CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the researcher would like to present and analyze the data which have been collected during the research. The first data are concerning on the difficulties as the challenges in proposal writing faced by students. The second data are about their reflection on the difficulties as the challenges in proposal writing and their attitudes toward the challenges in proposal writing. The researcher gained all of the data through questionnaire and in-depth interview.

A. Research Findings

1. The difficulties in proposal 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.

In this study, the students' answers on questionnaire were analyzed. The data of questionnaire were obtained from eighty sixth semester students of 2014/2015 academic year who had taken writing 4 proposal. Students answered 15 items about the difficulties in academic writing which are divided into two categorized, the difficulties in general academic writing skills and the difficulties in language problems. The result is calculated and distributed in rank which is described below:

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Table 4.1
Students' difficulties in academic writing

No	Item	Average
	The Difficulties in General Academic Writing Skills	
1	Searching for appropriate literature using databases and library resources	3,04
2	Writing introductions	2,93
3	Proofreading written assignments	2,85
4	Reviewing and critiquing the previous research and creating a research space (gap)	2,73
5	Designing the research methods	2,71
6	Writing the methods section	2,59
7	Referring to sources	2,39
8	Writing references / bibliography	2,18
	Average=	**2,68**
	The Difficulties in Language Problems	
9	Using proper "academic" language and vocabulary (style)	3,24
10	Understanding the specific language features of the academic genre (such as research paper)	2,94
11	Using the proper grammar such as correct tenses, agreements, reporting verbs, and prepositions	2,78
12	Using appropriate lexical phrases (such as *on the basis of, it should be noted that*) freely to build sentences and paragraphs	2,76
13	Writing coherent paragraphs	2,71
14	Summarizing / paraphrasing	2,66
15	Linking sentences smoothly	2,54
	Average=	**2,80**
	Overall Average=	**2,73**

Table 4.2
Rank of students' difficulties in academic writing

No	Item	Average	Response
1	Using proper "academic" language and vocabulary (style)	3,24	Very difficult
2	Searching for appropriate literature using databases and library resources	3,04	Very difficult
3	Understanding the specific language features of the academic genre (such as research paper)	2,94	Difficult
4	Writing introductions	2,93	Difficult
5	Proofreading written assignments	2,85	Difficult
6	Using the proper grammar such as correct tenses, agreements, reporting verbs, and prepositions	2,78	Difficult
7	Using appropriate lexical phrases (such as on the basis of, it should be noted that) freely to build sentences and paragraphs	2,76	Difficult
8	Reviewing and critiquing the previous research and creating a research space (gap)	2,73	Difficult
9	Designing the research methods	2,71	Difficult
10	Writing coherent paragraphs	2,71	Difficult
11	Summarizing / paraphrasing	2,66	Difficult
12	Writing the methods section	2,59	Difficult
13	Linking sentences smoothly	2,54	Difficult
14	Referring to sources	2,39	Not difficult
15	Writing references / bibliography	2,18	Not difficult

Based on the table 4.1, overall average is 2,73 which is close to degree of 3. Therefore, it is interpreted as difficult. The difficulties in language problems has average 2,80 which is greater than the difficulties in general academic writing skills which has average 2,68. The greatest difficulty in general academic writing skills is searching for appropriate literature using databases and library resources which has score 3,04. The greatest difficulty

in language problems is using proper academic language and vocabulary which has score 3,24.

Based on table 4.2, using proper academic language and vocabulary is in the first rank which means greatest difficulty for students. It has highest average that is 3,24 which is interpreted as very difficult. It is followed by the difficulty in searching for appropriate literature using databases and library resources which is also interpreted as very difficult because it has score 3,04. While items which have score lower than 3 are interpreted as difficult such as understanding the specific language features of the academic genre, writing introduction, proofreading written assignments, using the proper grammar, using appropriate lexical phrases, reviewing and critiquing the previous research and creating a research space, designing the research methods, writing coherent paragraphs, summarizing / paraphrasing, and linking sentences smoothly. Besides, the difficulty in referring to sources and writing references / bibliography are interpreted as not difficult because they have the lowest score which is lower than 2,5.

2. **Students' reflection on the challenges in academic writing**

In this study, students' reflection on the challenges in academic writing was analyzed. The reflection focuses on students' difficulties as their challenges in academic writing and their attitudes toward the challenges. They reflected themselves through in-depth interview. The interview started at May

16th 2015 and stopped at May 29th 2015 due to the saturation of information gained by the researcher. The total of interviewees is fifty students from eighty respondents. The researcher selected fifty students who have high difficulties. The criterion of selected respondents is based on their score of questionnaire.[54] Their reflection is described below:

a. Students' difficulties as the challenges in academic writing

There are fifteen difficulties discussed in this research. These difficulties are divided into two parts, the difficulties in general academic writing skills and language problems.

1) The difficulties in general academic writing skills

There are eight difficulties in general academic writing skills. These data is described below:

a) Writing introductions

The table below is the calculation of students' answers on this item in the questionnaire:

Table 4.3
Students' response on the difficulty in writing introductions

Response	Degree	N	F	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	4	80	12	15%
Agree	3	80	51	64%
Disagree	2	80	16	20%
Strongly Disagree	1	80	1	1%

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[54] See appendices

In this item, students who answered strongly agree on the difficulty is 15%. Students who answered agree on the difficulty is 64%. Students who answered disagree on the difficulty is 20%. Students who answered strongly disagree on the difficulty is 1%.

Based on the interview, most students answered that they have difficulties in writing introduction because they have difficulty in writing background of the study. Their reason was that they perceived hard to find ideas. Therefore, they perceived difficult to develop ideas in the background. It will be hard to strength their reasons in the background. Less reading and lack of resources becomes the reason of lack of ideas. Some of them also explained that they do not understand well the steps in writing background and paragraphs. Thus, they perceived hard to write coherent and cohesive paragraphs in the background. Furthermore, other difficulties they experienced in writing background are limited vocabulary and not accustomed in writing and research.

Most of them also have difficulty in making research questions. They answered that they perceived difficult to find problems for their research therefore making research questions is hard for them. Some of them also stated that they did not know how to make research questions. Besides, they are also confused to relate their research questions to the background.

In addition, there are other difficulties faced by students in writing introduction. They are difficulties in making significance of research, deciding scope and limitation of the study, and less vocabulary.

b) Searching for appropriate literature using databases and library resources

The table below is the calculation of students' answers on this item in the questionnaire:

Table 4.4
Students' response on the difficulty in searching for appropriate literature using databases and library resources

Response	Degree	N	F	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	4	80	18	22%
Agree	3	80	47	59%
Disagree	2	80	15	19%
Strongly Disagree	1	80	0	0%

In this item, students who answered strongly agree on the difficulty is 22%. Students who answered agree on the difficulty is 59%. Students who answered disagree on the difficulty is 19%. But there is no students who answered strongly disagree.

Based on interview, when they were asked whether, twenty nine students stated that their literature and resources are appropriate enough for their proposal while twenty one students answered that their literature and resources are not really enough.

Students were then asked about the difficulties in searching for appropriate literature and resources. Most students stated that the topic of their research was new and rarely discussed. So it was difficult to find the literature and resources. Besides, they also cannot access many literature and resources such as purchase journals and ebooks on internet. Moreover some of them answered that they do not have sufficient knowledge to brows on internet. They further explained that it was because literature and resources in the campus are so minim, especially for English sources. They also explained that sometimes they did not know the key terms to search on internet.

For students who answered that their literature and resources were appropriate enough, however, they also encountered some difficulties to manage the resources. They stated that when they found many literature and resources, they were usually not relating to their research. Some students also did not understand to summarize the resources well. Others stated that it needs effort to open many books and find the content which is appropriate to their research. Even though they found many literature and resources they need, they further explained that it was hard to combine them.

c) Referring to sources

The table below is the calculation of students' answers on this item in the questionnaire:

Table 4.5
Students' response on the difficulty in referring to sources

Response	Degree	N	F	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	4	80	1	1%
Agree	3	80	27	34%
Disagree	2	80	50	62%
Strongly Disagree	1	80	2	3%

In this item, students who answered strongly agree on the difficulty is 1%. Students who answered agree on the difficulty is 34%. Students who answered disagree on the difficulty is 62%. Students who answered strongly disagree on the difficulty is 3%.

Based on interview, students answered difficult because they did not know the right format to refer to sources. Lecturers have different formats to refer to sources. A student stated that she had difficulty in using endnote to refer to sources because she was not accustomed with it. She was taught to use it because the format is recently used in many research papers. While some students stated that they were expected to use a common format as the format in previous thesis. Thus, many students were confused to use the

right format in referring to sources based on the lecturers' expectation.

In addition, other students gave different answers. A student answered that when she found an argument which is similar to her thought, she usually forgot to refer to sources. Other students have different experiences. They perceived difficult because they cannot access many sources, however, others stated that they were lazy to read. Furthermore, they also explained that sometimes they found sources which have no complete information. Thus, it was difficult to refer to sources.

d) Reviewing and critiquing the previous research and creating a research space (gap)

The table below is the calculation of students' answers on this item in the questionnaire:

Table 4.6

Students' response on the difficulty in reviewing and critiquing the previous research and creating a research space (gap)

Response	Degree	N	F	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	4	80	7	9%
Agree	3	80	45	56%
Disagree	2	80	26	32%
Strongly Disagree	1	80	2	3%

In this item, students who answered strongly agree on the difficulty is 9%. Students who answered agree on the difficulty is

56%. Students who answered disagree on the difficulty is 32%. Students who answered strongly disagree on the difficulty is 3%.

Based on interview, some students answered that they have difficulty to create research gap. If they found a gap, they usually thought that it had been discussed. Some students answered difficult to find the difference between their research and previous research. Others answered difficult to find the lack of previous research. They usually consider previous research is almost perfect, especially research from English native. Thus, they encountered difficulty to create a gap, moreover the lack and also the difference between their research and previous research.

There are a few students stated that they were not accustomed in writing, thus they were confused in reviewing and critiquing the previous research and creating a research space (gap). They also stated that they less read books and less knowledge, thus they cannot understand previous research they found and the language is confusing for them. They also stated that it was hard to explain in other words. Besides, some students perceived difficult to find previous research which related to their research. Thus, it seems hard for them to review and critique previous research which did not relate to their research.

e) Designing the research methods

The table below is the calculation of students' answers on this item in the questionnaire:

Table 4.7
Students' response on the difficulty in designing the research methods

Response	Degree	N	F	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	4	80	7	9%
Agree	3	80	43	54%
Disagree	2	80	29	36%
Strongly Disagree	1	80	1	1%

In this item, students who answered strongly agree on the difficulty is 9%. Students who answered agree on the difficulty is 54%. Students who answered disagree on the difficulty is 36%. Students who answered strongly disagree on the difficulty is 1%.

When students were asked about what made them experienced difficult in designing the research method, all of them answered that they do not really understand about research method. It was because their lecturer in research method class did not explain it clearly. They further explained that the lecturer was always absent and gave more theory than practice. Moreover, they learned research method from students' preseantation in the class. Besides, some students also less read research method books and less practice it. Due to those reasons, some students just copied

and pasted research method from previous thesis and modified some sentences.

In designing research method, there are some steps which students experienced difficulty. Most of them answered that it was difficult to decide appropriate method for their research. Some students explained more detail that they were confused to choose qualitative or quantitative for their research. There are few students who did not really understand quantitative method as they dislike math. Some students also perceived difficult to decide instrument, sample size and subject of the study, and data analysis technique. Some students who answered difficult in data analysis technique further explained that deciding formula for analysis was extremely difficult. In addition, a few students experienced difficulty in designing research method because they did not know to make outline of research method and in their writing class, the lecturer did not emphasize research method.

f) Writing the methods section

The table below is the calculation of students' answers on this item in the questionnaire:

Table 4.8
Students' response on the difficulty in writing the methods section

Response	Degree	N	F	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	4	80	8	10%

Agree	3	80	32	40%
Disagree	2	80	39	49%
Strongly Disagree	1	80	1	1%

In this item, students who answered strongly agree on the difficulty is 10%. Students who answered agree on the difficulty is 40%. Students who answered disagree on the difficulty is 49%. Students who answered strongly disagree on the difficulty is 1%.

Based on interview, they perceived difficult in writing methods section since they did not really understand research method. Some student further explained that he was confused to write about quantitative design in methods section. Actually, they also have difficulty in writing, especially in English. They stated that they were not accustomed to write, especially using academic language. Some students stated that they had problem to write coherent paragraph. Other students also answered that due to less vocabulary, it was difficult to write method section.

g) Writing references / bibliography

The table below is the calculation of students' answers on this item in the questionnaire:

Table 4.9
Students' response on the difficulty in writing reference/bibliography

Response	Degree	N	F	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	4	80	3	4%

Agree	3	80	16	20%
Disagree	2	80	49	61%
Strongly Disagree	1	80	12	15%

In this item, students who answered strongly agree on the difficulty is 4%. Students who answered agree on the difficulty is 20%. Students who answered disagree on the difficulty is 61%. Students who answered strongly disagree on the difficulty is 15%.

When they were asked whether thier references was correct or not, they most of them anwered "yes". However, it was just their judgment. Based on interview, most students answered that they did not really know the right format of references. Thus they always open books and see references page in order to duplicate the format. They further explained that they did not remember the format even though they had written it. They need to open books and see references page. While other students answered that they were confused to use the format from their lecturers. Lecturers had their own format to use. Besides, a students have different answer that she did not know whether she have to write the reference or not if she only take and paraphrase one or two sentences. She did not know the standard.

h) Proofreading written assignments

The table below is the calculation of students' answers on this item in the questionnaire:

Table 4.10
Students' response on the difficulty in proofreading written assignments

Response	Degree	N	F	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	4	80	11	14%
Agree	3	80	44	55%
Disagree	2	80	25	31%
Strongly Disagree	1	80	0	0%

In this item, students who answered strongly agree on the difficulty is 14%. Students who answered agree on the difficulty is 55%. Students who answered disagree on the difficulty is 31%. But there is no students who answered strongly disagree.

When they were asked whether they proofread their proposal or not, some students answered "no" while some other students answered that "yes". They were asked whether it was difficult to proofread, and students who answered "no" stated that they did not have enough knowledge to recheck their proposal. Thus, they did not proofread. They are not good in academic writing, grammar, and less vocabulary. Thus, they were getting confused to proofread and tired with their proposal. However, some of them had different answer. They were lazy to do it and they realized

that it was their bad habit. Some of them also stated that they did not proofread because they did not have enough time to do it. They got short time to write their proposal while they got many assignments from other classes. Besides, a few students thought that they did not proofread because they were self-confident with their writing, but they found that there were many mistakes after getting feedback.

In other hand, students who answered "yes" perceived difficult because they could not proofread accurately. They stated that they did not have enough time; thus they could not proofread in detail. On the contrary, other students perceived that their writing was correct after proofreading, but there were many mistakes after getting feedback. Some students further explain in detail that they perceived difficult to check the coherence in paragraph. It was because they did not have enough time to check it accurately. Other students also stated that they experienced difficulty to check the grammar, style in academic, and the discourse. Actually, their answers are generally not having sufficient knowledge in proofreading.

2) The difficulties in language problems

The second part of the difficulties in academic writing is about language problems. There are seven difficulties in language problems and the data are described in detail below:

a) Understanding the specific language features of the academic genre (such as research paper)

The table below is the calculation of students' answers on this item in the questionnaire:

Table 4.11
Students' response on the difficulty in understanding the specific language features of the academic genre

Response	Degree	N	F	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	4	80	8	10%
Agree	3	80	58	72%
Disagree	2	80	14	18%
Strongly Disagree	1	80	0	0%

In this item, students who answered strongly agree on the difficulty is 10%. Students who answered agree on the difficulty is 72%. Students who answered disagree on the difficulty is 18%. But there is no students who answered strongly disagree.

When students were asked about their understanding to the specific language features of the academic genre, most students answered that they had low understanding about it. Based on interview, it was because they were not accustomed with academic

writing genre. Some of them further explained that they were not accustomed in English writing and others stated that they prefer to write non-academic writing. Besides, there are other reasons why they were not accustomed in academic writing. It was because they less read academic texts and less did practice in academic writing. They stated that they dislike reading and writing. Some of them also had different answers that they did not know academic genre before and recently begin to learn academic writing genre. It was because they perceived that academic aspect was not emphasized in previous writing class. The lecturer only emphasized the grammar and the structure of text.

In addition, some students experienced different things. They answered that they did not really understand the diction, discourse, and style of academic genre. Thus, they stated that they have low understanding about language features of academic genre. A lot of students also perceived that they have limited academic vocabularies which make them difficult to understand academic texts. A few students also further explained that their writing seems like spoken language.

b) Using appropriate lexical phrases (such as *on the basis of, it should be noted that*) freely to build sentences and paragraphs

The table below is the calculation of students' answers on this item in the questionnaire:

Table 4.12
Students' response on the difficulty in using appropriate lexical phrases (such as *on the basis of, it should be noted that*) freely to build sentences and paragraphs

Response	Degree	N	F	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	4	80	6	8%
Agree	3	80	48	60%
Disagree	2	80	26	32%
Strongly Disagree	1	80	0	0%

In this item, students who answered strongly agree on the difficulty is 8%. Students who answered agree on the difficulty is 60%. Students who answered disagree on the difficulty is 32%. But there is no students who answered strongly disagree.

Based on interview, most students stated that because their vocabulary of lexical phrases is limited, therefore they cannot use appropriate lexical phrases. A lot of students also answered that they did not know the use of lexical phrases. They only translate their sentences from Indonesian into English. Thus, they did not pay attention to the use lexical phrases. Moreover, some of them

stated that they did not know whether they used it or not. Some

students also answered that they were bad in grammar.

c) Summarizing / paraphrasing

The table below is the calculation of students' answers on this

item in the questionnaire:

Table 4.13
Students' response on the difficulty in summarizing/paraphrasing

Response	Degree	N	F	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	4	80	9	11%
Agree	3	80	38	47%
Disagree	2	80	31	39%
Strongly Disagree	1	80	2	3%

In this item, students who answered strongly agree on the

difficulty is 11%. Students who answered agree on the difficulty is

47%. Students who answered disagree on the difficulty is 39%.

Students who answered strongly disagree on the difficulty is 3%.

Based on interview, when students were asked about what

made them difficult in summarizing / paraphrasing, some students

answered that difficult to find new words/synonyms, moreover

academic words and some others answered difficult to

change/rewrite into their own words agreeing with the meaning of

the sources. If they rewrite the sentences, they worried that the

sentences become non-academic sentences. Moreover a few

students stated that they did not really understand how to summarize and paraphrase. Some students further explained that it was because less vocabulary, therefore they could not summarize or paraphrase well. Some of them also stated that it depends on the language. If it is hard to understand, it is difficult to summarize or paraphrase. In addition, some students also perceived difficult to choose the diction of academic language.

d) Writing coherent paragraphs

The table below is the calculation of students' answers on this item in the questionnaire:

Table 4.14

Students' response on the difficulty in writing coherent paragraphs

Response	Degree	N	F	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	4	80	7	9%
Agree	3	80	42	52%
Disagree	2	80	30	38%
Strongly Disagree	1	80	1	1%

In this item, students who answered strongly agree on the difficulty is 9%. Students who answered agree on the difficulty is 52%. Students who answered disagree on the difficulty is 38%. Students who answered strongly disagree on the difficulty is 1%.

When they were asked whether their paragraphs in their proposal are coherent enough or not, most students answered "not

really". Based on interview, some students answered difficult because of less reading and lack of resources, they had lack of ideas to develop paragraphs in their proposal. Finally they included unnecessary topics which does not relate to main topic. Besides, some students perceived difficult to manage their ideas in the paragraphs. It was hard to combine, connect, and develop ideas. They also stated that they always discuss unnecessary or different topics. Therefore, they cannot make outline of paragraphs well.

Other students experienced different things. They could not write coherent paragraphs since they had limited vocabulary. Some others also had difficulty in using conjunction/connecting words. They did not really understand to use it; therefore it was difficult to write coherent paragraphs. Moreover, a few students stated that they did their proposal writing in the last minutes, they then did not pay attention to coherence of paragraphs.

e) Linking sentences smoothly

The table below is the calculation of students' answers on this item in the questionnaire:

Table 4.15
Students' response on the difficulty in linking sentences smoothly

Response	Degree	N	F	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	4	80	5	6%

Agree	3	80	32	40%
Disagree	2	80	41	51%
Strongly Disagree	1	80	2	3%

In this item, students who answered strongly agree on the difficulty is 6%. Students who answered agree on the difficulty is 40%. Students who answered disagree on the difficulty is 51%. Students who answered strongly disagree on the difficulty is 3%.

When they were asked whether they used linking words/connectors appropriately or not, most students answered "not really". Based on interview, most students answered difficult because of less practice in academic writing and not accustomed using academic connectors, they perceived difficult to link sentences smoothly. They did not really understand the use of academic connectors appropriately. Other students also stated that they had limited connectors, therefore the connectors they used were monotonous in their proposal. They usually use the same connectors to link sentences whereas it seems too monotonous to read.

f) Using proper "academic" language and vocabulary (style)

The table below is the calculation of students' answers on this item in the questionnaire:

Table 4.16
Students' response on the difficulty in using proper "academic"
language and vocabulary (style)

Response	Degree	N	F	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	4	80	25	31%
Agree	3	80	49	61%
Disagree	2	80	6	8%
Strongly Disagree	1	80	0	0%

In this item, students who answered strongly agree on the difficulty is 31%. Students who answered agree on the difficulty is 61%. Students who answered disagree on the difficulty is 8%. But there is no students who answered strongly disagree.

When students were asked how well their academic language and vocabulary are, all of them answered "not really good". Based on interview, what made them difficult to use proper academic language and vocabulary is that academic language and vocabulary were not familiar to them. Thus, they were not accustomed using it. Besides, they less read academic texts and practice in academic writing. It made them have limited academic vocabulary and confused to use academic language and vocabulary in some contexts. They really perceived difficult to use formal language.

g) Using the proper grammar

The table below is the calculation of students' answers on this item in the questionnaire:

Table 4.17
Students' response on the difficulty in using the proper grammar

Response	Degree	N	F	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	4	80	11	14%
Agree	3	80	41	51%
Disagree	2	80	26	32%
Strongly Disagree	1	80	2	3%

In this item, students who answered strongly agree on the difficulty is 14%. Students who answered agree on the difficulty is 51%. Students who answered disagree on the difficulty is 32%. Students who answered strongly disagree on the difficulty is 3%.

Students were asked what errors they made in their proposal. They had various answers. Most students did error in tenses. They explained that they did not master it, therefore they did many mistakes. The tenses they made error were present tense, past tense, and future tense. A few students stated that they always do mistakes in passive and past. They intended to use passive but it became past instead. Other errors made by students are preposition, noun, clause, appositive, missing subject verb or

complement, missing tobe and have or has, errors in verb, misspelling, and missing "s".

b. Students' attitudes toward the challenges in academic writing

There were four items discussed about students' attitudes toward the challenges in academic writing. The data are described below:

1) Doing writing task in the last minutes before deadline

Based on interview, the researcher found that some students did their proposal in the last minutes before deadline while others did it earlier. The table below is the result of interview with students' reasons in detail:

Table 4.18

Students' answers on doing writing task in the last minutes before deadline

Response	N	F	%	Reasons	N	F	%
Doing thesis proposal in the last minutes before deadline	50	28	56%	The deadline is long, so I did it lightly	50	9	18%
				Getting many ideas in the last minute	50	8	16%
				I have other assignments and activities which have earlier deadline	50	8	16%
				It is so difficult, so I put off my proposal	50	3	6%
Doing thesis proposal earlier	50	22	44%	I need long time to do my proposal in order to get good result	50	18	36%
				Because there was instruction from lecturer to do it earlier and every week there is revision in the class	50	3	6%
				I have longer time to do my proposal	50	1	2%

In this item, 28 students did their proposal in the last minutes before deadline and 22 students did it earlier. There are 4 reasons why

students did their proposal in the last minutes before deadline. As result, 9 students stated that because the deadline of thesis proposal is long, therefore they did it lightly. 8 students got many ideas in the last minutes before deadline. 8 students had other assignments and activities which have earlier deadline. And 3 students perceived so difficult, therefore they put off their proposal.

Furthermore, there are 3 reasons why students did their proposal earlier. As result, 18 students need long time to do their proposal in order to get good result. 3 students stated that there was instruction from lecturer to do it earlier and every week there is revision in the class. And 1 student had longer time to do her proposal earlier.

2) Preference between doing other assignments and writing assignments

Based on interview, the researcher found that some students prefer doing other assignments and some others prefer doing writing assignments. The table below is the result of interview with students' reasons in detail:

Table 4.19

Students' answers on preference between doing other assignments and writing assignments

Response	N	F	%	Reason	N	F	%
Prefer doing other assignments	50	39	78%	I don't like writing because it is so difficult	50	37	74%
				Writing is tiring	50	2	4%
Prefer doing writing	50	8	16%	I like writing	50	5	4%
				Writing is important	50	2	10%

assignments				Writing is easier than linguistic	50	1	2%
Equal for all assignment	50	3	6%	All assignment is important	50	3	6%

In this item, 39 students prefer doing other assignments and 8 students prefer doing writing assignments. There are 2 reasons why students prefer doing other assignments. As result, 37 students stated that they did not like writing because it was so difficult; therefore they prefer doing other assignments. 2 students stated that writing is tiring. Furthermore, there are 3 reasons why students prefer doing writing assignments. As result, 5 students like writing; therefore they prefer doing writing assignments. 2 students stated that writing is necessary for them. And 1 student stated that writing is easier than linguistic, therefore he prefers doing writing assignments. Besides, there are 3 students who stated that all assignments were necessary. Therefore, they did all assignments without preference.

3) Motivation and engagement in writing process

Based on interview, the researcher found that some students were motivated and engaged in writing process and some others were not. The table below is the result of interview with students' reasons in detail:

Table 4.20

Students' answers on motivation and engagement in writing process

Response	N	F	%	Reason	N	F	%
Self-motivated and engaged in writing process	50	20	40%	Writing is important for me and I can improve my writing skills	50	10	20%
				I like writing	50	6	12%
				I like my topic	50	2	4%
				I know the steps in writing	50	2	4%
Motivated by extrinsic reward in writing process	50	12	24%	It is my assignment from lecturer	50	10	20%
				My lecturer is good	50	1	2%
				Getting high score	50	1	2%
unmotivated in writing process	50	18	36%	I don't like writing because it is so difficult	50	12	24%
				I didn't really like my lecturer strategy in teaching writing	50	5	10%
				I was so busy, so I don't have enough time to do it	50	1	2%

In this item, 20 students were self-motivated and engaged in writing their proposal, 12 students were motivated by extrinsic rewards and 18 students were not motivated and engaged. There are 4 reasons why students were self-motivated and engaged in writing their proposal. As result, 10 students realized that writing is necessary for them and it can improve their writing skills. 6 students like writing. 2 students like the topic of their proposal and 2 other students stated that they knew the steps of writing. Furthermore, there are 3 reasons why students were motivated by extrinsic rewards. As result, 10 students

stated that thesis proposal was their assignment; therefore they were motivated to finish it. A student stated that she likes the lecturer strategy in teaching and 1 other student wanted to get high score. Furthermore, there are 3 reasons why students were not motivated and engaged in writing thesis proposal. 12 students did not like writing because it was so difficult. 5 students did not really like their lecturer strategy in teaching writing. The last, a student was so busy; therefore she did not have enough time to do her proposal.

4) Doing practice in academic writing and asking feedback

Based on interview, the researcher found that some students always practice and asking feedback for their writing while others did not do it. The table below is the result of interview with students' reasons in detail:

Table 4.21

Students' answers on doing practice in academic writing and asking feedback

Response	N	F	%	Reason	N	F	%
Always practice and asking feedback	50	11	22%	I like writing and practice improves my writing skills	50	6	12%
				I need consultation and feedback to know my mistakes in my proposal	50	5	10%
Not practice and sometimes asking feedback	50	39	78%	I don't want to bother other people	50	30	60%
				I am lazy to do it	50	6	12%
				I don't have enough time	50	3	6%

In this item, 11 students always practice and asking feedback for their writing and 39 students did not do it. There are 2 reasons why students always practice and asking feedback for their writing. As result, 6 students stated that because they like writing and practice improves their writing skills. 5 students stated they need to ask consultation and feedback to know their mistakes in their writing. While there 3 reasons why students did not do practice and rarely asked feedback. As result, 30 students did not want to bother other people. 6 students were lazy to do it while 3 students did not have enough time. Therefore, they did not do practice and rarely asked feedback.

B. **Research Discussion**

1. **The difficulties in proposal 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.**

The difficulties in language problems has average 2,80 which is greater than the difficulties in general academic writing skills which has average 2,68.. In other hand, Luna's finding suggested that students experienced greater difficulty in writing the structure and content than language-related problems.[55] It was different from this finding that the greater difficulty perceived by students was language-related problems than writing the structure and content. Furthermore, it is such as Tajiro stated that the difficulties in academic writing involve at least three aspects: linguistic difference between L1 and L2, errors made by students; and linguistic complexity.[56] It indicates that many EFL or ESL learners encounter a lot of difficulties in language problems.

Furthermore, the greatest difficulty perceived by students in academic writing was using proper "academic" language and vocabulary (style). It has average 3,24. It was because they were not accustomed in academic style. As swales stated that one difficulty in using the appropriate style is knowing what

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[55] Cai, "Students' Perceptions of Academic Writing: A Needs Analysis of EAP in China."

[56] Lee and Tajino, "Understanding Students' Perceptions of Difficulty with Academic Writing for Teacher Development: A Case Study of the University of Tokyo Writing Program."

is considered academic and what is not. While many of them were not accustomed. Therefore, it was quite hard to know what is considered academic and what is not.

2. **Students' reflection on the challenges in academic writing**

   a. Students' difficulties as the challenges in academic writing

      1) The difficulties in general writing skills

         The greatest difficulty perceived by students in general writing skills was searching for appropriate literature using database and library resources. This item has average 3,04 which is interpreted as difficult. Based on calculation, only writing references / bibliography and referring to sources have lowest average which is interpreted as fairly difficult. It means that students did not really perceive difficult on the items. Whereas other items in general academic writing skills were perceived difficult by students.

         Firstly, searching for appropriate literature using database and library resources was the greatest difficulty perceived by students in general writing skills. If they could not find appropriate literature and resources for their proposal, they could not strength their reasons to do a research based on evidence such as theories or other resources. As what Wolfe mentioned that six features must belong to a good

academic writing.[57] One of them is evidence. Academic writers must show evidence for their argument. An argument can be supposed to be unrealistic or plagiarism if there is not enough evidence. 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.

Secondly, writing introduction was in the second place after searching for appropriate literature using database and library resources. Most students perceived difficult in writing introduction since they perceived difficult in writing background of the study, making research questions, deciding significance of the study and deciding scope and limitation of the study. While Wolfe mentioned six features which must belong to a good academic writing.[58] The first feature is contexts. 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. If the students could not write introduction clearly, the readers could not figure out the context of their writing.

Thirdly, proofreading written assignments was in third place after writing introduction. The main reasons why students perceived

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[57] Wolfe, "Six Features of Academic Writing."
[58] Ibid.

difficult were that they did not have enough time, they were tired to do it after finishing their proposal, and they could not proofread accurately. Actually Swales mentioned that academic writing is a product of many considerations: audience, purpose, organization, style, flow, and presentation.[59] He mentioned presentation as one of considerations in academic writing. 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. Before presenting the academic writing, writers should do proofreading to check errors in the text.

Reviewing and critiquing the previous research and creating a research space (gap) was in the place after proofreading written assignments. However, it is significant to review and critique the previous research since it differs the writers' research from previous research. As Cronin stated that, for novice researchers it is often seen as a difficult undertaking. It demands a complex range of skills, such as learning how to define topics for exploration, acquiring skills of literature searching and retrieval, developing the ability to analyse and synthesize data as well as becoming adept at writing and reporting,

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[59] Swales and Feak, *Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills*, 6.

often within a limited time scale.[60] If they could not review and critique the previous research, their research will be considered as a plagiarism. By reviewing and critiquing the previous research, the writers convince the readers that their research is not plagiarism. Creating research gap is also significant since a good research is continued from research gap. It means that the researcher develops previous research by holding its research gap.

Finally, designing the research methods and writing methods section were in the place after reviewing and critiquing the previous research and creating a research space (gap). These two items has relationship as before students wrote the methods section, they should design the research methods. As Kothari stated that the formidable problem that follows the task of defining the research problem is the preparation of the design of the research project.[61] It becomes the difficulty of researchers after defining the research problems. The main reason why students perceived difficult was that they did not really understand research method since some students complained that their lecturer was always absent, their lecturer gave more theory than

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[60] Patricia Cronin, Frances Ryan, and Michael Coughlan, "Undertaking a Literature Review: A Step-by-Step Approach," *British Journal of Nursing* 17, no. 1 (2008): 38.
[61] C. R. Kothari, *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques*, 2nd ed. (New Delhi: New Age International, 2004), 31.

practice, and students got the material from other students' presentation.

2) The difficulties in language problems

The greatest difficulty perceived by students in language problems was using proper "academic" language and vocabulary (style). It has average 3,24. Whereas all items in language problems were perceived difficult by students since each item has average which is close to degree of 3. Therefore, all items in language problems were interpreted as difficult.

The main problem faced by students was that they were not accustomed reading and writing academic texts. Therefore, using proper "academic" language and vocabulary (style) is the greatest difficulty perceived by students. As Swales stated that one difficulty in using the appropriate style is knowing what is considered academic and what is not.[62] If students could not understand and use academic style, their writing might be considered as non-academic writing. Swales also mentioned that academic writing is a product of many considerations. Style is one of them.[63] 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

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[62] Swales and Feak, *Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills*, 15.
[63] Ibid., 7.

writers need to be sure that their communications are written in the appropriate style.

The next difficulty was using the proper grammar. As explained before, errors which are not acceptable are considered as lack of writing quality. These include basic grammar errors (e.g., in subject verb agreement) including those that are not identified in a computer spell-checker.[64] Hence, before presenting academic writing, students should do proofreading to check errors in the text.

Furthermore, students also had difficulties in using appropriate lexical phrases (such as on the basis of, it should be noted that) freely to build sentences and paragraphs, writing coherent paragraphs, summarizing / paraphrasing, and linking sentences smoothly. The basic reason was that students were not accustomed with reading and writing academic texts.

b. Students' attitudes toward the challenges in academic writing

Ismail stated that students who are apprehensive and weak in writing often fail to do proper corrections or revisions and seem to take their written assignments lightly.[65] Based on the findings, most students stated that writing is really difficult. Therefore they did not like it. Since it was difficult, as result they put off their proposal and did it in the last minutes

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[64] Ibid., 29.
[65] Noriah Ismail et al., "Exploring ESL Students' Apprehension Level and Attitude towards Academic Writing," *The International Journal of Learning* 17, no. 6 (2010): 475–483.

before deadline. It indicates that most students had negative attitudes toward their writing.

Most students also prefer doing other assignments rather than writing because they dislike writing and it was really difficult for them. As Westwood stated that the attitude of weak writers toward writing becomes entirely negative and they avoid the task whenever possible.[66] It indicates that students' attitudes toward the challenges in academic writing became entirely negative since they perceived so difficult and prefer doing other assignments.

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.[67] While the researcher found that most students were motivated in writing their proposal. However, most of them did not often do practice in academic writing and ask feedback. It was because most of them were motivated by extrinsic rewards. Therefore rarely did practice and asked feedback for their proposal. Moreover, there were many students who were not motivated and engaged in writing process.

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[66] Westwood, *What Teachers Need to Know about Reading and Writing Difficulties*, 59.
[67] Ibid.