Chapter Two

Literature Review

This chapter focuses on the literature review which provides about the definition of English academic writing followed by the difficulties of academic writing. The factors that contributed to the difficulties of English academic writing will also be presented in this chapter. In addition, the conceptual framework will also present in this chapter.

Academic Writing

One of the types of writing is academic writing. Based on Abdulkareem (2013), academic writing can be characterized as a writing that requires several rules such as organizing and generating students' ideas, critical thinking, using proper vocabulary, and using the correct grammar. It indicates that academic writing requires the students to think critically and develop their idea. In addition, Zhu (2004) mentioned that academic writing is the kind of writing that presents a clear idea, good paragraph development (e.g., a paragraph should have one main idea only), the choice of vocabulary that is suitable for formal setting, and the accurate grammar. Hence, it could be inferred that academic writing is a proper writing in which the students are required to present their idea clearly, using the correct grammar, well developed paragraph, and using the appropriate vocabulary.

In addition there are some researchers who defined academic writing in a different definition. Saglamel and Kayaoglu (2015) define that academic writing is a writing activity that focuses on activities such as, rhetorical analysis, summarizing and synthesizing, argumentation and academic research paper that prepare the students into thesis writing. In addition, Sajidand Jawaid(2015) said,

academic writing is defined as scientific writing that characterized as structured research and it used by researchers in higher education level. Moreover, Al-khasawneh (2010) revealed that in academic writing task, the students are required to produce various types of academic text such as article reviews, reports, article critique, comparative analysis, book reviews, academic essay, summaries, proposal, and case study to employ their critical thinking skills, read widely, and apply what they have learnt in their study and the students are also requires to write references based on the certain conventions such as APA, IEEE, and so on to be more scholarly writers and train them in academic integrity. Hence, at this point, the definition of academic writing is greater because it is more focuses on research and it is not only requires the students to write properly instead it also requires them to sum up, unite, and analyze their knowledge in a written form based on scientific convention.

Vásquez (2013) stated that the purposes of academic writing for the students is to measure their understanding related to the topic being discussed, and to present the students' personal view about the problem in a written form. In addition, Aholjailan (2015) pointed that the purpose of academic writing is not to please the reader instead it used to satisfy the students' instructor. Hence, the audience of academic writing is limited for academics, e.g. the students, the lecturer, the researcher, and many more (Vásquez, 2013).

The Importance of Academic Writing

For some reasons, academic writing is important to be studied.Zhu (2004) stated that academic writing is the most important language-related ability that should be mastered by the students for their successful in their college studies. It

is supported by Sajid and Jawaid (2015) who stated that, "Academic writing is extensively acknowledged as a key skill for students to boost their educational performance at higher education level" (p. 176). It means that academic writing is important to be mastered by the students because the students' successful in college studies is depends on their academic writing. In addition, based on Bjork and Raisanen (as cited in Umer & Javid, 2014) academic writing is important to be included in all university curricula because academic writing is a tool for language development and for language learning that can increase the students' critical thinking. In addition, it can encourage the students to write properly. It is because in academic writing the students need follow some academic writing rules such as the use of correct grammar, the appropriate punctuation, the correct vocabulary, and so on (Abdulkareem, 2013).It can be indicated that by doing an academic writing, the students' proficiency in writing and their critical thinking will be fostered.

The First Year Students' Academic Writing

Academic writing is also studied by the first year students and it is provided in the first semester (Maher, 2011). According to Asaoka and Usui (2003), the first year in higher education is the beginning of a new education life for the students because they are expected to join academic community. Hence, academic writing becomes something new for the first year students because they are expected to produce an academic text that requires them to write academically that they are not used to when they were in high school. As a result, mostly first year students are under-prepared or weak for academic study. Furthermore, Matsuda and Sasaki (as cited in Asaoka & Usui, 2003) explained

that the first year students' English writing experience is limited to personal writing, book report, and a short essay. In addition, the first year students' academic writing instructor focuses the academic writing activity on the text production that focuses on academic text structure (e.g. introduction, body, conclusion), how to write a good paragraph as well as the required information, and discuss the language feature such as spelling, punctuation, etc. (Twagilimana, 2017).

The Elements of Academic Text

Academic text has several elements. According to Harvey (2009), there are several elements of academic text that are motive, thesis, structure, evidence, analysis, coherence, style.

Motive. Harvey (2009) mentioned that motive is a reason for writing, and it is suggested at the start of the essay. Harvey added thesis establishes why the writer thought the topic needed to be discussed and why the reader should care.

Thesis. Harvey (2009) explained, thesis is "main insight or idea about a text or topic, and the main proposition that your essay demonstrates" (p. 1). Harvey added that in writing academic essay, thesis should be stated early in some form and at some point recast sharply (not just be implied), and it should govern the whole essay.

Structure. Structure is the sequence of main sections or sub-topics, and the turning points between them (Harvey, 2009). Moreover, Harvey added that the sections should follow a logical order, and the links in that order should be apparent to the reader. Furthermore, Oshima and Hougue (2007) mentioned that the structure of an academic text is introduction, body, and conclusion.

Introduction. The first part of academic text is introduction. Oshima and Hougue (2007) mentioned, "introduction stimulates the reader's interest and tells what the essay is about. The last sentence of an introduction is the thesis statement. Like the topic sentence of a paragraph, a thesis statement names the specific topic of the essay" (p. 148). Hence, in introductory paragraph the writer needs to state their motive, and thesis statement.

Body. The body consists of one or more paragraphs and each paragraph develops a main point (Oshima & Hougue, 2007). Oshima and Hougue (2007) added, each body paragraph supports the thesis statement and it also has a main point and supporting details that are evidence and analysis. Moreover, each body paragraph may or may not have a concluding sentence (Oshima & Hougue, 2007).

Conclusion. The conclusion is a summary or review of the main points discussed in the body. It has three purposes. First, it signals the end of the essay; second, it reminds the reader of the main points; third, it leaves the reader with the final thoughts on the topic (Oshima & Hougue, 2007).

Supporting Detail. According to Oshima and Hougue (2007), "supporting details are the "meat" of a paragraph. They prove the truth of the topic sentence, and they make your writing rich and interesting" (p. 73). Supporting details consist of evidence and the analysis of the main idea (Oshima & Hougue, 2007).

Evidence. Harvey (2009) mentioned evidence is the fact, examples, or quote, in order to support the ideas.

Analysis. Harvey (2009) mentioned analysis is the work of breaking down, interpreting, and commenting upon the evidence, or saying what can be inferred from the evidence. A key aspect of analysis is 'logic' which means that it

connects the evidence with the main idea, which determines how it is relevant evidence for that main idea (Harvey, 2009)

Coherence. According to Koch (2004), coherence denotes the ability of the writer to combine the arrangement of sentences altogether in the text so that the reader will follow the ideas easily because there is no sudden jump between the previous idea and the idea after. It can be inferred that the writings became coherent if the ideas were stated in order and relate with the idea before it. Harvey (2009) stated that using transition signal (linking word), or restate the previous keyword are the ways to achieve coherence.

Style. The choices made by the writer about the words and sentence structure (Harvey, 2009). Harvey (2009) added that the style should be exact and clear (should bring out main idea and action of each sentence) and plain without being flat (should be graceful and a little interesting, not stuffy).

The Requirements of Good Academic Text

Some research already conducted to seek about the requirements of good academic text. Hence, in this research the characteristic of good academic text will be divided into five categories. Based on Altakhaineh (2010), those categories are the organization, the relevance, the accuracy, the range and style, and the appropriateness and referencing.

The organization. The organization here aims for the organization of the paragraph in academic text. Altakhaineh (2010) stated that in order to make a good academic text, the clear introduction, body and conclusion are needed. Altakhaineh (2010) added that the ideas should be clear and supported with evidence. In addition, Zhu (2004) stated that the logical organization (there is an

introduction, body and conclusion), good paragraph development, and the clear idea are required to make a good an academic text.

The relevance. The relevance here means the relevance between the ideas in academic text with the title of the academic text. Altakhaineh (2010) pointed that, "In academic writing, your work must be directly relevant to the title" (p.4). In addition, Davies (as cited in Altakhineh, 2010) stated, that good academic writing need to address the topic or the title clearly. Davies (as cited in Altakhineh, 2010) also added that the writer should be careful to add the ideas or material in their writing in order to avoid the unnecessary information.

The accuracy. The accuracy here means the use of appropriate grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, vocabulary, spelling, and many more. Abdulkareem (2013) stated, the use of appropriate vocabulary, and the correct sentence structure is needed to make a good academic text. Zhu (2004) pointed that academic text also requires an accurate using of grammar. Brown and Hood (as cited in Altakhaineh, 2010) added, spelling and punctuation are also important to avoid making mistakes in a sentence that can cause confusion for the reader. So, it can be concluded that the accurate vocabulary, sentence structure, grammar, spelling, and punctuation are the requirement of good academic writing. It is because, based on Jordan (as cited in Altakhaineh, 2010) the misuse of tenses can change the meaning of the sentence and spelling mistakes can causes confusion.

The range and style. The range and style means the use of various vocabularies and the writing style. Davies (as cited in Altakhaineh, 2010) mentioned that there are five requirements of good style. The first, good academic text need to be explicit, which means even the readers already have the

background information about the writings, the clear explanation about the topic being discussed in the writing and the conclusion are still needed. The second, the use of signpost is important to guide the reader through the academic text. Signpost is the sign that new paragraph is begin. The third, the use of long sentences should be avoided. The fourth, long paragraph needs to be avoided in academic text. Hence, the paragraph should consist of five sentences (Kemp, 2007). The fifth, never imagine that the reader understand about the topic being discussed in academic text, which indicate that the writer need to give clear explanation and avoid ambiguity. In addition, there are another requirements of good academic text related to the range and style category. Abdulkareem (2013) stated that critical thinking need to be included in academic text. Altakhaineh (2010) pointed that the academic text should be cohesive and coherence. In addition, Altakhaineh (2010) said, "Coherence implies that the text must make sense and cohesion means that it must be appropriately structured and interlinked by suitable signposts and linking words" (p.7)

      The appropriateness and referencing. The appropriateness and referencing here means, the language used in academic text should be formal and the writer needs to cite the source correctly (Altakhaineh, 2010). Kemp (2007) stated that good academic writing need to avoid ambiguous word and avoid the use of first person in writing academic text. Kemp (2007) added good academic writing should not use too much direct quote. However, Trzeciak (as cited in Altakhaineh, 2010) supports, "the use of quotation in the exceptional circumstance that it is not possible to express the author's words in another way or, the manner in which it is expressed is especially concise and unique. He adds

that the writer may misrepresent the source material or the wording of the original" (p.9)

The Difficulties in Writing English Academic Writing

There are some requirements to be fulfilled to produce a good academic text, but some studies found that there are some difficulties faced by the students to produce a good academic text. Hedge (as cited in Alfaki, 2015) pointed that there are several categories of problem in writing, those problem are grammatical problem, problem in sentence structure, problem of diction, punctuation problem, capitalization problem, organization problem, and content problem that includes problem in generating the ideas about the topic and problem in elaborating the paragraph, and problem in expressing the idea.

Grammatical problem. Al-Khasawneh (2010) mentioned that grammar is needed to make accurate message. The grammatical key includes tenses, voices, modals, articles, nominalization, and logical connectors (Dudley-Evans & St. John, as cited in Al-Khasawneh, 2010).

Some research found that grammar becoming an issue in academic writing for the first year students. Hirano (2011) reported that grammar issue is one of the big problems in English academic writing experienced by the first year students. In addition, Umer&Javid (2014) mentioned that the first year EFL learners are weak in the use of correct grammar.

Specifically, Kambal (as cited in Al-Khasawneh, 2010) found that, in writing, tense became one of main types of error in term of grammar. Alfaki (2015) also found that the students found to be mistaken in the use of correct tenses, in which they made error in the use of present participle and past

participle. According to Solikhah (2017), mostly students made error in making complete sentence. Incomplete sentence means that the students are often missed the subject or the verb in their sentence. Moreover, Wei (2010) mentioned that the use of phrasal verb became a challenge for EFL/ESL students because of its syntactic and semantic complexities and the difficulties came when the students need to comprehend and use it.

Problem in sentence structure. Jimenes, Mira, and Rodriguez (2013) stated that the mostly happened problem faced by the students in academic writing is about sentence structure in which the sentence made by the students is incomplete sentence structure or incorrect in syntax and maybe disassociate. In addition, Mpepo (2009) pointed that mostly first year students are often miss-ordering the sentence structure *e.g.* they wrote "*what you are doing?"* Instead of "*what are you doing?"* to ask a question.

Problem of diction. Hatch and Brown (1995) mentioned that diction is the choice and use of words in writing and speaking. Alamirew (as cited in Alfaki, 2015) pointed that a good writing or composition should consist of appropriate and varied vocabularies (Alamirew, as cited in Alfaki 2015). However, writing in a target language by using the appropriate words in the appropriate place is a problem for students. For example, White (as cited in Alfaki, 2015) states that usually students use 'big words' in their essays to impress the reader, their teacher. Hence, the effort to impress the reader leads to a problem of diction (Alfaki, 2015).

Punctuation problem. Punctuation is also becoming an issue in academic writing. Al-Badwawi (2011) stated that the first year students are also having a

problem in the placement of punctuation that is inappropriate. It is in line with Maher (2011) who stated that the students are often making some mistakes in the use of punctuation. Maher (2011) explained that the students' mistaken in punctuation are in the use of commas that is inappropriate.

Capitalization problem. Capitalization is also becoming an issue in writing. According to Kroll (as cited in Alfaki, 2015) capital letters are very useful for sentence initials, in topics, the beginning of important words, headings, and many more. However, Alfaki (2015) declared that learners have problems in using capitalization properly and there are reasons for students' problems in using proper capitalization. It is as stated by Gowere (as cited in Alfaki, 2015) who stated that "The rules of capitalization are not universal and classifying nouns as proper and common nouns is difficult for students" (p. 45).

Organization problem. According to Kharma (as cited in Alfaki, 2015) learners have the problem of structuring the paragraph and structuring the whole discourse. Pincas (in Alfaki, 2015) has also revealed that learners have the problems of writing united paragraphs because of their failure to use cohesive devices appropriately. Kalikoha (2008) also mentioned that the most of the students revised their essay, and many of them need to re-organize the ideas. Hence, it could be inferred that organizing the ideas is one of the difficulties in writing English academic text.

Content problem. Learners of English as a second or foreign language also face problems of exploring ideas and thought to communicate with others (Clifford, as cited in Alfaki, 2015). Moreover, in this research, the content problem is divided into three categories. The first is problem in generating the

ideas about the topic, the second is problem in elaborating the paragraph, and the third is problem in expressing the ideas.

Problem in generating the ideas about the topic. Murshidi (as cited in Badi, 2015) revealed that, "generating ideas about their topics could be also a barrier that hinders students to move on in their writing" (p. 66). Fanene (2006) found that some students were struggling to think about what will be wrote in their essay when the instructor gave a question about a certain topic and the students need to answer it by making it into an essay. Moreover, Fareed, Ashraf, and Bilal (2016) revealed that the students found to be lacked of ideas when they need to discuss the topic on their writing.

Problem in giving supporting detail. Supporting detail here means, elaborating the main idea by giving some reason, argument, or evidence. Rustipa (2016) stated that, the main idea could be developed by giving supporting detail, which means that supporting detail explained the main idea by giving fact, reason, example, statistics, quotations, and so on. Zughoul and Husain (as cited in Al-Khasawneh, 2010) pointed that the main challenge of the first year students in academic writing is they do not add any new information to the text. Alfaki (2015) found that, in writing, the students feel difficult in developing the paragraph, that is, they were less able to develop the main idea by giving supporting detail. In addition, Wanja (2016) stated that the students have some points to write when they were asked to make an academic text, but later they become confused to develop their idea. Wanja (2016) also pointed that the lack of evidence to support the ideas is also became a problem encountered by the first year students, and as a result, their arguments were generally found to be weak.

Problem in expressing the idea. Sometimes, the students could be obstructed in the process of writing academic text. Raimes (as cited in Alfaki, 2015) pointed that,

> "When students complain about how difficult it is to write in a second language, they are talking not only about the difficulty of finding the right words and using the correct grammar but also about the difficulty of finding and expressing ideas in a new language" (p. 41)

Moreover, Rabab'ah (as cited in Al-khasawneh, 2010) declared that the students were often did not know the vocabulary while writing. As a consequence, the students who do not know the vocabulary were unable to express their ideas freely and accurately because they have less vocabulary to use. Furthermore, Xiao and Chen (2015) stated that the students were often found to be obstructed when they tried to express their ideas in a written form because they lacked of vocabulary. Hence, it can be indicated that expressing the idea is not easy since some researcher found that in writing academic text, some writer face the difficulty in expressing their idea in a new language.

The Factors Causing the Difficulties in Writing English Academic Text

If there are some difficulties, there are also some reasons causing the difficulties in writing English academic text. Some research already conducted to find out the factors causing the difficulties in writing academic text. Hence, based on Mutimani (2016), there are several factors causing the difficulties in writing academic text among students, they are the lack of writing practice, the unclear explanation from the lecturer, lack of knowledge, and the habit of using slang language.

The lack of writing practice. Chokwe (2013) reported that the lack of writing activity at school level affected the students' English writing ability. The example is there are so many students that are not required to write essays at school level, so that the students faced some difficulties when they need to make an academic text in higher education (Wingate as cited in Chokwe, 2013). Furthermore, Twagilimana (2017) stated that the causes of the first year student's poor academic writing are the lack of practice to write academic text at class, the rare of feedback, and the lack of academic writing assessment.

The unclear explanation from the instructor. Mutimani (2016) found that the English Academic Practice lecturers were not giving much attention to academic writing conventions, yet they regularly gave academic written assignments to students. Abdulkareem (2013) mentioned that the large class size as the factor that causes the first year students' poor academic text because they are unable to clearly understand on the lecturer explanation. Tulley (2013) stated that the unclear instruction from the instructor is the reason of the students' poor performance in writing. Hence, if the explanation from the instructor is unclear, it caused the students to be difficult in writing academic text.

The habit of using slang language. Mutimani (2016) found that the use of Short Message Service (SMS) language affects the students' academic writing performance, that is, the students' cannot clearly distinguish between formal and informal writing styles. Moreover, Wanja (2016) pointed that social media affected the student's academic writing, because they are often using the slang language and inappropriate symbols in their academic writing. It is in line with Pineteh (2014) who found that the social media language which is an informal

language can affect the student's academic writing. It could be indicated that social media make the students unable to use formal language in their academic writing.

The lack of knowledge. In order to be able to make an academic text, the students need several knowledge that are useful to help them in making an academic text. The examples are knowledge about grammar, vocabulary, and topic.

Topic. Making an academic text based on the given topic is a usual thing in academic writing. However if the students does not familiar with the topic, they may face a difficulty. Al-Badwawi (2011) pointed that when the students are asked to write an academic text but they are not familiar with the topic, they will struggle to finish the academic writing task. Chokwe (2013) pointed that the learners will have some knowledge related to the topic to put into their writing if they read, because reading is needed to generate the ideas about the topic. Hence, the lack of reading affected the students' ability in generating the ideas about the topic because they will have less knowledge about the topic.

Grammar. According to Salima and Zahira (2015), the learners need to be aware about grammatical patterns in producing meaningful and well-structured sentences. However, Hirano (2011) pointed that one of the factors affecting the students' weaknesses in writing is the lack of grammar knowledge. Refnita (2014) also pointed that "Some students told that they did not know the correct grammatical features due to lack of knowledge and grammatical competency or they had already forgotten" (p. 293).

Vocabulary. Wardani, Basri, and Waris (2014) pointed that it would be difficult for the students to express and develop their ideas while writing if they have low vocabulary size. In addition, Adas and Bakir (2013) also found that mostly EFL students were lack of the adequate stock of English vocabulary, so that they found difficulty in stating their idea when writing.

Moreover, there is another factor causing the difficulties in writing academic text other than what has been mentioned previously. The factor is found by some others researcher, which is the lack of critical thinking.

The lack of critical thinking. Critical thinking is needed if the students want to make an academic text. Shirkhani and Fahim (2011) defined critical thinking as the individuals' ability to think clearly and rationally, understanding the logical connection between ideas. According to Al Badi (2015), critical thinking in academic writing is needed, because in academic writing the students need to present their ideas logically, which means that there is a relation between the topic and the discussion in their writing. However, Shaheen (2012) mentioned that the lack of critical thinking affected the students' performance in writing academic text, that is, it could leads the students to make a poor academic text. Hence, critical thinking is needed to make the students able to state their ideas clearly, and logically.

Related Studies

Many studies have been conducted by some researchers to investigate the difficulties of writing academic text. The first study is related to Al-khasawneh in 2010 entitled "Writing for Academic Purposes: Problems Faced by Arab Postgraduate Students of The College of Business, University Utara Malaysia."

This study aims at investigating the academic writing problems of the Arab postgraduate students and to provide solutions to the problems. This study used qualitative approach and the data of the study were collected via interviews. The informants of this study were postgraduate students from the College of Business at Universiti Utara Malaysia for the academic year 2008-2009. This study found that the students faced problems in relation to vocabulary, organization of ideas, grammar, spelling, and referencing.

The second related study comes from $Al - Badi$ in 2015, entitled "Academic Writing Difficulties of ESL Learners." This study aims to investigate the difficulties of writing academic text and the factors causing the difficulties in writing academic text among ESL learners. This study used quantitative approach, and the research design is survey design. Thus, the data were collected by using questionnaires. The respondents were twenty postgraduate students of four nationalities studying at a university in Australia. They are, ten Korean, seven Chinese, two Taiwanese, and one Omani. This study revealed that mostly respondents respond that academic writing was difficult. Hence, the result of this study revealed that there was several difficulties face by the respondents. They are the difficulty in diction, organizing the ideas, referencing, paraphrasing, and expressing the idea. Moreover, this study also revealed some factor causing the difficulties in writing academic text. The factor is categorized into three main factors. They are the lack of academic writing experience, the lack of knowledge about academic writing conventions, and the expectation of the institution they are studying at.

The study from Al-Khasawneh (2010) has the same methodology as this research in which it used qualitative approach and used interview to collect the data so that the researcher can adopt the methodology from that researcher. Another similarity from both related research to this research is the research participants, in which the research participants are non-native speaker of English. Moreover, the aim of this research is the same as both Al-Khasawneh's (2010) and Al-Badi's (2016) research in which the research aims to find out the difficulties in writing academic text, so that the researcher can use the data from both Al-khasawneh (2010) and Al-Badi (2015) research to support this research. However, this research is different from the research from Al-Badi (2015) in which this research used qualitative approach, but the research from Al-Badi (2015) used quantitative approach.

Conceptual Framework

English academic writing is a writing activity used in higher education that requires the students to write properly. Moreover, academic writing aims for academics such as teacher, students and many more so that the purpose of it is not for pleasing the reader, instead it used to satisfy the instructor. English academic writing is also important for the students to write properly and it also foster the students' critical thinking so that it causes academic writing becomes a language learning tool in higher education.

Academic writing is also studied by the first year university students. Hence, the first year students' academic writing instructor is focusing the academic writing activity on the text production that focuses on structure, how to write a good paragraph and the use of language features such as tenses, spelling

and many more. However, in doing an English academic writing, the first year students still need to be guided by their instructor to make a good academic text. It indicates that they faced some difficulties. Related to the difficulties of writing academic text, some theories found that there are several difficulties in nine problematic areas. They are grammatical problem, problem in sentence structure, problem of diction, punctuation problem, capitalization problem, organization problem, and content problem that includes problem in generating the ideas about the topic and problem in elaborating the paragraph, and problem in expressing the idea. Moreover, there are some factors causing difficulties in writing academic text. The factors are the lack of writing practice, the unclear explanation from the lecturer, the lack of knowledge, the habit of using slang language, and the lack of critical thinking.

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│                  │     │ The first year     │     │ The difficulties │
│ Academic writing │─────│ students'          │─────│ in writing       │
│                  │     │ academic writing   │     │ English          │
│                  │     │                    │     │ academic text    │
└──────────────────┘     └────────────────────┘     └──────────────────┘
                                                     ┌──────────────────┐
                                                     │ The factors      │
                                                     │ causing the      │
                                                     │ difficulties in  │
                                                     │ writing English  │
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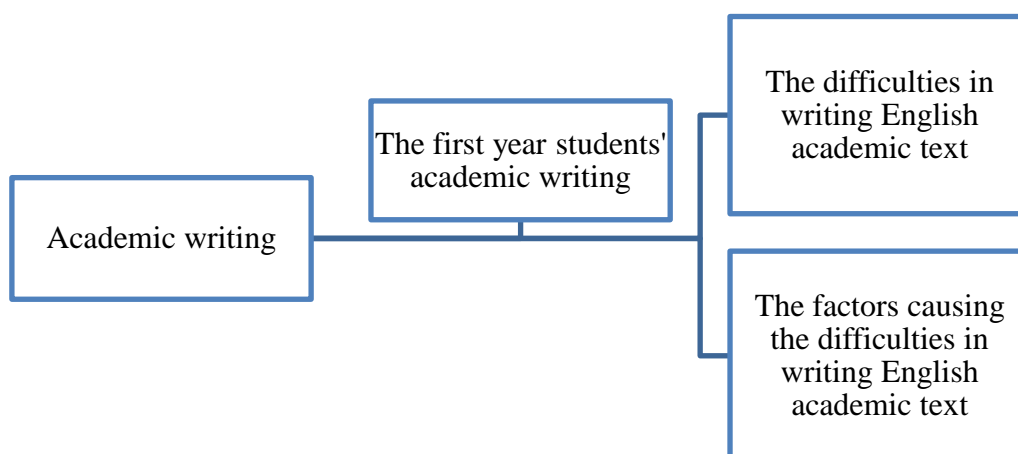
Figure 2.1. Conceptual framework of the study