

## **The Sentence Fallacies in the Narrative Writing: A Descriptive Study of Gender Differences at Senior High School**

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**Abstract:** Writing is one of the important skills that should be mastered by the students. Unfortunately, most of the students still have problems in writing especially in writing good sentences. Problems occur when the sentence form is incorrect. This research was intended to describe the tenth grade students' sentence fallacies in their narrative writings and explore the gender differences in their writing products based on the sentence fallacies. The sentence fallacies focused on sentence fragments, comma splices, and run-on sentences. There were 14 male students' writings and 14 female students' writings investigated in this research. A descriptive analysis was used to describe the students' sentence fallacies and the percentage of male and female students' sentence fallacies. Based on the result of the data analysis, it was found that both male and female students made the three kinds of sentence fallacies in their narrative writings. However, the male students made less sentence fallacies in almost all kinds of sentence fallacies, except in comma splice. The male students made more comma splices compared to the female students.

**Keywords:** Sentence Fallacies, Narrative Writing, Gender Differences

### **1. Introduction**

In learning English, writing is one of the four language skills that should be mastered by the students. Meanwhile, mastering writing skill is considered to be difficult for the students because they have to master so many aspects in writing itself. Alsamadani (cited in Ginting 2019) states that writing does not simply put words into a paper but it has many requirements to be called as proper writing. Most of the students still have problems in writing good sentences. The common types of sentence fallacies or sentence problems that usually appear in the students' written sentences are sentence fragments, comma splices, and run-on sentences (Guffey & Seefer, 2010). A sentence fragment is a sentence that does not have a subject or a main verb. A comma splice happens when two complete sentences are incorrectly joined or spliced with a comma. A run-on sentence happens when two complete sentences are joined without proper punctuation.

Furthermore, one of the sociocultural factors shaped by learners in the process of learning a language including writing is gender (Kamari, Gorjian, & Pazhakh, 2012). In other words, gender differences in using language can be revealed through writing skill. Males and females are indeed different, they think differently, so they write differently. The differences between males and females are more interesting rather than the similarities between them. Therefore, many studies on the existence of differences between males and females from different perspectives had been carried out, especially in writing. However, every study

showed different results that would be interesting to extend this issue. This current study extended the issue on gender differences in narrative writing focusing on the sentence fallacies or sentence problems. Basically, the objectives of this research were to know and to describe the kinds and the percentages of the sentence fallacies made by the tenth grade male and female students of SMAN 1 Jemberin their narrative writings.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1. Gender Differences in Writing**

Gender refers to the behavioral, social, and psychological characteristics of males and females (Pryzgodna & Chrisler, 2000). The different behavior between males and females exist due to the biological factor. This is supported by Pease and Pease (2001) who claim that the wiring of our brain in the womb and the effect of hormones will determine how we think and behave. The factor of gender differences in learning language can affect students' achievement and proficiency in learning. The differences among the males and females in using different language features can be revealed through writing skill and it can give a better understanding of the relationship between language and gender (Soori&Zamani, 2011).

The difference between males and females in writing has been investigated by Obioma in 2006. According to Obioma (cited in Fidelia, 2015), females had a high performance in divergent thinking while males were found to be higher in convergent thinking. Divergent thinking considers multiple perspectives or ideas and uncovers multiple possible answers to questions or problems. Meanwhile, convergent thinking assumes that a question has one right answer or a problem has one solution (Kneller, cited in Carayannis 2013). Thus, divergent thinking is required in writing because a writer needs to be able to generate many different ideas about a topic. It can be said that females are better in writing because females have a high performance in divergent thinking than males.

### **2.2. Narrative Writing**

According to Oshima and Hogue (2007), writing a narrative means that you write about events in the order that they happened. The basic purpose of narrative writing is to entertain the readers. The generic structures of a narrative are orientation, which is the opening of the story containing introduction of setting, characters and time of the story, complication is where the main events or the problem that happened in the story were organized chronologically, and resolution which is the resolved problem that end happily or not. Narrative writing contains language features such as the use of simple past tense, specific nouns, adverbs and adverbial phrases, and a variety of simple, compound and complex sentences. Concerning the language features used in narrative writing, the researcher identified the sentence fallacies because narrative writing uses a variety of simple, compound and complex sentences.

### **2.3. Sentence Fallacies**

Guffey and Seefer (2010) state that good writers know that sentences are composed of two essential elements, those are subject and verb. A good sentence is a sentence that can express a complete thought. To write a good sentence, the writer should avoid sentence

fallacies or sentence problems. According to Guffey and Seefer (2010), there are three common sentence problems in writing: (1) sentence fragments, (2) comma splices, and (3) run-on sentences. In this research, there are three common sentence fallacies or sentence problems in the tenth grade students' narrative writings.

First, sentence Fragment: A fragment is part of a sentence that does not express a complete thought (Langan, 2011). According to Hutchinson (2005), fragment might lack a subject or a predicate, or it might be a dependent clause. For examples: "The girl with the purple necklace. (lacks a predicate)", "Wore a pair of sparkling red shoes. (lacks a subject)"; "Because she wanted to attract attention.(dependent clause)". The fragments can be corrected by adding the part that is missing. For examples: "The girl with the purple necklace laughed.", " The dancer wore a pair of sparkling red shoes.", She dressed in bright colors because she wanted to attract attention.

Second, comma Splice: A comma splice happens when two sentences or independent clauses are incorrectly joined together with a comma (Guffey&Seefer, 2010). For example: No stock prices were available today, the market was closed for the holiday. Here are some ways to correct the comma splice: a) Add a conjunction: No stock prices were available today, so the market was closed for the holiday.b) Separate into two sentences: No stock prices were available today. The market was closed for the holiday. c) Change the comma to a semicolon and add a conjunctive adverb: No stock prices were available today; therefore, the market was closed for the holiday.

Third, run-on sentence: A run-on sentence consists of two complete sentences that run together with no punctuation to mark the break between them (Langan, 2011). For example: My family went to Australia then they emigrated to Canada. Run-on sentence can be corrected as follows: a) Add a period: My family went to Australia. Then, they emigrated to Canada; b) Add a semicolon: My family went to Australia; then they emigrated to Canada; c) Add a comma and a conjunction: My family went to Australia, and then they emigrated to Canada.

#### **2.4. Previous Studies**

Since 2013, gender differences in writing had been investigated by some researchers in different countries such as Thailand, Pakistan, Malaysia, and Indonesia. To begin with, Bijami, Kashef, and Khaksari (2013) reviewed some studies related to gender differences and writing performance. The analysis revealed that educators need to focus on males who have less ability in writing skills. Males with higher motivation performed better than those who were poorly motivated in writing, so it is essential for educators to motivate their students. In examining the gender differences in academic achievement for school-aged children, Reynolds, et al. (2015) discovered that girls not only had a higher score on writing, but also had a statistically significant effect on reading and math. It could be concluded that girls outperform boys on reading, math, and writing.

In an attempt at exploring gender differences in writing products, Nicolau and Sukamto (2016) investigated Indonesian EFL students' proficiency in writing complex sentences. The 19 males and 19 females of high school students were instructed to write a narrative account of the silent movie "The Pear Film" immediately after watching it. The

result revealed that female students had higher frequencies in producing complex sentences. However, the males outnumbered the females in the production of lexical variety. By employing a comparative analysis, Saragih, et al. (2019) analyzed the differences between male and female in making recount text. This research focused on what errors were commonly made by each male and female in making recount texts. There were 31 female students and 22 male students participated in this research. The results of this research revealed that female students were better at writing recount texts than male students. Implementing a different writing genre, Noviansyah and Anam (2019) investigated the differences between male and female students in writing a narrative text. The samples were 68 students taken by purposive sampling. The result revealed that female students had higher level than male students in writing achievement. It was showed by the mean score of female students that was higher than the mean score of male students.

The previous studies above reported that there was a significant difference between male and female students in writing. Although various studies had been conducted to examine gender difference regarding different aspects of language learning, the results revealed inconsistencies. To extend the gender issue in writing, this study aimed to find out the sentence fallacies which focused on sentence fragments, comma splices, and run-on sentences made by male and female students in their narrative writings.

### **3. The study**

#### **3.1. Research design**

This study was a descriptive study. According to Sukmadinata (2006), a descriptive research is a research that is used to describe the existing phenomenon, whether it is a natural phenomenon or phenomenon made by a

human being. This research was intended to describe the tenth grade students' narrative writings based on the sentence fallacies. They are; sentence fragments, comma splices, and run-on sentences. The data of this research consisted of main data that were the documents of the students' writings and supporting data that were obtained from semi-structured interview with the English teacher to get the information about the students' learning process of writing and the difficulties that the students faced in writing. There were 28 students' narrative writings given by the English teacher to the researcher. It consisted of 14 female students and 14 male students.

#### **3.2. Research data and analysis**

The data from the students' writings were identified and given codes to the sentence fallacies to simplify the classification. The codes of the sentence fallacies were as follows: Fr: refers to a sentence fragment; CS: refers to a comma splice; RO: refers to a run-on sentence

After identifying and coding the sentence fallacies in the students' narrative writing, the researcher classified and listed the sentence fallacies made by the male and female students in a table. There were three tables based on the indicators, namely sentence fragments, comma splices, and run-on sentences. After that, the researcher calculated the percentage of male and female students' sentence fallacies. To find the percentage of each type of sentence fallacies made by each gender, the number of each type of sentence fallacies

made by each gender was divided by the total number of sentence fallacies made by each gender multiplied by 100%. (Sugiyono, 2012)

#### 4. Research findings and discussion

From the results of the data analysis, it could be concluded that the three kinds of sentence fallacies were found in the male and female students' narrative writings composed by the tenth grade students of X MIPA 6 at SMAN 1 Jember. Those were sentence fragments, comma splices, and run-on sentences. From the three kinds of sentence fallacies, the female students made more sentence fallacies compared to the male students. There were 25 sentence fallacies made by female students, while there were 22 sentence fallacies made by male students.

Table 1. The Recapitulation of the Number of Sentence Fallacies Made by Female and Male Students in Their Narrative Writings in the Percentage

No.	Types of Sentence Fallacies	Gender				SUM
		Male Students		Female Students		
		Number of sentence fallacies	%	Number of sentence fallacies	%	
1	Fragment	9	41	13	52	22
2	Comma Splice	11	50	8	32	19
3	Run-on Sentence	2	9	4	16	6
Total		22	100	25	100	47

From the calculation, it was found that the percentage of sentence fragment made by female students was higher than the other types that was 52%. Meanwhile, the male students made only 41% of sentence fragments. The following sentence fallacy was comma splice that was 50% for males and 32% for females. In this case, the male students made more comma splices than the female students did. The smallest number of sentence fallacy was run-on sentence that was 9% for males and 16% for females. Overall, the male students made less sentence fallacies than the female students.

These findings did not seem to match the previous research that was conducted by Obioma (cited in Fidelia, 2015) who found that females had higher performance in divergent thinking, which means females could do better in writing than males. In this research, the male students performed better than the female students dealing with the sentence fallacies in narrative writing. According to Araghizade and Jadidi (2016), males translate significantly better than females regarding the quality of translation. It could be the reason why female students made more sentence fallacies because the female students translated a sentence without concerning the sentence structure. For example: English: Everything that was made

by Hephaestus always beautiful; Indonesian: Segala sesuatu yang dibuat oleh Hephaestus selalu indah.

According to Indonesian sentence structure, the sentence above was correct. However, the Indonesian sentence structure is different from the sentence structure of English. In English, the sentence need “to be”, while in Indonesia, it doesn’t. In this case, to correct the sentence above, we need to put “was” after the word “Hephaestus”.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings and the discussion presented above, it could be concluded that the three kinds of sentence fallacies were found in the male and female students in their narrative writings. Those kinds of sentence fallacies were sentence fragments, comma splices, and run-on sentences. From the three sentence fallacies that had been analyzed by the researcher, the male students were better in almost all kinds of sentence fallacies, except in comma splices.

The male students made more comma splices than the female students in their narrative writings. Nevertheless, in general, the male students were superior to the female students. The percentage of the sentence fallacies made by male and female students in their narrative writings were as follows: (a) the percentage of sentence fragments was 41% found on the male students and 52% found on the female students, (b) the percentage of comma splices was 50% found on the male students and it was 32% found on the female students, and (c) the percentage of run-on sentences was 9% on the male students and 16% on the female students. From all of the sentence fallacies, the biggest number of fallacy was sentence fragments produced by the female students, while the smallest number of fallacy was run-on sentence produced by the male students.

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