STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF PLAGIARISM
IN ACADEMIC WRITING CLASS: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract

This article explored undergraduate students' perceptions toward plagiarism and undergraduate students' strategies to prevent plagiarism in academic writing class. The participants of this study were fifth-semester students in article writing class. The researcher collected the data from questionnaires and interviews. Drawing upon the evidence from the individual interview with nine students, the present study identified students' perceptions toward plagiarism and their strategies to avoid plagiarism in academic context writing. All of the students had the same perception of plagiarism. They believed plagiarism is unacceptable and illegal because it took someone's idea and works without citing its source and recognized them as their own. From this perception, students did some strategies to prevent plagiarism in their writing. Students used quotation marks for direct quotations, cited the sources, and paraphrased the sources to avoid plagiarism. The students paraphrased more often when they found the sources. However, the students misunderstood paraphrasing with changes in word choices, and grammar did not include plagiarism. This research may help other researchers to conduct a similar study with more profound information and more significant participants.

Keywords: Academic writing; perceptions; plagiarism.

INTRODUCTION

The perceptions in this research come from students who participate in academic writing. The perception here refers to the organization, identification, and interpretation of sensory input to interpret and understand the environment (Mann, 2016).

According to Rakedzon & Baram (2017), academic writing is the primary way to promote an individual's academic career, which requires the knowledge of the basic

structure such as introduction, methods, results, and discussion which are used in science and social science.

The genre of academic writing includes book reviews, experiment or project reports, research proposals, and journal articles (Rakedzon & Baram, 2017). Writing academic text requires summarizing ability, paraphrasing ability, and synthesizing information (Habali and Fong, 2016). If the students or writers have used these abilities in academic writing, the texts reflect an identity and originality from the writers. Identity and originality are the main characters in academic writing. Therefore, the writer or student who produces original work indicates that he is a qualified academic writer (Lee & Tajino 2008).

The good quality of academic writing text means the works are far from plagiarism. Plagiarism here means taking by copying words or ideas from someone else and recognizing the word or ideas as their own without clearly stating the source (Park, 2003). From this explanation, we can conclude that plagiarism is a particular concern for educators. If the educators ignore plagiarism, it can influence the quality of the learners.

Several researchers have studied plagiarism in writing, such as Javaid, Sultan, & Ehrich (2020). The results show that the first and final-year students are found to have a similar attitude toward plagiarism. They are aware of plagiarism in university. Waltzer and Duhl (2020); Khuzaini, Ashari, and Rahmati (2020) investigated undergraduate EFL students' perceptions about plagiarism. The studies show that the students say plagiarism is wrong because they do not mention the sources and steal.

Then, Fatimah and Wulandari in 2018 released an article about the students' perception of plagiarism in the Study Program of English, Brawijaya. The results of their research are students have a clear understanding of what plagiarism is, and they use some strategies to prevent plagiarism. Liu and Wu released an article in 2020. The research investigated Chinese undergraduate EFL Learners' perceptions of plagiarism and the uses of citations in their course papers. This study shows that students have fairly good knowledge of plagiarism and identified various reasons for plagiarism. For example, they often use summary than paraphrase and quotation, and they use single-source citation in the course papers to avoid plagiarism.

Regardless of many studies on plagiarism, not many experts talk about students' perceptions of plagiarism connected with their strategies to prevent plagiarism in academic writing. The researcher conducted the research to analyze students' perceptions and strategies to avoid plagiarism using a case study as a research method

LITERATURE REVIEW
A. Perception
The Definition of Perception

The first definition is stated by James and Bruce (2015). They say perception is a complicated process using a higher-order method such as interpretation and memory that involves activity in the brain. Plotnik and Kouyoumdjian (2010) define perception as the process of gathering and combining thousands of meaningless individual sensations into meaningful

patterns or images. The last, Mann (2016) asserts that perception is the process of understanding the environment by organizing, identifying, and interpreting sensory information.

The Process of Perception

In perception, several aspects must be studied: selection, interpretation, reaction. Selection is the process of filtering the external stimulation by senses. Then, interpretation is the process of organizing the information, so it has meaning for someone. The organizing information here includes the process of reducing the complex information become simpler. The interpretation process is influenced by experience, the adopted value system, motivation, personality, intelligence. The reaction is the result of interpretation and perception then translated into behavior.

B. Plagiarism in Academic Writing

The word "plagiarism" usually refers to the theft of words and ideas, exceed what is normally considered general knowledge (Park, 2003). Howard (1995) states that plagiarism represents using words and ideas from someone and is recognized as own. Plagiarism happens when the writer fails to quote with the correct one, fails to cite the source of their ideas, and adopts the author's words source with grammar and word choice (Howard, 1995).

There are four types of plagiarism according to Park (2003): taking material from other sources and distributing it as their own, submitting a paper written someone and recognizing it as their own, copying material from various sources text, giving appropriate documentation including the references but forgetting the quotation marks, and paraphrasing the words or ideas from many sources without providing proper documentation.

For making an original text and avoiding plagiarism, there are some strategies that the students can be used such as summary and citation, quotation and citation, summarizing and paraphrasing.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research used qualitative research in the form of a case study. Following Yin (2014) case study is an empirical inquiry that deeply investigates a current event in a real-life context, especially when the connectivity between the event (phenomenon) and context is not evident. Nine students out of twenty students in article writing class were chosen as the sample of the research. This research used the questionnaire and interview for collecting the data. The questionnaire was used to select students who had the correct plagiarism concept.

The researcher conducted a semi-structured interview adapted from Ibegbulam & Eze (2015),; Power (2009),; Devlin and Gray (2007). The researcher prepared some questions that could be developed in the interview section. The interview was used to explore what students thought and investigated something that the researcher could not observe directly. After got the data, the researcher analyzed the data used interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014)

FINDINGS

1. **Students' Perception of Plagiarism in Academic Writing Class**

a. *Selection*

This process explained how the students received information about plagiarism from outside. The data of research in this process focused on how students recognized plagiarism in the academic writing class. All students stated that they have ever heard or seen the word "plagiarism" in academic writing class. Student "Mu" further explained in the interview session "Yes, I have. Usually, when the lecturer gives assignments and reminds us to always pay attention to what we write, so that plagiarism does not occur".

Most of the students said they had seen plagiarism when they were in the academic writing class. Because they had heard the word plagiarism, they could recognize plagiarism when in the academic writing class. Student "A" further added, "Mostly in writing courses, I have seen someone copy and paste sentences from a journal without paraphrasing and including the journal author.". In the selection process, most students had the awareness to receive information about plagiarism, and they could recognize plagiarism actions in the academic writing class.

b. *Interpretation*

This process explained the students' understanding about the information of plagiarism as knowledge. All students could interpret what plagiarism was, but only some of them knew the kinds of plagiarism. "A" explained "Based on my understanding is that plagiarism takes the work of others without including the author. I don't know about the types of plagiarism".

To explore more about the students' knowledge of plagiarism, the researcher asked about the criteria for plagiarism and how important was writing references for them and why. The data showed that all students in the academic writing class could explain about plagiarism requirements according to their knowledge. Most of the students mentioned that the criteria for plagiarism were taking or using other people's ideas or work without including the source and acknowledging it as their own. In addition, all students mentioned that writing down references was very important to avoid plagiarism in academic writing.

Then, the researcher asked what they knew about source summarization and how important it was for students when writing in the academic writing class. All students could answer about their understanding of summarizing, and most of them explain that summarizing was very important when writing academic texts. Student "Le" added, "Quite important because by summarizing, we understand better the points described in a source. Besides, by summarizing our focus, we will focus on the essential issues that we need from that source."

Lastly, to close the interview about students' plagiarism knowledge, the researcher asked about the problematic parts of plagiarism and their opinion about plagiarism in academic writing class. All the students answered that there was a difficult part of plagiarism when in academic writing. Student "Kr" added,

"What I usually experience is when I am going to paraphrase. The sentences that are taken as references and the aim that we will convey must be different but still in the same meaning and purpose". Even though all students had difficulties dealing with plagiarism, almost all students answered that plagiarism was terrible in the academic writing class. "Le" said, "I regret that. Because by doing plagiarism, we block ourselves from developing our ideas. As far as I know, an academic text is a text that contains information that can be justified for its origin, the presence of plagiarism makes the academic text not reputable."

In this interpretation process, most of the students answered that they understood the meaning of plagiarism as important and could explain some things about plagiarism even though there were some things they did not understand about plagiarism.

c. *Reaction*

In this section, the researcher examined students' habits or behavior in applying their knowledge of plagiarism in the academic writing class. The researcher asked students what to do after finding the source and their steps to summarize sources while in the academic writing class. Most of the students said they read first and understood the source's contents after finding the source. This was strengthened by the statement of the student, "Mi". She explained, "First, I read and understood it seriously. Usually, I go straight to the finding, because the point is there, then I take the important ones related to my writing idea, after that I paraphrase it."

Then, the researcher asked about how they organized their sources and what they did when their sources were difficult to understand. They described their various ways of organizing sources by choosing keywords, reading the abstract, introduction, findings, and discussion, whether they similar or not according to the topic. Student "Kr" gave an opinion regarding this issue. He explained, "By choosing keywords that in line with my writing's theme/topic, reading the abstract, introduction, findings, and discussion, whether they similar or not according to the topic. Then I can use the source as a reference."

After knowing about their habits when writing sources and managing them, the researcher asked students about writing references in academic texts. Eight out of nine students explained that they all use APA when writing references. Student "Mn" explained, "Like the APA rules, for example "Doe, John. (2018). An Investigation towards EFL Blended Learning. Oxford University Press".

The last thing the researcher asked in the reaction section was their reflections on plagiarism. First, the researcher asked whether they had ever practiced plagiarism while in the academic writing class and asked to tell it. Most students said they had never done plagiarism, but the rest said they had committed plagiarism for various reasons such as forgot to write the sources. Students "Mu" explained, "Yes, because I did it accidentally. I forgot to give my source, but it usually goes into a process if I am in the academic writing class. So

it can be corrected again when I have not written the source or have not paraphrased it."

Furthermore, researcher asked about their attitudes when they saw friends doing plagiarism in the academic class and how they avoided plagiarism while in the academic writing class. Most students said they would remind their friends, and one of the students said they would leave it. Student "H" added, "I will remind him, because this will deal with lecturers. We should not do plagiarism continuously."

The last question regarding their reflection on plagiarism was how students maintain attitudes towards plagiarism. All students had the same answer to this question. They agreed to maintain a non-plagiarism attitude. As student "Mi" said, "I want to maintain not to commit plagiarism because I realize that plagiarism is illegal and greatly reduces my writing quality.".

2. Students' Strategies to Prevent Plagiarism in Academic Writing Class.
a. *Using quotation marks for direct quotation*

The questions are given to students were whether they used quotation marks when quoting directly, when to use them, and how to write them down. Based on all students' answer, they used quotation marks when they wanted to use direct quotations. Student "Mu" added, "Yes, I use quotation marks, but I rarely use them. Usually, I use indirect sentences more often, for example, starting with "according to ..." or "based on ..." or ".... said", etc."

Then, the researcher wanted to examine how the writing of quotation marks in the academic class according to students. Based on most of the students' answers, they could explain how to write quotation marks using APA style. Student "Mn" added, "According to Jones (1998), "students often had difficulty using APA style, especially when it was their first time" (p. 199). That is the example of writing the direct quotation

b. *Citing the sources of their ideas*

The second indicator was related to writing sources when in the academic writing class. If they always wrote down the source, this meant that they had done ways to avoid plagiarism. According to the interview results, seven out of nine students said they never used other people's ideas or sentences without writing down their sources. These seven students said they all always wrote down citations to avoid plagiarism and respect the author. Student "Kr" explained, "I always write sources because of the rules regarding plagiarism and avoiding plagiarism."

Two students also explained that they had used other people's ideas or sentences without writing down the source. They explained that they had done it because they did not understand it and forgot to write down the source. For example, student "Mn", explained that, "I did it because I forgot. Fortunately, at that time, I had not submitted the assignment yet, so I immediately wrote down the source."

c. *Paraphrasing*

The last indicator was related to paraphrasing. Paraphrasing was one of the most commonly used ways to avoid plagiarism. The researcher asked whether they paraphrased or not and how they paraphrased the sources. All students had the same answer. They paraphrased in different ways. Student "H" added about how he paraphrased the source, "I read the entire content first, then paraphrase it by replacing the words and sometimes make new sentences but have the same meaning."

Finally, the researcher asked whether they paraphrased by changing their grammar and word choice or not and whether they thought it was plagiarism or not. Almost all students answered that they had paraphrased by changing grammar and word choice. Student "Kr" added, "Maybe I often change the word choice, but grammar is rare because I am not good at grammar.". But when asked about whether it is plagiarism or not, most of them answered if it is not plagiarism. Student "Mu" further explained, "I don't think so because, as far as I know, it should be like that, and it is a strategy in paraphrasing. Maybe because if the word choice is has a lot in common with the original idea, it will cause plagiarism."

DISCUSSION

The researcher concluded that the nine research participants considered plagiarism unacceptable and illegal action because it took someone's idea or work without citing its source and considered it as his own; therefore they had various strategies to avoid plagiarism. The students in academic writing class already had the same perception about plagiarism and a clear understanding of plagiarism. They could explain the definition of plagiarism and thought plagiarism was a bad thing when writing academic texts. All students interpreted plagiarism is unacceptable, illegal and should be avoided when in the academic writing class. They considered plagiarism wrong and bad because it took someone's idea or work without citing its source and considered it as his own. Other reasons are that plagiarism indicated that we did not respect and harm the author; plagiarism made us difficult to develop ideas and reduced confidence in writing. These indicated that they generally had an appropriate knowledge of plagiarism, which might be attributed to the increasing awareness and training on research ethics and conventions in the university.

The second analysis was related to students' strategies to prevent plagiarism. The strategies to avoid plagiarism were based on the results of research conducted according to plagiarism indicators. Three of them use quotation marks for direct quotations, citing the sources of their ideas, and paraphrasing. The students used these strategies to avoid plagiarism when in the academic writing class. First, the students rarely used quotation marks to avoid plagiarism in the academic writing class. They paraphrased more often when they found sources. Second, the present research revealed that most students cited their sources when in the academic writing class. Students were aware that if they did not write down the source or the author, it was categorized as plagiarism, and they

wanted to appreciate others' work by writing the reference. The last students' strategy took to avoid plagiarism was paraphrasing. For avoiding plagiarism, paraphrasing was done by not changing word choices and grammar only. If students paraphrased by changing their word choice and grammar, they included in the plagiarism. They paraphrased various ways, such as looking for synonyms, changing the word class, word choice, diction, and sentence structure. Something was deplorable when students paraphrased the sources. Most of them assumed that changing word choices and grammar did not include plagiarism. They argued that paraphrasing word choice and grammar but still wrote down the source did not mention plagiarism.

The main focus of this study was students' perception of plagiarism in academic writing and students' strategies to avoid plagiarism in academic writing. First, students' perception of plagiarism in academic writing was plagiarism unacceptable and illegal action. This research was in line with Waltzer and Dahl (2020). The article was discussed students' perceptions, evaluations, and reasoning about copying. The result of their study was students believed plagiarism was wrong, contrary to the common assumption that students did not care about academic integrity (Waltzer & Dahl, 2020). The students thought plagiarism wrong because it was unfair, affected the author and their welfare.

Research on students' perceptions of plagiarism was also in line with Javaid, Sultan, and Ehrich (2020). The article discussed the perceptions of undergraduate students between first and final-year undergraduate students. Their study revealed that when compared with the first-year students, most final-year students considered plagiarism unethical behavior. They believed it to be immoral and unfair. The result indicated that the final-year students had an increased more unfavorable attitude toward plagiarism.

The research from Indonesia was in line with the present study created by Khuzaini, Ashari, & Rahmati, (2020). This study was written to understand students' perception of plagiarism in the completion of the thesis. The result showed that some students think plagiarism was not good because it did not mention the sources or more as stealing.

Further, the research about strategies to avoid plagiarism was written by Fatimah and Wulandari (2018). The study discussed students' perception toward plagiarism connected with their strategy to prevent plagiarism. The data showed the students knew how to avoid plagiarism to not commit plagiarism by paraphrasing the sources using appropriate citation, putting the quotation, and writing the references. This result was in line with the present study.

These present findings seemed to be consistent with other research, such as Lu and Wu study on 2020. The research investigated Chinese undergraduate RFL learners' perceptions of plagiarism and citation in their papers. The researchers explained that students adopted the sources by summary the most frequently, followed by paraphrasing then quotation-these strategies used by the students to avoid plagiarism in writing.

Based on the current and previous study results, it could be concluded that students' perception of plagiarism was an unacceptable and illegal action because it took

someone's idea or work without citing its source and considered his own; therefore, they had various strategies to avoid plagiarism. This finding was in agreement with Howard (1995). He stated that plagiarism represented a source's word or ideas as one's own, which indicates that had known as an unacceptable and illegal action.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Generally, it can be concluded that plagiarism is unacceptable and illegal action because it took someone's idea or work without citing its source and considered as his own; therefore students had various strategies to avoid plagiarism such as using quotation marks for exact quotation, citing the sources of the ideas, and paraphrasing.

Some ideas are intended for the researcher as a student, other students, teachers, and other researchers. The teacher should add more in-depth knowledge about plagiarism, such as the types of plagiarism, the criteria for plagiarism, and how to use direct quotations and correct paraphrasing. The teachers can teach these kinds of knowledge in the academic writing class to enable students to truly understand what plagiarism is. So, students should not only be made aware of what to avoid in their academic writing, but also be taught what they can do and how to do it effectively.

Students should do more practice about citation rules and study the way to paraphrase to avoid plagiarism. The researcher hopes by being aware of plagiarism, the students may make good quality in their academic text. The researcher realizes that this study is not perfect. There is still much information related to the topic which needs to be investigated. Therefore, the researcher expects that the result of the study can be used as references for further issues.

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