

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses an overview of the background, research questions, research purposes, research significance, conceptual framework, and previous studies.

A. Research Background

Writing is a productive skill that helps students express their ideas, feelings, and expressions in written text. Since the goal is to help students express their ideas, writing also aims to convey suitable, efficient, and precise information for readers (Rao, 2017).

Writing is one of the most challenging language skills (Jashari & Fojkar, 2019; Rao, 2017). It requires a distinct vocabulary, syntactic patterns, linguistic systems, and intricate clauses than speaking. For this reason, many language experts view writing as a key indicator of proficiency in a given language (Rao, 2017). Students are not spontaneously good at writing, but it is a skill that requires practice and experience. Thus, in writing skills, practice makes perfect (Sasmita & Setyowati, 2021).

Teaching writing presents challenges for both students and teachers. Studies show that students struggle with motivation, leading to low proficiency and difficulties in writing tasks (Jashari & Fojkar, 2019; Sakkir et al., 2016). Teachers also face challenges, as students' lack of motivation affects classroom dynamics (Alostath, 2021; Pakpahan, 2023; Hidayati, 2018). Using traditional teaching writing media leads to passive and monotonous classroom activities (Abas & Bakir, 2013; Hidayati, 2018).

Both students and lecturers view interactivity as a major limitation of traditional media. While textbooks and printed handouts can support English learning, they lack the engagement offered by digital tools. Digital media provide authentic, interactive resources that help maintain student focus and participation (Febriansyah et al., 2024; Maula, 2024). In contrast, traditional media are less engaging, environmentally harmful,

time-consuming, and not cost-effective. As a result, digital media increasingly outcompete traditional methods in capturing student interest.

As the preceding discussion highlights, a common challenge in teaching writing skills is that students may experience boredom and lack motivation. Because of repetitive and overly formal instructional approaches, proper and personalized media are also necessary to increase effectiveness.

Teachers play a key role in teaching writing by facilitating the process and providing feedback (Brown, 2001; Harmer, 2007). As asserted by Ly (2024) from data collected at MTsN 1 Kota Kediri, teachers are not only knowledge providers, evaluators, and motivators, collaborators, but also as facilitators; teachers guide students through the stages of writing without dominating the process. They provide stimuli, problems to solve, and opportunities for exploration, allowing students to practice writing independently. However, pre-service teachers have two roles: teaching and learning how to teach (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). It requires them to navigate different roles. As their use of media and techniques is introductory, gaining knowledge of effective teaching is crucial. Flexible media can support them in planning, instruction, and feedback, ultimately enhancing their effectiveness of teachers.

To improve students' writing skills, in the 21st century, using various technologies to learn English is positive. Technology can also help motivate students and teachers to develop competencies in the learning process (Bransford, Brown, and Cocking, 2000). The study by Khan (2017) reveals that technologies potentially support learners to maintain their interest in learning writing. Tools like online dictionaries, translation apps, and mobile devices enhance language learning (Baskara, 2023). Technology makes writing lessons more engaging and provides real-time feedback, supporting both students and teachers in the learning process.

One of the options for using technology to enhance the students' interest and motivation in writing skills is by applying Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) as a practical learning media (Krisbiantoro & Pujiani, 2021). Applications connected via smartphone make it more flexible and more manageable for students to explore knowledge about English. Research by Al-Hadithy (2021) MALL

enhances motivation and engagement by allowing students to write anytime and anywhere, making learning more flexible and accessible.

Ristika et al. (2020) researched instructional teaching media, emphasizing the use of web-based platforms in English learning. Web-based platforms effectively support English learning by offering both real-time and flexible learning, enabling instant interaction and anytime access to materials with feedback. This digital approach enhances engagement and motivation, helps teachers improve, and encourages tech-based learning, suggesting the value of tools like MALL (Ristika et al., 2020). This discovery encourages the opportunity to use digital devices, one of which is MALL, in learning English.

In preliminary discussions with some pre-service teachers, they feel hesitant to use MALL in teaching practicum because, despite its benefits, the challenges still raise concerns about its use. As future professionals, pre-service teachers must understand both the benefits and challenges of using MALL in teaching writing to ensure effective learning. Fhaeizdhyall et al. (2018) mentioned that pre-service teachers often encounter the dilemma of how to teach students.

While previous studies have explored MALL in English learning, few have examined its full application in teaching writing. The gaps of earlier studies are as follows: (a) Most other studies focus on English skills broadly. Meanwhile, this study explores the role of MALL in teaching writing, a skill often overlooked in previous research despite its need for unique pedagogical strategies. (b) Some studies, such as those by Zaki and Yunus (2018), focus on the preparation for using MALL in teaching writing. Meanwhile, this research aims to provide more comprehensive explorations by examining the whole teaching process. (c) Unlike other studies that identified challenges without proposing practical solutions, this research aims to address both challenges and strategies to overcome those challenges based on pre-service teachers' perspectives.

Based on the statement above, this study identifies pre-service teachers' experiences in implementing MALL during teaching writing. Further, to identify their perspectives on the specific benefits and challenges they face, and the strategies they employ to overcome the challenges and effectively integrate technology into their

teaching of writing skills. The result is expected to serve as a reference for microteaching practice for pre-service teachers in integrating MALL into teaching.

B. Research Questions

Based on the explanation of the background of previous paragraphs, it can be concluded to the following research questions:

1. How do pre-service teachers implement MALL in teaching writing skills during teaching practicum?
2. How do pre-service English teachers reflect on the benefits & challenges of using MALL for teaching writing skills based on their experiences?

C. Research Purposes

This study explores pre-service English teachers' Experiences of implementing MALL in teaching writing during teaching practicum, also to understand their perspectives regarding the specific benefits and challenges they face. Additionally, it seeks to understand how pre-service teachers perceive strategies to overcome challenges when using MALL to teach writing skills.

D. Research Significance

The following section discusses the benefits of this research, both in terms of its theoretical significance and its practical significance.

1. Theoretical Significances

From a theoretical point of view, this research explores pre-service English teachers' perceptions of MALL, highlighting its benefits and drawbacks in teaching writing. The findings will provide insights for pre-service teachers and guide institutions in delivering practical MALL training.

2. Practical Significances

The researcher hopes can give valuable insight to other researchers and pre-service English teachers:

- a. To other researchers

This study explores teachers' perspectives on using MALL for teaching writing, aiming to uncover its benefits and challenges to guide the development of effective strategies.

b. To pre-service teachers

The findings can support teacher education by providing insights to enhance training programs, helping pre-service English teachers integrate technology effectively in future classrooms.

E. Conceptual Framework

This framework explores the perceptions among pre-service English teachers towards using MALL in teaching writing skills, focusing on identifying the benefits and challenges. "It examines how smartphones, tablets, and apps foster language learning through ubiquitous, accessible, flexible, and interactive features. It can be ensured by conducting in-depth interviews and document analysis based on pre-service English teachers' perspectives. Therefore, the theoretical framework for this study is portrayed in the following graphic.

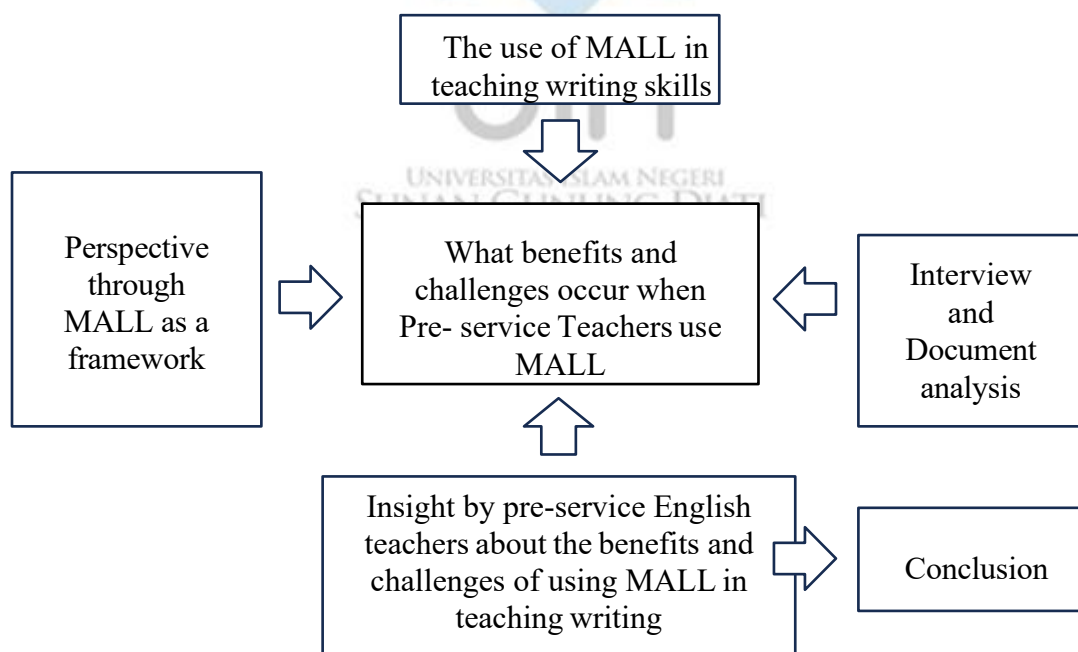


Figure 1. 1 Conceptual Framework

Writing is a critical productive skill for expressing ideas and thoughts, essential for global communication in the 21st century (Jeremy, 2015; Celcel-

Murcia, Dornyei, & Thurrell, 1995; Putri, 2017). For a deeper meaning, Numan (2015) offers a more profound perspective on writing skills, explaining in his book that it involves both physical and mental aspects. The physical aspect of writing refers to manually producing symbols, whether by forming letters on paper with a pen or pencil, or by using a keyboard to type them onto a screen. In contrast, the mental dimension of writing encompasses the cognitive processes of developing ideas and strategically planning their effective presentation within a written piece. Writing is the one that teachers and learners find most difficult to learn because it requires them to make some effort (Jeremy, 2025; Rao, 2017; Jashari & Fokjar, 2019).

Writing in English is considered important, considering the skills enable the students to communicate in a global context (Rashid et al. 2022). Moreover, Jeremy (2015) confessed in his book that it is true that if someone doesn't get the chance to write, they are being left out of many important roles in society, roles that most people in modern countries connect with success, respect, and influence. That's why being able to write, even at a basic level, is very important for language learners, just like it is for everyone else.

Teaching and studying writing in English can be supported by using technology (Khan, 2017). Furthermore, Koehler & Misra (2009) argue that effective teaching with technology integrates content, pedagogy, and technology, as figured in the TPACK framework.

MALL refers to integrating mobile devices in language learning environments, offering learners the advantage of studying anytime and anywhere. It includes various tools such as smartphones, laptops, and tablet PCs as effective in supporting this flexible learning approach (Kukulska-Hulme, 2015). Furthermore, mobile-assisted is not only just physical devices such as tablets or smartphones, but also about tools, apps, & functions available on mobile tools, such as search engines, learning app (quizlet, memrise, duolingo), QR codes, voice and video recording, social media platforms, and even note-taking apps (Stockwell, 2022).

Thus, MALL effectively supports language learning by enabling flexibility, accessibility, and engagement through mobile applications like Instagram,

YouTube, and Duolingo, with the teacher as facilitator and guide (Bada & Olusegun, 2015; Pratiwi et al., 2020; Lestari et al., 2022). By offering accessible, interactive, and context-sensitive learning opportunities, MALL can significantly enhance writing skills practice for EFL learners. Using mobile-assisted learning does not limit students only to the mobile phone itself; teachers can also collaborate it with other non-mobile devices, such as blending it with paper-based learning.

Pre-service English teachers refer to individuals who are currently in the process of becoming teachers. They are usually enrolled in teacher education programs before they enter the teaching profession. Pre-service teachers are in the transitional stage between their experience as students and their future role as educators. That is why they play a crucial role in shaping ideas and beliefs that teachers develop about teaching (Kennedy, 1999).

Pre-service English teachers perceive positive in utilizing technology tools such as MALL during teaching practice. Pre-service English teachers possess a good understanding of technology, including MALL. They believe that the use of MALL can facilitate English learning with a rich information source related to educational content, and the MALL flexibility (Nariyati & Pratiwi, 2020). However, pre-service teachers often face difficulties in integrating MALL during writing instruction. The area of greatest challenge for these pre-service teachers was their capacity to provide leadership in the coordinated use of content, technology, and teaching strategies within an educational context (Herwanto, et al., 2023). Therefore, the study aims to view the MALL on students' writing from pre-service teachers' perspectives to prepare them for future teaching.

Previous studies have shown that pre-service English teachers perceive MALL positively, appreciating its flexibility and the abundance of educational content it offers (Nariyati & Pratiwi, 2020). However, despite their familiarity with technology, they often encounter challenges in integrating MALL tools into writing instruction.

Most existing previous research has examined teachers' and students' viewpoints or the overall success of MALL, frequently using numerical data or a combination of methods. There's a lack of in-depth understanding regarding the

specific experiences of future English teachers using MALL for writing instruction, particularly from a qualitative standpoint, from pre-service English teachers in the writing skills area. Pre-service teachers, acting as both learners and future educators, offer a valuable perspective on MALL's teaching possibilities and practical limitations in actual classrooms (Kennedy, 1999).

Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by employing a qualitative Narrative inquiry approach to explore the benefits and challenges experienced by pre-service English teachers when using MALL media to teach writing through their stories. This approach offers rich, in-depth insights into how these teachers navigate instructional design, technological integration, and classroom realities, insights into the entire teaching process that are still underrepresented in current MALL literature.

F. Previous Studies

This research is conducted to explore how pre-service English teachers perceive the benefits and challenges of utilizing MALL in teaching writing. Research that discusses MALL in teaching English has been conducted by several previous researchers. Still, research on this area is frequently investigated for teaching writing by pre-service English teachers. The following are previous studies focusing on the use of MALL in English language teaching.

First, previous study conducted by Mozes (2019) at Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana in Salatiga, Indonesia. The research explored pre-service teachers' perceptions toward the integration of MALL, focusing on its benefits and challenges. This qualitative study involved six pre-service teachers during their teaching practicum in senior high schools. The results reveal that MALL fosters collaborative learning, enhances teaching strategies, provides visual aids, offers unlimited material access, and boosts student motivation. Challenges like poor internet connectivity and student distraction were also noted. While the study provided rich insights into how pre-service teachers perceive MALL integration in general, it did not specifically explore how MALL supports the teaching of writing skills, leaving a gap that this current study aims to fill.

Similarly, Nariyati and Pratiwi (2020) investigated EFL pre-service teachers' perceptions toward the use of MALL in teaching English at Ganesha University of Education, Indonesia. This mixed-methods research involved 70 eighth-semester students from the English Language Education program who had completed teaching practicum. The findings show pre-service teachers' approval of MALL due to its ease of material design, flexibility, and rich material sources. Pre-service teachers believed that MALL supported effective and engaging learning by enabling access to learning materials anytime and anywhere through familiar mobile apps like WhatsApp, YouTube, and Quizlet. While the prior study explored general perceptions of web-based learning, it didn't specifically examine how MALL aids in teaching writing skills, which is the focus of this research.

Study conducted by Zaki & Yunus (2018) at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. This research explored Malaysian pre-service teachers' readiness to use mobile learning for teaching writing. This research used a mixed-method design with questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, involving 28 ESL pre-service teachers. Research findings of this research highlight the pre-service teachers' interest in learning to integrate MALL that while participants were generally ready in terms of mobile skills, psychological openness, and technical access. But most preferred to use it for speaking, reading, and listening. They were hesitant to use MALL specifically for teaching writing. However, this research reveals a significant gap that is although MALL is increasingly embraced, its potential in writing instruction remains underexplored, especially from pre-service English teachers' perception and applying it in classroom contexts. In other words, it focused on preparation rather than examining the entire teaching process. This study inspires the current address to fill the gap by focusing specifically on pre-service English teachers' perceptions of using MALL in teaching writing.

Research by Saragih & Jaelani (2020) conducted a qualitative study at Ibn Khaldun University, Bogor, to explore pre-service teachers' opinions on the implementation of MALL in teaching writing during the COVID-19 pandemic. This research involved eight pre-service teachers who conducted their teaching practicum in an Islamic Junior High School through online learning. The data were collected through observation and interviews, focusing on internal and

external challenges of using MALL in teaching writing during an online teaching practicum. The findings show that MALL supported students' understanding of writing materials by offering accessible and flexible learning online. Still, challenges such as unstable internet connection, the type of cellular that does not support the learning process and fluctuating student motivation. Although this research provided useful information about how MALL was used in remote teaching, it didn't thoroughly investigate how future teachers employ MALL to instruct writing techniques or enhance writing skills, which is the specific focus of this study.

Another research conducted by Lin, Abdullah, & Samad (2020), investigated the acceptance of MALL among Chinese EFL teachers in higher education and the factors behind it. This research used a quantitative approach involving 30 in-service EFL college teachers in Yunnan, China. This research found that Chinese EFL Teachers perceived MALL highly positive of using MALL in the classroom because it is very useful and reasonably easy to use. However, despite this positive intention, the study also revealed that ease of use remained moderate, possibly due to limited training and digital teaching experience. This research, while insightful regarding teachers' adoption of MALL, lacked a specific focus on its implementation in teaching specific language skills, such as writing, a gap this research intends to explore.

Furthermore, several studies have been conducted. The gaps from previous studies are (a) Most other studies focus on English skills broadly, while this research aims to explore only focus on teaching writing skills. Writing is still rarely emphasized in MALL studies, yet it requires unique pedagogical strategies that this research seeks to uncover. (b) Unlike some studies, such as Zaki & Yunus (2018), this research examines the entire teaching process rather than just the preparation stage. (c) Unlike other studies that identified challenges without proposing practical solutions, this research aims to address some challenges and propose practical solutions.

This research addresses a significant gap in MALL studies by specifically focusing on the teaching of writing skills, an area often overlooked despite its need for distinct pedagogical strategies. Although numerous studies have investigated

the impact of MALL in teaching English, the specific effects of mobile applications on writing skills in pre-service English teachers remain largely unexplored. This area still warrants greater attention, commensurate with the challenges it poses among other English language learning skills, and its utilization by pre-service teachers. Beyond merely identifying challenges, this study goes further by proposing practical solutions to enhance MALL implementation in writing instruction. By bridging these gaps, this research provides valuable insights into the field of MALL.

