

STUDY ON GENDER ANXIETY IN WRITING

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Abstract

This research reported the difference of writing anxiety suffered by male and female students and the factors behind their writing anxiety. This quantitative research applied two type of questionnaires to compile necessary data which adapted from SLWAI (Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory) by Cheng (2004) and CSLWAI (Cause of Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory) by Rezaei and Jafari (2014). The research had 30 male students and 33 female students in their second grade of senior high school as research subject. The finding showed that male students suffered cognitive anxiety, avoidance behavior anxiety and somatic anxiety. Meanwhile, female students suffered somatic anxiety and cognitive anxiety. The different between male and female students' writing anxiety factors laid in male students had linguistic difficulties followed with writing techniques while female students only had writing techniques ad factors affecting their writing anxiety. Therefore, male students had worse writing anxiety than female students. So, building awareness about students' writing anxiety would help students, teacher and future researcher to find various solution to decrease and solve the problem such as building suitable teaching and learning environment based on this research finding and future related researches.

Keywords – Gender, Anxiety, Writing, Writing anxiety

Introduction

English is one of the most important language to learn. The language used as *lingua franca* in global community (Alsaloohi and Al- Tale', 2022). Therefore, become proficient in English language is highly beneficial. However, mastering a foreign language required patience, practices and long period of time learning. Therefore, majority of non – native English speaker such as Indonesian has difficult time in learning English language especially the writing skill.

Writing is one of language skill that is the most difficult to master. Writing skill is the most difficult to learn (Kusumaningputri, Ningsih and Wisasongko, 2018). Writing allowed students to express their ideas, feeling and thoughts through words. Writing is an ability to convey writer's intention through words and symbols (Reski et. all, 2021). However, there were several problems students had to face in order to effectively communicate through written words. Find proper words and grammar, idea blockage,

disability to link sentences, negative feedbacks and time constraint were some common problems students had to overcome in order to write effectively (Kusumaningputri, Ningsih and Wisasongko, 2018). Those several factors made writing skill complicated to learn, thus, it often become a reason for students to develop writing anxiety.

Anxiety is a negative feeling of fear caused by stimulus. Anxiety is a combination of nervous, worry and uneasiness felling experienced by people and cause people to afraid in doing specific tasks (Sabti et. all, 2019). Anxiety can be suffered by anyone. In psychology, anxiety divided into three types: 1) anxiety as biological traits, 2) anxiety cause by certain stimulus, and 3) anxiety caused in specific situation (Hartono and Maharani, 2019). Anxiety triggered by fear often showed physical reaction such as trembling, sweating, headache and stomachache (Kurniasih, Cahyono, Astuti, Suryati, 2021; Syarifudin, 2020). Cognitive anxiety is an anxiety that affect people cognitive system

because dysfunctional thoughts, beliefs, assumptions, and cognitive processing (Freeman and DiTomasso, 2002). The cognitive anxiety prevent students to had progress in their learning. In learning writing, it could significantly decrease students confident and motivation that would further develop into writing anxiety.

Writing anxiety is one type of anxiety cause by students' negative feelings towards writing skill. The anxiety came from language anxiety that is feelings of tension and apprehension when facing foreign language skills (Wahyuni and Umam, 2017). Writing anxiety that made EFL students tend to avoid situation required writing activities (Karlina and Pancoro, 2018). It can impact negatively to students' learning progress. Writing anxiety is a feeling that able to weaken students' writing performance. When students felt anxious, they often too afraid to make mistakes, shy, cannot do things properly that affect their achievement (Lestari, Loeneto and Ihsan, 2019)

Anxiety in writing divided into three types. There were somatic, cognitive and avoidance behavior anxiety. (Cheng, 2004). Somatic anxiety is an anxiety that showed physical symptoms. The arousal of somatic anxiety could showed physical symptoms such as stomachache, tremble, sweating and headache (Syarifudin, 2020). Cognitive anxiety was an anxiety related to students' capability to think properly because they were overwhelmed with anxiety. This type of anxiety has symptoms such as fear and dread that able to overwhelmed students' mind (Syarifudin, 2020). Last, is avoidance behavior anxiety, an anxiety in form of students' action of avoiding performing their writing skill. It is a behavioral aspect of anxiety which someone intentionally searches ways to avoid writing activities or assignments (Hartono and Maharani, 2020). Different students develop writing anxiety from different factors. Based on Rezaei and Jafari (2014), there are ten factors which are : 1) Teacher's negative feedback, 2) fear of writing test, 3) insufficient practices, 4)

insufficient techniques, 5) problem with the topic, 6) linguistic difficulties, 7) pressured to be perfect, 8) pressured by time 9) low-confidence, and 10) high- frequency tasks.

Writing anxiety can be developed by male and female students. There were several research that had been done to prove that gender become one factor to determine the ability to master writing skills (Cheng, 2002; Cheng, 2004, Rezaei and Jafari, 2014; Fitrinada, Loeneto and Fiftinova, 2018; Cahyanto, Ashadi and Saputro, 2019; Syarifudin, 2020; Rehman, Samad and Ali, 2022). Many of the researches tend to favor female students (Cahyanto, Ashadi and Saputro, 2019; Al-Saadi, 2020). It is because they are better in language learning and more diligent so they have proper foundation. However, some other researchers stated that they had bad writing anxiety because they can easily overthink things that confused themselves and result in low quality writing (Cahyanto, Ashadi and Saputro, 2019; Rehman, Samad and Ali, 2022; Kurniasih et. all, 2022). Meanwhile in some researches male students stated to have less writing anxiety. However, they tend to avoid writing task or keep their writing as short and simple as possible that is also a sign of anxiety (Rehman, Samad and Ali, 2022).

There were researches indicated students' cognitive ability would affect students' learning. There were various researches related to gender affect students' ability to learn English language (Prihastuti, Padmadewi and Ramendra, 2020; SaizAja, 2021) and anxiety affect students language learning (Wahyuni and Umam, 2017; Balta, 2018; Hanifa, 2018; Sabti, Rashid, Nimehchisalem and Darmi, 2019). However, there are only limited research connected gender trait to measure students' anxiety in learning writing skill. Besides, many of them were old researches that may or may not relevant nowadays (Hortwitz, Hortwitz and Cope, 1986; Williams, 1991; Cheng, 2002; Cheng, 2004). Therefore, the objective of the present study were to investigate: 1) What are differences of

writing anxiety between male and female students and 2) What are factors affect students' different writing anxiety between male and female students.

Methodology

This is a quantitative ex- post facto study. It was conducted at a Senior High School with 63 participants. The participants were in their second year of senior high school. They were divided into 30 male students and 33 female students. The researcher did not conduct any treatment to students in order to collect data on students' writing anxiety based on their English Language background knowledge. Meanwhile, the data to analyze factors of writing anxiety collected through their thoughts after writing Analytical Exposition text. Both of the data would be collected through online questionnaires.

The main instrument for this study was online questionnaires. The questionnaires used adapted from SLWAI made by Cheng (2004) and CSLWAI made by Rezaei and Jafari (2014). The SLWAI (Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory) by Cheng (2004) used to identify types of writing anxiety ESL (English Second Language) students suffered. Based on Cheng (2004), writing anxiety classified into three types which are somatic anxiety, cognitive anxiety and avoidance behavior anxiety. The questionnaires had total 22 items. However, researcher adapted the questionnaires into 5 items, 1 item refers to somatic anxiety, 3 items refers to cognitive anxiety and 1 item refers to avoidance behavior anxiety that suitable for EFL (English Foreign Language) students.

Questionnaires also used to identify factors that might affect students' writing anxiety. Researcher adapted CSLWAI (Cause of Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory) made by Rezaei and Jafari (2014). Based on the questionnaires, there were 10 factors that affect second language which are teachers' negative feedback, fear of writing test, insufficient practices, insufficient

techniques, problem with the topic, linguistic difficulties, pressured to be perfect, pressured by time, low- confidence, and high- frequency tasks. The questionnaire based on ESL students. Therefore, researcher adapted the questionnaires into 4 items represent factors that often faced by EFL students. The 4 items chosen were ability to understand topic, time constraint, linguistic knowledge, writing techniques.

This research used numbers to represent students' answers. Therefore, the questionnaires had Likert Scale answer. The scale had score 1 – 5 to represents different students' answer to each questionnaire items. 1 represent 'Strongly Disagree', 2 represent 'Disagree', 3 represent 'Neutral', 4 represent 'Agree' and 5 represent 'Strongly Agree'. The questionnaire in form of Google Form. Thus, researcher handed the questionnaire through link that shared through Whatsapp application. Students responses collected in researcher Google Drive in form of Microsoft Excel sheet contained numbers 1 – 5 that represent students' answers.

Researcher used Microsoft Excel to calculate the numbers that would determine students answer based on interval analysis category. The category were: Strongly Disagree 0% – 19.99%, Disagree 0% - 39.99%, Neutral 40% - 59.99%, Agree 60% - 79.99% and Strongly Agree 80% - 100%. After that, researcher would tabulated the data with Product Moment Spearman of SPSS 20.0 program to find difference of male and female students' writing anxiety. The program used in order to find how strong and significant each type of writing anxiety effect on students' writing anxiety. This data would be used as prove to solidify this study result and determine which hypothesis would be accepted and which would be rejected.

Finding and Discussion

Writing anxiety refers to negative feeling that cause negative attitudes towards learning writing. Writing anxiety

negatively affect students writing performance and motivation especially in academic setting (Hartono and Maharani, 2019). Based on the result above, researcher found that gender could affect students' writing anxiety. The result, were in line with some old researches (Hortwitz, Hortwitz and Cope, 1986; Williams, 1991; Cheng, 2002; Cheng, 2004). It means that although with the advancement of technology, majority of male and female students still found writing skill difficult, thus they build writing anxiety towards the skill.

Based on the research, male students suffered three types of writing anxiety. Table 1 showed male students responses to cognitive writing anxiety were 67, 33% followed by avoidance behavior writing anxiety 64,66% and last somatic writing anxiety were 64%. From three, they suffered cognitive writing anxiety the most. Table 2 that The findings were in line with several research (Reilly and Andrews, 2019; Cahyanto and Saputro, 2019; Hartono and Maharani, 2019). Male students had difficulty in learning a language. Majority of male students are right- brain person. Male biologically had good motor skill, high-tempered and right- brain person (Gurian, 2001). Male students' biological traits allowed them to calculate numbers. However, they required longer time in order to learn same amount of language knowledge with female students of the same age (Reilly and Andrews, 2019). Therefore, majority of male students cannot keep up with the learning process, thus develop high cognitive writing anxiety.

In addition to cognitive writing anxiety, male students also develop avoidance behavior anxiety and low somatic writing anxiety. Their disability to understand language faster made them had less confidence in their writing skill. Male had smaller hemisphere, a part of brain deals with language learning that made them difficult to understand a language

without proper contexts (Reilly and Andrews, 2019). Although they had better understanding ability a concept (Rumadani et. all, 2019) their brain disability to learn faster made them had lower linguistic knowledge than female students. As a result they felt hesitant to perform their writing skill and created low quality products (Kusumaningputri et. all, 2018; Al- Saadi,2020; Pratama et.all, 2020). Therefore, they build unpleasant feeling that develop into somatic writing anxiety (Kurniasih et. all, 2021). The unpleasant feelings then made male students difficult to think properly. Somatic anxiety they develop made them difficult to write (Wern and Rahmat, 2021) because the feelings would blocked writer's idea and made them felt stressed (Karlina and Pancoro, 2018). As a result, male students tend to find excuses to avoid performing their writing ability that indicated they developed avoidance behavior writing anxiety. Therefore, the higher cognitive writing anxiety male students suffered, the higher they had avoidance behavior anxiety that result in higher somatic writing anxiety they developed. The condition is in line with the result and tabulated data with SPSS 20.0 program.

Table 2 dispalyed result from SPSS 20.0 for male students' writing anxiety. The table showed that male students' somatic- cognitive anxiety showed 0,691 coefficient number and significance 0,000. Their cognitive – avoidance behavior anxiety had 0,540 coefficient number and 0,002 significance. Lastly, somatic – avoidance behavior had coefficient number 0,540 and significance 0,002. Neither anxiety coefficient number was lower than 0,500 with significance higher than 0,05 indicated that three types of writing anxiety had strong and significant impact to male students' writing ability. The result is in line with Table 1 Based on the table, male students' cognitive anxiety is the highest followed with avoidance behavior anxiety and lastly somatic writing anxiety. Cognitive writing

anxiety played the biggest role in students' writing ability. Meanwhile, the somatic and avoidance behavior anxiety are negative result of the cognitive writing anxiety. This finding also in line with Table 3 that showed male students had linguistic difficulties and writing techniques in writing Analytical Exposition text.

Table 3 contained result of SPSS 20.0 program dealt with male students' writing anxiety factors. It showed that male students had lower linguistic knowledge and writing techniques. The table showed related to linguistic difficulties had coefficient numbers 0,426 and 0,553 with significance 0,019 and 0,002 indicated that linguistic difficulties was highly significant to male students' writing anxiety. Besides linguistic difficulties, Table 1 showed that male students had low writing techniques that trigger male students' writing anxiety. Based on Table 3, coefficient numbers related to writing techniques showed numbers 0,553; 0,604 and 0,788 with significance 0,002; 0,000; and 0,000 indicated that writing techniques become a major factor to male students' writing anxiety. The result was in line with male students responses result on Table 1. It means that male students due to less linguistic knowledge made them had difficulty in writing, thus they had rather poor writing techniques such as spelling and punctuation. Male students had lower lexical density and ability to make arrange sentences with correct marks (Pratama et. all, 2020; Rumadani et. all, 2019). In their Analytical Exposition writing, majority of male students showed their linguistic problem and writing techniques. Most of them had made various mistakes in spelling and punctuation as well as in grammar they used. These finding was different than research conducted by Faber and Hannover (2020) that showed male students' capability to evaluate their grammar capabilities after doing grammar tasks. The researcher found that majority of male students' mistakes was similar and

repeated. They either misspelling or used wrong grammar, thus they repeatedly created low quality writing. This condition then steadily decrease their confidence in their writing ability. As a result, male students often produce shorter and brief texts. However, Argamon, Koppel, Fine and Shimoni (2003) found that male students had better abilities in writing formal writing. Their research found that males' writing was more specific and contained better information. However, in academic setting, male students had lower writing skill than female students (Pratama, Dwiyantri and Manik, 2020; Omid et. all, 2022; Al- Saadi, 2020). Therefore, the findings in this research that was in line with various previous research conducted investigating male students' writing ability.

The opposite of male students who biologically had less trait to learn language in fast speed, female students' traits to support their language learning is higher. There were various research found that female students had better ability in writing skill compare to male students (Pratama, Dwiyantri and Manik, 2020; Omid et. all, 2022; Al- Saadi, 2020). Female had better ability to learn language. Majority of female is left- brain person (Gurian,2001). They are faster in language learning and had better language learning as well as language knowledge. Female able to construct complicated and detailed texts due to their large lexical density (Pratama, Dwiyantri and Manik, 2020). In addition, their language ability is highly supported by their brains and neural systems. They had better brain parts and hormones that support their language learning (Gurian, 2001: 20- 26). However, due to their high ability to understand language, they often made misjudgment. Research conducted by Cahyanto et. all (2019) found that female students tended to have misconceptions in elements, compound and mixtures. This research found that female tended to made mistakes due to overwhelmed by pressure and stress. Female is an emotional person, thus

they are weak to stress (Nelson and Burke, 2002). Their difficulty to control their emotion would effect in their ability to think clearly. As a result, although they had better linguistic knowledge, majority of female students failed to apply it in their writing due to overwhelmed by stress. Therefore, this study showed that female students had high somatic writing anxiety followed by slightly lower cognitive writing anxiety and low avoidance behavior writing anxiety.

Based on research result, female students' writing anxiety dominated by somatic writing anxiety. Table 1 displayed female students responses to somatic writing anxiety were 72.72%, cognitive writing anxiety 68,84% and last avoidance behavior writing anxiety 60,6%. The somatic writing anxiety was a psychological type of anxiety that able to overwhelmed students with negative feelings such as fear and worry that prevent students to think properly. This findings is in line with a qualitative research conducted by Aripin and Rahmat (2021) which found female students often showed severe somatic writing anxiety. This finding also against various research conducted that found cognitive writing anxiety was the highest anxiety students suffered (Syarifuddin, 2020; Wern and Rahmat, 2021). The research found that female students' high somatic anxiety due to their mindset to always showed excellent performance. They put high regard in their image and how people saw them. Female tend to be more self-imposed perfectionist that often put them into high stress (Nelson and Burke, 2002). This occasion especially true in language learning especially in performing writing ability. Female students with dominant left brain trait able to learn language through various occasion. They able to learn language through verbal conversation, written texts and gestures (Reilly and Andrews, 2019). This allowed them to have wider and deeper language knowledge. Therefore, in performing

writing, female students tend to create long texts. Text made by female students tend to be longer and complicated than male students. (Pratama, Dwiyanti and Manik, 2020; Omid et. all, 2003). Their traits allowed them to had wider and deeper lexical and linguistic knowledge thus they able to write better. However, female tendency to be perfect in work they done, often put pressure on them. In performing writing case, the pressure turned into anxious, stress, panic and dread feelings. This condition made their brain overthinking of possible answer. As a result, they would be overwhelmed and made mistakes instead. The misjudgment in recognizing vocabularies or grammar cause them to create low quality text, thus add the stress level when they had to perform their writing ability in the future. Female had ability to thing various things at once though it made them had high stress level (Nelson and Burke, 2002). This condition explained high somatic writing anxiety followed with high cognitive writing anxiety majority of female students' suffered.

Female students' high somatic and cognitive writing anxiety was in line with the SPSS 20.0 tabulated result. Table 2 displayed result that showed coefficient 0,833 and significance 0,000 indicated strong and significant impact of somatic and cognitive writing anxiety to female students' writing ability. Meanwhile cognitive and avoidance behavior writing anxiety with coefficient number 0,400 and significance 0,021 indicated that the anxiety combination had significantly less impact to students' writing ability and lastly somatic and avoidance behavior with coefficient number -0,280 and significane 0,114 showed that anxiety had no significance impact to female students' writing ability. The result from Table 1 and Table 2 was in line. It means that majority of female students had good language knowledge but failed to apply it in their writing because their failure to manage their stress. Students who

overwhelmed by panic, nervous or worried would failed to control their emotion, thus create poor quality writing (Aripin and Rahmat, 2021). The calculated responses in chart 4.1 also showed that female students had high somatic writing anxiety followed by cognitive writing anxiety and lastly avoidance behavior anxiety. Female students' negative feeling when performing writing was too excessive thus made them unable to think clearly and put doubt in their language knowledge. Although it did not affect their enjoyment in their learning to write. Despite their anxiousness, female students produce more writing compared to male students (Pratama, Dwiyanti and Manik, 2020) showed their enjoyment in learning writing skill. Therefore, they had lowest avoidance behavior writing anxiety.

Female students high somatic anxiety symptoms could be seen during their mid- term period in which they had to write Analytical Exposition text. Majority of female students made certain facial expression and body movement that showed their anxious feeling toward their writing. Female students often made facial faces, body gestures and eye contact indicated their nervousness. (Aripin and Rahmat, 2021). They also often whispering the words they wrote. The condition was in line with Table 3 that showed tabulated result of SPSS 20.00 of female students' writing anxiety factors. The table with writing techniques skill showed coefficient numbers 0,405, 0, 467 and 0,706 with significance 0,019, 0,006 and 0,000. It means that writing techniques is the most affecting factors for female students writing anxiety. In addition, the techniques were strongly related to linguistic abilities that significantly in line with Table 1 and Table 2. Therefore, it could be concluded that female somatic writing anxiety was in form of nervous, panic, and dread feeling they had during performing writing. The feelings would overwhelmed female students and made them to create various mistakes. Thus,

they often whispering words and showing body movement that signed to their high level of somatic writing anxiety. Meanwhile the low quality text result in their doubt to their language knowledge that directly affect to raise their cognitive writing anxiety. However, the doubt did not decrease their enjoyment in writing. Therefore, they had significantly low avoidance behavior anxiety compared to their somatic writing anxiety

Conclusions

Table 1. Students' responses

Categories	Male (%)	Female (%)
Somatic	64	72,72
Cognitive	67,33	64,84
Avoidance	64,66	60,6
Topic	84	87,27
Time	82,66	86,66
Linguistic	74	81,81
Technique	70	73,33

Table 1 showed male and female students responses to questionnaires to identify their type of writing anxiety and factors affect the writing anxiety. It could be seen that female students had high somatic writing anxiety followed with cognitive writing anxiety and significantly low avoidance behavior anxiety. Meanwhile the factors affect female students writing is writing techniques that includes spelling and punctuation. In contrast, male students had high cognitive writing anxiety followed with avoidance behavior anxiety and slightly lower somatic writing anxiety. The factors affect male students' writing anxiety are linguistic knowledge and writing techniques.

Table 2. SPSS result on students' writing anxiety

Writing Anxiety	Male		Female	
	Co. (0,01)	Sig. (0,05)	Co. (0,01)	Sig. (0,05)
S- C	0,691	0,000	0,833	0,000
C - AB	0,540	0,002	0,400	0,021
S - AB	0,541	0,002	-0,280	0,114

Table 2 displayed male and female students' writing anxiety tabulated with SPSS 20.0 program. It showed that male students suffered three types of writing anxiety, which are somatic writing

anxiety, cognitive writing anxiety and avoidance behavior writing anxiety. The coefficient number and Sig. 2- tailed showed that there types of anxiety strongly affect each other and give significant impact to male student' writing anxiety. Meanwhile, female students suffered somatic and cognitive writing anxiety. The coefficient number and Sig. 2- tailed showed that female students suffered somatic and cognitive anxiety. However, they did not suffered avoidance behavior anxiety.

Table 3. SPSS result on students' writing anxiety factors

Writing Factors	Male		Female	
	Co. (0,01)	Sig. (0,05)	Co. (0,01)	Sig. (0,05)
To – Ti	0,904	0,000	0,833	0,000
To – Li	0,426	0,019	0,557	0,001
To – Te	0,553	0,002	0,405	0,019
Ti – Li	0,553	0,002	0,621	0,000
Te – Ti	0,604	0,000	0,467	0,006
Li - Te	0,788	0,000	0,706	0,000

Table 3 displayed students writing anxiety factors tabulated with SPSS 20.0 program. It could be seen that male students had good topic understanding, time constraint management and slightly lower writing techniques and rather lower linguistic knowledge. These two factors were tightly related as it deals with vocabularies and grammar. Thus, male students that biologically had lower ability to understand language had gap in their language knowledge so they had linguistic difficulties and poor writing techniques. Although, female students also showed poor writing techniques. The occasion caused by their inability to think clearly because when they write, they were overwhelmed by stress and nervous that prevent them to think clearly. Therefore, female students' writing anxiety factors is writing techniques, while male students' writing anxiety techniques while male students' writing anxiety techniques factors are linguistic difficulties and writing techniques.

In conclusion, male students had worse writing anxiety due to more factors.

They suffered three type of writing anxiety. The high cognitive writing anxiety caused by lacking in language knowledge made male students had linguistic difficulties in writing so they had poor writing techniques. This high cognitive writing anxiety also trigger avoidance behavior writing anxiety because of the linguistic difficulties made them felt inferior, thus rather not performing their writing skill so they had less writing practice and experience. Then, the condition would trigger male students' somatic writing anxiety that is their negative feelings such as nervous or inferior they felt when they had to write.

Meanwhile, female students had lighter writing anxiety because the anxiety only due to one dominant factor. Female students suffered two types of writing anxiety, which are somatic and cognitive writing anxiety. Somatic writing anxiety made female student felt overly stress when they had to perform their writing ability and made them had poor writing techniques. Therefore, female students' cognitive writing anxiety was triggered by high level of somatic writing anxiety. However, the anxiety did not triggered female students to develop avoidance behavior anxiety. Thus, based on result showed in Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3 male students suffered high cognitive writing due to their linguistic difficulties and poor writing techniques trigger development of avoidance behavior writing anxiety and somatic writing anxiety. In contrast, female had high somatic writing anxiety made them overly nervous when write thus made them had poor writing techniques that trigger the development of cognitive writing anxiety.

The result showed that male and female students had different types of writing anxiety and factors that effect to build the writing anxiety. Unfortunately, this research was not complete yet. This research conducted only used quantitative method, thus researcher could not specific

enough in describing students' writing anxiety especially the factors behind their writing anxiety. Therefore, researcher highly recommended that future researchers would conduct related research with different methods and adds various variables in order to complete the current research and understand better about writing anxiety, thus students and teachers could find teaching and learning methods that suitable and effective for their language learning especially in learning writing skill.

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