

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of the Study

The ability to write is considered one of the most complex abilities in the study of English since it requires the learner to have cognition, language, and communication competence. Writing is a process of planning, composing, reviewing, and revising as explained by Harmer (2007). On the other hand, according to Brown (2007), writing needs the generation and organization of ideas logically through the use of correct grammar and vocabulary. EFL learners can face problems with the language as well as difficulties with idea formulation.

Acquisition of English in vocational high school (Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan/SMK) means that the learners will get learning experience that will help them to cope with real-world situations, especially in the professional environment. As indicated by Widodo (2016), English language instruction in vocational context calls for the teaching of the language functions which meet the learners' professional needs. Some of the most important skills that the learners will learn here include descriptive writing which enables them to describe tools, products, places, and work environment.

The process of teaching students how to write must be done through a series of steps. The steps would include coming up with ideas, drafting the piece, revising it, and proofreading it. This ensures that the students are able to develop their ideas gradually. This is one way of ensuring that the writing is done effectively.

The use of computers and other technology is also an idea. It makes learning fun and interesting. Klimova found out in 2019 that using tools can make students more interested in learning and they will learn more. Other studies have also shown that using computer programs can make students more engaged and help them write better. These programs can guide students. Give them activities to do.

This shows that using technology can really help students learn to write in English as a language. Writing instruction and technology can work together. Technology can support writing instruction, in classrooms.

Unfortunately, however, the situation with the teaching of writing skills in classes does not remain good enough. In SMK Negeri 1 Kabanjahe in Class XI of the Multimedia program, lessons of writing are still rather conventional and oriented towards the end result. The teacher mostly makes use of worksheets and tasks from textbooks that are based on the text. This means that the teacher does not involve the students in the process of writing. As a result, the students usually receive tasks to write descriptive texts independently without any development of ideas.

Table 1.1 Table of Student's Achievement

Score Range	Category	Number of Students	Percentage
90-100	Excellent	4	13.33 %
75-89	Good	5	16.67 %
60-74	Enough	9	30.00 %
40-59	Poor	8	26.67 %
0-39	Very Poor	4	13.33 %
Total		30	100 %

Table 1.1 shows that students do not do well in writing texts. Many students did poorly on the test. This means students still have trouble with writing skills. Students have problems like not knowing words making mistakes, in grammar and finding it hard to organize their ideas clearly. Students need interactive learning media that can help them improve their descriptive writing skills. Writing texts is something students really need to practice. Students need to work on their writing skills especially when it comes to writing texts.

Table 1.2 Students' Learning Mastery Base

Description	Number of Students	Percentage
Achieved KKM (>70)	9	30.00 %
Did not Achieve KKM (<) 70	21	70.00 %
Total	30	100 %

Based on Table 1.2, it can be observed that several students have not achieved the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM). This condition indicates that students still need additional support in the learning process, particularly in writing descriptive texts. The use of conventional learning materials may not fully facilitate students' needs; therefore, interactive and technology-based learning media are needed to improve students' learning outcomes and writing performance.

The writing skills of the students are not up to the mark on the basis of the provided data. Nine out of thirty students were able to attain the Minimum Mastery Criterion of 70, and this makes 30%. However, on the other hand, 70%, which is twenty-one students, have not been able to meet the criterion. The writing skills of

the students are not satisfactory as they are still below the level that we expect from them. As far as the data is concerned, it can be said that there is much more left for the students to learn about writing. There are some issues that arise with the writing skills of the students such as lack of vocabulary, inability to organize thoughts, committing many mistakes, lack of confidence in writing, and so forth. The minimum mastery criterion should be 70%. Few students have reached this level of proficiency. There are many things that they have to do in order to get to that stage. They need to improve their vocabulary. They have to learn how to arrange their ideas. They have to learn how to write to prevent them from making errors while writing. They need to be confident in their writings. The desired level of writings among the students has to be achieved. This is the level according to the Minimum Mastery Criterion of 70%.

Even though Educaplay is a popular platform it is only used in the classroom for short tasks such as quizzes, match or vocabulary exercises. This practice fails to facilitate the writing process since there is no material developed on Educaplay that guides the students in generating ideas, organizing paragraphs and developing full descriptions. Such discrepancy between the application of Educaplay in the classroom and the requirements of the students regarding writing is an indication that Educaplay does not help the students in the process of generating grammatically correct texts. It is important, therefore, to design Educaplay-based worksheets which will assist students in completing all the steps in the writing process. Such steps include brainstorming, building vocabulary, constructing sentences and developing paragraphs. The development of such worksheets will

lead to proper use of Educaplay in order to facilitate the students' writing achievements.

Based on the phenomena above, the researcher proposes the use of Educaplay as an interactive digital worksheet to support students understanding and development in writing descriptive text. Educaplay is a web-based educational platform that allows teachers to create various interactive learning activities such as quizzes, matching exercises, word games, and interactive writing tasks. It provides a more engaging and student-centered learning environment through gamified and multimedia-based activities.

In teaching writing text, we are developing Educaplay as a digital worksheet. This is to help students with their difficulties. We found out from our data that students are still struggling. Their writing achievement is below the expected level, which's the Minimum Mastery Criterion or KKM. The problems they face include not having vocabulary. They also have trouble organizing their ideas. Grammatical errors are another issue. Many students have low confidence when it comes to writing. We think that what students need is a worksheet that is both interactive and structured. This will help guide them through the writing process step, by step.

Educaplay has lots of things to do like filling in the blanks and matching games. You can also do word searches and quizzes on Educaplay. You can get to all these things on your phone, laptop or other device with the internet. Teachers like Educaplay because they can make writing lessons that go one step at a time. Students can think of ideas put their thoughts in order make sentences and then

check their work. Educaplay is also of, like a game, which helps students want to learn and pay attention. This makes learning with Educaplay fun for students.

Based on the findings, using interactive digital tools can really help students take part in class and make learning more interesting. Warschauer (2011) stated that the use of technology in the classroom makes students more active and engaged due to its multimedia features. Shute (2008) also pointed out that digital learning tools that provide immediate feedback can make a big difference in how much students learn, especially when it comes to things like writing. Digital tools like these can be very helpful for students in supporting their learning process.

Furthermore, a study by Dewi in 2025 found that interactive digital worksheets made students more motivated and involved. This was because the activities were engaging and students could access them easily. These findings show that digital platforms like Educaplay can help learning by mixing teaching content with fun exercises. It also helps students to learn on their own and with others through tasks that are both structured and enjoyable. The use of worksheets increases student motivation and participation. Digital platforms support learning with interactive exercises. Students learn independently and collaboratively through tasks, on Educaplay.

Therefore, this study entitled “Developing Digital Worksheets in Writing Descriptive Text by Using Educaplay Application” is conducted to address the limited use of interactive digital worksheets and the low achievement of students writing skills, particularly in descriptive text.

B. The Problem of the Study

Based on the background of the study, the problem of this research is: “How is the development of digital worksheets in writing descriptive text by using Educaplay application for grade eleventh at SMK Negeri 1 Kabanjahe”

C. The Objective of the Study

Based on the problem of the study, the objective of the study is: To develop a digital worksheet in writing descriptive text by using Educaplay application at SMK Negeri 1 Kabanjahe.

D. The Scope of the Study

Based on the problem of the study, this study is limited to the teaching of descriptive text. The focus of this research is to design and develop an interactive digital worksheet using Educaplay that can help students improve their understanding and interest in writing descriptive text.

This research is conducted on eleventh-grade students of SMK Negeri 1 Kabanjahe, and applies a Design and Development Research (DDR) approach. Other language skills, text types, and digital applications are beyond the scope of this study.

E. The Significance of the Study

This study is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions.

1. Theoretically

Theoretically, this study adds knowledge in English language teaching with emphasis on technology-assisted writing instruction. It combines process-based writing, genre-based instruction, and digital learning by means of the utilization of Educaplay as a digital worksheet.

Moreover, this study serves as an additional literature for other researchers when doing research on instructional material design and development using Design and Development Research (DDR), especially among the EFL community.

2. Practical Significance

Practically, this study provides benefits for several stakeholders:

- a) For Teachers: This will be the provision of another mode of teaching writing as an instructional medium in Educaplay-based digital worksheets. These teachers will be able to create interactive activities to teach their students in the development of their writing.
- b) For Students: The students will develop their skills in descriptive writing by participating in various activities and learning experience provided by the software, Educaplay. The usage of Educaplay will definitely motivate and encourage the students in writing.
- c) For Future Researchers: This study will serve as the basis for future researchers who want to conduct a similar study in the future.