

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. The Background of the Study

One of the essential productive skills in improving communicative competence in language learning is writing; thus producing quality writing requires complex activities or processes in writing, including the expression of knowledge, information, experiences, or ideas. In addition, acquiring knowledge or information necessitates comprehension in writing. Therefore, it can be shared and gained. Zemach and Carlos (2005, p. 4) define writing is one of the most challenging skills and subjects that English language learners should master. Students must not only produce words and sentences but also be able to compile and develop words and sentences with appropriate grammatical in writing. Thus it can fulfill the requirements for good writing elements, which are: objective, paragraph, grammatical, material, writing technique, and can be understood by the reader. It corresponds to Anwar and Ahmed (2016, p. 735) that writing is frequently equated with grammatical and sentence structures. It also shows that errors often occur in writing, such as vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, spelling, cohesion, and organization. Furthermore, the students should have enough vocabularies and proper diction to make the writing easy to understand. Thus, the readers can achieve the message.

Based on those facts, students should be able to master writing skill, supported by the "Merdeka Curriculum" created by the Ministry of Education of

the Republic of Indonesia. It explains that English language learning focuses on enhancing students' proficiency in six English language skills, including listening-speaking, reading-watching, and writing-presenting. In the Merdeka curriculum, there are learning achievements that students in each phase must achieve. For English subjects, the targeted achievement starts from Phase A and ends in Phase F. Phase A (Grades I- 11 Elementary School), Phase B (Grades III-IV Elementary School), Phase C (Class V-VI Elementary School), Phase D (Class VII-IX Junior High School), Phase E (Class X Senior High School), Phase F (Class XI-XII Senior High School).

There are some types of genres in English, and one of them is descriptive text. Descriptive text must be learned in Phase D based on the learning achievement of the Merdeka curriculum. The descriptive text highlights and describes a specific person, place, or thing. Kane (2000, p. 352) Describes a state using senses to describe how it appears, sounds, and tastes, called descriptive text. In learning writing skills phase D, students must be able to communicate their ideas and express them through simple and structured sentences and paragraphs, using specific vocabulary according to the genre being studied. Based on these facts, it is not easy to encourage students to be able to understand descriptive texts. In descriptive text, students must master the language features and generic structure used to produce structured and coherent writing. In this case, teachers are expected to be able to provide appropriate teaching strategies.

Teaching strategy becomes an essential aspect of teaching, and without a teaching strategy, learning cannot run effectively. Therefore, students cannot

achieve the learning achievements that have been set. According to Stone and Morris (in Issac, 2010, p. 6), a teaching strategy is a fundamental lesson plan that contains organization, instructional objectives, and an overview of planned techniques required to accomplish the strategies. Teaching strategy must be able to answer students' problems and be appropriate to students' learning needs. Not only that, but the teaching strategy used in the classroom must also increase students' motivation which is necessary for success in learning. Based on these facts, teachers must be able to use appropriate teaching strategy in the classroom to help students understand the learning material more efficiently.

In reality, teachers are still using the traditional way by explaining the material and asking students to do the exercises without thinking about the student's understanding of the text being studied and students' motivation during learning. Furthermore, the teacher's planning are not well applied in the classroom. Thus, teaching writing strategy used by teacher often cannot overcome students' difficulties in writing and are boring. Some difficulties in writing in terms of organization and grammar are faced by students; hence the results of student writing do not convey messages to readers. Generic structure and language features elements are not well applied in students writing; meanwhile, producing writing according to an organized structure has to meet these qualifications and make learning fun for students.

The researcher has conducted interview sessions with English teacher at SMP Muhammadiyah 57 Medan to obtain preliminary data about the students' writing, especially in descriptive text. Here is a transcript of the interview:

**Tabel 1. 1** Sample of the Interview Transcript

| Question   | Answer   |
|--|--|
| <p>What are the teaching strategies that you usually use in teaching writing?</p>                | <p>I often use the Exploration, Elaboration, and Confirmation strategy, abbreviated as the EEK strategy. Students will explore the provided text as an example and listen to the teacher's explanation. The students are then instructed to produce a new text or answer questions based on the text during the elaboration stage. Last, teacher provides students feedback on their work, such as correcting grammatical and text structure errors.</p> |
| <p>Why do you choose that strategy in teaching writing descriptive text?</p>                     | <p>This strategy was chosen because students can use the sample text provided as a guide when writing to determine what type of text they should write.</p>  |
| <p>Can that strategy influence students' writing of descriptive text?</p>                        | <p>Not really, students are frequently confused about the material and have difficulties expressing ideas in coherent sentences based on the structure of the text. Even I have given the explanations.</p>  |
| <p>Can students understand the language features and generic structure of the provided text?</p> | <p>They were able to analyze the language features and generic structure of the provided text during the first meeting, but it was still challenging to</p>  |

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|--|---|
|  | <p>implement it in the text they produced. However, they quickly forget at the next meeting and find it hard to pay attention to learning.</p>  |
| <p>What about students' motivation and scores when applying that strategy?</p>                     | <p>I believe that the challenges students have when writing reduce their learning motivation and most of them have not been able to achieve KKTP.</p>   |
| <p>What steps will you take to solve the problems?</p>   | <p>I suppose I need a new strategy that solves students' needs and problem to enable them to generate qualified writing.</p>  |
| <p>Do you know what is color coding strategy and what do you know about color coding strategy?</p> | <p>Yes, I understand. As a teacher, I am constantly expanding my expertise by reading many references, particularly on this strategy. This strategy teaches students how to utilize color as a code for an important part in writing.</p>   |
| <p>Do you know about the color coding strategy proposed by Ewoldt and Morgan (2017)?</p>           | <p>Yes, I know. This strategy includes several teaching processes, one of which is highlighting the sentences with specified colors.</p>  |
| <p>What is your experience in implementing color coding strategy in teaching writing?</p>          | <p>When implementing this strategy, I encourage students to highlight the different types of sentences based on the structure and to draw a color line for each vocabulary word whose meaning they do not know. After that, create new paragraphs based on the design they've highlighted</p> |

Based on the preliminary data by interviewing the English teacher above, it was found that previously, the teacher used the Exploration, Elaboration, and Confirmation (EEK) writing teaching strategy, which still did not meet the needs of students, as proven by most of the seventh-grade students at SMP Muhammadiyah 57 Medan having difficulty understanding and compiling descriptive text. Students have minimal vocabulary and cannot organize language features into writing, even arranging them into a structured paragraph. Students also look passive during learning and find it difficult to focus. The teacher states that students also have a weakness in remembering. Some students can understand the material in the first meeting but will forget it in the next meeting. It was proved by the score of SMP Muhammadiyah 57 Medan's seventh-grade students who have not met the achievement criteria of learning objectives (KKTP) and have low motivation. Teacher is fully aware that a new strategy is needed to answer these problems. The strategy help students to understand language features, generic structures, and their use in sentences, making it easier for students to remember and increasing student motivation in learning. Therefore, the writing produced by students fulfills the qualifications of descriptive text.

For those matters, the teacher will use color coding strategy proposed by Ewoldt and Morgan (2017, p. 177) in teaching writing descriptive text. Moreno and Mayer (2007, p. 313) define color coding strategy is part of the visual design applied in learning, and a visual design serves two purposes: facilitating learners' cognitive processing of content and efficiently affecting learners' attitudes and motivation. In other words, the first role is to impact learners' cognition, and the

second is to influence learners' emotions. This strategy makes it easier for students to recognize language features with specific colors, structure, and paragraphs, thus enhancing their writing skill. Students can quickly determine a paragraph's structure using color-mapping or coding strategy and also helps students to keep memorizing the material about the text being learned. Therefore, students will not readily forget previous material in writing. Geigle (2014, p. 28) defines that the color codes will connect and correlate the students' previous understanding. Thus, using color is an option that suits students' problems, improving writing skills and students' motivation.

The procedures for using the color coding strategy was adapted from Ewoldt and Morgan (2017, p. 177). These procedures are expected to be valuable and helpful in using a color coding strategy. Apart from previous studies that focused on writing teaching strategies, the researcher believes it is essential to research more about teaching strategies.

Based on the reasons above, this research examines the use of color coding strategy in teaching writing descriptive text. This research is entitled "The Use of Color Coding Strategy in Teaching Writing Descriptive Text For The Seventh Grade Students at SMP Muhammadiyah 57 Medan".

## **B. The Problems of the Study**

Based on the background of this study above, the problems of this study are formulated in the form of questions as the following:

1. How does the color coding strategy use in teaching writing descriptive text?
2. What are the teacher's difficulties in teaching writing descriptive text using the color coding strategy?

### **C. The Objectives of the Study**

From the formulation of the study's problems, the study's objectives are:

1. To explore how the color coding strategy is used in teaching writing skill on descriptive text.
2. To determine the teacher's difficulties using the color coding strategy in teaching writing descriptive text.

### **D. The Scope of the Study**

The study focuses on the use of color coding strategy in teaching writing descriptive text adapted from Ewoldt and Morgan (2017, p. 177) will be the parameter of how the teacher uses the strategy. This research is conducted on the seventh grade students of SMP Muhammadiyah 57 Medan. There are various text types, and the researcher limits the text to descriptive text especially describing the thing.

### **E. The Significance of the Study**

The results of the study are predicted to give theoretical and practical contributions as follows:



1. Theoretically, the result of this study can be a reference and provide more information for those regarding the use of color coding in teaching writing descriptive text.
2. Practically, this research is considered to be beneficial for:
  - a) Students can use this strategy to form effective writing habits and be able to identify sentences. This strategy can also increase students' motivation and enthusiasm for learning writing.
  - b) Teachers can use this study to improve students' writing skill by using color coding strategy in teaching and learning process and develop engaging learning for students.
  - c) Researcher, this study provides further information for future researchers interested in applying a color-coding strategy for teaching descriptive writing at the junior high school level.