

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Writing is a crucial skill for language production. In the EFL context, writing skills should be mastered by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students for better proficiency, expressing ideas, and critical thinking in academic settings (Toba et al., 2019). However, mastering English writing skills can be challenging for Indonesian learners since English is not their first language. The primary reason for this practical is that students faced various problems in their writing skills. According to Abbas & Herdi (2018), two aspects may cause problems with writing. First, the micro and macro of writing skills; it involve the use of word choice, grammar, writing mechanics, and writing style, while macro skills include coherence, developing ideas, paraphrasing, and overall text structure (Brown, 2001). The second one is the writing process includes preliminary writing, drafting, revising, and editing (Suprpto et al., 2022).

In line with the above statements, the researcher found that the writing problem was not limited to a single student. A preliminary interview in the form of a questionnaire, conducted via WhatsApp with second-year students in the Academic Reading and Writing (henceforth, ARW) course of the English education department at a university in Tasikmalaya, revealed insights into their experiences with collaborative research papers writing. The ARW course implemented collaborative writing activities as the final assignment for the course's output. As a result, it was found that students in each group experienced various writing skill problems during their collaborative writing process. Some were using inappropriate word choices and had less knowledge about writing mechanics. Meanwhile, the others experienced difficulties and problems in expressing ideas and maintaining the coherence of each paragraph. Practically, these individuals' writing skill problems collectively presented

significant challenges in the collaborative writing (henceforth, CW) process. This has made their research paper's outcome unsatisfactory. In addition, standards expected by an individual caused a disparity in their writing skills. Hence, writing problems become a vital aspect that must be discovered and addressed to produce good-quality writing.

Previous studies have been conducted to investigate problems in EFL students' writing. A study of English education students at the University of Lancang Kuning Pekanbaru by Abbas and Herdi (2018) found that students faced problems formulating and structuring ideas, applying proper grammar and vocabulary, and applying accurate mechanics of writing argumentative essays. Meanwhile, students at the Soran University of Iraq often avoid writing because they begin writing without any idea and have not learned the basics (Ahmed, 2019). In Thai, Chuenchaichon (2022) investigated writing problems in making summaries. The main problem with language use is grammar, leading to unclear meanings. When writing, the main difficulty was choosing the right words to replace those from the source while paraphrasing (Ali & Zayid, 2022).

Considering the writing problems in the process of CW, Alkhalaf (2020) confirmed that students believe CW can be a beneficial strategy for enhancing their writing proficiency, especially in writing skills. Nevertheless, when students have problems with writing, the process of writing collaboratively may be ineffective. The research also parallels Nguyen & Phuong (2021), who emphasized that collaborative writing often leads to disputes and disagreements among group members, negatively impacting the writing process. Furthermore, they mentioned that during collaborative writing, there is a tendency for individuals to avoid taking responsibility for their contributions.

However, while there is considerable research on EFL students' writing problems and challenges in the CW process, studies that focus specifically on writing problems during collaborative writing remain under-researched. Existing literature often overlooks students' attitudes toward CW and the challenges themselves. Additionally, many studies focus on action research and questionnaires rather than exploring students' experiences and perspectives.

Therefore, this study addresses this gap by examining students' experiences with writing problems during collaborative writing at a university in Tasikmalaya. Focusing on the micro and macro aspects of writing skills, this research further investigated the writing problems that EFL students faced during collaborative writing and how these problems affected the quality of their research papers.

1.2 Formulation of the Problem

This research's question is, “What are the writing problems experienced by EFL students during collaborative writing?”

1.3 Operational Definition(s)

The researcher provides five definitions related to this study to avoid misunderstanding about the terms set out in this study as follows:

1.3.1 EFL Students

Students who are learning English in a setting where it is not the primary language. Specifically, they were 5th-semester English education student at a university in Tasikmalaya.

1.3.2 Writing Skill

The ability that EFL students should master to express ideas, apply appropriate language use in written form, and effectively contribute to a collective writing task. This includes clear communication of ideas, integration of diverse viewpoints, constructive feedback, and coordination with team members to produce a coherent and polished final document.

1.3.3 Students' Writing Problems

Issues, difficulties, and challenges that students face when writing

collaboratively relate to the aspects of micro and macro skills in writing, including the use of vocabulary, grammar, writing style, and overall writing among team members.

1.3.4 Collaborative writing

A learning process where students write together to create a written paper in the Academic Reading and Writing (ARW) course as the final assignment.

1.3.5 Students' perception

The way students see and understand various aspects of their collaborative writing experience includes individual challenges, struggles, learning styles, background, and interpretation.

1.4 Aim of the Study

This study aims to investigate the writing problems experienced by EFL students during collaborative writing, focusing on the study at the English education department at one university in Tasikmalaya, where the phenomenon has been observed.

1.5 Significance(s) of the Study

1.5.1 Practical Significance

Practically, this study may provide educators insights into common problems students face in writing, especially in collaborative writing. This knowledge can inform the development of targeted interventions and teaching strategies to enhance collaborative writing skills, ultimately improving the overall writing proficiency of EFL students.

1.5.2 Empirical Significance

This study gives information and proof for teaching languages. By carefully looking at and noting the writing problems EFL students face during collaborative writing, the research forms a base for using practices backed by evidence. Moreover, this research benefits the researcher by adding new knowledge and insights for the researcher facing such issues.