### **CHAPTER II**

# **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

# A. Theoretical Foundation

### 1. Academic Writing

# a. Definition of Academic Writing

When students enroll in a college or university, they have to be acquainted with academic world. Academic is the world relating to education, especially in a college or university.<sup>16</sup> Students have to use academic language for their learning. Academic language is different from daily language.

Most academic courses in English-medium colleges and universities use essays or other written tasks to assess students' work.<sup>17</sup> Typically written tasks which are done by students in college or university are assessed based on the quality in using academic writing style. Academic writing is a particular kind of writing that can be recognized by its style.<sup>18</sup> Students of university need to be sure that their communications are written in the appropriate style. The style of their writing must not only be

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Mike Mayor, *Longman Dictionary of American English* (Pearson Longman, 2008), http://www.longman.com/dictionaries/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Stephen Bailey, *Academic Writing a Handbook for International Students*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2006), 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> R.R. Jordan, *Academic Writing Course: Study Skills in English*, 3rd ed. (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 1999), 13.

consistent, but must also be proper for the message being conveyed and for the audience. In addition, a formal research report with the actual ideas and/or complex data may be considered too simplistic, if the style is written in informal English.

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>19</sup> Even before writing, some aspects in writing must be considered. Academic writing is a product of many considerations: audience, purpose, organization, style, flow, and presentation.<sup>20</sup>

1) Audience

In a college or university, most people are intelligent in education, especially in academic. The audience for most graduate students will be the instructor, who is seemingly quite familiar about the assigned writing topic if they produce a research paper which is written in academic style. Understanding our audience's expectations and prior knowledge is significant in order to be successful in writing task, because these will affect the content of the writing.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Rifa'uddin, "Informal Language in Academic Writing: A Case Study at English Education Department IAIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya," vi.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> John M. Swales and Christine B. Feak, *Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills* (The University of Michigan Press, 1994), 6.

2) Purpose

Audience, purpose, and strategy are typically interconnected. The writing is purposed for instructional if the audience knows less than the writer. The writing is usually to display familiarity, expertise, and intelligence if the audience knows more than the writer. The second situation commonly happens for the graduate student writer. The interesting question in this case now emerges as to what strategy a graduate student can use to make a successful display. Strategy can determine students' performance to display their familiarity, expertise, and intelligence in academic writing.

3) Organization

Information is presented to readers in a structured format. The organization of writing helps the reader to follow the message of the writing even there are some errors. Moreover, the reader will not understand the message of our writing if structured format of the organization is not proper with the convention. Even short pieces of writing have regular, predictable patterns of organization.

4) Style

Style of academic writing is different from other writing styles. It has structured format and convention. The style of a particular passage must not only be consistent, but must also be proper for the message being conveyed and for the reader. A formal research written in informal writing may be considered as informal style due to being too simplistic, even if the actual ideas and/or data are complex.

Academic writers need to be sure that their communications are written in the appropriate style. The style of a particular piece must not only be consistent, but must also be proper for the message being conveyed and for the audience. A formal research report written in informal English may be considered too simplistic, even if the actual ideas and/or data are complex.

Students may find difficulties in using the appropriate style in writing. They find difficulty in knowing what is considered academic and what is not, while academic style is not used in all academic settings. In writing class, lectures are generally not always delivered in academic style. It is not uncommon to hear lecturers use words and phrases in non-academic style. It is not generally appropriate for academic writing, even if it is necessary to understand and acquire such language for personal use.

5) Flow

It is critical to establish a clear connection of ideas to help the reader understand and follow our writing message being conveyed. Successful communication in writing is considered when the ideas in the writing flow in logical connection. Flow means moving from one statement in a text to the next. 6) Presentation

For non-English speaker, small errors in language in papers written are accepted by most instructors, for example, mistakes in article or preposition usage. However, errors which are not acceptable are considered as lack of writing quality. These include the use of an incorrect homophone (a word that sounds exactly like another such as *too/to/two);* basic grammar errors (e.g., in subject verb agreement); and misspelled words, including those that are not identified in a computer spell-checker.

### b. Features of Academic Writing

Academic writing in English at advanced levels is a challenge even for most native English speakers. Moreover it is difficult for most English as second language (ESL) graduate students to write not just an academic essay but a good academic writing. Yugianingrum identified four characteristics of good academic writing<sup>21</sup>:

- 1) Writing should play a significant role in the related community.
- The topic should be interesting for the writer, who believes that there is more to discover about it.
- The writer must care about the aesthetic quality of the text he/she writes.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Yugianingrum, "Producing an English Academic Paper: Process, Problems and Solutions," US-China foreign language 8 (January 2010): 40–41.

 The community should help writers in accessing relevant resources and finding support and guidance.

A good writing must have some key features. The features lead readers to understand the point of writing. It is such as base of building that will collapse if one of the bases is destructed or absent. Wolfe mentioned six features which must belong to a good academic writing.<sup>22</sup> They are:

1) Context

Introduction should be clear to sketch out a context of writing. It can consist of background, research statements, object of the study, significance, scope and limitation, and etc.

2) Thesis

Academic writers should convince the reader that their argument is accepted because a thesis is a promise. They promise that they will convince the reader that their research is true by showing evidence. The writers must claim that their writing is clear and right by showing evidence.

3) Navigation

Writers should use navigational technique to guide the reader to understand the texts. The main navigational techniques are occasional

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> John J. Wolfe, "Six Features of Academic Writing" (The Morphing Textbook 2.1, 2007), http://www.uiowa.edu/~rhetoric/morphing\_textbook/pdfs/MT0200S07IRSKWR.pdf.

summaries of argument, logical transition, and keyword/key concept transition.

4) Evidence

Academic writers must show evidence for their argument. An argument can be supposed to be unrealistic or plagiarism. Writers have to do at least three things with evidence: cite it – tell what the evidence is, interpret it – tell what it means, and tell how it relates back to your arguments.

5) Counter-argument

Writers should have an opponent argument into writing. People have different minds and opinions. By showing the difference, writers tell the readers that there is still much knowledge they may find them. But writer has to convince them that their argument is right. Here are some examples of how to give counter-argument:

"This solution, however, won't appeal to everyone. Some people might argue that...."

"At this point there's a natural objection. What about....?"

"Scholar X, however, has argued / pointed out that....."

6) Conclusion

After extending the topic, at the end of writing there must be a conclusion. In the conclusion, writers summarize their paper clearly,

not explaining another topic but summarize what they have talked about.

## 2. Challenges in Academic Writing

Every year the students experience the same problems in conceiving and writing their bachelor degree thesis or master dissertation thesis.<sup>23</sup> Students must face some difficulties when they are writing their academic paper. The concept of student difficulty has been defined and examined in various ways. Tajiro stated that the definition involves at least three aspects which includes linguistic difference between L1 and L2, errors made by students; and markedness or linguistic complexity.<sup>24</sup>

According to Cai's finding, there are 18 important academic writing skills for which students indicated their perceived difficulty.<sup>25</sup> Here is the table of 18 important academic writing skills for which students indicated their perceived difficulty:

Table 2.118 important academic writing skills perceived difficult

To mportane academic writing sums Provide anti-			
General	Writing Introduction		
academic	Searching for appropriate literature using databases and		
writing	library sources		

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Miclaus, Onisai, and Cocuz, "Challenges for Teachers and Students in Writing an Academic Paper."
 <sup>24</sup> Nancy Shzh-chen Lee and Akira Tajino, "Understanding Students' Perceptions of Difficulty with Academic Writing for Teacher Development: A Case Study of the University of Tokyo Writing Program," *Kyoto University Higher Education Research* (2008).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Cai, "Students' Perceptions of Academic Writing: A Needs Analysis of EAP in China."

ski	lls	Referring to sources
		Reviewing and critiquing the previous research and creating a
		research space (gap)
		Designing the research methods
		Writing the method section
		Summarizing and presenting the data
		Commentaries and discussions on the data
		Writing references / bibliography
	4	Writing conclusion
		Proofreading written assignments
La	nguage	Understanding the specific language features of the academic
pro	oblems	genre (such as research paper)
		Using appropriate lexical phrases (such as on the basis of, it
		should be noted that) freely to build sentences and paragraphs
		Summarizing / paraphrasing
		Writing coherent paragraphs
		Linking sentences smoothly
		Using proper "academic" language and vocabulary (style)
		Using the proper grammar such as correct tenses, agreements,
		reporting verbs, and prepositions
		1

Students may respond to academic writing difficulties with various attitudes. Negative attitude influences their motivation to learn writing process. Moreover, the attitude of weak writers toward writing becomes entirely negative and they avoid the task whenever possible.<sup>26</sup> However, some students are motivated to learn in writing process. Typically, students who are engaged in writing have good writing skills. Most good writers are self-motivated and will engage willingly in writing for its intrinsic rewards. By engaging often in writing they continue to build their skills and strategies through successful practice and with feedback from others.<sup>27</sup>

# 3. Reflection

# a. The Definition of Reflection

Reflection is seen as one of the ways that professionals learn from experience in order to understand and develop their practice.<sup>28</sup> Through reflection, students learn by themselves. They can develop their thought from their experience. They can evaluate their lack and get depth understanding about information in detail from their experience.

Kolb stated that knowledge is continuously derived from and tasted out in the experiences of the learner.<sup>29</sup> People learn from what had been learned in the past. Improvement occurs through deep thought and it will

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Peter Westwood, *What Teachers Need to Know about Reading and Writing Difficulties* (Victoria, 3124, Australia: ACER Press, 2008), 59.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Jasper, Beginning Reflective Practice: Foundations in Nursing and Health Care, 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> D.A. Kolb, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1984), 27.

be continuously improved by other learners. The process of understanding more and improving knowledge is reflection. The principle of continuity of experience means that every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after.<sup>30</sup> Learners reflect on something in order to get deep understanding and to modify knowledge quality which will be learned and reflected by others.

## b. Relationship between reflection and learning

The Kolb's cycle of experiential learning identifies reflection as one stage of learning.<sup>31</sup> Learning is derived from experience but it does not just happen. Some process is necessary to get knowledge from experience. Through experiences, many things can be learned. For it, it is not only to engage in reflection but also record it. By thinking about what have been done and why it was done is the process of experiences to be meaningful learning.

Teachers and students engaged in reflection on emergent practice that was to underpin their learning and therefore enhance their practice.<sup>32</sup> In a simpler way, students learned by listening, watching, doing and by being instructed in their doing. They do not only learn from what they have

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> John Dewey, *Experience and Education*, the Kappa Delta Pi Lecture (New York: Simon & Schuster Inc, 1938), 35.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Moon, Learning Journals: A Handbook for Reflective Practice and Professional Development, 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Anne Brockbank and Ian McGill, *Facilitating Reflective Learning in Higher Education*, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2007), 87.

heard and learned from books, lectures, and demonstrations, but also from the practice they are doing. By doing an action, they learn something and think critically about it. For example practicing speech in English, they also learned by reflecting themselves and with their tutors, how the action went. They reflected on their practice. Furthermore, they will recall their reflection on previous action as a piece of knowledge or learning when they begin to reflect in their next action or learning. The result of the reflection will be taken with them in the future in order to improve their learning. Thus, reflection is essential for learning because it happens in every action of learning and continuously being knowledge for students to take with them for next learning. By the following time, students will get deep understanding about what they do in the class.

### c. Types of reflection

Schön categorized reflection into two types. They are reflection *in* action and reflection *on* action.

### 1) Reflection in action

Reflection-*in*-action is concerned with practicing critically. It happens when we are in the midst of an action and in doing and being reflective-in-action we are.<sup>33</sup> It happens during and in the event, not after it. For example, a mother is cooking some food for dinner. She must prepare ingredients to make delicious food. When her cooking

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 89.

is on the process, she must taste it whether it has good taste or not based on our tongue. At the moment, she thinks critically on the process of cooking. She tries to get deep understanding about it. Then, she develops her thought during action and she applies it immediately.

Schon believes that reflection-in-action is distinguished from other forms of reflection. What differentiates it "is its immediate significance for action . . . the rethinking of some part of our knowing-in-action leads to on-the-spot experiment and further thinking that affects what we do – in the situation in hand and perhaps also in others we shall see as similar to it".<sup>34</sup> Reflection-inaction will influence action at the moment. It will be significant while the action is happening. Furthermore, reflecting on what is happening is to get deep understanding and then know what should do for next action. People think critically about the thinking that got them into this fix or this opportunity; and they may, in the process, restructure strategies of action, understandings of phenomena, or ways of framing problems.<sup>35</sup>

# 2) Reflection on action

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Donald Schön, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1987), 29.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Ibid., 28.

Reflection-*on*-action on the other hand, happens after the action. Reflecting on the activity which has taken place and thinking about what is done is reflection-*on*-action. Reflection-on-action is significant in the process of engaging in critical reflection.<sup>36</sup> People usually judge how successful they were and whether they need any changes to what they did in order to have better result in different outcomes. This is usually the type of reflection which they are asked to write about as part of their studies.

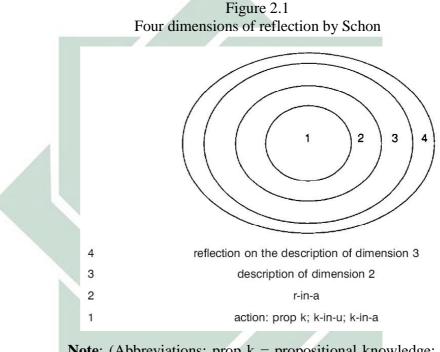
Situations or events where teachers and learners together work with knowledge are comfortable for students for the purposes of learning because they will need their teacher's help when they face any difficulties they are not able to solve. They also get feedback immediately from teacher in situation where they work together with knowledge. It is therefore the researcher will take initially Schon's reference to reflection-on-action. It is necessary to know about what reflection-on-action is. Schon stated "clearly, it is one thing to be able to reflect-in-action and quite another to be able to reflect on our reflection-in-action so as to produce a good description of it; and it is still another thing to be able to reflect on the resulting description".<sup>37</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Brockbank and McGill, *Facilitating Reflective Learning in Higher Education*, 91.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Schön, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*, 31.

He believes that reflection-in-action is still able to be reflected after the action.

Brockbank and McGill explain Schon's statement in their drawing about four dimensions of reflection.<sup>38</sup>



**Note**: (Abbreviations: prop k = propositional knowledge; k-in-u = knowledge-in-use; k-in-a = knowledge-in-action; r-in-a = reflection-in-action)

For the learner to go into reflection-on-action mode on dimension 4, requires on dimension 3, a description of dimension 2, the reflection-in-action and the action, as recalled on dimension 1. Reflection-in-action happens within the action. Dimension 3 also happens within dimension 2, reflection-in-action. And dimension 4,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Brockbank and McGill, *Facilitating Reflective Learning in Higher Education*, 93.

reflection-on-action, happens after all requirements completed. It means that reflection-on-action happens within the four dimensions. Students are able to do reflection-on-action after they did the action, and then they reflect-in-action. In process of reflection-in-action, students will produce description of their reflection. After the three dimensions happened, students do reflection-on-action. Why it is critical to know because actually reflection-on-action and reflectionin-action are relating to each other. They happen within each both happen. The result of reflection-on-action will be revision for action and reflection-in-action happening then.

# **B.** Previous Studies

The researcher found some related cases of the previous study. The first is the study entitled "Academic writing challenges at Universities in Zimbabwe: A case study of great Zimbabwe University" by Jairos Gonye.<sup>39</sup> In this research, the researcher focused on students' weaknesses in writing skills as their challenges in academic writing. The researcher took the first year undergraduate university students as the subject of study since they are in transition into academic environment.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Jairos Gonye, Rugare Mareva, and Jabulani Sibanda, "Academic Writing Challenges at Universities in Zimbabwe: A Case Study of Great Zimbabwe University," *Journal of English and literature* 3 (January 14, 2012), http://www.academicjournals.org/IJEL.

A related case is also found in the study entitled "Challenges for Teachers and Students in Writing an Academic Paper".<sup>40</sup> In this research, the researcher conducted the research on teachers and students facing challenges in writing an academic paper. The researcher found some challenges faced by students in academic paper such as lack of knowledge, bad time management, and lack of motivation. Therefore teachers also faced some challenges in teaching academic writing.

Another related study is conducted by Ernest A Pineteh under the title "The Academic Writing Challenges of Undergraduate Students: A South African Case Study".<sup>41</sup> This research is similar to Jairos Gonye's research. The researcher focused on students' difficulties in academic writing. These difficulties made them struggle in academic writing. The researcher also focused on the first year undergraduate university students since they are in transition into academic environment.

The researcher also found previous study which is also related to academic writing. The study is under the title "Informal Language in Academic writing: a Case Study at English Education Department IAIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya".<sup>42</sup> This study is not focusing on academic writing challenges or difficulties but the researcher focused on analyzing informal language in academic writing. One of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Miclaus, Onisai, and Cocuz, "Challenges for Teachers and Students in Writing an Academic Paper."
<sup>41</sup> Pineteh, "The Academic Writing Challenges of Undergraduate Students: A South African Case Study."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Rifa'uddin, "Informal Language in Academic Writing: A Case Study at English Education Department IAIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya."

academic writing challenges is poor writing skills. Using informal language in academic writing indicates to poor writing skills in which this weakness indicates to ineffective academic writing.

Additionally, the researcher also found previous study which is also related to writing. The study is under the title "an Analysis of Plagiarism in Seminar Proposal by Eighth Semester Students of PBI at IAIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya" by Nur Habibah. The researcher focused on the plagiarism in thesis proposal writing. Plagiarism is challenging in academic writing which is difficult to be avoided. Poor reading comprehension on reference can lead the researcher to plagiarism.

Nevertheless, this research has differences with those previous studies. The research by Jairos Gonye focused on students' weaknesses in academic writing while this research focuses on the difficulties experienced by students. Therefore Gonye analyzed students' essays to know their weaknesses in writing skills while this research analyses students' experiences on academic writing to know their difficulties. The research by Gonye and Pineteh focused on the first year undergraduate university students while this research focuses on six semester students who have taken thesis proposal class. This research also has difference with the research by Miclaus. Miclaus found the challenges in extrinsic aspect such as lack of knowledge, bad time management, and lack of motivation while this research analyses students' challenges from their difficulties in academic writing. The last, the research by Rifa'uddin and the research by Habibah

focused on the difficulty such as plagiarism and the use of informal language in academic writing through analyzing students' writing whereas this study analyses students' reflection on the challenges in academic writing.

In conclusion, the researcher in this research focuses on students' reflection on academic writing challenges. The researcher conducted this research to analyze students' awareness to academic writing challenges which are faced by them during learning in writing class. Therefore, the researcher hopes that the result of this research will fulfill the gap of the previous studies and be able to be developed for further research.

