

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter will explain a brief explanation of background of the study, research questions, research purposes, research significances, research scope, research framework, and the previous studies.

#### **A. Background of Research**

Writing is a way to share thoughts in order to connect with others. In writing, any ideas you brought forward must be supported by particular purposes or information. A writer may convey thoughts or ideas on a paper by writing. Anjayani et al., (2016) argues that writing is the practice of recording a sheet of paper or some other field to convey the writer's concept and intention, through the use of vocabulary and language structure. In other hand, Kim et al., (2020) believe that the writing method can motivates several problems for English classes because students are lack of written communication skills, which act as a means of performing academic tasks. In line with Muhtar et al., (2020), writing is a complicated skill that must be mastered (Muhtar et al., 2020). The ability to write is more complex than other language skills. However, Puspita (2019) stated writing academic is more challenging than only writing other kinds of writing.

Academic writing is clear, coherent, focused, organized, and evidence-backed. Its purpose is to help the understanding of readers (Toba et al., 2019). Furthermore, according to AlMarwani (2020), academic writing refers to the unique style of expression used for academics to interpret the intellectual scope of their discipline and their areas of knowledge. Academic writing features include a clear structure, the use of the third person rather than the first person's point of view, a clear focus on the research topic under examination, and proper choice of words. Academic writing is written to express the appreciation of the analysis of complicated theories or concepts by a group of academic experts.

Based on the preliminary research through observation, some students of English Education Department at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung faced some

difficulties in academic writing class especially in learning argumentative essay. From six out of ten students said that organizing idea was difficult, two out of ten students said that grammar was the most difficult feature of academic writing, and the rest two students accepted that coherence and cohesiveness were the most difficult aspects of academic writing.

A growing number of studies are beginning to explore research on student problems in writing academic essay. For example, Belkhir and Benyelles (2017) stated that the students face problems in learning argumentative essay, both in terms of coherence and cohesion, due to lack of reading, first-language conversion and inadequate writing practice. AlMarwani (2020) discussed about challenges and potential solutions in writing. The work reported here found out that students' difficulties in academic writing are mainly filled into one of the following categories such as language skills, academic writing skill, and source managing skills. Besides, Peloghitis (2017) argued that most participants perceived rhetorical features of English argumentative writing as the most problematic. The result from his research also suggests that participants primarily used cognitive, social, and search strategies to facilitate their writing, whereas metacognitive strategies were used minimally. Implications are discussed to improve writing instruction for argumentative essays. Furthermore, Zhu (2001) found out the difficulties and writing processes of a group of Mexican graduate students working on an argumentative writing assignment in English. The result indicates that from the participants' perspective, rhetorical concerns were a major challenge, although without a doubt the linguistic aspects (e.g., vocabulary) also posed problems. Results also indicate that the participants used a variety of strategies.

However this study is different with those previous research since the previous studies only focus on identifying students' problems in writing non-academic writing and academic writing in a general context. This research is specific to comprehend students' difficulties in writing argumentative essay. Moreover, this research will broaden the results by adding strategies in covering each difficulty.

## **B. Research Questions**

The problems are formulated from the analysis background in the following two questions:

1. What are the students' difficulties in writing argumentative essay?
2. What strategies are used by the lecturer to design writing argumentative essay?
3. What are alternative solutions to offer students in order they can improve their argumentative essay?

## **C. Research Purposes**

Centered on the research issue referred to above, the purpose of this research is to achieve the following two objectives :

1. To find out the students' difficulties in writing argumentative essay.
2. To reveal the strategies used by the lecturer to design writing argumentative essay.
3. To find an alternative solution for the improvement of students' writing on argumentative essay.

## **D. Significances of Research**

The findings of this research are expected to be useful theoretically, and practically.

1. Theoretical Significances

This study is proposed to reduce the complexity of students writing argumentative essay. In addition, potential solutions will be provided to students struggling with the difficulties of writing argumentative essay.

## 2. Practical Significances

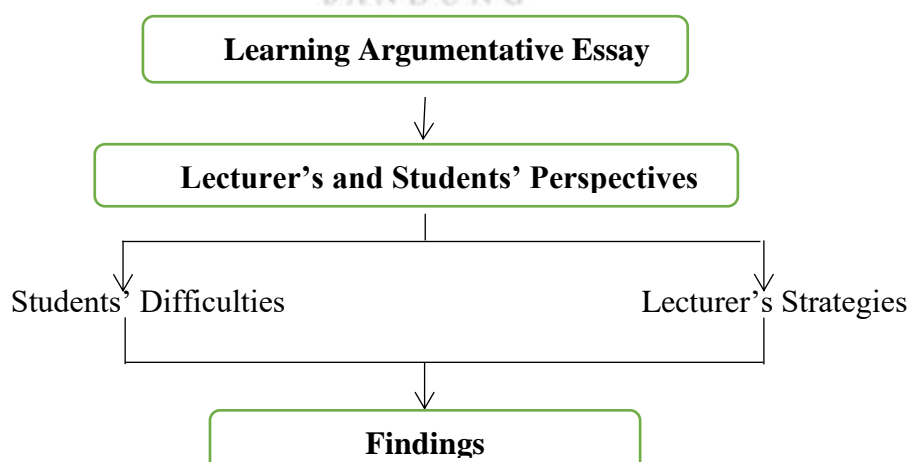
The results of this study can be useful for English lectures to achieve the success of students in writing argumentative essay. It is assumed that as they worked to counter the challenge they faced, the methods used by the instructor to solve the problems will improve. Moreover, this could be an alternative way for English lectures to consider the challenge of students face in mastering academic essay.

## E. Research Scope

The scope of this analysis is the difficulties and strategies of lecturers in teaching argumentative essays. In particular, the data is collected from students who wrote an English argumentative essay in the Academic writing class to address the teaching strategies. Purposely, there are nine participants from three different levels. The data is analyzed in order to clarify the level of difficulty and strategy facing the challenge of writing argumentative essay. Also, this research is limited to the 5th semester student of the Department of English Education at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. Students are enrolled in the Writing English class in the 2020/2021 academic year.

## F. Research Framework

This framework elaborates the general concepts of those researched topic through the following figure and its explanation.



*Figure 1.1 Research Framework*

Writing is a way of expressing ideas in order to communicate with others. In writing, any ideas that you advance must be supported with specific reasons or details. By writing, a writer can express his/her thoughts or ideas on the paper. Heaton (2020) argues about the definition of writing itself, writing in written forms is a single oral language endeavor. It means that anyone can freely and correctly convey ideas through written forms. The researcher concluded that writing is one of the language skills identified by an expert. If someone is concerned and interested in writing all the ideas well in a paper, writing skills should improve quickly. It is not easy for students to write academic writing because they should have a lot of vocabulary, knowledge, and good grammar, a lot of data, and also critical thinking (see Ariyanti & Fitriana, 2017). In order to allow readers gather the details within the text, they need lots of vocabulary. With the aim of allowing readers gather the details within the text, they necessitate wide range of vocabulary. In order to bring forth their thoughts, claims, plans, etcetera., they should have a lot of details. Then the best way to create good writing is to let the readers understand the data within the text. One type of English text in academic literature is an essay. Essay writing is at the heart of education because whatever individuals are studying English, they would possibly ask to write an essay at some point. Some students struggle to accomplish their potential simply because they do not grasp the essential concepts of writing essays. The fundamental theory of the essay is the basic task in the composition of an essay. Most of them is the language features used and the essay form used.. Language features should be in the context of a standardized language, while it is important to complete the structures (Yanwar, 2020). It's not easy to write an English essay because the writer should have a lot of understanding and knowledge. In addition, to maintain the basic structure of the essay the author requires the substance of the essay. Sustaining the general structure of the essay is written to the basic structure without modifying any section of the essay itself the introduction, the body paragraph, accompanied by the conclusion of the end of the paragraph. It is important to

bear in mind the key clues concerning the substance of the essay in order to formulate the essay precisely.

There are some types of academic writing during learning process in university, they are narrative, descriptive, explanation, recount, exposition and argumentative. Therefore, the researcher decides to discuss the difficulties in argumentative essay. Hoshima and Hogue (2006) explained that the primary focus of the argumentative essay is that you, as students, agree or disagree with the topic, building on the arguments to support your viewpoint. The aim of this essay is to reassure the readers that your view is absolutely right. The other explanation why the argumentative essay is appropriate for the students is that it forces the students to learn and put their own opinion. Students need to address the issue, encourage their statement on a reasonable basis, and support their rationale with credible proof. The researcher's reason for choosing the argumentative essay as the focus of the research here is that every university student is needed to make a thesis in the final semester, it is in line with Indonesia Regulation No 20 year 2003 about obligation in writing thesis or dissertation. In order to be a good researcher and to produce a good thesis, students have to choose interesting problems in the field. Students need evidence supporting their research results. Another reason is because English education department of UIN Sunan Gunung Djati facilitates the 5<sup>th</sup>-semester students to learn argumentative essay at academic writing subject. Hence, it is a good point for the researcher to carry out a research with this issue.

As regards the lecturer's strategy to facilitate students' writing and overcome problems they faced. The most frequently strategies are generating ideas and getting feedback. Also, the lecturer could produce resourceful in getting help from student's peers outside of class by sharing their draft with a classmate. Other common strategies such as organizing, formatting, and resourcing are used to help the students learn how to begin writing academically. Although organization is the most frequently reported difficulty, it is needed for the lecturer to be applied in teaching an argumentative essay.



## G. Previous Studies

This section presents some previous research regarding analyzing students' difficulties in writing argumentative essay. These previous researches are beneficial since they give reasons for the researcher to seek information as much as possible regarding the topic of the study.

There are several research results deal with the difficulties of learning writing argumentative essay from Indonesia and other countries that are elaborated below.

The first study was conducted by Belkhir and Benyelles (2017) who discussed the essay learning difficulties and sources. The participants' selection were the second year LMD (Licence Master Doctorate) students with their C.W.E (Comprehension of Written Expression) lecturers. The former are thirty (30) informants; 14 males and 16 females chosen at random, and they are enrolled in the academic year of 2015-2016. The latter are five lecturers of C.W.E course; 3 males and 2 females, who have taught this course for at least four years period of time. This study used descriptive qualitative method and the data is obtained from questionnaire and interview guideline. The result shows the attained data reveal that students meet difficulties in both coherence and cohesion due to the lack of reading, first language transfer and low writing practice. In hope to decrease students' essay writing difficulties, attention to these sources is required. Belkhir suggests that this research should be repeated with a different course content and target audience. However, this research is different from the previous research, while this research more comprehends to the analyzing students' difficulty in learning argumentative essay rather than knowing the process of teaching itself. Moreover, the target of the participant is also different, this research will focus to apply to an undergraduate program, the previous research was applied to a master's degree program.

AlMarwani (2020) elaborates the academic writing: challenges and potential solutions. This study investigates students' perspectives on academic writing challenges and their practices to overcome them. The study utilizes a qualitative research and data is obtained from in-depth and semi-structured

focus group interviews. The results indicate that the difficulties they encounter are mainly filled into one of the following categories: language skills, academic writing skills, and source managing skills. At the same time, the study probed an intervention trial of using Google Classroom and its effect on their academic writing revealed the growing understanding of digital tools' impact on encouraging independent learning and critical awareness that contribute to the enhancement of academic writing. Thank to advancements in technology, students seek support from online resources, but they still think that feedback from lecturers and supervisors is a crucial source of support; therefore, scaffold feedback is recommended. Besides, this research is different from the previously that focused to find out the challenge of learning academic writing as general, while, this research focuses on argumentative essay.

Muhtar et al., (2020) discussed the effect of guiding questions as a technique of writing. The method applied in this research was a quantitative method which uses one group pre-test and post-test design. Random group sampling was utilized as the technique in taking a sample. the researcher took one class consist of 31 of second grade students as research participants. This research was held in six meetings involved pre-test, four meetings for treatment, and post-test. The instrument of data collecting was a written test. In analyzing the data, the researcher used SPSS v.16 and t-test. The result shows that after treated by guiding questions technique in the teaching and learning process, the students got the improvement with the improvement level is categorized in medium level. It showed from the N-Gain score 0,34 means that the improvement is not low also not really high. This is to say, guiding questions technique also gave a good effect for students' enthusiasm in writing. However, it has some differences with the previous research, other than the focus is different, the method and participants applied in this research is far different, such as the method apply for this research used qualitative method with combine questionnaire and interview as the data collection.