

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the rationale behind the study, presents the research questions and objectives, and explores the theoretical and practical significance of utilizing X (formerly Twitter) as a digital platform to facilitate creative writing instruction among Indonesian junior high school students. By defining key terms and establishing the study's foundational concepts, this chapter sets the stage for a deeper exploration into how digital tools can transform traditional writing pedagogy in EFL contexts.

### 1.1 Research Background

In the digital era, language learning has undergone significant transformations, with technology offering new opportunities to enhance both teaching and learning practices. Among the essential skills in English language learning, writing remains one of the most challenging for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. In the Indonesian context, junior high school students often struggle with writing skills, as classroom practices tend to rely on conventional methods such as textbook-based exercises and grammar translation tasks. These approaches often lack opportunities for authentic and engaging writing experiences, resulting in students' limited ability to express their ideas creatively and confidently in English (Hidayati & Pardjono, 2022).

Creative writing has been widely recognized as an effective pedagogical strategy for developing writing skills in language education. According to Tin (2011), creative writing encourages learners to personalize language use and promotes deeper cognitive and emotional engagement with language structures. Pennebaker and Evans (2014) highlighted that creative writing provides meaningful and authentic writing practice, which supports the development of writing fluency, coherence, and confidence. In the Indonesian EFL context, Risnawati et al. (2022) reported that students involved in creative writing tasks demonstrated notable improvements in writing fluency, idea development, and overall writing performance. Similarly, Nirmalasari (2020) found that

incorporating creative writing projects, such as short stories and character journals, enhanced students' motivation and active participation in English writing classes.

As teenagers today are highly engaged with social media, integrating digital platforms into the classroom offers new ways to make writing activities more interactive, engaging, and relevant. X (formerly known as Twitter), with its concise format, presents a unique platform for creative writing activities. Its 280-character limit encourages students to focus on concise, thoughtful, and expressive language use. Rather than being a constraint, this character limitation can serve as a catalyst for creativity, as students are challenged to express their ideas clearly and effectively within a limited space (Lomicka & Lord, 2012). This challenge of brevity compels students to pay attention to the words they use, making their language more intentional and precise.

While X may not be the most widely used platform among Indonesian teenagers, its selection for this study is based on specific pedagogical opportunities that align with creative writing instruction goals. The platform's character limitation serves as a pedagogical constraint that encourages linguistic precision and creativity within boundaries, a key principle in creative writing pedagogy (Smith, 2019). Unlike visual-heavy platforms such as Instagram or TikTok, X's text centrist environment directs attention to language crafting rather than visual aesthetics, making it particularly suitable for developing writing skills.

Moreover, X offers various features that support and enhance digital writing practices. The character limit promotes attention to word choice and sentence structure, requiring students to craft their messages carefully. Hashtags help categorize their writing into specific themes or topics, allowing for easy navigation and organization of classroom writing tasks. Threaded posts enable the creation of longer, multi-part narratives, ideal for micro-stories, character monologues, or blog-style posts (Hattem & Lomicka, 2016). These features give students the opportunity to experiment with different forms of creative writing while remaining concise and clear. The integration of multimedia, such as images, GIFs, and videos, also supports multimodal writing and makes the writing process more interactive and engaging for students. Additionally, peer feedback is

encouraged through interactions such as replies, likes, and re-postsreposts, which fosters a collaborative and engaging learning environment (Lomicka & Lord, 2012).

Prior research has demonstrated the pedagogical potential of Twitter (now referred to as X) in enhancing EFL writing instruction. Studies have shown that Twitter integration in language classrooms can improve student engagement, facilitate immediate feedback, and enhance various aspects of writing performance. Research indicates that the platform's interactive features support collaborative learning environments and provide authentic contexts for language practice (Espinoza-Celi & Morochó Pintado, 2020). While previous studies have examined Twitter use in language learning, there is limited understanding of Indonesian junior high students' perceptions toward using X for creative writing activities. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by exploring junior high school students' perceptions of digital creative writing on X. Understanding students' perceptions is crucial as their attitudes and experiences with digital platforms significantly influence learning outcomes and engagement levels in creative writing activities.

## **1.2 Reason for Choosing the Topic**

This research topic was chosen for several reasons. First, writing remains one of the most difficult skills for Indonesian EFL learners, particularly at the junior high school level. Therefore, innovative, interactive, and student-centered approaches are necessary to improve students' writing fluency and confidence in expressing their ideas in English. Second, creative writing offers numerous benefits for language learners, including increased motivation, deeper emotional engagement, and enhanced writing performance. Third, social media platforms like X (formerly Twitter) are widely used among young people in Indonesia. Integrating familiar digital platforms into the classroom can bridge the gap between formal education and students' everyday digital experiences, potentially increasing engagement and motivation. In addition, the researcher's personal observation of X as a social media platform also inspired the choice of this topic.

Many X users actively share creative works such as fan-fiction, alternative universe (AU) stories, poetry, and short narratives, mostly in the Indonesian language. This phenomenon illustrates that X functions not only as a social networking site but also as a digital literacy space for creative expression. Building on this insight, the researcher became interested in exploring how junior high school students might engage in similar creative writing practices on X, but in English, thereby providing them with authentic and relevant opportunities to practice EFL writing.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

This research seeks to answer the question:

1. What are students' perceptions of using X as a digital platform for creative writing activities?

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The objectives of this research:

1. To investigate students' perceptions of using X as a digital platform for creative writing activities

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The significance of this research lies in its potential to contribute meaningfully to both theoretical understanding and practical application in the field of English language teaching.

#### **1.5.1 Theoretical Significance**

This study contributes to the theoretical understanding of digital literacy integration in EFL writing instruction by examining student perspectives on social media-based creative writing activities. The findings are expected to extend existing knowledge about learner perceptions in technology-enhanced language learning and provide theoretical insights into how digital platforms can support creative writing pedagogy in EFL contexts.

### **1.5.2 Practical Significance**

#### **1) For Teachers**

The findings of this study offer valuable insights into students' experiences with digital creative writing, which can help English teachers better understand learners' needs, challenges, and motivations. Such insights may guide teachers in designing writing activities that are more engaging, student-centered, and responsive to diverse learning preferences.

#### **2) For Students**

This research highlights students' own voices and reflections on using a familiar digital platform for creative writing. By sharing these experiences, the study may encourage students to approach writing with greater confidence, creativity, and enjoyment, as they see the relevance of writing activities to their daily digital practices.

#### **3) For Educational Institutions**

The study provides evidence-based insights into how students perceive and engage with digital platforms in language learning. These findings can inform institutional decisions to integrate technology in ways that align with students' interests and digital literacy, fostering a more relevant and motivating learning environment.

#### **4) For Researchers**

The results contribute to the growing body of literature on student experiences with social media in language learning, especially in writing. They may serve as a reference point for future research exploring other digital tools, different language skills, or varied educational settings, with an emphasis on learner perspectives.

### **1.6 Definition of Key Terms**

To ensure clarity and shared understanding throughout this research, the following key terms are defined.

1. **Creative Writing:** Creative writing refers to the production of original written texts that express ideas, thoughts, emotions, or narratives in imaginative and personal ways.
2. **X (formerly Twitter):** X refers to the social media platform formerly known as Twitter, characterized by its 280 character limit for posts, hashtag functionality, multimedia capabilities, and social networking features.
3. **Writing Skills:** This term refers to students' ability to produce coherent, structured, and meaningful written texts in English, covering aspects such as idea organization, grammar, vocabulary use, and appropriate style.
4. **Junior High School Students:** This term refers to students enrolled in Sekolah Menengah Pertama (SMP) in Indonesia, typically between the ages of 12 and 15 years, corresponding to grades 7-9 in the Indonesian education system.
5. **Digital Learning:** Digital learning refers to the use of digital technologies and internet-based platforms to support, enhance, and deliver educational content and activities.
6. **Perceptions:** In this study, perceptions refer to students' attitudes, opinions, beliefs, and evaluative judgments about using X as a digital platform for creative writing activities.
7. **EFL (English as a Foreign Language):** Refers to the learning and teaching of English in countries where English is not the primary language of communication, as is the case in Indonesia.