

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the research. It includes the research background, research questions, research purposes, research significances, research framework, and previous research.

A. Research Background

This research aims to determine students' perceptions of their use of grammar in Academic Writing. Writing is an essential skill for students to master because it allows them to think critically and deeply. Writing is used for a variety of purposes and takes many forms. Writing can help students develop critical thinking skills (Harmer, 2004). Students learn how to organize their experiences into words by writing. Students can understand and know how to express their ideas, write effectively, and share their thoughts with others by learning to write. Moreover Harsyaf, Nurmaini, and Zakhwan (2009) define writing is the transformation of thoughts into language; when writing, students must consider the topic's main idea and arrange these ideas into written text. Nunan (2003) also stated that writing is organizing ideas or messages, finding ideas, deciding how to express them, and writing them into statements and clusters of sentences.

Academic Writing is in formal education, particularly in upper-level classes. It is the study of writing used in high school and college classes, according to Alice and Ann (2007). Academic Writing is an essential aspect of writing that students must master at university. This type of writing includes essays, term papers, research papers, et cetera. These types serve the same purpose and adhere to the same principle (Whitaker, 2010). Academic Writing serves a purpose in any aspect of education, whether at school or university (Thais & Zawacki, 2006). As a result, Academic Writing aims to improve writing skills and education, particularly in English.

According to Chandra et al. (2018), writing is a highly complicated cognitive activity in which writers must have equal control over many aspects. It refers to

planning, compiling, rewriting, and editing. Writing is a challenging learning ability for students and a long process, which is why many students need help to develop their writing abilities. Several issues make it difficult for students to exercise their writing abilities, including a lack of vocabulary, comprehension of syntax, and the capacity to convey their thoughts in writing.

Based on the result of preliminary observation on February 8, 2023, of the English Education Department students who have taken Academic Writing classes, students face various challenges when writing academic journals or conducting mini-research. Some students need help using formal language, making references, finding evidence to support their claims, and constructing grammatical sentences. There is very limited grammar use in Academic Writing knowledge, so students face anxiety about writing grammatically correct sentences. According to Muhammad Fareed et al. (2016), students make mistakes in subject-verb agreement, pronouns, tenses, articles, prepositions, and basic sentence structures. Lack of vocabulary has caused the students to face challenges in acquiring writing skills.

Grammatically correct writing is essential. It is critical for students to express their ideas in grammatical sentences in Academic Writing, where they are expected to demonstrate their understanding of very complex ideas. Grammar is a language rule that allows one to construct sentences to convey meaning in language. It is related to how words are woven together to create correct sentences (Harmer, 2007, Thornbury, 2002, Ur, 2012, Gerot and Wignell, 1994).

Previous studies are thought to be relevant to the current research. The first previous research was conducted by Silviana (2022); this study explored the skills of the sixth-year students of the English Program Study and their perception of paraphrasing. The study focused on students' paraphrasing writing. Setyowati (2019), the purpose of this research is to determine whether there is a link between students' writing talents and their mastery of grammar. This study employed a correlational research design and a quantitative technique. The following relevant study, conducted by Alova (2022), the purpose of this study was to evaluate the

Academic Writing and grammatical abilities of special grade kids, as well as to investigate characteristics such as the child's gender and the educational attainment of the parents, highlighting their link to Academic Writing. The subsequent relevant research was conducted by Oma (2019). The goal of this study is to determine whether or not pedagogical grammar instruction benefits ELLs' Academic Writing.

Therefore, this research has a different area from previous studies. This study focuses on exploring students' perceptions of the use of their grammar in Academic Writing, challenges EFL students' experience in Academic Writing, and what causes mistakes made by semester 4 students of the English Language Education Department at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung in their Academic Writing.

B. Research Question

Regarding the issues mentioned above, this study poses the following questions:

1. What are the challenges that EFL students experience in Academic Writing?
2. What are the EFL students' perceptions of the use of grammar in Academic Writing?
3. How are the EFL students' use of grammar in their Academic Writing?

C. Research Purposes

Seeing the research questions above, the purposes of this study are to find out:

1. To explore the challenges faced by EFL students in Academic Writing.
2. To describe EFL students' perceptions regarding grammar use in Academic Writing.
3. To describe how EFL students use grammar in their Academic Writing.

D. Research Significances

This study has two significant implications. The research findings are expected to be theoretically and practically applicable.

a. Theoretical Significances

The findings of this study are meant to be a resource and source of information for English lecturers seeking unique and innovative English teaching and learning activities, specifically regarding students' perceptions and challenges of using grammar in Academic Writing courses. Besides, this study provides valuable insight into students' perspectives and challenges of using grammar instruction in an Academic Writing course context. It can be used as a reference for future studies in this area and others.

b. Practical Significances

The responses of students in this study are expected to help teachers evaluate teaching methods and study grammar in Academic Writing. It is expected that the results of this study should encourage students to learn and improve their English writing skills by using grammar.

E. Conceptual Framework

Students' perception is their perspective on everything that occurs in the classroom during the educational process (Shidhu, 2003). Students are free to express themselves and their teachers' opinions. Therefore, students' perspectives are crucial. In addition to Petegen et al. (2007), students' perception is relevant material to consider when measuring learning outcomes. As a result, students' perceptions are critical not only for evaluation but also for educational development. According to the explanation above, students' perception is the process of their preferential treatment of information obtained from an object. This study used a questionnaire about how students could understand the observed object to examine how grammar is used in Academic Writing classes.

Academic Writing is an important talent that every student should have. It is not only necessary for academic accomplishment but also for professional success. According to Mork and Oldham (2018), Academic Writing assists students with organizing their thoughts and ideas, communicating their views effectively, and providing evidence to back their assertions.

Students can also use Academic Writing to demonstrate their mastery of a subject and explain it effectively and concisely (Rose & McClafferty, 2019). This is especially crucial in academic settings, as the ability to write well is a major element in predicting academic achievement (Flowerdew, 2016).

According to Harsyaf, Nurmaini, and Zakhwan (2009), writing transforms thoughts into language. This means that in order to write, students must consider the topic's central idea and organize it into a written text. Nunan (2003) also states that writing is organizing ideas or messages, inventing ideas, considering how to express them, and writing them into sentences and paragraphs. Furthermore, Harmer (2004), writing is used for various purposes and is produced in various formats. Writing can help students develop a critical mindset. Students learn how to articulate their experiences through writing.

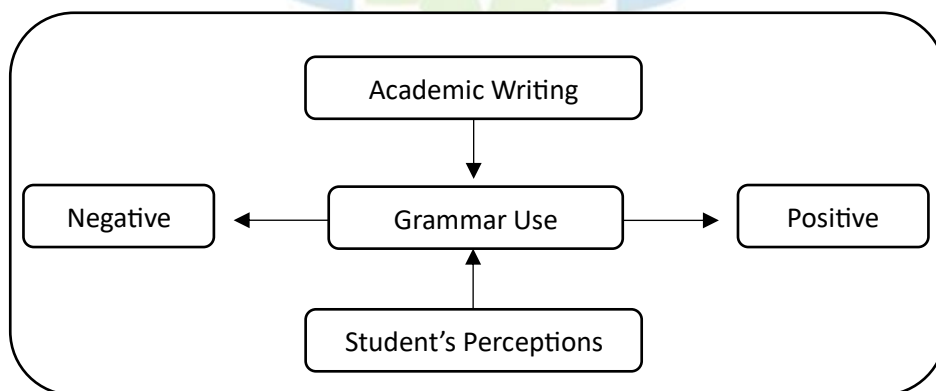
Skills such as word choice and grammar usage (English structure regulation) are extremely important. Students must have a high standard of grammar in addition to analytical and critical thinking, mastering writing regulations, and setting critical arguments. In fact, most EFL students continue to struggle with Academic Writing. According to Pratama (2017), several characteristics of written language are discussed: "Writers must study how to remove redundancy, how to combine sentences, how to make references to other elements in the text, how to make syntax and lexical variety, and more."

According to Harmer (2007), grammar can thus be understood as knowing what words can go where and what form these words should have. Grammar study entails learning how to string together various grammatical elements to form a chain of words. A grammatical mistake was also found in the Academic Writing of

Iraqi postgraduate students. A study showed that postgraduate students made mistakes in tenses, prepositions, passive voice, verbs, and morphology (Mohammed, 2015). These studies show that EFL students all over the world make mistakes in their school writing.

Grammar is one of the most important parts of learning a language (Putri, 2014). Grammar is a set of rules for how sentences, phrases, and words in any language should be put together. Every language has its own way of putting things together. Grammar is essential in Academic Writing since it makes it easier for readers to read. It teaches authors how to form words into cohesive phrases and sentences into paragraphs so that their writing effectively conveys the meanings intended by the writers. Students who know how to use correct grammar are likely to write well, which will earn them a good grade from their teachers. Grammar is defined as the set of rules that form a language (Canie, 2013).

In general, the research can be described in the thesis diagram.



F. Previous Study

The first previous research was conducted by Silviana (2022) on EFL students' perceptions of their paraphrasing skills in Academic Writing. This study explored the skills of the sixth-year students of the English Program Study and their perception of paraphrasing. This study uses a case study. Interviews and document analysis were the research's primary methods of data collection. Participants in this

research were nine students: three students with poor achievement, three students with medium achievement, and three students with high achievement in the 6th semester based on their achievement in the Academic Writing course. The approach of this research is qualitative research, using a case study and interview and document analysis as instruments. Exploring student perceptions. However, there are also some gaps between the current and previous studies. The current research focuses on explaining students' perceptions of their use of grammar in Academic Writing through a case study with the 4th-semester students of the English Education Department at a state Islamic university in Indonesia. The instruments used were a questionnaire, an interview, and document analysis.

Second, Setyowati (2019) conducted research on the correlation between grammar and writing achievement of EFL sophomore students at STKIP PGRI Pasuruan, Indonesia. The purpose of this study is to determine whether there is a significant correlation between students' grammar mastery and their ability to write. This research was conducted using a quantitative method and a correlational research design. The test and scoring manual were utilized as the study's instruments by the researcher. The researcher administered the writing exam and the grammar test as part of the data collection. Participants in this research were all fourth-semester students of the English Education Study Program at Teachers Training and Education (STKIP) PGRI Pasuruan in the academic year 2017/2018. This previous research is relevant in terms of topic and participants. The topic is grammar in EFL, and the participants are 4th-semester students of English education. However, there are also some gaps between the current and previous research. The current research explores students' perceptions of their use of grammar in Academic Writing using a case study. The participants are the 4th-semester students of the English Education Department at a state Islamic university in Indonesia. The instruments used were a questionnaire, an interview, and document analysis.

Third, Alova's research (2022) focuses on the grammatical and Academic Writing competence of special-class students. This study focused on determining

the competence of learners in Academic Writing and grammar as well as the significance of the link between the two variables. To determine the impact of these characteristics, some other variables, including sex and parental educational attainment, are measured. The descriptive-correlational research design Participants in this research were ninety (90) students in Grade 10 enrolled in a special science class selected using a stratified sampling technique. The instrument of this research is a questionnaire. This previous research is relevant in terms of topic and instrument. The topic is grammatical and Academic Writing, and the instrument of this study is an online questionnaire. However, there are also some gaps between the current and previous research. The current research focuses on exploring students' perceptions of their use of grammar in Academic Writing using a case study. The participants are the 4th-semester students of the English Education Department at a state Islamic university in Indonesia. The instruments used were a questionnaire, an interview, and document analysis.

Finally, relevant research was conducted by Oma (2019), teaching pedagogical grammar in context to enrich English language learners' Academic Writing. This study aims to discover the difficulties that students face in Academic Writing classes as well as the students' perceptions of using grammar in Academic Writing. This study employs a qualitative approach. Interviews and questionnaires were used to collect data for this study. Participants in this research are nine ELLs. This previous research is relevant in terms of topic, method, and instrument. The topic is pedagogical grammar and the challenges they encounter while writing in academic situations. The method of this study is a qualitative approach, and the instruments of this study are interviews and questionnaires. However, there are also some gaps between the current and previous research. The current research focuses on exploring students' perceptions of their use of grammar in Academic Writing and the challenges that EFL students experience in writing academic English using a case study. The method of this research is qualitative. The participants are the 4thsemester students of the English Education Department at a state Islamic university in Indonesia. The instruments used were a questionnaire, an interview, and document analysis.