

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

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

In the process of learning, the acquisition of academic writing skills is crucial for high-level students, particularly at university level. Proficiency in writing serves a significant indicator of student language abilities (Isfani et al., 2022). Moreover, academic writing holds great importance as a requirement for graduation at university, typically demonstrated through the completion of a scientific research known as thesis (Lestari, 2020)

In English Language Education Study Program of Islamic state Antasari University, students must write a thesis or research paper as a requirement to graduate. Many students can finish writing their thesis on time that is less or exactly four years, while others need more than four years to finish it. Various kinds of problems hinder students from completing their thesis writing, both related to internal problems such as knowledge and psychology, as well as external problems such as environmental factors (Irwandi, 2019).

The thesis is an independent academic final project that requires students to demonstrate the ability to learn practically for themselves. It is evident that a significant proportion of students still encounter difficulties in completing their theses within the stipulated timeframe. The process of writing a thesis is often perceived as challenging, requiring a substantial

investment of time and emotional, cognitive, and physical resources. Even at the outset of the thesis writing process, students may encounter challenges, such as identifying a suitable thesis title, relevant literature, and references aligned with the subject matter under investigation. This can be attributed to a lack of motivation and engagement among students in completing their theses (Aprillia et al., 2023).

Low self-esteem, including feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, and other related problems, is the most significant psychological component that contributes to difficulty in writing a thesis (Rizwan & Naas, 2022). Apart from that, other problems, such as time management, also have an influence. Many students delay writing their thesis for several reasons, such as being stuck when their writing is reviewed or needing more preparation before starting (Lestari, 2020).

In the process of writing a thesis, students need to think more critically cognitively because the content of the thesis is based on the author's thoughts regarding the problem being discussed (Mbato & Cendra, 2019). Blaxter (1998) explains that students are required to provide their ideas and opinions related to the topic being written or can consult with relevant experts or supervisors in writing their thesis. Additionally, a thesis has systematic rules and structure, which requires a higher level of thinking, skills and cognitive involvement (Sapti et al., 2019) (Mahfudhoh, 2019). For students who take English education studies, they are required to write a thesis in English. For foreign language students, English

proficiency in writing a thesis is challenging (Lestari, 2020).

Given these challenges, EFL students need effective strategies and self-regulation to help them in the thesis writing process (Umamah & Cahyono, 2022). Each student has a different learning approach and orientation regarding their environment (Ylijoki, 2001). To overcome all these barriers to academic writing, self-regulation must be internalized at the beginning of the academic writing process. (Wijaya, 2021).

Self-regulated learning is how students organize their intellectual abilities into task-related learning skills. SRL involves self-control and self-direction that are carried out independently and continuously to achieve learning objectives, including introspection of progress, results, and failures experienced (Zimmerman, 1990). In general, SRL is an effective and positive learning process in which individuals set goals, learn, and regulate the cognitive, behavioral, and motivational aspects of learning by themselves (Pintrich, 1995).

The main goal of responsible self-regulation of EFL students' academic writing process is to focus their attention on achieving the desired learning outcomes by activating, utilizing, and modifying certain cognitive aspects of behavior (Wijaya, 2021). The Qur'an indicates that humanity has a natural consciousness and motivation to pursue knowledge and scientific inquiry, as conveyed through both implicit and explicit means.

Reference of Q.S. Yunus, verse 101:

قل أنظروا ماذا في السموت والأرض وما تغنى آلاءايت والندر عن قوم لا يؤمنون

From this verse, it can be interpreted that to increase faith, Allah commands humans to pay attention to the signs of his greatness. In the context of SRL, paying attention to signs of greatness can be used as motivation and inspiration for learning in order to increase faith. This follows SRL theory, where students must organize learning methods that suit them to improve their abilities and achieve their goals.

Several previous studies have explored self-regulated learning and writing. For instance, Lin and Zhang's (2018) research showed how motivational regulation plays a crucial role in influencing students' writing performance in English as a second foreign language. Another study by Cendra (2021) emphasized the importance of seeking help and motivation in the self-regulated learning strategies utilized by EFL students to enhance the quality of their thesis writing.

Although research has been conducted in the field of EFL students' self-regulated learning in thesis writing, there are still knowledge gaps that need to be filled. Previous research has predominantly employed traditional methodologies that have concentrated on motivation, help-seeking, and learning strategies. However, such approaches are typically less effective in capturing the experiences and perceptions of the individuals involved. A more comprehensive and in-depth approach, such as narrative inquiry, is required. In discussing thesis writing, it is crucial to

acknowledge the diverse experiences of students, as they tend to adopt varying learning approaches and study orientations (Ylijoki, 2001). The use of narrative design can assist researchers in gaining a deeper understanding of the experiences and meanings associated with the utilization of self-regulated learning as a strategy for writing a thesis.

Based on the previous description, researchers are highly interested in studying the application of self-regulated learning strategy in thesis writing. By using a narrative inquiry approach, this research aims to bridge the gap by exploring an in-depth understanding of how SRL can be applied in the context of writing a thesis and understanding how individuals are involved in the process. Furthermore, in order to explore student experience in using self-regulated learning strategies in writing their thesis, researcher interested in conducting a study on the process of adopting self-regulated learning strategies on students' thesis writing at the English education department of UIN Antasari Banjarmasin under the research title "Self-Regulated Learning Strategies of EFL Students' Thesis Proposal Writing: A Narrative Inquiry Research".

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

The researcher provides several explanations regarding the cores to avoid misunderstanding:

### **1. Self-regulated Learning (SRL)**

Self-regulated learning (SRL) is a systematic approach that helps students set educational goals. Students are instructed to regulate,

monitor, and control cognition, motivation, behaviour, and the surrounding context in order to accomplish the goals that have been set (Pintrich, 2000). According to Zimmerman (2002), there are three phases that students go through with SRL, namely the forethought phase, where students determine goals and what strategies will be used to achieve the goals; the performance phase, where students regulate by paying attention to the process and the self-reflection phase where students respond to how they have achieved so far. In this research, self-regulated learning means how students use SRL as a strategy that can support successful thesis writing.

## 2. English Foreign Language (EFL) Students

An English Foreign Language (EFL) student refers to an individual who is learning the English language as a non-native speaker in a country which English is not the primary language. EFL students find difficulties in area such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and cultural nuances because of the language structure differences.

Students majoring in English education at UIN Antasari Banjarmasin are included as EFL students because they are English language learners but are not from countries that use English as their first language. In this research, it refers to the highly motivated students towards writing a thesis proposal, namely those who have completed their thesis proposal in semester 6.

### 3. Thesis writing

Chandrasekhar (2008) explains that the thesis is a work that has been undertaken by students in the form of a written record. Thesis writing is a skill that all college student should acquire during their studies so that they can optimally present their research findings (Irwandi, 2019). The thesis writing in this research is academic writing which is the final assignment before graduating as a bachelor of English education at UIN Antasari Banjarmasin.

### **C. Research Questions**

The questions that are used by researchers for this research are:

1. How do participant' experiences of using self-regulated learning to achieve success in thesis proposal writing?
2. What self-regulated learning strategies do EFL students employ in the thesis writing process?

### **D. Objectives of Study**

Research objectives that will be conducted by researchers based on the research questions that have been mentioned are:

1. To explore participant's experiences in using self-regulated learning strategies for the thesis proposal writing.
2. To identify and categorize the various self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies that EFL students use during the thesis writing process.

### **E. Significance of Study**

This study provides a significant contribution to the understanding of EFL students' usage of SRL strategies in thesis writing. Through in-depth analysis, this study can reveal the different strategies used and the factors that influence the use of these strategies.

In terms of learning strategy development, this study can serve as a basis for developing more effective learning strategies to support EFL students in thesis writing. Thus, educational institutions can design learning programs that are more appropriate to students' needs.

In the development of knowledge and literature, this study can be an important reference for researchers, educational practitioners, and education policy makers to understand and improve students' thesis writing process.

For students, this research can help improve the quality of thesis writing by understanding the SRL strategies used by students in writing thesis and identifying strategies to improve the quality of thesis writing.