

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a wide-ranging description of the study. It comprises the background of the study, formulation of the problem, operational definitions, the aim of the research, and the significance of the study. Below is a further description.

1.1 Background of the Study

Writing a research proposal is a difficult task for most undergraduate students in Indonesia, including English language education students at one of the universities in Tasikmalaya. This difficulty is caused by writing a research proposal is the first experience in writing scientific work for most students. This correlates with conditions in the field, where there was a delay in graduation for some students, which is assumed to have occurred since the initial process of preparing the proposal. As is known, preparing a research proposal is one of the graduation prerequisites that students need to take as a first step in being able to write a thesis. Therefore, the proposal preparation process plays quite an important role.

Considering its important role in a student's graduation process, the preparation of a research proposal needs to receive sufficient attention. The issue of delays in graduation for some students needs to be connected to the graduation process, one of which is the proposal preparation process. It could be that students who graduate late are due to challenges during the proposal preparation process, both internal and external challenges. Meanwhile, this research was carried out to reveal what challenges students experienced during the proposal preparation process and what the best solution was to overcome these challenges.

Based on the previous studies, most of them discovered that most students face challenges during writing research proposals. According to Suryatiningsih (2019) there are several problems in writing research proposals, such as capitalization and punctuation, inexplicability or fuzziness, poor organization or illogical sequence, spelling and grammatical order. The study argues that most of their writing problems

arise from pedagogical reasons. Peng (2018) indicated that students face challenges when it comes to writing research, starting with selecting a topic and developing a research proposal, and continuing with the subsequent steps. more complex, such as document review. Manchishi (2015) found some students' mistakes in writing the proposal, such as broad and unclear topics, failure to state the problem, failure to identify the gap in the literature, using the wrong methodology, misunderstanding research terminology, wrong referencing style and plagiarism. Retya (2010) researched the problems faced by the students in writing a Thesis and revealed several students' problems in writing a thesis, especially nonlinguistic aspects. The result of the research was that the learners' factor was covered by students' motivation and personality. Moreover, the advisors applied for some role; the students who were lazy, pessimistic, worried and fearful influenced their willingness to finish their thesis quickly.

There have been myriad studies investigating research proposal writing from different perspectives, such as: genre analysis (Feng, 2002), academic writing (Sudirman, et.al, 2020), document analysis (Abdullah,2023), and discourse analysis (Scheuer, 2003). This has caused most of the leading research to focus on common mistakes in writing research proposals, as well as linguistic aspects. Unfortunately, students' attention to challenges and solutions when writing research proposals is still under-researched. Research into other aspects such as difficulties during the proposal preparation process from the beginning of determining the topic to pre-presentation, language barriers in preparation, non-linguistic aspects such as student conditions including students' economic situation, family situation, obstacles during guidance and solutions taken to overcome these challenges as well still rarely researched. Therefore, the present study aims to fill the gap, namely investigating the challenges encountered by the students during writing research proposals. Apart from that, this research also adds to existing research related to the topic of preparing research proposals.

1.2 Formulation of the Problem

Two research questions are addressed in the present study:

1. What are the challenges encountered by the students during writing research proposals?
2. How do students resolve the challenges during writing research proposals viewed from linguistic and non-linguistic aspects?

1.3 Operational Definitions

1.3.1 Challenges

Challenge is defined as something that increases the determination to improve the ability to overcome problems when preparing a research proposal. Challenges themselves can be accepted in two ways, namely, making things difficult and demotivating. In cases where the challenges feel difficult, a solution is needed to overcome these challenges.

1.3.2 Solutions

A solution is defined as a thing or object that can help students to solve their challenges in the process of writing a research proposal. The solution can be a thing or object that is born internally within the student, or externally.

1.3.3 English Education Department Students

English Education Department Students refers to students majoring in English education who have at least completed a research proposal seminar.

1.3.4 Research Proposal

Scientific papers written by 7th semester students majoring in English education as a requirement for preparing a thesis. A research proposal is a structured formal document that explains the research plan to be carried out.

1.4 Aims of the Study

The present study aims to investigate what are the challenges in writing research proposals and to identify the solutions to those challenges.

1.5 Significances of the Study

1.5.1 Theoretical Significance

This research contributes to existing theory regarding the challenges, common mistakes that students usually make when writing research proposals. Apart from that, this research also contributes to the theory related to the solutions of how to overcome the problem during writing a research proposal.

1.5.2 Practical Significance

This study contributes to students who are working on research proposals to be ready for all the difficulties they might encounter. It also helps them learn how to solve these difficulties by using the suggestions from others who have faced similar challenges.

1.5.3 Empirical Significance

The present study contributes to finding out the challenges that students encounter when working on research proposals for their final assignment. In addition to understanding how they overcome these challenges.