CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an introduction to the research. The following sections outline the study's background, research questions, purpose, significance, framework, hypotheses, and a review of previous studies. The background section begins with a discussion of writing ability, the challenges students face in writing, and the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) as a solution to address these issues.

A. Background to the Study

Writing is one of the important language skills that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students need to acquire. It is an instrument to express thoughts, feelings, opinions, and ideas about specific experiences. Harmer (2004) states that writing is a form of communication that enables students to put their feelings and ideas on paper, organize their knowledge and beliefs into persuasive arguments, and convey meaning through well-constructed text. Similarly, Nunan (2003) defines writing as the mental work of inventing ideas, thinking about how to express them, and organizing them into statements and paragraphs that will be clear to a reader. Therefore, writing skills are important for students to communicate their ideas clearly and structured in English.

However, compared to other language skills, such as listening, speaking, and reading, writing is often considered the most difficult skill for students to learn. Ahmed and Bidin (2016) demonstrated that the writing skills of Indonesian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners were significantly enhanced by Project-Based Learning (PjBL). This model emphasizes student-centred learning, enabling students to engage in real-world projects that require applying writing skills. Similarly, Harmer (2004) described writing as a complex skill. This is because English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students should have accurate information, strong arguments, and a good understanding of writing organization and mechanics before presenting their ideas in writing.

At Indonesian Islamic Junior Secondary School Bani Ma'sum, students encounter writing difficulties, including limited vocabulary, lack of exposure to

correct sentence structure, and difficulty organizing their thoughts into well-structured writing. The difficulties arise from a lack of interest in reading and insufficient educational resources. As a result, students struggle to construct grammatically accurate sentences. The difficulties are intensified by the implementation of the conventional method, which does not adequately address students' needs in developing writing proficiency.

Furthermore, traditional teaching methods often fail to engage students actively, leaving them with limited opportunities to practice and improve their writing skills in a meaningful context. A study by Graham and Perin (2007) found that traditional learning methods, which only focus on memorization and lectures, are less effective in improving students' writing abilities than strategy-based and interactive approaches. Therefore, an innovative teaching model, such as Project-Based Learning (PjBL), is needed to create a more student-centred learning experience that fosters deeper engagement and skill development.

The Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model can effectively improve student learning, particularly in writing skills. Affandi and Sukyadi (2016) found that the use of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) contributed positively to the development of writing competence among Indonesian learners of English as a foreign language. This model emphasizes student-centred learning, enabling students to engage in real-world projects that require applying writing skills. According to Thomas (2000), Project-Based Learning (PjBL) is a model that organizes learning around a project. This model is characterized by a structured sequence of phases that enables students to follow the learning process and enhance their writing abilities. According to The George Lucas Educational Foundation (2005), the model consists of six key steps: (1) identifying an essential question, (2) designing a project plan, (3) setting a schedule, (4) monitoring student progress, (5) assessing outcomes, and (6) evaluating the learning experience. The structured phases ensure that students can generate meaningful texts and comprehend the writing process.

However, limited research has addressed the use of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in improving students' writing skills in recount texts, particularly at the junior secondary level. Therefore, this study aims to investigate whether Project-

Based Learning (PjBL) significantly influences the improvement of students' writing skills in recount texts at Indonesian Islamic Junior Secondary School Bani Ma'sum. The study uses a quantitative method with a quasi-experimental design.

B. Research Questions

Based on the research background described above, the problem formulation in this study is as follows:

1. What are the results of students' writing skills in recount texts without Project-Based Learning (PjBL)?

2. What are the results of students' writing skills in recount text with Project-Based Learning (PjBL)?

3. What is the significant influence of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in improving students' writing skills in recount texts?

C. Research Purposes

Based on the formulation of the research problem above, the purpose of this study is formulated as follows:

1. To analyze the results of students' writing skills in recount texts without Project-Based Learning (PjBL).

2. To analyze the results of students' writing skills in recount texts using Project-Based Learning (PjBL).

3. To determine whether Project-Based Learning (PjBL) significantly influences the improvement of students' writing skills in recount texts.

D. Research Significances

This section presents the research's significance for various parties involved in the educational process, including EFL teachers, learners, and researchers.

1. For EFL Students

This study is expected to benefit students, especially EFL learners, by improving their writing skills through implementing Project-Based Learning (PjBL). Students can develop their creativity, collaboration, and motivation to learn English by engaging in real-world projects.

2. For EFL Teachers

This study presents an alternative model for teaching writing, particularly in the context of writing a recount text. Teachers can design and implement a more effective teaching model using Project-Based Learning (PjBL) to foster a more engaging, student-centred learning environment.

3. For Researchers

This study is expected to provide input for other researchers interested in furthering their research on writing skills by implementing the Project-Based Learning (PjBL), especially in writing recount texts.

E. Research Scope

This study is limited to recount text writing and does not cover other writing genres. It investigates the influence of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) on proficiency in various aspects of recount text writing, including content, organization, vocabulary,language use, vocabulary and mechanics. The subjects of this study were 35 eighth-grade students of Indonesian Islamic Junior Secondary School Bani Ma'sum, comprising classes VIII A and VIII B. The research was conducted during the first semester of the academic year 2024/2025. The study employed a quasi-experimental design, with Class VIII A serving as the experimental group and Class VIII B as the control group. The school is located at Cimanggu Street No. 87, Cimanggu Village, Cisalak District, Subang Regency, West Java Province, Indonesia (41283).

F. Theoretical Framework

This research investigates how Project-based learning (PjBL) can improve students' writing skills in recount texts for Indonesian Islamic Junior Secondary School Bani Ma'sum students. In this study, Project-Based Learning (PjBL) serves as the independent variable (X), while students' writing skills in recount texts are the dependent variable (Y).

According to Thomas (2000), Project-Based Learning (PjBL) is a model that organizes learning around projects. This model emphasizes student-centered learning, in which students actively participate in projects to comprehend and enhance their skills. Students exchange ideas and acquire knowledge from each

other through collaborative group activities. The George Lucas Educational Foundation (2005) outlines six essential stages of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model : (1) starting with the essential question, (2) designing a plan for the project, (3) creating a schedule, (4) monitoring the students and the progress of the project, (5) assessing the outcome, and (6) evaluating the experience. Furthermore, Zhang and Ma (2023) stated that Project-Based Learning (PjBL) significantly improved student learning outcomes and had a positive impact on affective attitudes, cognitive skills, and academic achievement compared to traditional teaching models.

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), writing is often considered one of the most difficult skills to master Richard and Renandya (2002). Writing is the cognitive process of generating concepts, considering their expression, and arranging them into sentences and paragraphs that are comprehensible to the reader, as defined by Nunan (2003). Considering these challenges, it is important to implement Project-Based Learning (PjBL) to promote active engagement and collaboration in writing tasks by providing a structured and practical framework.

At the junior secondary level, the recount text is one of the texts that is introduced to students. According to Kemendikbudristek (2021), this genre is used to describe past events or personal experiences. Implementing Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in recount text learning aims to improve junior high school students' English as a foreign language (EFL) writing skills by providing them with opportunities to be active, independent, and creative (Cahyono et al., 2024). Students write recount texts utilising Project-Based Learning (PjBL) by outlining, brainstorming, revising, editing, and compiling. Therefore, their writing skills are expected to improve progressively at each stage.

This study employs a quasi-experimental research design to investigate whether the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) significantly influences the writing ability of recount text of Grade VIII students at Indonesian Islamic Junior Secondary School Bani Ma'sum. The theoretical framework demonstrates that Project-Based Learning (PjBL) facilitates students' ability to

write recount texts through collaborative and contextually relevant learning activities.

Based on the theoretical explanation above, it can be assumed that the use of the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) has a significant effect on students' writing ability, especially in writing recount texts. The learning process, which involves active participation, collaboration, and real-world projects, provides an effective platform for students to develop their writing skills in a structured manner. Therefore, this study assumes that there is a significant influence of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) on students' ability to write a recount text.

G. Hypothesis

The research hypothesis focuses on how Project-Based Learning (PjBL) influences students' writing skills in recount texts. The hypothesis was formulated to investigate the relationship between two variables. According to Creswell (2023), Quantitative hypotheses are predictions the researcher makes about the expected relationships among variables. There are two types of hypotheses, as follows:

1. **Alternative Hypothesis (Ha):** There is a significant influence of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) on improving students' writing skills in recount texts.
2. **Null Hypothesis (H0):** There is no significant influence of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) on improving students' writing skills in recount texts.

H. Previous Studies

The following presents previous research on implementing Project-Based Learning (PjBL) to improve students' writing skills. The first study, conducted by Arochman et al. (2024), examines the impact of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) on Indonesian EFL students' English writing skills and their perspectives. This study of 39 Tidar University English Education majors employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative analysis with a paired sample t-test and descriptive qualitative analysis. The study indicated that writing quality improved from 66.76 to 74.82. Participants reported that the independent learning environment of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) enhanced their critical and creative

thinking, language skills, and writing abilities. Project-Based Learning (PjBL) enhances writing content, grammar, vocabulary, and organization.

The second study, conducted by Endriyanto (2023), employed Project-Based Learning (PjBL) as an approach to enhance students' writing abilities, utilising a quasi-experimental design. The study was conducted at SMPN 1 Murung. This study examines how Project-Based Learning (PjBL) enhances the narrative text-writing skills of grade VIII students at SMPN 1 Murung. The experimental group had an average post-test score of 75.75, while the conventional learning group had an average of 69.5. Project-Based Learning (PjBL) is better than standard procedures because the data analysis resulted in a significance value of 0.000, rejecting H0 and accepting Ha.

The third study, conducted by Chadafi and Fatwa Syarifudin (2021), aimed to examine the effectiveness of the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model in enhancing the writing skills of tenth-grade students at SMK Ma'arif NU Sunan Giri, particularly in writing recount texts. The study used a pre-experimental design with a single group, including both a pre-test and a post-test. The study involved 36 students and used a writing test as the instrument. The results indicated a significant improvement in students' post-test scores compared to their pre-test scores, with a sig. (2-tailed) value of $0.001 < 0.05$, meaning the use of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) had a statistically significant effect on students' writing performance. In addition, the study found that grammar and mechanics were the most frequent problems students faced when producing retell texts, indicating that, despite the benefits of Project-Based Learning (PjBL), certain areas still require instructional attention.

The fourth study, conducted by Amali et al. (2024), aimed to determine the effectiveness of the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model on improving the ability of grade X students at SMK Al Musyawirin, Cirebon Regency, to write descriptive texts. This study used a quantitative method with a quasi-experimental design. The study was conducted at SMK Al Musyawirin, Cirebon Regency, in the 2023/2024 academic year. The research indicates that the use of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) has a significant impact on enhancing the ability to write descriptive text.

The average score of the experimental class increased from 57.22 to 75.09, while the control class's average score increased from 50.00 to 64.25. The effect size value of 1.003 indicates a strong influence, particularly in aspects of content and writing organization.

The fifth study, conducted by Wulandari and Ahmad (2020), aimed to investigate the effect of the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) method on the writing ability of second-grade students at SMAN 2 Tapung Hilir. The study used a quantitative method and a quasi-experimental design. The results of data analysis using a paired sample t-test showed that the average score of students in the experimental class increased significantly from 50.67 to 79. With a t-value of 8.682 (higher than the t-table value of 0.367 at the 5% significance level), these results prove that the use of the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) has a significant effect on improving students' writing skills.

Although there are similarities in variables and research focus, the previous studies differ in terms of methods, settings, and the academic levels of the students. Most of them were conducted in senior high schools or universities, and only a few focused specifically on recount texts. Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap by explicitly examining the effectiveness of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in enhancing writing skills, particularly in recount texts, among eighth-grade students at Indonesian Islamic Junior Secondary School Bani Ma'sum. It is expected to offer more contextual insights within the junior secondary school level and the Islamic school setting.