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Author(s): Leni Tiwiyanti, Yulia Sofiani Zaimar, & Yosi Maeleona Passandaran

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Obstacles in Writing Literary Research Proposals: a Study Case of 7th Semester Students

Leni Tiwiyanti*, Yulia Sofiani Zaimar, & Yosi Maeleona Passandaran

Universitas Indraprasta PGRI, Jakarta, Indonesia.

Abstract: Literary research writing does not merely related to students' ability and mastery in writing a scientific research. The elements of literature is also there for them to consider. This research is based on the obstacles that 7th semester students encountered in writing literary research proposals in Universitas Indraprasta PGRI, Jakarta. Therefore, this research focuses on analysing the obstacles in writing the literary research proposals. This research is a case study which is part of qualitative research and the method of this research used case study method. The subject of this research are the students who are writing their research proposals on literary research written in the seventh semester 2021/2022. The instruments used were questionnaire and interviews. In short, the result of the research as follows; First, the team found that there are three common obstacles in writing literary research proposal. The obstacles are categorized into three. They are the mentor-student obstacles, student-related obstacles and institution-related obstacles. There are four recognizable mentor-student obstacles, six student-related obstacles and two institution-related obstacles. At the end, based on the student related obstacles, lectures of literature class can explore and equip themselves with various literary learning techniques that will interest the students in the future.

Key Words: Students Obstacles; Literary Research; Writing Proposal; Case Study

Abstrak: Penelitian sastra tidak hanya melibatkan kemampuan siswa dalam menulis penelitian ilmiah. Elemen sastra pun hadir untuk dipertimbangkan. Penelitian ini berdasarkan hambatan yang siswa semester tujuh hadapi dalam menulis proposal penelitian sastra di Universitas Indraprasta PGRI, Jakarta. Oleh sebab itu, penelitian ini memfokuskan pada analisa terhadap hambatan yang hadir dalam penyusunan proposal penelitian. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif dan metode yang diterapkan adalah studi kasus. Subjek dari penelitian ini adalah siswa yang sedang menulis proposal penelitian dalam bidang penelitian sastra di semester tujuh 2021/2022. Instrumen yang digunakan adalah kuisisioner dan wawancara. Singkat kata, hasil penelitian menunjukkan hal berikut: pertama, tim menemukan bahwa terdapat tiga jenis hambatan umum dalam menulis proposal penelitian sastra mereka. Hambatan yang ada meliputi hambatan yang berkaitan dengan pembimbing-siswa, hambatan yang berkaitan dengan siswa dan hambatan yang berkaitan dengan institusi. Terdapat empat hambatan yang berkaitan dengan pembimbing-siswa, enam hambatan yang berkaitan dengan siswa, dan dua hambatan yang berkaitan dengan institusi. Pada akhirnya, berdasarkan hambatan-hambatan yang terjadi, pembelajaran literatur dapat

*Corresponding author: Leni Tiwiyanti. Universitas Indraprasta PGRI. Jl. Nangka Raya No.58 C, RT.5/RW.5, Tj. Bar., Kec. Jagakarsa, Jakarta Selatan, DKI Jakarta 12530, Indonesia. Email: lenitwiyanti@gmail.com

mengembangkan dan memenuhi kebutuhan siswa dengan berbagai teknik pembelajaran literatur yang menarik minat mereka di masa mendatang.

Kata Kunci: Hambatan Siswa; Penelitian Sastra; Penulisan Proposal; Studi Kasus

INTRODUCTION

The subject of this research were seventh semester students which would be further developed into their undergraduate thesis. In the seventh semester 2021/2022, the students who study at Faculty of language and arts, English study program in Universitas Indraprasta PGRI Jakarta, took Literature Class which offered many details on the history of English literature based on the literary period that discussed the important events, the literary works, and the writers. The class is expected to provide knowledge on literature for the students during composing their research proposals, right before the undergraduate thesis writing. However, the students did not get further knowledge such as the theory on literature itself, the elements of literary works, literary approaches, and any literary analysis practices from the class. The module used in the class had not also been revised since its first use. Thus, it's outdated and need revision.

It's interesting to know that most of the thesis are on literary research although the students are from Faculty of Language and Art Education. Especially during the pandemic academic year, more students preferred to choose literary research for their thesis. However, there are some problems that occurred, not only the topic of the research is similar among several students, the theories used are also similar. This had been the same occurrence for some years. New students would look for examples only from the existing theories that have been used in previous thesis. The outcome led to more similar numbers of research topics. The redundancy of similar theory and titles is easily acknowledged.

The scientific paper is the result of someone thinking that can be applied in the real world. Scientific paper is produced from field studies or literature reviews. Wikanengsih (2013) points out writing is an academic activity that processes reasoning in the realization of thinking activities. Unfortunately, there are still many students in Indonesia still lacking in writing and reading activities. It seems clear that their preference to be more like talking than writing and reading. Obstacles in writing scientific papers can be experienced by novice writers. Especially the final level students when preparing a research paper as part of the pre-requisite for completing academic education. The research proposal is usually their first experience with any scientific writing. Thus, they must learn both the concept of scientific writing and the field of study of their research topic. Students need to ensure a thorough understanding of the two to compose a well written research paper.

Various obstacles are present during the research writing process. Ifeoma (2019) identified three major categories of challenges affecting the success of a research paper, including: mentor-student challenges comprised the lack of scientific training, supervision challenges and pacing of content, student-related challenges identified students' issues such as research problem definition, time management, confidence issue, quantity of literature, working of deadlines, data collection and interpreting literature and data, institution-related challenges stemmed from poorly equipped library and lack of access to resources. Meanwhile, Qasem & Zayid (2019) carried out a study on "The challenges and problems faced by students in the early stage of writing research projects In L2, University of Bisha, Saudi Arabia". The study aimed to investigate some common challenges students encountered during writing their research proposals and projects. The results revealed that students had some difficulties regarding

deciding the research topic, lacking knowledge of methodology, being unable to find specialized and related reference, lacking interest in research, lacking understanding of the subject matter, lacking time and guidance for conducting the research. From the findings presented above, the authors gave some recommendations as follows. Students should participate in more training workshops concerning writing research. Besides, supervisors should give students good guidance about choosing the topics and appropriate materials.

Moreover, teachers teaching research methodology should create some useful tasks or activities in class to help students be familiar with the research procedures.

Research proposal is a crucial step in the thesis-writing process. Once the research proposal is complete, work on the thesis itself can begin. The thesis writing process is made simpler by a rigorous proposal. Research proposals provide an opportunity to convince the academic community that researchers are knowledgeable about what they will publish about their research. The research proposal, according to (Dunleavy, 2017), is a document that informs people about the project the researcher plans to carry out as part of their study for a higher degree. The research proposal assists you in focusing your research objectives, outlining their significance and necessity, describing their methodologies, foreseeing potential issues and consequences, and formulating possible solutions and interventions.

The study proposal typically has five chapters, each of which has a well-established section. It is the first phase of a research strategy that will be carried out as a thesis or dissertation. Nawangpuli & Arsana in Nurlita (2018) state that a strong research proposal needs to have an intriguing title, a background that is clear and supports the research, a research statement that is delivered clearly and is supported by goals and objectives, and compelling arguments for why the research is important enough to be investigated. The conclusion is that "a good research proposal will help you define and formulate your research question, narrow the study to a manageable form within the prescribed time limits, structure and develop our writing, and avoid wasting time in the literature search and data collection stages of the project" (Samuels, 2012, p.5)

Kabir in Nurlita (2018) believes that chapter I consist an Introduction as a brief description about the research proposal, it is usually composed of background of study, research question, aim of study, significant of study, and terminology. Besides, in chapter II contains a literature review as result of previous studies related to the topic and the research questions. Furthermore, chapter III consist of research methodology. Basically, in this chapter all the steps that need to be done in answering the research should be elaborated in detail. This chapter composed of research design, population and sample, data collection, data analysis and followed by the list of references. According to Arsana (2012), a research proposal usually consists of cover page, introduction and background of study, research question, the aim of study, literature review, research methodology, instrument and data collection, data analysis and references.

It implies that little can be done to eliminate it using the most logical language. When focusing on the phenomena happened in Universitas Indraprasta PGRI, Jakarta, we could see how students had limited their research object to collect the data. They generally chose movies instead of poetry, novel, or short stories. Literary work is certainly a unique phenomenon. It is packed full of numerous interpretations, purposes, and conditions. But that doesn't mean that, as a literary studies, it has the distinctiveness to set itself apart from other studies. In truth, literature has just as much meaning as language. Widdowson asserts that literary works can take on different interpretations depending on the context to which they are being used. It could refer to literary works as fiction or literature as a field of study. The achievement of aesthetic and moral merit, such as those found in the canon or the great tradition, could be described as literature when referring to literary writing. Literature has the so called a range of characteristics

such as excellent, aesthetic, creative, imaginative, expressive, valuable, and universal. In short, students should have a fair reading skill to enable themselves in analysing a text.

When a reader reads aesthetically, their primary concern is with how the text will affect them. While reading, readers create associations, images, ideas, and experiences in their minds that remain with them long after they have finished the book. If the purpose of language instruction is to help students improve their language and thinking skills, teachers must understand what their students bring to class. Students therefore bring their individual experiences, interests, ideas, difficulties, worries, and attitudes Alwasilah (2001). Literature can be assigned by teachers because it simulates life, enables students to learn a language top-down, and helps them develop critical thinking skills. Teachers can model for students how readers respond to texts and interact with them in order to foster their language skills, particularly reading, and critical thinking.

It's common that most students or learners still faced difficulties to comprehend a text. They are still lack of comprehension in second language reading. Natsir & Anisati (2016) remark that there are still many students who have less comprehension on English reading texts. Further, refers to the children's reading difficulties, there are a number of findings revealed that second language learner have similar trouble in decoding and spelling of L1 and L2, and the differences of individual learner such irrespective of the differences of the orthographies; phonological knowledge, rapid naming and verbal working memory are can predict reading difficulties in L1 (Geva, 2006). The reason for students' failure in second language reading Concerning to the students' difficulties and the reason, Geva (2006) states that the obstacle of L2 learners' reading comprehension is affected by less of word-based reading skills included word recognition, pseudo word decoding, and phonological knowledge. In addition, unfamiliar with language structure and features of the text of readers offend them in gaining comprehension and their language-processing ability break down.

It is typical for most students or learners to still have trouble understanding a book. They still struggle with reading comprehension in second languages. According to Natsir & Anisati (2016), many pupils still struggle to understand English reading texts. In addition, research on children's reading difficulties has shown that second language learners struggle with spelling and decoding in both L1 and L2, and that individual learner differences, independent of differences in orthographies, can predict reading difficulties in L1 through phonological knowledge, rapid naming, and verbal working memory (Geva, 2006). Further, he claims that the difficulty of reading comprehension for L2 learners is hampered by a lack of word-based reading skills, such as word recognition, pseudoword decoding, and phonological awareness. Additionally, readers' difficulties in understanding the text due to their ignorance of the language's structure and features causes a breakdown in their language-processing abilities.

Students who are less motivated to read, who use fewer metacognitive strategies to track their reading comprehension progress, and who lack the vocabulary and background knowledge necessary to relate new concepts to what they have already learned frequently struggle with reading comprehension. Additionally, it appeared from the interviews with the English teacher and the students that the students' English proficiency issues stemmed from their limited vocabulary, lack of complicated grammar, and lack of prior reading experience. Another issue in second language reading is that the less of reading practice affect students to achieve their reading comprehension skill (Rochman, 2017). The construction of L2 reading comprehension To increase learner's knowledge and comprehension in second language reading, there are several strategies that can be applied in teaching and learning reading process, such as activate ideas or build learner's schemata, build vocabulary and grammar, etc. that include semantic mapping and experience text relationship method (Fitrisia et al., 2015). In addition,

incorporating the reading strategies in teaching reading should be carried to assist students to be successful readers.

The interviews with the English teacher and the students also seemed to indicate that the pupils' difficulties with the language were due to their restricted vocabulary, lack of complex syntax, and lack of reading experience. Another problem with second-language reading is that pupils' ability to develop their reading comprehension skills is impacted by their lack of reading practice (Rochman, 2017). The development of L2 comprehension of reading. There are several strategies that can be used in the teaching and learning of reading, such as activating concepts or building learner schemata, building vocabulary and grammar, etc., that include semantic mapping and the experience text relationship method, to increase learners' knowledge and comprehension in second language reading (Fitrisia et al., 2015). Additionally, including reading techniques into reading instruction is necessary to help pupils become successful readers.

Realizing how important a research proposal writing is and how well the students in conducting literary research, the team were encouraged to find out the obstacles that were present in writing a literary text research proposal. It is expected that once the team found out the obstacles, the team could give some recommendations related to any effort in improving the quality of the students' literary research proposal.

METHOD

This research is case study research which is one of the qualitative research projects. Therefore, the researcher uses a case study method. In data collection this research used triangulation instruments such as; observation at the first step, second is questionnaire, and interview at the final stage. As stated by Tavakoli, (2012) that case study method is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case. The "case" may be a single individual, several individuals separately or in a group, a program, events, or activities. To study the selected cases, case study researchers usually combine a variety of data collection methods such as interviews, observation, questionnaires, narrative accounts document archives and audio or video recording. The population and sample in this research are the 7th semester students of Universitas Indraprasta PGRI Jakarta with a sample a student of English Language Education Study Program, taking the literature class. This study lasted for 1 month. The instrument used was questionnaires and interviews. For Data analysis techniques of this research is description and interpretation.

There were 32 students who were engaged in this study. They are the students of Literature class in English Education Program, Language and Art Faculty, in Universitas Indraprasta PGRI Jakarta. They were the seventh semester students, and most of them were busy writing their research proposals. Most of them had never written any research proposal and they just had their literature class in the seventh semester. They also never or rarely read literary works. The sample of the participant was using purposive sampling since the research objective is to analyze the students' obstacles found in writing literary research proposals. The participants were students of Literature Class and only students taking literary research were involved into the research. In this study, the instrument was in the form of questionnaire and interviews dealing with the kinds of problems that students encounter in writing their literary research proposals. Both questionnaire and interviews aimed to identify students believes, opinion, and attitudes toward writing literary proposals and their literature class.

The procedures of this study were firstly, the observation was done during the seventh semester to identify the problems in writing literary research proposals. Next, some literatures

were reviewed as references to choose the appropriate theories. After reviewing the literatures, the purpose of the research was specified namely to analyze the students' obstacles in writing literary research proposal. The next step was organizing the instrument to collect the data. This study used the questionnaire and to get the data from the students about their difficulties in writing their literary research proposals. The Google form was chosen in building up the questionnaire since it is easy and accurate in getting the analysis along with the graphs or charts. The questionnaire was administered to the students in literature class. After all the students finished in giving their questionnaire response, the team held a short interview to confirm the participants answer. Finally, the data was analyzed and interpreted. In a descriptive qualitative method, the data will be analyzed by the answer given by the students. Data taken from the questionnaire interviews were analyzed. The data will be categorized into based on problems that students face in writing literary research proposal.

RESULTS

According to data analysis derived from the questionnaire, the obstacles are classified into mentor-student obstacles, student-related obstacles and Institution-related obstacles. The obstacles are categorized as follows:

Advisor-student obstacles

Advisor-student challenge is highly relevant to the communication between the research proposal advisor and the students. Based on the questionnaire given to the students, there are four obstacles that are found. They have lack scientific writing training, limited guidance in research methodology, limited guidance in literary analysis and limited proposal writing supervision. Students considered that limitation in guidance became the first main issue that they encounter.

Table 1. Mentor-student Obstacles

No	Obstacles
a.	Lack of scientific writing training
b.	Limited guidance in research methodology
c.	Limited guidance in literary analysis
d.	Limited proposal writing supervision

Student-related obstacles

There are 6 obstacles found regarding the student-related challenges in literary research proposals. The problems are commonly related to the students' ability. The questionnaire showed that the obstacles are on their reading comprehension skill, understanding literary theory, understanding literary works, interpreting data, lack interest in the research and lack of research knowledge and skills.

Table 2. Student-related Obstacles

No	Obstacles
a.	Lack of reading comprehension skill
c.	Lack of understanding of literary theory
d.	Lack of understanding literary works

No	Obstacles
e.	Lack of Data Interpretation skill
f.	Lack of interest in research,
g.	Lack of research knowledge and skills

Institution-related Obstacles

In institution -related challenges, there are 2 main issues. First, the students found that the campus library is not well equipped with appropriate books related to research writing, literary works, literary theory, and literary analysis. The other problem is related to the literature class offered by the campus in the 7th semester which is intended to help students understand literary work. However, the discussion provided in the class is only limited to the historical period of English literature.

Table 3. Institution -related Obstacles

No	Obstacles
a.	poorly equipped campus library
b.	limited discussion in literature class

According to the questionnaires given to the students, the research team concluded that the obstacles that participants found in writing their literary research proposal could be categorized into three. They are mentor-student obstacles, student-related obstacles, and institution-related obstacles. The research team noted there were four commonly found obstacles in mentor-student obstacles, six obstacles in student-related obstacles and only two institution-related obstacles. Understanding literary theory and literary works are two main requirements in conducting literary research proposal writing; therefore, all parties involved in the process of the research writing should be taken into account.

Participants who just happened to have their first experience with their research proposals admitted that they had many problems in their research writing. The problem might even bigger when they finally decided to take literary research. The choice made them to prepare themselves in doing two new research experiences at once. They were not only certainly lack the expertise and skills needed for scientific research but also lack basic knowledge on literary studies. Even though the students were also offered a seminar proposal and literature classes to guide them in writing the research proposal in the same semester, many students frequently struggled to apply their theoretical knowledge of research in the real world. Furthermore, they should challenge themselves to be involved with literary research proposal writing.

In case of research proposal writing, Taskeen et al. (2014) discovered that choosing a new topic is hard because researchers are not aware of what criteria they should base on to choose a theme. The results are also in accordance with those of the study conducted by Javed, (2019) and the two authors Qasem & Zayid (2019) who also found that the participants in their study faced these two problems. In terms of writing the introduction, the participants in this study found it hard to identify the significance of the paper while those researchers figured out their participants' obstacles in writing other parts of the research paper such as writing the literary review. Other obstacles commonly found are writing literature review, identifying appropriate theoretical background, choosing, and summarizing related studies, and using correct style of citation. By comparison, Javedik (2019) also believed that the participants in his study had the issue of obeying the APA rules for writing the literature review while Qasem & Zayid (2019) indicated that the participants in their study were unable to find specialized and related reference. In the process of writing methodology, the participants struggle with deciding the

appropriate statistical tool for data analysis. By contrast, the participants did not face this issue in the study conducted by Dwihandini et al. (2013). For writing findings and discussion, choosing appropriate formulas for calculating the collected data, interpreting data clearly and concisely, comparing the findings of the present study to those of related studies. The results are aligned with those carried out by Ifeoma (2019) who discovered that it was challenging for the participants to decide the best collection tool, explain the collected data, and connect his/her findings with previous studies.

In writing a literary research proposal, the first obstacles are related to advisor-student category. The role of mentor or advisor is expected to place start in the early phase of the research proposal writing. Students found that they did not have enough guidance even in deciding the topic and in determining the research materials. Limited scientific writing training was known as the first main issue mentioned by the participants. They considered that scientific writing as a new academic experience and they needed a thorough guidance. The campus had provided such training in a seminar proposal class also in the seventh semester. Yet, the limited time available made students difficult to follow. The students at once found trouble in topic identification which is the beginning of research. This is where students brainstorm on possible topics they could study. The different research methodology from different studies gave problems in finding the appropriate research methodology. The idea of brainstorming and finalizing the topic to be researched on take a lot of time. In addition to that, literary research brought an issue related to literary analysis which they found to be quite a handful. The limited guidance on the mechanism of doing a literary research analysis makes the students be less independent in writing research proposals. Poor supervision or communication with the advisors also imposed difficulties for students. Particularly for undergraduate students, having proper assistance is crucial. It should be highlighted that undergraduate students have little to no background in the field of their assigned research, necessitating the need for the supervisors to teach them enough about it to get them productive quickly while yet preserving their enthusiasm. Also, literature review is chapter two in a thesis. This is where students look for conceptual and related literature. When reviewing the literature, students should have the skills in comparing and differentiating data, choosing information which are relevant in the study, among others

The second obstacle category is student-related which turned to present the highest number of obstacles. The questionnaire showed that there are six obstacles that are related to limited reading comprehension skill, understanding literary theory, understanding literary works, data interpretation, low research interest, and lack of research knowledge and skills. Based on the description given by the participants, the second obstacles category mainly depict the student present condition in conducting the literary research proposal writing. The first obstacle concerns with their limited reading comprehension skill. The problem faced by researchers as lecturers in linguistics and literature studies are the lack of knowledge in understanding a text, analysing meaning and ability in researching a literary work. This is because literary works are closely related to language education and learning, all of which must be able to understand a text. Kosheleva (2018) explained "To overcome these problems, it is necessary to improve learning efforts that can improve students' abilities in learning. examining a text, including literary texts. Understanding literary theory is another obstacle that participants found. The number of elements in literary theory brought many new insights that were not easy to learn in a single literature class. The obstacle continued in interpreting data. The figurative language and other language features of literary work were new for the participants. They needed more effort just to interpret the data. The last two obstacles are lack in research interest and research knowledge and skill. Derived from the interviews, researchers found that doing research is not their basic interest, therefore they were not showing their great interest in

conducting the research. The last is the participants lack research knowledge and skills. They mentioned that one of the main obstacles is the lack of research knowledge and skill. These naive researchers experienced that the idea of brainstorming and finalizing the topic to be researched on take a lot of time. Reviewing the literature requires students to have the skills in comparing and differentiating data, choosing information which are relevant in the study, among others.

CONCLUSIONS

The last category is the institution related. There are two obstacles: poorly equipped campus library and limited discussion in literature class. The campus library should and must be the first reference source students can use. Students face the challenge of wasting a lot of time and energy on tracing appropriate books, journals and reports with very little help from the libraries which are often times poorly equipped. Al-Qaderi (2016) identified the lack of well-equipped library with open access to resources and websites as a major challenge facing undergraduate research students. The other obstacle is the limited discussion in literature class. Literature class should and could be one of the solutions for students taking literary research. However, they only got limited material which was mainly only about the historical period of the English literature. This is considered far from giving what the students taking literary research need. They still didn't get materials concerning about the literary theories, analysis or even approaches. The number of works discussed in the class was also insufficient for them to build experiences to explore literary works. Once finish the class, students were still unable to further analyse literary works as they didn't have further knowledge.

From the problems investigated above, the researchers make some recommendations for the participants as well as future student-researchers. First, advisors think about their students' favourite topics or topics with high applications in teaching, learning and analysing literary works. Then, students can discuss their topic with the advisor to orient their research. Ask students to spend as much time as possible to read research papers because it helps them not only improve their comprehension skills but also exploit their research topics and expand their academic lexical resources. Students are required to read related studies supporting researchers to gain a stable foundation for their research papers. Schedule a meeting to help researchers manage their time effectively and study the rules for text citation and references, and research methodology. Based on the student related obstacles, lectures of literature class can explore and equip themselves with various literary learning techniques that will interest his or her students in the future. The diversity of students' understanding and interpretation on the elements of literary works should also be well managed by providing the required materials. Determining the intrinsic elements of literary works means determining the elements that build literary works from within. Institution should also work on the provision of literature resources in the campus library which will certainly help the students to be more productive. It is also highly recommended that the institution uses a developed module which cover broader discussion on literary theory, literary works, literary analysis and also literary approach as a basic resource for their research proposal.

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