

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of the Study

Good writing is a skill that must be understood and mastered.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>

Writing can be divided into all kinds of different categories. One of the main divides is between informal and formal writing.<sup>4</sup> 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

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

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

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

<sup>4</sup> “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>.

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.

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/iije.v3n1p12>.

As known that writing is not only a way of expressing pleasure but also a way of learning.<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup> Reflection is seen as one of the ways that professionals learn from experience in order to understand and develop their practice.<sup>9</sup> 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.<sup>10</sup> 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 Department<sup>11</sup>, eight out of ten students face difficulty in finding ideas for their writing. They stated that they need to read a lot of

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

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

<sup>11</sup> Held on 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> of November, 2014. Ten students are interviewed.

academic year at English Teacher Education Department of Tarbiyah faculty at State Islamic University Sunan Ampel Surabaya to know the students' difficulties in academic writing. In this research, the researcher chose 30 students of 2014/2015 academic year at English Teacher Education Department of Tarbiyah faculty at State Islamic University Sunan Ampel Surabaya because they claimed that they encounter some difficulties in academic writing as a challenge. The researcher also hopes that the results of this research can be used as such information for faculty as sources of evaluation and improvement of programs related to writing in English Teacher Education Department.

### Statement of Research Problem

What are the difficulties in academic writing faced by the students of 2014/2015 academic year as their challenges and how can they overcome them?

are the difficulties in academic writing faced by students of 2014/2015 academic year as their challenges

- are the difficulties in academic writing faced by students of 2014/2015 academic year as their challenges

### Design of the Study

### Design of the Study

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.

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.

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.

1. 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.

- 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 Cai<sup>12</sup> and are divided into two parts: general academic writing skills and language problems.

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.<sup>13</sup> The researcher limits academic writing into thesis proposal done by sixth semester students of 2014/2015 academic year

<sup>13</sup> Anang Rifa'uddin, "Informal Language in Academic Writing: A Case Study at English Education Department IAIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya" (IAIN Sunan Ampel, 2013), vi.

