

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research background, three research questions, three research purposes, the scope of the research, the conceptual framework, the research hypothesis, and previous studies.

A. Research Background

Writing is one of the four essential language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) that is very important in the process of learning English. Having the ability to write can help students express ideas and information clearly and in a structured way. Writing is an effective tool for sharing information and ideas with readers (Qur'ani, 2018, as cited in Fitria, 2024). According to Srimularahmah & Marwil (2021, as cited in Fitria, 2024), writing can effectively communicate individuals' thoughts and feelings. Moreover, Jamoom (2021) states that “*writing supports students' intellectual growth and expands their cognitive domain as well as enhancing their language skills.*” This shows that writing skills are very important in supporting students' academic and communication development. It can be concluded that writing ability plays a crucial role in students' academic achievement and communication competence, making it an essential skill to be developed in English language learning.

Given the importance of writing skills in learning English, students are required to apply these skills to produce various types of texts as part of the school curriculum. According to the Curriculum for Senior High School, students are expected to understand and produce several types of simple texts, such as descriptive, recount, procedure, and narrative texts (Kemendikbud, 2025). Narrative texts tell a story and serve a social function: to entertain and convey moral messages through a logical sequence of events (Anderson & Anderson, 2003). However, research suggests that students often struggle with narrative writing due to difficulties in idea development, structure, grammar, and vocabulary. Koilara *et al.* (2020) reported that students often struggle to understand the generic structure of narrative texts. Additionally, Faliyah *et al.* (2022) have found that limited vocabulary and grammar knowledge significantly contribute to students' writing

difficulties.

These difficulties were also observed at the research site. During the preliminary observation in a tenth-grade class at SMAN 26 Bandung, students required prompts or specific stimuli to begin writing and to develop their ideas. In addition, they tended to spend considerable time completing their writing tasks, suggesting difficulties with generating and organizing ideas independently. According to Wahono & Afifah's findings (2022), these writing difficulties may arise when students perceive English writing as difficult, leading to low motivation and limited vocabulary in their writing. In addition, this condition aligns with Al-Izhar and Rokhuna (2023), who reported that Indonesian vocational high school students encounter difficulties with narrative writing, particularly in idea development, grammar use, vocabulary mastery, and text organization. These problems are also influenced by students' low motivation and their perception that writing in English is difficult.

Writing is one of the most difficult activities for students in the classroom. As stated by Richards and Renandya (2002), writing is the most difficult activity for learners to master, especially second language (L2) learners. The difficulty lies in organizing ideas and translating those ideas into readable text. Apsari (2017, as cited in Wahono & Afifah, 2022) states that writing is considered the most arduous skill for language learners because it requires students to generate and express ideas in written form. Moreover, Wahono and Afifah (2022) found that learners struggle to generate and develop ideas, which causes them to require a long time before starting to write. Therefore, most students were able to produce only a limited number of sentences and had difficulty exploring their imagination.

With the current development of digital technology, digital picture series have become a suitable medium for learning narrative writing. According to Alfara & Yuvita (2022), digital picture series are a modified version of image media. They are suitable for use in writing instruction, as images can make it easier for students to understand and develop stories. According to Wright (1989, as cited in Swari et al., 2024), sequential images help students understand chronology and facilitate their story-building. In line with Harmer's (2007) statement, music,

images, and films are good stimuli for writing activities.

The use of Picture Series in writing skills has consistently shown positive and significant effects on narrative paragraph writing skills. Specifically, studies by Romadlona (2023) and Girsang (2021) both found that the use of Picture Series can improve students' narrative writing skills. Furthermore, a study by Clarita *et al.* (2023) proves the effectiveness of using Digital Picture Series as a learning medium for narrative writing. The empirical basis of this previous research provides strong confidence that the digital media used can be the right solution. To address these writing issues, educators need to select appropriate learning media to help students overcome these difficulties.

Although several previous studies have examined the use of visual media to improve writing skills, a gap remains in research on the effectiveness of digital picture series, particularly in narrative paragraph writing. Romadlona (2023) and Girsang (2021), for example, found that using static image series can improve cohesion and storyline in students' narrative writing. However, the study did not utilize a more interactive digital format. Furthermore, Sartipa *et al.* (2025) reported that the use of multimedia positively impacts students' writing creativity, but the study did not focus on digital picture series as the primary learning medium. Additionally, Rohinayah and Mari (2022) examined the effect of digital storytelling on writing fluency, but the study did not focus on narrative writing. Therefore, further research is needed to specifically examine the effectiveness of digital picture series in improving students' narrative paragraph writing skills, particularly in story organization, sequence of events, and idea development.

Based on the description provided, this study aims to determine the impact of using Digital Picture Series on improving the narrative paragraph writing skills of high school students, especially in developing supporting details and organizing the storyline. This research is important because many high school students still struggle to develop ideas, sequence events, and describe stories coherently in narrative writing. The use of Digital Picture Series is expected to serve as a visual aid that helps students visualize a series of events, stimulate their imagination, and facilitate the systematic organization of stories. Thus, this study is urgent to provide

empirical evidence on the use of digital visual media as an effective alternative learning strategy for improving students' narrative writing skills in EFL classes.

B. Research Questions

Based on the background of the study, the research is guided by the following questions:

1. What is the students' ability in writing narrative paragraphs before the implementation of Digital Picture Series?
2. What is students' ability in writing narrative paragraphs after the implementation of Digital Picture Series?
3. How significant is the impact of Digital Picture Series on Students' ability in writing narrative paragraphs?

C. Research Purpose

In line with the research problem above, the objectives of this study are:

1. To identify the students' ability in writing narrative paragraphs before the implementation of Digital Picture Series.
2. To identify the students' ability in writing narrative paragraphs after the implementation of Digital Picture Series.
3. To determine the significance of the impact of Digital Picture Series on students' ability in writing narrative paragraphs.

D. Research Significances

This study has theoretical and practical benefits. The results of this study are expected to contribute to teachers, students, and other researchers in the field of English language learning, particularly in writing skills.

1. Theoretical Significance

The results of this study can enrich theoretical studies on the use of visual media in language learning by providing empirical evidence of the role of Digital Picture Series in improving students' narrative writing skills, especially in organizing storylines and developing supporting details. In addition, this study supports constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes that learners actively construct understanding through visual stimuli and learning contexts.

2. Practical Significances

a. For Students

To help them increase motivation to learn, facilitate idea development, and organize their storylines coherently and logically when writing narrative paragraphs.

b. For Teachers

To assist the teacher in teaching writing more interestingly and effectively using the Digital Picture Series.

c. For School

To provide meaningful input for school policy decisions related to improving technological infrastructure and implementing innovative learning media.

d. For Future Researchers

To provide a reference for other researchers who will conduct similar research in the future.

E. Research Scope

This research was limited to examining the impact of Digital Picture Series as a learning medium in improving students' ability to write narrative paragraphs. This research is a quantitative study using a pre-experimental design (one-group pretest-posttest). Specifically, this study involves only one class of X-2 grade students at SMAN 26 Bandung, West Java, Indonesia, with a sample of approximately 47 students. The teaching procedure used in this study was limited to the Genre-Based Approach (GBA), covering the stages of Building Knowledge of the Field (BKOF), Modeling of the Text (MOT), Joint Construction of Text (JCOT), and Independent Construction of Text (ICOT). This limitation focused on developing narrative paragraph writing. The pictures will be used from websites such as Pinterest and Canva AI. This study measured students' writing skills solely using pretest and posttest results and did not examine other language skills, such as listening, speaking, or reading. The learning media, such as videos, realia, or printed pictures, were not included in this research.

F. Conceptual Framework

This study is grounded in the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning proposed by Mayer (2005), which explains that learners understand material more effectively when information is presented through both visual and verbal modes. Consequently, understanding how learners process information through multimedia learning leads to a discussion of writing as a productive skill that requires idea generation, organization, and language construction.

Writing is one of the most important skills in the English language learning process. Harmer (2007) emphasizes that writing is a way to produce language and express ideas, feelings, and opinions. According to Nunan (2003, as cited in Cahya, 2018), writing is defined as a process of thinking to generate ideas, considering how to express them in good writing, and arranging these ideas into clear statements and paragraphs. Writing is a means of communication in written form. Through writing, writers can convey experiences, ideas, or feelings so that readers can understand what the writer is experiencing. In the context of English learning in schools, especially in high school, the curriculum specifies various types of texts to develop writing skills.

The types of texts studied are descriptive, recount, procedure, and narrative texts. Each type of text has a specific communicative purpose and structure, so students need to understand the characteristics of each text before writing it correctly. According to English Language Achievement Phase E, as cited in the Ministry of Education and Culture (2025), at the end of this phase, students are expected to produce various types of texts, including descriptive, recount, procedure, and narrative texts. Therefore, mastering writing skills is an important part of helping students produce texts in accordance with curriculum achievements.

Among the types of texts studied by students, narrative text plays a significant role in developing students' literacy and creativity skills. According to Anderson & Anderson (2003), narrative text tells a story; its purpose is to present a view of the world that entertains or informs the reader or listener, and its structure consists of an orientation, a complication, a sequence of events, a resolution, and a coda. Rebecca (2003, as cited in Arnilah & Astari, 2022) describes narrative text as

a form of writing that presents a sequence of events in logical chronological order, based on events that are either imagined or directly experienced by certain participants.

To help students achieve these competencies, a simpler stage is needed, namely starting with narrative paragraphs. According to Bushel (2011, as cited in Indrawati, 2020), a narrative paragraph describes an event, feeling, or experience in story form or in the order in which the event occurred. In line with Hudak (2008, as cited in Indrawati, 2020), a narrative paragraph is a group of sentences that tells what happens, how the action happens, and in what order the events occur. Narrative paragraphs focus on one main event accompanied by relevant supporting details, so they are more suited to the initial abilities of high school students.

Students' abilities in writing narrative paragraphs rely not only on their comprehension of the various texts, but also on their writing skills. Heaton (1990) stated that writing skills encompass several key components: content, organization of ideas, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. In the context of narrative paragraphs, students are required to convey a series of events coherently, develop relevant supporting details, and use linguistic elements in accordance with the rules of narrative paragraphs. However, several studies show that many students still experience difficulties in determining ideas, organizing the sequence of events, and developing adequate supporting details. Therefore, understanding students' abilities to write narrative paragraphs is crucial so that teachers can design learning media to help them improve these skills.

In general, learning media can be categorized into conventional media and digital media. Conventional media, such as printed images and textbooks, have traditionally been used to support student writing activities. With the development of technology, digital media is increasingly being used in schools because it is more flexible, interactive, and suited to the characteristics of students who are familiar with technological devices. Prensky (2001) emphasizes that digital generation students are more engaged with interactive media. Therefore, the use of digital media is a relevant choice for high school writing instruction.

One form of digital media that can be used in writing lessons is the Digital

Picture Series, a series of digital images arranged sequentially to show the flow of events. According to Wright (1989, as cited in Swari et al., 2024), sequential images help students understand chronology and facilitate their story-building. Digital Picture Series provides a strong visual stimulus so students can more easily find supporting details and organize events logically. This is especially important when writing narrative paragraphs, which emphasize sequencing and the development of details.

The use of Digital Picture Series is directly related to improving students' ability to write narrative paragraphs. By viewing a series of digital images, students are helped to identify the sequence of events, determine the main idea of the paragraph, and develop relevant supporting details. Berk (2009) stated that visual media improves student retention and comprehension because visual information is easier for the brain to process. In addition, the use of Digital Picture Series has the potential to effectively improve students' ability to write narrative paragraphs, especially in developing supporting details and structuring the storyline chronologically. Girsang (2024) found that Digital Picture Series have a good impact on students' narrative writing abilities. Moreover, Aulia and Liansari (2023) found that Digital Picture Series significantly affect simple essay writing skills. Therefore, Digital Picture Series can be used in English-language learning to improve students' writing skills, especially narrative writing.

G. Hypotheses

In quantitative research, hypotheses are formulated to predict the expected relationships among variables (Creswell, 2014). The hypotheses of the research were formulated as follows:

1. Null Hypothesis (H₀): The use of Digital Picture Series does not significantly improve students' ability in writing narrative paragraphs.
2. Alternative Hypothesis (H_a): The use of Digital Picture Series significantly improves students' ability in writing narrative paragraphs.

H. Previous Study

Romadlona (2023) conducted a study entitled *The Effectiveness of Using Picture Series Media on Student's Writing Narrative Text*. This study aimed to

determine how the use of picture series media to write narrative text skills, and this research was carried out in class VIII PK at MTs. Ma'arif NU Nguwok. This study used a Quantitative method with pre-experimental design. The findings showed that picture series is effective for improving students' writing skills. However, the study used non-digital picture series and the subject was middle school students. Meanwhile, the present study uses digital picture series and the subjects are high school grade X students.

Rohinayah & Mari (2022) conducted a study entitled *The Use of Digital Picture Series as Media of Improving Writing Skill Through Recount Text Paragraph in English Writing Class*. The study aimed to improve students' writing skills in recount text paragraphs using digital picture series. The findings showed that using picture series had improved students' ability in writing recount paragraphs. However, the study focused on recount paragraphs and used the Qualitative Collaborative Classroom Action Research method. Meanwhile, the present study focuses on Digital Picture Series and examines students' ability in writing narrative paragraphs at the senior high school level. Also, this study uses a quantitative method with pre-experimental design.

Tondang et al. (2023) conducted a study entitled *The Effect of Picture Series Teaching Media to the Writing Ability of Grade Eight Students of SMP Negeri 9 Pematang Siantar on Narrative Text*. This study aimed to find out the effect of picture series teaching media to the writing ability of grade eighth students on narrative text. This study used a Quantitative method with quasi-experimental design. The findings showed that the effect of picture series teaching media to the writing ability on narrative text is effective. However, the study used non-digital picture series and the subject was middle school students. Meanwhile, the present study uses digital picture series and examines students' writing narrative paragraphs at the senior high school level.

Girsang (2021) conducted a study entitled *Improving Students' Narrative Writing Ability by Implementing Digital Picture Series in Online EFL Class*. This study aimed to prove that the implementation of digital picture series can improve students' narrative writing ability and to see students' response to it. The method of

this study used is Quantitative with pre-experimental design. The findings showed that digital picture series implementation can improve students' ability in narrative writing. However, the study used a web-side based application called StoryBoardThat.com. Meanwhile, the present study uses digital picture series using Canva application and carried out in offline class.

Clarita et al. (2023) conducted a study entitled Utilizing Digital Picture Series to Enhance Students' Performance in Writing Narrative Text. This study aimed to explore the implementation of digital picture series in English language teaching and learning and its impact on students' performance in writing narrative texts. This study used a collaborative action research method. The findings showed that the implementation of digital picture series was successful, and students' performance in writing narrative text improved. The differences from the present study are that the method uses a quantitative approach with a pre-experimental design, and the aim focuses on the effectiveness of digital picture series in writing narrative paragraphs.

Based on previous studies, picture series, both digital and non-digital, have been shown to be effective in improving students' writing skills. Most of these studies are similar to this study in that they focus on writing skills and the use of picture series as an instructional medium. Several studies also use a quantitative approach and analyze student performance in narrative writing, showing that visual media play an important role in supporting the development of students' ideas and text organization.

However, there are differences between this study and previous studies. Several previous studies, such as Rohinayah & Mari (2022) focused on recount texts rather than narrative paragraphs and applied qualitative and classroom action research design; also, Tondang et al. (2023) used non-digital picture series and involved junior high school students. In contrast, this study focuses specifically on Digital Picture Series, targets narrative paragraph writing, and employs a quantitative pre-experimental design. Therefore, this study fills the research gap by providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of Digital Picture Series in developing students' narrative paragraph writing skills at the high school level.