CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Good writing is a skill that must be understood and mastered.¹ Writing skill is necessary in academic institution. For non-native English students, writing skill is extremely necessary when they want to enroll in Universities where academic English is used. Non-native English speakers who enroll in a college or university want to develop writing skills that will lead to academic success.² However, many of us grew up doing more speaking than writing. Nevertheless, writing skill is necessary for many fields. In college and in the business and professional worlds, knowledge of Standard Written English is essential.³

Writing can be divided into all kinds of different categories. One of the main divides is between informal and formal writing.⁴ Informal writing is similar to spoken language. It does not have systematic rules and structure. Informal writing tends to be personal writing. In addition, some points of view such as I, we, you, etc. are allowed to use in informal writing. Formal writing is different

¹ Winifred Belmont and Michael Sharkey, *THE EASY WRITER Formal Writing for Academic Purposes* (Australia: Pearson Australia, 2011), 1.

² Dorothy E. Zemach and Lisa A. Rumisek, *Academic Writing from Paragraph to Essay* (Macmillan, 2005), iv.

³ Paige Wilson and Teresa Ferster Glazier, *The Least You Should Know about English Writing Skills*, 10 (Boston: Wadsworth, 2011), 100.

⁴ "Formal Writing: Definition, Rules & Examples," *Education Portal*, last modified December 11, 2014, accessed December 11, 2014, http://education-portal.com/academy/lesson/formal-writing-definition-rules-examples.html.

from informal writing. It has systematic rules and structure. It needs techniques and particular discipline to write.

In university, students are assessed from their production of formal writing or called academic writing. Academic writing is a kind of formal writing which uses a particular style of expression that researchers use to define the intellectual boundaries of their disciplines and their areas of expertise. However, Pineteh states that many students are struggling to maintain academic writing standards that are acceptable in higher education. They are struggling in academic writing since they need to improve their academic writing skills. Writers have to clearly deliver their ideas in writing in order to lead the readers understanding their ideas.

However, academic writing becomes challenging because students have to learn the techniques and particular discipline in academic writing that may be confusing for some of them. They then have to write an academic writing technically and with particular disciplines. They have to keep their writing not only in right style but also in right structure. During the process of writing, they must encounter some difficulties. It can be their challenges for them to overcome their difficulties. In addition, they may be challenged by academic writing since they were not accustomed to academic discourse before entering in university.

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⁵ Robert Labaree, "LibGuides. Organizing Your Social Sciences Research Paper. Academic Writing Style.," last modified December 11, 2014, accessed December 11, 2014, http://libguides.usc.edu/content.php?pid=83009&sid=645284.

⁶ Ernest A Pineteh, "The Academic Writing Challenges of Undergraduate Students: A South African Case Study" 3 (September 25, 2013), http://dx.doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v3n1p12.

When they enroll in university, they have to be accustomed with academic discourse.

As known that writing is not only a way of expressing pleasure but also a way of learning. Whereas students would probably encounter some difficulties during learning or writing an academic text. These are the challenges for them to overcome their difficulties. However, the most important thing is to know them, early recognize them and quickly find solutions to deal with and solve them. Reflection is seen as one of the ways that professionals learn from experience in order to understand and develop their practice. By reflection, students learn from their experiences and understand their weaknesses in writing. By understanding their strengths and lacks, it can be found the way to develop their practice in academic writing. The Kolb's cycle of experiential learning identifies reflection as one stage of learning. Therefore reflection is necessary for students for their learning in academic writing skills.

Based on the preliminary research to fifth semester students of English Teacher Education Department¹¹, eight out of ten students face difficulty in finding ideas for their writing. They stated that they need to read a lot of

⁷ Sylvan Barnet, William Burto, and William E. Cain, *An Introduction to Literature Fiction, Poetry, and Drama*, 15th ed. (New York: Pearson Longman, 2008), 48.

⁸ R. Miclaus, L. L. Onisai, and M. E. Cocuz, "Challenges for Teachers and Students in Writing an Academic Paper," *University of Brasov* 3 (2010).

⁹ Melanie Jasper, *Beginning Reflective Practice: Foundations in Nursing and Health Care*, 2nd ed. (Cheltenham: Nelson Thornes Ltd, 2003), 2.

¹⁰ Jennifer A. Moon, *Learning Journals: A Handbook for Reflective Practice and Professional Development*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2006), 10.

¹¹ Held on 11th-12th of November, 2014. Ten students are interviewed.

references. Four of them also find difficulty in tenses. They still need to improve their understanding in tenses in order to write good papers. Knowing that reason, the researcher wants to conduct this research to six semester students of 2014/2015 academic year at English Teacher Education Department of State Islamic University Sunan Ampel Surabaya to know the students' reflection on challenges in academic writing. In this research, the researcher take sixth semester students of 2014/2015 academic year at English Teacher Education Department of Tarbiyah faculty at State Islamic University Sunan Ampel Surabaya since they claimed that they encounter some difficulties in writing their proposal as a challenge. The researcher also hopes that the result of this research will give such information for faculty as sources of evaluation in order to improve programs related to writing in English Teacher Education Department.

B. Statement of Research Problem

- 1. What are the difficulties in academic writing faced by the sixth semester students of 2014/2015 academic year as their challenges at English Teacher Education Department of State Islamic University Sunan Ampel Surabaya?
- 2. What is students' reflection on the challenges in academic writing?

C. Significance of the Study

This research is conducted to know challenges in academic writing faced by sixth semester students of 2014/2015 academic year at English Teacher

Education Department of State Islamic University Sunan Ampel Surabaya and to know what they do dealing with the challenges. In addition, through this research, the researcher explains the advantages of this research for the faculty, for the researcher and for the students being sample. They are:

1. For the Faculty

The researcher expects the result of this research can be a source of evaluation for lecturers in teaching writing class and for the faculty to make better syllabus related to the students' challenges.

2. For the Students

Being the sample of this research, the sixth semester students of 2014/2015 academic year at English Teacher Education Department are expected to gain much benefit from this research. The researcher expects that students can evaluate themselves in writing an academic paper. The researcher also expects that the result of this research can be an evaluation for them to ease their thesis writing process and to improve their writing quality.

3. For the Researcher

This research is also expected to give much benefit for the researcher who will finish degree program and will be an English teacher. The researcher will know the challenges in academic writing that must be faced by students when the researcher becomes a teacher himself.

D. Objective of the Study

- To know the challenges in academic writing faced by the sixth semester students of 2014/2015 academic year at English Teacher Education Department of State Islamic University Sunan Ampel Surabaya.
- 2. To know students' reflections on the challenges in academic writing.

E. Scope and Limits of the Study

In this research, the researcher will focus on sixth semester students of 2014/2015 academic year at English Teacher Education Department who have taken writing 4 classes. As the measurement, the researchers will limit this study on 15 important academic writing skills which are perceived as the difficulties in academic writing. This limitation of academic writing difficulties is adapted from Cai¹² and are divided into two parts: general academic writing skills and language problems.

F. Definition of key term

1. Academic Writing: Academic writing is a kind of writing which is written for academic purposes, in which this writing has to follow the rules in accordance to the agreement. The researcher limits academic writing into thesis proposal done by sixth semester students of 2014/2015 academic year

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Luna Jing Cai, "Students' Perceptions of Academic Writing: A Needs Analysis of EAP in China,"
Language Education in Asia 4, no. 1 (2013), http://dx.doi.org/10.5746/LEiA/13/V4/I1/A2/Cai.
Anang Rifa'uddin, "Informal Language in Academic Writing: A Case Study at English Education Department IAIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya" (IAIN Sunan Ampel, 2013), vi.

- at English Teacher Education Department since they have taken writing 4 class (thesis proposal).
- 2. Challenges: something that needs great mental or physical effort in order to be done successfully and therefore tests a person's ability. 14 Therefore, any difficulties in academic writing are challenging students to write an academic writing. In this research, the researcher limits the difficulties into 15 important academic writing skills which are divided into two parts, they are general academic writing skills and language problems.
- 3. Reflection: an exploration and explanation of events not just a description. It often involves revealing anxieties, errors and weaknesses, as well as strengths and successes. 15 In this research, reflection is defined as an exploration and explanation of students' difficulties in academic writing as the challenges and students' attitudes toward the challenges.

 ^{14 &}quot;Challenge Definition, Meaning - What Is Challenge in the British English Dictionary & Thesaurus
- Cambridge Dictionaries Online," last modified March 24, 2015, accessed March 24, 2015, http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/challenge.

¹⁵ Queen Margaret University, "Reflection" (Effective Learning Service, n.d.), 1, Edinburgh, www.qmu.ac.uk/ELS.