

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

In university, graduation project is a very important link in the process of developing students' creative ability. Generally, most of the engineering education programs demand a research thesis work in order to complete the requirements for regarding degree. A thesis is a research paper that must be completed by the students in university as their final project, it is required in the completion of many master's degrees. Huiyun (2008) states that graduation thesis is an important practice that can help the university students deepen and widen their professional knowledge, and cultivate their scientific thinking and methods preliminarily (p.1116). Writing a thesis is one of the mandatory requirements for university students to complete their studies in a bachelor's degree program (S1). In writing a thesis each student has differences in choosing the theme, title, methodology, and type of research that will be used in the research process because each study program in university has differences in the field of science taught. Also, writing a thesis depends on the study program taken, it means a thesis made by the students that related to their study program must have a connection and not deviate far from the field of their study program.

A thesis in the English Education Department program in Antasari State of Islamic University has three fields that students can

choose for them to study, they are English Teaching, Literature, and Linguistic. However, writing a thesis for English Department students is not an easy thing to be done, the most difficult thing for them to finish their thesis is because their thesis must be written in English, while in Indonesia itself, as it is known English is not Indonesian first language neither their second language. In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language, so the students are rarely used English in their daily life. As an EFL student, students often get difficulties when they are asked to write their ideas in English, especially when it deals with grammar.

From four main skills in English, writing is known as a difficult skill for students to acquire. This is happening because writing skill has many components that students need to master in order to have a better writing performance. First language transfer (Belkhir & Benyelles, 2017), grammatical weakness (Huwari & Al-Khasawneh, 2013), the limited number of vocabulary and idioms as well as less experience with second language (Salem, 2007) are other reasons why students find writing difficult (as cited in Chandra and Yuyun, 2018, p. 228). However, most English students consider grammar as the most difficult component in writing.

As explained above, writing is a difficult thing to be done, especially when it deals with grammar. Students from English Department themselves can also experience this. In college, students need to write with considered to the accuracy of grammar. Grammatical accuracy is very

important for their academic writing in order to express their ideas clearly, accurately, and precisely (Cavaleri and Dianati, 2016, p. 224). In writing an academic text, it is expected that the students follow recognized English grammar conventions, such as accurate sentence structure, correct subject-verb agreement, consistent and appropriate tenses, and correct use of articles. However, as mentioned above undergraduate students are still have difficulties in this matter because their writing skill is still on the development path and their choice of linguistic may not always be accurate or successful (Myhill, 2009 as cited in Cavaleri and Dianati, 2016, p. 224).

This also happens when the EFL students want to write their thesis, sometimes they feel difficult to find appropriate vocabulary, tenses, or to put the punctuations at the right place, and mostly they have problems with grammar.

Since writing, especially writing an English thesis has become a problem for university students, the existence of many online grammar checkers plays an essential role to help the students in writing their English thesis.

It is undeniable that technological progress brings an impact on the world of education, even though it can be a positive or a negative impact. One of the positive impacts, for example, technology can be useful as a media in learning or other activities related to education.

Nowadays, people can easily access their *smartphone* or computer at any time to browse the internet in order to find various materials needed. With this kind of technology, the students of English Education Department do not need to be afraid anymore to make mistakes in grammar while writing their thesis because they can easily check their grammar errors in an online grammar checker through the internet. Recently, one of the grammar checkers that popular among the students is Grammarly. It is touted as the world's most accurate English grammar checker (Cavaleri and Dianati, 2016, p. 226)

Grammarly is an online grammar checker that can automatically recognize and provide advice about grammatical errors in writing. It also provides a correction for spelling, punctuation, synonyms (vocabulary usages), and plagiarism detection. We can use Grammarly freely, it means we can access it any time. Grammarly is really easy to be used. It can be accessed as long as there is an internet connection. Grammarly can also increase students' confidence in writing and their understanding of grammatical concepts (Cavaleri and Dianati, 2016, p. 234). Even though Grammarly is still new, compared to any other grammar checker tool students often use this application in writing their academic text.

However, sometimes grammar checkers by Grammarly are not always correct. Sometimes it suggests something that made no sense, for example, the placement of articles and punctuation, sometimes they suggest adding an article when it is actually not appropriate to put any

articles. Some EFL students state that they do not want to use Grammarly because they find it is not very reliable and it gives inappropriate feedback. Yet, there are still many EFL students who use it to correct their grammar in writing their graduation thesis.

In this study, the researcher will focus on the EFL students' perceptions on the use of Grammarly in writing their thesis since mostly the students often use it as a tool to check and correct their thesis graduation writing, especially when it deals with grammars.

Perception appears because of the stimuli through the five senses (vision, hearing, touch, smell, and taste) that God gives to humans. It is a process where a person gives meaning to the stimuli in the form of information about the environment around them which is received by their sense. In Al-Qur'an Surah An-Nahl verse 78, Allah SWT. says about the five human senses, as follows:

وَاللَّهُ أَخْرَجَكُمْ مِنْ بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ
وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ ۚ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ (٧٨)

And Allah has extracted you from the wombs of your mothers not knowing a thing and He made for you hearing, vision, and intellect that perhaps you would be grateful. (QS. An-Nahl [16]: 78)

This verse explained about five senses of humans, which are vision, hearing, touch, smell, and taste. It is related to how humans get their perceptions about something. This case is the same as this research

will work, which is this research will get about EFL students' perceptions about Grammarly.

The researcher wants to figure out the EFL students' perception as the students often use Grammarly for correcting their thesis grammar even though they know that Grammarly sometimes gives inappropriate feedback. Based on the description above the researcher prefer to write a thesis with the title **‘EFL Students’ Perceptions on the Use of Grammarly in Writing Thesis’**.

B. Research Question

Based on the research background above, there is one main problem that will be discussed in this study, that is:

1. What are the EFL students' perceptions on the use of Grammarly in writing thesis?

C. Objective of Study

The purpose of this research is:

1. To identify EFL students' perceptions on the use of Grammarly in writing their thesis.

D. Significance of Study

The significance of the study will be useful for:

1. For English University Students

This result of the research is expected can be used to help the EFL students, especially in university to know an appropriate tool that they can use to support their thesis writing. The result of this study can show how Grammarly works and show the advantages and disadvantages of using Grammarly as a grammar checker tool, especially in writing thesis.

2. For The Readers of The Study

Through this study, the readers can understand the EFL students' perceptions on Grammarly in writing their thesis. Thus, from this study, the researcher expects the readers to get new knowledge and information about the usefulness of Grammarly application as a grammar checker tool for their English writing, especially in writing their English graduation thesis.

3. For Other Researcher

The result of this study can help the other researcher to find more information and inspiration in conducting other research studies. It will help them to make new and deeper research about the use of Grammarly in English class and try to create the best new research.

E. Definition of Key Terms

This part is going to explain briefly about the definition terms that are related to this study. The terms that are going to be explained are EFL Students, Perception, Grammar Checker Tool, Grammarly, and English Thesis.

1. EFL Students

EFL is an abbreviation of English as a Foreign Language. According to Nordquist (2020), EFL is defined as the study of English by non-native speakers in a country where English is not the dominant language. EFL is usually learned in an environment where the language of the community and the school is not English. EFL students in this study is the students from English Education Department at Antasari State Islamic University in Indonesia, wherein this country English is neither the first language nor second language but rather as a foreign language.

2. Perception

A process in which a person regard, analyze, retrieve, assess, and reacts to all the information he gets from the environment is called perception. Rookes and Wilson (2005, p. 115) state that perception is a psychological process of interpretation of sensation, in other words, the translation of physical sensory information into a meaningful psychological interpretation of the world. This study will focus on EFL students' perception on Grammarly in writing thesis.

3. Grammar Checker Tool

A grammar checker used to find grammatical errors. It is a software or a program feature found in a word processor. In other words, a grammar checker use to check the sentence structure and the use of inappropriate words, poorly or unnecessary punctuation, and other esoteric errors.

4. Grammarly

Grammarly is one of online grammar checker tool used for correcting grammar errors in texts. Grammarly was founded in 2009 by Maz Lytvyn and Alex Shevchenko, who first developed the platform's grammar programming. Grammarly has two versions which are free and premium. The features provided by the premium one are more completed than the free one, but we have to pay annually to get the premium version of Grammarly. This application claims to correct up to ten times more mistakes than popular word processors by providing over 250 grammatical checks and a contextual spell checker (Grammarly, 2019).

5. English Thesis

A thesis is a written report conducted by undergraduate students as one of the requirements to get a bachelor's degree. An English thesis is a thesis written in English conducted by the students of the English Department. In writing a thesis, English students must write their

thesis in appropriate grammar in order to make their thesis can be easy to understand.