

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the background of the study, the formulation of the problem, the operational definitions, the aim of the study, and the significance of the study.

A. Background of the Study

Writing is a productive skill that expresses ideas, thoughts, and feelings in writing using appropriate language structures and organization to communicate meaning effectively. Writing is considered as one of the most important abilities in learning English. Despite its importance, writing is frequently viewed as one of the most difficult skills for students to develop, especially when studying English as a foreign language (Sinaga, 2020). Many students struggle to create ideas, organize their feelings effectively, and use correct grammar and vocabulary in their writing.

Narrative text plays a crucial role in English writing instruction because it requires learners to organize events logically and connect ideas in a meaningful sequence, which enhances coherence in writing. Narrative writing pushes students to sequence actions and relate them through cohesive language features, helping them understand how individual sentences and paragraphs link together to form a unified text. Research shows that narrative writing tasks can significantly improve students' ability to structure their writing logically. For example, one study reported that narrative writing activities “helped students conceptualize ideas and structure narratives logically” by encouraging learners to connect events in an orderly manner (F. Nisa & Apoko, 2023).

In addition, students perceive narrative writing tasks as effective for enhancing idea generation, paragraph structuring, and vocabulary use, all of which contribute to more coherent written texts overall (Putri & Susanto, 2021). Moreover, guided instruction in narrative structures such as orientation, complication, and resolution has been found to strengthen learners' ability to maintain continuity and logical sequencing in texts (Ramadhani, 2022). Therefore, narrative text is not only a medium for storytelling but also a pedagogical tool.

Narrative text is a type of writing that aims to entertain readers by telling a story of conflict and resolution (Gerot & Wignell, 1995). Narrative describes the events characters experience and focuses on how those characters handle problems or complications in the story. Another understanding of narrative text is a text that contains a story, either written or unwritten, and there is a series of connected events (Widyantara & Rasna, 2020). The ability or writing skills of these students, especially in narrative text, are determined by many factors.

However, students' learning outcomes are often governed by two key aspects: external and internal factors. External factors include teacher competence, learning resources (instrumental input), and the environment in which students grow and develop. For example, recent research indicated that teachers' motivational practices (external factor) have a considerable impact on students' writing self-efficacy and performance (Tahir et al., 2025). Meanwhile, internal factors affect students' psychological well-being, including motivation, curiosity, talent, cognitive level, and emotional states like worry or tension. Research has shown that writing motivation and self-efficacy (internal factors) are favorably connected with students' writing performance (Puspita & Iriani, 2022).

In addition to the previously stated factors, it is crucial to keep in mind that when learning narrative text, students must comprehend a variety of grammatical and language aspects, the text's structure, and the genre's traits. Because they facilitate the plot's development and guarantee that events are portrayed consistently and clearly, mastery of these elements is crucial. According to Sari & Rachmawati (2021), students who struggle with important grammatical concepts like action verbs, past tenses, and temporal conjunctions often create narratives that are hard to follow and lack chronological clarity.

Moreover, a lack of comprehension of the narrative structure, particularly the orientation complication resolution pattern, frequently results in disjointed concepts and insufficient tale development (Utami, 2023). Students' capacity to preserve coherence and create a cohesive plot is adversely impacted by their lack of understanding of the traits of narrative genres (Fauziah, 2022). As a result, even when students are able to come up with ideas, misconceptions about linguistic and structural elements may lead them to convey those ideas incorrectly.

One of the abilities required for the academic profession is writing (Muliani et al., 2019). Writing skills are the ability to express ideas while paying attention to a number of factors, such as grammar, vocabulary, and the selection of appropriate words or punctuation to make the sentence or point you wish to make easily comprehensible to readers. Each person has writing abilities, which are used to communicate ideas (Suhendra in Alawiyah, 2021).

A writer must consider a number of factors before writing anything. Ideas must be developed, points must be logically arranged and sorted, terminology must be chosen, grammar must be checked, words must be spelled correctly, punctuation must be used, and writing must be clear (Fry in Muliani et al., 2019).

The issue becomes more pressing at the senior high school level, where students are expected to write more complex and structured text. Based on a pre-interview conducted by the researcher at one private school in Tasikmalaya, it is known that class XI students have difficulty writing narrative text. The main difficulties include finding ideas and developing a content story, as well as organising a clear plot.

Many students are hindered when starting to write and often write in Indonesian before translating it into English due to vocabulary limitations. Many students struggle to begin writing since they are used to writing in Indonesian first and then translating it into English. This happens because their lack of English vocabulary makes it difficult for them to articulate their ideas clearly. Their writing may become less imaginative as a result of this translation process.

Several previous studies have indicated that students frequently have difficulty writing narrative text. Pratiwi (2019) identified writing issues that were caused by technical features such as grammar and sentence structure, as well as psychological factors such as a lack of confidence. Similarly, Sinaga (2020) found that tenth-grade students had significant difficulties with grammatical accuracy, particularly when utilizing past tense verbs and applying correct generic structures.

Furthermore, Safitri (2020) found that junior high school students struggled with grammar, vocabulary, and text organization in narrative writing. These studies show that writing difficulties are complicated and related at many educational levels. Although numerous studies have investigated students' difficulties in writing narrative text, most of them emphasize grammatical errors or textual analysis of students' written products.

In contrast, this study focuses on students' personal experiences of writing difficulties by examining psychological, linguistic, and cognitive aspects simultaneously. By employing a qualitative approach, this research provides deeper insights into how these difficulties are experienced by students in an EFL context, particularly at the senior high school level.

B. Formulation of the Problems

What difficulties do students face in writing narrative text at Senior High School?

C. Operational Definitions

1. Narrative Text

Narrative text is a type of discourse that clearly recounts events to the reader. The students composed narrative pieces from genres such as legends.

2. Difficulties in Writing Narrative Text

The specific difficulties that students face while they are writing creatively. This covers problems with coming up with ideas, structuring ideas, using grammar, choosing appropriate words, and feeling confident when writing.

D. Aim of the Study

This study aims to identify students' difficulties in writing narrative text at Senior high school, focusing on Psychological, linguistic, and cognitive difficulties.

E. Significance of the Study

1. Practical Significance

This research provides practical benefits for both teachers and students. For teachers, the findings can assist in identifying specific areas where students struggle, enabling them to design more targeted instructional strategies, provide appropriate scaffolding, and develop materials that address psychological, linguistic, and cognitive barriers in narrative writing. For students, this research helps them recognize common challenges in narrative writing and understand that these difficulties can be overcome through specific strategies and teacher support.

2. Empirical Significance

This research provides empirical data on the common difficulties faced by senior high school students in composing narrative text through qualitative interview analysis. The findings offer concrete evidence of how psychological, linguistic, and cognitive difficulties affect students' writing performance in a real classroom context. This empirical contribution serves as a valuable reference for future studies aiming to improve narrative writing skills.