

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

English is an international language that plays a crucial role in various aspects of global life, particularly in facilitating the exchange of knowledge, information, and technology. In the 21st century, English proficiency has become an essential skill for students to be able to adapt to the rapid development of science and knowledge. However, to achieve such proficiency, students are required to master four main language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among these skills, writing is often considered the most challenging to master, both for second language learners and native speakers (Mastan et al., 2017).

These challenges in writing arise due to the complex cognitive processes involved, which require students to manage various aspects simultaneously, ranging from idea development and text organization to accuracy in word choice and writing conventions (Rass, 2015). In line with this view, Brown (2001) asserts that writing is not an instant product, but rather a thinking process that involves several stages, including planning, drafting, revising, and editing to produce a coherent text. Beyond its technical aspects, Harmer (2004) emphasizes that writing provides students with more "thinking time" to process language and express ideas more deeply, which allows them to resolve linguistic problems and focus on accuracy more effectively than in spontaneous communication.

The demand for expressing ideas in a structured manner is reflected in the junior high school curriculum in Indonesia. In this context, writing instruction is implemented through a text-based approach, known as the Genre-Based Approach, in which students are required to master various types of functional texts (Emilia, 2011). One of the main genres taught is narrative text. According to Hyland (2019), narrative text is not merely a story, but a genre that organizes human experiences chronologically in order to engage readers and convey meaning. However, in practice, transforming ideas into narrative texts remains a major challenge. Many students still experience difficulties in constructing the generic structure, such as orientation, complication, and resolution, as well as in applying appropriate language features (Muliani et al., 2019). This condition indicates that narrative text learning requires innovative instructional strategies that can help students understand text structure in a more concrete and meaningful way.

In response to these challenges, English language learning in schools needs to transform by emphasizing critical, collaborative, and creative thinking skills, which are recognized as core 21st-century competencies (P21, 2019). One essential skill that should be developed in 21st-century learning is collaborative skill. Collaborative learning approaches are considered to have strong potential in helping students overcome the complexity of writing narrative texts, as learning occurs through social interaction that enables students to support one another in developing ideas and organizing text structure (Vygotsky, 1978; Storch, 2013). Through collaboration, students are no longer passive recipients of information;

instead, they actively construct understanding and address their writing difficulties through meaningful interaction with peers.

To obtain a clearer picture of how the challenges in writing instruction occur in actual classroom practice, it is necessary to understand the real conditions in the field. Therefore, an interview with an English teacher at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Medan was conducted to gather preliminary information regarding the teaching of writing skills in the classroom.

Based on the interview results, it was found that writing instruction in the classroom is still predominantly focused on reading texts and analyzing text structures, while opportunities for students to produce their own written texts remain relatively limited. The teacher reported that when students are asked to write, they generally experience difficulties, particularly in vocabulary and grammatical usage. In addition, students tend to show confusion and low confidence when completing writing tasks due to their limited mastery of linguistic elements. According to the teacher, group work or discussion can serve as an effective alternative to help students feel more comfortable and support one another during the writing process. Therefore, the implementation of collaborative writing is considered worthy of exploration as an effort to help students overcome difficulties in writing (see Appendix 1).

Several studies have shown that collaborative writing positively impacts students' writing ability in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. Rezeki and Rahmani (2021) found that implementing collaborative writing improved students' writing quality and enhanced their confidence in writing.

Similarly, Li (2023) reported that online collaborative writing significantly improved EFL learners' writing performance, motivation, and self-efficacy. Furthermore, Shehadeh (2011) revealed that collaborative writing significantly enhances specific areas of students' writing, particularly in content, organization, and vocabulary. His study also highlighted that the collaborative process creates an enjoyable learning experience, which contributes to a more supportive and engaging environment for language learning.

Although these studies show the positive potential of collaborative writing in writing instruction, existing studies still have several limitations. Most studies have been conducted at the high school or college level, many have utilized digital media in their implementation, and have placed more emphasis on the collaborative process than on the quality of students' writing. Therefore, research on the application of collaborative writing at the junior high school level, especially that which focuses on analyzing students' writing, is still relatively limited.

In addition to these limitations, based on the results of preliminary interviews with an English teacher, narrative text instruction in the classroom still predominantly emphasizes text analysis activities, such as identifying generic structure and language features, rather than engaging students in active writing practices. This condition indicates that students have limited opportunities to develop their writing skills, particularly in producing complete narrative texts. As writing instruction should emphasize the composing process, including giving students opportunities to draft, revise, and receive feedback (Brown, 2001), the

limited emphasis on text production suggests a discrepancy between pedagogical expectations and classroom practice.

Based on these issues, this study focuses on analyzing the quality of eighth-grade students' narrative writing produced within the context of collaborative writing. Furthermore, this study investigates the problems faced by students during the collaboration process in writing narrative texts. This study is expected to provide a deeper understanding of students' writing quality as well as the challenges encountered in collaborative writing activities. Therefore, this study is entitled "Analysis on the Students' Collaborative Writing of Narrative Text".

1.2 Problems of the Study

Based on the above background, the problems formulated in this study are as follows:

1. How is the quality of students' narrative writing produced through collaborative writing?
2. What problems are faced by the students in collaborative writing of narrative texts?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Analyze the quality of students' narrative writing produced through collaborative writing.
2. Investigate the students' problems in collaborative writing of narrative texts.

1.4 Scope of the Study

There are various types of texts taught in English language learning, such as transactional, interpersonal, short functional, and long functional texts. However, this study is limited to narrative text. Furthermore, this study focuses on collaborative writing in narrative text among the eighth-grade students of SMPS Muhammadiyah 01 Medan in the 2025/2026 academic year, second semester. The focus is on the quality of students' narrative writing and the problems encountered during the collaborative writing process.

1.5 Significances of the Study

This research is expected to provide both theoretical and practical benefits, as explained below:

Theoretically, this research is expected to contribute to the field of ELT, particularly in understanding the implementation of collaborative writing in teaching narrative text. The findings of this study are expected to enrich theories related to collaborative learning and writing instruction by providing empirical evidence on students' writing outcomes and the actual challenges encountered during the collaborative process.

Practically, the results of this study are expected to be beneficial to the following parties. For Teachers, this study is expected to help English teachers study and use collaborative writing for narrative text learning and identify students' difficulties during the collaboration process. The findings may assist teachers in designing more effective writing activities and improving students' participation and interaction in writing classes.

Meanwhile, for students, this study is expected to help students become more aware of the collaborative writing process and the challenges they face when working together. Through collaborative writing activities, students are expected to improve their ability to generate ideas, organize narrative texts, and develop their writing skills through peer interaction.

In addition, the results of this study can provide additional insights for readers who are interested in collaborative writing in English language learning. Furthermore, this study can serve as a reference for future researchers who intend to conduct similar studies, explore other types of texts, investigate different educational levels, or examine collaborative writing using other research approaches.

