CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the study by addressing key issues concerning the development of writing skills among Indonesian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) student teachers. It begins by examining the persistent challenges these learners face in academic and professional writing, as well as the limitations of conventional pedagogical approaches commonly used in Indonesian teacher education programs.

The chapter emphasizes the importance of adopting innovative instructional tools, particularly blogging, to enhance writing fluency, promote reflective practice, and support teacher identity development. Within this context, news writing is positioned as a purposeful and structured genre that enhances overall English as a Foreign Language (EFL) writing competence.

Following the background, the chapter presents the research questions guiding this investigation, which focus on how EFL student teachers in Tangerang, Banten, engage with blogging for news writing instruction and the challenges they face. The study's objectives are then outlined, emphasizing the dual focus on enhancing writing performance and exploring the role of blogging in shaping teacher identity.

The chapter also discusses the study's theoretical and practical significance, particularly to genre pedagogy (GP) and its integration with digital tools in English as a foreign language (EFL) writing instruction. Finally, the chapter defines the scope and limitations of the research, clarifies its focus on pre-service teachers within a specific institutional context, and provides an overview of the dissertation's organization, offering a roadmap for the chapters that follow.

1.1 Background of the Study

In recent years, the integration of digital technologies into language education has reshaped pedagogical practices, particularly in writing instruction. Among these innovations, blogging has gained recognition as a valuable

instructional tool that fosters authentic writing, enhances learner engagement, and enables interaction with broader, often real-world, audiences (Blackstone & Harwood, 2011; K. T. C. Chen, 2012; Godwin-Jones, 2008). Beyond its function as a writing platform, blogging also serves as a reflective and interactive space where learners can articulate pedagogical beliefs, develop a professional voice, and engage in multimodal discourse (R. H. Chen, 2022; Darvin & Norton, 2015; Nabhan, 2021). In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts such as Indonesia, blogging has demonstrated potential for enhancing writing skills (Mali & Salsbury, 2021) and for supporting reflective learning and the development of professional identity among pre-service teachers (Nabhan, 2021).

Despite its pedagogical potential, blogging remains underutilized in Indonesian EFL contexts, where learners continue to struggle with organizing ideas, maintaining cohesion, and achieving grammatical accuracy (Ahmed, 2019; Ariyanti & Fitriana, 2017; Ceylan, 2019). These difficulties are often exacerbated by conventional methods that prioritize form over function (Rahayu, 2021; Rohmah & Muslim, 2021). Consequently, many learners fail to develop the rhetorical control and genre sensitivity necessary for producing well-structured, contextually appropriate texts. This limitation is often rooted in instructional models that overlook identity, agency, and reflection in writing development. Identity formation is not peripheral but central to language learning and is dynamically constructed through discourse, social practice, and investment (Barkhuizen, 2017; Gee, 2000; Norton, 2013; Wenger, 1998).

One promising response to these instructional shortcomings is genre pedagogy (GP), an approach grounded in systemic functional linguistics (SFL). GP highlights the social purpose and staged organization of texts, offering learners explicit instruction through modeling, deconstruction, joint construction, and independent practice (Emilia, 2005, 2011; Hyland, 2007; Martin & Rose, 2008). Research in the Indonesian context supports the effectiveness of genre pedagogy (GP) in improving learners' academic writing abilities by promoting awareness of genre-specific features and purposes (Nurlaelawati et al., 2020; Wardani et al., 2021).

Among the various genres taught in EFL contexts, news writing stands out as particularly relevant for developing critical communication skills. As a real-world, public-facing genre, news writing emphasizes factual accuracy, objectivity, conciseness, and clarity, key competencies for media literacy and civic participation (Antepara, 2003; Schulman, 2019). The genre typically follows the inverted pyramid structure and relies on the 5W1H framework (Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How) to organize information efficiently (Suksawas, 2018; Z. Yin, 2015). Nevertheless, mastering news writing also requires learners to overcome affective barriers such as writing anxiety, which can hinder engagement, motivation, and linguistic risk-taking (Rohmah & Muslim, 2021).

Recent research suggests that blogging can be an effective way to mitigate these emotional challenges. Blogging provides an authentic, low-stakes writing environment that supports iterative drafting, encourages peer feedback, and promotes student autonomy (Alenezi, 2022b; Saha, 2023). By shifting the focus from accuracy to expression and communication, blogging can help learners reduce writing apprehension and enhance their fluency and confidence. It also fosters critical thinking and digital literacy as students curate content, engage with real-world audiences, and reflect on the ethical dimensions of their writing (Blackstone & Wilkinson, 2011; Huffaker, 2005; Yu et al., 2024). When embedded within a genre-based framework, blogging offers multimodal, socially situated learning opportunities that deepen learners' understanding of the rhetorical purpose and textual structure (Gilliland et al., 2021; Zhai & Razali, 2023).

The intersection of blogging and genre pedagogy is especially salient for EFL teacher education, where professional identity development is as important as language proficiency. Reflective, dialogic practices, hallmarks of blogging, serve an important role in helping student teachers construct their professional selves. According to Norton (2013), identity is shaped through active engagement in educational discourse. Darvin and Norton (2015, 2017) extend this model by highlighting the role of ideology, capital, and investment in shaping learners' engagement with literacy. Blogging, in this light, becomes a space for student teachers to reflect on their pedagogical beliefs, negotiate their evolving roles, and document their professional growth (Amalia, 2019; Farrell, 2021; Rachmawati et

al., 2017; Varghese et al., 2005). A well-developed self-concept encompassing academic, emotional, and social dimensions enables student teachers to fully leverage the reflective and expressive opportunities afforded by blogging (Nabhan, 2021).

Empirical evidence from Indonesian contexts supports the integration of blogging into genre-based writing instruction. Studies have shown that blogging when combined with scaffolded genre instruction, enhances writing competence, digital fluency, and learner engagement (Cahyono & Mutiaraningrum, 2016; Mali & Salsbury, 2021; Nurlaelawati & Novianti, 2017). Furthermore, discourse-based pedagogy supports learners in making informed rhetorical and linguistic choices, thereby contributing to more precise and more purposeful writing (Flowerdew, 2012). As Godwin-Jones (2008, 2018) suggests, online tools such as blogs provide socially situated platforms for multimodal composition, thereby amplifying learners' voices and agency in meaningful communicative contexts.

In light of these pedagogical potential and contextual limitations, this study investigates the integration of blogging into a genre pedagogy model for teaching news writing to Indonesian EFL student teachers. Specifically, it explores how student teachers engage with blogging, navigate the linguistic, cognitive, and affective complexities of journalistic writing, and reflect on their evolving professional identities through multimodal, socially grounded writing practices.

Hence, the convergence of genre pedagogy and blogging presents a compelling framework for addressing the linguistic, emotional, and identity-related needs of EFL student teachers. However, a significant research gap remains regarding how this integrated approach functions in practice, particularly within news writing instruction and teacher education programs. Addressing this gap is crucial for advancing writing pedagogy and informing curriculum design in digitally enriched English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning environments.

1.2 Research Questions

To address the research gap and advance understanding in this area, the present study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How do EFL student teachers in Tangerang, Banten, engage with blogging as a pedagogical tool for news writing instruction?

2. What challenges do they face in learning news writing through blogging, and how does this experience shape their teacher identity development as future educators?

These research questions aim to uncover both the pedagogical affordances and the experiential realities of integrating blogging into genre-based news writing instruction. By examining how student teachers engage with this approach and the challenges they face, the study aims to generate insights into how digital tools can support not only writing development but also the formation of a professional identity. These guiding questions inform the specific objectives of the research, which are articulated as follows:

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

1. To explore how EFL student teachers in Tangerang, Banten, use blogging to enhance their news writing skills within a genre pedagogy framework.

2. To identify the challenges these student teachers face in learning news writing through blogging and analyze how these experiences inform the development of their professional identity.

By addressing these objectives, the study not only aims to provide empirical evidence on the integration of blogging within genre-based news writing instruction but also to illuminate its broader implications for EFL pedagogy and teacher development. Understanding how digital writing tools, such as blogs, influence both linguistic outcomes and the construction of professional identity has the potential to inform theoretical discourse, classroom practices, and institutional policies. The following section outlines the significance of this study in terms of its theoretical, pedagogical, and practical contributions.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study offers theoretical, pedagogical, and practical contributions to the fields of English as a foreign language (EFL) writing instruction and teacher

education, particularly within digitally mediated and genre-informed learning environments. By investigating the integration of blogging into a genre pedagogy (GP) framework, the study addresses a critical gap in understanding how digital tools can support both academic writing development and the formation of professional identity among EFL student teachers.

Theoretical contributions of the study advance existing research on genre-based instruction, digital writing practices, and identity construction in EFL contexts (Emilia, 2005, 2011; Hyland, 2007; Wardani et al., 2021). Although prior studies have examined blogging as a tool to improve writing fluency, learner engagement, and motivation (Blackstone et al., 2007; Blackstone & Harwood, 2011; Vurdien, 2012, 2013), few have investigated its role within structured genre-based pedagogy to support both genre mastery and identity development. This study addresses that gap by positioning blogs not only as platforms for written production but also as reflective, multimodal spaces that mediate teacher identity through interaction, critical reflection, and pedagogical voice.

The study is informed by sociocultural and poststructuralist perspectives, which conceptualize identity as dynamic, socially constructed, and mediated through participation, discourse, and reflection (Gee, 2000; Norton, 2013; Wenger, 1998). In addition, the research draws on theoretical models of new literacies and digital multiliteracies that emphasize the situated, multimodal, and participatory nature of online writing (Godwin-Jones, 2021; Lankshear & Knobel, 2006). These perspectives support a broader understanding of writing as not only a technical-linguistic practice but also a reflective and identity-oriented activity, particularly relevant in teacher education, where pre-service teachers negotiate their emerging professional roles.

While reflective writing has long been recognized as foundational to professional learning (Amalia, 2019; Farrell, 2021; Rachmawati et al., 2017; Schön, 1992), blogging extends this reflective function into digital and dialogic environments, enabling student teachers to engage in self-representation, collaborative meaning-making, and critical self-examination(Al Khateeb, 2016; R. H. Chen, 2022; Darvin, 2017). Therefore, the study contributes to a more integrated

model of teacher development, one that aligns literacy development with the formation of professional identity in technology-enhanced learning contexts.

Pedagogically, this study demonstrates how blogging, embedded within genre-based instruction, supports the production of structured, audience-oriented texts while fostering rhetorical awareness, digital authorship, and reflective thinking. These findings offer insights for instructors and curriculum designers seeking to enhance writing instruction through learner-centered, technology-mediated approaches.

Practically, the study offers guidance for teacher educators and institutional stakeholders on integrating accessible blogging platforms into EFL teacher preparation programs. In resource-constrained environments, blogging presents a scalable and cost-effective means for cultivating essential 21st-century competencies, including digital literacy, multimodal composition, and audience awareness (Cahyono & Mutiaraningrum, 2016; Zein et al., 2020).

Finally, the study addresses specific challenges faced by student teachers in composing news articles, including writing anxiety, limited familiarity with journalistic conventions, and uncertainty in navigating public digital spaces. By framing blogging as a reflective and socially mediated writing practice, the study illustrates how student teachers can develop professional confidence and identity through participation in authentic, multimodal discourse communities (Darvin & Norton, 2017; Farrell, 2021; Norton, 2013). Through its integrated focus on genre pedagogy and digital practice, the study contributes a pedagogical model that supports linguistic development, critical literacy, and professional growth in EFL teacher education.

To contextualize the contributions outlined above, it is essential to describe the specific parameters within which this study was conducted. Clarifying the scope provides a foundation for interpreting the findings and understanding the relevance of the research outcomes within a defined educational setting. The following section outlines the contextual, instructional, and thematic boundaries of the study.

1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study examines the integration of blogging into news writing instruction within a genre-based pedagogical framework, with a dual focus on enhancing writing competence and supporting the development of teacher identity among EFL student teachers. Conducted at a private university in Tangerang, Banten, the research is situated within a semester-long writing course in a teacher education program where blogging was systematically implemented as a core instructional tool for genre-based news writing.

The study is framed by the principles of genre pedagogy (GP), rooted in Systemic Functional Linguistics, and it adopts blogging not only as a medium for structured composition but also as a reflective, interactive practice. The central aim is to understand how blogging, when embedded in genre-based instruction, supports the development of rhetorical awareness, digital literacy, and professional identity among pre-service teachers.

Specifically, the study explores the following focus areas:

1. Engagement with Blogging for News Writing

How EFL student teachers compose structured, audience-oriented news articles that adhere to journalistic genre conventions, thereby enhancing their ability to communicate clearly and purposefully in English.

2. Challenges in News Writing through Blogging

The linguistic, technological, and pedagogical difficulties encountered by student teachers during the blogging process and how they navigate these barriers while participating in digitally mediated instruction.

3. Impact on Teacher Identity Development

The extent to which blogging fosters reflective practice, peer interaction, and digital authorship contributes to the construction of teacher identity through multimodal engagement and public writing.

In aligning blogging with genre pedagogy, the study situates itself within the broader discourse on multimodal and identity-oriented language learning (Darvin & Norton, 2015; Saha, 2023; Yu et al., 2024). It contributes both theoretical insights and practical implications for EFL teacher education programs aiming to integrate digital tools with structured writing instruction.

However, the scope of the study is intentionally delimited. It focuses exclusively on news writing as the target genre and does not extend to other forms of writing, such as narrative, expository, or argumentative texts. Additionally, blogging is the only digital platform examined; alternative tools, such as wikis, podcasts, or vlogs, fall outside the scope of this investigation.

The study is also confined to pre-service EFL teachers within one institutional context, a private university in Indonesia, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. The experiences of in-service teachers or participants in different institutional, regional, or technological settings are not addressed. Therefore, while the results offer meaningful insights, they should be interpreted as context-specific and exploratory.

Nonetheless, the findings are transferable to comparable educational contexts seeking to blend genre-based instruction with technology-enhanced writing pedagogy. Future research could examine the longitudinal impact of blogging on teacher development, explore its scalability across culturally and geographically diverse institutions, and investigate its applicability in in-service teacher training.

Given the theoretical complexity and interdisciplinary nature of this study, it is important to establish clear definitions for the key concepts that underpin the research. Doing so ensures consistency in interpretation and facilitates a more precise understanding of the study's scope, methodology, and findings. The following section defines the central terms as they are applied explicitly within this research context.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

To ensure conceptual clarity and consistency throughout this study, the following key terms are defined as they specifically apply to the context of EFL teacher education, genre pedagogy, and the integration of digital literacy.

1. EFL Student Teachers

EFL student teachers, also referred to as pre-service teachers, are individuals enrolled in teacher education programs to teach English in contexts where it is not the native or dominant language. These learners face dual demands:

acquiring advanced linguistic proficiency and mastering the pedagogical skills necessary to teach English effectively to others. Their preparation includes developing grammatical and communicative competence, designing instructional materials, and managing multilingual, multicultural classrooms (Ariyanti, 2016; Aunurrahman et al., 2017b, 2017a; Nabhan, 2021). Additionally, they engage in reflective practice and identity negotiation to align their evolving self-concepts with professional teaching standards (Zein et al., 2020). As they progress through academic coursework, practicum teaching, and peer collaboration, student teachers begin to articulate their instructional philosophies and shape their identities as future educators (Amalia, 2019; Rachmawati et al., 2017; Varghese et al., 2005).

2. Blogging

Blogging refers to a multimodal and interactive digital platform that supports public-facing, reflective, and dialogic writing practices. In the context of teacher education, it enables pre-service teachers to develop professional voice, engage critically with discourse, and construct digital identities (Blackstone & Harwood, 2011; K. T. C. Chen, 2012; Darvin & Norton, 2015; Nabhan, 2021). For EFL student teachers, blogging offers a platform to compose structured, genre-specific texts, such as news articles, while also documenting their learning processes and pedagogical growth. This study uses blogging as a central instructional tool within a genre-based writing framework, enabling iterative composition processes (drafting, peer feedback, revision) and promoting rhetorical awareness and self-reflection (Fathi et al., 2019; Vurdien, 2013). Through these experiences, blogging supports both linguistic development and the shaping of professional identity.

3. Genre Pedagogy (GP)

Genre pedagogy (GP), also called genre-based instruction, is an instructional approach rooted in systemic functional linguistics (SFL) that emphasizes teaching writing through socially situated text types. It promotes an understanding of the communicative purpose, structural organization, and linguistic features of specific genres (Emilia, 2005, 2011; Hyland, 2007). In EFL contexts, genre pedagogy involves modeling, scaffolding, and explicit instruction to help learners produce contextually appropriate and audience-aware texts. This approach

is efficient in supporting learners as they construct meaning through structured stages of the writing process (Feez & Joyce, 1998). When integrated with digital tools such as blogs, genre pedagogy enables authentic engagement with public-facing texts, fostering genre awareness, critical reflection, and multimodal composition skills (Suksawas, 2018; Wardani et al., 2021). Research has shown that even lower-proficiency students benefit from genre modeling (Firkins et al., 2007) in producing complex academic and journalistic texts.

4. News Writing

News writing is a journalistic genre characterized by factual reporting, objectivity, clarity, conciseness, and audience awareness. It typically follows the inverted pyramid structure and utilizes the 5W1H framework (Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How) to organize information efficiently and effectively (Antepara, 2003; Z. Yin, 2015). Within EFL education, news writing not only enhances learners' linguistic precision and discourse cohesion but also builds critical reading skills and rhetorical control. It enables students to synthesize information from multiple sources, write for public readerships, and engage with real-world discourse (Schulman, 2019). For student teachers, developing proficiency in news writing contributes to their ability to promote media and civic literacy in their future classrooms.

5. News Blogging

News blogging is a hybrid genre that combines the factual rigor and structural conventions of traditional journalism with the interactive, multimodal, and reflective qualities of blogging. This form allows learners to write news articles for online audiences while also expressing personal voices and engaging in critical reflection (Blackstone & Harwood, 2011; Vurdien, 2012, 2013). News blogging supports real-world composition skills, such as engaging with current events, incorporating multimedia elements, and managing audience feedback. It enhances rhetorical awareness, promotes collaboration through peer responses, and fosters deeper civic and media literacy (Berger, 2011; Blackstone et al., 2007). For EFL student teachers, news blogging provides authentic opportunities to develop genre-specific writing skills while building professional competence in technology-enhanced communication.

6. Teacher Identity Development

Teacher identity development, also referred to as identity formation or professional identity construction, is a dynamic, socially constructed process shaped by discourse, reflection, and engagement within communities of practice (Gee, 2000; Izadinia, 2013; Norton, 2013; Wenger, 1998). Blogging and reflective practice serve as key mediating tools in this process (Farrell, 2021; Moon, 2006; Schön, 1992). This process is informed by cognitive, emotional, and social experiences across academic coursework, field experiences, and peer interaction (Rachmawati et al., 2017; Varghese et al., 2005). Reflective practice plays a central role in this development, helping student teachers critically examine their pedagogical beliefs, classroom experiences, and evolving roles (Amalia, 2019; Farrell, 2018, 2021). In this study, blogging serves as a reflective tool through which student teachers articulate their experiences, engage in peer dialogue, and document their growth. According to Norton (2013), identity is constructed through access to symbolic resources and participation in meaningful communicative events. Darvin and Norton (2015, 2017) extend this by proposing a model that links identity with ideology, investment, and various forms of capital (e.g., linguistic, cultural, and social). In the context of blog-based news writing, these dimensions are activated as student teachers engage with socially situated content, negotiate their voices, and construct public-facing identities as educators.

To guide the reader through the structure and logic of the research, it is important to outline how the study unfolds across its major components. The following section provides an overview of the thesis organization, detailing the content and focus of each chapter and explaining how they collectively build a coherent argument from conceptual foundation to empirical findings and pedagogical implications.

1.7 Organization of the Study

This thesis is organized into five chapters, each building a coherent narrative that guides the reader through the research process, from conceptual background to conclusions. Chapter I: Introduction lays the foundation of the study by presenting its background and contextual framework. It introduces the central research

questions and objectives that guide the investigation, explaining the study's significance within the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) field, with a particular emphasis on writing instruction and teacher identity development. The chapter also defines key terms and outlines the study's scope and limitations to help clarify its boundaries and focus.

Building on this groundwork, Chapter II: Literature Review synthesizes the theoretical and empirical foundations that inform the research. It reviews major themes, including EFL writing instruction, the integration of blogging into the classroom, and the principles of genre pedagogy. The chapter also explores the literature on teacher identity development, particularly in pre-service education contexts, and highlights the specific challenges EFL student teachers face when engaging with news writing as a genre. Attention is given to how digital platforms, such as blogging, can serve both linguistic and professional development purposes.

Chapter III: Research Methods describes the study's methodological framework. It outlines the qualitative case study approach used to investigate EFL student teachers' engagement with blogging in a genre-based news writing course. The chapter details participant selection, the design of the instructional blogging tasks, and the data collection procedures, which include blog entries, interviews, classroom fieldnotes, and photovoice reflections. It also explains the analytical procedures for interpreting the data, ensuring methodological rigor and coherence with the research questions.

Finally, Chapter IV: Findings and Discussion presents and interprets the study's main findings. This chapter analyzes how EFL student teachers in Tangerang, Banten, engaged with news writing through blogging, the challenges they encountered, and the pedagogical value of their experiences. It further discusses how their participation in blog-mediated writing tasks contributed to their evolving teacher identities, emphasizing the interplay between writing development, reflective practice, and professional growth.

Chapter V: Conclusion and Recommendations concludes the study by summarizing key findings and discussing their implications for EFL writing instruction and teacher education. The chapter provides practical recommendations for integrating blogging into teacher preparation programs and outlines potential

directions for future research. It reflects on the study's contributions to the broader discourse on digital pedagogy, genre instruction, and identity in language education.