

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of The Problem

English is the most widely studied foreign language in the world, including in Indonesia (Annur, 2021). In learning this language, there are at least four skills that students must master if they want to become proficient in communication (R. A. Fitria et al., 2022). These skills are reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Among these four skills, writing is considered more challenging. This is caused by the complexity of the process of translating ideas, thoughts, views, and feelings into written form while ensuring the effective organization of written aspects (Setyowati, 2016).

Furthermore, in academic writing, such as essays or theses, where the accuracy of structure and grammar also becomes a crucial point to be considered in producing quality writing (Cavaleri & Dianati, 2016). Ensuring grammatical accuracy enables students to effectively express their intended meaning by paying attention to various grammatical elements. These elements, such as word order, tenses, word choices, capitalization, subject-verb agreement, punctuation, and spelling, collectively contribute to determining the overall quality of the text. Considering this, if students want to write quality academic writing, they need to have an understanding of various grammatical elements.

Even though understanding various grammatical elements is crucial for producing quality writing, in fact, many students, especially foreign language students, struggle with academic writing due to a low understanding of correct grammar usage. They still often make grammatical errors, so readers are confused to grasp the idea clearly (Fatoni, 2019). This finding has been identified in several previous studies, including Imam's research on the analysis of grammatical errors in thesis writing. He found that grammatical errors generally occur in the subject-verb agreement

(2016). These errors commonly happened from the errors of using singular subject, name of a person, plural subject, conjunction, preposition and then use of the word 'there' and the word 'these/those'. Other studies have also found that the most common grammatical error made by students is in the use of verbs (Fitrawati & Safitri, 2021). Students still struggle to place verbs correctly with time expressions. For example, they use verb 1 in sentences with the time expression "yesterday. This indicates that students are still confused about the use of tenses in the English language, whether it is present, past, or future tense.

Nowadays, there are so many tools based on artificial intelligence which help students to improve their writing quality. One of the artificial intelligence commonly used to enhance the quality of writing in English is Grammarly. Grammarly is a tool that facilitates automatic checking of grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Its usage has become popular among students due to its ability to assist in correcting common grammar mistakes, providing suggestions for more accurate word usage, and optimizing sentence structure. It is supported by Armanda (2022), who stated that some students at one of the state universities in Indonesia utilized Grammarly as an online grammar checker to assist them in writing articles. This tool is often used because the use of Grammarly is very flexible. Furthermore, Grammarly's features are highly beneficial in correcting grammatical writing errors. Not only check grammatical errors, but Grammarly also offers a spelling feature to identify spelling mistakes. It can detect over 250 grammatical and spelling errors.

In the English Language Education program at Nahdhatul Ulama Sunan Giri University, especially final year students during the academic year 2023/2024, many of them utilize Grammarly as a tool to correct errors, particularly those related to grammar in their theses. This eliminates the necessity for students to consult with lectures for error corrections, as Grammarly enables them to identify and receive feedback on errors independently. Consequently, students can enhance their writing skills. Furthermore, Grammarly's accessibility allows students to use it at their

convenience. In light of this, the researcher aims to explore and understand students' perceptions regarding Grammarly's use in thesis writing.

In its usage, many students choose to use the free version of Grammarly to help them write their thesis. They choose to use the free version over the paid one for several reasons. Grammarly's free version offers basic features like spell-checking, grammar, and punctuation. On the other hand, the Premium and Business versions offer additional features such as writing style suggestions, plagiarism checking, and more in-depth vocabulary enhancement. The Premium version is designed for individual users looking for a more comprehensive writing experience, while the Business version is better suited to teams or organizations that need additional collaboration and administration features. However, students often choose the free version because it is enough to meet their basic needs without having to pay additional costs.

In addition to the use of Grammarly, students' perceptions become an important factor that should be considered by the lecturer. Students' perceptions are crucial to be used as a consideration by lecturers in enhancing and evaluating students' learning outcomes. According to Lailika (2019), students' perceptions determine the success or failure of the learning process. Moreover, students' perceptions provide data that is much richer in quality and leads to a more useful understanding of the student experience in terms of 'learning and teaching.' According to Tudor (2010), the consideration of students' perceptions and approaches could be integrated with work focusing on improving the student experience. Thus, students' perceptions should be considered regarding whether the utilization of Grammarly brings the claimed benefits or even leads students to face any difficulties or confusion. In the context of thesis writing, students' perceptions of the use of Grammarly are necessary for lecturers to consider for guidance or further learning.

In recent years, studies on student perceptions of using Grammarly in academic writing have been conducted by several researchers. Cauring's study (2023) found that the use of the Grammarly application can enhance

students' research writing skills. Students also mentioned that the ease of using Grammarly makes them consider it a beneficial tool that offers valuable feedback and suggestions for improving their research writing skills. Another study by Fitria and friends (2022) discussed student perceptions, with results showing that 80.1% of students strongly agree that using Grammarly has a positive impact. Grammarly has both strengths and weaknesses. In another study, Additionally, Nova's research (2018) found that students' experiences in utilizing Grammarly to evaluate academic writing offer several significant benefits. However, the study also identified some weaknesses in the Grammarly program, such as misleading feedback, excessive focus on reference lists, and limitations in checking context and content, potentially affecting the accuracy of evaluations.

Based on the previous studies above, many studies investigated students' perceptions of using Grammarly in writing their thesis, regarding its convenience, benefits, weaknesses and advantages. However, some previous studies have discussed students' perceptions of using Grammarly, but none have addressed the student's perceptions of the challenges and opportunities they face when using Grammarly. Additionally, there has been no research that presents results on how students behave when encountering challenges and opportunities while using Grammarly. Identifying the challenges and opportunities of using Grammarly is important because it helps to comprehensively understand how this tool impacts students' academic writing processes. By knowing the challenges faced, strategies can be developed to address these challenges. Conversely, understanding the opportunities offered allows students to maximize the opportunities of Grammarly. Moreover, it assists educators and software developers in improving and optimizing this tool for more effective use by both English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and non-EFL students. It also provides insights to educational institutions on how technology can be integrated with traditional learning processes to enhance overall student writing skills.

Therefore, it is needed to investigate “Student Perception: Challenges and Opportunities of Using Grammarly in Thesis Writing”. This topic is

important to explore because (1) most of the previous studies above only mention students' perception of Grammarly, without discussing the challenges and opportunities, (2) students can leverage opportunities and confront challenges when using Grammarly for thesis writing, and (3) identifying the challenges and opportunities of Grammarly will be beneficial for both English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and non-EFL students.

1.2. Research Questions

Based on the background of the study above, the researcher set out the research questions, they are:

- a. What are the student perceptions of using Grammarly for thesis writing?
- b. What are student perceptions on challenges and opportunities of using Grammarly in their thesis writing?
- c. How do students respond to opportunities and challenges when using Grammarly?

1.3. Research Purposes

To the background and research questions, the objectives of the research are:

- a. To know students' perceptions of using Grammarly on thesis writing
- b. To explore student perceptions on the challenges and opportunities of using Grammarly in their thesis writing
- c. To explore student responses towards opportunities and challenges when using Grammarly

1.4. Scope and Limits of The Research

1.4.1. Scope

This study focused on the students' perceptions of Grammarly use in thesis writing, including positive and negative perceptions. It also included the opportunities and challenges of the Grammarly program. Furthermore,

this study explains students' attitudes when facing challenges and opportunities.

1.4.2. Limitation

The study is limited to the students of the English Language Education Department who are in the process of writing the thesis in the 2023/2024 academic year.

1.5. Significance of The Study

1.5.1. Theoretically

The theoretical aim of this research is to explore students' perceptions of using Grammarly in their thesis writing process, particularly in identifying the challenges and opportunities they encounter. It also aims to offer educators or students new insights into developing strategies to overcome challenges and maximize the opportunities presented by Grammarly. Additionally, it aims to provide updated findings from previous research to serve as a reference for future studies.

1.5.2. Practically

The result of this study is expected to be beneficial information for English teachers and students. This research will give information for the lectures about using Grammarly help them to check the student's work or their work in writing.

- a. For EFL students, this research provides some information about Grammarly, including the opportunities and challenges of using this tool. It also provides a detailed analysis of the kind of inaccurate feedback provided by Grammarly and how students deal with it
- b. For the lecturers, this research is beneficial in giving information about Grammarly so that the lecturers can use it to help them check their students' work in writing.

1.6. Definition of Key Terms

1.6.1. Perception

Perception refers to views, arguments, perspectives, thoughts, and beliefs about something. Perception is belief about oneself or one thing. In this research, this term refers to the accompanying students' views of

Grammarly use on thesis writing and the opportunities and challenges they face when using it.

1.6.2. Grammarly

Grammarly is one of the artificial intelligence tools that help check grammar in writing automatically. Grammarly provides several features such as checking grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors. Grammarly also provides useful feedback including suggestions and corrections to make the writing more effective, mistake-free, and precise with a high rate of accuracy. In this case, the term Grammarly refers to a tool used by students to check their grammar mistakes in writing the thesis.

1.6.3. Thesis Writing

Thesis is one kind of academic writing. It is a scientific paper based on the result of the field research and literature which is written by undergraduate students as a formal study final project. Thesis writing is a reporting research submitted as a requirement to get a degree of Sarjana Pendidikan in the English Education Department of Nahdhatul Ulama Sunan Giri University. Every university student must complete the thesis writing to graduate. The thesis writing in this research is students' writing as a required subject for their degree.



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