

## **EXPLORING STUDENTS' PROBLEMS IN WRITING THESIS BACKGROUND: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY**

**Reina Siti Ainurohmah**

English Education Department, Islamic State University of Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Indonesia  
*sitireina23@gmail.com*

**Tedi Rohadi**

English Education Department, Islamic State University of Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Indonesia  
*tedi.rohadi@uinsgd.ac.id*

**Predari Siswayani**

English Education Department, Islamic State University of Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Indonesia  
*predarisiswayani@uinsgd.ac.id*

### **Abstract**

This research explores the experiences of graduates and current students of the year 2020 in writing thesis backgrounds. The main purpose of this research was to identify the specific problems experienced by the students and the strategies to overcome these problems. This research used a qualitative approach with a narrative inquiry design. The participants are the students of the year 2020 in the English Education Department (EED). The students are (1) those who had completed their thesis until the graduation ceremony and (2) those who are still completing their thesis until semester 9. The data collection technique and instrument were used in two ways, namely interviews and document analysis. The findings indicate that students have problems writing a thesis background. The problems they encountered were identifying specific research gaps, identifying research problems, the rationale for selecting the research topic, organizing ideas, paraphrasing, summarizing, and citing to avoid plagiarism, grammar errors, difficulty in connecting each paragraph, using appropriate academic vocabulary, punctuation errors, and writing apprehension. The students also used various strategies to overcome these problems. The strategies they used were reading relevant references with their thesis; using digital tools such as Grammarly, Quillbolt, Google Translate, and DeepL; regular discussions and consultations with supervisors; discussions with peers; listening to music; and engaging in social interactions such as exercise, hanging out, and going to the park.

Keywords: Students' problems, thesis background, strategies to overcome

### **INTRODUCTION**

This study explores the challenges faced by undergraduate students in writing the background section of their thesis, specifically within the context of English academic writing. Academic writing, as defined by Oshima and Hogue (2017), refers to the type of writing that is commonly employed in high school and college courses. Academic writing exhibits a higher level of formality than narrative writing or personal writing. Each sentence in academic writing must demonstrate coherence and possess a well-structured sentence. This means that academic writing involves organized research practices used by students at higher education levels, using formal language while writing Bailey (2011) further highlights that the purposes of academic writing encompass reporting original research conducted by the writer, addressing a given or chosen question, engaging in a discourse on a topic of shared interest while presenting the writer's perspective, and synthesizing existing research conducted by others on a specific subject. Akkaya and Aydin (2018) mentioned that Academic writing is classified into several types, including theses, articles, papers, projects, and posters. In other words, a thesis is a type of academic writing that plays an important role in higher education as a student's final assignment in obtaining a bachelor's degree. Understanding academic writing is essential for students, especially in the English realm. Students need to know how to write academic papers, especially when writing a thesis.

Wilson (2022) outlines seven core elements of academic writing: evidence, analysis, responsiveness to questions or problems, methodology, structure, and argumentation. These elements require students to demonstrate critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and formal expression—skills often underdeveloped in novice researchers. Writing the thesis background, as noted by Thahirah et al. (2023), is particularly demanding, requiring students to integrate ideas, justify the research, and differentiate their study from existing literature.

Theoretical insights from Ratnawati et al. (2018) suggest that successful academic writing depends on students' ability to generate, outline, and compose new ideas in the form of a formal academic essay while demonstrating their capacity to adapt to new situations for educational contexts. Based on preliminary interviews with students from UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, common difficulties include the difficult undertaking of finding relevant content and references that align with the thesis topic, the challenge of establishing coherence between sentences, experiencing writer's block, and the difficulty in finding relevant theories. This aligns with Swales and Feak (2012), who state that students frequently struggle to integrate relevant literature and synthesize material to construct a coherent narrative, which is crucial for providing an appropriate basis for the thesis. Belkhir and Benyelles (2017) also note EFL learners faced challenges when writing academically in English due to the need for proficiency in general writing skills, including the ability to access grammar, paraphrase, summarize, and incorporate evidence from journal articles to develop supporting ideas.

This research differentiates itself by focusing solely on the thesis background rather than the entire thesis writing process. It adopts a narrative inquiry design, relying on in-depth interviews to explore students' lived experiences and the strategies they employ to overcome their difficulties. This approach allows for a more personalized and detailed account of student challenges compared to prior studies that primarily used descriptive qualitative or quantitative methods.

The study addresses two main questions: (1) What are the problems experienced by graduate and ongoing students in writing thesis background? (2) What are the strategies used by the graduate and ongoing students to overcome these problems?

Theoretically, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the micro-level difficulties students face in thesis writing. Practically, it offers insights for students, educators, and future researchers to better prepare and support undergraduate thesis writers.

The conceptual framework integrates four main constructs: academic writing, thesis background writing, students' challenges, and strategies for overcoming them. Writing, as described by Irvin (2010), is a crucial form of indirect communication that develops various linguistic competencies. However, academic writing poses greater challenges due to its formal requirements and cognitive demands (Wahib, 2023). Furthermore, Indonesian students face specific linguistic hurdles when translating ideas from Bahasa Indonesia to English (Ariyanti, 2016).

In conclusion, understanding the specific problems encountered in writing the thesis background, along with strategies for overcoming them, is essential for enhancing the quality of academic writing among undergraduate students. This study aims to fill a gap in the existing literature and provide practical recommendations for improving academic writing instruction and support systems.

## **METHOD**

This study employs a narrative inquiry design and a qualitative methodology to examine more deeply the students' problem experiences in writing thesis backgrounds. The qualitative approach was chosen to obtain an in-depth understanding of students' problem experiences in writing thesis background, and implementation strategies to overcome the problems. This study was conducted with a special focus on two students in 2020 at the English Education

Department, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. Based on the purposive sampling technique, the two participant criteria were students who had completed their thesis until the graduation ceremony and were still completing their thesis until semester 9. The selected participants were interviewed, and documents from the thesis background were analyzed to obtain more in-depth data about their background experiences in compiling their thesis. The data were collected using two primary techniques involved semi-structured interviews using open-ended questions designed to draw out detailed responses about students' difficulties and strategies; and document analysis to provide a complementary perspective by allowing the researcher to examine actual writing samples for evidence of common challenges such as difficulties with grammar, paraphrasing, summarizing, coherence, and identifying research gaps. Data analysis followed Creswell (2012): examining raw data, identifying aspects of the participants' story, sequencing or arranging story aspects, transcribing the text, and presenting retellings that express personal experiences.

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS**

This study explores students' experiences in writing a thesis. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews to answer research questions one and two; and document analysis to answer research question one, involving two students in 2020 at the English Language Education Study Program, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. The findings are categorized into two main parts: The problems experienced by graduate and on-going students in writing thesis background; and the strategies used by the graduate and on-going students to cope with the problems.

### **1. The problems experienced by graduate and ongoing students in writing thesis background**

In higher education, students have to finish a thesis as a final assignment to get a bachelor's degree. As Safitri et al. (2021) mentioned, writing a thesis is a crucial task for students because it is necessary to complete university studies and obtain an academic degree. One part of the thesis is the background of the research, which is in the first chapter of the thesis. As mentioned by Thahirah et al (2023), the introduction includes the background of the research, which should explain what and why the research was conducted and include details in the literature review chapter. This research aims to figure out the problems experienced by the graduates and the ongoing students' experience in writing thesis background.

The interview questions and document analysis were designed to answer the research questions regarding the problems faced by students in writing the thesis background in identifying research gaps, identifying research problems, the rationale in selecting the research topic, organizing ideas, paraphrasing, summarizing and citing, grammar, connecting paragraph, selecting academic vocabulary, punctuation, and writing apprehension.

The findings revealed that the problems encountered by the two participants were different. Both Seli and Nana experienced difficulties in identifying gaps, connecting paragraphs, paraphrasing, summarizing, and citing, grammar errors, choosing the proper academic vocabulary, organizing ideas, and writing apprehension. Meanwhile, the differences between the problems lie in identifying research problems, the rationale for selecting the topic, and punctuation.

The findings indicate that both participants encountered several similar difficulties, especially in identifying gaps, connecting paragraphs, paraphrasing, summarizing, and citing, grammar errors, choosing the proper academic vocabulary, organizing ideas, and writing apprehension. These common difficulties highlight the necessity for a supportive system, including writing workshops, consistent supervisor feedback, and access to technology like

Grammarly or Quillbot. Furthermore, students must be motivated to enhance their academic writing abilities by reading scientific articles, participating in peer discussions, and regularly practicing writing. Instructors and institutions may conduct specialized thesis writing workshops or courses to provide students with the skills to address and overcome difficulties with writing at an early stage. Overcoming difficulties can enhance academic writing proficiency and confidence in thesis completion.

Firstly, they explained that identifying research gaps is a difficult part of writing a thesis background. This can pose a serious problem for academic writing, particularly for novice writers (Bailey, 2011). The students' experiences demonstrate that an in-depth understanding of the existing literature is essential for differentiating their research. Identifying a research gap at the beginning of their research demonstrates to readers that previous research has limits (Arsyad & Zainil, 2023). In addition, clearly identifying research gaps can influence the direction and goals of their research. Creswell (2014) emphasized that identifying gaps in current research is essential for guiding the goals and focus of studies, as well as proving the need for new research within a wider scientific framework. Meanwhile, Booth et al. (2016) asserted that identifying research gaps may support arguments regarding a study's significance, encourage innovation, and enhance the scientific field. Thus, the ability to identify research gaps is essential for guiding more significant research directions and goals, as well as encouraging innovative research.

Secondly, they recounted different experiences about the identification of research problems. Seli considered how her engagement with topics of interest and preliminary study facilitated the identification of her research problems. Meanwhile, Nana had difficulty defining the topic from the beginning, resulting in difficulties in identifying the research problems. This resonates with Fareed et al. (2016), who state that Ambiguity in topic selection might hinder the formulation of research problems, often confusing writing structure. This is also supported by the findings of Thahirah et al. (2023), who contend that ambiguous research topics frequently lead to a complex research process. In this case, the research problems are essential for identifying research questions. Effective research begins with clearly comprehending the research problems, which serves as a foundation for further investigation (Creswell, 2012). This discussion highlights the significant impact of the preliminary research phase in enhancing students' capacity to refine their research questions.

Moreover, academic writing is an essential ability for students. They frequently experience difficulty in the writing process, particularly when tasked with identifying and elaborating on their research topics. In this case, it was seen that they encountered different difficulties in articulating their rationale for selecting the topic. Seli stated that the selected topic was overly broad, leading to difficulties in delineating the research. In contrast, Nana encountered difficulties in identifying particular reasons for selecting the topic. This aligns with Belkhir and Benyelles (2017), who demonstrated that students encounter numerous challenges that may be linked to the problems of topic narrowing and rationale development. Al Fadda (2012) asserted that novice writers can achieve success in academic writing by defining topics before writing and following the three principal stages of the writing process: planning, writing, and editing.

They also encountered different problems while organizing ideas for their thesis background. The difference highlights a crucial element of academic writing, in which coherence and logical progression are essential. This aligns with Al-Khairi (2013), which emphasizes Saudi students' general challenges in academic writing, particularly in content organization and idea connectivity. This results from a lack of understanding of rhetorical issues. Soraya et al. (2019) state that students frequently encounter challenges in organizing their ideas when writing backgrounds. Furthermore, their problems in writing backgrounds are caused by their rhetorical issues. Rhetorical issues arise when individuals attempt to transform their existing knowledge. They also expressed a deficiency in confidence regarding the

precision of their structured concepts, which might be ascribed to writing apprehension. This can affect the productivity and the quality of their writing (Bailey, 2011).

Then, they indicate the problems with paraphrasing, summarizing, and citing. This challenge emerges from the complexity of academic writing, which requires paraphrasing, summarizing, and citing the ideas and works of other authors (Bailey, 2011). Paraphrasing, summarizing, and citing are essential components of writing. In this case, effective word management is essential to avoid plagiarism (Bailey, 2011). Furthermore, in this case, critical thinking is essential for paraphrasing, summarizing, and citing to avoid plagiarism. This aligns with Davies (2015), who states that critical thinking in thesis writing is essential for students in higher education as it enables them to effectively summarize, paraphrase, and provide clear, coherent, and cohesive interpretations.

Additionally, they encountered different problems with grammatical errors, especially in the appropriate use of tense and conjunctions, as stated in the findings. This aligns with the study by Fareed et al (2016) found that grammar and syntax were the major issues students had with their writing. An appropriate use of tense is an essential component that frequently poses difficulties for students. Bailey (2011) asserted that the appropriate use of tense is essential, particularly in parts like method and research results, where the past tense is required to indicate completed acts. This indicates that linguistic elements, including proficiency in tense and conjunctions, significantly influence the clarity and coherence of academic writing structures.

The primary problem during analysis is the difficulty of coherently linking paragraphs due to they have difficulties with conjunction usage. This aligns with the findings of Fareed et al (2016), who demonstrated that several students have difficulty maintaining a coherent flow in their writing due to a lack of understanding of sentence structure and the interconnections between ideas. In this context, it is essential to acknowledge that the problem of utilizing conjunctions applies not just to linguistic proficiency but also to students' critical thinking abilities. As mentioned by Al Zahrani and Elyas (2017), critical thinking is of crucial significance. This skill is crucial for comprehensive analysis and the formulation of coherent arguments. Critical thinking aids students in rationally connecting ideas. Thus, this can enhance the quality of their writing.

In addition, they had difficulty in recognizing appropriate academic vocabulary due to a lack of comprehension of the vocabulary. This challenge substantially affected the quality of their writing, particularly in articulating accurate and formal concepts within the thesis background. Academic vocabulary is essential in writing academic papers. As mentioned by Nushi and Jenabzadeh (2016), effective academic vocabulary is essential for understanding and succeeding in an academic career. Moreover, the ability to read and comprehend texts across various academic areas or disciplines is deeply linked to students' vocabulary proficiency. In addition, Nation (2001) asserts that acquiring English vocabulary is an essential difficulty for English learners. Students with a limited vocabulary are likely to have difficulties in their professional and academic environments. Furthermore, a conclusive rationale for the primary significance of academic vocabulary is its use as an intellectual instrument for developing students' critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making abilities (Washburn, 2009). This indicates that students must comprehend the use of academic vocabulary to succeed in the academic setting.

Besides, they also encountered different punctuation errors, which affected the coherence and clarity of ideas in their thesis background. The punctuation inaccuracies exhibited by Nana indicate a need for enhanced comprehension of punctuation rules in academic situations to prevent errors that may affect written coherence. As stated by Khan and Khan (2016), punctuation marks are essential in writing. Without these symbols, the writer's message remains incomprehensible. This is also supported by Rehman (2005), who states that proficient writing requires thorough control of punctuation since it avoids ambiguities and enhances the

clarity and comprehensibility of sentences. This means that punctuation is essential in writing. Thus, proficiency in effective punctuation is an essential ability for writing a cohesive thesis, and students must engage in focused and ongoing practice to enhance this aspect.

Lastly, they encountered anxiety during the writing of their thesis backgrounds due to apprehensions regarding the accuracy of the information provided. This aligns with Madjid et al. (2020), who said that students have difficulty with writing apprehension. They often feel nervous and insecure in writing backgrounds. It makes students experience a level of anxiety in writing backgrounds. This will affect the student's learning process. Writing apprehension is a multifaceted concept and a significant issue encountered by both native and non-native English learners, ultimately affecting the student's learning process (Al-Shboul & Huwari, 2015). In addition, students exhibit various characteristics of writing apprehension. As mentioned by Badrasawi & Zubairi (2016), students who are typically proficient in writing often experience apprehension regarding the writing process; they fear assessment of their work, frequently avoid writing tasks, and submit assignments tardily or not at all. Their anxiety manifests in both their written output and their attitudes towards writing contexts. Therefore, students require appropriate support and guidance to comprehend the information and develop efficient writing skills in order to reduce tension and enhance the quality of their thesis background writing.

In conclusion, writing a thesis background poses various challenges for higher education students, as demonstrated by the experiences of the interviewed participants. The students encountered considerable difficulty in identifying research gaps and problems, which are essential for developing an effective basis for their studies. Their challenges encompassed organizing ideas, paraphrasing, summarizing, citing, and applying appropriate grammar and academic vocabulary, which are critical elements of proficient academic writing. Furthermore, the students articulated apprehension related to their information's reliability and general self-assurance in managing complex writing assignments. These discussions highlight the imperative to improve students' comprehension of academic writing conventions and to offer specific support to facilitate their comprehension of the writing process, thus strengthening their skills and decreasing anxiety in future studies.

## **2. The strategies are used by graduate and ongoing students to cope with the problems**

Writing a thesis background frequently presents problems for both graduate and on-going students. This required that both students devise efficient strategies. The interview findings indicated that students employed various techniques to overcome the problems.

The interview results indicate that they generally read appropriate journals and references to address problems when writing thesis backgrounds. This aligns with Thahirah et al. (2023), who asserted that students can surmount this obstacle by reading relevant references to the research, engaging in regular consultations with their supervisor, and engaging in discussions with friends who have a more comprehensive understanding. In addition, extensive reading enhances students' knowledge base and offers diverse views that might improve writing quality. Students are able to enhance their writing abilities and resolve the challenges they face when composing a task by reading a book (Tulkinjonovna & Jurakulovna, 2021). Furthermore, Fareed et al (2016) highlighted that engaging with appropriate sources can enhance comprehension and expand writing concepts. Consistent reading habits enhance knowledge and foster improved writing abilities (Pramonojati et al., 2020). However, students stated that this activity can be difficult at times. This demonstrates that academic pressure still exists. Pressure can affect students' motivation for extended reading, as noted by Aydin (2017), who indicated that high-stakes environments can create anxiety that detracts from educational

experiences. This illustrates that academic pressure persists, affecting students' capacity to engage in their reading activities fully.

In the writing process, digital technologies such as Google, Grammarly, QuillBot, and deepL are considered to increase the quality of the thesis background. Students can utilize technology to access various resources and tools for language development through various language learning apps and programs. These technological tools enhance accessibility to language acquisition opportunities and enable learners to develop language abilities with greater autonomy (Pratiwi & Waluyo, 2023). They narrated that these tools accelerate the writing process while also assisting with grammar, punctuation, and appropriate word choice. Furthermore, Madjid et al. (2020) stated that using tools like Grammarly can discover issues with the use of articles and punctuation, which are frequently a cause of errors for students. Thus, this indicates that the usage of technology not only reduces the strain of writing but also improves efficiency and accuracy.

Then, they agreed that consultation with the supervisor is essential for identifying and resolving problems in the thesis background. This aids students in enhancing the quality of their background. Similarly, Thahirah et al. (2023) state that participating in regular conversations with their supervisor might overcome the problem. This is supported by Al-Khairy (2013), who states that supervisory support is essential for assisting students in managing complex writing assignments and enhancing the clarity of their arguments. A communicative and experienced supervisor can provide clear direction and help students correct errors in their writing. This indicates that a positive relationship with the supervisor enhances writing quality and influences students' confidence when facing demanding academic tasks.

Moreover, they narrated that social interactions and physical activities such as exercise, or enjoyable activities such as listening to music reduce writing apprehension. This is confirmed by Hallam et al. (2002), who demonstrate that music can significantly diminish anxiety and improve focus by fostering an ideal working environment. At the same time, Craft and Perna (2004) observe that exercise enhances physical health and substantially elevates mental well-being, which is essential during demanding writing periods. This is supported by Madjid et al. (2020), who assert that effective stress management positively influences the writing process, aiding students in maintaining attention and motivation while finishing tasks. This indicates that achieving stability between studies and social engagements is essential for sustaining productivity in thesis writing.

In conclusion, students face several problems when writing a thesis background, and they also require the implementation of effective solutions. Interview data indicate that students primarily depend on reading relevant articles and references to address these challenges, supplemented by consistent consultations with supervisors and dialogues with knowledgeable peers. Using digital tools such as Grammarly and QuillBot significantly improves writing quality by aiding in grammar and punctuation while overcoming various problems. A positive supervisory relationship is essential for enhancing writing quality through guidance and constructive criticism, while social interactions and stress management strategies, including music listening and physical activities, sustain motivation and concentration throughout the writing process. The proper balance between academic obligations and personal well-being is crucial for maintaining productivity in thesis composition.

## CONCLUSION

This research highlights how students experience the problem of writing a thesis background and the strategies they use to overcome these problems, specifically in identifying specific research gaps; identifying research problems; the rationale for selecting the research topic; organizing ideas; paraphrasing, summarizing, and citing to avoid plagiarism; grammar

errors; difficulty in connecting each paragraph; using appropriate academic vocabulary; punctuation errors; and writing apprehension.

Both students had difficulty finding significant research gaps due to the large number of similar studies. Identifying a research problem is also very hard because it requires a problem that is recent and has not been widely researched to then become different from other studies. The difficulty in finding a research problem is also influenced by the difficulty of the topic to be chosen. In addition, organizing logical ideas throughout the paragraph and choosing the appropriate vocabulary are severe problems. This is due to organizing ideas requires critical thinking and the vocabulary used must be in accordance with the academic context to maintain formality.

The students also find difficulty in paraphrasing, summarizing, and citing sources. This is because the three stages listed above are the most essential elements of writing to avoid plagiarism. Furthermore, both students frequently have difficulty utilizing the appropriate tense, which affects the coherence and clarity of the meaning they try to express. In addition to tenses, the students also have difficulty with choosing proper conjunctions, which has an impact on paragraph connectedness. Moreover, excessive emphasis causes children to lose sight of the location of periods and commas as a barrier between sentences, making punctuation more difficult. Finally, these challenges induce anxiety in writing since students frequently worry about the accuracy and coherence of their papers.

The findings indicate that both participants encountered several similar difficulties, especially in identifying gaps, connecting paragraphs, paraphrasing, summarizing, and citing, grammar errors, choosing the proper academic vocabulary, organizing ideas, and writing apprehension. These common difficulties highlight the necessity for a supportive system, including writing workshops, consistent supervisor feedback, and access to technology like Grammarly or Quillbot. Furthermore, students must be motivated to enhance their academic writing abilities by reading scientific articles, participating in peer discussions, and regularly practicing writing. Instructors and institutions may conduct specialized thesis writing workshops or courses to provide students with the skills to address and overcome difficulties with writing at an early stage. Overcoming difficulties can enhance academic writing proficiency and confidence in thesis completion.

Furthermore, both students also have strategies to overcome these problems when writing a thesis background. The interview results showed that both students agreed that reading journals and references is essential to developing ideas and improving critical thinking. They also used digital tools such as Grammarly, QuillBot, Google Translate, and DeepL to enhance the quality of writing by speeding up the process and improving grammar and vocabulary. In addition, both students found that guidance from supervisors was essential to recognize and correct writing problems. Nonetheless, their approaches to peer discussion and feedback differed; one student felt that discussion was not very useful if peers did not understand the problem, while the other found discussion useful even though feedback was often abstract. However, both students agreed that discussing with peers helped to find a way out of their problems, even if it was not significant. Finally, the relaxation activities were also considered essential, with one student preferring to listen to music in a relaxed atmosphere, while the other preferred social interaction to increase motivation.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Akkaya, A. & Aydin, G. (2018). Academics' views on the characteristics of academic writing. *Educational Policy Analysis and Strategic Research*, 13(2), 128-160. doi: 10.29329/epasr.2018.143.7
- Al Fadda, H. (2012). Difficulties in academic writing: From the perspective of King Saud University postgraduate students. *English Language Teaching*, 5(3),123-130.

- Al-Khairiy, M. A. (2013). Saudi English-major undergraduates' academic writing problems: A Taif University perspective. *English Language Teaching*, 6(6), 1-12.
- Al-Shboul, Y., & Huwari, I. F. (2015). The causes of writing apprehension through students' perspective. *Journal of Language Teaching & Research*, 6(3), 535-544. 10.17507/jltr.0603.08.
- Al Zahrani, B. & Elyas, T. (2017). The Implementation of Critical Thinking in Saudi EFL Context: Challenges and Opportunities. *Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, 1(2), 133-141.
- Ariyanti, A. (2016). The teaching of EFL writing in Indonesia. *Dinamika Ilmu*, 16(2), 263-277. <https://doi.org/10.21093/di.v16i2.274>
- Arsyad, S., & Zainil, Y. (2023). Research gap strategies in article introductions of different rank applied linguistics journals. *Studies in English Language and Education*, 10(1), 216-234.
- Aydin, U. (2017). Test anxiety: Do gender and school level matter? *European Journal of Educational Research*, 6(2), 187-197.
- Badrasawi, K., & Zubairi, A. (2016). Exploring the relationship between writing apprehension and writing performance: A qualitative study. *International Education Studies*. 9. 134-134. 10.5539/ies.v9n8p134.
- Bailey, S. (2011). *Academic writing: A handbook for international students* (3rd ed.). Routledge.
- Belkhir, A., & Benyelles, R. (2017). Identifying EFL learners essay writing difficulties and sources: A move towards solution the case of second year EFL learners at Tlemcen University. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 16(6), 80–88.
- Booth, W. C., Colomb, G. G., Williams, J. M., Bizup, J., & Fitzgerald, W. T. (2016). *The craft of research* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). University of Chicago Press.
- Craft, L. L., & Perna, F. M. (2004). The benefits of exercise for the clinically depressed. *Primary care companion to the Journal of clinical psychiatry*, 6(3), 104–111. <https://doi.org/10.4088/pcc.v06n0301>
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. (4th Ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). SAGE.
- Davies, M. (2015). A model of critical thinking in higher education. In M. B. Paulsen (ed.). *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research* (pp. 41–92). Springer. [http://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-12835-1\\_2](http://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-12835-1_2)
- Fareed, M., Ashraf, A., & Bilal, M. (2016). ESL learners' writing skills: Problems, factors and suggestions. *Journal of Education & Social Sciences*, 4(2), 80–92.
- Hallam, S., Price, J., & Katsarou, G. (2002). The effects of background music on primary school pupils' task performance. *Educational studies*, 28(2), 111-122.
- Irvin, L. L. (2010). What is “academic” writing? In C. Lowe & P. Zemliansky (Eds.), *Writing spaces: Readings on writing* (vol. 1, pp. 3-17). Parlor Press.
- Khan, A., & Khan, Y. (2016). Punctuation errors made by the learners of intermediate level at Punjab Group of Colleges: An error analysis. *International Journal of Institutional & Industrial Research*, 1(1), 22–25.
- Madjid, H. I., Amru, A. N. F., Bimantoro, R., & Ramadhan, D. A. (2020, May). Students' Writing Apprehension in Research Background Development. In *International Conference on English Language Teaching (ICONELT 2019)* (pp. 170-172). Atlantis Press.
- Nation, P. (2001). *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge University Press.

- Nushi, M., & Jenabzadeh, H. (2016). Teaching and learning academic vocabulary. *California Linguistic Notes*, 40(2), 51-70.
- Oshima, A., & Hogue, A. (2017). *Longman academic writing series 3: Paragraphs to essays* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Pearson Education.
- Pramonojati, S., Carella, D. N., Fitriyah, W. D., & Sari, I. Y. K. (2020, May). Students' critical thinking in writing background of research. In *International Conference on English Language Teaching (ICONELT 2019)* (pp. 304-308). Atlantis Press.
- Pratiwi, D. I., & Waluyo, B. (2023). Autonomous learning and the use of digital technologies in online English classrooms in higher education. *Contemporary Educational Technology*, 15(2).
- Ratnawati, R., Faridah, D., Anam, S., & Retnaningdyah, P. (2018). Exploring academic writing needs of Indonesian EFL undergraduate students. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ)*, 9(4), 420-432. <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol9no4.31>
- Rehman, D. T. (2005). *Punctuation, comprehension, and precise writing*. In D. Fazal-ul-Rehman, English (compulsory). Allama Iqbal Open University.
- Safitri, C. D., Azisah, S., & Annur, M. J. (2021). The analysis of students' challenges to thesis writing at UIN Alauddin Makassar. *English Language Teaching for EFL Learners*, 3(2), 41 –53. <https://doi.org/10.24252/elties.v3i2.21013>
- Sintya, Y. E., & Al Hafizh, M. (2022). Undergraduate Students' Ability in Constructing Cohesion in the Background of the Problem of Thesis. In *67th TEFLIN International Virtual Conference & the 9th ICOELT 2021* (TEFLIN ICOELT 2021) (pp. 224-227). Atlantis Press.
- Soraya, I., Riswan, A. H., Sholehuddin, T. R., & Mahendra, A. (2020, May). The rhetorical development of students' research paper background. [Paper presentation]. In *International Conference on English Language Teaching (ICONELT 2019)* (pp. 274-277). Atlantis Press.
- Swales, J. M. & Feak, C. B. (2012). *Academic writing for graduate students* (3rd ed.). Umich Press
- Thahirah, T., Muhayyang, M., & Aryani, A. (2023). Students' difficulties in writing thesis background. *Journal of Excellence in English Language Education*, 2(1), 82-89. <https://doi.org/10.26858/joele.v2i1,%20January.43588>
- Tulkinjonovna, B. F., & Jurakulovna, K. L. (2021). Impacts of reading books in improving writing proficiency. *Academicia Globe*, 2(05), 23-26.
- Wahib, A. (2023). An EFL experience in undergraduate thesis writing: An auto-ethnography. *SALEE: Study of Applied Linguistics and English Education*, 4(1), 100-113.
- Washburn, P. (2009). *The vocabulary of critical thinking*. Oxford University Press.
- Wilson, J. R. (2022). *Academic Writing*. Harvard University.