The Lived Experiences Of An Undergraduate In Writing For Publication: A Narrative Inquiry

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Abstract*. Inspired by the unique of Ahmad (pseudonym), a young researcher who has successfully published his scholarly articles in international reputed journals regardless of his only holding a bachelor's degree from a private university in East Java, this study aims to document his untold stories in writing for publication using narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry informs the design of this investigation as the approach is particularly useful for understanding lived experiences. Findings of the current study show that through the past stories of Ahmad in his scholarly journey, he passed several events that had shaped his identity as a productive researcher with several published scholarly articles in reputable journals, namely: embarking on research world by attending academic workshops on publication, gaining good references based on interests and reading scholarly works related to them enthusiastically, finding research interests based on reading activities, preparing manuscripts, having mentorship with well-established researchers in his research interest, navigating targeted journals by browsing and reading the author's submission guidelines and its scopes, submitting the research draft, negotiating the long revision processes. From those steps Ahmad went through in the past, reading references from reputable journals has been emphasized by him. Several issues confronted him during his journey such as difficulty in gaining access to credible references and less optimal guidance from his thesis supervisor due to her less scholarly reading activities. These barriers could be addressed by Ahmad through his virtual academic socialization with the experts of his research interest.*

Keywords*: Narrative Inquiry, Novice Researchers, Reputable Journals*

Abstrak. Terinspirasi dari keunikan Ahmad (nama samaran), seorang peneliti muda yang berhasil mempublikasikan artikel ilmiahnya di jurnal bereputasi internasional meski ia hanya menyandang gelar sarjana dari sebuah universitas swasta di Jawa Timur, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendokumentasikan kisah-kisahnya yang tak terhitung dalam bentuk tulisan. untuk publikasi menggunakan penyelidikan naratif. Penyelidikan naratif memberi masukan pada desain penyelidikan ini karena pendekatan ini sangat berguna untuk memahami pengalaman hidup. Temuan penelitian kali ini menunjukkan bahwa melalui kisah masa lalu Ahmad dalam perjalanan keilmuannya, ia melewati beberapa peristiwa yang membentuk jati dirinya sebagai peneliti produktif dengan beberapa artikel ilmiah yang dimuat di jurnal bereputasi, yaitu: mengawali dunia penelitian dengan mengikuti lokakarya akademik. dalam publikasi, mendapatkan referensi yang baik berdasarkan minat dan membaca karya-karya ilmiah yang berkaitan dengannya dengan antusias, menemukan minat penelitian berdasarkan kegiatan membaca, menyiapkan naskah, melakukan mentoring dengan peneliti yang sudah mapan dalam minat penelitiannya, menavigasi jurnal yang ditargetkan dengan menelusuri dan membaca karya penulis pedoman penyerahan dan ruang lingkupnya, penyerahan rancangan penelitian, negosiasi proses revisi yang panjang. Dari langkah-langkah yang ditempuh Ahmad selama ini, membaca referensi dari jurnal bereputasi menjadi penekanannya. Beberapa kendala yang menghadangnya selama perjalanannya seperti sulitnya mendapatkan akses referensi yang kredibel dan kurang optimalnya bimbingan dari dosen pembimbing skripsi akibat aktivitas membaca ilmiahnya yang kurang. Hambatan tersebut dapat diatasi oleh Ahmad melalui sosialisasi akademis secara virtual dengan para ahli yang menjadi minat penelitiannya.

Kata Kunci: Narrative Inquiry, Peneliti Pemula, Jurnal Bereputasi

BACKGROUND OF STUDY

This study centers on exploring the lived experiences of Ahmad (pseudonym), an undergraduate student graduating from an English study program in a private university in Indonesia. Based on my first personal communication with him, since December 2018 until December 2020, Ahmad has successfully published his papers in some peer reviewed international journals: *The Journal of ASIA TEFL, Korea TESOL Journal, Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics, Humanising Language Teaching*, *The New English Teacher, and XLinguae*. Anchored by his publishing experiences, Ahmad were many times invited by several English teacher association, graduate student community, and universities in East Java, to share his learning trajectory on successful international publication. These scholarly excellences of Ahmad have attracted me to investigate his lived experiences in scholarly publication under the framework of narrative inquiry.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

My idea of researching Ahmad's personal experiences in scholarly publication are derived from some reasons. First, writing for scholarly publication is generally done by doctoral students and faculty members including lecturers and professors from different disciplines. Regarding doctoral students' practice of scholarly publication, Watts (2012) as cited in (Habibie & Hyland, 2019) views the practice of writing for academic publication as part of doctoral experience within doctoral study. His statement is supported by Teng (2019) stating that doctoral education is accepted as the process where well-established researchers are created; therefore, they are highly expected to be the indicator of future scholarly success (Pinheiro et al., 2014) and their research productivity is emphasized (Boud & Lee, 2009). Other views related to benefits of doctoral education's scholarly publishing practice is emphasized by Mizzi (2014) saying that it offers the prospect to receive and give mentorship, toil on spoken and written communication skills, shape ideas, link to experienced and emerging scholars, mingle with individuals on the same wavelength, and learn of the publication process from start to finish (p.58). Evidenced in the above studies, research topics on doctoral students' writing for scholarly publication practice such as motivation (Barnacle et al., 2016; Peng & Gao, 2019; Ulla et al., 2017), researcher identity (Mantai, 2015; Teng, 2019; Xu, 2014), barriers and strategies (Casanave, 2019; Cheung, 2010; Chien, 2019; Fazel, 2013; Mansouri Nejad et al., 2019; Nguyen et al., 2016) have received more considerable attention than that of undergraduates practice. In other words, experiences in conducting for publication in international reputable journals like what Ahmad has done is rare.

Second, there have been sparse studies exploring how undergraduate students engage in scholarly publication activities. Several empirical studies involving undergraduate students in academic publishing practice have been recorded in several different disciplines. In the field of *Economy, Accounting and Finance* (Jalbert, 2008) has presented valuable experiences in writing for publication in peer reviewed journals involving his undergraduate students for about six years. Despite the pitfalls he and his students underwent in running the scholarly works, their scholarly works were successfully disseminated in international conferences and peer reviewed journals. Similarly, another interesting personal story comes from Plakhotnik, (2020), an academic faculty who invited her undergraduate student, Marina, to publish her assignment through the lens of innovative work behavior (IWB) in a reputed journal which lasting with the article being accepted with minor revision in a reputable journal. Meanwhile, in *Medical Sciences*, a study by Urrunaga-Pastor et al. (2020) aiming to assess the rate and characteristics of undergraduate medical students' published research in Peru has discerned that scientific creation among those medical sciences undergraduates turned out diverse; only a few of them did successfully publish their scholarly works in *PubMed* indexed journal. Still in the same discipline, Burks and Chumchal (2009) shared their scholarly experiences in engaging undergraduates to conduct research and publish the results in reputable journals. They also emphasize that co-authoring with students, academic faculty will gain a more notable milestone in their academic career. Interestingly, in the field of *Psychology* engaging undergraduates in publishable research has been received more considerable attention (Detweiler-Bedell & Detweiler-Bedell, 2019; Giuliano, 2019; Reavis & Thomas, 2019; Scherman, 2019; Scisco et al., 2019). For example, (Scherman, 2019) has introduced a scholarly program named *Student Writing Weekend* to encourage undergraduate students to engage in writing for scholarly publication.

Third, I refer to the need of highlighting publication practice among EFL student-teachers. There has been so far very limited research showing this activity among EFL undergraduates; while, other just showcased the students' rhetorical skills in writing research articles (RAs). On the one hand, the real practice of scholarly publishing among EFL preservice teachers has been recently conducted by (Banegas, Roberts, et al., 2020). It is a large collaboration exploratory action research (EAR)-based study in Argentina in which the authors engaged in a writing-for-publication project (book reviews by EFL student-teachers) to explore the effects between authenticity of audience and motivation in enhancing the student-teachers academic writing competency. The results show that although authenticity of audience acted as motivating factor only with more advanced ELT students, most ELT students and tutors

participated in motivational synergy which were driven by tutors' changing in teaching practices given the likeliness of publishing. This result suggests future research exploring the effects of writing for publication on student-teachers' English language proficiency. Surprisingly, the next study (Banegas, Loutayf, et al., 2020) has proven that pre-service EFL teachers' English language proficiency upgraded in terms of textual organization, lexical use, and grammatical accuracy. On the other hand, in terms of Research Articles (RAs) writing, (Lubis, 2019) conducted a research on Indonesian ELT undergraduate students' ways of presenting their argumentation in finding and discussion (F&D) section of research article (RA). The study reveals that as Non-Native English Speaking (NNES) novice writers, those Indonesian undergraduate students have lack of the capability in using rhetorical styles of elaborating their academic views in the sections of findings and discussions of their research articles. This fact is shown through their not embracing the criticality element. They also do not emphasize the dissimilarities of results with the previous research and illustrate deep argumentation through establishment of explanation or exemplification after certain claims are made. Lubis further explains that the absence of both steps leads to the occurrence of non-conformity manifestation in organizing the flow of arguments exhibiting a lack of logical coherence. Moreover, students do not have adequate repertoire to convey the comments move in the F&D sections which results in several grammar-related and idea-related errors of the manifested steps. Those studies clearly indicate that writing for scholarly publication practice in reputable journals done by Applied Linguistics or English education undergraduate students is rare.

Last but not the least, the last fact that writing for scholarly publication in international peer-reviewed journals is perceived as a complex and daunting task for students and faculty members (Pecaski McLennan, 2013) who are categorized as junior or novice authors. Interestingly, this phenomenon is experienced not only by English as Additional Language (EAL) junior scholars, but also by Anglophone junior scholars (Casanave, 2019; Habibie & Hyland, 2019). As a consequence, enormous hurdles and barriers have been facing novice writers in becoming well-established members of academic discourse communities (Arsyad et al., 2019; Habibie & Hyland, 2019; Mansouri Nejad et al., 2019, 2019; Mantai, 2015; Nguyen et al., 2016; Teng, 2019; Vecaldo et al., 2019). Much literature has discussed the issues such as an overview by Fazel (2013) synthesizing studies on NNES authors' challenges and strategies in writing for publication in highly reputed journals from 1992 to 2010. The results were divided into two categories: problems of writing for publication from the perspectives of authors and editors showing that there were three main problems which confronted those non-Anglophone

authors, namely: sentence level (grammar, lexis, and structure), discourse level (organization of proportions and the overall flow of the paper), and rhetorical level (claim or voice and the force with which argument is presented). The recent investigation on this issue also shows almost similar problems encountered by novice researchers elsewhere (Arsyad et al., 2019; Chien, 2019; Jiang et al., 2017; Nguyen et al., 2016; Rahimi et al., 2018; Rezaei & Seyri, 2019; Vecaldo et al., 2019).

Based on the aforementioned issues I discussed in this background, previous studies have much 1) focused scholarly publication on doctoral students or faculty members; 2) explored very few undergraduate students from periphery; 3) continued highlighting the daunting experiences of scholarly publication by both students and faculty members. To this end, little attention has been directed to portraying the lived experiences of an undergraduate student in scholarly publication activities, particularly in non-English speaking countries. It is, therefore, in the present study, I attempt to document Ahmad's untold scholarly experiences consisting of research and academic activities that support his success in scholarly publication. To reveal the stories, I employed narrative inquiry consisting of 3-dimensional frameworks: temporarily, place, and interaction. By utilizing this narrative inquiry, the study sheds light on the meaning of untold personal stories and events (Clandinin, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Wang & Geale, 2015). The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. *What scholarly processes did Ahmad experience before writing for publication process in international reputable journals?*
2. *How did Ahmad navigate his writing for publication in reputable international journals?*
3. *What barriers did Ahmad encounter and how did he face the barriers during his scholarly trajectory?*

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the present study, I employed narrative inquiry as the research design to explore the lived experiences of Ahmad in navigating his scholarly activities. As Creswell (2012) proposes, 'narrative research" as the term representing a design focuses "on studying a single person, gathering data through the collection of stories, reporting individual experiences, and discussing the meaning of those experiences for "the individual". I tried to find the pattern or the source of past stories or scholarly experiences closely that will be revealed by Ahmad, the research participant. Polkinghorne (1995), as cited in Benson (2014), classified narrative inquiry into two forms: analysis of narrative and narrative analysis. The first form, analysis of narrative, is

the form of narrative inquiry in which the stories of the research participants are analyzed (Benson, 2014). On the other hand, narrative analysis refers to the use of storytelling as a means to analyze the data (Benson, 2014; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Considering the two forms of narrative inquiry, this research is going to adopt the second form of narrative inquiry, narrative analysis.

The research procedures of this study follow the guidelines by Creswell and Poth (2018) and (Clandinin, 2013). I first determined research questions and aims of this research and ensured that these research questions and research aims are matched with narrative research. In so doing, I reviewed research articles related to writing for publication practices by NNES authors published in reputable international journals both in global context and Indonesian context. The articles cover various topics such as types of motivation, hurdles or challenges encountered by NNES authors during the process of publication, and how they dealt with those barriers. In addition to this, I read qualitative inquiry research books to understand deeply about this type research. By reviewing and synthesizing those articles and research books, I found the issues which become the root of the research questions and the aims of the research.

I highlight my close friendship with Ahmad in this study. This relationship is important, as Clandinin (2013) says, "not only is the relational space between researchers and participants integral to understanding the composition or co-composition of field texts and research texts, but relationships are a central way of making way of making sense of the temporal and contextual aspects of narrative inquiry" (pp.34). I asked Ahmad to tell his stories and record the stories utilizing a smartphone as the main data source through in-depth interviews. The interviews were conducted not only in formal places like the participant's office, but also in relaxing places like coffee shops, campus corridors, even in social media like through WhatsApp chats. This is because the researcher and the participant have a close relationship as friend. This stage is called data collecting technique.

In the following steps, I did data transcription and retold Ahmad's stories. The recording data were listened several times and were transcribed verbatim before rewritten and translated into English by me. After that, the story was returned to the participant to get some feedbacks or clarification (trustworthiness). These two stages are called co-construction done by researcher and participant (Clandinin, 2013; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Finally, the data were analyzed using thematic analysis to gain several themes emerging as Benson (2014) argued that stories in the analysis of narrative is often analyzed by using content or thematic analysis. And the final stage is presenting the narrative in written form.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This part provides the findings as well as the discussion of the present study which are elaborated by depicting the lived experiences of Ahmad through re-storying process and is based on the three research questions, namely: what scholarly processes Ahmad experienced before writing for publication process in international reputable journals, what experiences Ahmad gained in the processes of navigating his writing for publication in reputable international journals, and what barriers Ahmad encountered and how he faced the barriers during his scholarly trajectory.

a) **Ahmad's Past Scholarly Activities prior to His Publication in Reputable International Journals**

Ahmad's success story in writing for publication begins in 2013 when he was still in the third semester of undergraduate majoring at English education. He was sent by his lecturer to represent him to attend a 2-day workshop on writing for publication in one of established university in Java. There he gained many experiences about writing for publication, including confusedness of several research terms as it was his first time to know them. He knew nothing about everything related to research convention. He narrated,

"I have started to be very active in academic publication since 2013 when I was in the third semester of undergraduate study majoring in English Education. At the time, one of my lecturers sent me to join a two-day workshop on academic international publication at State University of Malang because he could not attend the workshop due to his busy activities. The participants of the workshops were dominated by faculty members and doctoral students. Only me at the time who was still an undergraduate student. This made me confused what was being discussed in the forum. The keynote speakers talked about terms that I had never heard before such as editor, journal, submission, revision, reviewers, indexing service, Scopus, Thomson Reuters, Copernicus, EBSCO, MLA and many more. These terms made me confused because I was not familiar with them. What made more confused was when all the participants were grouped to discuss about research. All were discussing their writing for publication practice and their expertise. I just kept silent at that moment since I did not know what my expertise was. I did not even know the meaning of expertise literally". (Interview in October 2019)

Ahamd's narration above indicates his first time to step his feet into scholarly convention unintentionally. It can be imagined that as the only undergraduate student amidst

faculty members who at least had had experience in conducting and disseminating research, it was very frustrating for him. It has been mentioned in the introduction of the present study that most of researchers are mostly dominated by doctoral students ((Jiang et al., 2017; Pinheiro et al., 2014; Teng, 2019; Watts, 2012). Moreover, the activity Ahmad did by joining workshop on writing for publication is supported by a well-established author Cargill (2019)'s statement saying "..there is a clear need for models of teaching, training, and mentoring of less experienced researcher authors that can be adapted effectively to the range of contexts in which they are required." What is meant here is Writing for Publication Workshop (WfPW) which is believed to be able to develop participant's skills for writing research articles in English and for dealing with the publication process.

On the last meeting of the seminar, Ahmad was amazed of what one of the keynote speakers did to the audiences and made him motivated to know more about scholarly world. The keynote-speaker showed a website of an international reputable ELT journal in which one of the authors was he himself. He said,

"… in the last session, one of the keynote speakers showed a very interesting website which listed his name along with experts in English Language Teaching like Jack C. Richard, David Nunan, Anne Burne, Lawrence Zumza, etc. More impressively, he was the only Indonesian scholar, but he could be in the same level as those international ELT experts. It was my first time to be inspired and motivated to learn more about research and writing for scholarly publication."

On the next day after joining the workshop, Ahmad visited an internet café to find more information about the journal that was shown in the workshop enthusiastically. He gained surprised of the research topics and the titles of the articles published in the journal due to their unique, and he enjoyed reading those articles. He narrated,

"I still remember the journal was for qualitative research focused on narrative inquiry research, named Teaching and Critiques, if I am not mistaken. It was published by University of Waikato, New Zealand. In that journal, I found out many research articles written using a methodology which might be considered ordinary or unimportant by us. Why? Because those articles were resulted from sharing, ordinary description but reported so academically scientific that it touched my feeling when I was reading them. This first impression, therefore, led me to an addiction, an addiction to enjoy reading research articles because it was also unique for me. That was the first thing that made me enjoy reading scholarly articles from reputed journals, of course.

In that journal, Ahmad saw two Indonesian names among the authors. This made him more curious to read their scholarly products and other emerged ELT experts' articles as he stated,

> *"I found out several other Indonesian researchers whose articles were published in top-tier journals such as Nugrahenny T. Zacharia dan Flora Deborah Floris. I was highly interested in and curious of their international scholarly achievements by reading all their articles and following their ways of thinking scientifically.'*

What Ahmad stated about his following the Indonesian authors' ways of thinking through reading their scholarly writing is in line with the previous study conducted by Khozaei Ravari & Tan (2019) which found out that spending many hours on reading sources published in reputable journals could lead to have capability to write coherently. Their study was also supported by (Dong, 1998) highlighting that by imitating well established writers, novice writers start learning how to conform to disciplinary norms.

Ahmad subsequently found a strategy to make himself more interested in reading the scholarly articles by classifying the articles based on the authors in folders in his flask dish so that he could understand how to conduct writing for publication. He continued reading those articles for about three years until the time for him to write his undergraduate thesis came. This is a new strategy in reading scholarly journals. He uttered,

> *"I was more and more interested in scholarly writing after I made folders in my flash disk containing names of international ELT experts like Ahmar Mahboob, Jack C. Richards, Anne Burns, Paul K. Matsuda and many more. In these folders I put their academic publication due to my high enthusiasm. I then kept reading those articles and finally I could understand steps of those experts used in writing for publication. I kept doing this activity up to two or three years when the time for me to write my undergraduate thesis (skripsi) came."*

Because of his actively engaging in scholarly reading activities, Ahmad could find a distinguished research topic for his undergraduate thesis. For that reason, he expected to publish the research in reputable international journals although his advisors suggested it be published in nationally indexed journals. To do this, he made a strategy, namely bravely communicating and discussing his research topic with several international experts in his research topic virtually. One of them was Nugrahenny T. Zacharias as he stated,

> *"Since I had previously been motivated dan actively using strategies in reading research articles and saving those articles based on the authors, I planned to write my*

undergraduate thesis which was publishable in international reputable journals indexed in Scopus. Hence, in 2015 I seriously started to seek for my research interest focus. And after doing scholarly reading, I found English as an International Language (EIL) very interesting to be researched. And I conducted research on Pre-Service English teachers' beliefs which was aimed to investigate their perceptions on EIL, the way they saw English as an international language. In this moment, I tried my best to write my undergraduate thesis using the folders containing researched articles based on the experts/authors I made beforehand. Furthermore, I had other ways in improving my research writing, namely discussing my research topic with its experts through email and Facebook Messenger. I even bravely sent my research proposal to one of those experts, Bu Nugrahenny in the hope that she would be correcting and giving feedbacks on it. At first, I was quite not sure about this, but then surprisingly, she (Bu Nugrahenny) she responded me enthusiastically. She praised that the topic was very good and out of the box for undergraduate students as it's very rarely discussed. She then commented on my research problem saying," Make it better, please!" Then I revised it. We kept discussing."

Not only did he keep communicating with Nugrahenny T. Zacharias about his research topic, Ahmad also bravely emailed others expert. He uttered,

"Well, I also emailed international EIL experts like Paul K. Matsuda, Ahmar Marboob, and Jack C. Richards as I mentioned previously. And I once emailed Van Gabriel to ask for his research articles which I needed because at that moment I hadn't known Sci-Hub and my campus didn't subscribe for international journals on website. It is; therefore, I contacted the author directly through email. Amazingly, in two days there was a notification on email. Van Gabriel sent me lots of his scholarly products. This happened due to my high enthusiasm in doing my scholarly writing. This support was totally motivating me more and more. That was the turning point in my trajectory to write my undergraduate thesis and publish it in an indexed-Scopus reputable journal.

Getting feedbacks and supports from senior researchers from other institutions have been highlighted in several previous studies (Fazel, 2013; Khozaei Ravari & Tan, 2019; Rezaei & Seyri, 2019) and proven successful in improving the quality of research articles leading to be more likely to be accepted in reputed peer-reviewed journals.

b) Ahmad's Writing for Publication in Reputable International Journals

After Ahmad finished writing his undergraduate thesis, he did not want to follow his advisors' advice to publish it in nationally indexed journal. Instead, he tried his best to publish it in reputable internationally indexed journal like Scopus.

"After I passed my thesis exam, I insisted on publishing my research findings in top-tier journals although my thesis advisors and examiners suggested it be published in nationally indexed journals. For me it's not challenging. Therefore, I developed my thesis data into research article and used more good references. I added some contents on it so that it could be published to international journals. It was done by me not long after I had finished my undergraduate study in the end of 2015."

Then in 2016 he tried to find out targeted journals for his research articles, especially ELT and Applied Linguistics journals. He learned those authors' submission guidelines and their scopes. He mentioned,

"In the beginning of 2016, I started to find several top-tier journals in ELT or Applied Linguistics as the place where I could submit my scholarly article. In this process, from 2016 up to 2017, I learned authors submission guidelines and research scopes of several journals such as TEFLIN Journal, EFLT, TESOL Quarterly, ASIA TEFL, Asian EFL Journal, Applied Linguistics, ELT Oxford, and many more. So, during that time, 2016 to 2017, I submitted my research article to five journals, if I'm not mistaken. And none of those journals accepted my work. There was even one journal that rejected it only after one day I submitted it with reason unsuitable submission. This rejection continued for one year".

When navigating the process of seeking for the most appropriate targeted journals, Ahmad found out that all the authors whose writings had been published in that journals were holding at least Master's degree, and most of them were professors in ELT. However, this fact did not discourage him to continue his intention. He uttered,

"This activity made me more motivated because I found out that most of authors in these journals were senior researchers, faculty members, and doctoral students. I didn't find undergraduates or master's students whose works were published in those journals. This simply made me think that I had to be unique, being different from others."

Until the end of 2017, Ahmad had not been successful making his research article accepted and published in his targeted journals. He said,

"….2016 to 2017, I submitted my research article to five journals, if I'm not mistaken. And none of those journals accepted my work. There was even one journal that rejected it only after one day I submitted it with reason unsuitable submission. This rejection continued for one year".

Even though he was still unable to make his research article accepted by the targeted journal, he kept making himself motivated by joining research seminars and conferences. In these places, he got more support from other scholars before finally he found the appropriate targeted journal in the beginning of 2018. As he mentioned,

"During the time, I was actively engaged in several research communities like seminars, workshops, and conferences although only as a participant. And at last, I found one journal that might be suitable for my scholarly article. This journal was The Journal of ASIA TEFL. I submitted my research article to this journal in the beginning of 2018 and after a five-time rejection from five different journals."

His article was eventually accepted by the journal in the end of 2018 after seven revisions. This was something crazy for a novice researcher like him to survive in that long and exhausting process. He proudly said,

"This journal accepted my work finally although I had to undergo several times of revisions. Exactly seven revisions. It's unbelievable for me as only an undergraduate graduate to pass this hard time. First, I had to revise the template as I didn't use its template. Then errors in grammar use, tables, figures, and the reference were noticed by the reviewers and needed revising. Finally, in the end of 2018, my revision process finished. And it was officially published. So, I was taking approximately one year to finally successfully publish my research article in a top-tier journal."

c) Barriers during Ahmad's Scholarly Journey

In his scholarly journey, Ahmad confronted barriers like what commonly happened to novice scholars. The first constraint he gained was related with his difficulty in gaining credible international reputable references. This was due to the fact that the university where he was studying did not subscribe to certain journals. He narrated,

"When I was working on my research proposal in the seventh semester, the biggest constraint I confronted was no access to scholarly references from reputable journals because the university where I was studying had not subscribed to top-tier journals, so I could not gain credible references." (Interview on January 20, 2021)

However, as mentioned before, he tried to contact ELT experts to have their scholarly articles and books. This is the way he solved this first problem as he explained,

"*I also emailed international EIL experts like Paul K. Matsuda, Ahmar Marboob, and Jack C. Richards as I mentioned previously. And I once emailed Van Gabriel to ask for his research articles which I needed because at that moment I hadn't known Sci-Hub and my campus didn't subscribe for international journals on website. Therefore, I contacted the author directly through email. Amazingly, in two days there was a notification on email. Van Gabriel sent me lots of his scholarly products.*"

The next problem Ahmad confronted was that his academic advisor did not understand about his research topic, English as International Language (EIL). This fact led him to not get enough feedbacks from his advisor. He stated,

"*The next barrier I met was less optimal thesis guidance since my academic advisor knew less about my research topic, so I did not get optimal feedbacks to improve the quality of my research proposal. I did realize that the references I read would influence the way I wrote my thesis.* (Interview on January 21, 2021)

To solve this problem and to avoid misunderstanding between his advisor and himself, Ahmad brought the printed sources to his advisor. He clearly narrated,

"*My barrier when I was writing my undergraduate thesis was that my advisor disagreed with my ideas which I synthesized from reading previous research or references published in reputable journals. I did not mean to underestimate her or judged that she did not read enough articles from reputable journals, but what I told her in every discussion session was proven by me through the printed articles including the ideas I cited from, method to write research titles and how to seek for research problems. Because I was still an undergraduate student and was under her advisory, I had to agree with her ideas even though I realized that it wouldn't support me to improve my thesis I was writing.* "(Interview on January 21, 2021)

The way Ahmad addressed his challenges is categorized as an academic socialization. Academic socialization is mostly done by novice authors to enter into the discourses of an academic community which has been greatly examined by a number of theoretical perspectives (Canagarajah, 2004; Duff, 2010; Morita, 2009). Another authors (Khozaei Ravari & Tan, 2019) concludes this activity as seeking help from professionals. It is in line with what Ahmad did to

address his challenges of having unprofessional supervisor and difficulty in getting credible references.

Ahmad then added that he gained many benefits of reading references from international renowned authors as he said,

> *"I felt that the positive effects of reading much previous studies had led me to be able to map the concepts of my research topic. She might haven't understood about this. One day, she was once annoyed of my insisting not to revise my thesis as she instructed. I believed that the thesis draft I wrote was good based on the references. I did that as I knew that it was what I had to follow, resulted from my much reading. I didn't cite research methodology books authored by Indonesian authors such as Ari Kunto or Sugiyono. Instead, I read and used international books written by Creswell, Simon Borg, Sandra Liminkey, and many more. This might also be contradictory with my thesis advisor. So, this became my constraint in writing my thesis which could be published in peer reviewed journals. But I could finally show to her my success in publishing my research article in top-tier journal. This was because I followed the right track. Anyway, I still followed my advisor's instruction although not much while I revised based on my knowledge. At last, she admitted it after the thesis examination."*

d) Ahmad's Present-Day Scholarly Activities

Currently Ahmad becomes very productively doing scholarly activities. This is supported by his current job as a researcher in a Center for Research and Publication in one of state university in Indonesia. At this research center, he not only conducts research projects, but he also reviews all research manuscripts written by faculty members and postgraduate students in the university. He has found his real world. He feels like he is in the zone which forces him to get much more motivated in writing for publication. Now he possesses many invitations to review articles from nationally and internationally indexed journals although the journals are still indexed in Scopus Q1, Q2, and Q3. He benefits much from these scholarly activities for his learning process. It is very useful. He feels that his expertise gets sharper time to time. Also, he can connect to international researchers as he becomes an editor chief of an international journal together with those experts. He narrated,

> *"If I reflect on my experience of my writing for publication process, it was indeed starting from an inspiration I gained from several inspiring researchers I had joined the seminars or those whom I discussed with. From this inspiration, I was highly motivated to write for publication regardless of my education background. The ways I did, as mentioned before,*

are beginning from reading many research articles which I was interested in and classifying them based on the writers or experts' names in file folders. This made me know much about the articles' authors, the journals publishing them, on what pages they were published, and the citation. In other words, my identity as a researcher was shaped for about three until four years. And now I'm very productively doing scholarly activities. Moreover, this is supported by my current job as a researcher in a Center for Research and Publication in one of state university in Indonesia. This is my true world. I feel like I am in the zone which forces me to get much more motivated in writing for publication. Now I have many invitations to review articles from nationally and internationally indexed journals although the journals are still indexed in Scopus Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4. I benefit much from this scholarly activity for my learning process. It is very useful. I feel that my expertise gets sharper. Also, I can connect to international researchers as I become an editor chief of an international journal together with those experts. In brief, this process was begun in 2013 and is continuing up to present."

As his close friend, I have witnessed his current scholarly activities such as conducting research collaboration with researchers from Indonesia both the more experienced researchers and the novice ones. He enjoys helping and guiding his colleagues especially the novice ones in writing for publication. This is proven through several WhatsApp groups he created for research discussion media. There he loves to share scholarly articles and motivate all members of the groups.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

From the present study, it can be concluded that through the past stories of Ahmad in his scholarly journey, he passed several events that had shaped his identity as a productive researcher with several published scholarly articles in reputable journals, namely: embarking on research world by attending academic workshops on publication, getting used to scholarly habits, gaining good references based on interests and reading scholarly works related to them enthusiastically, finding research interests based on reading activities, preparing manuscripts, having mentorship with well-established researchers in his research interest, navigating targeted journals by browsing and reading the author's submission guidelines and its scopes, submitting the research draft, negotiating the long revision processes. From those steps Ahmad went through, reading references from reputable journals has been emphasized by him.

In terms of present time, Ahmad has built his career as a true researcher and is focusing on sharpening his research capability by having collaborative research with many novice and senior researchers beside actively working as a researcher and a research articles reviewer at his office every day. He is always ready to help others learning to conduct research and disseminate their research findings in reputable journals. Meanwhile, with regard to future hope, Ahmad plans to continue his career as a professional researcher by earning master's degree and doctoral degree.

In succeeding his scholarly publication, Ahmad confronted some issues like other novice researchers worldwide. The first barriers came from the university where he was studying which did not provide credible scholarly sources. Ahmad narrated that the university did not subscribe reputable journal articles. To address this issue, he did virtual academic socialization by emailing the authors of the references he needed. The final barrier was from his academic supervisor who did not have enough knowledge about the research topic Ahmad decided to choose. However, he found a wise way to solve this problem which is by showing the printed references he had gained from reputable international journals. This way was successfully proven because the supervisor could not deny it. When deciding to submit his research findings to international reputed journals, he had gotten mentorship from the experts of his research topic.

The results of this study have shown the audiences (readers) to follow the steps Ahmad has done to be a successful researcher as discussed in the previous subsection, particularly maintaining the scholarly habits (reading). This is because there is no short cut to publish our research works in high impact peer-reviewed journals. For teacher educators, it is recommended to widen their knowledge by making reading scholarly articles as a hobby to guide their student-teachers in doing research. And the last, for educational institutions or higher educational institutions, it is strongly suggested to do subscription to reputable journals to make students easy to access the good references freely.

If the next researchers are interested in designing this research again, some changes should be made like using mixed methods to broaden the findings or involve more participants.

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