship focused on audience identity, digital cinephilia, and media engagement rather than educational or linguistic outcomes. Therefore, despite increasing academic interest in Letterboxd as a social and cultural phenomenon, there remains a significant gap in research regarding its potential as a tool for English writing practice or EFL pedagogy. This gap justifies the present study's aim to explore Letterboxd from a pedagogical perspective. This indicates a gap that has not yet been addressed in the EFL context.

This lack of research represents a significant gap that needs to be addressed. Writing remains one of the most challenging skills for EFL learners, who often struggle to generate ideas, maintain coherence, and develop motivation to write. In this regard, Letterboxd offers a promising avenue, integrating essential components of effective learning: authentic writing tasks, opportunities for peer feedback, and interaction with a meaningful audience. Digital platforms that provide real audiences have been shown to increase learner engagement and promote more purposeful writing (Hyland, 2016). Authentic tasks and communicative interaction have long been recognized as key conditions for language development in sociocultural learning environments (Vygotsky, 1978;

Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Social writing platforms also support peer response and collaborative learning, which are essential for writing improvement in EFL contexts (Hyland, 2019). Therefore, features of Letterboxd align with established principles of effective writing pedagogy that emphasize authenticity, interaction, and audience engagement.

However, despite these potential benefits, limited research has examined its pedagogical role in EFL writing development. Addressing this gap is crucial because it can provide students with engaging and motivating ways to practice writing, assist teachers in identifying innovative tools to complement classroom instruction, and contribute to the broader field of language education by expanding the understanding of how participatory media platforms support learning.

B. Research Questions

1. What are the students' perceived impacts of using of using Letterboxd on their English writing development?
2. What features of Letterboxd do students identify as most supportive in enhancing their writing, and in what ways do these features contribute to fulfilling their needs as described in Self-Determination Theory?
3. What challenges do students experience when using Letterboxd for writing, and how do they navigate these challenges?

C. Aims of the Study

1. To explore EFL students' perception of how Letterboxd influences their English writing development.
2. To identify and understand the specific features of Letterboxd that students find most helpful in supporting their writing and examine how these features foster their needs as framed by Self-Determination Theory.
3. To analyze the challenges faced by students when using Letterboxd for writing and the strategies they use to overcome them.

D. Significance of Study

1. Students

This research may help EFL students realize the potential of social media, particularly Letterboxd, as a valuable platform for improving their English writing in a natural, expressive, and engaging manner. By engaging with film reviews, students can practice writing in a context that resonates with their interests, potentially increasing motivation and enhancing their writing skills.

2. Teachers and Educators

The findings may encourage English teachers to consider integrating informal platforms like Letterboxd into their teaching strategies. By promoting authentic writing practice outside the classroom, educators can create a more dynamic and relevant learning experience for students. This integration can also foster a sense of community among learners, as they share their thoughts and feedback on films.

3. Future Researchers

This study can serve as a reference for other researchers interested in exploring how digital platforms and social media can support language learning, particularly in the development of writing skills. By providing insights into the specific features and challenges of using Letterboxd, this research can inform future studies and contribute to the growing body of literature on technology-enhanced language learning.

E. Research Terminology

1. Student's Perception

The term students' perception refers to learners' personal expressions, perspectives, and identities as they engage in authentic learning activities. In this study, it represents EFL students' autonomy, self-expression, and active participation in writing film reviews on Letterboxd. Through their perception, students demonstrate ownership of learning, negotiate meaning, and interact with others in meaningful ways, which aligns with the principles of Self-Determination Theory and Sociocultural Theory. جامعة الرانج

2. EFL (English as a Foreign Language)

EFL refers to the teaching and learning of English in countries where it is not the primary language. Learners often face challenges such as limited exposure to English outside the classroom. EFL instruction focuses on developing key skills reading, writing, listening, and speaking while emphasizing grammar and vocabulary. Understanding the specific needs of EFL learners is crucial for creating effective teaching strategies that enhance their language proficiency.

3. Letterboxd

Letterboxd is a platform for film enthusiasts that enables users to log, rate, and review films and to connect with a community of cinephiles. It serves as a digital diary for movie lovers, enabling them to share opinions and discover new films. For EFL students, Letterboxd offers an engaging way to practice writing by allowing them to articulate their thoughts on films in a relevant context.

4. English Writing

English writing is the ability to express thoughts and ideas effectively in writing, encompassing grammar, vocabulary, coherence, and style. Proficient writing is essential for academic success and personal expression. For EFL students, developing English writing skills can be challenging, but practicing on platforms like Letterboxd offers valuable opportunities to refine their skills and gain confidence in communicating in English.

5. Film Reviews

Film reviews are written critiques that express the reviewer's opinions and analyses of films. These reviews can vary in style and depth, from casual blog posts to formal critiques. Writing film reviews helps EFL students develop critical thinking and writing skills, as they learn to analyze film elements and clearly articulate their insights.