A Study on Writing Ability Differences between Male and Female Students in Describing People

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Abstract

This study intends to investigate and analyzed male and female students' writing ability differences in writing a descriptive text about describing people, from the aspects of generic structure, language features, vocabulary, and mechanics. This research was conducted by using descriptive research and using a test as an instrument collected from 26 male and 26 female students of English department, Universitas Negeri Padang. Moreover, the researcher used quantitative data analysis. The result show that male students and female students' writing ability in describing people at the same category which is good but the mean score were slightly different. The male students scored 2,92 (good) and the female students scored 3,09 (good). Moreover, from all of the aspects assessed female students got higher score rather than male students. In identification, the male students scored 3,15 and the female students scored 3,35. In the description the male students scored 3,08 and the female students 3,35. In language features the male students scored 2,65 and the female students scored 2,69. In vocabulary the male students scored 2,85 and the female students 3,15. Last, the male students scored 2,88 and the female students scored 3,04 in mechanics.

INTRODUCTION

In education, writing is one of the basic skills that should be mastered by students. Writing is also an essential part of academic purpose especially for English Department students at Universitas Negeri Padang. There are several writing courses that they need to take to finish their study. One of the courses is paragraph writing. In paragraph writing, the students will learn about the types, the structures, and the way to write those text.

One of the text types that is currently learned in paragraph writing is descriptive text. It is mentioned in RPS paragraph writing January-June 2020. The lesson learning outcome was students can write descriptive paragraphs. The indicators were the students had ability to compose descriptive paragraphs correctly, including: (1) topic sentence, (2) supporting sentences, and (3) concluding sentences. Then, the students were learning about the definition of descriptive paragraphs, purposes of descriptive paragraphs, and characteristics of descriptive paragraphs. It can be concluded that the English college students of Universitas Negeri Padang will always learn about the text types fundamentally and specifically in paragraph writing.

Descriptive text is a text that describes something in a specific and clear way so that readers can feel what the writer is trying to describe about. According to Anderson et al., (1998, p. 20), "descriptive text is one of the factual genres which function to describe a person, place or thing in a clear and specific way". Moreover, Wardiman et al., (2008) explained "description is a part of another piece of writing and is used to inform an audience about how something from the writer's point of view". Descriptive text specifically trying to describe a place, a thing, and a person in a specific way. It also specifically trying to develop and include the intense and deep experience to the reader. So, the focus of descriptive essay can be whatever the writer see and experience.

There have been many researchers who have done the study toward descriptive text, such as Siahaan (2013) that analyzed the students' abilities and difficulties in writing descriptive texts. Furthermore, Sunyoto (2017) also did a study entitled: analysis of writing abilities in descriptive texts of the tenth grade students of MAN 2 Boyolali in the academic year 2016/12017. Lastly, Nair & Hui (2018) analyzed common errors in ESL descriptive writing. In these studies, another thing that arises in this problem is the difference in basic writing skills between male and female students or specifically said, namely gender.

Gender is considered to be one of the distinguishing levels of students' success in language acquisition including writing ability. Kamiar et al., (2012) argued "one of the sociocultural factors that students need in the process of learning a language including writing is gender". Therefore, language and gender have a big contribution to the learning process. Based on these studies and previous explanations, the researcher wants to focus on students' writing abilities and studies them based on gender differences and ability in writing descriptive texts. So, the researcher will focus on male and female students' writing ability differences in descriptive text.

Therefore, the researcher wants to see more about the male and female students writing ability differences especially in writing a descriptive text about describing people, like it is already stated in the background of the problem. The researcher wants to know how male students' writing abilities in describing people, how female students' writing abilities in describing people, and how the differences between male and female students' writing abilities in describing people.

METHOD

1. Research Design

This research conducted by using descriptive research. These theories supported the researcher in this research because the researcher analyzed and described how the male and female students' writing ability in describing people. Moreover, in this research, the researcher used quantitative data analysis. The data was measured using numbers and values.

2. Population and Sample

a. Population

The population of this research was all of Paragraph Writing classes' students on January-June 2020. There were 8 classes in total which consist of 262 students.

Table 1 *Population of English College Students Who Were Taking Paragraph Writing classes in Academic in January-June 2020*

No	Class	Male Students	Female Students	Total
1	K1-19	9	21	30
2	K2-19	5	30	35
3	K3-19	3	32	35
4	K4-19	8	26	34
5	K5-19	10	23	33
6	NK1-19	5	25	30
7	NK2-19	11	21	32
8	NK3-19	12	21	33
Total		**63**	**199**	**262**

The population of this research had similar characteristics. First of all they were studying paragraph writing in the same period. Second, they also had the same times in learning paragraph writing which were three hours in a week. Then, they use English only for international communication, because their first language is Indonesian language.

b. Sample

From total 8 classes of paragraph writing class, the researcher randomly took 20% from the total of the population. So, the amount sample is 20% of 262 students which is 52. Finally, the researcher divided those amounts into two 26 male students and 26 female students.

The type of the sampling in this research is Simple Random Sampling. All of the population had the same probability to be chosen as a sample.

3. Instrumentation

In this research, the researcher used a test as instrument. The instruments are made based on the syllabus and the standard of competencies and the basic competencies of paragraph writing class in January- June 2020 especially the

descriptive text. In giving the test, there are two aspects should be concerned, they are validity and reliability.

a. Validity

The validity of this test was only a writing test which was used to measure the students' ability in writing descriptive text about describing people. Furthermore, the test instrument was consulted with advisor and then it is validated by an English lecturer, Dr. Rusdi Noor Rosa, S.S., M. Hum.

One of the subordinate form of validity is content validity. According to Gay et al., (2009), content validity is the degree of the test items represent measurement in the perspective of the content area. So, in administering the test, the validity of the content could be seen by using syllabus of Paragraph Writing subject. It was consulted to English Department Lecturer who is teaching Paragraph Writing class in January-June 2020.

Table 2 *RPS Paragraph Writing January-June 2020*

Week	Lesson Learning Outcome	Indicators	Learning Materials
4-5	Students are able to write **Descriptive** paragraphs	Students' ability to compose Descriptive paragraphs correctly, including: 1. Topic Sentence 2. Supporting sentences 3. Concluding sentence	1. Definition of Descriptive paragraphs 2. Purpose of Descriptive paragraphs 3. Characteristics of Descriptive paragraphs

b. Reliability

Reliability testing in this study involves a rater or expert. The researcher used inter-rater reliability, because it is trustworthy. Brown & Abeywickrama (2010) suggested that inter-rater is needed to rate a test in order to avoid human error, subjectivity and presupposition in the scoring process. There were three raters in this research, they were the researcher, EFL teacher and English Department lecturer who is expert in writing.

Then, the researcher used an analytic scoring rubric adapted from Brown (2007) to score the students' writing ability in describing people. According to Hughes (2003), an analytic scoring provides scores for every items or aspects in a test so that it intended to enhance the scoring to be more reliable.

4. Technique of Data Collection

The techniques of collecting the data in this research considered to the purpose of the research.
   a. The researcher contact all of the chairman in each class who already learnt paragraph writing in January-June 2020 in English Language and Literature

Department of UNP, in order to ask their permission for conducting the research.

b. The researcher chose the sample randomly from each class.

c. Then, asked them to write a descriptive text; describing people type by giving them three topics. In fact, the topic is about a person you admire, an important person for your life, and a person who has influenced your life. Then they chose one of the topic.

d. The sample wrote the describing people short essay in at least 250-300 words.

e. After that, the researcher collected the samples' descriptive text to score by using rating scale rubric to find out their ability in writing a descriptive text about describing people.

5. Technique of Data Analysis

The data analysed based on aspects in assessing descriptive text adapted from Brown (2007). Then, the researcher scored the students writing product based on those rubric's analytic score and rating scale which were categorized from 4 (very good), 3 (good), 2 (fair), and 1(poor). Then the data were calculated to get the mean score in every indicator by using formula from Gay et al., (2009):

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum x}{n}$$

The mean scores were categorized in four categories. The categories followed the scale above.

Table 3 *Mean Score*

Mean Score	Categories
4 - 3,51	Very Good
2,51 - 3,50	Good
1,51 - 2,50	Weak
1 - 1,50	Poor

Adapted from Likert scale in Gay (2009)

To find out the percentage of male and female students' score based on rating scale in writing a descriptive text, the formula suggested by Arikunto (2006) was used.

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \text{ X } 100\%$$

Then, the researcher described the percentage of the male and female students' writing ability in describing people dealing with some criteria in the test whether they scored 4 (very good), or 3 (good), or 2 (weak), or 1 (poor)s' ability.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Research Finding
    The data obtained from the descriptive text about describing people writing test that was written by twenty-six male students and twenty-six female students. The descriptive text was analysed by using analytic score adapted from Brown (2007).

1) Male Students' Writing Ability in Describing People
    The ability of male students' in arranging the generic structure and grammatical features of descriptive text was 3 (good). In detail, the data presents on the table below.

Table 32 *Male Students' Writing Ability in Describing People*

No.	Indicators	Scores	Answer of Research Questions
1	Identification	3,12	**2,92 (good)**
	Description	3,08	
	Language features	2,65	
	Vocabulary	2,85	
	Mechanics	2,88	

    Table 32 showed that male students had the lower score in arranging and applying language. It was proved by the scores of male students in language features which is 2,65. It means that male students had not really understood yet how to apply an appropriate language features on descriptive text about describing people.

    Nevertheless, male students got higher score in writing identification among all aspects of descriptive text. The score of the male students in writing identification was 3,12 which is in good category. It means that almost all of male students had understood how to write good identification. The male students had written the identification based on the standard by identifying the subject that is going to be described. Even though it was only provided few details.

2) Female Students' Writing Ability in Describing People
    The ability of female students' in arranging the generic structure and grammatical features of descriptive text was 3 (good). In detail, the data presents on the table below.

Table 33 *Female Students' Writing Ability in Describing People*

No.	Indicators	Scores	Answer of Research Questions
1	Identification	3,35	**3,09 (good)**
	Description	3,23	
	Language Features	2,69	
	Vocabulary	3,15	
	Mechanics	3,04	

Table 33 showed that female students had a lower score in language features. It was proved by female students scored in language features was 2,659. It was still in a good category, but it lower than the other elements assessed. It means the female students able to applied language features, but still lack. The female students did several errors that slightly disturb the reader in understanding the contents of the text.

On the other hand, in writing identification, female students got higher scores than all of the other elements or aspects assessed. Female students got 3,35 which is in a good category. It means that almost all of the female students had written an appropriate identification by identifying the subject that is going to be described.

3) **Differences between Male and Female Students' Writing Ability in Describing People**

The ability of male students and female students of English Language and Literature Department of Universitas Negeri Padang had a slight difference in score even though it was calculated at the same score rating. Male students got 2,62 (good). Meanwhile, the ability of female students was 3,08 (good) which mean higher than male students. Table 34 presents the differences between male students and female students in writing descriptive text about describing people.

Table 34 *Differences between Male and Female Students' Writing Ability in Describing People*

Indicators	Male Students	Female Students
Identification	3,15	3,35
Description	3,08	3,23
Language Features	2,65	2,69
Vocabulary	2,85	3,15
Mechanics	2,88	3,04
Answer of Research Question	**2,92 (good)**	**3,09 (good)**

Table 34 shows female students got higher scores in all of categories than male students. Even though, their difference in score is just slightly different. Then, both of male students and female students had already written the descriptive text based on the standard. It proved by the male students got 2,92 and female students got 3,09 which are categorized as a good score. They had already completed the indicators of generic structure (identification and description), language features, vocabulary, and mechanics. So, it can be concluded that some of them had written an appropriate descriptive text based on the standard. Even though, they differ slightly. The writing ability of female students in describing people was a bit higher than male students.

Discussion

Based on the finding of this research the writing ability of female students in describing people was slightly higher than male students. It was indicated that the writing ability of male students were 2 male students (7,7 %) had very good ability, 16

male students (61,5 %) had good ability, 8 male students (30,8 %) had weak ability, and no one (0%) from male students had poor ability. Meanwhile, female students were 3 female students (11,5 %) had very good ability, 19 female students (73,1 %) had good ability, 4 female students (15,4 %) had weak ability, and also no one (0%) of female students had poor ability. It can be assumed that most of female students had good writing ability in describing people**.**

In addition, both male students and female students had the lowest and the highest scored on the same category of descriptive text. First, in applying language features. Both of them had the lower score in language features among all of the categories. It can be assumed that both male students and female students still has lack ability in understanding how to apply language features as one of the important aspect of descriptive text. Second, in writing identification both of the male students and female students got higher score among all of the categories in writing descriptive text. Almost all of the male students and female students had written the identification in an appropriate way by including few details to identifying the subject they will be described and for the background information for the readers. Still, the scores of female students in writing identification was higher than male students.

The finding of this research had different result from Husna (2018). In her finding, the students are good at mechanic and grammar. However, the findings of this research showed that the students have weak ability in fulfilling the generic structure and also lack of using vocabularies. Next, the research findings from Mardiyah (2013) showed that the students' ability in to write generic structure and lexicon grammatical features. In her finding indicate that the students also had weak ability in fulfilling the generic structure of descriptive text.

Furthermore, the findings of this research were similar with JH (2015). In her research showed that female students produced only six of the seven error categories; they did not make any error of grammar. In contrast, male students committed all the seven types of errors. Also, the total errors of female students, 35 errors which less than those male students, 43 errors. It means that the male students did the most errors in applying grammar.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, there are several conclusions that can be drawn. *First,* both of male students and female students' writing ability were in a good category of mean score.

Thereafter, the writing ability of female students was a bit higher than male students at English Language and Literature Department of Universitas Negeri Padang. The writing ability of female students was 3,09 (good). There were three of them scored 4 (very good), nineteen of them scored 3 (good), four of them scored 2 (weak), and no one from them got 1 (poor). Meanwhile, male students' writing ability was 2,92 (good). There were two of them scored 4 (very good), sixteen of them scored 3 (good), eight of them scored 2 (weak), and no one from them scored 1 (poor). So, it can be concluded that female students had mastered the descriptive text about

describing people a bit better than male students assessed by all of aspects of descriptive text. Even though their ability is not really shown significant differences, but it proved that from all of that indicators female students got higher score rather than male students.

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