

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Writing remains one of the four essential language skills, together with listening, speaking, and reading, and it holds an important role in effective communication and academic achievement. Of these four language skills, writing is regarded as one of the most demanding and sophisticated skills in second and foreign language acquisition because it requires students to combine vocabulary, grammar, organization, and critical thinking when conveying meaning effectively (Fachrunnisa et al., 2025). In the setting of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), writing allows learners to communicate their thoughts successfully across academic, professional, and social contexts. Nevertheless, after years of English education, numerous EFL students continue to encounter challenges when composing clear, organized, written work, highlighting the necessity for increasingly effective pedagogical approaches within writing instruction.

These difficulties are also evident among EFL learners in Indonesia, particularly vocational high school students. EFL learners face challenges in various components of writing, including content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics (Toba et al., 2019). These difficulties stem from limited writing knowledge, inadequate practice, writing apprehension, unfavorable attitudes toward writing, low motivation, restricted time during examinations, and ineffective writing instruction

provided in educational settings. As a result, students' writing achievement is frequently low and does not meet the minimum mastery criteria. Limited vocabulary mastery and low learning motivation also contribute to students' poor writing quality. Learners engaged in inquiry-based writing instruction demonstrated notable improvements in academic writing abilities (Wale & Bogale, 2021). They successfully produced essays exhibiting enhanced task fulfillment, coherence and cohesion, lexical proficiency, and grammatical diversity together with greater linguistic accuracy. These findings highlight the importance of implementing effective writing instruction to support students in developing their writing performance.

In vocational education, writing abilities are valuable not only for academic success but also for effective future professional communication. Vocational students are expected to produce functional and professional texts such as job application letters, resumes, internship reports, and other workplace-related documents that require clarity, accuracy, and systematic organization. To develop these writing competencies progressively, students are introduced to several text types in accordance with the curriculum. One of the text types taught in Grade X vocational high school is descriptive text, which plays an important role in developing students ability to describe people, places, or objects clearly and systematically. Descriptive text is among the mandatory text genres taught to tenth-grade students in vocational high schools following the Merdeka Curriculum. Through descriptive writing, learners develop skills in organizing ideas, applying

suitable vocabulary, and describing people, places, or objects systematically. These competencies are essential because they equip students for increasingly complex writing activities in higher grades and strengthen their ability to communicate effectively in academic and professional environments.

Writing descriptive texts helps students develop their vocabulary mastery, organize their ideas effectively, and improve their sentence structure. Students descriptive writing ability involves several aspects, including content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics (Purnamasari et al., 2021). These aspects demonstrated that writing descriptive texts encourages students to select appropriate words, arrange ideas coherently, and construct grammatically correct sentences. Nevertheless, referring on initial observations at SMK Gamaliel 1 Madiun, numerous tenth-grade students continue to face considerable challenges in composing descriptive texts. Their writing demonstrates weak paragraph organization, vague descriptions, grammatical inaccuracies, and insufficient vocabulary mastery. Comparable findings were likewise reported by Purnamasari et al. (2021), who identified students' challenges in developing ideas, vocabulary usage, sentence construction, and text organization. These results suggest that many learners continue to struggle with organizing ideas, employing appropriate vocabulary, and producing grammatically accurate descriptive compositions. Rowiyah et al. (2025), also highlight that these aspects remain challenging for EFL students in developing their

writing skills. Therefore, appropriate instructional strategies are needed to provide students with effective guidance in generating ideas, organizing information, developing paragraphs, and revising their writing. The implementation of an effective writing strategy is expected to help students produce more organized and coherent descriptive texts.

One strategy that has been developed to support students' writing development is the Please Strategy. The Please Strategy was originally introduced by Welch as a structured writing strategy that assists students in planning, organizing, developing, and revising their writing. The strategy consists of six systematic stages: Pick, List, Evaluate, Activate, Supply, and End. Through these stages, students are guided to select a topic, generate ideas, evaluate and organize their ideas, develop a topic sentence, provide supporting details, and conclude their writing. Therefore, the Please Strategy offers a structured approach that assists students throughout planning, organizing, developing, and revising their writing, allowing them to create increasingly coherent and well-developed descriptive texts. Unlike other writing strategies such as Process Writing, Mind Mapping, and the Four Square Writing Method, the Please Strategy integrates the processes of generating ideas, organizing information, developing paragraphs, and evaluating writing within a structured framework.

While Process Writing emphasizes recursive writing stages, covers planning, drafting, revising, and editing (Torrance et al., 2015). Mind Mapping focuses on generating and organizing ideas visually before writing

(Yunus & Chien, 2016). In contrast, the Please Strategy integrates idea generation, organization, paragraph development, and evaluation within one structured framework. Therefore, the Please Strategy is considered suitable for students who experience difficulties in organizing and developing descriptive texts.

These present outcomes align closely with prior research carried out by (Kurniati et al., 2020), which evaluated the Please Strategy against the Idea Details Strategy in enhancing students' descriptive writing skills. Their results revealed that the Please Strategy remarkably enhanced learners' overall capacity to organize ideas, select proper vocabulary, and apply correct grammatical structures.

While previous studies have confirmed the effectiveness of Please Strategy in improving students' writing ability, empirical evidence regarding its implementation in vocational high school settings within the Indonesian EFL context remains limited. Prior research, notably the empirical work by Kurniati et al. (2020), predominantly targeted junior high school learners. Conversely, vocational high school students present distinct academic traits, educational requirements, and writing expectations linked to professional workplace communication. Additionally, scarce scholarly attention has been directed toward assessing the Please Strategy's impact on descriptive writing using quasi-experimental methods within vocational contexts. Hence, the extent to which the strategy effectively develops vocational students' descriptive writing competence continues to be unverified.

Consequently, this investigation aims to bridge this empirical gap by evaluating the impact of the Please Strategy on tenth-grade students' descriptive writing performance at SMK Gamaliel 1 Madiun employing a quasi-experimental approach.

Therefore, this research investigates the effect of the Please Strategy on the descriptive writing skills of tenth-grade students at SMK Gamaliel 1 Madiun through a quasi-experimental design. The findings are expected to provide empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of the strategy and contribute to improving writing instruction in vocational EFL classrooms.

B. Delimitation of the study

This research is delimitation to the effect of using Please Strategy on writing skills of the tenth grade student at SMK Gamaliel 1 Madiun.

C. Research Problem

Researcher formulated a problem of this study: Do students who write using the Please Strategy have better writing skills than students who write using conventional teaching?

D. Purposes of the study

The purpose of this study is to see the significance different of students who write using Please Strategy and conventional teaching.

E. Significance of the Study

This research is anticipated to offer valuable insights to English language pedagogy, specifically regarding the domain of writing skill

instruction. The significance can be seen from three perspectives: teachers, students, and future researchers.

1. Teacher

This study offers insights into the practical application of the Please strategy in teaching descriptive text writing. The findings may help English teachers at vocational high schools SMK adopt an instructional strategy that is both structured and systematic in guiding students through the writing process. By implementing the “Please” strategy, teachers can provide clear step-by-step guidance that scaffolds students’ idea generation and paragraph organization, making the writing instruction more effective and manageable. As a result, teachers may be better equipped to support students in developing coherent and well-organized descriptive texts.

2. Students

The implementation of the Please Strategy is expected to enhance students’ writing skills by providing clear and systematic step-by-step guidance in the writing process. Through this strategy, students may become more confident and motivated in expressing their ideas in written English, particularly in writing descriptive texts. The systematic steps of the Please Strategy assist learners in idea generation, paragraph organization, and effective conclusion, thereby mitigating writing-related confusion and anxiety. Hence, students are stimulated to foster their writing abilities with greater independence and consistency.

3. Future Research

This research provides a valuable reference and foundation for future research investigating application of the Please Strategy in teaching writing. Further studies may explore the effectiveness of the Please Strategy in different writing genres, such as narrative, recount, or argumentative texts, or examine its implementation at different educational levels. Furthermore, subsequent studies could explore the sustained effects of the Please Strategy on writing proficiency or evaluate its efficacy against alternative structured writing interventions. Such studies are expected to enrich empirical evidence on the role of systematic instructional strategies in improving EFL students' writing skills.

F. Definition of Operational Variables

1. Writing Skills

Writing skills represent the ability to express ideas clearly and logically through written language. This includes the correct use of grammar, vocabulary, coherence, and text organization. In this study, writing skills refer to students ability to write descriptive texts that are relevant, structured, and grammatically accurate based on assessment criteria.

2. Teaching in writing

Teaching writing involves guiding students toward improving their writing abilities through systematic instructional support, practice, and

feedback. It involves supporting students throughout the writing stages from planning to editing to help them produce coherent and organized texts. In this research, teaching in writing refers to the teacher's efforts in applying various strategies and classroom activities to enhance students' writing performance.

3. Please Strategy

The Please Strategy is a step-by-step method used to help students write better by organizing their ideas into clear and structured paragraphs. It includes activities such as choosing a topic, generating and evaluating ideas, writing topic and supporting sentences, and ending with a conclusion. In this study, the Please Strategy refers to the application of these steps during writing instruction to help students develop descriptive paragraphs effectively.

4. Descriptive Text

Students descriptive writing skills refer to students ability to write descriptive texts that clearly describe people, places, or objects using appropriate vocabulary, grammar, and text organization. Descriptive writing focuses on presenting detailed and vivid information so that readers can easily imagine the described subject. In this research, learners' descriptive writing skills are assessed through a descriptive writing task where students must compose a descriptive paragraph. Their written performance is appraised utilizing an analytic scoring

rubric that measures content quality, structural organization, vocabulary range, grammar, and mechanics.