

**Exploring Pre-Service English Teachers' Experiences in Learning
to Write Research Proposals: Challenges and Strategies**

(A Study of Department of English Language Teaching UIN Ar-Raniry)

THESIS

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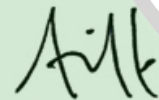
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adalah benar-benar karya saya, kecuali semua kutipan dan referensi yang disebutkan sumbernya. Apabila terdapat kesalahan dan kekeliruan di dalamnya, maka akan sepenuhnya menjadi tanggung jawab saya. Demikianlah suratpernyataan ini saya buat dengan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

Banda Aceh, 9 April 2025

Saya yang membuat pernyataan,



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ABSTRACT

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Research proposal writing is an essential academic skill for pre-service English teachers, equipping them with the necessary foundation for conducting research and enhancing their professional competence. However, learning to write research proposals presents numerous challenges that impact students' academic progress. This study explores the experiences of pre-service English teachers in learning to write research proposals, focusing on the challenges they encounter and the strategies they employ. Using a qualitative case study approach, six students from the English Language Education Department at UIN Ar-Raniry were selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted via WhatsApp, allowing for in-depth exploration of participants' experiences. Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the data systematically. Findings reveal that students face both internal and external challenges, including difficulties in structuring research proposals, understanding academic writing conventions, selecting appropriate methodologies, and managing time effectively. To address these challenges, participants employed strategies such as seeking peer and supervisor support, utilizing online resources, and engaging in self-directed learning. This study highlights the need for enhanced instructional support and structured academic writing training in research courses. It recommends integrating explicit research writing guidance into the curriculum to better prepare students for their future academic and professional endeavors.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher has carried out an explanation regarding the five crucial sections of the introduction, including the background of the study, research question, aims of the study, significance of the study, and terminologies.

A. Background of the Study

Research is a fundamental part of the undergraduate academic program. The process of designing research involves the engagement in a systematic investigation that is guided by specific methods and procedures to acquire the desired information about the subject that is being investigated (Dahlia, et al. 2023). The program's learning objectives will not be met until academic research is conducted, which is not as simple as one might think. The researchers can broaden their knowledge and further their studies by engaging in and conducting a research.

Preparing a research proposal is an essential step in the research process. The research proposal is designed to convince the supervisor and institution that the researcher has viable research writing and sufficient skills and work plan to carry out it. This aligns with what Juni (2014) stated in his study, which before performing any research, the students must produce a research proposal for approval by their supervisor and institution. A research proposal should include all of the major study elements as well as enough information to aid the evaluator during the evaluation process. A research proposal's quality is determined not only by the proposed study,

but also by the quality of the research proposal writing. As a result, it is critical for a researcher to develop a logical, clear, and compelling research proposal in accordance with structured proposal writing formats.

Learning to write research proposals is a crucial skill for pre-service English teachers as it not only enhances their academic writing abilities but also prepares them for future research theses. At the Indonesian university level, there is a necessity for students to learn and write research proposals to complete their studies (Turmudi, 2020). These proposals outline the research writings' introduction, literature review, and methodology chapters and are essential to academic writing. This learning skill is vital for pre-service English teachers to design effective research writings that advance English language teaching and learning.

Pre-service English teachers, as aspiring educators, must develop strong academic writing skills to effectively communicate their ideas, contribute to the field of education, and meet the demands of their future profession. The ability to learn to write research proposals is particularly crucial for pre-service English teachers, as it prepares them to engage in research that requires a high level of critical thinking skills, contribute to educational scholarship, and secure funding for their research endeavors. Yet, the acquisition of learning to write research proposal skills among pre-service English teachers has received relatively less attention in the literature (Yamin & Purwati, 2020).

Pre-service English teachers often encounter several challenges when learning to write academic proposals. Despite these challenges, they also employ various strategies to improve their research writing skills and succeed in writing research proposals especially like during the research courses. These challenges and strategies involved in constructing research proposals spark the attention of researchers to learn more about designing research proposals and conducting in-depth studies (Suryatiningsih, 2019). This research was built on previous studies, for example, a study by Ndhlovu, et al. (2015) revealed that students made many errors while drafting their proposals, which included failing to express the ideas.

Another study also found that students often encounter difficulties in developing a conceptual framework (Peng, 2018). Effective strategies can significantly enhance the writing capabilities of pre-service English teachers. Therefore, in order to tackle the challenges, there are several studies of strategies to face those issues. Abas, et al. (2018) found that the students focus on learning and practicing principles of writing, drawing connections between the topic and their individual knowledge.

The study presented here focuses on students from the undergraduate English language education department at UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, specifically those from the 2021 batch, who have engaged in learning to write research proposals throughout the three mandatory research courses. The exploration employs a semi-structured interview method to examine the challenges and strategies faced by students in learning to write and develop research proposals. This study primarily examines the experiences of pre-service English teachers, who

have participated in teaching practicum in Thailand and Malaysia, throughout their learning experiences in conducting research proposals especially after their experience in the three research course classes. This aims to uncover the difficulties they encountered in learning to design research proposals and the different approaches they employed to address them based on their abilities (Maghfiroh, 2023)

The researcher's motivation for this study arises from the persistent challenges many English language education students of UIN Ar-Raniry face in learning to master the essential skill of writing research proposals. This skill is vital not only for their academic requirement but also for their future roles in various professional contexts since research proposals require great critical thinking skills. Critical thinking is the process of viewing everything proportionately and objectively, and it is necessary for students to be able to develop a sense of urgency regarding any issues when learning to write, particularly in research writing (Yamin & Purwati, 2020). By investigating the specific difficulties students encountered and the strategies they used to navigate these obstacles in learning to write research proposals, this research seeks to uncover how their learning can successfully bring them toward the next research stages despite their challenges during the research courses.

However, existing studies have mostly focused on how EFL students who are writing research proposals deal with the challenges and strategies without specifically stated about the learning process. Most of them also did not utilize the purposive sampling in order to ensure that the participants really meet the criteria

of the research. A concern in the learning experiences or processes of the participants in learning to write research proposals has not been studied much before.

Therefore, this study aims to address this missing point by clearly investigating how pre-service English teachers are able to cope with the obstacles they encounter during their learning to write research proposals in research courses that lead them to the next research phases. The objectives are to offer a valuable contribution and helpful insight to the enhancement of academic writing in the research courses around the English language education department. Furthermore, the researcher hopes this study will serve as a motivational insight for other students to encourage them to complete their research proposals writing during their learning in research courses as the first step before broadening them to the thesis stage, ultimately fostering a supportive and research-oriented academic environment within the institution.

B. Research Questions

In accordance with the background of the study, the research questions of this research are:

1. What challenges do pre-service English teachers encounter as they engage in learning to write research proposals?
2. What are the strategies employed by pre-service English teachers to cope with the challenges in learning to write research proposals?

C. Aims of the Study

The objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To identify and analyze the challenges experienced by pre-service English teachers during their engagement in learning to write research proposals in English.
2. To discover the specific strategies utilized by pre-service English teachers in their endeavor to cope with their challenges and learn to write good research proposals in English.

D. Significant of the Study

The findings of this research will provide valuable insights into the common challenges pre-service English teachers face in writing academic proposals and the strategies utilized by them.

1. For lecturers of English Language Education

This study provides insights into the common challenges pre-service English teachers face in learning to write research proposals. By understanding these difficulties, lecturers can develop more effective teaching strategies and support systems tailored to address specific student needs, thereby improving the overall quality of instruction in the research courses.

2. For students of English Language Education Major

For students, by identifying the challenges and successful strategies in research proposal writing during their learning in research courses, this study provides practical tips and guidance that other English language education students can apply to enhance their research proposal writing skills, leading to better academic performance so that they will be able to proceed to the next stage of research writing.

E. Terminology

The researcher defined some of the key terms related to the topic used in this research to avoid any misunderstanding. The terms are:

1. Pre-service English Teacher

The pre-service English teacher is someone who pursues undergraduate teacher education to prepare for teaching (Çelik & Zehir Topkaya, 2024). They are college students who are still preparing to become an English teacher after completing the teaching practicum. The pre-service English teacher in this study refers to the students at the English Language Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh who have participated in the international teaching practicum program (PPKPM).

2. Experiences in Learning to Write

Learning is a multifaceted process that encompasses the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies through various means such as experience, study, or teaching (Metzger & Harris, 2018). Experiences in learning to write in this research refer to the process by which pre-service English teachers develop their writing skills, especially in the context of learning to write research proposals, including the challenges, and strategies during the research courses.

3. Research Proposals

According to Jackowski and Leggett (2015), a research proposal is a document written by a researcher that specifies what a researcher plans to investigate and design before starting to write the whole research. It is an outline of the entire research process that aims to persuade the supervisor and institution of the comprehensive work plan before its execution and it also gives a reader a summary of the information discussed in the writing. Based on those definitions above, the research proposals in this study refer to the work of English language education students on a detailed study of a particular subject that includes introduction, literature review, and methodology chapters.