

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

Writing is one of the four essential abilities that determine whether a person is considered to have mastered a language. As (Sadiku, 2015) said, writing is a valuable skill to have. In matters of self-expression, a skilled writer is invariably victorious. The "hard copy" of your capacity for critical thought and self-expression is your writing.

ن وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ ﴿١﴾

In QS Al-Qalam (68:1) Allah SWT has indicated one of the benefits granted to mankind in addition to the favor of being able to talk and explain things to others is the favor of writing. By writing, individuals may transmit what they feel and think to others. As a result, university students must learn how to write by taking writing courses in phases, beginning with basic, paragraph, essay, academic writing to business writing. Consequently, one of the competencies imperative for college students to develop is writing, particularly paragraph writing.

Paragraph is a chapter in an essay by combining sentences that have one main idea. According to (Asfah, 2019), it was discovered that students

struggled with composing an opening paragraph, maintaining a logical sequence in their writing, and effectively concluding their sentences.

To assess the progress that students have made, lecturers also need to consider the writing aspect (Ellis & Yuan, 2004). It is important for educators to understand how individual differences can affect students' writing ability (Kormos, 2012).

Gender was mentioned as one of the variables that may have an impact on L2 acquisition in (Altman 1980, Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991 (Hyland & Hyland, 2004). Gender difference is one of the human characteristics that have been connected to individual variations in writing ability. In order to design specific interventions and strategies that can improve writing ability and promote equal opportunities for all genders, understanding this is crucial. This is mostly due to the fact that every student is different, and linguistic, social, and psychological aspects all influence how well a student acquires a second language.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ
عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٣﴾

In Islam, Allah SWT has also mentioned the creation of humans with different genders so that they know each other (Al-Hujurat (49:13)).

Several studies have investigated gender differences in writing outcomes. One study showed that women tend to show superior text quality and writing fluency compared to men (Al-Saadi, 2020). Another research conducted by (Cordeiro et al., 2018), girls tend to excel over boys in various aspects of writing skills. These aspects involved confidence, beauty of writing, text length and quality of writing. However, a study by (Maharani & Fadilah, 2021) found no significant gender differences in English writing perceptions and skills. With some studies showing different results, the researcher has dialogued with the lecturers of the paragraph writing course regarding their assumptions on the influence of gender in students' writing skills and they believe there are no gender differences in the ability to write paragraphs. This is not in line with Altman 1980, Larsen-Freeman & Long 1991, and Hyland, 2004's theory which states that gender is one of the factors that influence second language acquisition.

In light of the following issues, the researchers are keen to explore gender differences in writing skill. In different to previous studies, this research focus on the differences in the writing of men and women in paragraph writing ability and using causal comparative method. Students in the English Education Department at Antasari State Islamic University Banjarmasin the academic year 2023 are the participants in this study.

Scores served as the basis for measuring the writing ability. The writing score and the writing aspect score were the two scores that were

mentioned. Three elements are referred to as the components of writing: linguistic features, structure, and content

B. Definition of Key Terms

Here are some crucial phrases that need to be identified to prevent misunderstandings during this study:

1. Male

Based on an online dictionary known as Dictionary Reference, the term "male" is defined as an individual possessing both X and Y chromosomes in their cell nuclei, typically exhibiting physical features such as a penis, scrotum, and testicles. Additionally, during adolescence, males tend to develop facial hair. The term specifically pertains to individuals identified as boys or men and distinguishes them from those capable of bearing children. For the purposes of this study, the term "male" specifically denotes students enrolled in the English department during the academic year of 2023.

2. Female

As per the definition provided by an online dictionary, the term "female" describes an individual possessing two X chromosomes in their cell nuclei. Typically, females exhibit

physical characteristics including a vagina, uterus, and ovaries. During puberty, they undergo bodily changes such as a relatively rounded physique, enlarged breasts, and a lack of facial hair. The term specifically applies to individuals identified as girls or women, highlighting their ability to bear children. The word "female" in this study refers to students who were enrolled in the English department in the 2023 academic year.

3. Paragraph Writing

The book *Writing Academic English* by Ann Hogue and Alice Oshima, A paragraph is a collection of connected phrases discussing one or generally just one major theme. A paragraph might have 10 sentences or only one sentence in length. The paragraph should be long enough to clearly explain the primary concept, but the quantity of sentences is not crucial (Oshima, 2008). Additionally, a strong paragraph possesses the following qualities: coherence, unity, and completeness/development. Unity, or having each phrase in a paragraph focus on a single, major idea, is the first characteristic of a strong paragraph. This brings the theme and paragraphs together (Asfah, 2019). In this research, the researcher focuses on descriptive and expository paragraphs.

C. Research Questions

Given the provided information, the study's research question can be formulated in the following manner:

1. How do male students perform in writing descriptive and expository paragraphs?
2. How do female students perform in writing descriptive and expository paragraphs?
3. Is there any statistically significant difference between males and females in their ability in writing paragraphs?

D. Objectives of Study

The objectives of this research are:

1. To examine how male students perform in writing descriptive and expository paragraphs.
2. To explore how female students perform in writing descriptive and expository paragraphs.
3. To assess whether there is a significant difference in the ability to write paragraphs between male and female students.

E. Significance of Study

The results of this study should be able to provide certain requirements that apply both practically and theoretically to:

1. The instructors can utilize it in assessing their students' proficiency in writing paragraphs, and then evaluate and enhance that proficiency in light of the study's findings.
2. The students may discover their strengths and expand their understanding of several topics, including how to comprehend writing's components or parts.

F. Hypothesis

In research, hypotheses are typically regarded as the main tool. To propose fresh observations and experiments is its primary purpose. To make decisions based on sample data, hypothesis testing is helpful. With reference to the aforementioned explanation, the author formulates the following two provisional assumptions regarding this study:

H1: There is a statistically significant difference between males and females in their ability in writing paragraphs.

H0: There is no statistically significant distinction between males and females in their ability to write paragraphs.