

**The Factors Affecting Undergraduate Students' Difficulties in Writing Their
Thesis in English: A Case Study at English Education Study Program of Tarbiyah
Faculty of Islamic State University Raden Fatah Palembang**



UNDERGRADUATE THESIS

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CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the following subheadings: (1) background, (2) problem of the study, (3) objective of the study, and (4) significance of the study.

1.1. Background of the Study

Writing is one of four basic language skills and it is very important in teaching and learning English. Siahaan (as cited in Septiani, 2018) states that there are four basic skills that have to be mastered. They are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. According to Mertens (2010), writing is a complex cognitively demanding activity. Furthermore, Nunan (2003) states that writing is the mental work of inventing ideas, thinking about how to express them, and organizing into statements and paragraphs that will be clear to a reader. In addition, Harris, Ansyar, and Radjab (2014) say that

Writing is not only the activity of producing symbols of language in written form, but also a mean to deliver ideas in mind on the paper to transform them in words and become sentences by using structure and coherent organization. It indicated that writers expected to explore their ideas and arrange them into good sentences and paragraphs that have meaning.

Students of English Education Study Program of State Islamic University Raden Fatah Palembang have studied three subjects related to writing with focused on paragraph writing, essay writing, and academic writing. Academic writing is a complex task that involves a variety of cognitive and metacognitive (Proske, 2010). Oshima and Hogue (2007) say that academic writing is focusing on the kind of second language learner used in high school and college or in university area. It is different from creative writing, which is the kind of writing

stories and it is also different from personal writing, which is the kind of writing letters or e-mails. In the same line, Bailey (2011) assert that academic writing is clearly different from written style of newspapers or novel. In brief, academic writing is formal, so the writer should not use slang or contractions (Oshima and Hogue 2007). One of the types of academic writing is dissertation or thesis (Bailey, 2015).

Thesis is a final project is written by students as part of the requirements of academic education in universities. Furthermore, Murray (2011) say that thesis is a far bigger project than most students will ever have undertaken before, it requires more independent study and more self-motivation. According to the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 49 Year 2014 concerning Higher Education National Standards Article 45 paragraph 4, the final project in the form of a thesis, thesis or dissertation is one form of research that can be carried out by students through certain standards and processes. Therefore, thesis writing is a compulsory subject for undergraduate students in Indonesia. Collage students write thesis as one of requirements to have bachelor (sarjana) degree.

In English Education Study Program of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang many students faced problem in writing their thesis. This evidence from the number of students in academic years 2013/2014 who needed more than 4 years to finished their study. The normal period for S1 degree was eight semester or 4 years. However, in reality there was 30% students class of 2013 need more than 2 years and 60% students class of 2014 need more than 1 year to worked their thesis. Darmono and Hasan (2002) say that the ideally in completing the final

project or thesis in a period of six months, a compilation of thesis students must have self-discipline to complete the thesis consistently, but in reality there were many students need more than 6 months or more than 5 and 6 years to finish their study. It means that, writing thesis was challenges for students.

It happened because in writing thesis student face many challenges. Paltridge and Starfield (2007) say that for all students, writing a thesis is a challenge; for those writing in English whose first language is not English. They also add that, all students writing a research thesis face challenge of having manages large amounts of text across a lengthy period of time. In addition, Tiwari (2019) also say that students face a lot of challenges while writing or even getting prepared for writing thesis. Next, a research conducted by Claudius (2016) found that the challenges of writing thesis include inappropriateness in presenting different chapters of the reports and lack of academic writing skills. Therefore, students need a lot of study and practice in order to develop learners' writing skill (Oshima and Hogue,1999).

There were problems faced by students in thesis writing. a research conducted by Matin and khan (2017) found that the problem in general identified were lack of students' knowledge, exprience, commitment in thesis work, lack of found, inadequate and irreguler meeting with supervisor. Beside that, Al Fadda (2012) found that the main challenges ESL students encounter are differentiating between written and spoken words and phrases, reviewing grammar including subject-verb agreement and joining sentences together to make a coherent paragraph.

In addition There are factors influence students difficulties in writing their thesis. Lee and Tajino (2008) argue that two separate concepts of difficulty; that is related to the linguistic structure of the language and psychological matters. Furthermore, Research conducted by Sariyanto, Supardi and Husin (2015) concluded students problem with psychological problem, such low of motivation, axiety, low of confident. Next, Paltridge and Starfield (2007) explain that there are a lack of confidence, and fear of failure and rejection, or its counterpart perfectionism is the factors of difficultie in writing thesis.

Furthermore, linguistic problem faced by students in writing thesis is linguistic problem . Levine (2002) mentioned the language problems in writing are poor vocabulary, awkward phrasing and unconventional grammar, difficulty with sentence structure and word order. Beside that, Brown (2007) believes to identify the errors was put in the students levels of language (phonology, lexicon, grammar and discourse) that should be considered.

Regarding the problems previous study, there were some previous related studies to this matter. Firstly, a research conducted by Dwihandini (2013) the finding of the research showed that the main cause of students' difficulties in writing thesis in the psychological factor was self-esteem. Furthermore, the main cause of students' difficulties in writing thesis in the linguistic factor was found in domain and extent error analysis. Similarly research conducted by Puspita (2019) the data showed significant finding there are 82% or 40 students have difficulties in personality factors. Second, here are 83% or 41 students have difficulties in sociocultural factors. The last there are 86% or 42 students have difficulties in linguistic factors.

A preliminary study was conducted by interviewing with undergraduate students of English Education Study Program of Tarbiyah Faculty at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang from class of 2013 and 2014 who have been in the process of thesis writing. Based on the interview with undergraduate students in academic years 2013 & 2014, they faced problem in process of thesis writing. Furthermore, some of the students find difficulty to write a thesis. Writing a thesis in English especially for EFL learners like Indonesians is difficult as the students should think not only about the content, the organization of the thesis but also the language.

Based on the preliminary study, I would like to have deeper investigation about the factors affecting undergraduate students' difficulties in writing their thesis in English at English Education Study Program Tarbiyah Faculty of Islamic State University Raden Fatah Palembang.

1.2. Research Problems

Based on the background of the study, the research problems were formulated in the following questions:

1. What were the aspects of students' difficulties in writing in writing their thesis in English at English Education Study Program Tarbiyah Faculty of Islamic State University Raden Fatah Palembang?
2. What were the factors affecting students' difficulties in writing their thesis in English at English Education Study Program Tarbiyah Faculty of Islamic State University Raden Fatah Palembang?

2.3. Research Objectives

Based on formulated research question above, the objectives of this research are:

1. To know what were the aspects of students' difficulties in writing in writing their thesis in English at English Education Study Program Tarbiyah Faculty of Islamic State University Raden Fatah Palembang?
2. To know what were the factors affecting students' difficulties in writing thesis in English at English Education Study Program Tarbiyah Faculty of Islamic State University Raden Fatah Palembang.

2.4. Significance of the Study

The significances of this research were expected to be useful for the following:

1. For the students, this study was expected to provide information in the problems faced by students in thesis writing.
2. For the lecturers of English Education, this study was expected to provide information on the problem faced by students in thesis writing in order to provide students with better method and media for use in writing the thesis.
3. For the researcher herself, this study was expected to gain her experience in education in education research.

For other researchers, the result can be used as a reference for those who want to conduct the similar research and give information and general guidance for the researcher.