

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter conveys the research introduction of the background of study, research questions, research purposes, contributions of study, research significances, research scope, conceptual framework, and previous studies.

#### **A. Background of Study**

This study explored the students' experiences while writing the research proposal. Instead of the general studies on writing the research proposal, there was a specific exploration of the challenges undergraduate students faced in composing research proposals. This study aimed to elucidate undergraduate students' experiences behind the challenges in writing the research proposal through narrative inquiry. The students portrayed their lived experiences while composing the research proposal starting with Research on English Language Teaching (ROELT) subject and Seminar on English Language Teaching (SOELT) subject, then preparing for the proposal seminar which conducted by program study.

Based on Wikanengsih (2013), writing is an academic activity that processes reasoning in implementing thinking actions. Writing is a fundamental skill that is important to learn. As stated by Harmer (2004), being able to write is a vital skill for a speaker of a foreign language as much as for everyone using their first language. The passion for speaking than writing and reading is apparent, especially for English Foreign Learners students. Many students in Indonesia still need to improve their writing and reading exercises because they are still low in literacy, as predicted by Chamdani, Mahmudah & Fatimah (2019). Indonesia is predicted to decrease illiteracy ten years later. The prediction indicated that Indonesia still has low literacy, although literacy will go up continuously.

Therefore, writing is challenging for students, especially English as Foreign Learners. According to Gibbons (2002), students found writing tough because generating and organizing thoughts and translating them into readable language is pretty challenging. A research proposal is one type of academic writing that

undergraduate students must write. A research proposal is an early stage that the researcher must write in conducting the study as a final assignment for seventh-semester students who want to complete their bachelor program. The goal of the research proposal is multifaceted. As the students produce it for their research, it expresses their objectives by outlining the significance of the study's intended aim and providing progress for carrying the research stated by Fraenkel & Wallen (1993) as cited in Kheryadi (2018).

Suyadi & Husnaini (2020) noted that students have main problem factors in conducting research proposals, including psychological, sociocultural, linguistic, and cognitive factors. In the preliminary survey conducted by the author, several seventh-semester students sensed the difficulties they faced while writing a research proposal even though they had passed many stages in various subjects held by English Education Department. For instance, in Research on ELT subject, the subject explained the theoretical knowledge before conducting research, then Seminar on ELT guided students in making the research proposal. However, they still encountered difficulties in completing a research proposal. It was proven by several students who still needed time to complete their final assignment before the first phase schedule of the proposal conducted by the program study. In addition, they would join the proposal seminar on the second phase and more to accomplish their assignment first.

In order to show the urge of this study, several previous studies have investigated the topic of students' difficulties in writing the research proposal. The first study came from Muneer, Batool, and Zehra (2020) entitled A Qualitative Study on Challenges that Post- Graduate Students Face in Research Proposal Writing at University Level. This study explored challenges and obstacles that post-graduate students face during writing the research proposal to highlight the challenges and make recommendations to overcome the challenges. The second study is from Tiwiyanti, Zaimar, and Passandaran (2022) entitled Obstacles in Writing Literary Research Proposals: A Study Case of 7th Semester Students. The study focused on analyzing the obstacles in literary research proposals. The third study brought by

Ifeoma (2019) entitled *Examining the Challenges Faced by Undergraduate Students in Writing Research Projects*. This study focused on elaborating the fourth students' experiences in writing research projects, especially the term of engineering.

To contrast the previous study with this present study, the gaps appear such as in the difference of methodology where the previous studies used a case study, meanwhile, this study used narrative inquiry design. Moreover, the previous study was conducted in two schools related to Ifeoma (2019) study, whilst this study used one institution and in major of English Education Department. Related to the statements above, this study aimed to elucidate the experience behind the challenges in writing the research proposal to students of the year 2019 of English Education Department and their probability solutions to overcome the challenges. A narrative inquiry design is used to collect the data since it needed depth-interviews to obtain the data. Moreover, this study used interviews as primary data and questionnaires as proponent data.

Thus, the writer was delighted to employ the research title, "A Narrative Inquiry of Undergraduate Students' Experiences in Writing the Research Proposal." In addition, the writer was interested in elaborating on the challenges factors in writing the research proposal to give insight to novice researchers in minimizing the problems they will encounter in the following research.

## **B. Research Questions**

There are two questions to identify the problem of the research:

1. How are the undergraduate students' experiences in writing the research proposal?
2. What are the undergraduate students' challenges in designing the research proposal?

### **C. Research Purposes**

There are two purposes to respond the questions:

1. To portray the experiences in composing a research proposal
2. To identify undergraduate students' challenges and improvements to overcome the challenges in writing a research proposal

### **D. Contributions of Study**

This research has several advantages for lecturers and students. The advantages from theoretical and practical implications are:

#### **1. Theoretical Contributions**

##### **a. Lecturer**

The lecturers could use the study results as a resource for information about undergraduate students' experiences and challenges in writing a research proposal.

##### **b. Students**

The findings of this study could be helpful for the next researcher as an acknowledgment for better composing a research proposal.

#### **2. Practical Contributions**

##### **a. Lecturer**

Responses from students in this findings study were expected to be a consideration among lecturers to overcome the challenges students face.

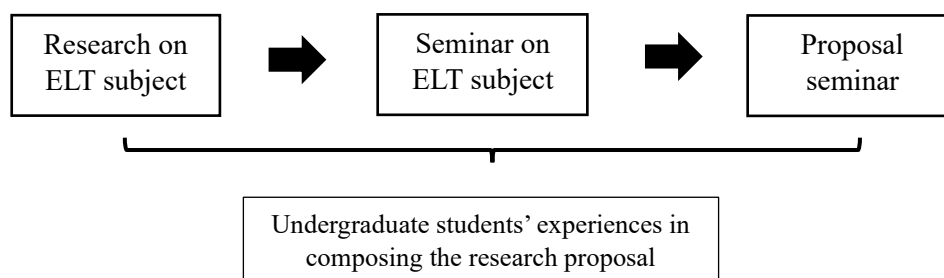
##### **b. Students**

The outcomes of this research motivate students to learn from all factor challenges and learn the probability solutions that can apply to improve the obstacles in writing the research proposal.

### **E. Research Significances**

This research outcome starts with the students composing their idea in the ROELT project. The students determined their research title to complete the partial final assignment for gaining bachelor's degree status. Then, the students narrated

their journey while composing the research proposal in the SOELT subject. Finally, students portrayed their journey until their preparation for conducting the proposal seminar.



**Figure 1.1** The Sequences of the Research

The figure describes that the research started with the students composing their idea in the ROELT project. The students determined their research title to complete the partial final assignment for the subject. The process triggered students to find the best title for their future research. Then, the students narrated their journey while composing the research proposal in the SOELT subject. In the SOELT subject, students have responsibility for their research proposal one week one progress that the lecturer will supervise. Finally, students portrayed their journey until their preparation for conducting the proposal seminar. Proposal seminars have different timing for students. This moment they have happened because of the different background experiences of students. Therefore, the storyline of this study narrated the journey of undergraduate students in writing the research proposal.

This study interviewed the students of the year 2019 who have passed semester 7 in English Education Department. The students have completed their study for Research on English Language Teaching (ROELT), Seminar on English Language Teaching (SOELT), and proposal seminar. For this purpose, the writer focused on students' experiences while completing their studies at the proposal seminar. The writer burrowed all events that the students had passed in writing the research proposal.

## **F. Research Scope**

To confine the research scope, the writer limits this study's subject, object, and research site. The initial step of this study involved selecting six participants from the English Education Department who were nominated as students of the year 2019. The six students came from different backgrounds, such as differences in class, academic supervisor, the changes or consistency in the title proposal, and the timing for the proposal seminar. The different backgrounds influenced the diversity of students' challenges and experiences in writing a research proposal. Lastly, the research was conducted at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, in Jl. Cimencrang, Bandung City, West Java.

## **G. Conceptual Framework**

This study investigated the theoretical framework to delineate undergraduate students' experiences and challenges in writing the research proposal. Starting with explaining the concept of writing, it can be understood as a linguistic aptitude and one of the methods employed for indirect communication. Writing activities for children will continue to advance and continue beyond there. Students can begin writing with simple things like their experiences, or the most straightforward thing is documenting the lessons the teacher presents. Since writing is more than merely taking notes or copying, it has been taught since elementary school and gets more complicated as students advance. Writing is one of the most formidable talents; most people find it challenging to do both in their native and foreign languages (Visser & Sukavatee, 2020). Many challenges prevail, especially in writing for scientific purposes. They were hard to organize ideas that could be read by the reader, as convinced by Gibbons (2002).

Students must be able to write well to succeed in school, especially in language classes. For scientific purposes, students must compose their ideas regarding the academic rules in good writing. The English curriculum aims to improve students' oral and written communication skills (Sari, Sumami, & Astina, 2021). The terms scientific purposes here relate to the research proposal as a final assignment in

reaching Bachelor's Degree. Based on Kabir (2016), he defined the research proposal as a written statement by a researcher outlining the planned study in great detail. It is a summary of the complete research process that gives a reader an overview of the data presented in a project. Creating a research proposal is necessary because it makes it easier for the many research operations to run smoothly, increasing the efficiency of the research process and producing the most information with the least amount of work, time, and money spent. The research proposal serves as the conceptual framework for the research process, guiding data gathering, measurement, and analysis. As a result, the proposal comprises a description of the researcher's process, from developing the hypothesis and considering its operational implications to accomplishing the final data analysis.

There are several stages that must be conducted by the writer to write the research proposal. Sanu, Sharma, Kumar, and Shreya (2022) pointed out the stages of writing the research proposal including of 5Cs. The first stage is Commencement, at this point, we begin to consider the study, the research area of interest, and the work of other researchers in that area. The second stage is Conceptualization, this stage is how the writer forms the ideas of research by reading several literature reviews, analyzing other studies related to the topic area, and asking for help from the supervisor to develop the idea of the research topic. The third is Consolidation, at this stage, the writer develops research proposal into written forms after all concepts floating in mind. The fourth stage is Communication, this stage is how the writer presents conceptualized and consolidated ideas in front of the expert committee. The fifth stage is Command, at this stage, the writer work on the research proposal, carry out the research plan, and produce the dissertation, thesis, project report, etc.

In the field, many novice researchers need help in writing research proposals. While research defines as a process in which you keep researching and refining things. Thus, whether it is a topic, approach, analysis, or conclusion, you can take your time to revise it, according to Belwal (2016). Every research project demands thorough preparation, careful planning, and attention, which is why many



undergraduate students find it difficult. Moreover, Mapolisa and Mafa (2012) highlighted the challenges into three categories of challenges. These are tutor-related, student-related and institution-related.

## **H. Previous Studies**

This study is not the first research conducted. Four previous studies have investigated the difficulties in composing a research proposal. The previous research depicted many obstacles in writing the research proposal for academic purposes. Nevertheless, there were differences between this study and the early studies.

The first study was conducted by Qasem and Zayid (2019), entitled “The Challenges and Problems Faced by Students in the Early Stage of Writing Research Projects in L2, University of Bisha, Saudi Arabia.” They have summarized the broad challenges English as a Second Language (ESL) faces. There were writing research proposals and projects in English as Second Language, selecting the right topic and the proper methodology for writing proposals, lack of motivation in writing proposals and projects, lack of sound knowledge in specialization, lack of time and stress chiefly out of their preoccupation with other subjects, and also less time given from supervisors to students. This research focused on English as a Second Language, where the students faced English as their language in their region. Even though they have similar difficulties in writing, it might be different challenges faced by English as Foreign Learners. The difference from the present study is that Qasem & Zayid conducted the research in English as Second Language abroad. In contrast, the current study led the research on English as Foreign Language (EFL) students in UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung.

The second was reported by Islamiah (2020) with the title “Students’ Difficulties in Designing Research Proposal (A Case Study at English Department Students of UIN Ar-Raniry).” The research employs the students’ difficulties consisting of eight points. They are finding the title, topic, or problem to be studied, lack of English ability, difficulty in finding adequate reference sources, lack of understanding of



research proposal, difficulty in developing ideas, research methodology, and the advanced word used in articles of the international journals. Then, there are several solutions to solve the problems. However, the research methods and design are quite different from the previous study, where the present study utilizes a narrative inquiry to justify the experiences behind the participants. At the same time, the research by Islamiah (2020) used a case study as the research design.

The third was investigated by Suyadi & Husnaini (2020) in the study “Undergraduate Students’ Difficulties in Writing a Research Proposal: A Case Study.” In the eighth semester of the English Education study program at one private university in Jambi City during the academic year 2017–2018, the author concluded that the primary problem factor that the students encountered in writing a research proposal for a thesis was the problem that mostly came from themselves or psychological factor or the internal problems. Another issue brought on by the adviser or lecturer was a lack of communication, which led to a misinterpretation of the contents provided. In this research paper, the author frequently focused on the psychological factor that made students obstructed in making the research proposal. Students’ responses might be the same as the findings in this study. Nevertheless, the author dug into the long story behind the students’ research proposal process to identify more challenges and solutions to overcome them.

The last study was found by Rahayu & Moesarofah (2022) in “The Solutions of Writing Undergraduate Thesis: A Narrative Inquiry Case Study.” This study supports their thesis’s experiences, solutions, and writing methods using a narrative inquiry case study. Most college students know that conducting research and writing a thesis, often in English, is difficult. This study showed that EFL students must be persistent, committed, disciplined, and skilled writers to finish an undergraduate thesis. To fill the gaps from this previous study, the researcher uses a new variable research proposal different from the preliminary investigation. The primary study focuses on the thesis as a writing phenomenon, and the participants came from alumni.

Hence, the author conducted the new variables to fill the gaps in the earlier research study. The new variable was based on the suggestions and a shortage to develop the research. The different sites and participants influenced the gaps in the findings of this research. The location was held in UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, which has not been conducted before on this site. The participants chosen were the six students from the English Education Department students to differentiate from the previous studies, which had only four students involved in interviews. Moreover, English as Foreign Language students would be different from English as Second Language students to encounter challenges. Then, the narrative inquiry methodology would closely portray the students' experiences, and the reader could take benefits from the students' stories to avoid problems that can occur in the future.

