# CHAPTER 1
# INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the cover-up of the study including the background of the study, research questions, purpose of the study, the scope of the study, and its significance. All of them are described in this chapter.

## 1.1 Background of the Study

English has become an essential subject of education (Abadi, 2015). According to Abadi, the goal of teaching English is to give assessment to students to apply the language in the different context of communication, so that students are expected to be able to take part in social life and able to communicate to gain information provided in English. But for some reasons, teaching English as a second language is not a simple task (Mohammadian, Dolatabad, 2016), especially to those with special needs students. Mohammadian and Dolatabad (2016) argue that there are several significant reasons why students struggle in language classes. The most significant causes could be having a bad attitude, lacking motivation, having a lot of anxiety, or even having poor brain function (Mohammadian, Dolatabad, 2016) as what happens to those children with special needs. Those special needs students deserve the same opportunity to get an English education (Vaidhyanathan,et al, 2021). Special needs student is someone who has a level of difficulty in following the learning process but has a potential of intelligence and special talent (Upa, Mbato, 2020, Syed, 2021). Kryszewska, (2017, in Upa, Mbato, 2020) stated that special needs education is intended for students who have communication disorders, visual impairments, hearing impairment, autism, emotional behavior disorders, physical learning disabilities and development and mild  intellectual

disabled. Moreover, even the children labeled as students with disabilities at the moment are getting education guarantees from the government (Ulfa, Inayati, 2022).

Being a teacher in a special needs school is not easy, and to possess knowledge about children with special needs, special needs school teachers are required to have high patience and a good mentality at work (Upa, Mbato, 2020). The existence of teachers to educate students with special needs, Upa and Mbato (2020) further say, cannot be separated from the role of a teacher who conducts the process of teaching and learning activities. In teaching English to special needs students, Teachers play a crucial role, the educational strategies need to be well supported by teachers (Hemant, Meenakshi, 2021). So, It is significantly more difficult to teach English to mild intellectually disabled students (Mohammadian, Dolatabad, 2016). Children with mild intellectual disability should be taught by special teachers through special teaching methods keeping in mind their special needs, abilities, and capacities (Hemant, Meenakshi, 2021).

In the information technology era like today, the evolution of information and communication technologies has brought about several developments in education (Suhonjić1, Labus2, et al). The current demand to shorten learning time has led to the development of microlearning and microcourses, ushering in the "micro age." (Wei, Yang, Zeng & Yu, 2015 cited in Suhonjić1, Labus2, Despotović-Zrakic). According to Hug (2012) cited in (Garshasbi, Yecies, Shen, 2021) microlearning is a digitally cantered, multimodal method that strives to generate content, then it may consist of brief asynchronous learning materials, such as short video, micro-podcasts, or digital texts. In microlearning the teaching process to a small group of students within a short time (Bada, Akinbobola, 2022). While microlearning is a small group learning mode, it needs the development of interaction, collaboration, and teamwork skills (Garshasbi, Yecies, Shen,

2021). Garshasbi, Yecies, Shen (2021) argue, intensive engagement of learners in collaborative work through group interactions leads to beneficial learning outcomes, such as greater problem-solving skills, enhanced communication skills, and the building of strong mental models of complicated processes. Therefore, collaborative learning enhances the communication skills and competence of students through interactions designed to perform specified collaborative tasks. Although collaboration has been seen as a valuable technique for assisting teachers and other professionals in serving students with special needs (Brownell, Adams, Sindelar, Waldron, & Vanhover, 2006; Ritzman, Sanger, & Coufal, 2006 cited in Angeles, 2012), research on its implementation in the development of microlearning -based materials, especially for those who are intellectually disabled is still limited. Students who are intellectually disabled incorporate collaborative-characteristics in the development of micro-learning-based teaching materials, especially for writing classes with students who are intellectually disabled is urgently needed. One of the major difficulties found by students with disabilities that needs to be paid attention to, especially in learning language, including English as a foreign language , is to do with written language. However research on the characteristics of collaborative learning and micro learning-based materials for teaching writing, especially for those with intellectual disability is still limited. This can be seen that references which are concerned with all these matters are not easy to find. Thus, to fill the gap, this study aims to design learning materials scripts, especially in teaching writing for students with mild intellectual disability. The study involves one teacher who teaches students with special needs in a district in West Java, Indonesia. Before designing the teaching materials, the study first of all aims to identify to what extent the learning materials incorporate characteristics of collaborative learning and micro learning. The study also aims to identify which characteristics of learning materials for

students with mild intellectual disability which are paid attention to in the learning materials for writing. Moreover, based on the designed materials, the study also aims to identify the teachers' opinions about the designed teaching materials for students with disability, especially the written script.

Based on the scarcity of the studies and references on the implementation of characteristics of collaborative learning and micro learning in teaching materials for students with intellectual disability, especially in teaching writing in grade seven (seventh grade), this study is significant, especially from three perspectives: theoretical, practical, and policy. From a theoretical perspective, the results of the study can become a significant reference for those who are concerned with helping students with intellectual disability in learning, especially in learning to write and those who are concerned with the incorporation of collaborative learning and microlearning in the development of teaching materials for students with intellectual disability. From a practical perspective, this study can provide practical matters on materials development, especially for teaching writing to seventh graders with intellectual disability, by incorporating characteristics of collaborative learning and micro learning. This is also relevant to the contemporary world condition where technology is part of the students' life. Finally, from the policy perspective, the results of study are expected to lead to the release or the establishment of policy which can help develop materials for students with intellectual disability, especially in teaching writing. Moreover, as this study is also concerned with collaborative learning and micro learning, the results of the study are expected to become an important source for the policy makers in designing learning materials script for students with intellectual disability.

## 1.2 Scope of the study

This study was limited to the development of collaborative learning-integrated and microlearning-based English learning materials for seventh-grade students with mild intellectual disabilities. Therefore, DDR (Design and Development Research) was applied. This study implemented the DDR method in four steps: needs analysis, prototype design, evaluation and revision. Due to limited time, more DDR phases were not administered.

## 1.3 Research Questions

Based on the background as stated above, the study attempts to address the following research questions.

1.  To what extent does the learning material for teaching writing to students with mild intellectual disability integrate with collaborative learning and microlearning?
2.  How is the procedure of designing learning materials to teach writing to seven grade students with intellectual disability, paying attention to the aspects of collaborative learning and microlearning?
3.  How is the design of collaborative learning-integrated and microlearning-based English learning materials of writing for the seventh grades of mild intellectually disabled students?
4.  What is the teacher's opinion about the designed learning materials to teach writing to students with intellectual disability?

**1.4 Research Aims**

In line with the research questions above, the study aims to:

1. Identify to what extent does the learning material for teaching writing to students with mild intellectual disability integrate with collaborative learning and microlearning.

2. To describe the procedure in designing collaboration skills-integrate and microlearning based instructional materials script of English-writing for seventh graders of mild intellectually disabled.

5. To design the collaborative learning-integrated and microlearning-based English learning materials of writing for the seventh grades of mild intellectually disabled students

3. To identify the teacher's opinion about the designed learning materials to teach writing to students with intellectual disability.

**1.5 Significances of the research**

As mentioned in the background above, the study is significant from three perspectives: theoretical, practical and policy. From a theoretical perspective, the results of the study can become a significant reference for those who are concerned with helping students with intellectual disability in learning, especially in learning to write and those who are concerned with the incorporation of collaborative learning and microlearning in the development of teaching materials for students with intellectual disability. From a practical perspective, this study can provide practical matters on materials development, especially for teaching writing to seven graders with intellectual disability, by incorporating characteristics of collaborative learning and micro learning. This is also relevant to the contemporary world condition where technology is part of the students'

life. Finally, from the policy perspective, the results of study are expected to lead to the release or the establishment of policy which can help develop materials for seven grade students with intellectual disability, especially in teaching writing. Moreover, as this study is also concerned with collaborative learning and micro learning, the results of the study are expected to become an important source for the policy makers in developing learning materials to teach writing to seven grade students with intellectual disability.

## 1.6 State of the Art

Micro-learning is learning in small chunks and for short periods of time. Excellent way to learn in small groups. It works well with technology (Jomah, Masoud, Kishour, Aurelia, 2014). Microlearning has been used since the mid-1990s (Growth, 2019). Furthermore, Microlearning has grown from insignificant beginnings to a multibillion-pound industry. It has been looking for ways to condense learning since the advent of the internet. But, in some levels of education like special needs schools, microlearning does not exist, because of their limited sources. Due to this situation, the questions arise regarding Designing microlearning-based instructional materials script of English-writing. Many studies have been conducted finding the barriers of microlearning implementation, but they were mostly done in normal school. This aroused the researcher's concerns on the use of microlearning in special needs schools. The present study intends to analyse and design the microlearning material script. The results of the research are hoped to overcome the obstacles that were encountered in teaching writing to mild intellectual disability students.