

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of Study

Writing is a fundamental skill that every individual must possess, including in the context of mastering English. This fundamental skill is comparable to the abilities of reading, listening, and speaking in mastering the English language. As a productive skill, writing enables a person to produce language and becomes an integral part of the communication process. Through writing, individuals can express themselves clearly by conveying ideas, thoughts, feelings, or opinions to others.

The importance of writing is mentioned in the Qur'an Surah Al-Alaq verse 4-5:

الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ، عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ

The verse above implies that Allah instructs humans to use the qalam and then grants them knowledge. Therefore, it can be inferred that indirectly, humans are encouraged to write as a means of acquiring knowledge. Thus, it is crucial to develop writing skills.

As a student, writing is an essential skill because students must generate work that is suitable and useful in an academic setting. To develop formal and academic writing, it is important to consider various significant features, such as sentence structure, linguistic style, appropriate

punctuation use, sentence coherence, and other factors that influence writing quality. Ariyanti (2016) emphasized the importance of creating comprehensive and well-structured sentences that are free from errors. Furthermore, Fauzan et al. (2022) underlined that academic writing should include knowledge of adjacent subjects backed by proof and precise references. Recognizing the significance of these criteria, students should consider utilizing guidelines while writing scientific papers.

At the undergraduate level, students are often required to produce scientific papers, particularly in their final semester when they must complete a thesis or final project as a graduation requirement (Usman et al., 2023). The thesis is a student paper that must be completed in lectures. Prior to beginning the process of preparing the thesis, a thesis proposal must be submitted. Fauzan et al. (2022) stated that the thesis proposal comprises three parts: an introduction, a review of relevant research, and a research methodology. Since the thesis proposal is the first step in creating an organized and focused thesis, students are expected to pay close attention to the writing process.

However, writing a thesis proposal is a challenging task. Many students struggle with the process, especially when the proposal is written in English. Non-native English speakers, in particular, face difficulties when writing a thesis in English (Paltridge and Starfield, 2019). In addition to obtaining the suitable vocabulary and sentence structure, it is

tough to identify and communicate concepts in a new language (Raimes in Ibrahim, 2015).

Other difficulties faced by students include the difficulty of determining the title and choosing the appropriate methodology when writing a thesis proposal, and Fauzan et al. (2022) added several other factors such as lack of knowledge, motivation, and students' ability to write. Manchishi et al. (2015) identified several errors in academic writing. These included unclear and overly broad topics, a failure to state the problem clearly, a failure to identify gaps in the literature, an inappropriate use of methodology, a misunderstanding of research terminology, an incorrect referencing style, and plagiarism. These difficulties may be faced by undergraduate students, especially those who lack experience (Suyadi et al., 2020), and can impact the thesis completion process.

Students who frequently encounter challenges when writing a thesis proposal may experience negative outcomes such as emotional distress, including feelings of frustration, anxiety, stress, and self-doubt. Moesarofah and Rahayu (2023) identified anxiety as the dominant emotion in the process of writing an undergraduate thesis. The presence of such negative emotions can impede motivation and hinder progress toward thesis completion. Nevertheless, positive experiences, such as the completion of the writing and the successful completion of the proposal seminar, can also bring happiness, which creates positive emotions. Consequently, an understanding of emotions is crucial in order to

comprehend the outcome of one's appraisal process. In general, positive emotions arise from positive appraisals, while negative emotions arise from negative appraisals (Yu-Whattam, 2020).

Emotions are present in every individual experience. Therefore, it is important to understand emotions. Emotions are not only a subjective response to experience; they also help to feel and assess the experience (Denzin, 1984). In the process of preparing a thesis proposal, each student has different experiences, influenced by various factors. Such factors include differences in supervisors, thesis titles, research methods, research locations, feelings during the thesis proposal process, and so on.

Understanding students' emotional experiences can assist in identifying the triggering situations that give rise to these feelings (Yu-Whattam, 2020). This enables students to identify sources of stress and develop strategies for managing them, thereby enhancing the quality of their writing. In addition, the writing of emotional experiences can be used to relieve poor emotional conditions such as stress, anxiety, and other conditions (Nashori, 2011).

Several researchers have discussed writing undergraduate thesis proposal. Fauzan et al. (2020) and Usman et al. (2023) investigated the difficulties and strategies involved in writing thesis proposal. Additionally, Alfionita (2023) analyzed the experiences and challenges of writing proposal. The focus of this study is similar to the previous three studies,

which focused on writing thesis proposal. However, few researchers discuss emotional experiences in detail when writing thesis proposal.

Although Alfionita's (2023) research shares similarities with the current study regarding the issue of experience, there is a gap between the two studies in terms of methodology. Previous research collected data using the narrative inquiry methodology, while this study used the photovoice methodology.

In this regard, this study aims to investigate the emotional experiences and difficulties of university students in writing thesis proposal. The research design utilizes the PhotoVoice approach, which provides a platform for students to visually express their experiences. The study hopes to generate valuable insights for students and lecturers in facilitating the completion process of thesis proposal.

The thesis proposal stage is crucial for determining the direction and success of the entire research. Photovoice is utilized in critical qualitative research to document learners' lived experiences, making it a valuable tool for understanding students' emotional engagement (Ferdiansyah et al., 2020).

Based on these problems and previous research, the researcher is interested in conducting a study titled **“PICTURING STUDENTS’ EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE DURING THESIS PROPOSAL WRITING: A PHOTOVOICE STUDY”**.

## **B. Definition of Key Terms**

In order to ensure clarity and avoid any potential misunderstanding, the researcher provided the following definitions of key terms that are essential for understanding this study:

### **1. Picturing**

This refers to the process of visualization or illustration, especially through the medium of images or photographs. In this study, the photovoice method was used to facilitate students in capturing and expressing their emotions and experiences during the thesis proposal writing process through an image or photo.

### **2. Students' Emotional Experience**

It refers to the feelings, thoughts, and actions that students experience when directly involved in an activity. In the context of this study, student experience specifically refers to the experiences, emotions, and challenges that students face during the process of writing their thesis proposal. This encompasses the processes of creating the title, determining the research design, searching for theories and references related to the research, writing from chapter 1 to chapter 3, meeting with the supervisor for consultation, and obtaining approval to advance the seminar proposal.

### 3. Thesis Proposal

A thesis proposal is a written document that outlines the research project to be conducted in the thesis. The focus of this study captured the emotional experience of writing after completing a thesis proposal.

### 4. Photovoice

This refers to the research design used in the study to collect and examine data in the form of photographs taken by students as a tool to illustrate and express students' experiences in the thesis proposal writing process.

## **C. Research Questions**

In consideration of the background presented above, the following questions were the focus of discussion in this study:

1. How do the pictures represent the students' emotional experiences during thesis proposal writing?
2. What difficulties do the students face during thesis proposal writing?

## **D. Objectives of Study**

According to the research questions, the research aimed to analyze:

1. To explore the students' emotional experiences during thesis proposal writing.
2. To find out the students' difficulties during thesis proposal writing.

## **E. Significance of Study**

The study's results are expected to have positive theoretical and practical implications as follows:

1. Theoretical

The research aims to provide an understanding and description of the emotional experience and difficulties that students face during writing thesis proposal. Additionally, this research can serve as a source of information for students to prepare better proposal.

2. Practical

- a. For students

After reviewing the emotional experiences of other students during the thesis proposal writing process, it is hoped that students will be motivated to understand the obstacles they may face and plan effective writing strategies to improve the quality of their proposal.

- b. For lecturers

By understanding the challenges faced by students, it can be taken into consideration for lecturers to overcome student challenges and provide more appropriate guidance.

- c. Researchers

The study's results can serve as a resource for other researchers working on projects related to thesis proposal writing.