

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

Writing skill is one of the four language skills that should be developed in learning English at Senior High School. Richard and Renandya (2002 : 303) state that writing is the most difficult skill for second language and foreign language learners because in this skill the writer must express their ideas, opinions, feeling, and emotion in written form. They must transfer their ideas properly and naturally in a good and interesting writing. Thus, to do those they need to have a good writing skill. Through the teaching and learning writing, the students are expected to be able to produce a text well because writing skill is often needed to measure knowledge in most exams, whether they are testing in foreign language abilities or other skills.

In the process of teaching and learning English, writing is one of productive skill besides speaking. This subject is the most difficult and complicated language skill to be learned by the students in every level of education. The students must have ability in organizing ideas, producing meaningful and structured sentences. If the students do not have those abilities they will face problems in producing a good writing. Dewi (2014) defines several problems that are faced by students in writing, they are: (1) limited vocabulary, (2) difficult in organizing to write about something, (3) no motivation to write, and (4) lack of confidence in grammar to write.

In writing process, there are three stages should be done by students such as planning, translating, and reviewing. (Hayes and Flower, 1981). All of them active the cognitive process of students in producing a writing. In composing writing, students have different ways in expressing their ideas or opinion in each stages planning, translating and reviewing. They have to build their cognitive process in their mind in order to produce a good writing. There are some kinds of writing types which force to active cognitive process in mind in order to express the ideas logically; one of them is argumentative writing.

Argumentative writing is kind of text in which the process of making what writers or speakers think clear to themselves and to others are organized systematically. This text supposes students to measure their logical thinking they have. In addition, it is a genre of writing that requires the writer to investigating a topic and establishes a position on the topic in a concise manner. As proposed by Nippold and Ward-Lonergan (2011), argumentative text requires the writer to embrace a particular point of view and try to convince the readers in order to have the same perspective. In addition, the writer also has to arise the problems and attempt to map language onto his or her own thoughts and feelings as well as the expectations of the reader. So from the statement above can be seen that argumentative writing is a text active the mental process in the students' mind when they are composing writing because they embrace a particular point of view and try to convince the readers in order to get the same perspective.

In writing argumentative text, language used by people is determined by social classification such as gender, social class, age, ethnicity, education etc. (Muto-Humphrey, 2005). One of the socio-cultural factors shaped by learners in

the process of learning a language including writing is gender (Kamiar, Gorjian, & Pazhakh, 2012). The term “gender” clearly reveals the social and contextual expectations which society puts on part of each gender (male or female) culturally and socially (Kamiar et al., 2012). One of the factors which seem to be of great importance in dealing with writing and gender is the relationship between second language writing and identity construction. Those relationship causes each of them has different perceptions about something so they also have different way in writing idea or opinion. Male and female are believed to have different language in expressing the ideas based on their perception or experience. It can be seen from the researcher everyday observation to his students; he found that the students’ major problem in writing is idea generating. The researcher found in the students’ assignment that male writes only a few lines and it jumps to the point and it was difficult for the male students to accomplish their writing task. Most of them would rather copy from other sources than write themselves or only have fewer words to write whenever they are asked to write an essay. In the process of writing, they tend to complete their writing without planning and reviewing. While the females always do the task well even it doesn’t finish completely. They tend to remember again what they have stored in their mind and tend to make the outline first before writing. After finishing, some of them reread and check their writing word by word. The female students tends to be careful in checking their writing again because they want to make sure the result of their writing is good and perfect.

There are evidences or tendencies that female students are smarter than the male students. One of them is reported by Morris (1998) that stated the

women ESL writers tended to outperform the men because their essays showed much higher level of adherence to guidelines than the man. And the evaluation grid richly rewarded this adherence. However, it was found that woman and man's text to be comparable quality as regards accuracy and readability. It is line with the researcher's investigation while teaching his students. The researcher found that female students have best quality in writing than the male students do. We can see that the problem don't not lie in the cognitive abilities of the female students are better than male students have. However, it is caused of the different way of their cognitive process of processing something. The ways in expressing their ideas are not similar and depend on their characteristics. It can be seen from their achievement in composing their writing.

Archer (2003:66) states that boys in schools are viewed as "under-achievement" and the teachers have higher expectations for female. The female are said doing miles better than the male in exams. It happens because, a male brain consists of about four per cent more cells 100 g more tissues than a female brain. Besides the opinion above, Guobing (2015) investigated that female students used writing strategies better and their general strategies and writing habits were different from the ones used by male students. Female student writers received significantly higher writing strategy employment scores than that of male students. In addition the writing competency test revealed that female students are more influenced by their first language (L1) since they used 'coinage' to invent words when they did not know suitable words in the target language.

Besides all those, the researcher has asked two students one male and one female to think aloud protocol writing of argumentative text

The title is importance of learning English. Many people must be learn English. Why do I say that one to access knowledge and information. In the google search engine available English language search is universal. Many overseas news is using English Language. Two Media Communication..... Many people can contact people from all over the world..... and be able to interact quickly Three Enjoy the art. In cinema people..... don't must to find the subtitle because they are know English language and can enjoy the music from all over the world. Four to find job We can be easy to find a job. Applicants who master active or passive English than people who don't. So the conclusion is many people must be learning English to knowledge in the era globalization. And don't missing of technology moving forward. Thank you.

(FMI/TAP-M/Friday, May 05th 2019)

The writing above is written by a male student. The writing result showed that there are some sentences where the student needs a long time to complete them as the example: “*two ... media communication .*”. From this sentence, it can be seen that something happened in his cognitive process so he couldn't say and write the sentence directly without thinking in a long time. He prefers silent in thinking the idea. He found a difficult in generating ideas about the importance of English because the information or knowledge that kept in his mind insufficient.

Interview was made to him and it was found that he wrote the argumentative writing by short planning because he developed his writing by retrieving the information of his long term memory in a short moment. He didn't make a draft or outline what he has to write so he faced a difficulty in developing the ideas about issue given in writing. After finishing, he gave the writing directly without rereading or editing again to make sure his writing has been good or not. He is looked to compose that writing just to finish it soon

without caring about his writing has been good or not. In the result of his writing, it was found there are some bad grammars in the writing such as “*Many people must be learn English*”. Actually the sentence must be “*Many people must learn English*”. Here, the researcher knew that this male student is still weak in writing ability.

The cases above can be concluded from the retrospective interviewing to him below:

- Researcher : *Zril, bagaimana kamu membuat tulisan argumentative ini? Zril, how did you make this argumentative writing?*
- Student : *Apa yang kutau langsung kutulis sir, setelah siap langsung kukasi sama sir.*
What I knew immediately I wrote sir, after being ready I gave it to you directly.
 (FMI/RI-M/Friday, May 05th 2019)

This writing below is a female’s argumentative writing

Importance of learning English. English is important because English is important because English is international language. English is a mother language on the world. According to the thesis, English is in my mind, English is important because English is important because one with English we can find the best job easily. Two, if we can if we can speak English we can communicate with all people on the world. And the last reason, why English is important is because English hmm The last reason why English is important because with English we can understood the film, book and etc of education without translator. So, in conclude, English is important because with English we can know all of the news all of the news on the world. So, don't lazy to learn English because English is very important in our life. Thank You.
 (FMI/TAP-F/Friday, May 05th 2019)

From the writing above it can be seen that this female student has a better ability in writing argumentative text because she can generate the ideas and develop her opinions in the writing. She tends to repeat some same sentences such as “*English is important because English is important because*”. It was happened because the student hasn’t retrieved the information from her long term memory well and so she covered it by saying same words but she got the

ideas in a fast way. She has much information or knowledge about the topic given because she can write the writing fluently. It can be concluded from her thinking aloud protocol writing that she just did once silent space. In structure, She still made a wrong structure such as “ *with English we can understood the film*”. It should be “*with English we can understand the film*”. Though she did some grammatical errors but it is not as much as the male did in his writing. As the conclusion, the female’s writing is better than male because of affecting the writing process stages where she used planning, translating and reviewing in her writing process. And female student’s ability is considered better than male student’s ability. It can be known from the retrospective interviewing

- Researcher : *Deang, bagaimna kamu membuat tulisan argumentative ini?*
 Deang, how did you make this argumentative writing?
- Student : *Pertama-tama saya ingat-ingat dulu sir apa pentingnya bahasa inggris untuk dipelajari. Kemudian saya buat kerangkanya sir biar mudah. Setelah itu saya tulis sir. Susah sir menggabungkanya tadi. Setelah siap kucek lagi sir soalnya grammar saya berantakan jadi untuk memastikannya.*
 Firstly, I remembered what the importance of learning English. Then, I drew the outline to make it easily. After that, I wrote sir. It’s difficult to combine one sentence to others. After finishing, I checked it again to make sure because my grammar is not really good.
 (FMI/RI-F/Friday, May 05th 2019)

The preliminary data showed that there are differences between male and female cognitive process in writing argumentative text. Male student tends to complete the writing soon without organizing the ideas and drawing outline. He developed the ideas directly so he faced silent thinking in a long time for several times. In constructing sentences by sentences, the male student still made some wrong grammars. In the writing process, the male students just activated his cognitive process in planning and translating. Meanwhile, the female student

wrote the draft of the issue firstly. She calls the information that she stored in her memory first. Then, developing the ideas, she wrote the ideas well and looked fluently but she realized that she is still weak in constructing the sentences by using a good grammar and appropriate word. Female student did planning, translating and reviewing by rereading her writing.

There are some researchers who had conducted similar research about cognitive process but different phenomenon. Sapitri (2018) who found that the cognitive processes of both natural science and social science in writing was different. It was happened because both of majors have different ability in the proficiency of writing, vocabulary and discourse comprehension.

Sevgi (2016) investigated about cognitive process of writing English and L1 in composing a text in English and in their L1. He found that no statistically significant difference, which suggested that the participants were making use of similar cognitive strategies when they were writing a paragraph in their L1 and L2.

The theories proposed by Hayes and Flower (1981) and Lu (2010) which involve the mental process in writing process. From the writer's perspective and looking toward the mental processes going on in the individual writer's mind during the process of writing, lead the researcher's interest to conduct this scientific study. The researcher tried to verify whether the theories are applicable to the students of SMA Free Methodist Medan which is divided on gender, male and female, students or there is any difference. This study analyzed the cognitive process of different gender in writing argumentative text by using Think-Aloud Protocol (TAP) and retrospective interview. Argumentative text was chosen

because this text stimulated the students' cognitive process in expressing their opinions about the controversial issue and they must take a position and persuade the readers to agree with their opinion by using strong logical reasons to support their argument.

1.2 The Problems of the Study

The problems of this study are formulated as the following:

1. What cognitive process of different gender concerned in writing argumentative text?
2. How is the cognitive process of different gender realized in writing argumentative text?
3. Why is the cognitive process of different gender occurred in the way it does?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

1. To find out the cognitive process of different gender occurred in writing argumentative text
2. To elaborate the manner of cognitive process of different gender occurred in writing argumentative text
3. To explain reasons of the way the cognitive process of different gender occurred in writing argumentative text

1.4 The Scope of the Study

This study only focuses to see the cognitive process that occurred in writing argumentative text of different gender for the twelfth grade students of

SMA Swasta Free Methodist Medan. The theory of cognitive process in writing proposed by Hayes and Flower (1981) which consisted of three stages in writing process, they are planning, translating, and revising and the factors affecting the cognitive process in writing proposed by Lu (2010).

1.5 The significances of the study

The findings of the study are expected to be relevant and significant theoretically and practically. The findings can give some contributions to all readers for those who are concerned with this field. In the following significances of the study are stated theoretically and practically.

a. Theoretically

Theoretically, the results of this study are useful:

- 1) To enrich the knowledge of Psycholinguistic especially in cognitive process of different gender in writing argumentative text.
- 2) To widen horizon in the theory of psycholinguistic especially in cognitive process of different gender in writing argumentative text.

b. Practically

Practically, findings of the study are useful:

- 1) Other researchers who are interested in conducting researchers or any further studies in psycholinguistics to apply cognitive process of different gender in writing argumentative text
- 2) For teachers in knowing the students' mental process in writing argumentative text between male and female students so the teachers can guide and arrange the strategies to teach them in

building ideas and creating a good text especially in argumentative text.

- 3) For students in writing argumentative text with good process such as planning, translating, and reviewing so they can create a good writing.

