# DELVING INTO ENGLISH AS A FOREGIN LANGUAGE STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON THESIS WRITING REFERENCING SYSTEM

## INVESTIGASI PERSEPSI MAHASISWA PEMBELAJAR BAHASA INGGRIS SEBAGAI BAHASA ASING TERHADAP SISTEM RUJUKAN DALAM PENULISAN SKRIPSI

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**ABSTRACT**

This research aimed to investigate undergraduate EFL students' perception towards the use of Microsoft Word References on students' thesis and factors that influence the perception. This research used a sequential mixed method. There were 25 students from 7th semester of English Language Education, Ganesha University of Education, involved in this research. The research instruments were questionnaire and interview. The results from the questionnaires were analyzed using mean score ideal (Mi) and standard deviation ideal (SDi), and data from the interviews were analyzed using interactive model analysis by Miles and Huberman. From the ideal mean score analysis, the mean score of undergraduate EFL students' perception towards the use of Microsoft Word References on students' thesis was 41.84, which was categorized as average. This means Microsoft Word References can be used in managing citation and reference in thesis writing. Moreover, the interview result shows 11 factors that influence undergraduate EFL students' perception towards the use of Microsoft Word References on students' thesis, namely attitudes, motives, interests, expectations, novelty, motion, size, background, proximity, and time. The factors build two trends, positive and negative perceptions.

Keywords: Undergraduate EFL students, Microsoft Word References, perception, thesis writing.

***ABSTRAK***

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki persepsi mahasiswa EFL terhadap penggunaan Referensi Microsoft Word pada tesis mahasiswa dan faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi persepsi tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain metode campuran khususnya metode campuran sekuensial. Mahasiswa yang terlibat dalam penelitian ini berjumlah 25 mahasiswa semester 7 Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha. Instrumen penelitian yang digunakan adalah kuesioner dan wawancara. Hasil dari kuesioner dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif khususnya nilai rata-rata dan standar deviasi, sedangkan data dari wawancara dianalisis menggunakan analisis model interaktif oleh Miles dan Huberman. Dari analisis nilai rata-rata ideal, nilai rata-rata persepsi mahasiswa EFL terhadap penggunaan Referensi Microsoft Word pada skripsi siswa adalah 41,84, yang dikategorikan sedang. Artinya, Referensi Microsoft Word dapat digunakan dalam mengelola kutipan dan referensi dalam penulisan skripsi. Selain itu, hasil wawancara menunjukkan ada 11 faktor yang mempengaruhi persepsi mahasiswa EFL terhadap penggunaan Referensi Microsoft Word pada skripsi mahasiswa yaitu sikap, motif, minat, harapan, kebaruan, gerak, ukuran, latar belakang, kedekatan, dan waktu. Faktor-faktor tersebut yang membangun dua kecenderungan yaitu persepsi positif dan negatif. Hasil penelitian mengimplikasikan bahwa Referensi Microsoft Word bisa digunakan dalam penulisan skripsi namun bisa digantikan oleh pengelola referensi lain.*

*Kata kunci: mahasiswa pembelajar bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing, Referensi Microsoft Word, persepsi, penulisan skripsi*

## INTRODUCTION

In managing citation and reference, students can use reference tools both manually and automatically. According to Parabhoi et al. (2017) the use of reference management software (RMS) can help writers in their writing process. There are several reference tools which can be used by students namely Zotero, EndNote, Turnitin, Mendeley, and Microsoft Word References. Zotero, EndNote, and Mendeley should be downloaded and installed manually before used. Turnitin needs payment before it can be downloaded and installed. One of the easiest reference tools which can be used is Microsoft Word References. According to Wijayanti et al. (2020), Microsoft Word References can be used to create automatic citations and insert details of the resources. Moreover, Microsoft Word References is included in Microsoft Word application, which is used to write document, hence it does not need to be downloaded or installed manually.

According to Emanuel (2013), the bibliography feature of Microsoft Word is launched in 2007 in Windows and 2008 in Macs. It means that Microsoft Word References does not need to be installed or downloaded manually. According to Beel et al. (2013), Microsoft Word is a user-friendly tool because it allows users to edit references. Another advantage is that Microsoft Word References is free unlike Turnitin or EndNote. It is also familiar for students because it is included in Microsoft Office Word, which is installed in every Windows PC or laptop. However, there is still lack of resources which identify the Microsoft Word References usage in thesis writing.

There are several previous studies containing relevant information that support this current research. Due to scarcity in the research of Microsoft Word References as a referencing system, this research is also supported by studies related to reference tools in the use of academic writing. Butros and Sally (2016) conducted research related to some software to insert citation and reference including EndNote, RefWorks, Mendeley and Zotero. The purpose of the research is to help researcher collect and organize references for their publications taken from licensed databased by using EndNote, RefWorks, Mendeley and Zotero.

Rakshikar (2015) conducted research related to the features and functions of Zotero as software that manages citation. The conclusion of the research was Zotero is a tool for conducting research which allows the users to sense and add contents in the personal library. Nikam (2015) conducted research about Zotero as an effective reference tool. The result of the research using the citation tool correctly shows that researchers can save their time in managing reference, and it can even allow them to format and manage the list of the references in order to publish their works.

Wijayanti et al. (2020) conducted a study about the use of Microsoft Word References in managing citation and reference for teachers. The result of the research was the teachers learn something new from the training and that the training is easy to be understood, implying that Microsoft Word References can help the teachers in managing citation.

There are two purposes of this research. The first is to identify how undergraduate EFL students perceive Microsoft Word References as an automated referencing system in thesis writing. The second is to identify what factors influence undergraduate EFL students' perception to use Microsoft Word References in the process of thesis writing. The participants of this research were the 7th semester undergraduate EFL students of English Language Education Department, Ganesha University of Education who were still working on writing their thesis.

A preliminary study was conducted to identify number of students who already used Microsoft Word References, and it was found out that 46.3% respondents used the referencing system for their thesis writing. This early finding shows that almost half of the respondents utilized the tools, and it is important to know their perception of the platform. The study is expected to provide an onset situation and a consideration for students who will write their thesis using Microsoft Word References in academic writing in the future.

# METHOD

## Research Design

Sequential mixed-method design was used in this research as this research analyze perception, followed by factors that influence the perception. The explanatory sequential design is one of the designs in mix-method which helps researchers to conduct quantitative research to determine the results and qualitative research to explain the details in sequence (Creswell, 2014). In this design, quantitative and qualitative data are needed to gain the mean score ideal (Mi) and standard deviation ideal (SDi) to determine the result and explanation for details in the data collection.

## Participants

There were 25 participants involved in this research, consisting of undergraduate EFL students from English Language Education Department, Ganesha University of Education. The 25 participants were selected based on their availability in filling the forms related to the first phase of the data collection, which is the questionnaire. EFL students from English Language Education Department, Ganesha University of Education, were chosen since they were available to be the subject of this research and they match the criteria of the subject, i.e., Indonesian students who use English as a Foreign Language and who were doing thesis writing.

Purposive sampling was used to select the participants. There were 5 participants involved in the second phase of data collection (the interview phase). The 5 participants were selected based on the variation of scores in the questionnaire and their availabilities to do interview. The five participants were undergraduate EFL students from English Language Education Department, Ganesha University of Education who had been involved in the first phase of data collection (questionnaire phase). The selections of the participants were based on accessibility, supporting facility, time limitation, and schedule.

## Data Collection

There were two instruments used in this research to collect data, i.e., perception questionnaire and interview guide. The instruments were divided into three dimensions namely perceiver, target, and situation based on a theory of Robbins and Judge (2013). The questionnaire is adapted from some previous studies (Buzzetto-Hollywood, 2008; Patak et al., 2016; Bicen & Kocakoyun, 2018; Rosida, 2018; ONeill & Russell, 2018). The questionnaire was distributed through online survey by sending the link of Google forms to the participants. The participants were not given deadline or specific time to fill the questionnaire. After the questionnaires were distributed, the interview guide was developed.

## Data Analysis

The results from the questionnaires were analyzed using Ideal mean score (Mi) and Ideal standard deviation (SDi) analyses. Below are the categorization criteria of ideal mean score analysis for the questionnaire analysis.

**TABLE I CATEGORIZATION CRITERIA OF IDEAL MEAN SCORE ANALYSIS**

| No | Criteria | Interval | Categorization | Qualification |
|----|----------|----------|----------------|---------------|
| 1 | MI + 1.5 SDI <M<Mi+3.0 SDi | 54<M<72 | Very high | Very positive |
| 2 | MI+ 0.5 SDI<M<MI+1.5 SDI | 42<M<54 | High | Positive |
| 3 | MI-0.5 SDI<M<MI+ 0.5 SDI | 30<M<42 | Average | Neutral |
| 4 | MI-1.5 SDI<M<MI-0.5 SDI | 18<M<30 | Low | Negative |
| 5 | MI-3.0 SDI<M< MI-1.5 SDI | 0<M<18 | Very low | Very negative |

The noteworthy responses of the participants were analyzed to select the participants for the interview phase. Then, 5 participants were selected for the interview. The interview result was analyzed using interactive model analysis by Miles and Huberman (1994) and used to support the questionnaire results. The interactive model was chosen because it allows researcher to analyze the data with more flexibility and feasibility of repetition of the data collection when necessary.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Undergraduate EFL Students' Perception towards the Use of Microsoft Word References on Students' Thesis

The questionnaire consisted of 12 valid statements in the form of five points of Likert-scale started from Strongly Agree (SA) to Strongly Disagree (SD). Based on the ideal mean score analysis, the mean score (Mi) and standard deviation (SDi) of the questionnaire were 36 and 12, respectively. It obtained a score range between 30 and 42. The mean score categorization of undergraduate EFL students' perception towards the use of Microsoft Word References can be seen in Table 1.

The mean score of undergraduate EFL students' perception towards the use of Microsoft Word References on students' thesis was 41.84, based on the descriptive statistics using SPSS-X version 25. It was in the interval of 30<M<42, which can be categorized as average. It can be concluded that undergraduate EFL students in English Language Education Department, Ganesha University of Education had neutral perception towards the use of Microsoft Word References on students' thesis. This means that Microsoft Word References can be used to help students in their thesis writing.

The analysis of frequency distribution showed three dimensions analyzed, namely perceiver, target, and situation. The first dimension is perceiver. Perceiver indicates the individual who perceive or recognize a particular thing. The perceiver of this research is the undergraduate EFL students who used Microsoft Word References in their thesis writing.

There were six elements identified in the perceiver dimension. The first element is that the perceivers consider Microsoft Word References useful for thesis writing. The second is that the perceivers use Microsoft Word References to help them understand how to manage citation and references of thesis writing properly. The third is that perceivers are interested in using Microsoft Word References to maintain citation and references on thesis writing. Fourth, the perceivers consider using Microsoft Word References help them have better understanding about some citation styles provided by Microsoft Word References. Fifth, the perceivers consider Microsoft Word References make them feel more confident in managing citation and references in their thesis. Lastly, the perceivers believe that Microsoft Word References usage will play an important role in minimizing plagiarism in thesis writing.

Based on the frequency distribution, 37.34 % students are shown to have positive perception, indicating that the undergraduate EFL students consider using Microsoft Word References for their thesis writing beneficial. As much as 24% students have had neutral perception, indicating that the undergraduate EFL students consider the use of Microsoft Word References for thesis writing is both useful and not useful. 38.68 % students are revealed to have negative perception, which shows that the undergraduate EFL students consider the use of Microsoft Word References for thesis writing is not useful for them. It means undergraduate EFL students in English Language Education, Ganesha University of Education tended to have negative perception towards the use of Microsoft Word References for thesis writing.

### TABLE II FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION FOR PERCEIVER DIMENSION

| No | Perception | Percentage |
|----|-----------|------------|
| 1 | Positive | 37.34 % |
| 2 | Neutral | 24% |
| 3 | Negative | 38.68 % |

The second dimension is target. The target indicates the object, or a particular thing being observed and interpreted. The target of this research is Microsoft Word References used by undergraduate EFL students in managing citation and references. There were five elements identified in the target dimension, such as 1) valuable things are found in Microsoft Word References. 2) Microsoft Word References is easy, quick, and simple tools because it does not need to be installed or downloaded. 3) Microsoft Word References is easy to be used because it is installed in the Microsoft Word application, so it does not need space for manual installation. 4) the feedbacks from supervisors due to incorrect and inconsistent citation style on thesis writing influenced the use of Microsoft Word References. 5) Microsoft Word References is used for creating citation and reference because it is easy to use since it does not need to be installed manually. Based on the frequency distribution, 64% of the students have had positive perception, implying the use of Microsoft Word References has given advantages for undergraduate EFL students in their thesis writing. 18.75% of the students have had neutral perception, which showed the use of Microsoft Word References gave both advantages and disadvantages for undergraduate EFL students in their thesis writing. Further, 17.18% of the students have had negative perception, which showed the use of Microsoft Word References gave disadvantages for undergraduate EFL students in their thesis writing. Since 64% of the students have had a positive perception, it can be stated that the use of Microsoft Word References is beneficial for undergraduate EFL students in English Language Education, Ganesha University of Education especially in its use for thesis writing.

**TABLE III FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION FOR TARGET DIMENSION**

| No | Perception | Percentage |
|----|------------|------------|
| 1 | Positive | 64 % |
| 2 | Neutral | 18.75% |
| 3 | Negative | 17.18 % |

The third dimension is situation. The situation indicates the circumstances of the perception. There was one element identified in the target dimension, namely the duration to learn about Microsoft Word References because the features are easy to understand. Based on the frequency distribution, 68% students have had positive perception, which showed that according to the undergraduate EFL students it took only little time to learn to use Microsoft Word References. 16% students have had neutral perception, which showed that undergraduate EFL students think it took a moderate amount of time to learn to use Microsoft Word References. 16% students have had negative perception, implying that undergraduate EFL students considered a lot of time is needed to learn to use Microsoft Word References. Since 68% students have had positive perception, it can be stated that it took a little time for the undergraduate EFL students to learn to use Microsoft Word References.

**TABLE IV FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION FOR SITUATION DIMENSION**

| No | Perception | Percentage |
|----|------------|------------|
| 1 | Positive | 68% |
| 2 | Neutral | 16% |
| 3 | Negative | 16% |

Based on the questionnaire analysis, it is identified that undergraduate EFL students have had neutral perception towards the use of Microsoft Word References. In addition, based on the frequency distribution, undergraduate EFL students have had negative perception in the perceiver dimension, positive perception in the target dimension, and positive perception in the situation dimension. It showed that undergraduate EFL students can use Microsoft Word References to help them manage citation and reference in thesis writing. Furthermore, to support the questionnaire analysis result, interview was conducted to identify the undergraduate EFL students' perception more deeply and to find whether the result was equivalent with the questionnaire analysis result or not.

**TABLE V FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION FOR UNDERGARDUATE EFL STUDENTS' PERCEPTION**

| No | Dimension | Perception |
|----|-----------|------------|
| 1 | General perception | Neutral |
| 2 | Perceiver | Negative |
| 3 | Target | Positive |
| 4 | Situation | Positive |

Factors which Influence undergraduate EFL Students' Perception towards the Use of Microsoft Word References on Students' Thesis. There are 11 factors that have influenced students' perception to use Microsoft Word References in the process of thesis writing, which is based on the three dimensions of perception, namely perceiver, target, and situation dimension. The factors are the indicators used to determine the perception based on the dimension. Each dimension contains several indicators that represent the factors that influence the perception.

There were 6 questions in the perceiver dimension, which represented the 5 factors in the perceiver, namely attitudes, motives, interests, experience, and expectations. There were 5 questions in the target dimension, which represented the 5 factors in the target, namely novelty, motion, size, background, and proximity. There was 1 question in the situation dimension, which represented 1 factor in the situation, namely time. There were 11 factors that influence students' perception to use Microsoft Word References in the process of thesis writing. They built two trends, namely positive and negative trends. The positive trend has shown that Microsoft Word References can help students in their thesis writing while the negative trend shows that Microsoft Word References can be replaced by other reference tools such as Mendeley and Google Scholar as identified in the interview phase.

From the explanation above, it can be identified that the undergraduate EFL students' perception towards the use of Microsoft Word References in students' thesis can be inferred as neutral perception. It means that Microsoft Word References was beneficial for students in their thesis writing even though it can be replaced by other references tools. This is supported by Rakshikar (2015) that has stated that EndNote, RefWorks, Mendeley and Zotero can be used as a reference tool and by Nikam (2015), which asserts that Zotero is an effective reference tool that can help researchers in managing citation and references.

Furthermore, based on the data from the interview result, the undergraduate EFL students have also used other tools such as Mendeley and Google Scholar. It can also be revealed that there have been 11 factors influencing the students' perception, namely attitudes, motives, interests, expectations, novelty, motion, size, background, proximity, and time, based on the indicators used to determine the perception for each dimension.

**TABLE VI FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCE STUDENTS' PERCEPTION**

| No | Dimension | Factors |
|----|-----------|---------|
| 1 | Perceiver | Attitude |
| | | Motives |
| | | Interests |
| | | Experiences |
| | | Expectations |
| 2 | Target | Novelty |
| | | Motion |
| | | Size |
| | | Background |
| | | Proximity |
| 3 | Situation | Time |

They showed two trends, namely positive and negative trends. The trends showed the students' perception towards the use of Microsoft Word References, which implies that Microsoft Word References can be used in the thesis writing. Yet, this referencing system can be replaced by other reference tools such as Mendeley and Google Scholar as identified in the interview phase.

## CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate undergraduate EFL students' perception towards the use of Microsoft Word References in the process of thesis writing and to describe the factors which influence the use Microsoft Word References in process of thesis writing.

It was found that undergraduate EFL students' perception towards the use of Microsoft Word References in the process of thesis writing is neutral, influenced by 11 factors comprising attitudes, motives, interests, experience, expectations, novelty, motion, size, background, proximity, and time.

However, this study still has many shortcomings. Therefore, it is highly recommended that other researchers who have interest in this issue continue or conduct a similar study, since there is still a lack of resources, which explain the students' perception towards Microsoft Word References. Other researchers can conduct a field study or experimental study which focuses on Microsoft Word References.

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