

**EXPLORING EFL STUDENTS' ADVERSITY IN WRITING
UNDERGRADUATE THESIS**

THESIS

Submitted by

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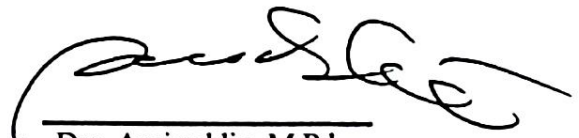
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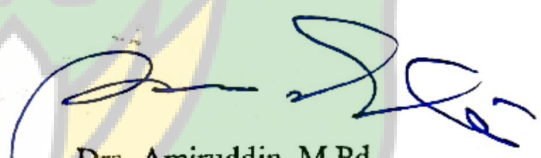
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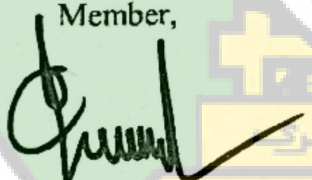
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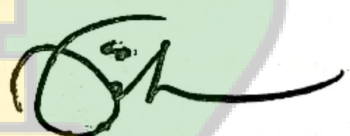

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UNDERGRADUATE THESIS**

adalah benar-benar karya saya, kecuali semua kutipan dan referensi yang disebutkan sumbernya. Apabila terdapat kesalahan dan kekeliruan di dalamnya, maka akan sepenuhnya menjadi tanggung jawab saya. Demikianlah surat pernyataan ini saya buat dengan sesungguhnya.

Banda Aceh, 30 April 2024

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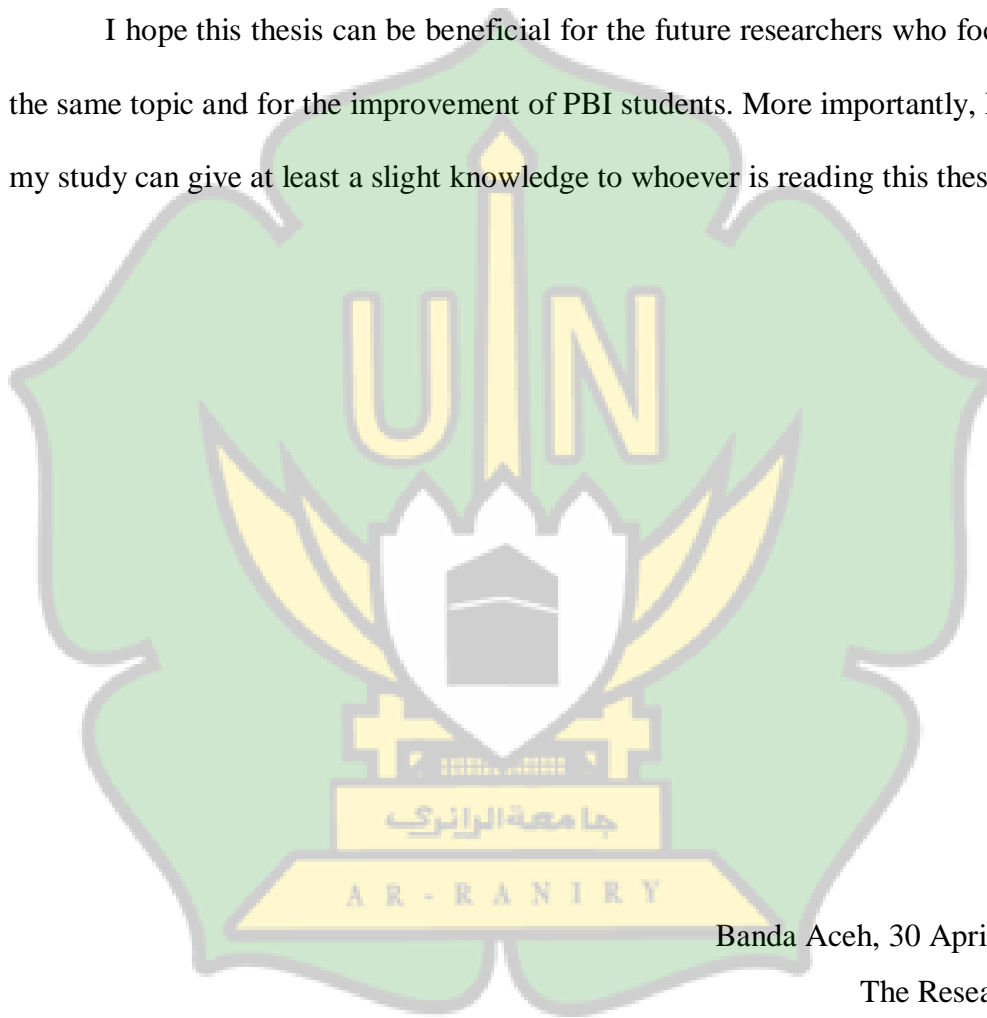
Alhamdulillah *abil'amin*, all praises to the Almighty Allah SWT, who has always given me blessings, strength, health and ability so that I can finish writing this study. Peace and Salutation be upon our beloved prophet, Muhammad SAW, who has brought us to the light path, the world full of goodness, and taught us all the good things in life.

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I hope this thesis can be beneficial for the future researchers who focus on the same topic and for the improvement of PBI students. More importantly, I hope my study can give at least a slight knowledge to whoever is reading this thesis.



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ABSTRACT

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External Factor

This study aimed to investigate EFL students' challenges in writing their undergraduate thesis by identifying internal and external factors that hindered students from finishing their thesis and exploring the strategies used by students to deal with their difficulties. This research employed a mixed-method design. The participants of this study were fifteen EFL students from the English Language Education Department batch 2017 at Islamic State University of Ar-Raniry. The participants were selected using random sampling. The researcher used questionnaire and interview as instruments to gather the data. The results of this study showed that paraphrasing sentences and paragraphs was perceived as the most challenging aspect among other internal factors. On the other hand, students faced difficulties in finding relevant materials or sources, which served as an external obstacle for English department students in writing their thesis due to the limited resources available on the campus. To address these complexities in thesis writing, students employed various strategies to overcome the challenges, such as setting priorities, managing their time effectively, maintaining consistency, and increasing their motivation.

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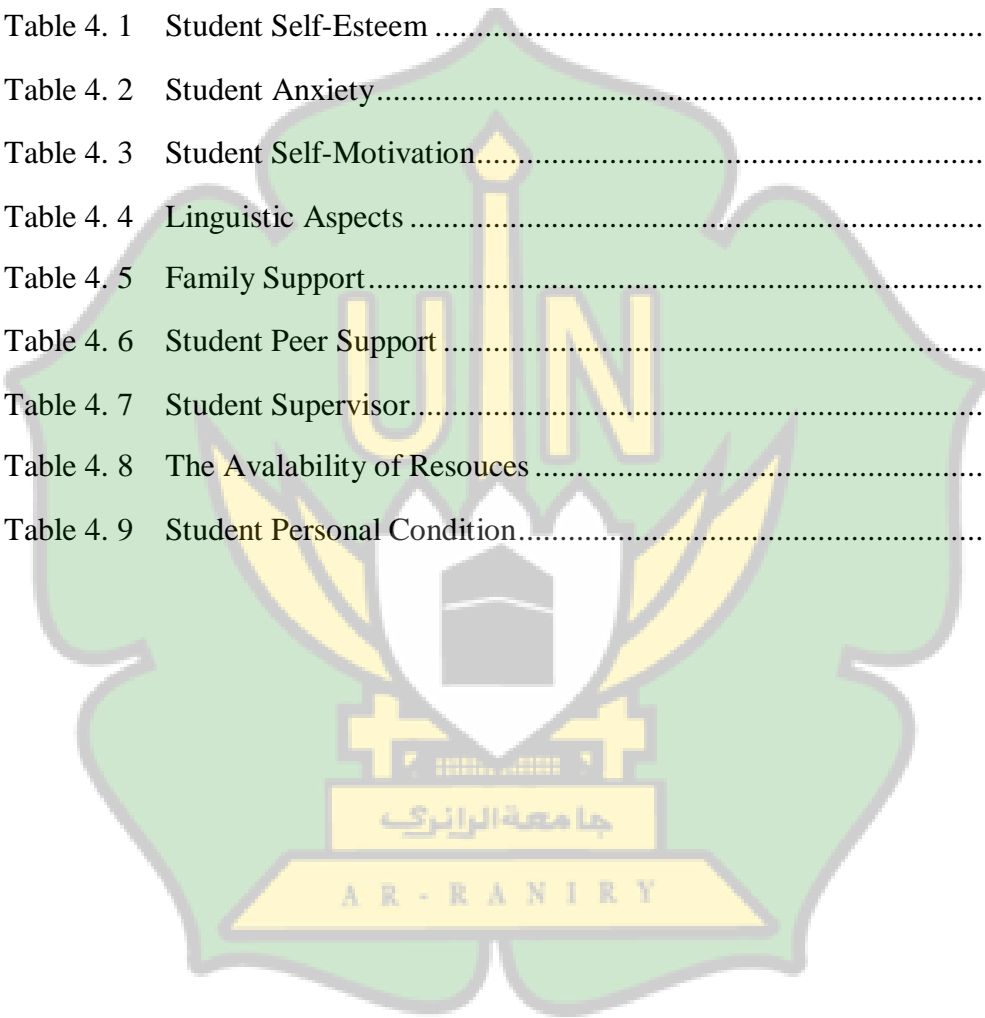
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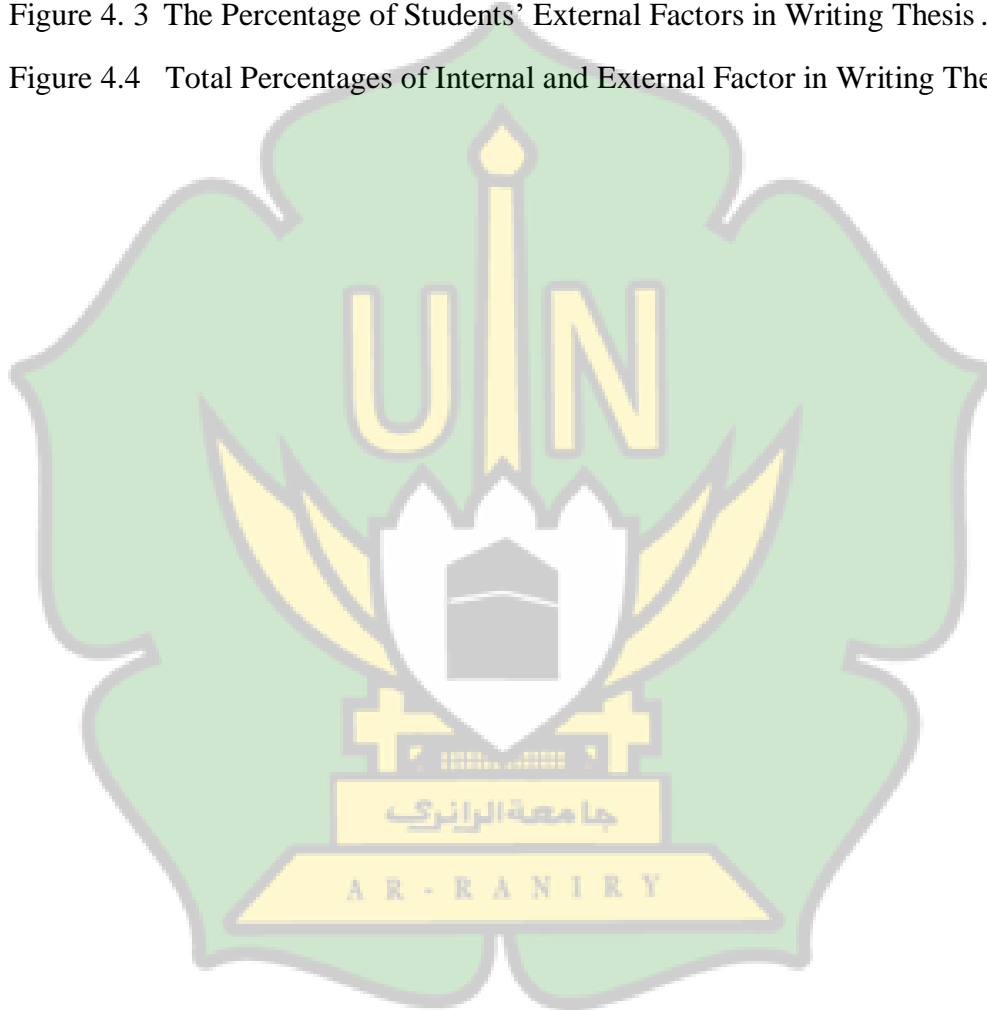
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

Without a doubt, education has become a mandatory background for every generation in all countries to achieve. Many people are starting to realize that living in today's era must have a decent level of education in order to blend into society and compete in the workplace. Education is the process of gaining information, skills, values, and beliefs through a variety of techniques, including instruction, training, and experience. It is a lifelong process that started formally in kindergarten, elementary school, junior high school, senior high school, and up to the highest level of education, University. The higher the degree that a student wants to achieve, the more challenges it becomes, including demands for conducting research to complete the degree. University is an establishment dedicated to advanced education and research, conferring academic degrees across different levels, including bachelor degree, master degree, and doctoral degree, in various fields of study (Oxford, n.d.).

In the field of education, students are often required to fulfill final arrangement as part of graduation criteria, which may encompass a range of projects depending on their educational level. For instance, undergraduate student at university is obligated to produce research writing or thesis as the requirement to graduate and obtain a degree level. Thesis is an academic writing which involves the clear exploration of a chosen topic, requiring in-depth research, critical analysis,

and combining some of existing knowledge. As indicated by Mauch and Park (2003), the thesis is the result of an in-depth scholarly and professional exploration conducted at the undergraduate or master's degree level, precisely represented in the form of a document following a particular format and style prescribed by the university (p. 9). Moreover, Alwasilah, as referenced by Husnussalam (2016) stated that the urgency of writing has become the measurement of intellectuality of academicians. Therefore, thesis writing is an unavoidable requirement for college students before completing their studies.

Writing a thesis is considered difficult for some college students. Creating good writing involves a step-by-step process and requires proper strategies to produce a successful result (Chamisah, 2013, p. 144). With regard to this problem, Oshima and Hogue (1998) as cited in Lestari (2020, p.18) highlight that writing, especially academic writing, is a challenging task. Developing this skill requires dedicated study and practice. It's crucial to recognize that thesis writing is a continuous process rather than just a final product which is made by researchers. It implies any written thesis is never considered finished and remains open to the possibility of repeated revisions or reexamination by other people.

In Indonesia University, the majority of undergraduate students begin their thesis research in eight semesters. However, there are instances where some students finish the entire mandatory course, enabling them to initiate their thesis in the seventh semester. It usually takes more than six months for most students, but some students even spend one to three years to complete the thesis.

Writing a thesis began by selecting a suitable title for the research. Students are tasked by exploring relevant titles from library resources or websites and subsequently formulating a distinct title that differs from existing thesis or journal. Following the title selection, students are expected to prepare and organize their research proposals. Subsequently, undergraduate students have to present their proposals in a seminar, where each student's work is assessed and corrected by the examiners regarding their research proposals. However, some students face challenges in formulating their proposal. Evangelista and Hernandez (2013) as cited in Safitri et al. (2021) argue that writing the proposal and conducting the research is considered as challenging part in writing thesis; Furthermore, over eight semesters, 103 students confronted distinct challenges at each stage, including difficulty in selecting the research topic, managing time in finishing the research, accessing and collecting the related data, and interpreting the result. In line with this, Maghfiroh et al. (2023) affirm that when writing research proposals, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students faced both internal difficulties (such as a lack of self-esteem, self-motivation aspect, lack of knowledge, and anxiety) and external challenges (including a lack of feedback from lecturers, limited access to materials, and insufficient support from family and friends) (p. 12-13). Moreover, some students are occasionally requested to change the proposal title that they have been working on due to their inability to proceed with their thesis.

Dealing with the research proposal is not the only challenge that students have to confront. Undergraduate students in the English Department, for instance,

put greater effort than other major students. This is because they have to write their thesis in English; in fact, Indonesia uses English as a foreign language (EFL), not as a second language, which presents a challenge for EFL students in the English department because they are obligated to compose their thesis in English despite using Bahasa. This factor causes students to hesitate in writing their thesis because they are afraid of making vocabulary selection, phrases, and grammar errors. This is accordance with Fitria (2022) argue that some common factors that often appear when students write their thesis include difficulties in understanding the systematic approach to thesis writing, a tendency to rely on translation tools, challenges with grammar, and struggles in selecting the appropriate vocabulary, as well as difficulties with spelling and punctuation (p. 307). Similarly, Khasanah et al. (2023) found that the students faced challenges with language grammar, specifically dealing with tense agreement, word order, prepositions, and sentence structure. Furthermore, some students also admitted that paraphrasing sentences or paragraphs from the source was considered difficult. (p. 118).

The lack of academic writing skills seems to be a common issue for undergraduate students in conducting their final projects. However, some researchers have found that motivation is also a main problem for students in finishing their thesis. The deficiency of motivation often leads many college students to become lazy in working on their thesis, hindering their progress and overall commitment to completing the required academic task. It leads students to laziness, impacting the lack of ideas and impeding the progress of their thesis

(Khasanah et al., 2023, p. 119). Encouragement from college friends, family, and even supervisors is crucial, providing valuable support that not only boosts students' spirit but also creates a positive environment conducive to effective thesis writing. In short, motivation is essential for students to initiate and sustain their efforts when writing their thesis. It acts as a key factor, helping them overcome challenges, stay focused, and ultimately produce a well-written thesis in the end.

There are a total of 17 universities in Aceh, where most students are expected to complete their studies in eight semesters or four years in college. Yet, despite these expectations, many students still face difficulties in finishing their thesis, leading to extended semesters and additional financial burdens to cover their college bills.

UIN Ar-Raniry is a state Islamic University which is located in Darussalam, Banda Aceh. Aiming at providing qualified student outcomes, the university has various fields of study which have good accreditation, particularly the Department of English Language and Education. This department has produced many of the best graduates, as evidenced by the A-level accreditation at the time the research was conducted. In maintaining the quality of division, students are expected to finish their study within the designated four-year timeframe; however, some students may need more than eight semesters due to obstacles in conducting their thesis.

Some researchers have investigated the study toward the related problem. For example, Fajrina (2021), who conducted research on the obstacles faced by 8

undergraduate students when writing chapter two for their thesis, identified five main issues in composing literature review. These issues include difficulty in accessing the related sources, struggles in defining the material of the sources, choosing relevant reference at library, limited time with the supervisor, and a lack of ability in paraphrasing sentences or paragraphs (p, 46). Similarly, in Tiwari (2019) fifteen students encountered obstacles in completing their thesis because of insufficient guidance from their supervisors and incomplete work on the part of the students (p, 51). Moreover, Rohim et al. (2023), in their deeper analysis, argue that 10 undergraduate students experience six psychological factors, including a lack of self-esteem, anxiety, low motivation, insufficient social interaction among undergraduate students, feelings of shame within the college, and a deficiency in communicative skills.

In accordance with all the aforementioned research, the writer determined that composing thesis or final project is crucial for students, as it is one of the necessary components for completing university studies and earning an academic degree. However, numerous students still face various challenges in the process of writing undergraduate thesis. Thus, the aim of this study was to investigate the phenomenon of academic experience among thesis-writing students in the English Education Department of Islamic State University of Ar-Raniry in Aceh. Therefore, exploring the challenges faced by EFL students in completing their undergraduate thesis would ultimately provide both lecturers and students with valuable insights to address this issue in the future.

B. Research Question

1. Which chapter is considered as the most challenging part in writing undergraduate thesis by English Department Students?
2. What are the factors that hinder English Department students from finishing their thesis?
3. What are English Department student strategies dealing with related factors in thesis writing?

C. Aim of Study

1. To examine students' problematic section in writing undergraduate thesis
2. To analyze the factors experienced by the English Department Student in finishing their thesis
3. To find out the effective strategies made by undergraduate students to overcome the problems in writing thesis

D. Significance of Study

The present study is significant to the undergraduate student thesis-writing process by identifying the factors that hindered many students from completing their thesis. In my view, when doing this, it is important to identify some common aspects that appear in the process of writing a thesis. After all of the factors have been identified, it will guide students on what needs to be considered and how the thesis-writing process should be approached. Thus, undergraduate students should

give special attention to dealing with difficult aspects and preventing these factors from recurring when conducting their thesis.

It is hoped that the current study would be useful for undergraduate students, and its practical application is expected to become a guideline or provide information for English department students at UIN Ar-Raniry on how to face difficulties related to factors affecting thesis writing.

E. Terminology

The definitions of some terminologies used in the study are provided to avoid misunderstandings for readers. They are as follows:

1. *EFL Student*

EFL is an abbreviation for English as a Foreign Language. This acronym is mainly used to classify the students (non-native speaker) who are learning English while living in their own country. Richard Nordquist (2020) defined EFL as a traditional term for the study of the English Language by non-native in countries where English is known as foreign language and generally used as the medium instruction in teaching and learning process. EFL students in this study refers to English Education Department Students of Tarbiyah Faculty who study English as a foreign language.

2. *Adversity*

The word “*Adversity*” refers to difficulties, challenges, or unfavorable circumstances that one may face in life (Oxford, n.d). In this research, it points to various aspects that EFL students encounter while writing their thesis.

3. *Undergraduate Thesis*

A thesis or final project is an academic writing that presents an individual's original research, findings, and insights on a specific topic, typically required for obtaining an academic degree. An undergraduate refers to a student who undergoes studies in a university to obtain a bachelor's degree (Mauch and Park, 2003, p. 3). In short, an undergraduate thesis is a research project undertaken by a student to fulfill the requirements for achieving a bachelor's degree.

