



## STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN WRITING THESIS OF ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM IN MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY OF SUMATERA BARAT

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### Abstract

This research is about difficulties faced by the students in writing thesis at eight semester of English Education Study Program of Muhammadiyah University of Sumatera Barat. The purpose of the research is to describe the students' difficulties in writing the thesis. The participants of this research were eight semester students of English Education Study Program of Muhammadiyah University of Sumatera Barat that consist of 15 students. This research is a descriptive research. It is aimed at describing things as the way and also analyzing the interrelationship of the data. The instrument used in this research was questioner and interview. The questioner is used to find out the students' difficulties in writing thesis while the interview is used to support the data gotten from questioner. The result of this research shows that there are 13 difficulties faced by students in writing thesis. And the most frequent difficulties is "pouring ideas into scientific writing". All of the students (15) faced this difficulty.

**Keywords:** *Difficulties; Writing thesis*

### INTRODUCTION

English Education Study Program of Muhammadiyah University of Sumatera Barat, as an institution that aims to produce professional English teacher candidates with Islamic character, organizes undergraduate education programs with an ideal target of 8 semesters. For 7 semesters students are provided with general sciences, Islamic religious sciences and Kemuhammadiyah, linguistic



sciences and educational sciences. While in the last semester students have to write a thesis as one of the graduation requirements based on Article 25 of Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System. Thesis refers to scientific writings in the form of written presentations containing the results of undergraduate research regarding the discussion of a phenomenon or problem in a field of science based on the applicable rules. These rules usually differ from one university to another, but in general the basic rules are the same. Jarwanto (1992) says that thesis is a scientific work compiled by an undergraduate student from the results of his research on the basis of primary data analysis and secondary data analysis techniques. According to Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia: Thesis is a scientific work that must be written by students as part of the requirements in completing their academic education.

Since it was opened in 2013 the English Education Study Program has completed 75 students in 6 periods of graduation. However, based on the observations of the supervisors, students are often unable to complete thesis writing within 1 semester, thus delaying their graduation time to more than 4 years due to various problems faced by students during thesis writing. Rismen (2015) Summed up the difficulties faced by students in writing thesis in 3 categories: 1. Analysis of the dominant Thesis Title Preparation Process is a. Difficulty in pouring ideas into scientific writing b. Difficulty in making background problems c. Difficulty in finding literature/library materials d. Difficulty in dividing study time with guidance 2. Data Collection and Processing Process: a. Elaborating research results into discussion b. Determination and use of statistical formulas used c. Length of time doing research d. Difficulty in analyzing research data 3. Thesis Examination Process a. The waiting period for the exam is too long b. High fear of facing exams c. Ignorance about the conduct of the exam. In addition, M, Idris and Faisal (2013) reported the difficulties faced by students of the Makassar State University Fine Arts Education Study Program in writing theses as follows: 1. Choosing the topic of the problem and formulate it into the title 2. Identifying research problems. 3. Developing the background of the research problem. 4. Formulating the research



problem. 5. Formulating research objectives 6. Formulating the benefits of research. 7. Interpreting and describing the research data. 8. Making conclusions and research suggestions 9. Determining the population and sample. 10. Describing the problem into variables. 11. Difficulties in data collection techniques and making research instruments. 12. Determining data analysis techniques, determine data processing techniques, and analyze research data. 13. Difficulty in getting referrals 14. Difficulties caused by supervisors are sometimes difficult to find on campus 15. The supervision process is relatively long. The delay in completing thesis has unfavorable impacts on various parties, not just students, but also their parents, lecturers, administration, even Muhammadiyah University of Sumatera Barat.

For students themselves, the delay in completing this thesis has an effect on increasing the length of the gap between student learning time on English language education sciences and teaching practice (PPL) and the time they practice these sciences in the world of work, this can affect student psychology in preparing themselves to enter the world of work. The delay in completing this thesis has also resulted in an increase in tuition fees that must be paid by the parents of the students so that this is quite detrimental from an economic point of view for the parents of students. In addition, the supervising lecturers must increase the supervising time which results in sometimes disturbing the concentration of lecturers and learning time of other students. This delay also makes the administration work more busy because it takes care of various things related to students who have not finished their thesis. With the addition of busyness to lecturers and administration, this can indirectly affect the overall time efficiency of the university if these events are also accumulated with events in other study programs. In other words, if this problem can be solved, the units in the UM of Sumatera Barat will have more time and concentration to do things that can contribute to the progress of the UM of Sumatera Barat.

As explained above, the delay in completing the thesis has a branching negative impacts. It is caused by problems faced by students in thesis writing.



Hence the research on problems or difficulties faced by students in thesis writing can be considered as urgent topic that should be discussed.

## **METHODS**

This is a descriptive research. It is aimed at describing things as the way and also analyzing the interrelationship of the data. Related to this, Gay (2000) states that descriptive research involves collecting data in order to get the answer from the research question concerning the status of the subject of the study. The descriptive design is used to specify, delineate, or describe naturally occurring phenomena without experimental manipulation (Salinger and Shohamy, 1989). The researcher used this kind of research design because she investigated and reported the difficulties faced by the students in writing thesis. The participants of the research were eight semester students of english education study program at Muhammadiyah University of Sumatera Barat that consisted of 15 students. The instrument used were questioner and interview. They were used to collect the data about students' difficulties. The researcher used the questioner sheet to collect the data about students' difficulties in writing thesis. And then, interview was used to support the data from questioner. After the data collected, the researcher analyzed the data. To analyze the data, the researcher used tabulating to arrange for processing data, also for getting the data better for systematic process and making percentage. Then, the researcher also calculated the total number and percentage of students' difficulties based on the result of questioners given to them.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Students' Difficulties in Writing Thesis**

Based on the data gotten from questioner and interview, there are 13 difficulties faced by the students in writing thesis. They are arranged from the most frequently to the less frequently found.

#### **a. Pouring ideas into scientific writing**

It was found that all of the students from 15 (100%) students got difficulties in pouring ideas into scientific writing. It means that this component is become the



crucial problem in writing thesis. They said that actually they have the idea in their mind to be written however they were afraid to make mistakes in writing. Some of them said that they don't know how to arrange word by word or sentence by sentence correctly to be a good paragraph. They have difficulty in describing the ideas into written form. It means that they have a problem with academic writing.

**b. Developing background of the problem**

From the result of questioner, it was found that 13 (86.7%) of the students from 15 students got difficulties in developing background of the problem. It means that almost all of the students got difficulties on this component. In background of the problem, the writer should state the important of the problem that will be researched. In addition, the writer should support the problem with some data or fact happened in the field. In fact, the students got difficulties in describing this component in their thesis. They said that they were confused in stating and describing important of the research and also in describing the fact or data found in the field. When they try to start writing, the idea become jumping or not focus.

**c. Interpreting and describing the research data**

12 students (80%) from 15 students got difficulties on interpreting and describing the research data. It means that most of the students got difficulties on this component. After conducting the research, the writer have to interpret and describe the data gotten from the field. In term of thesis writing, the students have to write it in chapter 4 as the research finding. However, most of the students got problem in this step. They were confused how to describe the data correctly.

**d. Determining technique of data collection and making instrumen**

Most of the students still had difficulties on determining technique of data collection and making instrumentation. It was found that 11 (73.3%) students from 15 students got difficulties on this component. Instrumentation is a tool used to collect the data. The writer have to choose the correct instrument to get the real research data whether it is qualitative or quantitative research. In fact, the students faced problem in choosing the appropriate research instrument in their research.

**e. Determining data analysis techniques**



More than a half of the students still got difficulties in determining data analysis technique. It was found that 11 (73.3%) students from 15 students got difficulties on this component. Technique of data analysis is an important part in writing thesis. The writer have to use the appropriate technique in analyzing the data. However, most of the students did not know how to determine the technique of analyzing the data. It means that they still had problem with formula or statistic. The students have to understand well how to use statistical formula not only for their research but also for other purposes.

**f. Choosing the topic**

From the questionare distributed to 15 of the English students, it was found that 11 (73.3%) students got difficulties in choosing the topic. Choosing the topic is the first step to be considered in writing thesis. From the topic choosen the researcher can develop it into the next step that is formulating the topic into title and develop it into the background of the problem. However, almost all of the students got difficulties on choosing it. They said that they were afraid that the topic chosen will not be interesting or old topic. In addition, they still had less reading habit.

**g. Formulating the topic into the title**

After choosing the topic of the research, the researcher have to formulate it into the title. From the 15 students, it was found that 9 (60%) students got difficulties in formulating the topic into title. It means that more than a half of students got difficulties in this component. They were had problem in arranging the good topic.

**h. Formulating the research problem**

From 15 students, it was found that 9 (60%) students got difficulties in formulating the research problem. Formulating the research problem is the step include in background of the problem. The students got problem in describing the problem gotten from the field.

**i. Getting the referrals**

In getting the referral, the students also got difficulties. 9 (60%) students from 15 students still got difficulties on this component. Literature can be found in



many sources such as library, internet, journal, and others. However, the students still had the problem on it. They said that the literature is limited in the library. They had difficulty to find out the literature in the library. In fact, the literature is not only can be found in the library but it also can be found in other sources.

**j. Determining population and sample**

The students still had difficulties in determining the population and sample. It was found that 6 (40%) students from 15 students got difficulties on this component. Determining population and sample is one of the step in quantitative research. There are so many techniques of taking sample that can be used by the researcher. The students still did not understand well how to take the sample from the population. They still confused what technique that will be chosen.

**k. Writing conclusion and research suggestion**

Writing conclusion and research suggestion is the last step in writing thesis. From the questioner, it was found that 6 (40%) students from 15 students still got difficulties in writing it. They still confuse how to write the conclusion and suggestion correctly. In conclusion part, the writer should write the summary of the research finding. And then, write some suggestion for the next researcher or some parties related to the research.

**l. Formulating research objectives**

From the result of questioner, it was found that 5 (33.3%) students from 15 students got difficulties in formulating the research objectives. Eventhough only 5 students, it means that the students still had difficulties on this component. In writing thesis, research objective or purpose of the research must be stated clearly. If the research purpose is not clear, the resercher do not have the guidance to conduct the research well.

**m. Formulating the benefits of research**

The benefit of the research or the significances of the research is the one of the component of thesis. The students have to write it in chapter one that is introduction. From 15 students, 4 (26.7%) students still had difficulties in formulating it. They did not know or confused in determining who will get the benefits from their research.





## CONCLUSION

From the finding above, it can be concluded that the students had difficulties in writing thesis. Their difficulties from the most to the less frequently one are pouring ideas into scientific writing (100%), developing background of the problem (86.7%), interpreting and describing the research data (80%), determining technique of data collection and making instrumen (73.3%), determining data analysis techniques (73.3%), choosing the topic (73.3%), formulating the topic into the title (60%), formulating the research problem (60%), getting the referrals (60%), determining population and sample (40%), writing conclusion and research suggestion (40%), formulating research objectives (33.3%), formulating the benefits of research (26.7%).

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