

VISUALIZING STUDENTS' CHALLENGES AND EMOTIONS IN THESIS PROPOSAL WRITING: A PHOTO-VOICE STUDY

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ABSTRAK

Para mahasiswa menghadapi berbagai pengalaman ketika memulai dan selama proses penulisan sebuah proposal skripsi. Penelitian ini difokuskan untuk meneliti tantangan-tantangan dan emosi-emosi para mahasiswa dalam menulis sebuah proposal skripsi. Metode *photovoice* digunakan sebagai desain penelitian untuk menggambarkan tantangan dan emosi, dan memfasilitasi perolehan data yang detil dari foto-foto, deskripsi, dan hasil wawancara mendalam dengan para partisipan. Data-data dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik kepada enam mahasiswa yang telah menyelesaikan proposal skripsi mereka. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa tantangan yang dialami para mahasiswa dalam menulis sebuah proposal skripsi seperti menentukan judul penelitian, menemukan teori-teori yang relevan dan sesuai dengan topik penelitian, dan kurangnya kemampuan bahasa Inggris termasuk masalah tata bahasa, kosa kata, dan kurangnya kualitas keterampilan menulis. Emosi para mahasiswa dapat berubah tergantung pada tahapan selama proses penulisan sebuah proposal skripsi. Para mahasiswa mengalami emosi-emosi negatif pada tahapan pertama, seperti kecemasan, khawatir, pusing/bingung, ragu atau bimbang, tertekan, and frustrasi. Emosi negatif terjadi dalam tahap *pre-writing*. Seiring waktu, emosi negatif mahasiswa berubah menjadi emosi yang positif seperti bahagia, lega, bangga, tenang, dan rasa kepuasan pada tahap *while-writing* and *post-writing*. Emosi negatif disebabkan oleh kesulitan mahasiswa dalam menulis sebuah proposal. Sebaliknya, emosi-emosi positif muncul setelah proposal skripsi para mahasiswa ditulis lengkap dan selesai. Dan akhirnya, proposal skripsi mereka disetujui oleh dosen pengampu mata kuliah tersebut.

Kata kunci: *photovoice*, tantangan, emosi, menulis, proposal skripsi

ABSTRACT

This study was focus on investigating students' challenges and emotions experiences in writing a thesis proposal. The photo-voice method was used as a research design to visualize the experiences and facilitate obtaining detailed data from photographs, descriptions, and in-depth interviews with participants. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to six students who had completed their thesis proposals. This study found that students' experiences on the challenges such as determining the research title, finding the relevant theories were online to the topic of the research, lack of English proficiency includes grammatical problems, lack of vocabulary, and identifying the appropriate references. Besides, emotions could change depended on the stages of during the thesis proposal writing process. The students experienced the negative emotions in the first stage, such as uncertainties, anxieties, tiredness, frustrations, and worries. It happened in the *pre-writing* stage. Then, gradually their emotions changed into positive such as cheerfulness, comforts, calmness, prides, and satisfactions in the *while-writing* and the *post-writing* stages. The negative emotions were caused by the students' difficulties. Otherwise, the positive emotions arose after students' thesis proposals had been completed and finished to be written, and finally, the thesis proposals were accepted by the lecturer.

Keywords: Photovoice, challenges, emotions, writing, thesis proposal

INTRODUCTION

A thesis proposal is an academic assignment that undergraduate students must be written. It is one of requirement to the next step in writing a thesis. Karanja (2016) said a thesis proposal as a comprehensive plan for a research project. It is a written description of the research design that will be conducted.

In writing a proposal or a thesis, it needs skills of writing. The students must master the elements of writing such as grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and the structure of sentences or paragraphs. Wahyuningsih (2018). said it is important to be noted that the writing process involves an essential element: grammatical competence. This involves a thorough understanding of grammar rules and lexical elements. Writing enables a person to produce language and becomes an integral part of the communication process.

To develop a formal and an academic writing, it is important to consider various significant features, such as sentence structure, linguistic style, appropriate the punctuation use, sentence coherence, and other factors that influence writing quality. Ariyanti (2016) stated the importance of creating comprehensive and well-structured sentences that are free from errors. Furthermore, Fauzan et al. (2022) highlighted academic writing must consist of 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.

So, when starting writing a thesis proposal, it is not only need a writing skill, but also mastered the contents of a thesis proposal, such as an introduction; it explains the proposal details the specific areas of study, the purpose, the scope, and a review of relevant research; and a research methodology that provides the information about research design, setting, the subject or the research, the technique in collecting data, and the data analysis.

When start and in the process of writing a thesis proposal, there are some challenges faced by undergraduate students such as determine the title and choosing the appropriate methodology. Fauzan et al. (2022) added several other factors such as lack of knowledge, motivation, and students' ability to write. Manchishi et al. (2015) found out 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 them, especially those who lack experience (Suyadi et al., 2020), and it often impact to the thesis completion process.

Students commonly experience challenges when writing a thesis proposal, which can significantly affect their emotional well-being. One major difficulty is identifying a suitable title and topic, as Zuriati (2017) found that many students struggle with selecting an appropriate subject, particularly when it involves market-related issues. Additionally, finding adequate reference sources presents another challenge. Although university libraries and online databases provide extensive resources, students often have difficulty locating the most relevant materials for their chosen topics (Hasanah, 2018). Furthermore, writing the research background is not an easy task. This section should clearly justify the study and define the research problem; however, students frequently face challenges in framing their research direction, avoiding redundancy, and maintaining a coherent focus, which can result in a vague or disorganized background (Firza & Aisiah, 2019).

Moreover, students often struggle with limited proficiency in academic English writing, as transforming ideas into well-structured sentences requires mastery of grammar and vocabulary. Proper academic writing is crucial to minimizing errors and enhancing clarity in thesis proposals (Wahyuningsih, 2018). In addition to language difficulties, selecting an appropriate research methodology is another obstacle, since the methodological approach directly influences data collection techniques and the overall execution of research. Deciding on the right research design can be overwhelming for students, particularly those unfamiliar with different methodologies.

Another important factor affecting students' ability to complete their thesis proposals is their level of motivation and confidence. Many students struggle with self-confidence, discipline, and perseverance, which impacts their ability to stay committed to their research. As Mardiansyah (2018) cited, Sara's research found that students with higher confidence in their English writing skills tend to achieve better results than those with lower

confidence levels. Additionally, fear of supervisor criticism is a significant concern. While supervisors provide essential guidance during the writing process, some students feel anxious about receiving criticism and negative feedback, which leads them to avoid consultations. Khairah & Fatimah (2022) highlighted that such fears reduce interactions with supervisors, ultimately hindering academic progress.

Finally, identifying relevant theories is another challenge students face. A thesis proposal must be supported by appropriate theoretical frameworks and expert perspectives; however, many students struggle with theoretical knowledge, literature synthesis, logical organization, and critical thinking (Wang in Suyadi et al., 2020). These difficulties collectively create barriers in the thesis proposal writing process, affecting not only academic performance but also students' emotional well-being. The challenges that students experience in writing a thesis proposal, can influence students' emotions. Emotions play an important role in education, including in academic writing (Cameron et al., in Forster, 2020). The process of writing a thesis proposal involves intense emotions. Emotion is also one of the factors that affect students' proposal writing. Emotions can arise at any given time and are triggered by "trigger events" that can come from outside (such as time pressure, environment, or supervisor) or from within the student (such as writing ability and motivation). Changes in emotional levels during the thesis proposal writing process can affect students' writing ability through the ideas they generate during writing activities (Amin et al., 2023).

Emotional experiences and a thesis proposal writing closely have a relationship. The difficulties experiences in writing a thesis proposal can cause various emotions, for example, anxiety to growth, depending on their implicit beliefs and self-perceptions as writers.

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 experiences (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). A comprehensive understanding of emotional engagement can provide valuable insights for students and educators alike. This approach can better identify and address emotional challenges, ultimately leading to a more successful thesis writing experience (Rantala-Lehtola and Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2022).

This study used the photovoice methodology. In this regard, this study aims to investigate the emotional experiences and difficulties of undergraduate students in writing a thesis proposal. The research design utilizes the Photo-voice method, 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 a thesis proposal. The thesis proposal stage is crucial for determining the direction and success of the entire research. Photo-voice 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).

Photo-voice is employed in this study as a qualitative research method to examine and

understand students' emotional experiences and the challenges they encounter in writing a thesis proposal. This method was selected for its capacity to elicit deep insights into lived experiences (Plunkett et al., 2013). Wang and Burris (1997) originally developed the Photo-voice method, which adopts a participatory approach to data collection. As noted by Wang and Burris in McKernan et al. (2019), Photo-voice enables participants to capture contextual photographs, offering a visual representation of their personal experiences. Traditionally, this method has been utilized to help individuals identify, represent, and improve their communities through photographic documentation. More recently, researchers have applied Photo-voice within academic contexts, recognizing its potential for capturing nuanced educational experiences.

This study adopts a photovoice research design, where participants document their lived experiences through photographs, which are then collected, analyzed, and discussed through interviews or group dialogues. The significance of this study lies in its ability to visualize the challenges that students encounter during the process of writing a thesis proposal. Photographic documentation not only highlights these difficulties but also reveals the emotional impact they impose on students. Despite prior research on academic writing challenges, few studies have employed visual methodologies to illustrate the intersection between students' struggles and their emotional responses.

Guided by this framework, the study seeks to answer the following research questions: 1) what are the specific challenges students experience in writing a thesis proposal? And 2) what emotions do students experience during the thesis proposal writing process?

METHODS

This study aimed to investigate and comprehend students' challenges and emotions experiences and in writing the thesis proposal. The researchers chose a photo-voice as a method in to elicit data that may deepen understanding of the life experience (Plunkett et al., 2013). Wang and Burris in McKernan et al. (2019) stated that Photo-voice utilizes a participatory approach to data generation, in which participants are requested to take contextual photos to capture a visual understanding of their own life experiences. This

photo-voice research design is a qualitative procedure in which the research object captures pictures in the individual's life as data, gathers, and analyzes through interviews or discussions.

Participants

In this research, there are six students of English Language Education Study Program who selected by the criteria the students had completed a seminar on English Language Teaching Course which the lecturer required them to submit a thesis proposal.

Data Collection

The data were the combination of a photo and their interpretation on their own photo that taken by each participant and determined representing or illustrating their challenges overall and emotional experiences in pre-writing stage, while-writing stage and post-writing stage in writing the thesis proposals. Then, the participants were also asked to write the reasons for taking photos, both the challenges and the emotions that were experienced in writing a thesis proposal. The data were collected by using documentary and interview.

Following the photovoice data collection method outlined by Ferdiansyah et al. (2020), the interviews were structured to guide participants in describing their photos, either through written text or voice recordings. The procedures process of interviews covered three key areas: 1. the context surrounding the photo, 2. the reasons for taking the picture, 3. the challenges and emotions were encountered by the students during thesis proposal writing.

The researchers were used Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis techniques for analyzing the data. The six steps thematic analysis techniques which consists familiarizing the researchers on the data, producing initial codes, looking for themes, reviewing themes, defining and identifying themes, and preparing the report.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

These photos often represented significant moments that evoked emotions, helping participants express their experiences. This section details the data represented the difficulties

and the emotions that were visualized by the students' photos and the context behind each photo. The photos helped the students to express and describe their challenges and emotions in writing the thesis proposal.



Figure 1. Photo and Interpretation of Student 1

*This picture was taken at night when I couldn't sleep. All I could think about at that moment was whether I could finish building this Lego. This picture illustrates my feelings in the early stages of writing the proposal, because at that time I felt **confused and difficult** in determining or making a research title and determining what kind of method I should use to realize the desired research. This was due to my **lack of knowledge at the beginning of writing the proposal**. This is the same as my feelings when I was confused about where to start with the Lego arranging, and I also felt difficulties when I started arranging the Lego parts. At the next stage, after I had organized the first part of the Lego, there was a sense of worry that I felt, what if the next part of the Lego was not as expected? The same thing happened with the proposal writing process in the middle stage when I had to write from chapter 1 to chapter 3. At that time, I really **felt worried that my writing was not in accordance with the writing rules**. In the final stage of writing, I felt **relieved and proud** of myself because I could **finally finish writing this proposal**. This is the same as my feelings when I succeeded in forming Lego, because I felt very relieved and proud because I could arrange Lego with the results of my own efforts, even though there were still shortcomings in their shape. The **difficulty I faced was finding a theory related to the title of my proposal**, so I had to read many articles to find a theory that really fit.*

Based on the photo-voice taken by the student 1, She said, it was taken by her at night when she could not sleep. She used lego to illustrate how she constructed it. The Lego was used as an analogy to make and write a thesis proposal..In the pre-writing stage, the student 1 told she felt difficulties in deciding a title and choosing the right method to realize the desired research. The second, her uncertain how to start writing the thesis proposal. As the result, the difficulties impacted to their emotions. She felt **confusion, uncertain, , and distress**. Opposite of it, in the while-writing stage, she felt **worry** that was caused by her lack of the academic writing rules and system. Meanwhile, in the post-writing stage, when she could finish writing the thesis proposal, her emotions changed into positive, student 1 felt **relief and proud of herself**, even though she still faced **difficulty in finding a theory related to the topic of her thesis proposal**, she used a metaphor to represent her successful in forming lego was the same as finishing writing the thesis proposal



Figure 2. Photo and Interpretation of Student 2

*When I took this photo of the night sky, I thought about whether my friend would feel the same way looking at this night view. This photo of a dark night sky captures how I felt in the prewriting stages of writing a proposal. At that time, I **felt uncertain** about finding direction in the midst of darkness, the same feeling as when I had to make decisions that were in line with my research goals. At the while-writing stage, feelings of **anxiety** arise when I begin to write the background. I worry that the results of my writing will not be good enough. This is the same feeling I have when I am searching for stars in the vast sky, **anxious** about whether I will find the right star or whether it will be lost in the dark. At the post-writing stage, I **felt happy** because I*

received permission from the lecturer to submit a seminar proposal, even though some revisions were needed. This happy feeling is like seeing the stars begin to twinkle in the dark night sky, giving hope and satisfaction after a period of **anxiety**. The **difficult to determine the title**, I faced while writing the proposal was that it was difficult so I changed the title several times, similar to looking for direction on a dark night **full of doubt and intimacy**, but finally found the right path.

Based on the photo-voice and the student's interpretation on her photo, she explained that the sky night represented her feeling. She felt in the darkness of the night, **getting lost in the initial stage. Feeling confuse, hesitant, anxiety, and uncertain** in her pre-writing stage. The emotions were caused by **poor writing quality and did not know what to do in starting writing the thesis proposal**. This feeling was as like looking for the stars and was not getting lost in the dark. In the while-writing, because of **her poor writing quality**, student 2 told that she felt **anxious and fear** when starting to write the background, It also was caused by **not follow the rules of writing a thesis proposal**.

After keeping trying, in the post-writing stage, she **felt happy** after being able to **finish and complete writing the thesis proposal**. The feeling was also caused by getting permission to do the seminar and presented the proposal she had written. Her **happy** was analogized by the stars that began to twinkle in the night sky.

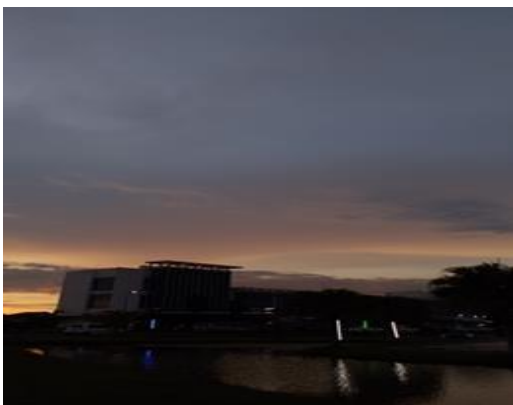


Figure 3. Photo and Interpretation of Student 3

I took this photo in my room at night while I was doing my homework. When I took this photo, I was thinking about how to find the right mood so that I could complete my assignment on time. This photo illustrates my feelings at the prewriting

*stage. When I was required to look for theory and add references related to research, I **felt confused** because I **had to look for where and what kind of theory was appropriate to support my proposal**. This is like the **confusion** I feel when I have to choose a menu of drinks that are appropriate for my mood while working on assignments. During the writing stage, I **felt frustrated** it was caused by **my writing was still messy**, and I **couldn't get any references that could help confirm my writing** until I wondered whether I could finish this proposal on time. This feeling is like after I found some kind of drink and was faced with too many choices. In the post-writing stage, when I finally began to understand what I was writing in this proposal, and I also received guidance from the academic advisor, I **felt calmer**. Although I had to revise continuously until the advisor finally allowed me to proceed to the proposal seminar. This is similar to how I feel when I manage to choose one of the many drink menus that are suitable to accompany me in my work, even though I have to constantly scroll through the menu on several food delivery service applications. The difficulty I faced while writing my thesis proposal was that it was **difficult to determine the title because it required several theories**, so I had to keep looking for reference sources from journals or books.*

The photo-voice above was taken after student 3 finished her exercise at the dusk. She did it to get inspiration to write a thesis proposal. The dusk, that the student used as a metaphor her feeling in the prewriting stage. First, she felt **excitement** because when she was able to **get ideas for research titles easily**, but also **felt worried**. The feeling arose because of her **lack of experience in proposal writing**. Therefore, she tried to overcome her worries by doing exercise to generate new ideas. Feeling **tired, down, and doubt** in the while-writing stage, she answered that these feelings could be compared to feel sweaty and tired after exercising. She informed that all emotions happened because she **made a lot of mistakes and was less thorough in each chapter**, resulting in many revisions by the lecturer. She found it was **difficult to find theories that were relevant to the research** that she was doing. Then, because of receiving an approval from the lecturer and also successfully registered at the last second of the application registration deadline, she felt **happiness, satisfaction, and relief** emerged at the post-writing stage She analogized it was like when

she took a break after exercising to relieve her tiredness. When she saw how beautiful the sunset that illustrated her happiness the same as the feeling after finishing writing a thesis proposal.



Figure 4. Photo and Interpretation of Student 4

*I took this photo in my room at night while I was doing my homework. When I took this photo, I was thinking about how to find the right mood so that I could complete my assignment on time. This photo illustrates my feelings at the pre-writing stage. When I was required to look for theory and add references related to research, I felt **confused** because I had to look for where and what kind of theory was appropriate to support my proposal. This is like the confusion I feel when I have to choose a menu of drinks that are appropriate for my mood while working on assignments. During the writing stage, I felt **frustrated** because my writing was still messy, and I couldn't get any references that could help confirm my writing until I wondered whether I could finish this proposal on time. This feeling is like after I found some kind of drink and was faced with too many choices. In the post-writing stage, I felt **calmer** because I finally began to understand what I was writing in this proposal, and I also received guidance from the academic advisor, although I had to revise continuously until the advisor finally allowed me to proceed to the proposal seminar. This is similar to how I feel when I manage to choose one of the many drink menus that are suitable to accompany me in my work, even though I have to constantly scroll through the menu on several food delivery service applications. The difficulty I faced while writing my thesis proposal was that it was **difficult to determine the title because it required several theories**, so I had to keep looking for reference sources from journals or books.*

Based on the photo-voice in figure 4, it was a kind of drinks. she thought about how to find the right mood to finish the assignment on time. She analogized the drinks as good mood and right choice to finish writing her thesis proposal on time. The photo was taken in her room when she was doing the assignment of writing thesis proposal. First, she thought about how to find the right mood to finish it on time, but, then, she felt **confused** during in the pre-writing stage. **The confusion, and frustration**, were caused by her **lack of academic writing rules and identify the fixed theories**. This was similar to how she felt when she had to choose a menu of drinks that would be appropriate for her mood during the writing process.

In the while-writing stage, her feeling was a **frustration** because **the references in supporting her to write the thesis proposal did not convinced her**. It was like the feeling when she found several kinds of drinks and imagined that she had too many choices. Finally, The student was getting **calmer** and understood what should be written in post-writing stage after being given guidance and some revisions from her academic advisor. Therefore, she still felt a difficulty to **determine the title, which required her to look for multiple theories from multiple sources**, as well as determining the beverage, which required her to look at various menus in the application.



Figure 5. Photo and Interpretation of Student 5

This photo was taken when I saw the cat was sleeping on this printer, which made me think that my friends might be able to feel the feelings I experienced during the writing of the proposal. At

*the prewriting stage, I thought that writing a proposal was not easy because it was my first time writing a proposal. So I **felt anxious and doubtful** at the same time when deciding on the title, which was my first step in starting to write this proposal, just like this cat sleeping on the printer reflects my uncertainty, like trying to find comfort in a confusing situation. In the while-writing stage, when I started writing the first chapter, I **felt anxious** about whether my writing was in accordance with the revision given by the lecturer. This cat, looking relaxed on top of the printer, reflects my efforts to find calm and confidence in the writing process, even though the anxiety remains. However, at the post-writing stage, I **felt happy** because I was able to make a proposal through my own efforts, from meeting with the lecturer for revision to getting permission from the supervisor to continue to the proposal seminar. This feeling is like a cat that can finally sleep comfortably in the place of its choice, giving hope and satisfaction after going through a process full of challenges. The difficulties I faced in writing the proposal, such as **the difficulty in determining the title** and having to revise it many times, were similar to looking for comfort in an unfamiliar place but finally finding the right position.*

In the photo-voice above, it could be seen a cat was sitting on the print machine. Student 5 illustrated his feeling that was represented by the cat. He said, it represented the emotions of his **anxiety** and **doubtfulness** in pre-writing stage. The emotions are caused by the **difficulty in deciding the title of his thesis proposal**. It was similar with watching a cat was sleeping on a printer, trying to find a comfort in a confusing situation.

However still felt **anxiety** in the while-writing stage but he kept continuing writing each chapter and adjusting with the lecturer's corrections and revisions. In this stage, he explained that he also encountered **difficulties in determining the title**, which caused him to revise the title several times, just the same as the cat changed its comfortable position several times. The **happiness and satisfaction** after **completing and finishing writing the thesis proposal with his own efforts** were experienced by him in post-writing stage. it was like seeing his cat finally was able to sleep comfortably in the place he had chosen.



Figure 6. Photo and Interpretation of Student 6

*I took this photo in my room after staying up late to learn English using this dictionary. When I took this photo, all I could think about was whether I could speak English well and fluently. This photo illustrates my feelings during the pre-writing stage because I **felt it was difficult to determine and create a research title due to my lack of experience in writing proposal**. This feeling is the same when I have to speak English fluently. I find it difficult, so I learn to improve my English. At the while-writing stage, I was **afraid of writing a research gap when I didn't know whether the gap I made was correct or not for my research**, so I immediately consulted my supervisor. At the post-writing stage, this stage is described by the feeling that I have succeeded in improving my speaking skills, which is the result of my efforts to learn English so far, and that the efforts do not betray the results. This is the same as being **satisfied** with the results of my proposal writing, which I try every week to make progress on and produce results with the approval of the instructor. This is how I felt when I was confused about where to start learning English and I also found it **difficult to remember vocabulary, learn grammar, and pronouns in English**.*

Student 6 took picture a dictionary to analogize and express her feelings when she was writing the thesis proposal. A dictionary is related to vocabulary, part of speech, and grammar. She considered that to write a thesis proposal, it meant the students had to learn and memorize all things in a dictionary. In the pre-writing stage, she felt **confusion** and **difficulties especially in determining and deciding the title**. The emotions were caused by her **lack of experience in writing a proposal**. In while-writing stage, her feeling changed into **afraid** of

because it was **difficult for her to find out the gap in her proposal with the previous research**. The emotion of **satisfied** was felt by her after having revisions from the lecturer. It happened in the post-writing stage. Besides, she was also successfully completed to write the thesis proposal, then got an approval and finally it was ready to hold proposal seminar.

DISCUSSION

After analyzing the students' photo-voice reflections on the challenges and emotional experiences encountered during thesis proposal writing, several key difficulties were identified. One of the primary challenges was determining a suitable research title, as students often struggled to identify a specific and relevant topic within their field of study. Many reported changing their title multiple times, which aligns with Hasanah's (2018) assertion that limited knowledge in a new subject area can hinder creativity and lead to unoriginal titles. Similarly, Zuriati (2017) found that students, particularly those focusing on market-related topics, frequently faced title rejections, requiring multiple revisions.

Another common challenge was finding relevant theories that aligned with the research topic. According to Kurniati et al. (2010), selecting theories appropriate to the title or research problem is crucial for meeting scientific writing standards. However, many students struggled to identify relevant theoretical frameworks, and the use of inappropriate theories often led to thesis proposals that failed to meet academic expectations.

In addition, students encountered difficulties related to English proficiency, including grammatical errors, limited vocabulary, and syntax issues. Writing a thesis proposal in English as a foreign language posed significant obstacles, requiring mastery of grammar, academic vocabulary, and sentence construction. Wahyuningsih (2018) emphasized that transforming ideas into English sentences demands precise grammar and appropriate vocabulary choices, which many students found challenging.

Moreover, finding appropriate references was another significant issue. Hasanah (2018)

noted that not all resources required by students—such as books, international journals, and supporting documents—were easily accessible. The findings indicated that students frequently struggled to identify and select appropriate references, leading to uncertainty in their research process.

Alongside these academic challenges, students experienced a range of emotions throughout the thesis proposal writing process. During the pre-writing stage, emotions such as uncertainty, anxiety, exhaustion, frustration, and worry were prevalent. Kristanto et al. (2014) highlighted that confusion often contributed to prolonged preparation times and difficulties in determining research topics. Chaplin, as cited in Kristanto et al. (2014), described anxiety as an unpleasant emotional state triggered by an unclear or uncertain threat. However, as students progressed to the post-writing stage, their emotions shifted toward positive experiences, including cheerfulness, comfort, calmness, pride, and satisfaction. Wach (2019) found that positive emotions such as pride and satisfaction were commonly experienced by students and played a crucial role in maintaining their motivation throughout the writing process. These emotions ultimately helped students persevere and complete their thesis proposals successfully.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings presented in the results and discussion, several key conclusions can be drawn regarding the challenges and emotional experiences students face in writing a thesis proposal. The challenges identified include difficulties in determining a suitable research title, selecting relevant theories that align with the research topic, overcoming limitations in English proficiency—such as grammatical errors, insufficient vocabulary, and syntactical issues—and identifying appropriate reference materials. These obstacles often hinder students' ability to develop a well-structured and academically sound thesis proposal.

Moreover, students' emotional experiences were closely tied to the challenges they encountered throughout the writing process. Negative emotions, such as uncertainty, anxiety, exhaustion, frustration, and worry, were more prevalent during the pre-writing and drafting stages. However, as students made progress in their writing, these emotions gradually transformed into positive feelings, including cheerfulness, comfort, calmness, pride, and satisfaction. The shift toward positive emotions was particularly evident when students received approval for their thesis proposals from lecturers or academic advisors, reinforcing their sense of accomplishment.

This study was conducted with a limited number of participants, specifically those who had completed their thesis proposals. Future research could yield different insights if participants were selected from various universities or included students who were still in the process of writing their proposals. Given these findings, students preparing to write a thesis proposal are encouraged to focus on strengthening their academic writing skills, carefully selecting a research title, choosing an appropriate methodology, and identifying suitable reference materials. Additionally, thesis advisors play a crucial role in providing not only academic guidance but also emotional support to help students navigate the challenges of thesis proposal writing. Further studies should expand the scope of research to explore these challenges in greater depth and across different academic contexts.

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