

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the background of the study, research questions, the purposes, the significance, and the scope of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

In educational field, writing is an important skill to learn (Ariyanti, 2016). In order to fulfill their academic needs, it is important to recognize many academic goals that include writing skills such as reports, assignments, exercises and theses (Ariyanti, 2016). Indonesia has agreed that higher education graduates have to publish the final project of leaving such as an article in a journal as the new reform of publication (Mukhroji, 2020). However, problems exist under certain conditions in order to implement the policy. Learning to write in academic English is a problematic and challenging assignment (Fadda, 2012). Al-Badi (2015) stated that it is considered as challenging skills for students to learn especially for English Foreign Language (EFL) students whom their foreign language has different rules, patterns, and structures from their mother language. For those who has different cultural backgrounds, they consider it specifically demanding (Fadda, 2012). Asians, for instance, are assumed to encounter more academic writing challenges (Casanave & Hubbard, 1992). Rabab'ah (2005) also pointed out that students from Asian universities typically find it difficult to meet the criteria of English academic writing. Al-Badi (2015) stated the reasons behind this matter; it might be caused by the differences in students' cultural backgrounds, lack of critical thinking, and low language proficiency. For that reason the current study is aimed to discover students' difficulties in academic writing.

In recent years, academic writing difficulties have become a topic that researchers have noticeably considered and different studies have been performed on

this matter. Nasser (2018) examined Iraqi English Foreign Language learners' difficulties in writing composition. This research takes place in the Department of English at College of Education for Women, University of Baghdad. Al-Badi (2015) examined the academic writing challenges of English Second Language students. 20 postgraduate students of four nationalities learning at a university in Australia were the subjects. The next research was conducted by Rahman & Hasan (2019). They examined the academic writing problems faced by Bangladeshi students at University Utara Malaysia (UUM). Ariyanti & Fitriana (2017) also investigated the problems encountered by English Foreign Language students in essay writing in English Department at Widya Gama Mahakam University, Indonesia. Xiao & Chen (2015) examined engineering students' academic writing difficulties at the tertiary level in China. They described three categories of academic writing difficulties in their previous study: content, structure, and language. Lastly, Noori (2020) examined the difficulties of undergraduate English major students face in academic writing in Afghanistan. He also adapted and modified three categories of academic writing difficulties students likely to be experienced.

Since academic writing presents students with such a challenge, language experts have reacted by trying to find ways to take advantage of advent technology. A strong argument stated by Rabah (2015) highlighted the employment of learning technology as an efficient and convenient learning tool which is required and expected to deal with the challenges of modernization, improve the nation's financial status, and encourage and assist learners in learning. From the use of technological resources like machine translation, these developments have found their way into the field of foreign language education. Kim & LaBianca (2018) indicated that English Foreign Language students, especially those for whom English is not their mother language, tend to seek a help from different sources, including online sources such as Google Translate. According to Yamamoto, cited in (Sukkhwan, 2019) it is said that Machine Translation is computer software used to translate texts from one language to another. Sukkhwan (2019) said that many online machine translator technologies are available for internet users and language learners such as Google Translate, Bing

Translator, and Yahoo Babelfish. Google Translate is currently the most commonly used free machine translation available (Drugan, 2013). Certainly, people around the world use these services to translate every day, and mostly language learners, including Indonesian college students, use them for language learning purposes.

Prior studies have been conducted by many researchers regarding the employment of machine translation in academic writing. The practice of Google Translate in English Foreign Language essay writing and its role in language learning and teaching was examined by Kristen & Wacana (2018). Bahri (2016) conducted a study on the use of Google Translate as a alternative tool to assist international students at Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) in learning and increasing their knowledge and skills in Bahasa Malaysia. S. M. Lee (2020) investigated the value of machine translation for improving students' L2 writing. Garcia & Pena (2011) conducted the related study to discover whether machine translation could help improve the writing skills of second language students. Alhaisoni & Alhaysony (2017) conducted the relevant study which focused only on students' attitude toward the use of Google Translate in academic purposes.

However, none of those studies investigated the employment of machine translation to overcome Mechanical Engineering Vocational Education student's difficulties in academic writing. This gap has led the researcher to investigate this study.

1.2 Research Questions

According to problems stated in previous section, two research questions are formulated as follows:

1. What academic writing difficulties are encountered by Mechanical Engineering Vocational Education students?
2. How does the machine translation overcome Mechanical Engineering Vocational Education students' difficulties in academic writing?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to discover the employment of machine translation to overcome Mechanical Engineering Vocational Education students' difficulties in academic writing.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The researcher focuses on discover the employment of machine translation to overcome students' difficulties in academic writing. This study used qualitative survey with descriptive analysis methods. The researcher distributed two questionnaires to gather the data. Qualitative research does not aim to generalize research results because this research was conducted only on 2nd semester Mechanical Engineering Vocational Education students who were taking English subject Education at Universitas Negeri Jakarta.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study was conducted to provide benefits in two aspects, theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the findings of the study can be useful information for other researchers who are interested in conducted the same area. Practically, the study is also beneficial for both students and lecture to take the advantage of employing machine translation to overcome Mechanical Engineering Vocational Education students' difficulties in academic writing.

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