

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Introduction in academic writing is the first section to write since it presents the structure of the thesis, the objectives and scope of the research, the problem that is investigated, and the limitation on the scope of the study (Indrian & Ardi, 2019). They said that in some fields (a research article, a BA thesis, an MA thesis, or a PhD thesis) introduction covers an overview of the research findings. Indrian & Ardi (2019) also add that introduction can help the readers understand the context of the research by presenting illustrative example. the introduction section plays the most important thing when it comes to write a paper, research article or a thesis. A good research paper starts with an interesting introduction because the appearance of the introduction can impress half of the whole part (Swales, 2004). Faryadi (2018) says that the introduction opens a dialogue with the examiner or reader. As such, a good introduction is critical to capturing the attention of the readers and engaging their interest in your research.

This is why writing an introduction is really important since the main purpose is to provide the necessary background or context for the research problem (Laily, 2019). If the readers are not impressed with the introduction, they will unlikely continue reading the next section of the article (Arsyad, 2001; Swales and Najjar, 1987). Swales and Feak (1994) state that there are two main purposes of the introduction section: to give a logical reason for the article and to provoke readers to read it. Swales & Feak (2012) also said that there are three reason to write an introduction. First is to build a research territory, second is to identify the research gap or niche, and three is to give signal in question in order that researcher can signal the value of the research.

However, writing introduction of a research or a thesis is not a simple task to begin with. As a writer, they need to establish what is called a research gap in their article introduction to show readers that previous studies have some limitations or shortcomings; therefore, their research is necessary or important (Arsyad & Zainil, 2023). According to Baako et al. (2022), he explains that research gap is a piece of information or knowledge about a topic of interest that hasn't been fully examined or isn't being fully investigated in the research literature. Research gap is important for writing an introduction. As such, researcher must narrow his field of interest in order to discover the research gap because doing so necessitates reading and analyzing a lot of information from diverse literatures (Azeez, 2022). This is why research gap and research gap strategies are the same and both can support each other. Chen and Li (2019) and Hempel et al. (2019) state that research gap strategies can draw attention to a study's novelty and significance.

There are countless studies regarding research gap(s) conducted by Chen and Li (2019), Arianto et al. (2021), and Arianto and Basthomi, (2021). Chen and Li (2019) in their study found that compared to earlier learners, recent learners in their study were more critical in their composition, particularly in writing the introduction. Arianto et al. (2021) found that the majority of the writers use one or more of the five different strategies, which are: 1) claiming non-existent research dealing with a specific topic, 2) suggesting inadequate research in a particular aspect, 3) stating limitation(s) in previous research, 4) claiming contradictive or conflicting previous research findings, and 5) suggesting solution/s in abstracts and introductions of their journal articles. Similarly, Arianto and Basthomi. (2021) also found that the authors used five types of research gap strategies, namely stating the absence of research, stating the insufficient related studies, stating the limitations or shortcomings from previous studies, stating the contrasting evidence, and suggesting solutions.

There have been numerous studies examining the research gap strategies of Introduction sections in various genres, such as research proposals (Qamariyah & Wahyuni, 2017), research articles (Arianto & Basthomi, 2021), MA thesis (Wuttisrisiriporn, 2017), PhD thesis (Kawase, 2018), Unfortunately, a few studies have scrutinized it in the undergraduate theses (Ankomah & Afful, 2019), particularly, in Indonesian EFL context (Indrian & Ardi, 2019). Therefore, this study aims to analyze research gap strategies frequently utilized in the undergraduate thesis Introduction at the Department of English Education, in Indonesian higher education context.

## **1.2 Formulation of The Problem**

This study focuses on answering the question which is “What research gap strategies are frequently utilized in the undergraduate thesis introduction at the Department of English Education.”

## **1.3 Operational Definitions**

To avoid misunderstanding about the terms set out in this study, the researcher provides some definitions related to the study, as follows:

- 1.3.1 Research Gap Strategies** : A plan for creating a question or a problem that has not been answered by any of the existing studies or research within the field of the student’s interest, in this case the gaps that the English Department students write in their undergraduate thesis
- 1.3.2 Undergraduate Thesis Introduction** : The most important part about thesis that the undergraduate students, in this case the English Department Students have the most difficult time writing it, it is because

it covers the basics of the research topic that the writers want to talk about.

#### **1.4 Aims of the Study**

This study aims to analyze research gap strategies frequently utilized in the undergraduate thesis introduction at the Department of English Education, and also in Indonesian higher education context.

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

- 1.5.1 Theoretical Uses      This study will contribute to the existing theories about research gap strategies conducted by Arsyad, S., & Zainil, Y. (2023), and Arianto et al. (2021).
- 1.5.2 Practical Uses        This study can be used as a reference for practical information to the stakeholders (Teachers, students, writers, researchers, etc.) about research gap strategies.
- 1.5.3 Empirical Uses        This study contributes to the existing research gap strategies for the thesis introduction of undergraduate students at the university.