

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Self-regulation does not refer to an individual intellectual ability or academic skills, but rather to the process by which students guide and manage themselves to convert their mental capabilities into academic performance (Zimmerman, 2002). This is referred to the process in which learners independently initiate and maintain their thoughts, emotions, and actions in a structured way to achieve their learning objectives (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2011). In this process, students actively manage their thoughts, feelings, and actions, such as setting goals, monitoring progress, and adjusting their learning strategies based on feedback and self-reflection to reach their goals (Zimmerman, 2000). This theory consists of three main phases: the forethought phase, which occurs before the learning process begins; the performance phase, which takes place during the learning activities; and the self-reflection phase, which occurs after the learning effort is completed (Zimmerman, 2013). Each phase of the self-regulation represents a crucial stage in helping students effectively organize and manage their learning process.

Writing is a productive language where students express their opinions and ideas through written expression (Ahmed, 2019). Additionally, writing offers various benefits, such as fostering curiosity, improving sensitivity, enhancing the logical organization of thought, reducing stress, increasing the writer's popularity, and a sense of appreciation (Komaiddi, 2017). Therefore, writing is not merely an academic requirement, but also an essential tool for students' development and self-expression.

Recently, creative writing has become one of the most popular learning models for students to practice writing skills in English. Creative writing means composing texts imaginatively and considering them as a work of art (Stegner, 2002). Creative writing plays an important role in developing new skills. Just like other learning principles, writing requires commitment. It enhances students' learning while also fostering their creative abilities. (Tariq et al., 2025). Moreover, Burea (2023) highlights that practicing freewriting by itself can effectively support students in developing ideas, boosting their confidence, and enhancing their writing fluency. This allows students to move beyond formal academic rules, giving them the freedom to explore different ways of expressing their ideas and trying new writing styles.

In today's digital era, advancements in information and communication technology have significantly transformed how we learn and create. Over the past few decades, research in second language (L2) writing has shown considerable interest in examining the writing processes and strategies employed by L2 learners (Kessler, 2020). Blogging has already emerged as a teaching and language learning technique that creates both cooperative and autonomous learning atmospheres (Usmanova, 2023). This indicates that digital writing platforms provide meaningful spaces for students to practice writing while developing their independence in learning. In this regard, *Medium*, as one of the widely used blogging platforms, offers students the opportunity to express their thoughts and creativity freely beyond formal classroom boundaries.

Related to the use of digital platforms in creative writing, previous studies have examined their role in enhancing students' writing skills. For instance, Baker and

Lastrapes (2019) investigated the use of a digital writing application among elementary students in the United States and found that it significantly increased both the quantity and quality of their writing, motivated students to write, and extended the time spent on writing activities. However, their study mainly focused on writing performance outcomes without exploring how students regulated their learning processes while using the application. Similarly, Elsawi (2020) examined the effectiveness of using blogs to improve the creative writing skills of first-year secondary school students in Egypt, revealing significant improvement through blog use. Nevertheless, this study was limited to secondary school students and emphasized the final writing product rather than investigating students' self-regulated learning strategies during their creative writing activities using digital platforms.

More recently, Jin, Lin, and Lai (2024) modeled how self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies influence writing outcomes in AI-assisted writing contexts among postgraduate students in the UK. They found that SRL significantly predicted all levels of AI use and writing outcomes, highlighting the importance of developing students' self-regulation skills to maximize digital writing technologies. However, their research context centered on AI-assisted academic writing among postgraduate students, rather than exploring how university students utilize general digital writing platforms, such as *Medium*, for creative writing purposes.

Therefore, a gap remains in understanding how SRL strategies influence the creative writing development of university students using digital writing platforms. Filling this gap is crucial to provide insights into how Indonesian university students can effectively regulate their learning in their creative writing skills using

accessible digital platforms, which in turn can support their academic and professional communication development. However, this study does not examine how such tools contribute to the development of more reflective and self-regulated learning processes, particularly in the context of creative writing. In contrast, the focus of this study is to investigate how platforms like *Medium* can support Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) in creative writing. The findings are anticipated to be valuable for application developers, educators, and students in designing and utilizing more effective learning tools.

1.2 Research Questions

1. How do university students use SRL strategies in creative writing on *Medium*?
2. What challenges do students face when using SRL strategies in creative writing on *Medium*?
3. What strategies do students use to overcome the challenges in applying SRL while engaging in creative writing on *Medium*?

1.3 The Purposes of this Research

In line with the research question above, the purpose of this research is to explore how university students utilize Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) strategies when engaging in creative writing activities on *Medium*. This study also aims to identify the challenges students face in applying these SRL strategies during their writing process. Furthermore, it seeks to analyze the strategies that students employ to overcome the challenges they encounter while implementing SRL in their creative writing practices on *Medium*.

1.4 Limitations of the research

This research has several limitations that should be taken into consideration. First, the study focused specifically on the *Medium* platform, which may limit the generalizability of findings to other similar platforms. However, the insights gained may apply to other digital platforms for exploring SRL in similar platforms with comparable features. Second, participants may not fully represent diverse backgrounds or writing skill levels. To address this, recruitment efforts aim to recruit participants from varying academic and linguistic backgrounds to ensure a broader representation. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data may introduce bias or inaccuracies. To mitigate this, qualitative interviews were complemented.

1.5 Significance of the research

This study advances understanding of SRL theory by exploring how its strategies are operationalized in creative writing contexts, offering new insights into the integration of metacognitive skills with digital platforms as the learning tools. Educators can use the findings instructional strategies and intervention that incorporate SRL skills in creative writing curricula, enhancing students' ability to plan, monitor, and reflect on their writing processes.

The result informed developers of digital platforms like *Medium* on how to optimize their tools and features to better support SRL, providing a user-centered approach to fostering creative writing skills. By fostering SRL and creative writing skills, the research contributes to students' employability, digital literacy, and engagement with technology-enhanced learning, equipping students' with

essential competencies for 21-st century. Although focus on *Medium*, the findings serve as a model for integrating SRL strategies into digital learning platforms and creative writing contexts, providing broader relevance for language education.

1.6 Definition of Keyterms

1.6.1 Self-Regulated Learning (SRL):

In this study, Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) refers to learners' ability to plan, monitor, control, and evaluate their own learning processes to achieve specific goals. According to Schunk and Zimmerman (2001), SRL involves proactive actions in which students set goals, select and implement appropriate learning strategies, monitor their progress, and make adjustments as needed. Zimmerman (2002) further emphasizes that SRL is characterized by students' self-generated thoughts, feelings, and actions that are systematically oriented toward attaining their academic goals. Moreover, self-regulation plays a crucial role in education as it supports the development of lifelong learning skills (Zimmerman, 2001). In this research, SRL is operationalized as the cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, and behavioral strategies that participants employ in their English creative writing activities using the *Medium* platform.

1.6.2 Creative Writing

Creative writing is not only about linguistic accuracy but also about allowing learners to explore their imagination, originality, and personal voice in written form (Ahmed, 2019). It involves producing texts with aesthetic purposes, aiming to create effects of beauty, creativity, and originality. Pentury et al. (2020) emphasize that the ability to generate original and innovative ideas is essential in producing unique content. Furthermore, Almehi (2021) highlights that writing

serves as an important *Medium* of communication, enabling language learners to express their opinions, ideas, and thoughts creatively. In this research, creative writing refers to the participants' written works that demonstrate their ability to express imaginative and original ideas in English through the *Medium* platform.

1.6.3 SRL Creative Writing

Creative writing refers to the process of expressing one's ideas, feelings, and imagination through written texts that go beyond mere academic or technical writing. It is a learning activity that requires students to reorganise and connect their existing knowledge, concepts, experiences, sounds, images, and dreams to produce original and meaningful pieces of writing (Demirel et al., 2023).

In the context of this research, creative writing on *Medium* involves not only the ability to write aesthetically and meaningfully in English but also the use of self-regulated learning skills to support the writing process. The component skills of self-regulated learning include setting specific proximal goals, adopting strategies to achieve them, monitoring performance, restructuring one's environment to support goals, managing time efficiently, self-evaluating methods, attributing causation to results, and adapting future approaches (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1994, 1998, as cited in Zimmerman, 2002).

However, although self-regulated learning consists of various component skills, this research specifically focuses on three main aspects: setting goals, monitoring performance, and reflecting on writing outcomes, as these are considered the most relevant in understanding students' self-regulation in their creative writing processes. In the context of creative writing, these self-regulated

learning components help students plan, organise, and evaluate their writing tasks effectively.

1.6.4 *Medium* Technology-Enhanced Language Learning (TELL)

Medium, as a platform within Technology-Enhanced Language Learning (TELL), serves as an online space where students can publish their English creative writing to share their ideas and emotions publicly. In this research, *Medium* is considered part of TELL because it utilizes digital technology to support language learning, particularly writing skills, by providing features that enable students to write, edit, and receive readers' responses or feedback (e.g., Chu et al., 2024; Demirel et al., 2023; Nugroho & Rahmawati, 2020). Thus, platforms such as *Medium* function not only as publishing platforms but also as learning environments that enhance learners' motivation, writing practices, and digital literacy.

1.6.5 Challenges in SRL Implementation

In this research, challenges in SRL implementation are defined as any barriers or problems experienced by participants when planning, monitoring, and evaluating their English creative writing activities on *Medium*. These may include common challenges in writing such as difficulties in maintaining focus, finding ideas, or managing writing schedules (Arianto & Wulyani, 2022; Kartika, 2015), as well as general SRL challenges such as lack of motivation, limited knowledge of effective learning strategies, and time management difficulties (Zimmerman, 2002; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2017).