

## **Reading and Writing as Academic Literacy in EAP Program of Indonesian Learners**

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### **Abstract**

This study investigates academic literacy imposed in reading and writing for academic purposes in the EAP program. This study uses descriptive design elaborating data from curriculum documents and interviews. Involving 45 participants from IAIN Surakarta and Veteran University, data were analyzed using constant-comparison and inductive analysis techniques. The study discovers that academic literacy is prominent to serve and recently it has been the growing learning outcomes universities should provide besides discipline and expertise. Academic literacy in EAP program is embedded into academic vocabulary, grammar, reading and writing for academic purposes. Consequently, academic literacy should be incurred in the curriculum, syllabus, aims and objectives, and teaching materials.

**Keywords:** literacy, academic vocabulary, reading, writing.

## A. Introduction

Amid the growing push to implement academic literacy in English and communication skills for university graduates, challenges occur in adherent to the advance of Indonesian Qualification Framework-Based Curriculum (henceforth, IQF-Based Curriculum). Universities prepare graduates for various opportunities of employment through content knowledge, disciplinary expertise and an essential learning outcomes that is communication skills that encompass academic literacy and English language proficiency.

The development of communication skills is most effectively embedded in the curriculum in context of disciplinary study. Communication skills are key graduate attributes, highlighted as professional requirements in a range of fields, including education, law, and health (Johnson, De Roode, & Fenton, 2015). Accomplishment of standard competency in area of a literacy and English proficiency is promising in the development of curriculum. Academic literacy seems to be the core of English teaching especially in English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Literacy is defined as the ability to read and write. Academic literacy is a set of skills to be vital foundation required for success in academic communities (Hyland & Hamp-Lyons cited in Sanavi (2012).

In addition, communication skills have emerged as a key element in 21st century curriculum (Nelson, Creagh, Kift, & Clarke, 2014). In reference to National Qualification Framework (NQF), curriculum renewals in some countries have placed communication skills or academic literacy as the core priorities (Johnson et al., 2015). Communication skills from which English language proficiency is the core competency advocates integration of language development across curriculum.

In context of English environment in Indonesian universities, the demand incurring academic literacy and English proficiency using qualification standard may present in the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) programs. Thorough studies in developing EAP programs admittedly indicate that EAP Programs should incur academic literacy as the core contents. Solikhah (2015) conducted a research and development in IAIN Surakarta and Veteran University at Sukoharjo strongly suggested that academic literacy be prepared as core materials for EAP learners. Literacy is defined as competency to read and write. In EAP program, literacy refers to reading and writing skills that students of EAP program should accomplish as a minimum competency. In the regard, EAP curriculum is devised to include reading and writing for academic purposes as the core materials. In addition, academic vocabulary is other core materials the students should achieve to support reading and writing skills. Academic literacy in EAP programs would comprise of academic vocabulary, skills in reading for academic purposes, and skills in writing for academic purposes.

Yurekli (2012) conducted a study in Turkey analyzing curriculum renewal in EAP context. Yurekli analyzed curriculum renewal process and explained stages of change in the curriculum. In the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses,

Opportunities, Treats), she identified that among many strengths and opportunities, there were weaknesses in terms of linguistics and academic skills. Specifically, two most weaknesses include: (1) lack of ability in listening, speaking, writing and reading and (2) lack of spoken English (Yurekli, 2012). The curriculum contents in response to the needs analysis include basic knowledge of English: vocabulary and grammar, and English skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Yurekli also outlined objectives of basic knowledge and skills, each of which is derived from answer of interview and questionnaire given to students in purpose of needs analysis. Though Yurekli (2012) does not emphasize the needs as academic literacy, she admits that academic reading and academic writing are crucial. Grammar and academic vocabulary are inevitably embedded in every single of the skills.

In addition, Kim (2013) investigated Needs analysis for ESP Course for Engineering students in Korea. The study identified that English communication ability has become a crucial qualification for a job applicants in Korea. Standard English qualification must be accomplished by engineering and required as accreditation of qualification. Engeneer students should acquire English communication ability good enough to cooperate globally in their professional fields. This study emphasizes that communication in English is the main purpose students involve in EAP program and university offers for EAP courses. Communication in English in perspective of recent curriculum constitutes academic skills and standar English proficiency.

This way, there is no doubt that academic literacy has been concensus to apply in the EAP program and EAP Curriculum. Academic literacy in EAP context encompasses academic vocabulary, academic grammar, and reading and writing for academic purposes. Core curriculum of EAP should include such the materials and serve speaking skills as medium of instruction.

Regarding EAP textbooks that are overwhelming, an attention should be paid that the books do not necessarily reflect academic literacy in the contents. Very common features are the books describe grammar and vocabulary in isolation, demonstrate topics of oral performance in artificial ways, ask students to answer reading comprehension questions, and practice writing and grammar topics in writing.

EAP refers to teaching English to students who live in non English speaking countries. It is not enough for students to know English, but they are also expected to accomplish certain academic tasks using academic skills in English. EAP is directly related to instruction which centers around communicative needs and practices in academic contexts. This demand, however, is particularly challenging to practice in setting where English is not the medium of instruction and students do not speak English as the mother tongue resulting a degree of failure and underachievement (Yurekli, 2012).

EAP focuses particularly on academic contexts, with the purpose of meeting the students' specific communicative needs and practices of particular

groups in academic contexts. EAP is associated with the English required for the specific purpose of academic studies (Hyland, 2006; Liu, 2007).

There are three approaches implemented to view EAP indicating curriculum responses: study skills, socialisation, and academic literacies (Hyland, 2006). Study skills approach tend students to accomplish skills in the soonest time of study. Perceived in pragmatic approach, study skill approach offers students the quickest and most cost-effective, avoiding longterm study and stakeholders, students client or parents dictate the goal of the study. This approach prepares students with test-taking skills for better scores as quick as possible, such as TOEFL, IELTS. The test, of course, is merely language proficiency test rather than preparation students for university study (Wilson, 2009).

Socialization approach in EAP view EAP in context of sociolinguistics and ethnographic understanding. EAP programs are implemented in context of cultural background besides English skills. It emphasizes sociocultural contexts of language, and the ways these contexts constrain the language choices within social registers. Two kinds of approach are recognized in this context: contrastive rhetoric and genre analysis. Contrastive rhetoric approach emphasizes cultural differences to learning English exposing how academic thinking and writing may be understood differently in different culture contexts. Genre analysis approach teaches English through interdisciplinary differences in academic text. This approach recommends that teaching EAP in general skill is not appropriate, but for the specific literacies of the field of study. EAP viewed through contrastive rhetoric puts emphasis writing and the genre approach focuses on reading of different texts and background (Wilson, 2009).

The literary approach is based on an understanding of literacy as an integration of discrete skills of reading and writing. Literacy views language as a discourse context that requires critical language awareness.

Traditionally, academic literacy is viewed just a set of skills that students must master in order to perform successfully as a scholar. A broad survey of four Queensland university websites indicated that the dominant model of academic literacy refers to a skills-based approach. Academic literacy strongly associates with academic skills advisers, learning support, or some form of centralised learning centre. Here, academic literacy is defined as a generic set of skills, e.g. grammar and editing and types of writing, such as essay writing, scientific reports and reference lists that students need for success. Procedural guides lead students step by step in the construction of particular text-types (ICAS, 2002).

To be prepared for college and university courses, students need greater exposure and instruction in academic literacy than they receive in English classes alone. This need calls for greater coordination of literacy education among subject matter areas within high schools. Statement of academic literacy definitely consists of three competencies: reading, writing, and critical thinking.

However, all the elements of academic literacy—reading, writing, listening, speaking, critical thinking, use of technology, and habits of mind that foster academic success— are expected of entering freshmen across all college disciplines. These competencies should be learned in the content areas in high school. It is, therefore, an institutional obligation to teach them (Gilliver-Brown & Johnson, 2009).

The recent studies on English academic literacy of EAP students in Indonesia assert that university students of non-English departments are lack of academic vocabulary, reading, and writing. The academic literacy for freshmen is not set out as the requisite for academic competency (Solikhah, 2014a). EAP program facilitated to improving academic literacy tends to implement product oriented program giving students tests on TOEFL or IELTS in response the request of students needs (Solikhah, 2013). There is a program labelled as EAP in universities being observed but the contents of teaching materials are general English that put emphases on grammar, reading, and exercises to answers General English tests. Two factors are responsible in this context: teaching management rules MKDU (General Basic Skill Course) to serve for non-English program and instructional designs, including syllabus, curriculum, and textbooks are not available in reference to the needs analysis. MKDU is intended to design as English for Specific Purposes (ESP) or EAP, however, the implementation is lack of preparation and low standard (Solikhah, 2014a).

EAP is generally defined quite simply as teaching English with the aim of assisting learners' study or research in the language. In short, EAP is specialized English-language teaching grounded in the social, cognitive and linguistic demands of academic target situation, providing focused instruction informed by an understanding of texts and the constraints of academic context (Gee, 1998).

In preparing English skills for academic practices, ESL students need to have sufficient language knowledge and skills. The main challenge comes from increasing demand for English proficiency. The needs for listening during lectures, reading academic materials, and writing essays are crucial. Writing in academic contexts is one of the most important skills for ESL students. Written language in university academic studies is often packaged as reports, abstracts, analyses, proposals, briefs, articles, essays, monographs, books, reviews, and bibliographies (Lea & Street, 2006).

To equip ESL learners sufficient English knowledge and skills, Flowerdew & Peacock (2001) suggested three approaches to apply: *Learner-Centered Approach*, *Task-Based Approach*, and *Content-Based Approach*. *Learner-Based Approach* concentrates on meaningful and appropriate content and communication. The *Task-Based Approach* emphasizes on purposeful interactional and authentic materials. In *Content-Based Approach*, the stress is on the integration between academic content instruction with language instruction.

This study is aimed at designing academic literacy for EAP Programs in IAIN Surakarta. Academic literacy is elaborated into academic vocabulary,

reading for academic purposes, and writing for academic purposes. Academic literacy in this study describe teaching materials to build academic literacy including academic vocabulary, reading and writing.

## **B. Research Methodology**

This study was conducted using a qualitative approach, and qualitative data were gathered from document review and in-depth interview. The objective of this study was to describe the curriculum design of academic literacy for EAP program. Stress of development is on academic vocabulary, reading and writing for academic purposes. Prior to development, a needs analysis is defined to locate learning objective, competency, teaching materials, and methods to achieve the learning outcomes.

### **1. Participants**

Participants of this study are twofold: 20 participants for needs analysis process and some 25 participants for the research process. The first procedure to design curriculum for academic literacy and its description was needs analysis. The 20 participants consist of 5 English lecturers and 15 students of EAP. In the second research to develop curriculum the researchers involved 10 lecturers and 15 students for research participants.

### **2. Instruments**

Two most instruments used in this study were interview guide and questionnaire. Interview guide was used to explore existence of EAP and relevant problems the students encountered in the teaching process and learning objectives of the programs. Interviews were conducted twice, respondents of needs analysis development and those who were involved in the development of academic literacy ingredients. These two instruments were useful to collect data from respondents to explore needs students expected and lecturers viewed as standard needs. Data pertaining to documents covering recent curriculum of EAP, textbook, lesson plan, assessment tools, and other socio-cultural documents were collected without using any instrument. The resercher read the documents and selected themes in categories and assessed relevant to the research questions.

### **3. Procedure**

Data collection occured over three months employing multiple research methods: document reviewing and in-depth interviewing. Documents collected for the recent study include EAP syllabus, teching materials, assessment and policy issues poduced within EAP program, for example: guidelines, textbook, students' perception and how instructors conceived academic literacy in EAP contexts. In addition, interviews were chosen because interpretative reserch can be viewed as a social production negotiated between researcher and participants.

In qualitative research, interviews were open-ended. In-depth interview was used because it represents the world view of participants being investigated and were considered as the most common and powerful ways to understand human beings.

#### **4. Data Analysis Techniques**

This study focuses on the analysis of students perception, lecturer perceptions, and description of contents of documents regarding the condition of academic literacy on the EAP program. This study used constant comparison method and data were analyzed inductively. Inductive analysis identifies data in terms of patterns, themes and categories emerge from the data, rather than imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis (Liu, 2007). Constant comparison method outline four stages: (1) comparing incident applicable to each category, (2) integrating categories and their propergies, (3) delimiting the theory, and (4) writing the theory (Lincoln & Guba, cited in Liu, 2007). In this research, transcripts of each interview were sorted in sequence of interview questions. Transcripts and document review were read and examined to search for relevant themes. In addition, relevant themes and participants perception were constantly compared to determine their representativeness (Liu, 2007).

#### **C. Finding**

Findings of the study is delineated in two parts: results of needs analysis and the development of academic literacy. The acadmic literacy encompasses academic vocabulary, reading for academic purposes, and writing for academic purposes.

##### **1. Needs analysis**

Needs analysis is firstly introduced by Munby (1978) functions as the starting point to curriculu development, renewal process, syllabus and materials development, and collecting information on leraners' needs. Needs analysis meets students' needs, expectation from the lecturers and allignment of students needs, expectation of the institution, and standar criteria on certain field of competency. This study incurs communication competency elaborated into language literacy that figures out academic vocabulary, reading and writing for academic purposes. Objectives of each kind of litecary are designed to accomplish competency in vocabulary, reading and writing. Grammar is incorporated in the writing skills sequencing vocabulary, reading, writing, speaking and listening. Needs analysis was begun from exploration study giving students and lecturers interview and discussion. Data were collected from learners, lecturers, current academic literacy of EAP and identify students' target needs in academic skills through EAP course.

Needs analysis is the first step to develop curriculum and it starts with aims and objectives of the program. Learners needs are elaborated in this stage

and the needs are translated into language and pedagogical process to produce effective course. Language needs are specified into content, purpose, and channel of language teaching. Needs analysis is beneficial to syllabus design and materials writing.

Based on the objectives of EAP results of needs analysis indicate students needs five aspects of English language expertise: vocabulary, grammar, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening skill is considered out of basic needs of English literacy because listening occurs at any conduct a learner uses English for interactions.

#### **a. Vocabulary**

Vocabulary is considered as the most basic knowledge to accomplish. Interaction takes place because addressor and adresece have enough number of words supplying meaning when interaction occurs. Without vocabulary nothing can be said. Regarding academic literacy, vocabulary should consist of General Word List (GWL) that contain words for general interactions. Particularly, GWL is stepped from 1,000 words, 2,000 words, 3,000 words, 4,000 words, and 5,000 up. A number of 1,000 to 2,000 indicates elementary level, 3,000 as intermediate level, 4,000 as pre-advanced level and 5,000 up as advanced level. This is the case that learners of English having standar competency should at least accomplish 4,000 words level. In addition to academic proficiency, GWL is not enough and students should increase their mastery on academic vocabulary, a 500-word level frequently used in academic environments. In summary, academic literacy in vocabulary according to learners' perception is GWL people used for interaction. The EAP program imposes that academic literacy in vocabulary undergoes with GWL of elementary, intermediate and pre-advanced level, and academic vocabulary serving 500 words frequently used for academic affairs. Subject-specific vocabulary is considered interesting but it is difficult to implement unless the context is relevant.

#### **b. Grammar**

Basic grammar is another problem the students face during the EAP class. Mistakes in using agreements, tenses, passive voice, plurality and auxiliary do are prevalent, indicating that basic knowledge of English is limited. Grammar knowledge serves accuracy and correctness of delivering sentences in correct structure. Command on grammar should start from basic, complex and compound complex sentences in line with texts and vocabulary variations whose level of difficulty ranges from easy, fair and difficult. This evidence obviously restricts students to develop greater knowledge in reading or writing for EAP where English academic literacy is the basic competency.

### **c. Speaking**

Instructors mention that students demonstrate low competency in speaking. Instructors admit that in any presentation that require oral English during the class, only certain students participate in English. Interactions will cease where students do not know the vocabulary to express ideas in English. In addition, students admit that speaking is not required in the EAP class since the main objectives to join the EAP class is to gain certificate.

### **d. Reading**

The majority of instructors claim that reading skills are the most important in the EAP class. They focus more on how to understand various texts through vocabulary exercises and answering questions that follow each passage. Reading comprehension is addressed to tap vocabulary building, grammar, and writing instead of reading techniques to literal and inferential comprehension. What the students face as the big problem is students have limited vocabulary where most messages in the texts are not clearly understood.

### **e. Writing**

Writing skill is considered the most important area of academic skill, however, teaching writing for EAP program is very hard. Most instructors admit that to write a paragraph or an essay in English, instructors should teach grammar, vocabulary, and writing techniques. With low competency in vocabulary and grammar, students feel more difficult to impress creativity in writing forms. This way, logic and rhetoric of L1 that is Bahasa Indonesia are frequently used in the discourse (Solikhah, 2014b).

## **2. Academic Literacy in Course Contents**

Results of needs analysis promote a recommendation from which English academic literacy would be integrated in the EAP program.

Learning outcomes should be stated explicitly in the curriculum and learning objectives be described in the teaching materials. The aim of the program should be literacy academic-based EAP program. Learning outcomes of the program should match objectives from students' needs, institution, lecturers, and standard objective of international EAP program (Kim, 2013). The mixture of four parties-objective, students-lecturers-university- international EAP would provide accurate contents and quality of the program.

Basic knowledge of English vocabulary and basic grammar be set as the minimum standard of competency. Core materials of vocabulary should be General Word List 1,000 to 3,000 words and academic vocabulary. In addition, basic grammar for academic uses would be the minimum target of grammar teaching.

The objectives of teaching English skills should consider typical skills each of which aspire recent researches that identify best practices in the EFL

countries all over the world. The aim of speaking skills is to accommodate critical thinking that focuses on improving competency for interaction in various discourses and uses. As much as possible, medium of interactions during lectures should be in English. Reading comprehension is aimed at improving critical reading that starts from literal, inferential and critical skills. In addition, writing competency should focus on academic writing that puts emphasis on the development of ideas using variative techniques. Paragraph elements and essay organization that fit to the academic writing would be the main materials and rhetoric of the academic writing becomes the core materials of exposure for language styles in the writing.

Teaching materials are designed in competency-based materials dividing sub-competency of academic vocabulary, reading competency, writing competency, and speaking competency. In addition, syllabus and textbook be devised in accordance with the learning outcomes and should be framed for the Competency-Based EAP Syllabus and EAP Competency-Based Textbook.

### 3. Aims and Objectives of EAP

Aims and objectives of the programs are the basic needs to address competency and score of teaching materials in formulation of EAP Program. Aims and objectives are described in syllabus for guidance of developing teaching materials. Figure 1 indicates aims and objectives of EAP program (quoted from Solikhah, 2014b; Solikhah, 2015).

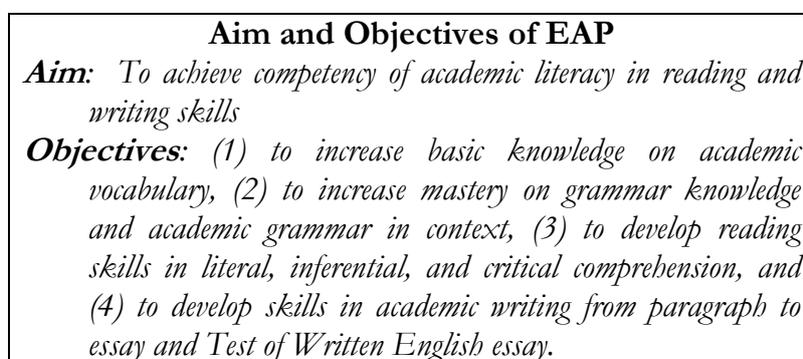


Figure 1. Aim and Objectives of EAP in this Project.

Figure 1 describes that academic literacy is the core materials in the EAP program and reading and writing skills are skills of which academic literacy is embedded and the learning outcomes should be accomplished at the end of the program. The academic literacy commences from the accomplishment of general vocabulary, academic vocabulary and grammar knowledge.

Table 1. Contents and Learning Outcomes of EAP (Solikhah, 2014a)

No	Contents	Learning Outcomes	Indicative Contents
1	Vocabulary knowledge, general and academic vocabulary	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify, implement, and use of 1.000 to 2.000 general words</li> <li>2. Identify, compare and use academic vocabulary</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. General words list first-hundreds to tenth hundreds</li> <li>2. General words list of 1, 000 and 2,000 words</li> <li>3. Head words, synonym, antonyms, definition, words classes, affixes</li> <li>4. Academic words list of Ohio University and Jim Burke</li> </ol>
2	Basic grammar and academic grammar from textbook	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify and use of basic rules of grammar</li> <li>2. Identity and use of typical academic grammar obtained from authentic texts, e.g. textbook chapter, journals</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Basic grammar: to be, tenses, agreements, sentences, gerund, passive voices</li> <li>2. Sentences: simple, compound, complex, compound-complex sentences</li> <li>3. Clause and adjective clause</li> <li>4. Analysis to grammar in English textbooks</li> </ol>
3	Reading comprehension	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify and use of reading text of 1,000 and 2,000 passages</li> <li>2. Implement skills in various level of comprehension: literal, inferential, critical</li> <li>3. Identify passages of</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Comprehension of reading texts in a range of 1,000 to 3,000 words</li> <li>2. Comprehension on reading of authentic text, e.g. TOEFL, TOEIC, textbook</li> <li>3. Competency on the use of literal, inferential, critical reading skills</li> </ol>

No	Contents	Learning Outcomes	Indicative Contents
		academic texts	
4	Writing in the academic context	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop an academic paragraph in various developing details techniques</li> <li>2. Develop three-paragraph essay and Test of Written English (TWE)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Paragraph organization: opening, the body, conclusion.</li> <li>2. Topic sentence, developing sentences, concluding sentence.</li> <li>3. Thesis statement, introductory paragraph, developing paragraphs, concluding paragraph</li> <li>4. Expository and argumentative essay for TWE</li> </ol>

Definitely, reading skills affiliating academic reading is specified in terms of literal reading, inferential reading, and critical reading. In addition, writing skills that also incurs academic writing is equipped to develop paragraph writing, composition writing, and essay writing.

Vocabulary and grammar knowledge are the basic knowledge and they are integrated in the language skills. The outline of syllabus and materials frames that reading and writing are core skills prepared in EAP Program.

#### D. Discussion

This study defines academic literacy as basic knowledge of English and English skills. Academic literacy for graduates is packaged in a competency of communication skills and high command in English language proficiency. Academic competency consists of academic vocabulary, academic grammar, reading, writing, and speaking skills.

In Indonesia, teaching of EAP is basically referred as teaching English for non-English program learners that serves general English or English activities that are specified to improve English skills. Needs analysis is normally not designed prior to teaching program, syllabus is prepared on the instructor's view and experience, and teaching materials focus more on oral interactions emphasizing interactions for informal and formal settings. Vocabulary building and grammar knowledge development follow speaking activities. Teaching EAP

in this context devises needs analysis, syllabus, objectives, teaching materials and learning outcomes merely referring to the instructor's experiences. The development of EAP program in some EFL countries do show that considerable plan reflected in curriculum, aims, objectives is prominent. In the implementation stage, prior to teaching implementation, a needs analysis is scholarly done and literacy as the core curriculum is embedded thoroughly.

As suggested by ICAS (2002), academic literacy is built to accomplish academic competency and involves reading, writing and critical thinking as the basic framework. Reading competency imposes critical reading students should accomplish to suit reading in academic environment as the learning outcomes. In addition, learning outcomes of writing are specified. Writing competency refers to academic needs such as report, paper, journal articles, thesis and dissertation. For oral uses, critical thinking competency basically spurs competency in oral use of English either for academic setting or other various formal and informal settings (Solikhah, 2015).

The identification of English as academic literacy in this study is emphasized on application of basic knowledge and skills in competency basis. Competency-based instruction should be explicitly stated in the syllabus and textbook (Solikhah, 2015). This implies that EAP program should develop competency-based EAP syllabus and competency-based EAP Teaching materials. Prior to the development, of course, assigned university should conduct a survey on the curriculum and teaching materials and devise needs analysis as conducted in Korea by Kim (2013) and Turkey by Yurekli (2012).

Contents of basic knowledge in English refer basically to General Word List that ranges from 1,000 to 3,000 words, academic vocabulary, basic grammar and academic grammar (Solikhah, 2014b). If so far, reading and writing have been the core materials in EAP program, in this study reading and writing are not enough. A crucial competency is required for oral communication the students should accomplish from speaking activities.

Critical thinking should start from speaking activities to other implementation in academic setting that require speaking as the basic competency. In conclusion, academic literacy framework for EAP program of Indonesian learners in this study would cope with general word list, academic vocabulary, basic grammar, academic grammar, speaking, reading, and writing.

## **E. Conclusion**

To sum up, this study suggests English academic literacy for EAP program embedded in English skills. Academic literacy should be framed in the learning objectives to represent target of teaching materials, learning objectives to see learners' competency after completing program, textbooks, and English skills. Academic literacy framework in this study is relied upon evidences that EAP program should incur general word list, academic vocabulary, basic and

academic grammar, reading for academic purposes and writing for academic purposes as well.

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