

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Alongside listening, speaking, and reading, writing is recognized as one of the four fundamental English language skills. It is regarded as an essential skill because it provides students with the ability to communicate ideas, share opinions and feelings, and present personal experiences through well-organized and meaningful written texts. In academic contexts, writing also serves as a medium for demonstrating understanding, constructing knowledge, and completing academic tasks. Furthermore, writing requires more effort in constructing meaning, applying critical thinking, and systematic sentence organization, making writing a more complex skill than other language skills (Basuki et al., 2024). Thus, mastery of writing skills is an important indicator of students' success in communicating ideas effectively in both academic and social contexts.

English language instruction at the junior high school level, especially in ninth grade (Phase D), focuses on developing students' writing abilities as one of the primary productive competences as part of the Merdeka Curriculum's implementation in Indonesia. In this stage, students are expected to be able to use a variety of text kinds, including descriptive, narrative, report, and procedural texts, to express in writing their thoughts, experiences, interests, opinions, and points of view to their peers, instructors, and others. Through writing activities, students are

encouraged to develop their ability to organize ideas logically and communicate clearly and meaningfully in written communication in accordance with the context and purpose (Kemendikdasmen, 2025).

Among various types of texts, narrative texts are one of the texts studied by students. Through narrative writing, students are expected to be able to organize events into a logical sequence, analyze and evaluate the plot, develop characters and settings, and express ideas creatively to construct them into a coherent narrative. To produce a proper narrative text, students need to apply appropriate vocabulary, construct grammatically correct sentences, and organise them into a coherent storyline (Terenovix et al., 2023). However, in actual classroom practice, writing activities remain challenging for many students due to several factors, such as limited language proficiency, difficulties in generating and developing ideas, and the limited use of varied and engaging instructional strategies in the classroom.

Drawing from observations made by the researcher during teaching practice at SMP Negeri 1 Tanjungpinang, many ninth-grade students experienced difficulties in writing narrative texts. They showed low motivation, as reflected in their passive behaviour during writing activities, had difficulty generating and organizing ideas, and had limited vocabulary. In addition, the learning materials were mostly presented through text-dominated PowerPoint slides, which did not provide sufficient visual support for students' idea development.

In order to support the process of learning in the classroom, visual media can be used to facilitate learning, as the medium is capable of presenting abstract

ideas in a more concrete and easily understandable way. Picture series are a form of visual media that can serve as an alternative in writing instruction, particularly for the learning of narrative texts. The use of picture series in learning can create a more active, innovative, creative, and engaging learning atmosphere for students (Berliana et al., 2024). In other words, picture series provide context through a sequence of images that construct a coherent storyline, encouraging students to develop their understanding and generate ideas by observing, interpreting and connecting the images, which ultimately facilitates their ability to describe characters, settings and plot. Furthermore, besides attracting students' attention, picture series also encourage students to interact with teachers and peers, leading to discussions and the exchange of ideas.

The use of picture series as a visual medium has been recognized as being effective in assisting students' writing skills across different types of texts. In recount texts, picture series help students organize events chronologically while improving their participation and creativity in the writing process (Gayatri & Gaffar, 2023). In narrative writing, picture series support students in developing coherent storylines, structuring ideas, and expressing creativity through visual prompts that stimulate their imagination (Yasminto & Maulidah, 2023). Furthermore, in descriptive texts, picture series provide visual context that assists students in describing objects, events, and situations more effectively (Ramadhanty et al., 2021). These suggest that picture series play a significant role in supporting students' writing development across various text types and have the potential to

serve as a creative and engaging teaching strategy, particularly in enhancing students' narrative writing.

Although previous studies have investigated the use of picture series on students' writing skills, most of these studies focused on high school students, particularly at tenth-grade level, and on specific texts such as recount and narrative text. Other studies have also examined descriptive text at the eighth grade level, however, research on narrative text, especially among ninth grade students' is still limited. Furthermore, few studies in a similar context exist in Tanjungpinang, particularly at SMP Negeri 1 Tanjungpinang. Therefore, further investigation is needed to explore the use of picture series on students' writing ability of narrative text. This study is hoped to fulfil this gap by offering empirical evidence of the implementation of learning media in junior high schools.

Based on the the explanation above, the researcher believes that the use of picture series still needs to be further studied to determine its effect as a visual media on the narrative writing skills of junior high school students, particularly ninth-grades students in Tanjungpinang. Therefore, this study was conducted through quantitative research with a quasi-experimental design, entitled "The Effect of Using Picture Series on Ninth Grade Students' Writing of Narrative Text at SMP Negeri 1 Tanjungpinang."

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Based on the study's background, the researcher identified the following problems:

1. Students have difficulty generating and organizing ideas in writing.
2. Students have limited vocabulary to express their ideas in written form.
3. Students show low enthusiasm and participation during writing activities.
4. The learning media used in writing instruction are still limited and less visually engaging.

1.3 Limitation of the Problem

To ensure clarity and prevent misinterpretation, this study focused on students' difficulties in generating and organizing idea by examining the effect of using picture series on ninth-grade students' ability to write narrative texts at SMP Negeri 1 Tanjungpinang. The writing ability was assessed in accordance with five criteria: content, organisation, vocabulary, grammar and mechanics. This study does not examine different types of text or other language skills.

1.4 Research Question

The following research question has been formulated based on the research context: Does the use of picture series significantly affect ninth-grade students' ability to write narrative texts at SMP Negeri 1 Tanjungpinang?

1.5 Research Objectives

The objective of this study is to determine whether the picture series media has a significant effect on the ninth grade students' ability to write narrative texts at SMP Negeri 1 Tanjungpinang.

1.6 Significances of the Research

1.6.1 Theoretically

This study is expected to make a theoretical contribution by enriching the empirical evidence on the use of visual media in English language teaching. In particular, it provides further support for the view that picture series can enhance junior high school students' narrative writing skills.

1.6.2 Policy Significance

The findings of this study may provide input for schools and English teachers in selecting appropriate visual learning media to support writing instruction, especially in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum at the junior high school level.

1.6.3 Practically

1. For Teachers

This study is expected to provide an alternative for teachers to implement affordable, engaging, and effective media for teaching, and the researcher

expected that teachers would implement the picture series to improve students' narrative writing .

2. For Students

By using picture series in the narrative learning process, researcher hopes to improve students' writing ability, increase students' motivation, and allow students to be more creative in developing ideas in writing narrative texts.

3. For Other Researchers

The results of this study may contribute to other researchers as an additional information source on the application of picture series media in English teaching at junior high school level.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

1.7.1 Writing Ability

Writing ability refers to students' ability to convey ideas in textual form through content, organisation, vocabulary, grammar and mechanics. Operationally, in this study, writing ability refers to students' scores in writing narrative texts assessed using an analytic writing rubric.

1.7.2 Picture Series

Picture series is a type of visual media consisting of a sequence of related images arranged logically to illustrate a story. Operationally, in this study, picture series refers to the learning media used in learning narrative texts in

the experimental class, to help students' develop narrative texts through a sequence of related images.

1.7.3 Narrative Text

Narrative text is a type of text in which a story or series of events, whether real or fictional to entertain or convey moral values to the reader. Operationally, in this study, narrative texts refers to students' written narrative texts based on picture series as a writing prompt, consisting of the generic structure of orientation, complication, resolution, and reorientation.

