

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This Chapter reveals the related issues of this study which focused on writing problem, wordiness, types of wordiness, academic writing, research proposal, and theoretical framework.

2.1 Writing Problems

In composing writing, the students often face problems. Writing style becomes one of major problems. Students have weaknesses in using academic language (Maui, 2001, p. 4). According to Maui (2011, p.7) Students tend to use spoken language which contains large number of sentence in their writing whereas in academic writing making a concise writing is recommended. The reader will be looking for the readability and accuracy of delivering ideas. So, long explanation does not needed for academic writing.

Another problem is delivering ideas to the reader clearly. Communicating to the readers needs clarity, coherence, and focus (Carroll, 1990, p. 4). And the problem is come from the existence of ambiguous sentences. Carrol (1990, p.5) said that ambiguity causes unclear meaning. Making coherence writing is also difficult for the students. By using proper transition, students are required to link the ideas, sentence, and paragraph (Carroll, 1990, p. 7). Another writing problem is focus writing. Students typically explain something out of the topic of the writing itself. Thus, influencing the coherence of the writing (Carroll, 1990, p. 7).

Another study stated that students are lack of vocabulary (Hermianthy, 2013). It caused the students having difficulties in expressing their ideas by using proper words. Since in academic writing students are required to use academic language, having good background knowledge both on the topic and vocabulary is needed. Students may have difficulties creating their writing by using proper words without using long sentences with needless explanation on their writing. It leads the students in the phenomenon called wordiness. For example this sentence, *Everyday even on holiday, traffic jam always happens everywhere and anytime*. The word 'holiday' is needless, because there is word *everyday* which means every single day even on holiday.

2.1.1 Wordiness

Wordiness is a problem of sentence which is long while it could be shortened (Meyer, 1945, p. 202). Supported by Norton (1992, p.190), he states wordy sentence contains of unnecessary words and phrases which only make the sentence longer and unclear. The information of the sentences is not as much as the word used, and those words become wasted word. The writing could not be concise if it has wordiness, for example in the sentence *Tina has ability to design poster*. The word *has ability* have simple form with the same meaning; it is the word *can*. The sentence would be shorter: *He can swim*. Another example of wordiness which is often occurred, *In my opinion smoking has not advantages*. Whole of the

essays which are written by students is their opinion. So, it causes wordiness.

The reader would feel irritating with the wordy sentence because it wastes their time to get the point of the writing. Long needless sentences would annoy readers to gain the message (McMahan & Day, 1984, p. 78). Instead, delivering the ideas directly is much more favored by the readers rather than long explanations, for example: *My mother is **a woman** who wears pink dress*. Readers have already known that the term ‘mother’ is a woman. The direct sentence: *My mother wears pink dress* would be much favored by readers. Students are afraid that readers could not catch their ideas by short sentence. Wordiness has sixteen types; The Redundant, The Already Understood, The Empty, The Evasive, The Passive, The Weak, The Affected, The Circuitous, The Self-Indulgent, The Overkill, The Inflated and Deflated, The Invisible and Therefore Unnecessary, The Imprecise, The Beautiful, The Nonsensical and The Clever and Show-Off (Brohaugh, 1993, p. 16).

2.1.1.1 The Redundant

Brohaugh (1993, p.20) defines redundancy as superfluous repetition and unnecessary words. He stated that redundancy has the same term with tautology, pleonasm, prolixity, and circumlocution. Supported by Gerson and Gerson (1992, p.36), they stated that

redundancy is a writing problem which shows the repetition of words which have the same meaning. This example contains redundancy, *He did many **illegal crimes***. The word *illegal crime* has the same meaning. According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines *illegal* as the action which is not allowed by the law and the word *crimes* means an illegal act. The students may use the word *illegal* or only use *crimes*. In other term, redundancy is also called deadwood. Messenger and Taylor (1989, p.134) stated deadwood consists of two or more word which has the same meaning. Meyers (2013, p.201) also stated "*deadwood is useless and lifeless language*"

2.1.1.2 The Already Understood

The redundant describes unnecessary repetition on a sentence, but repetition could be occurred on a less concrete level (Brohaugh, 1993, p. 28). He explained that in this type of wordiness, the writer does not need to repeat something that the readers understand about the language and the work it does. For example, *Do your homework!* The sentence's object is *you* and it does not need to write ***You** do your homework*. Another example, *A **new** study released Friday...* these sentences is also contains wordiness, the word *new* here is already known by the reader. When the

writer said *released* it means the study conducted is new. Because releasing the old study would be worth nothing. The writer can delete the word *new*.

2.1.1.3 The Empty

Adding some empty words or phrases is not help the writers to make a concise writing. Brohaugh (1993, p.34) notes that the empty word is the synonym of pleonasm, and it should be discarded. He adds that empty words consist of empty modifiers, empty introduction, empty transitions and connections, empty summation, empty reaction, tangential material, empty comments on what the manuscripts does not deliver. Each kinds of the empty word only add the length of the sentence not the meaning and information. Empty modifiers can add pure deadwood (Brohaugh, 1993, p. 34). The example of empty modifiers are *very, extremely, really, generally, usually, basically, awfully, rather, pretty much, quite, a bit, mainly, mostly, as a rule, etc.* The writers should avoid telling the reader what they are going to tell them, it would be better to go straight to the point. The example of empty introduction are *for your information, in case you were wondering, the facts are these, etc.* Empty transition and connections can lead the writer into personal comment that may not be appropriate

to the writing. For example in the sentence *Well, I've thought about that...* and *Some observers purpose that the U.S. revamp its education funding policies. Well there's some advantage to that, but...* . Other phrases and words, contain empty transition and connection, are *So, as you can see, So,* or *As you can plainly see.*

2.1.1.4 The Evasive

Brohaugh (1993, p.40) said that “evasive language hurts communication”. The evasive wordiness includes apologies, indecisive waffling, euphemisms and dodge words, and aesthetic evasion. Hedging the sentence could be included in wordiness. Instead of saying something to the point, people tend to use other words which have soft meaning. For example, *I think Smith may be the best to play shortstop ever.* In this sentence the words *think* and *may be* are wasted words. It would be better to choose between them, *Smith may be the best* or *I think Smith is the best.*

2.1.1.5 The Passive

Passive form makes passage long and tiresome (Brohaugh, 1993, p. 42). In using passive form, the sentence would be longer than active form. For example, *all of these public concerns are conveyed by the committee*

through the instrument of policy recommendations which can be seen as a tool through which special social issues are enhanced. The sentence is too long and making the readers confuse to get the meaning. It would be better *the committee convey the public concern through the instrument of policy recommendation which is a tool to enhance the special social issue.*

2.1.1.6 The Weak and Hesitant

Weak writing is defined as “meek writing, more timid than evasive” (Brohaugh, 1993, p. 45). For example, the sentence *I am in love with you* sounds soft rather than *I love you*. Hesitant here refers to the phrase that delays the point of your writing. The examples of hesitant phrases are *to be honest, for instance, to be perfectly frank, etc.* Those kinds of words are not adding sufficient meaning to your writing.

2.1.1.7 The Affected

Affected writing relates to euphemistic writing, “though this time the writer has something to show off instead of something to hide” (Brohaugh, 1993, p. 48). For example *Stacy will actuate another eighteen tunes in a row for you*, whereas the context of the meaning of *actuate* is not for tune, it is more appropriate for movement. Another

example is *I spoke with **seven individual people*** while it is enough to write *I spoke with **seven people***.

2.1.1.8 The Circuitous

Circuitous writing shows that the writer is not presenting information appropriately to the subject of topic (Brohaugh, 1993, p. 51). For example *Pick up the **folder that is green***. It could be economical in *Pick up the green folder*. Avoiding the circuitous, the writer could put the related words together. Roundabout writing is often happen when the writer put a distance between subject and verb, and verb and object, adverb and verb, and adjective and noun. For example, *To reduce the potential **for becoming self-conscious about your writing**...* would be economical and avoid circuitous in *To reduce the potential for **self-conscious writing**...* The word *self-conscious* is a modifier, and it would be efficient when used to modify the word *writing*. Relative clauses also cause roundabout writing.

2.1.1.9 The Self-Indulgent

The word *I* is often found in many writing (Brohaugh, 1993, p. 55). In academic writing the word *I* is not allowed, because academic writing is not personal writing that the reader should know about the writer. For example ***I** remember the Friday afternoon **I** first made the*

acquaintance of Tony. The word *I* lead into misdirecting the reader and wasting space. This will lead your reader know that your writing is not come from the objective point. Avoiding kind of non-objective phrase will make your writing academically (Brohaugh, 1993, p. 57).

2.1.1.10 The Overkill

Be aware of trying to give many words in writing, it is risky and caused overkill (Brohaugh, 1993, p. 60). Giving an explanation about something is good for reader understanding but does not repeated more than twice. Areas of writing ripe for overdoing include description, pet phrases and verbal tics, argumentation, and writing devices. The overkill causes your writing wordy, irritating, boring, and reduce credibility (Brohaugh, 1993, p. 60).

2.1.1.11 The Inflated and Deflated

Word inflation is caused from stretching the words themselves (Brohaugh, 1993:64). For example the words *carefulness*, *preciseness*, *conciseness*, *hungriness*, *greediness*, etc. He adds that you may use those longer words when you really mean it. Another example is *I am **getting sick** of all this advice*. It would be better *I am **sick** of your advice*. Word deflation is rarely happen (Brohaugh, 1993, p. 71). These are example of word

deflation that has been allowed into the language; *memo* from *memorandum*, *auto* from *automobile*, *pants* from *pantaloons*, *flu* from *influenza*, *quote* from *quotation*, etc.

2.1.1.12 The Invisible and Therefore Unnecessary

Spotting the invisible can be found in a phrase contain a cliché, inseparable adjective-noun combination, standardized phrases, and tired word pair (Brohaugh, 1993, p. 74). For example, *You should never use standardized phrases, he chided gently*. The word *chided gently* includes as wordiness because *chided* means doing gently. So, it does not need to put the word *chided* and *gently* together.

2.1.1.13 The Imprecise

Expressing your thoughts specifically will reduce the empty, space filling cliché or a jury-rigged series of words (Brohaugh, 1993, p. 77). It means that it will eliminate description and explanation which might needed to communicate your focus to the reader. Being specific not only makes your writing short but also it will reduce the mental length by answering reader's questions immediately. For example, rather than write *My goal is to gain the presidency*, it would be better if you just write it *I am running for presidency*. The word *to gain* is not giving

specific meaning. Other example is *I handled the staff training*. The word *handled* is not giving the reader clear explanation. How the writers handle the staff training? Trained the staff or supervised the staff training? It would be better to write specifically *I trained the staff* or *I supervised the staff training*.

2.1.1.14 The Clever and Show-off

Brohaugh (1993, p.79) notes that the writers should avoid showing off, eventhough it is active allure of arresting alliteration. For example *the pow-pow-pow of onomatopoeia, the sublime internal rhyme, casting puns upon the reader, and in transitions or in conclusions*. Those kind of phrases sounds cute but it will lead you into the dead wood and slow down the reader. Brohaugh (1993, p.80) also adds that effective alliteration often works best when only a couple of words are involved.

2.1.1.15 The Nonsensical

In this type of wordiness, the word use in one sentence would be nonsense in the meaning. Brohaugh (1993, p.80) stated that he saw a sign and it say *Free Kittens for Sale*. He explained that this sign is not nonsense because the word *free* and *for sale* are opposite term and it was nonsensical. He adds that nonsense is one

of mental lengtheners and if we find it in a sentence we should reduce the length both physical and mental meaning in the sentence.

2.1.1.16 The Beautiful

The beautiful here means that the writers tend to use sophisticated language to make their writing look fancy. That kind of techniques is not helping the reader to understand your ideas. It would be better to write it in common words. Moreover, the term of the word does not fit to your writing context it is confusing to the reader. Brohaugh (1993, p.80) said that “nothing by its inclusion or its absence would have improved it”.

1.2 Academic Writing

Whitaker (2010, p.2) defined academic writing as “the writing you have to do for your university courses; your instructors may have different names for academic writing assignments (essay, paper, research paper, term paper, argumentative paper/essay, analysis paper/essay, informative essay, position paper), but all of these assignments have the same goal and principles”. Maui (2011), said academic writing contains the information related to the topic and it needs reference to prove their writing. The structure and content of the writing also have to be delivered smoothly and systematically.

Academic writing has some kinds of structure, such as a beginning, middle, and an end, to be required. Composing academic writing also has to be proven by others statement. And also, citing the previous study conducted by others to show the writers have read the literature related to the topic, the understanding of the ideas, and integrated other issue and perspective (Bowker, 2007, p. 2).

Whitaker (2010, p.2) explained that academic writing has ten principles; clear purposes, audience engagement, clear point of view, single focus, logical organization, strong support, clear and complete explanations, effective use of research, correct APA style, writing style, and following the instructor direction. Among all principles there is clear and complete explanation. it means that the writer should make the reader easy to understand the ideas, logic and organization. Academic writing is common genre of writing for university students. One of academic writing task is research proposal. Composing research proposal usually made by the university students before they compose a research paper.

1.2.1 Research Proposal

University of Melbourne (2010) in the *Helpsheet Research Proposal* stated that research proposal is a document contains three to seven pages that describe a proposed piece of research. Research proposal can be defined as “a document which deals basically with what the proposed research is about” (Punch, 2000, p. 10). Since in the research proposal contain the design of the research, it is

important to make the research proposal clearly and effectively. Punch (2000, p.13) points out that the purpose of research proposal consists of communication, contract and plan. The quality of research proposal will depend on the clarity and thoroughness of the proposal as meaning as communication.

The good proposal will lead the researcher to the form of an outline of the research, and it can be mapped into the various part of the final research. The researcher can start to write the research proposal by identifying a general area of research and developing a focused research question. Then, create a research protocol which related to the research question and acceptable in terms of time, resources and ethical considerations. Stated in the *Writing an Effective Research proposal* conducted by Verhoef and Hilsden (2004, p.2), the first part of the proposal includes the research question, the reason of raising the issues and the result of the previous issues. And the second part of the proposal is the method section. It explains the plan for answering the research question. In the *Helpsheet Research Proposals* proposed by University of Melbourne (2010), the big element of the research proposal includes introduction, Literature Review, and Methodology.

2.2.1.1 Introduction

The introduction reveals the background of knowledge of the research conducted (Wallwork, 2011, p.

195). It used to show the reader the findings and advance of the current knowledge which related to the research. In this part, the writers also explain the purpose, the significant and the gap of their research. The purpose of introduction is to give a clear explanation about the background information of delivering your research question, the context, the reason of the hypotheses, and the expected results. As stated in the *English for Writing Research Paper* by Wallwork (2011, p.197), the writer could begin the paragraph by stating the definition and the background of the topic, supporting issue and the problems are raised, the writer objectives, and the introduction to the literature.

2.2.1.2 Literature Review

The key term of literature review is provides the reader with just the right amount of literature regarding the sequence of events leading up to the current situation (Wallwork, 2011, p. 207). The researchers should give a basic descriptive study designed to give preliminary understanding about the issues. And it will be show your knowledge and understanding about the issues you raised to the reader. Hartley (2008, p.87) notes that, literature review can show the previous study or history related to the topic, present a number of current studies, integrate and

synthesize work from different research areas, and also evaluate the current state of evidence for particular point of view.

2.2.1.3 Methodology

The key term of this section is to describe the materials, research design, and the procedure used in the research. Wallwork (2011, p.217) points out the skill needed to construct this part is to give clear and concise description of the research by referring to other work in the literature which used similar method, and do not described more than two steps in one sentence. Since this part is to describe the method of the research, the writer should construct the paragraph or step in a logical order. He adds that the important skill is proving that the description is complete and concise.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

This study is proposed to investigate the occurrence of wordiness in English Department students' research proposal, in order to discover the most common type of wordiness occurred. The researcher uses Brohaugh (1993, p.18) wordiness concept to analyze and categorize the wordiness in students' research proposal. This concept divides wordiness into sixteen types; The

Redundant, The Already Understood, The Empty, The Evasive, The Passive,
The Weak, The Affected, The Circuitous, The Self-Indulgent, The Overkill,
The Inflated and Deflated, The Invisible and Therefore Unnecessary, The
Imprecise, The Beautiful, The Nonsensical and The Clever and Show-Off.