

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of the Research

Writing is widely recognized as one of the most complex and demanding productive skills in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). It requires learners to integrate multiple subskills simultaneously, including generating ideas, selecting appropriate vocabulary, applying grammatical rules accurately, and organizing sentences into coherent and logical paragraphs. Compared to speaking, writing is a deliberate and reflective process that demands precision, coherence, and linguistic awareness. As emphasized by Sa'adah, writing requires careful attention since every stage involves adherence to linguistic norms, such as word choice, coherence, correlation, and grammatical accuracy.

<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Chicho describes writing as the ability to express opinions where writers convey their messages and ideas through written form.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, writing competence not only reflects linguistic knowledge but also cognitive maturity and communicative ability.

In the Indonesian EFL context, English is taught as a foreign language and writing is one of the four essential skills emphasized in the Kurikulum Merdeka. At the junior high school level, students are expected to master several text genres, including narrative, recount, report, and descriptive texts. Among these genres, descriptive text serves as a foundational type that introduces learners to expressing clear details, describing people, places, or objects vividly, and using linguistic features such as adjectives and linking verbs appropriately. Despite its pedagogical importance, writing remains one of the most challenging skills for Indonesian EFL learners to master.

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<sup>1</sup> Annisa Raudatus Sa'adah, "Writing Skill in Teaching English: An Overview," *EDUCASIA: Jurnal Pendidikan, Pengajaran, Dan Pembelajaran* 5, no. 1 (2020): 21–35.

<sup>2</sup> Kanar Zirak Haseeb Chicho, "An Analysis of Factors Influencing EFL Learners' Writing Skills," *Canadian Journal of Language and Literature Studies* 2, no. 2 (2022): 28–38.

Numerous studies have identified writing as the most problematic area for secondary school students. According to Syifa, Al-Baekani, and Srisudarso, many students find it difficult to organize ideas, construct grammatically correct sentences, and choose appropriate vocabulary when composing descriptive texts.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, Pramoedya and Mandarani found that students often struggle with tenses, prepositions, spelling, and punctuation, resulting in unstructured and repetitive writing.<sup>4</sup> These findings highlight that students' writing difficulties stem not only from limited linguistic proficiency but also from a lack of awareness regarding text organization and genre conventions.

Preliminary interviews with English teachers at SMPN 1 Cinangka further confirm these issues. Teachers reported that students' difficulties in writing descriptive texts arise from limited vocabulary mastery, weak grammatical understanding, and most prominently a lack of comprehension of the material taught. Many students fail to recall the generic structure or linguistic features of descriptive texts, such as identification and description, leading to writing that lacks detail, coherence, and unity. Moreover, some students demonstrate low motivation and confidence during writing lessons, perceiving writing as a tedious and demanding task. This situation is aggravated by traditional teaching methods that rely heavily on textbook based exercises, translation activities, and teacher-centered explanations, providing little space for creativity and autonomous learning.

In the digital era, conventional methods are increasingly seen as insufficient to foster engagement and meaningful learning. The integration of technology in EFL classrooms has been shown to enhance students' motivation, participation, and autonomy by creating interactive and multimodal learning environments.

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<sup>3</sup> Qorina Aulia Syifa, Abdul Kodir Al-Baekani, and Mansyur Srisudarso, "Junior High School Students' Difficulties in Writing Descriptive Text," *JlIP-Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan* 5, no. 10 (2022): 4470–74.

<sup>4</sup> Adyansah Noer Sita Pramoedya and Vidya Mandarani, "The Difficulties of Writing Descriptive Text for Junior High Schoolers: Kesulitan Menulis Teks Deskriptif Untuk Siswa SMP," 2023.

According to Ilmiawan, Ganinda, and Saifulloh, digital media promotes active participation and shifts learning toward a more student-centered approach by combining visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modalities. These tools provide authentic contexts for learners, direct access to information, and flexible practice opportunities that can improve linguistic accuracy and fluency.<sup>5</sup>

Among the various educational technologies, Quizlet has gained significant popularity as a mobile- and web-based platform designed to facilitate language learning through digital flashcards, matching games, and interactive quizzes. The platform employs the principle of spaced repetition, allowing learners to review content systematically for long-term retention. With its gamified interface and adaptive learning modes such as Learn, Match, Test, Flashcards, and Blast Quizlet enables students to review key vocabulary, phrases, and sentence structures in an enjoyable and stress free environment. As noted by Hlavatska, such interactive and repetitive learning experiences promote greater linguistic accuracy and cognitive engagement, both of which are crucial for developing writing skills.<sup>6</sup>

Empirical evidence supports the positive role of visual and interactive media in writing instruction. Puspitasari, Suroso, and Saptaningsih found that using flashcards as learning media significantly improves students' writing performance by enhancing their ability to recall descriptive content.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, Burhan demonstrated that picture cards containing cue words can effectively enhance students' descriptive writing by stimulating idea generation and improving text organization.<sup>8</sup> Rustiani also discovered that grammatical errors

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<sup>5</sup> Muhamad Nur Ilmiawan, Nurhayati Ganinda, and Ahmad Iklil Saifulloh, "The Effectiveness of Quizlet in Teaching the Simple Present Tense," *Jurnal Pendidikan Prapanca* 1, no. 1 (2025): 40–48.

<sup>6</sup> Yuliia Hlavatska, "The Development of Non-Linguistic Students'critical Thinking Skills: Practical Experience," 2025.

<sup>7</sup> Andhika Dyah Puspitasari, Eko Suroso, and Sri Endah Saptaningsih, "The Use of Flashcards in Strengthening the Writing Skills of Descriptive Texts," *International Journal of Instructional Technology* 3, no. 2 (2024): 62–70.

<sup>8</sup> Fiha Sanaya Burhan, "Improving Students' skill In Writing Descriptive Text Through Flashcard With Clue Words" (STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY, 2023).

in students' descriptive writing decreased after the introduction of interactive visual media.<sup>9</sup> These findings collectively suggest that visually oriented tools can positively influence writing performance by supporting vocabulary retention and structural awareness.

However, despite the increasing use of Quizlet in EFL classrooms, there remains a research gap concerning how this application, originally designed for vocabulary practice, can contribute to the broader development of writing skills particularly in the context of descriptive text writing among junior high school students. Previous studies such as those by Sitorus applied a classroom action research approach and found a significant increase in the vocabulary scores of tenth-grade students through the use of Quizlet, with post-test results improving from 41.9 to 85.6. Avisteva and Halimi also reported similar findings in a quasi-experimental study involving eleventh-grade students, where productive vocabulary scores increased significantly from 50.83 to 73.36. Their research also highlighted students' positive perceptions of Quizlet's ease of use and engagement.

Additionally, Maulida, Sudirman, and Munawaroh investigated the impact of Quizlet on eighth-grade students and reported a significant improvement in vocabulary mastery, with the experimental group outperforming the control group (88.42 vs. 84.42). Similarly, Prayogi and Wulandari focused on students' attitudes, revealing high average scores for perceived usefulness ( $M=4.03$ ) and ease of use ( $M=4.38$ ), indicating positive acceptance of the platform. Sarantika, Susilawati, and Ikhsanudin conducted a pre-experimental study at the junior high school level and found a strong effect size (1.94) in vocabulary improvement, as students' scores increased from 60.67 to 71.83 using the Quizlet flashcard feature.

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<sup>9</sup> Ika Rustiani and Efransyah Efransyah, "An Error Analysis in Writing Descriptive Text of the Eighth Grade Student of Junior High School in Cianjur," *PROJECT (Professional Journal of English Education)* 5, no. 2 (2022): 311–15.

Building upon this gap, the present study seeks to explore the effectiveness of the Quizlet application in enhancing students' ability to write descriptive texts. It aims to determine whether integrating Quizlet into the writing process can support students' lexical development, improve sentence organization, and foster coherence and linguistic accuracy.

The novelty of this research lies in its emphasis on the application of vocabulary knowledge within actual writing production, providing a more comprehensive understanding of how technology-assisted learning can strengthen overall language competence in EFL classrooms. Specifically, this study investigates the extent to which Quizlet-based instruction can enhance students' ability to write descriptive texts effectively in terms of fluency, organization, and linguistic accuracy.

By integrating Quizlet into writing instruction, this research is expected to contribute to innovative pedagogical practices in English teaching. The platform's user-friendly design and engaging features encourage continuous practice, autonomy, and motivation qualities essential for writing proficiency.

Therefore, based on these reasons and educational significance, this study is entitled: "The Effectiveness of Quizlet Application on Students' Writing Descriptive Text (A Quasi-Experimental Study at the Eighth Grade of SMPN 1 Cinangka)."

## **B. Research Questions**

Based on the background, the problem of this study can be formulated as follows:

"How effective is the use of Quizlet application on students' writing descriptive text at the eighth grade of SMPN 1 Cinangka?"

### **C. Objective of the Research**

The objective of this research is to examine the effectiveness of using Quizlet application on students' writing descriptive text at the eighth grade of SMPN 1 Cinangka.

### **D. Significance of the Research**

This significances of this research is expected to provide contributions for several parties, such as:

1. For English teachers:

This research provides insights into the use of Quizlet not only as a vocabulary learning tool but also as an effective medium for teaching writing, especially descriptive text. Teachers may consider adopting Quizlet as an alternative digital platform to enhance students' writing skills and engagement.

2. For students:

Quizlet offers an interactive and enjoyable learning experience that can help students generate ideas more easily, use varied expressions, and organize their writing coherently. Indirectly, they also gain additional vocabulary knowledge as a bonus to support their writing competence.

3. For schools and policymakers:

The findings can serve as a reference for integrating digital tools like Quizlet into the English curriculum at junior high schools, especially in writing instruction, to foster more innovative and technology-based learning environments.

4. For future researchers:

This study can be a useful reference for further investigations related to the integration of educational technology in writing instruction, especially for descriptive texts, and can inspire broader studies involving other genres of writing or other digital applications.

## **E. Scope of the Research**

This research is limited to examining the effectiveness of the Quizlet application in improving students' ability to write descriptive texts. The study is conducted at the eighth grade of SMPN 1 Cinangka in the academic year 2025. The choice of this level is based on the fact that students at junior high school are required to master various types of texts, including descriptive texts, yet many of them still face challenges in organizing ideas, developing coherent sentences, and producing accurate writing.

The scope of this research does not cover students' general vocabulary mastery, speaking, listening, or reading skills. Instead, the focus is specifically on writing ability, especially descriptive text. The aspects under consideration include how students generate ideas, organize them into coherent paragraphs, and use appropriate language structures to produce meaningful writing. In this sense, vocabulary enrichment is regarded only as a supporting element or a bonus outcome of using Quizlet, while the main focus remains on students' writing competence.

Furthermore, the learning media examined in this research is limited to the Quizlet application. Other digital tools or platforms are not included in the scope of study. To achieve the research objectives, a quasi-experimental design is employed by administering pre-tests and post-tests to both control and experimental groups. This design is expected to provide clear evidence of whether Quizlet can significantly improve students' performance in writing descriptive texts.

## **F. Previous Research Findings**

Several previous studies have examined the use of Quizlet in English learning, and most have highlighted its effectiveness in improving students' vocabulary mastery. These findings are presented below in order:

The first study was conducted by Sitorus (2021) entitled ‘Improving Students' Vocabulary Mastery Through the Utilisation of the Quizlet Application at the Tenth Grade of MAS Ibadurrahman in the 2020/2021 Academic Year’ using the Classroom Action Research method consisting of two cycles. This study involved 33 tenth-grade students at MAS Ibadurrahman and aimed to determine the improvement in English vocabulary mastery through the use of the Quizlet application. In this study, data were collected through qualitative instruments such as observation, interviews, and documentation, as well as quantitative data in the form of pre- and post-tests. The results showed that in Cycle I, only 9 students achieved the Minimum Competency Criteria (KKM) with an average score of 62.2. However, in Cycle II, 29 students successfully achieved the KKM with an average score increasing to 85.6. Additionally, students demonstrated active participation and increased motivation during the learning process. This study proves that Quizlet is effective in improving students' vocabulary mastery. Besides improving grades, this app has also been proven to increase students' interest and participation in English learning.<sup>10</sup>

The second study was conducted by Avisteva and Halimi (2020) entitled ‘The Use of Quizlet as a Vocabulary Acquisition Learning Media for Eleventh Grade Students.’ This study used a mixed-method approach on eleventh-grade students. The study aimed to assess the effectiveness of the Quizlet application in improving productive vocabulary mastery. The results showed a significant increase in the average student score from 50.83 (pre-test) to 73.36 (post-test). In addition to improved scores, students also expressed positive perceptions of using Quizlet, particularly regarding ease of use and learning engagement.

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<sup>10</sup> Jesi Suryani Sitorus, “Improving Students' Vocabulary Mastery Through The Utilization Of Quizlet Application At The Tenth Grade Of Mas Ibadurrahman In 2020/2021 Academic Year” (Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan, 2021).

Quizlet was evaluated as a fun, flexible tool that facilitates more effective vocabulary retention compared to conventional methods.<sup>11</sup>

The third study was conducted by Maulida, Sudirman, and Munawaroh (2024) titled ‘The Effect of Quizlet Application Towards Students’ Vocabulary Mastery at the Eighth Grade of SMP-IT Mathla’ul Anwar Malingping Lebak, Banten in the Academic Year 2023/2024’ and used a quasi-experimental design. A total of 38 eighth-grade students were divided into two groups: experimental (using Quizlet) and control (using Quizizz). The results of the paired sample t-test showed a significant improvement: the average post-test score for the experimental group was 88.42, while the control group scored 84.42. The significance level of 0.000 ( $< 0.05$ ) confirms that Quizlet has a significant impact on improving vocabulary mastery. Additionally, students demonstrated high enthusiasm in using Quizlet due to its interactive and engaging features.<sup>12</sup>

The fourth study conducted by Prayogi and Wulandari (2021), titled ‘Implementing a Mobile Application Quizlet to Help Senior High School Students Learn Vocabulary,’ was conducted at a private high school in Yogyakarta and used the Classroom Action Research (CAR) method. A total of 13 students participated in the study. This study assessed students' perceptions of using Quizlet in vocabulary learning. The results showed high scores in the Perceived Usefulness ( $M = 4.03$ ) and Perceived Ease of Use ( $M = 4.38$ ) aspects. Students rated Quizlet as practical, easy to learn, and effective in helping them remember and understand new vocabulary. This study suggests that integrating

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<sup>11</sup> Rofika Tiara Avisteva and Sisilia Setiawati Halimi, “The Use of Quizlet as a Vocabulary Acquisition Learning Media for Eleventh Grade Students,” in *International University Symposium on Humanities and Arts 2020 (INUSHARTS 2020)* (Atlantis Press, 2021), 254–60.

<sup>12</sup> Dela Maulida, Ade Sudirman, and Tatu Munawaroh, “The Effect of Quizlet Application towards Students’ Vocabulary Mastery at the Eighth Grade of SMP-IT Mathla’ul Anwar Malingping Lebak, Banten in the Academic Year 2023/2024,” *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Primary Education* 2, no. 1 (2024): 78–86.

digital applications can enhance learning efficiency and motivation in language education.<sup>13</sup>

The fifth study conducted by Sarantika, Susilawati, and Ikhsanudin (2025) titled 'Using the Quizlet Application with Flashcards Feature to Teach EFL Vocabulary,' the researchers used a quantitative approach with a pre-experimental design to investigate the effect of the flashcards feature in the Quizlet application on the vocabulary mastery of EFL students at SMP Negeri 26 Pontianak City. This study showed an increase in students' scores from 60.67 (pre-test) to 71.83 (post-test) after using the Quizlet flashcard feature. The effect size of 1.94 indicates a significant impact. These findings prove that the flashcard feature in Quizlet not only helps students remember vocabulary but also enhances their motivation and participation in learning.<sup>14</sup>

From these various studies, there is a research gap because no study has explicitly investigated the extent to which the Quizlet application can influence students' writing skills, particularly in the context of descriptive writing. However, in language learning practice, vocabulary mastery should not stand alone but should directly contribute to students' productivity in expressing ideas in writing in a coherent, accurate, and varied manner.

Although these studies provide strong evidence of Quizlet's potential in vocabulary mastery, few have examined its direct impact on students' writing abilities. Most existing research measures vocabulary mastery separately through tests, without exploring whether these improvements help students write more effectively. In reality, writing requires not only knowledge of words, but also the ability to generate and organise ideas, construct coherent sentences, and convey messages clearly. Therefore, there is still a research gap on how

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<sup>13</sup> Alesandro Woisela Prayogi and Mega Wulandari, "Implementing a Mobile Application Quizlet to Help Senior High School Students Learn Vocabulary," in *ELT Forum: Journal of English Language Teaching*, vol. 10, 2021, 87–99.

<sup>14</sup> Pirda Sarantika and Endang Susilawati, "Using Quizlet Application With Flashcards Feature To Teach Efl Vocabulary," *JEELL (Journal of English Education, Linguistics and Literature) English Departement of STKIP PGRI Jombang* 11, no. 2 (2025): 81–87.

Quizlet, as a digital learning tool, can be applied to improve writing performance, especially in descriptive texts.

Therefore, this study aims to expand on previous findings by shifting the focus from vocabulary mastery alone to its application in actual writing tasks. Specifically, this study investigates the effectiveness of Quizlet in improving students' descriptive writing skills at the lower secondary level. By integrating Quizlet into writing practice, this study aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how digital applications can contribute to improving students' writing competence in the context of learning English as a foreign language (EFL).