

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Research Background

Writing has been one of the essential skills in learning English. It has served as a vital communication tool that has enabled structured and meaningful expression of thoughts, emotions, and arguments. In academic contexts, writing has enabled students to produce essays, reports, and creative texts, and in the real world, it has supported professional and personal communication. English writing skills have played a crucial role as a means of communication and structured expression of ideas. However, for students who have learned English as a foreign language (EFL), mastering writing, particularly recount texts, has often been challenging due to limitations in vocabulary, grammar, and motivation.

Sahara has stated that writing in English has not been easy, especially for students who have still been learning the language. Some students have struggled with vocabulary, grammar, and organizing ideas logically and coherently.¹ Similarly, Hidayah has stated that writing has been the most challenging language skill compared to listening,

¹ Novita Sahara, "Common Grammar Errors in Writing Narrative Texts by Eighth Grade Students at MTs Negeri Sijenjang" 11, no. 1 (2017): 92–105.

speaking, and reading. Writing has required simultaneous mastery of various language components, such as grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation, along with the ability to express ideas logically and structuredly.² It has also required precision, creativity, and sufficient time to communicate ideas clearly and effectively. Some students have continued to struggle to develop these skills without consistent practice and proper guidance.

Research by Abdul Muin, Arif, and Kheryadi has emphasized that novice writers have often faced obstacles in scientific writing, including weak paragraph construction, poor structure, inappropriate citation methods, and inappropriate reference formats. Good writing skills have enabled students to process and convey information effectively, which has been achieved through guided practice.³

Thus, writing in English has been a complex skill that has posed various challenges. Students have required continuous practice and appropriate guidance to improve their abilities. Initial observations at SMPIT Al Izzah, Serang City, which has used technology in some of its teaching methods, have shown that eighth-grade students have tended to

² Bida Hidayah, "An Error Analysis in Writing Recount Text of the 10th Grade Students of SMA Nasional 3 Bhasa Putera Harapan Purwokerto" (2019): 74.

³ Abdul Muin, Arif Rahman, and Kheryadi, "Building a Strong Foundation for Academic Writing: A Training and Mentoring Program with Mendeley and Publish or Perish Platform for Final Year Students," *Kaibon Abhinaya: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat* 6, no. 2 (July 18, 2024): 179–187.

be less engaged in learning to write recount texts using conventional methods. This low interest has been evident in minimal participation and a lack of creativity in sharing personal experiences. This context has emphasized the need for innovative approaches, such as utilizing Canva as a digital storytelling tool that has not been widely explored for teaching recount texts at the junior high school level in Indonesia.

Today, some EFL students have still struggled with writing, making it a persistent problem in education. These challenges have stemmed from a variety of interrelated factors. One contributing factor has been the nature of the writing process, which has required a solid understanding of the basic mechanics of writing.⁴

Previous research has identified low motivation, limited language skills, and lack of writing experience as barriers to writing competence. Students have often lacked motivation, which has reduced their consistency in writing practice. Furthermore, limited exposure to writing activities has made them less confident and more likely to avoid writing assignments. Research has shown that higher motivation has been positively correlated with better writing outcomes.⁵ Unfortunately, writing has often been perceived as a boring activity, further diminishing

⁴ Ninik Britiviliani and Eulis Rahmawati, "Utilizing Picture Books to Showcase Writing Activities in Young Learners," published by: English Language Studies Journal 11, no. 2 (2018): 60.

⁵ Zoltán Dörnyei and Ema Ushioda, *Teaching and Researching Motivation* (Routledge, 2021).

student interest. Therefore, a fresh and engaging approach has been needed to foster student motivation and improve their writing skills.

In the context of 21st-century education, technology has played an increasingly important role in enhancing learning, particularly in language education.⁶ Digital tools have provided more dynamic, visual, and interactive learning experiences that have met the needs of today's digitally-savvy students. One such method has been digital storytelling, which has combined text, visuals, audio, and video to create narrative-based learning content.⁷ This approach has been proven to improve students' writing skills, especially in narrative genres such as recount texts, while enhancing their creativity and critical thinking.⁸

One promising digital platform for supporting writing skills has been Canva, an easy-to-use graphic design tool. Canva has offered a variety of features that have enabled the creation of digital storytelling media. Students have been able to creatively design infographics, presentations, and other visual projects. Canva's accessible interface has made it an effective tool for boosting motivation and creativity. Its compatibility with laptops and mobile devices has made it widely used

⁶ Bernard Robin, "The Educational Uses of Digital Storytelling," in Society for Information Technology & Teacher Education International Conference (Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE), 2006), 709–716.

⁷ Joe Lambert, *Digital Storytelling: Capturing Lives, Creating Community* (Routledge, 2013).

⁸ Bernard R. Robin, "The Power of Digital Storytelling to Support Teaching and Learning," *Digital Education Review* -, no. 30 (2016): 17–29.

in schools. In recount text learning, Canva has helped students construct narratives visually, understand text organization, and creatively describe personal experiences. Previous research has supported that tools like Canva have increased engagement and comprehension.⁹

While several studies have highlighted Canva's benefits in education, most have focused on its use in teaching descriptive texts or general writing activities. There has been limited research specifically addressing Canva's effectiveness in teaching recount text writing at the junior high school level.¹⁰ This has indicated a clear research gap that has needed to be explored; especially considering that recount text has been a major component of the English curriculum in Indonesian secondary schools.

This study has aimed to address this research gap by investigating the integration of Canva as a digital storytelling tool to improve students' recount text writing skills at SMPIT Al Izzah in Serang City. This study has sought to explore how Canva has been used to make the learning process more engaging, foster creativity, and improve students' ability to produce well-structured recount texts. Specifically, this study has

⁹ Silvia Utami and Karnedi Karnedi, "Enhancing Students' Writing Paragraphs through Canva Magic AI," *Leksika: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra dan Pengajarannya* 18, no. 2 (2024): 105.

¹⁰ D Rahmah, L., & Sari, "Technology Integration in English Writing Instruction: A Review of Current Practices in Indonesian Schools.," *Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching* 18, no. 1 (2023): 56–67.

focused on understanding students' perceptions of Canva's use, evaluating its effectiveness in improving writing skills, and identifying any challenges students have encountered during its use. By addressing these aspects, this study has aimed to provide practical insights into how technology has transformed traditional writing instruction, particularly for recount texts, which have required students to recount personal experiences in a coherent and engaging manner.

B. Identification of Problems

Based on the research background, several problems were found, namely:

1. Low motivation among students, stemming from conventional teaching methods, hinders their ability to write recount texts effectively.
2. There is limited research that specifically explores the use of Canva to improve students' skills in writing recount texts.
3. Further investigation is needed to determine the extent to which Canva can help students generate ideas, increase creativity, and produce better writing.

4. The use of technology such as Canva can serve as an interesting alternative to increase student interest and participation in writing activities.
5. Although Canva is widely used in various educational institutions, its application in teaching writing, especially recount texts, is still not optimal, including at SMPIT Al Izzah.

C. Formulation of the Problem

This study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are students' perceptions of the use of the Canva in writing recount texts in the eighth grade at SMPIT Al Izzah?
2. How can the Canva, as a digital storytelling tool, improve students' writing skills in recount texts in the eighth grade at SMPIT Al Izzah?
3. What challenges do students face when using Canva in writing recount texts in the eighth grade at SMPIT Al Izzah?

D. Scope and Limitations of the Research

This research was conducted at SMPIT Al Izzah in Serang City, a school that has begun integrating technology into its classroom learning. One area of innovation is English language teaching. The study focused on 21 eighth-grade students at SMPIT Al-Izzah, Kota serang, to investigating the use of Canva as digital storytelling tool in the teaching and learning process of writing recount texts. However, the small sampke size may not fully represent diverse educational settings. Additionally, the study's reliance on internet connectivity and students' prior familiarity with digital tools could influence the findings, potentially limiting the generalizability of the results.

E. Research Purposes

The objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To identify students' perceptions regarding the use of Canva in writing recount texts in the eighth grade at SMPIT Al Izzah.
2. To explore the effectiveness of Canva in improving students' writing skills in recount text in the eighth grade at SMPIT Al Izzah.
3. To examine the challenges faced by students when using Canva in writing recount texts in the eighth grade at SMPIT Al Izzah.

The VOSviewer overlay visualization above illustrates the co-occurrence relationships among keywords extracted from the literature related to the use of Canva in English language learning, with a focus on writing skills and recount texts. The size of each node reflects the frequency of occurrence, with larger nodes indicating terms that appear more frequently in the research. Key terms such as "writing," "students," "English," and "technology" are prominently displayed, indicating their central role in the analyzed studies. The network of connections between these nodes highlights the interconnectedness of these concepts in the domain of language education.

The keyword "Canva" emerged as a significant node, closely related to terms such as "recount text," "writing skills," and "perception," indicating its growing relevance as a digital tool in educational settings. This relationship suggests that research has explored how Canva impacts the teaching and learning of writing, particularly in the context of recount text, a common focus in English curricula. The close association of "Canva" with "students" and "motivation" further implies that its use can increase student engagement and interest in writing activities.

The color gradient in the visualization provides a temporal dimension, with the color scale ranging from purple (2020) to yellow (2024), representing the average publication year of the studies. Nodes

such as "writing skills" and "recount text text," shaded in lighter colors like green and yellow, indicate more recent research (2022–2024). This trend demonstrates that Canva's application and impact on writing education has gained attention in recent years, reflecting the growing interest in digital tools in the field.

Other key keywords, such as “technology,” “education,” and “impact,” are positioned at the earlier end of the color spectrum (purple and blue), indicating that these fundamental concepts have been studied since 2020. The association between “technology” and “development” or “model” suggests that prior research has laid the groundwork for understanding how technological tools, including Canva, can be integrated into educational frameworks. This historical context provides the basis for the more recent focus on specific applications like Canva in writing instruction.

Overall, the VOSviewer map reveals a dynamic research landscape, where traditional educational themes like "English vocabulary" and "Indonesian" coexist with emerging topics like "Canva" and "writing skills." The visualization underscores the shift toward digital tools in language learning and highlights potential areas for future research, such as Canva's long-term effects on student performance or its adaptability across educational contexts. This analysis offers valuable insights into

the field's evolution and the growing prominence of technology-enhanced learning strategies.

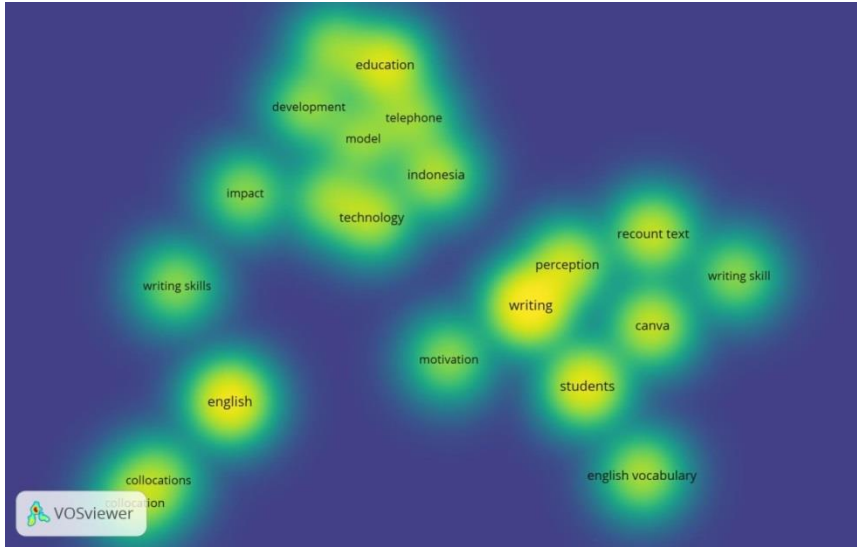


Figure 1. 2 : VOSViewer Density Visualization of Keywords in Canva-Related Research

The VOSviewer Density Visualization presented in the figure provides an overview of the intensity of the relationship between keywords related to the topic of recount text. The colors in this visualization indicate research density, where lighter areas (yellow to green) indicate a high concentration of research, while darker areas (blue to purple) indicate less explored topics. Keywords such as "writing," "students," "English," and "technology" appear with high density, indicating that these topics have been a major focus in research related to English language learning. This indicates that research on writing

skills, particularly in the context of students and technology, has been conducted extensively.

The keyword "Canva" also shows a relatively high density, highlighted in a striking yellow, indicating that Canva has become a frequently researched tool in English language education, especially in recent years (as shown by the timeline in the Overlay Visualization, spanning from 2020 to 2024). "Canva" is closely related to "writing," "students," and "motivation," illustrating that previous research has explored how Canva can enhance students' motivation in writing activities. However, although "recount text" appears as one of the nodes, its density is lower compared to "writing skills" in general, indicating that research specifically on the use of Canva for recount text is not as extensive as research on writing skills as a whole.

Furthermore, keywords such as "English vocabulary" and "Indonesia" also show relatively high densities, indicating that research on English language learning in Indonesia, including vocabulary development, has been a significant focus. However, the relationship between "Canva" and "recount text" is not as strong as Canva's relationship with other topics such as "writing skills" or "motivation." This confirms that although Canva has been used in English language learning contexts, its application to recount text, particularly at the junior

high school level, remains underexplored. This gap presents a significant opportunity for research focused on optimizing Canva in teaching recount text.

The visualization also reveals that topics such as “education,” “technology,” and “impact” have a relatively high density but are shaded in darker colors (blue to purple), indicating that research on these concepts began earlier, around 2020. In contrast, more specific topics such as “recount text” and “writing skills” (without the plural “s”) are shaded lighter (green to yellow), indicating that research on these topics is more recent, around 2022-2024. This highlights the growing trend in using digital tools like Canva to support writing education, but the focus on recount text is still relatively new and underdeveloped.

Overall, the VOSviewer Density Visualization reveals that although Canva has been widely studied in the context of English language learning, particularly for improving students' writing skills and motivation, its application in teaching recount text still has room for further exploration. The lower density for "recount text" indicates that research on this topic is not as intensive as other topics such as "writing" or "motivation." Thus, this visualization provides valuable insights, suggesting that research focusing on the use of Canva for recount text,

particularly at the junior high school level, can offer new contributions to the field of English language education.

G. The Importance of Research

This research is expected to provide theoretical and practical benefits. Theoretical benefits include contributions to the development of writing instruction for education, and practical benefits consist of expected practical benefits for learning. These benefits are explained as follows.

1. Theoretical

Theoretically, this research aims to contribute to the development of writing instruction utilizing digital technology. It emphasizes the role of modern applications, such as Canva, in fostering student creativity and improving the quality of technology-based writing instruction.

2. Practical

a. For researchers

This research is expected to increase researchers' understanding of qualitative descriptive research and offer insights into the application of Canva in English teaching, especially in writing recount texts.

b. For students

This research is expected to increase students' motivation in learning English and improve their learning outcomes. It also aims to stimulate creativity and critical thinking, essential skills in the digital age.

c. For teachers

The findings of this study can provide teachers with new strategies for integrating technology into the classroom. It is hoped that Canva can be used to encourage student engagement and achieve better learning outcomes in line with curriculum objectives.

H. The Organization of Writing

In this study, the structure of the paper is organized into five chapters as follows:

Chapter I: Introduction, This chapter presents the background of the study, highlighting the challenges students face in writing recount texts and the potential of Canva as a digital storytelling tool to enhance writing skills. It also identifies the problems, formulates research

questions, objectives, scope and limitations, significance of the study, and definitions of key terms used in the research.

Chapter II: Theoretical Framework, This chapter discusses the theories underpinning the research, including the concepts of writing, recount texts, digital storytelling, and Canva's features as a learning tool. Theories from scholars such as Harmer, Lambert, and Robin are employed to support the study. Additionally, this chapter reviews relevant previous studies on the use of Canva in English language teaching.

Chapter III: Research Methodology, This chapter explains the descriptive qualitative research design, data sources (21 eighth-grade students of SMPIT Al-Izzah), research instruments (questionnaires and in-depth interviews), data collection procedures, data analysis using Miles and Huberman's approach, and data validity techniques such as method triangulation and member checking.

Chapter IV: Findings and Discussion, This chapter presents the analysis results based on data collected from questionnaires and interviews. Findings cover students' perceptions of Canva, its impact on improving recount text writing skills, and challenges faced, such as time constraints and internet connectivity issues. The discussion is supported by digital storytelling and writing instruction theories.

Chapter V: Conclusion and Suggestions, This chapter provides conclusions drawn from the study's findings, indicating that Canva effectively enhances motivation, creativity, and recount text writing skills, despite technical challenges. Suggestions are offered for teachers, students, and future researchers to optimize Canva's use through training, collaborative learning strategies, and learning environment adjustments.