CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the fundamental aspects of the research, covering the background of the study, research problems, research objectives, research hypotheses, the significance of the study, scope and limitations, as well as the definition of key terms.

A. Background of the study

Writing is considered one of the most challenging skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning because it requires students to generate ideas, organize information logically, and apply appropriate grammatical and lexical knowledge simultaneously. Recent studies indicate that many EFL students still experience difficulties in developing writing skills, particularly in organizing ideas, maintaining coherence, and expressing arguments effectively in written form (Balida & Alhabsi, 2024; Hamdani & Abid, 2025). In addition, writing activities demand higher-order thinking skills, critical reasoning, and continuous revision, making writing cognitively more complex than other language skills (Anggraeni et al., 2025). According to Nunan (2003), writing is a productive language skill that requires learners to organize and communicate ideas effectively so that readers can understand the intended message. Similarly, Harmer (2007) explains that writing is a recursive process involving planning, drafting, revising, and editing, which requires students to continuously evaluate and improve their work throughout the writing process. Therefore, writing is not merely a linguistic activity but also a cognitive and communicative process that requires substantial practice and instructional support.

In EFL classrooms, students' writing difficulties are often influenced by limited classroom interaction, low confidence, insufficient feedback, and inadequate opportunities for collaborative learning. Research reveals that many EFL students struggle to elaborate ideas into coherent paragraphs due to limited vocabulary, inadequate grammatical competence, and low engagement during writing instruction (Setyowati et al., 2025; Sulukiyyah et al., 2026). These difficulties become more significant in

vocational high school contexts, where students tend to focus more on practical and technical competencies related to their field of study rather than academic writing skills. Consequently, many students experience problems in brainstorming ideas, organizing arguments logically, and developing coherent written texts (Bisriyah, 2022; Budiana, 2023). Such conditions indicate that students require instructional approaches that are more interactive, engaging, and supportive of the writing process.

One of the writing genres that students frequently find difficult is analytical exposition text. This genre requires students to present logical arguments systematically to persuade readers about a particular issue or viewpoint. According to Emilia (2011), analytical exposition writing involves not only presenting opinions but also supporting arguments with clear reasoning and evidence. In addition, students must apply appropriate linguistic features such as logical connectors, modality, and present tense consistently throughout the text. However, many students encounter difficulties in fulfilling these requirements because they lack sufficient experience in argumentative writing and struggle to organize ideas coherently. As a result, students' writing often lacks clarity, coherence, and persuasive quality. These challenges suggest that students need learning environments that facilitate brainstorming, idea development, collaboration, and active participation during the writing process.

The challenges in writing instruction are also closely related to the teaching methods applied in the classroom. Conventional teaching methods, which are generally teacher-centered, often limit students' opportunities to actively participate in classroom interaction and collaborative learning activities. In traditional writing classrooms, students commonly rely on teacher explanation and individual assignments with limited discussion or peer interaction. As a result, students become passive learners and have fewer opportunities to exchange ideas, receive immediate feedback, and develop confidence in expressing opinions (Fathona & Jetra, 2025). Richards and Renandya (2002) argue that effective language learning requires active participation and meaningful interaction, which are often

insufficiently accommodated in conventional instructional approaches. Consequently, traditional writing instruction may not optimally support students' writing development, particularly in generating and organizing ideas.

The rapid development of educational technology has encouraged teachers to integrate digital learning media into writing instruction to create more interactive and student-centered learning environments. Interactive digital platforms are believed to increase students' engagement, participation, collaboration, and motivation during the learning process. Studies on digital learning media in EFL classrooms found that technology-assisted learning environments can support brainstorming, idea organization, and collaborative interaction more effectively than conventional instruction (Nur & Ramadhani, 2025). In addition, digital tools provide opportunities for students to participate more actively and confidently during classroom activities because they allow immediate responses, collaborative discussion, and real-time feedback.

One of the digital learning platforms that has recently attracted attention in educational contexts is Mentimeter, a web-based interactive application that enables teachers to create real-time classroom activities such as live polls, quizzes, word clouds, and collaborative responses (Mohin et al., 2022). Through these interactive features, students can actively contribute ideas, participate in brainstorming sessions, and engage in classroom discussions more dynamically. Furthermore, Mentimeter allows anonymous participation, which helps reduce students' anxiety and encourages more active classroom interaction (Sirajudin & Hasan, 2021). In writing instruction, Mentimeter can support the early stages of the writing process, particularly brainstorming and idea organization, by enabling students to visualize and share ideas collaboratively. As a result, students may become more confident and better prepared to develop coherent written texts.

Several previous studies have reported the positive effects of Mentimeter and other interactive digital tools on language learning

outcomes. Khan (2025) found that Mentimeter significantly enhances students' engagement, participation, and active learning through interactive classroom activities. Similarly, Puspita (2025) reported that Mentimeter effectively supports brainstorming activities and helps students generate clearer topic sentences and more coherent paragraphs during writing instruction. Furthermore, Sitinjak et al. (2026) revealed that Mentimeter positively affects students' comprehension and communication skills by promoting collaborative interaction and active participation in classroom learning. These studies indicate that interactive digital platforms can create more engaging and supportive learning environments for language learning.

However, despite the increasing number of studies investigating digital learning media in EFL classrooms, several important research gaps remain. First, many previous studies mainly focused on students' engagement, motivation, participation, or classroom interaction rather than specifically examining students' writing achievement in analytical exposition texts (Khan, 2025; Sirajudin & Hasan, 2021). Second, research investigating the implementation of Mentimeter in vocational high school contexts is still limited, even though vocational students often experience different academic characteristics and writing challenges compared to students in general senior high schools. Third, previous studies rarely compared Mentimeter with conventional instructional media such as PowerPoint to determine whether interactive digital learning tools provide significantly better outcomes in writing instruction. Consequently, empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of Mentimeter in improving analytical exposition writing among vocational high school students remains insufficient.

Therefore, this study attempts to fill these gaps by investigating the effectiveness of Mentimeter in students' writing skills in analytical exposition texts among vocational high school students. The novelty of this study lies in several aspects. First, this study specifically focuses on improving students' analytical exposition writing skills, whereas many previous studies primarily investigated general classroom engagement and

participation. Second, this study is conducted in a vocational high school context, which has received relatively limited attention in previous Mentimeter-related studies. Third, this study compares Mentimeter with PowerPoint as conventional instructional media to examine the effectiveness of interactive digital learning more comprehensively. Finally, this study integrates Mentimeter into several stages of the writing process, particularly brainstorming, idea generation, and collaborative discussion, to investigate how interactive technology can support students' writing development in EFL classrooms. Therefore, this study is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to the development of technology-assisted writing instruction in EFL classrooms.

B. Research Problem

Based on the background of the study mention above, the research question is formulated as follows: "Is the use of Mentimeter effective in improving students' writing skills?"

C. Objectives of the study

In accordance with the formulation of the research problem, the objective of this study is to determine whether the use of Mentimeter is effective in improving students' writing skills. This finding is obtained by examining and observing student outcomes following the implementation of Mentimeter to support their English learning, particularly in the area of writing.

D. Hypothesis of Study

This study is based on the following hypothesis:

- **H_0 (Null Hypothesis):** There is no significant difference in the students' writing skills, as measured by their writing test scores ,between those who are taught using Mentimeter and those who are taught using PowerPoint.
- **Ha (Alternative Hypothesis):** There is a significant difference in the students' writing skills, as measured by their writing test scores,

between those who are taught using Mentimeter and those who are taught using PowerPoint.

E. Significance of the Study

This research is expected to provide benefits for different parties, including:

- For Teachers:
  This study can serve as a reference for integrating interactive learning media like Mentimeter into writing instruction to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.
- For Students:
  The study can help students improve their writing skills through more engaging and interactive learning experiences, which may increase their confidence and interest in writing.
- For Educational Institutions:
  The findings can support the adoption of technology-based learning strategies in vocational high schools, aligning with the needs of modern education.
- For Future Researchers:
  The results can contribute to further research on the role of digital learning tools in English language teaching and learning, particularly in the context of vocational education.

F. Scope and Limitation

This study focused on investigating the effectiveness of Mentimeter as an interactive digital learning medium in teaching writing skills, particularly in writing analytical exposition texts. The research was conducted at SMKN 2 Kota Kediri and involved tenth-grade students of the Hospitality and Tourism Department in the 2024/2025 academic year. The study employed a quasi-experimental design involving two classes consisting of 32 students each. One class served as the experimental group, which received instruction using Mentimeter, while the other class functioned as the control group, which was taught using PowerPoint as a conventional learning medium.

The implementation of Mentimeter in this study was limited to several stages of the writing process, particularly brainstorming, idea generation, classroom interaction, and collaborative discussion before students produced their analytical exposition texts. Students' writing performance was assessed based on five aspects of writing adapted from Jacobs et al. (1981), namely content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics.

This study was limited in several aspects. First, the research only examined writing skills and did not investigate other English language skills such as speaking, listening, or reading. Second, the study specifically focused on analytical exposition texts; therefore, the findings may not be generalized to other genres of writing. Third, the duration of the treatment was relatively short and only measured students' immediate improvement during the research period without examining long-term retention or sustained writing development. In addition, several external variables such as students' prior knowledge, motivation, learning preferences, and classroom environment were beyond the researcher's full control, which may have influenced the results of the study. Nevertheless, efforts were made to minimize these influences by providing similar learning materials, instructional objectives, and assessment criteria for both groups.

G. Definition of Key Terms

To ensure clarity, the following terms are defined:

1. Mentimeter: Mentimeter is a web-based interactive learning platform that enables teachers to create engaging classroom activities such as live quizzes, polls, word clouds, and collaborative discussions. In this study, Mentimeter is used as an instructional medium to facilitate students' participation, brainstorming, and idea organization during the process of writing analytical exposition texts. The platform also allows students to respond anonymously and interact in real time, which may increase classroom engagement and reduce students' anxiety during learning activities.

2. Writing Skills: Writing skills refer to students' ability to express ideas, opinions, and information in written form effectively and systematically. In the context of this study, writing skills include several aspects of writing performance such as content development, organization, vocabulary use, grammatical accuracy, and mechanics. These skills are measured through students' performance in writing analytical exposition texts based on an analytic scoring rubric adapted from Jacobs et al. (1981).
3. Analytical Exposition Text: Analytical exposition text is a type of argumentative text that aims to persuade readers that a particular issue or opinion is important or valid. This text type generally consists of three main structures: thesis, arguments, and reiteration. In this study, students are required to produce analytical exposition texts by presenting logical arguments, supporting evidence, and coherent organization to express their viewpoints on a given topic.