

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a wide-ranging description of the study. It comprises the background, formulation of the problem, operational definitions, aim of the study, and significance of the study.

A. Background of the Study

Academic writing skills are very important skills for students, especially to complete assignments that require originality in writing and adherence to academic standards. Theroux (2024) stated that a similarity score on Turnitin that exceeds 25% is considered too high and has the potential to be categorized as plagiarism. This confirms that one of the main challenges in academic writing is keeping the level of plagiarism below the set threshold. Fitria (2021) stated that one of the main difficulties for students in writing is plagiarism or the inability to re-express ideas in their own words. Paraphrasing is an important solution in this case. Fitria (2022) also emphasized that paraphrasing is an important skill in academic writing because it helps avoid plagiarism. However, to master paraphrasing, one must demonstrate an acceptable level of vocabulary and grammar, which presents difficulties for EFL learners. According to Ismail et al. (2020), the most difficult part of paraphrasing is vocabulary and grammar. EFL learners have technological means to overcome the challenges in paraphrasing. Bakla and Karakaş (2022) claim that the different linguistic and cultural backgrounds of native and non-native speakers of English lead to variations in the methods and strategies used for academic writing. Many tools for grammar and vocabulary correction, such as QuillBot, are available to many EFL learners who struggle with grammar and vocabulary. The use of artificial intelligence in paraphrasing makes QuillBot more popular among EFL learners as it helps to reorder sentences meaningfully and quickly while upholding academic integrity.

QuillBot is a word processing application that is popular among EFL learners who deal with academic writing. Fitria (2021) stated that QuillBot can be easily found online, and it helps to reorganize text accurately. Syahnaz and Fithriani

(2023) found that students appreciated the QuillBot tool because it can change words and phrases to avoid plagiarism and is more efficient than manual paraphrasing. Fitria (2021) also noted that QuillBot helped students' complete assignments faster by correcting their drafts and facilitating the expression of ideas.

As technology becomes more integrated into their daily activities, EFL learners have begun to utilize QuillBot. QuillBot not only helps with academic writing but also helps students understand the importance of avoiding plagiarism. Students are often given writing assignments that challenge their writing skills; QuillBot helps them accomplish this task with ease. This tool allows students to paraphrase ethically without losing the originality of their work. Particularly in the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) course where students had to write a research articles as a final exam, Turnitin was used to check for plagiarism. The results showed that some students passed while others did not. Upon further investigation, it was found that most of the students who passed relied on QuillBot to paraphrase their work. There are significant concerns about how students who use academic writing perceive the use of QuillBot in their work.

This research is of significant value since QuillBot is becoming more relevant in aiding students with English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in the academic writing. QuillBot does not only assist students in producing written work comparatively easier and faster, but also plays an important part in creating students' awareness towards plagiarism. With numerous assignments needing writing proficiency, QuillBot is relevant in promoting students' originality. It creates important boundaries to be studied on the students' perception of QuillBot because their perception depending on the easiness and usefulness of the tool will impact their decision to use it. With these perceptions, we are able to find out if indeed, QuillBot helps students overcome their writing obstacles and enhance the quality of academic works. Additionally, this research also helps the later development of more sophisticated educational technologies.

Many studies have been conducted on the use of QuillBot for paraphrasing. Several studies on the use of QuillBot show many benefits. Kurniati and Fithriani (2022) stated that QuillBot helps improve students' positive attitudes towards

writing and develops their language skills. Saputri (2023) added that QuillBot improves work effectiveness and helps students recognize sentence patterns in English. However, the use of QuillBot can also reduce manual paraphrasing skills, potentially causing errors, and difficulty in explaining writing orally. Andriani et al. (2024) noted that EFL students' self-efficacy is influenced by behavioral, social, and personal factors, with behavior being the most significant factor influencing academic writing competence. Therefore, increasing self-efficacy in using QuillBot requires social support and addressing behavioral challenges.

EFL students are increasingly using QuillBot as a paraphrasing tool in academic writing. The use of QuillBot not only makes the writing process easier, but also helps maintain originality and raises awareness of the importance of avoiding plagiarism. Although previous studies have discussed the benefits of QuillBot, research focusing on college students' perceptions of QuillBot's Usability and Ease of Use in meeting academic demands is lacking. Therefore, this study aims to explore EFL students' perceptions of the Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) of QuillBot in academic writing.

B. Formulation of the Problem

Based on the background above, the researcher addressed the following question, “What are EFL students' perceptions of the Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) of QuillBot in academic writing?”

C. Operational Definitions

To avoid misinterpretation of this study, the researcher provided four definitions related to this study as follows:

1. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

According to Davis (1989), the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) analyzes why individuals accept or not accept and use technology. The model focuses on two main variables: Perceived Usefulness (PU), which represents the belief that the technology will improve performance, and Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU), which measures the degree to which the technology is easy to use without

effort. In this study, TAM was used to investigate EFL students' attitudes towards QuillBot as a tool for academic writing (not for plagiarism). Students' perceptions of the tool's ease and usefulness were determined through semi-structured interviews that examined whether students felt the tool helped them produce quality, plagiarism-free writing.

2. EFL Students' Perception

EFL students' perceptions in this study are related to their attitudes and experiences in using QuillBot in academic writing in CDA courses. These perceptions were further investigated through semi-structured interviews, which aimed to identify how students perceived the usefulness of QuillBot in creating original and high-quality academic writing and what difficulties or problems they experienced when using it.

3. Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing in this dissertation refers to the technique of changing sentences or content from the source text into an alternative text without changing its meaning. This step is also used by students who take Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) courses at one of the universities in Tasikmalaya city to minimize plagiarism in academic writing, especially in writing research articles. The use of QuillBot as a paraphrasing tool can enable students to produce original work and avoid plagiarism.

4. Free Version of QuillBot Paraphrasing Tool

QuillBot is a state-of-the-art paraphrasing tool. In such cases, students use the free version of QuillBot to help write academic articles to prevent plagiarism in addition to this research. The paraphrasing software is available for free with the free version consisting of a paraphrasing tool, grammar checker, and vocabulary enhancer. Its use was determined by students' use of QuillBot to rewrite texts to improve their writing skills and prevent plagiarism.

5. Academic Writing

The academic writing in this study shows that EFL students' research articles should be completed for the final project of the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) course. In academic writing, the emphasis is on novelty, which is tested with the help of Turnitin plagiarism detection. This study is written to discuss how to support students to create their original non-plagiarized sentences through the use of QuillBot as a proper paraphrasing tool.

D. Aim of the Study

This study aims to explore EFL students' perceptions of the Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) of QuillBot in academic writing.

E. Significance of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate EFL students' perceptions of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of QuillBot paraphrasing tool for avoiding plagiarism in their academic writing. Theoretical, practical, and empirical contribution. This research will have an impact through offering theoretical, practical, and empirical contribution.

1. Theoretical Significance

The findings of this study provide support for the growing TAM literature in learning, specifically paraphrasing and academic writing, as this study highlights EFL students' perceptions of the usability and ease of use of the QuillBot paraphrasing tool. Despite being a technology-enabled paraphrasing tool, QuillBot has not been fully explored in the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. As such, this study contributes to the theoretical understanding of how EFL college students use automated paraphrasing tools to write academic texts, while also advancing knowledge on the acceptability of technology in academic writing.

2. Practical Significance

The purpose of this preliminary study is to give readers or instructors a glimpse into students' perceptions of QuillBot's usability and ease of use. By knowing students' perceptions of QuillBot's usability and ease of use, educators will be able to maximize the use of QuillBot in the classroom, as well as a learning resource and strategy for academic writing. In addition, the findings of this study will serve as a guide for instructors in understanding how QuillBot can help students avoid plagiarism and to gain insight into what difficulties students may encounter when using QuillBot. Furthermore, the submission of this study can also inform developers of tools such as QuillBot about user needs in an educational context.

3. Empirical Significance

This research generates empirical evidence on how EFL learners perceive the usefulness and ease of use of the QuillBot in academic writing. These empirical insights are valuable in that they allow students to provide such first-person accounts of engaging with the tool and shed light on the nature and function of paraphrasing technology in academic writing.