

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, the formulation of the problem, the purposes of the study, the significance of the study, and the limitations of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Writing is a language skill that plays a strategic role in English learning, particularly in vocational secondary education. This skill not only serves as a written communication tool but also as a means for students to organize ideas, express experiences, and convey information systematically, coherently, and in a way that the readers can understand. In the context of vocational education, mastery of writing skills is crucial because it prepares students to face the demands of the workplace and further education, both of which require strong written communication skills[1]. One type of text that students must master in English learning in vocational high schools is the narrative text, which aims to entertain readers through a sequence of events involving characters, conflicts, and resolutions. Writing a narrative text requires mastery of various linguistic aspects, such as understanding text structure of the text, using grammar correctly, especially the past tense, choosing appropriate vocabulary, and the developing coherent plots and meaningful resolutions. Recent studies also confirm that students often face challenges in organizing ideas, using correct tenses, and developing story plots in narrative writing, which makes this genre highly relevant for instructional innovation in EFL classrooms[2]. These difficulties suggest that writing instruction requires learning activities that offer structured guidance while providing students with opportunities to develop their ideas actively.

Writing skills not only play a crucial role in academic achievement but are also an essential part of literacy competency in the 21st century. [3]The need to strengthen students' writing skills is evident in international assessment results. According to the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

2022, only around 25% of Indonesian students achieved at least Level 2 in reading literacy, significantly lower than the OECD average of 74%. This finding indicates that many students still struggle to understand, organize, and effectively communicate ideas through writing. This situation, underscores the need for innovation learning approaches to improve students' literacy competencies, particularly writing skills, which are crucial for academic success and future communication in the workplace.

Furthermore, learning practices in vocational high schools still often employ a teacher-centered approach, where the teacher acts as the center of learning and students tend to be passive. This approach results in low learning motivation, creativity, and interaction among students in English writing lessons. Therefore, the implementation of more participatory and student-centered learning strategies is needed. One relevant strategy is Think-Pair-Share (TPS), a cooperative learning strategy that involves independent thinking (Think), pair discussions (Pair), and sharing discussion results with a group whole class (Share). This strategy encourages active student involvement in the learning process and has been shown to improve learning outcomes in various language skills, including reading comprehension and writing, compared to conventional learning [4].

Think-Pair-Share (TPS) is an appropriate cooperative learning strategy for teaching narrative text writing because it gives students opportunities to develop, discuss, and organize their ideas before producing a written text. Through this cooperative process, students have opportunities to develop and organize their ideas, which can help them improve their writing performance[5]. Furthermore, integrating Think-Pair-Share with gamification elements can create a more engaging learning environment by increasing students' motivation and involvement during the learning process[6].

As an alternative to these problems, cooperative learning strategies are among the recommended approaches to improving the quality of writing learning. Think-Pair-Share (TPS) is a cooperative strategy that emphasizes individual thinking, pair discussions, and sharing ideas in larger groups. This strategy provides students with opportunities to develop understanding gradually, test ideas through

dialogue, and obtain feedback from peers. Research findings show that the implementation of Think-Pair-Share has a positive impact on improving students' writing skills. For example, a study at SMKN 3 Payakumbuh showed that Think-Pair-Share effectively improved students' writing skills in various aspects, such as organization, vocabulary use, grammar, and writing mechanics (writing skills) according to school's learning mastery criteria [7]. With these characteristics, Think-Pair-Share is considered relevant for application in learning to write narrative texts that require systematic thinking, discussion, and idea development. To enhance the effectiveness of Think-Pair-Share, the integration of gamification elements has been proposed, resulting in what is conceptually referred to as gamified Think-Pair-Share. Gamification is defined as the use of game design elements in non-game contexts to improve user engagement and motivation[8].

However, implementing the Think-Pair-Share strategy alone is considered insufficient to address the challenges of writing instruction in the 21st-century learning era. Integration with innovative and contextual learning media is necessary because it can enhance students' motivation. [9]One rapidly developing approach is game-based learning (GBL), which integrates game elements to create a fun, interactive, and meaningful learning environment. Recent research shows that the use of game-based media in English learning can increase student engagement, encourage creativity, and improve learning outcomes, particularly in writing skills. The Colorful Plane Media is a form of game-based learning media that uses colored paper airplanes containing writing instructions or questions, thereby stimulating students' imagination and encouraging collaboration in the learning process[10].

Recent empirical evidence confirms the effectiveness of gamification in improving students' writing skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. Gamification incorporates game elements such as points, badges, prizes, and challenges into learning activities to increase students' motivation, engagement, and active participation. A quasi-experimental study by [11] showed that students who learned writing through a gamified approach achieved significantly better writing achievement than students who followed conventional learning. The study revealed that gamification not only increased motivation and participation in class but also supported the development of narrative writing skills

through a more engaging and interactive learning experience. These findings suggest that gamification can be an effective pedagogical approach to facilitate writing instruction and create a more meaningful learning environment for EFL students.

Although various studies have examined the effectiveness of both the Think-Pair-Share strategy and game-based learning separately, there remains a research gap that requires further investigation. First, studies that combine the Think-Pair-Share strategy with particular game-based media, especially Colorful Plane Media, for teaching writing are still scarce. Second, the majority of earlier studies have been carried out in general education settings, including junior high schools and senior high schools, whereas investigations into the use of an integrated cooperative and game-based learning approach in vocational high schools are still relatively few. Third, existing research has not adequately explored how the integration of Think-Pair-Share and game-based media can facilitate students' writing development in terms of content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics[12]. Therefore, the novelty of this study is found in the integration of the Think-Pair-Share strategy with game-based learning through Colorful Plane Media within the context of writing instruction at a vocational high school.

Responding to existing learning challenges and supported by relevant theoretical perspectives, this study focuses on investigating the effectiveness of the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) strategy combined with the Colorful Plane Media in improving students' ability to write narrative texts at SMKN 1 Mojoanyar. Researchers found that the writing scores at SMKN 1 Mojoanyar in classes X KA-1 and X KA-2 were low, as evidenced by data collected during the researchers' Field Teaching Practice. The collaboration between cooperative learning methods and game-based learning media is intended to foster a more interesting, interactive, and student-centered classroom atmosphere, which can help overcome students' difficulties in organizing ideas, grammatical accuracy, selecting vocabulary selection, and applying correct writing mechanics. Through the integration of guided group discussions inherent in Think-Pair-Share and stimulating game-based media activities, this study seeks to produce empirical findings regarding the impact of this learning model on students' writing achievement. The results of this study

are expected to provide theoretical insights for the development of English writing instruction and practical contributions in the form of an innovative teaching model that aligns with the characteristics and educational needs of vocational high school students, particularly in developing their English writing competencies.

1.2 Formulation of the Problem

Based on the background of the study, the research problem is formulated as follows:

“Is the Think-Pair-Share strategy through the Colorful Plane Media effective in improving students’ writing skills at SMKN 1 Mojoanyar?”

1.3 The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to determine the effectiveness of the Think-Pair-Share strategy through the Colorful Plane Media in improving students’ writing skills at SMKN 1 Mojoanyar.

1.4 The Significance of the Study

This research is expected to give significant theoretical and practical contributions to the field of English language teaching, particularly in teaching writing to vocational high school students. By integrating cooperative learning strategies with game-based learning media, this research offers insights into how learning designs can be adapted to meet the cognitive, social, and motivational needs of English Foreign Learners in a vocational education context.

1.4.1 Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, the findings of this research are expected to enrich knowledge in English language teaching by providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of integrating Think-Pair-Share (TPS) and game-based learning media in teaching writing. This research contributes to the development of writing pedagogy by demonstrating how structured Think-Pair-Share can be strengthened through contextual and engaging media such as the Colorful Plane Media.

The research findings are expected to support the theoretical perspective that views writing as a cognitive social process, in which idea

development, collaboration, and motivation interact dynamically. Furthermore, this study can serve as a reference for future researchers who wish to explore innovative learning models that integrate cooperative learning and gamification in teaching writing, particularly in EFL vocational education settings.

1.4.2 Practical Significance

Practically, this research is expected to provide tangible benefits to various stakeholders involved in the teaching and learning process.

1. For Teachers : This study provides insights into the use of cooperative and game-based learning strategies as alternative approaches to enhance students' writing skills.
2. For Students: The implementation of Think-Pair-Share through the Colorful Plane Media is expected to increase students' motivation, engagement, and confidence in writing narrative texts.
3. For Schools: The findings may support schools in developing innovative and effective English teaching practices aligned with student-centered learning principles.

1.5 Limitation of the Study

This research is limited to assessing the effectiveness of the Think-Pair-Share strategy integrated with the Colorful Plane Media in improving the narrative text writing skills of grade X KA-1 and X KA-2 students at SMKN 1 Mojoanyar in the academic year of the study. The scope of the study covers English writing instruction, specifically teaching narrative text using cooperative learning strategies combined with game-based learning media. In terms of language skills, this study is limited to writing skills and does not examine other English language skills such as listening, speaking, or reading. Assessment of students' writing skills is limited to key components of narrative text writing, including organization, content, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. This study only examines the effectiveness of the Think-Pair-Share strategy through the Colorful Plane Media and does not compare it with other cooperative learning strategies or different learning media.

Limitations of this study include the relatively small sample size and the specific research setting, which may affect the generalizability of the findings to

other educational contexts. Furthermore, external factors such as students' initial writing abilities, learning motivation, and the classroom environment are beyond the researcher's full control and could potentially influence the results. Understanding these limitations allows for more objective and careful interpretation of the research findings.

Furthermore, this study employed a pre-experimental One-Group Pretest-Posttest Design, which did not include a control group. Therefore, although improvements in students' writing performance were measured before and after the treatment, the findings cannot fully eliminate the influence of external variables and should not be interpreted as providing the same level of causal evidence as a true experimental design.