

# CHAPTER I

## 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

Recently, the study of academic writing has become an important aspect of writing skill. Writing skill is known as the most difficult skill in academic writing. Many studies found that the Indonesian EFL students' problems in writing are increasing. Rahmatunisa (2014) investigated the Indonesian EFL learners' problems in writing argumentative essay. This study revealed that the EFL students had problems in terms of linguistics, cognitive, and psychological. Ariyanti & Fitriana (2017) reported that Indonesian EFL university students were trouble in using grammar, cohesion, coherence, paragraph organization, diction, and spelling errors in essay writing. Hasan & Marzuki (2017) analyzed the Indonesian EFL students' ability in writing by asking the students to do writing task in determined time. Additionally, Kristy (2015) found that the third semester students of English Department of FKIP University of Bengkulu have some difficulties in writing. Based on the data, the researcher has grouped the difficulties into Physiology Aspect (Content), Linguistics Aspect (Language use and Vocabulary), and Cognitive Aspect (Organization and Mechanics). Those studies lead us to the problems of how to write the academic writing correctly with the proper grammar, cohesion, coherence, paragraph organization, and diction.

The problems of academic writing start with the most challenging part of academic writing itself, that is paraphrasing. Research nowadays found that there are many students face the paraphrasing difficulties in their writing activities. Sarair et al., 2019's study found that the students still failed to properly paraphrase the English texts as they observed that the students' works nearly copied most of the original sources. Most paraphrases were classified to be near copy since many

students still copied the original texts more than 50%. Then, Irena and Yanu, 2019's study revealed that not all of students know the correct way to do paraphrase so they can be labeled as plagiarist. Janpha Thadphoothon, 2019 analyzed the students' responses to the questions concerning their perceptions of the paraphrasing skills. Results showed that students found paraphrasing skills to be essential for their language learning and development. They recognized that paraphrasing skills were complex involving a myriad of skills and abilities. They also perceived syntactic and lexical (vocabulary) skills to be essential for their ability to paraphrase. Many of them said that they could not decode the text and they did not know which words to use. In M. Taufiq, 2020's research, it showed that three among six students successfully perform decent paraphrasing, while the other three paraphrasing is the opposite. But, the rest three define paraphrasing in its basic terminology which is heavily relying on synonym substitution rather than restate a passage. Additionally, Do Na Chi, 2017's study revealed that participants frequently paraphrased using synonyms, but rarely changed syntactic structures. The interviews showed that the learners encountered several language-related difficulties when attempting to paraphrase, such as inadequate understanding of the source text and the lack of vocabulary to use when paraphrasing.

The students are mostly relying on the synonym and failed to paraphrase. It can be caused by the weak writing competencies in their educational studies (Hyytinen et al., 2014). It is also because of the mismatch between participants' behaviors and perceptions. Ming-Tzu Liao and Chiung-Ying Tseng, 2010's research found that the participants tended to deny having committed plagiarism and claimed they were aware of the importance of paraphrasing. However, such belief has contrasted sharply with their actual behaviors in the paraphrasing task in which both postgraduates and undergraduates failed to produce acceptable texts. The reasons for this included not having explicitly learned paraphrasing, unsuccessful transfer of paraphrasing knowledge to writing due to a lack of experience and practice, and the influence of their citation practice in Chinese writing. Ibtisam, 2015 in his study also suggested that the main factor of paraphrasing problems is the lack of previous experience and knowledge about the

conventions of academic writing and the expectations of the institution they are studying at.

M. Chen et al. (2014) conducted a study entitled “Developing a corpus-based paraphrase tool to improve EFL learners' writing skills” in Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, National Tsing Hua University, HsinChu, Taiwan. The study found that EFL Learners have difficulty in making paraphrases to meet their writing demands, and there has been little research on developing automatic reference tools to assist the learners' paraphrasing skills for better writing quality. In M. Chen et al's study, it develops PREFER, an online corpus-based assistance system. The results of the study indicated that PREFER offered the most benefits to students' writing performance (with an after-use improvement of 38.2%), compared with an online dictionary and an online thesaurus (-31.6% and -6.2%, respectively). Further investigation revealed that the less proficient, more motivated, and more conservative students showed more significant progress in the paraphrasing task with the help of PREFER. In the meantime, nearly 90% of the students expressed satisfaction with the paraphrases generated by PREFER, and its functions, and another 75% of them acknowledged that PREFER benefits their writing task.

Prodromos Malakiotis (2009) in his study focuses on paraphrase recognition. He proposed three methods that employ string similarity measures, which are applied to several abstractions of a pair of input phrases (e.g., the phrases themselves, their stems, POS tags). The scores returned by the similarity measures are used as features in a Maximum Entropy (ME) classifier (Jaynes, 1957; Good, 1963), which learns to separate true paraphrase pairs from false ones. Two of his methods also exploit WordNet to detect synonyms, and one of them uses additional features to measure similarities of grammatical relations obtained by a dependency parser. 1 The experiments were conducted on two datasets: the publicly available Microsoft Research Paraphrasing corpus (Dolan et al., 2004) and a dataset that constructed from the MTC corpus. 2 The experimental results show that his methods perform very well. Even the simplest one manages to achieve state of the art results, even though it uses fewer linguistic resources than other reported systems. The other two, more elaborate methods perform even better. Section 2



presents the three methods, and section 3 our experiments. Section 4 covers related work. Section 5 concludes and proposes further work.

The previous research has not ever found the difficulties faced by Mechanical Engineering Vocational students in paraphrasing. The students are obviously not the English Education or English Literature students, but the Non-English Department Students should have the writing skills especially paraphrasing. Clara Aurora (2008) in her thesis stated that English mastery is required in order to enable the graduates to communicate in English when they face the working world. Therefore, machines mostly come from abroad, the manuals and textbooks are usually written in English. It is important for the mechanical engineering students with every degree to learn English especially reading skill to enable them to read English textbooks and support their study (Clara, 2008). In this research, the Mechanical Engineering Vocational Education students are the sources. They took the Academic Writing subject in the second semester of studying. After presenting some meetings in Academic Writing class, the engineering students found some difficulties in writing paraphrases.

This research will also emphasize the use of tools of paraphrasing. The effect of using internet-based tool or usually called as software assistant to help someone's writing has been studied extensively in recent years. For example, a study by Rogerson and McCarthy (2017) which aims to highlight the existence, development, use, and detection of the use of internet-based paraphrasing tools. This study demonstrated that students can use online paraphrasing tools or article spinners in ways that avoid detection by originality checking software such as Turnitin®. Kirtland et al. (2012) in her study said that the use of web based tools can be the excellent sources for teaching writing skills in an interactive way. The free tools available via the internet lack constant updates and improvements as the code is controlled by webmasters and not by experts in MT (Carter & Inkpen, 2012).

However, it is not clear that the use of online paraphrasing tools can overcome the mechanical engineering education students' difficulties in paraphrasing. This research presents the data on students' paraphrase results in paraphrasing literature review section of a journal article. Then it investigates the roles of online

paraphrasing tool to overcome the students' difficulties. The results show that the paraphrasing tools not only overcome the students' problems in paraphrasing, but also the other aspects of academic writing even though the tools cannot help the first step of paraphrasing which is reading skills.

## **1.2. Research Questions**

1. What difficulties are encountered by Mechanical Engineering Vocational Education students in paraphrasing?
2. How do the online paraphrasing tools overcome the students' difficulties in paraphrasing?

## **1.3. Purposes of the Study**

The purposes of this study are to discover the Mechanical Engineering Vocational Education students' difficulties in paraphrasing essays and to investigate how the online paraphrasing tools overcome the students' difficulties in paraphrasing essays.

## **1.4. Scope of the Study**

The study was carried out in second semester of Mechanical Engineering Vocational Education study program of Universitas Negeri Jakarta which takes Academic Writing subject guided by one of English Education lecturer. The learning activities include the process of students in paraphrasing or citing the literature review of a study correctly. The data were collected from the answers of questionnaires of paraphrasing difficulties and how the online tools overcome the paraphrasing difficulties. The researcher focuses on discovering students' difficulties in paraphrasing and the roles of Online Paraphrasing Tools for the students in dealing with the difficulties. This study used qualitative approach with descriptive methods. The researcher distributed two questionnaires to gather the data.

### **1.5. Significance of the Study**

This study was conducted to provide benefits theoretically and practically. Theoretically means that the results of this study can give beneficial information for other researchers who are interested in conducting further research in this area. Meanwhile, practically means that this study can provide a deeper understanding about the difficulties of paraphrasing and how to overcome it. This study is also to increase students' awareness of paraphrasing essays by understanding the paraphrasing strategies and the use of online paraphrasing tools.

### **1.6. Previous Related Study**

This study followed two researches as the reference. The first was from Fabyen Feroza (2017) English Education UNJ entitled "Paraphrasing Strategy in The English Department Students' Skripsi". The purposes of his study are to know paraphrase strategy encountered students' skripsi of English Department and to know the fulfillment of good paraphrase standard on students' skripsi.. The writer used theory from Schuemann (2006) and Kirszner (2008) of forming paraphrase. The researcher used the same framework to analyze the paraphrase of the students.

The second reference is from Irmadamayanti with the title "An Analysis of Paraphrasing Experienced by English Students in Academic Writing". Almost the same with the previous skripsi, in her study, the purpose was to identify English students' strategies in paraphrasing and to investigate the kinds of obstacle or problems they encounter. The results of the study are most of the participants (32%) consider to use minimal revision as the strategy in paraphrasing the text, followed by 28% of the participant who use near copy as their strategy in paraphrasing. Then, 22% of the participants who apply moderate revision and only few participants (18%) who greatly apply substansial revision as the strategy of paraphrasing. The



obstacles they encounter in paraphrasing are: the students find difficulty in comprehending the source text, changing the syntax and structure and finding the keywords and keypoints in the source text.

Based on the two references above, the gap between this study and the previous researchers can be seen through the research purposes and the tool used to do paraphrasing. The previous research does not use analyze the roles of Online Tools to overcome the obstacle or problems in paraphrasing. Then, this study will also find out the difficulties faced by the students of mechanical engineering vocational education in paraphrasing.

