

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research background, research questions, research objectives, significance of the study, and definition of key terms. These sections provide the foundation and rationale for conducting the research.

A. Research Background

As a lingua franca, English is a universal language that is spoken by a large portion of the world's population. At schools and public universities throughout Indonesia, teaching English to Indonesian students as a second language is a required topic. The fact that English is extensively utilized in both academic settings and everyday life demonstrates the significance of the language. Employers greatly value proficient English speakers, especially if the business is globally focused, making them more employable than individuals with weaker competence (Ting et al., 2007). The fact that many institutions are turning out graduates with inadequate English language abilities has drawn criticism from both the public and corporate sectors. After graduating from college, students are expected to be able to utilize English fluently and effectively in a variety of settings.

Writing is one of four basic skills in English. Writing in English is a crucial ability to learn in the age of globalization. Writing not only creates a graphic of symbols but also allows the writer to communicate their emotions. Speaking, listening, reading, and writing are the four skills that make up the language of English. The fact that writing is in this position suggests that it is a tough talent. Writing has long been considered the most difficult talent to master. According to Richards

(2001), mastering writing in grammatically correct form is the talent that requires the most effort. In the real world, students must be able to verbalize what is on their minds and transform it into a strong, well-written sentence or paragraph. However, a large number of college students struggle with writing.

Technology is widely utilized by students in today's modern culture, particularly by those who were born after 1995 and are referred to as Generation Z. These students are digital natives, which means they were raised utilizing technology in their everyday lives since they were born in the digital era. Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are well-liked and often utilized as a tool for people to interact with one another and express their thoughts (Dolot, 2018). Also, writing happens right here. As a technique to teach writing to their pupils, more teachers are using social media into their lesson plans. In the context of education, the use of technology especially social media has been integrated by many teachers to improve students' writing skills (Yunus et al., 2012).

The development of technology is found in the Holy Qur'an as follows:

Q.S Yunus: 101

قُلْ انظُرُوا مَاذَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

Say, 'Observe what is in the heavens and earth.'

Q.S Al-Baqarah: 164

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمُوتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَالْفُلْكِ الَّتِي تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِمَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَا

أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ مَّاءٍ فَأَخْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيحِ

وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَخَّرِ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ

Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and earth, and the alternation of the night and the day, and the ships which sail through the sea with that which benefits people, and what Allah has sent down from the heavens of rain, giving life thereby to the earth after its lifelessness and dispersing therein every [kind of] creature, and in His directing of the winds and the clouds controlled between the heaven and the earth are signs for a people who use reason.

That is to encourage Muslims to study harder and increase knowledge and to develop it into modern technology so that it will be useful for mankind in the future.

In recent years, technology has played an increasingly important role in the development of students' writing skills. With the rise of digital tools, students have access to a variety of resources that can help them improve their writing abilities. From online writing programs to spell checkers and grammar checkers, technology has made it easier than ever for students to produce high-quality written work.

In the context of higher education in Indonesia, students' writing skills often face major challenges. Research by Fatimah and Santiana (2017) found that many students have difficulty in compiling structured academic writing, especially in English. This shows the need for a new approach in learning to write, one of which is through the use of technology.

The incorporation of technology into education has been an increasingly significant topic of interest in recent years, with advocates arguing for the use of digital tools to augment teaching and learning outcomes. In the realm of English as a foreign language (EFL) instruction, technology has the potential to make a substantial impact on the teaching and learning of writing. Specifically, integrating technology in the EFL writing classroom has the potential to enhance student motivation, engagement, and writing skills (Lee, 2019).

One of the primary benefits of technology is that it allows students to practice writing in a variety of formats. In the past, students were limited to writing by hand or on a typewriter, but now they can use a computer or tablet to write essays, reports, and other types of assignments. This means that

students can experiment with different writing styles and techniques, and can easily revise and edit their work as they go.

Another benefit of technology is that it can help students to identify and correct errors in their writing. Spell checkers and grammar checkers can highlight mistakes that students might have missed, and can suggest corrections that can help to improve the quality of their writing. This can be especially helpful for students who struggle with spelling or grammar, as it can give them the tools, they need to improve these skills.

Technology can also help to improve students' research skills, which are essential for effective writing. With access to the internet, students can quickly and easily find information on a wide range of topics, and can use this information to support their arguments and ideas. They can also use online databases and libraries to find academic sources that can help to strengthen their writing.

The statement above is supported by previous study done by Pheng et al. (2021) figured out that technology play an important role in helping teachers to improve students' writing skills. Significantly, the findings of this study provide evidence to improve the application of technology in language teaching and learning. Yilmaz's (2017) study demonstrated that the use of technology in EFL writing classes positively impacted students' writing proficiency. Similarly, Alghamdi & Alghamdi (2018) found that technology, such as word processing and spelling and grammar check tools, improved writing skills and increased motivation among high school students in Saudi Arabia. However, challenges remain, as revealed by Irfan et al. (2020), who noted problems in the use of technology for academic writing, including errors in citing references and copy-paste tendencies.

On the other hand, Irfan et al. (2020) also investigate about technological knowledge application on academic writing college students at Sriwijaya University. They figure out that the participants have several problems in applying technological knowledge in academic writing, such as in citing references correctly, avoiding tendency to copy-and-paste, structural error due

to using automatic correction, and paper formatting. Hayati et al. (2021) also investigate the role of ICT on college student's academic paragraph writing. The findings reported that there was a significant correlation among the three variables statistically since the significant value was 0.006 (< 0.05). The value of adjusted r^2 was 0.114 which means ICT use and learning attitude contributed 11.4 % to the students' English academic paragraph writing.

In the context of UIN Antasari Banjarmasin, the teaching of writing in the English Education Department is carried out through a progressive sequence of writing courses, namely Paragraph Writing, Essay Writing, and Academic Writing. These courses are designed to develop students' writing competence gradually, starting from the construction of well-organised paragraphs to the production of more complex academic texts. In the learning process, students are encouraged to utilise various digital tools such as Microsoft Word for drafting, Grammarly for grammar checking, and Google Docs for collaborative writing assignments. Lecturers frequently integrate technology into their teaching by assigning digital-based writing tasks, providing online feedback, and requiring students to submit their work through online platforms. This integration of technology in the writing classroom at UIN Antasari provides a relevant context for investigating how students perceive and respond to the use of technology in their EFL writing activities, as well as the obstacles they encounter during the writing process.

Based on the background discussed above, this study focuses on the role of technology in supporting EFL students' writing activities at Antasari State Islamic University. Specifically, the study explores students' views regarding the use of technology in writing and identifies the technological obstacles they encounter during the writing process. A qualitative case study approach was employed to obtain in-depth information from participants through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. Therefore, this study is entitled "The Role of Technology in EFL Writing among University Students."

The motivation for conducting this research stems from the researcher's personal experience as an EFL student at UIN Antasari Banjarmasin. Throughout her academic journey, the researcher has observed that technology has become an

inseparable part of the writing process, not only for herself but also for her peers. The researcher noticed that many students rely heavily on digital tools such as Grammarly for grammar checking, Google Translate for vocabulary assistance, and Google Docs for collaborative assignments. While these tools appeared to facilitate the writing process, the researcher also observed that some students became overly dependent on them, struggling to write independently without technological assistance. Furthermore, during classroom observations and informal discussions with classmates, the researcher identified recurring issues such as unstable internet connections, limited proficiency in using advanced software features, and uncertainty about the accuracy of automated feedback. These observations prompted the researcher to investigate the role of technology in EFL writing more systematically, with the aim of understanding both the benefits and the challenges that students experience. By conducting this study, the researcher hopes to contribute to the improvement of technology integration in EFL writing instruction at UIN Antasari Banjarmasin and similar institutions.

B. Definition of Key Terms

1. EFL Students

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students are learners who study English in a context where English is not used as the primary language of daily communication. According to Richardss and Schmidt (2010), EFL learners acquire English mainly through formal instruction in educational settings.

2. Technology in EFL

Technology in EFL refers to the use of digital tools, applications, and online resources that support English language learning. These technologies include word processors, grammar-checking applications, collaborative platforms, and internet-based learning resources that facilitate language development.

3. EFL Writing

EFL writing refers to the process of producing written texts in English by learners whose first language is not English. This process involves generating ideas, organizing information, applying grammatical rules, and communicating meaning effectively in written form.

C. Research Questions

Based on the research background, the research questions can be formulated as below:

- a) What are the students' views as EFL learners about technology when applied in writing activity at university?
- b) What are technological obstacles met by students in EFL writing?

D. Research Objectives

Based on the research questions, the research objectives are formulated as below:

- a) To explore the students' views as EFL learners about technology when applied in writing activity at university.
- b) To identify technological obstacles met by students in EFL writing.

E. Research Significance

This research is important as it helps understand how technology affects the writing skills of university students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). By investigating students' views and the obstacles they face with technology in their writing tasks, the study will provide useful information to improve teaching and learning practices.

- 1. Improving Writing Instruction: The research can help educators learn how technology can be best used to support writing in EFL classrooms. By knowing what students find helpful or challenging, teachers can improve their teaching methods and make the learning experience more effective.

2. Addressing Technological Challenges: Identifying the obstacles that students face with technology will help universities provide better resources and support. By understanding these challenges, institutions can ensure that all students have access to the tools they need and overcome any technical difficulties.
3. Enhancing Student Motivation: Technology can make writing more engaging for students. By understanding how students feel about using digital tools for writing, the research can help motivate students to engage more with writing activities, improving their skills and confidence.
4. Guiding Policy and Resource Allocation: The findings can assist university administrators in making decisions about how to best use technology in language learning programs, ensuring that resources are effectively allocated and that students have access to the right tools for success.

this research will provide practical insights for improving EFL writing instruction, overcoming technology-related challenges, and enhancing the overall learning experience for students.