

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The research is about the challenges and strategies undertaken by students in thesis writing. This chapter aims to foreground general particulars for the readers. It comprises the background of the study, research questions, scope of the study, and significance of the study.

#### A. Background of the Study

Writing is one way to communicate. Communicating our ideas, desires, opinions in writing is a common thing. We can see that writing as a process of expressing ideas or thoughts in words should be done at our leisure.<sup>1</sup> Writing can be done at any time. By writing everyone is free to use their language. Writing must pay attention to whom the written will be read. However, becoming a student, the language in writing is different from just writing it. In academic writing is certainly different from ordinary writing. Because undergraduate students enter the academic realm, writing is academic writing as well. As an undergraduate student, learning how to write academically. One of the hardest parts of students' careers including undergraduate students or S1 is to fulfill the requirement for writing up their 'skripsi' (or thesis).<sup>2</sup>

Academic writing needs a lot of study and practice to strengthen learners' writing skills.<sup>3</sup> Many things must be considered in academic writing. So in academic writing, a student must practice a lot. De Poel & Gasiorek categorize academic writing as a prominent component of academic discourse which may take several different forms, including essays, projects, lecture notes, and theses.<sup>4</sup> In the academic field, one thing

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<sup>1</sup> Leo, *English for Academic Purpose: Essay Writing* (Yogyakarta: C.V Andi Offset, 2007), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Yulhenli Thabran & Nunung Fajaryani., "Why It Took so Long to Complete Undergraduate Thesis at English Department: Students' and Lecturers' Voices", *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research (ASSEHR)*, Vol. 82 (2017), 180. URL: (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>)

<sup>3</sup> Alice Oshima and Ann Hogue, *Introduction to Academic Writing: Second Edition* (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1999).

<sup>4</sup> K. De Poel and J. Gasiorek, "Effects of an Efficacy Focused Approach to Academic Writing on Students' perceptions of themselves as Writers", *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, Vol.11, (2012), 294–303.

students must do is write a thesis. In this research, the writer will focus on one academic field, thesis writing

Many things have been passed to arrive at the thesis stage. The thesis is one of the scientific works which is a condition that must be accomplished by students to complete their study program as a Bachelor Program Student, as well as a Thesis by a Masters Program student, and a Dissertation by a Doctoral Program student. The thesis is a scientific paper in a field of study written by undergraduate students (S1) at the end of their studies to obtain a Bachelor's degree. The thesis is written based on the results of field research, literature study results, or the results of development work (projects) that are applied in theory or descriptive with a monodisciplinary approach.

In completing the final thesis writing project that entered in 8th semester, it went through a fairly long process. First, students must submit research titles to the Head of the Study Program. Submission of titles can be done repeatedly depending on the eligibility of the title itself. After the proposed research title is approved by the Head of Study Program, the next step is the preparation of a proposal with a supervisor lecturer appointed by the Head of Study Program. Likewise in preparing these proposals, it can be done by students repeatedly depending on whether or not the formulation of the problem, the objectives of the research, or the methodology. After the proposal is approved by the supervisor, the next proposal is held in a seminar that is attended by the supervisor and students. After the proposal is considered feasible, students can research with the guidance of the supervisor.

Implementation of guidance can be done many times both with the first supervisor and with the second supervisor. After the two supervisors approve the research report in the form of the thesis, the next step is to register the exam. Then the Head of Study Program determines the day and date of the thesis being tested. After the thesis examination is carried out there is still another tough task that must be completed namely revising the input of the examiners obtained at the time the exam is carried out. After completing the revision and all supervisors and examiners approve, the thesis is considered good and obtains authorization from them. The student task has

not stopped at this stage but he still has to collect the results of the research along with journal articles and study programs in the form of print outs. and CD, and only after that students get the final value of the thesis.

The lengthy process of completing the final thesis writing project requires resilience, tenacity, and resilience of the students because of the many obstacles encountered when conducting research both academic and non-academic constraints. For students who are not resilient and resilient can experience failure in accomplishing thesis so that it drops out. This failure can cause psychiatric disorders of students because of an inner conflict between the desire to finish writing a thesis and academic and non-academic inability. In general, students do not experience difficulties in completing courses on time, but another case with thesis writing. If a student can complete a thesis on time, the time needed to complete a one-year undergraduate program can begin in the 7th semester.

However, the process of writing the thesis is not easy, but it does not mean the students can not accomplish it. Based on the curriculum, as one of the important role holders for the achievement of the success of thesis writing, if students follow the provisions of the curriculum, then they can complete the thesis on time. Vice versa, if students do not follow the provisions of the curriculum, then they too can stall their graduation time. Because the function of the curriculum is to help students to be able to understand the material and carry out the learning process easier so that learning targets can be achieved. That is why as long as students adhere to the curriculum that has been determined, they can finish their studies up to the thesis writing stage. As long as students follow the curriculum, students can graduate on time. The curriculum that regulates undergraduate student learning time so the students can do their work, this is included in the academic realm. However, based on the author's experience, she still encounters non-academic phenomena that can hinder the completion of the thesis.

Students who are known to participate in every campus activity, fill every opportunity in English-based competitions such as debates, storytelling to the provincial level, and always raise their hands in class in every discussion to express

their opinions. With such a background, a student at this level can be said that he has a good academic.

Students who have a good academic background, they tend to feel very capable of doing all the tasks. Moreover, the final project is proof of the end of all the lectures. In practice, every time following the thesis guidance has a different opinion from the supervisor. This student still voiced opinion, doing what he wanted to do without heeding the advice of the lecturer. The ego of this student is a non-academic case which is one of the factors students cannot accomplish their thesis. He wants the script to be perfect, but the reality is never finished. The psychological problem here is not the academic realm that is the reason students cannot complete their thesis, it belongs to the non-academic realm.<sup>5</sup>

This non-academic phenomenon becomes a challenge for students in accomplishing thesis. In accomplishing the thesis, not only academic matters that challenge students, but non-academic matters are also challenges for them. When they realize, they try to deal with it by doing things that can enable them to graduate with a bachelor's degree. That is the strategy in facing academic and non-academic challenges, which are discussed in this research.

In reality, so far many of the students have been able to accomplish their thesis according to deadlines. As said by the thesis supervisors at IAIN Kediri that during the supervision so far, for example from ten students only two were incapable to accomplish their thesis on time.<sup>6</sup> Some thesis advisors admit that most of the students can graduate on time. However, there are a few students who cannot go through the stages of writing the thesis, so they graduate not on time.

In this study, the researcher will investigate the phenomenon of educational experience in students who have written thesis. Where there are two types of students who will be examined in the process of writing a thesis; students who can accomplish thesis on time and students who postpone the completion of their thesis or not on

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<sup>5</sup> Cyntia Puspita. "Factors Affecting Students' Difficulties In Writing Thesis", *3rd English Language And Literature International Conference (Ellic)*, Vol. 3 (2019): 14.

<sup>6</sup> Toyyibah, Dosen Pascasarjana, IAIN Kediri, 27 April 2020.

time. The stages in thesis writing are a challenge for students. Students who can accomplish thesis mean going through these challenges, in completing it they must do many ways with respective strategies. The way they face challenges here is the strategy of the students, which will be the focus of this research.

This study, therefore, aimed at discovering two major points. The first point is about the challenges and strategies that are done by students who have accomplished wrote thesis. Because they have accomplished thesis the researcher wants to investigate the challenges and strategies as they did in accomplishing thesis. The second point is the challenges and what strategies have been done but still incapable to accomplish the thesis on time. The challenges here can be meant the complexities in writing a thesis. In this study will be studied further about the complexities experienced, as well as strategies that are ways to resolve complexities or challenges will also be discussed.

Related to writing a thesis, several previous studies explain, Puspita argues the factors that can influence academic writing, which is said to be difficult, especially thesis writing.<sup>7</sup> As Lili states that writing seems simple at the surface level but is actually among the most difficult of cognitive tasks.<sup>8</sup> In academic writing, there are some challenges faced by students.<sup>9</sup> Based on Ekpoh's finding, challenges in academic writing are also found in thesis writing.<sup>10</sup> In writing a thesis the challenges that must be resolved not only occur from the students themselves, such as in

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<sup>7</sup> Cyntia Puspita., 13.

<sup>8</sup> Zhao Lili, "On Writing Strategies of Enhancing Students' Writing Skills", *Higher Education of Social Science*, Vol. 9 No. 6 (2015), 70. DOI:10.3968/8069

<sup>9</sup> Hasan Sağlamel and Mustafa Naci Kayaoğlu, "English Major Students' Perceptions of Academic Writing: A Struggle between Writing to Learn and Learning to Write", *Journal of History Culture and Art Research*, Vol. 4 No. 3 (2015), 37. DOI: 10.7596/taksad.v4i3.477

<sup>10</sup> Uduak Imo Ekpoh, " Postgraduate Studies: The Challenges of Research and Thesis Writing", *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, Vol. 6 No.3 (2016), 67. Doi:10.5901/jesr.2016.v6n3p67

grammar,<sup>11</sup> or motivation,<sup>12</sup> but also in need of proper assistance from supervisor.<sup>13</sup> Puspita found that difficulties in the writing can be found on several factors, namely Personality Factor, Sociocultural Factors, and Linguistic Factors.

The difference of this research is the scope of research where the researcher will find out another factor, except these psychological, linguistics, and sociocultural factors. And what makes this research unique is that it uses a different methodology from previous studies. If the previous research used Mix-Method Research,<sup>14</sup> Descriptive Qualitative,<sup>15</sup> Descriptive Survey Research,<sup>16</sup> this study used Narrative Inquiry.

This is the researcher's point to explore more about the challenges and strategies experienced by undergraduate students. Therefore, the writer uses Narrative Inquiry method. Narrative inquiry captures the potential and the complexities, the challenges, and the success and unsuccess of undergraduate thesis writing.<sup>17</sup> The narrative inquiry also promises to empower students' voices as someone who has the experience to tell. Their experiences give an alternative point of view of thesis writing knowledge. Another important reason for using narrative is that it provides a tool for doing self-criticism about the challenges, the conflicts as well as the

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<sup>11</sup> Anna Riana Suryanti Tambunan, Widya Andayani, Winda Setiasari, Fauziah Khairani Lubis, and Bahagia Saragih, "Analyzing Errors In Thesis Writing: Should Grammar Be An Issue In English Academic Writing For Students Of English College?", *Research and Innovation in Language Learning*, Vol. 3 No. 1 (2020), 49. URL:<http://jurnal.unswagati.ac.id/index.php/RILL>

<sup>12</sup> Krismalita Sekar Diasti and Concilianus Laos Mbato, "Exploring Undergraduate Students' Motivation-regulation Strategies in Thesis Writing", *Language Circle: Journal of Language and Literature*, Vol. 14 No.2 (2020), 176.

<sup>13</sup> Randi Benedikte Brodersen and Solveig Kavli, "Students Can Write!" How can Students Explore and Improve their Writing by Using Different Academic Genres, Sources, and Voices?", *Nordic Journal of Information Literacy in Higher Education*, Vol. 11 No.1 (2019), 39. DOI: 10.15845/noril.v11i1.2624

<sup>14</sup> Cytia Puspita., 13.

<sup>15</sup> Anna Riana Suryanti Tambunan, Widya Andayani, Winda Setiasari, Fauziah Khairani Lubis, and Bahagia Saragih., 51.

<sup>16</sup> Dwihandini L.A; Marhaeni A.A.I.N; and Suarnajaya I.W, "The Analysis Of The Factors Affecting Undergraduate Students' Difficulties In Writing Thesis In The English Department Of Mahasaraswati University", *e-Journal Program Pascasarjana Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha*, Vol. 2 (2013), 1.

<sup>17</sup> Galuh Nur Rohmah, "Teachers' Reflection On And Students' Experiences In Collaborative Efl Writing: A Narrative Inquiry", (Doctoral Dissertation, Universitas Negeri Malang, 2017), 31.

complexities of teaching and learning English in thesis writing that the students encounter in the final semester.

## **B. Research Questions**

Based on the above description and explanation, the present study is to probe these research questions :

1. What challenges do undergraduate students face when writing their thesis?
2. What strategies that undergraduate students have carried out to accomplish their thesis?

## **C. Scope of the Study**

The present study focuses on exploring the challenges and strategies of undergraduate students who have finished accomplishing their thesis writing. In this research, the focus is on the process of writing the thesis of undergraduate students who have written their thesis. With their experience when writing a thesis the author can find out the difficulties they face and the strategies to cope with these difficulties.

## **D. Significance of the Study**

Many students do not know what will be faced when writing a thesis. Based on the researchers' experience, students only make guesses to feel worried and even afraid of not being able to accomplish the thesis on time. With this research, students can find out what they will face later. Students can prepare themselves better because they can find out the difficulties in writing a thesis. As students who have not yet entered the old semester, namely the 7th and 8th semester, they can recognize their strengths and weaknesses so that they can learn from strategies in dealing with thesis writing difficulties. Here the researcher wants to fill the gap of the early students with stories of experiences from students who have written their thesis.

By knowing all the difficulties of writing a thesis, they might have a way that is more suitable for them in dealing with it. Because from the experience of others we can learn, as we often hear the term "Experience is the best teacher", not only from one's own experience but also from the experience of others we can learn.

## **E. Definition of Key Terms**

To avoid misunderstanding some keywords and the content of the study, it is necessary to define the following terms:

1. Undergraduate Thesis Writing, the researcher focuses on the process of student experience when writing their final project. From the time of writing their thesis for the first time until the time of registration for graduation, which means they have gone through the thesis writing process from start to finish.
2. Narrative is a compilation of the story, which consists of the thesis writing experience of students who graduate on time and do not graduate on time.