

A MORPHO-SYNTACTIC ERROR ANALYSIS OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING

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Abstract: The research aims are to identify the morpho-syntactic errors in argumentative text writing by university students at the English Department of Kuningan University and find out the difficulties that students face in writing argumentative texts. A descriptive qualitative is used through the instruments of document analysis and interviews. The subject of this research was 5 students of the English Education Department who were in the second semester. The result of the document analysis showed that the errors in using prepositions as the most frequent error at 6 errors (25.24%), errors in using verbs group at 4 errors (16.5%), the third place of errors are errors in using articles and errors in word order, and errors in using relative clauses and relative pronouns for 3 errors (12.5%), errors in using tenses and errors in using adverbs for 2 errors (8.3%), the next is errors due to lack of concord for 1 error (4.16%) and the last is errors in using conditional sentences for 0 error. Moreover, the difficulties that students face in writing argumentative texts based on interviews were: language features, grammar, vocabulary election, writing strategy, personality background, study background, and the environment including learning sources. The errors were found in writing argumentative texts because these factors affected the student's performance in writing argumentative texts.

Keywords: *argumentative text; error analysis; morpho-syntax.*

INTRODUCTION

Writing activity is a process of obtaining, editing, selecting, organizing, and interpreting information, taking into account grammar and spelling (Balta, 2018) University students face the same problem in implementing writing skills because of the lack of vocabulary mastery and language use in line with Mukarromah, Beratha, Artawa, & Budiarsa (2019) that low rank of Indonesian University and international publications indicate that university students lack writing competency, Alisha, Safitri, & Santoso (2019) agree university students had a significant problem with writing skill because of

their poor vocabulary and language uses. Writing a text still has complex issues caused by the learning process of writing a text.

Liunokas (2020) claims that argumentative text requires empirical research where the students need to collect the data through interviews, surveys, observations, or experiments. Furthermore, critical activity is implemented in writing argumentative text, since constructing arguments needs some stages starting from the basic idea as a planning stage and then being developed into a few points in paragraphs as drafting stages, editing, and final draft.

The argument is another way to clarify and persuade the readers and it's valid when it is supported by the evidence and the theory as stated by Ario (2020), an argumentative can be as proof or a reason to make the statement, the research's result, and the facts become more trusted and valid. Students need to make sure the ideas and the theories are related in making the original written text with conclusion implications. Besides critical activity, there are other aspects needed such as grammar rules and structure rules to make the text easier to understand, present the idea properly, and the valid arguments.

Research has shown the learners' first language, both the Indonesian language or certainly considered one among indigenous languages certainly has one of a kind guidelines as compared to the English language (Purinanda & Sutrisno, 2022) However, Indonesian students aren't native English; they frequently face difficulties and commit errors in writing an argumentative text, to overcome these difficulties Nadya & Muthalib (2021) claimed that error analysis suggested fixing and improving the writing skill, error analysis also considered many educators to be an integral part of the teaching-learning process because it can be the best tool for describing and explaining errors (Aqel, 2017) From the previous issues, teachers need to overcome and help the students' errors in writing a text by making a proper lesson plan, teaching strategy, teaching method, and determining students' level of English skills, teachers are suggested to use the error analysis.

Irmayana, Pricilia, & Siregar (2020) state error analysis is a study that covered the umbrella of linguistics, and the major focus of error analysis is to demonstrate that learning errors contribute to our understanding of the processes underlying second language acquisition (Keshavarz, 2012) The unacceptable forms by the second or foreign language learners are being analyzed to find the substantiation of the process so that the learners' level and the learners' needs can be a guide to designing the proper materials and teaching techniques. Error analysis is divided into two branches namely theoretical and applied, in theoretical focus on investigating the psycholinguistic or the nature, reveals the process and the factors that influence the process that is made by foreign language learners and second language learners, and in the applied focus on finding out the therapy for the learners.

Based on the background, it's formulated are the following questions: (1) What kinds of morpho-syntactic errors are found in writing

argumentative texts? (2) What difficulties did students face in writing argumentative texts?

METHOD

This study used a descriptive qualitative method to describe the kind of errors and the students' difficulties in writing argumentative text, in line with Leavy (2017) that the descriptive qualitative method is concerned with describing individuals, groups, activities, events, or situations The common features of qualitative research are approaching what happens in the world instead of approaching it in special settings such as laboratories (Flick, 2018) Qualitative research is intended to understand, describe, and explain social phenomena through the experiences of individuals or groups, analyzing the communications based on observation, and document analysis. The data is collected by using two data instruments namely students' documents analysis and interviews. Students' documents analysis intended to identify the kind of morpho-syntactic errors which are found in writing argumentative texts and the interviews intended to find out the students' difficulties in writing argumentative texts based on their experience.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The document was taken from the students by using some topics which were: parents can't interrupt too much in the lives of their kids, technology development in the world, the usage of smartphones leads to less live communication, and the modern world depends on the Internet heavily.

Eight of nine errors are found in this research, there are errors in using prepositions, errors in using verb groups, errors in using articles, incorrect word order, errors in using relative clauses and relative pronouns, errors in using tenses, errors in using an adverb, and errors due to lack of concord. The errors are listed in the table below.

Table 1. *The kinds of morpho-syntactic errors*

Types of Errors	Total Errors	Percentage
Errors in using articles	3	12.5%
Errors in using prepositions	6	25.24%
Incorrect word order	3	12.5%
Errors due to lack of concord	1	4.16%
Errors in using conditional sentences	-	-
Errors in using tenses	2	8.3%
Errors in using an adverb	2	8.3%
Errors in using verb group	4	16.5%

Errors in using relative clauses and relative pronouns	3	12.5%
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Based on table 1 each student has eight of nine morpho-syntactic error types, errors in using prepositions are the most frequent error committed by 3 students for 6 errors or 25.24%, and the second position is errors in using verb group 4 errors or 16.5% committed by 2 students, the third-place of error is committed by 2 students for 3 errors or 12.5% which were errors in using articles, errors in word order, and errors in using relative clauses and relative pronouns, the next is errors in using tenses and errors in using adverbs for 2 errors or 8.3% committed by 2 students, the fifth-place is 1 error or 4.16% committed by 1 student which was errors due to lack of concord, and the last is errors in using conditional sentences for none error.

To find out the difficulties that students faced through the interview section there were five aspects; structure, content, grammar, vocabulary, personality background, and study background supported by Ario (2020) that the object of academic writing has four principles namely formality, efficiency, modesty, and clarity and Stavans, Seroussi, & Ehrlich (2019) determined that a high argumentative text quality is the advanced elaboration components of genre-specific.

Structure

All of the students comprehend that argumentative text is about opinion and there is an agree-disagree statement, a few students remember the structure of the argumentative text, and most of the students claimed that they don't even know the language features of the argumentative text.

A few of them have similar steps in preparing for writing the argumentative text such as determining the topic, organizing the introduction, making the main body of text, conclusion, and revision but only one of them set the outline of the idea.

Content

The preparation is done before they develop the content, the result shows that two students are clueless to develop the content into paragraphs because they write it spontaneously, while the others arranged the diction of the words before combining the words to become a sentence and then into a paragraph. Besides ordering words, they claimed that they just develop the idea to become more detailed and classify them based on the related purposes.

Grammar

The interview showed that all of the students recognized the definition and the function of grammar. The students stated that grammar has a big role in stating or claiming the meaning of a sentence including the situation, time, or place. In contrast with their statement, the students have a low implementation of grammar in writing practice proven by the finding of 24 errors.

Vocabulary

The students had a variety of styles of vocabulary in writing practice. Some of them used formal vocabulary, flexible vocabulary, and daily vocabulary. Having an advanced vocabulary is also important because it makes the essay better by having a variety of vocabulary, references, and educative in helping the reader to improve their vocabulary skill, even though the important thing about an essay is easy to understand.

Personality background

Personality background and writing performance have closely intercourse, can be seen from the variety of approaches that students choose, how persistent they write their essays, and how well they can produce the essay, convinced by He (2019) that personality traits known as self-discipline, order, assertiveness, and activity influence the writing performance of EFL college significantly. A detail person is part of self-discipline and based on the interview section a few of them are detail people, they will recheck their work twice or more before submitting it, one student chose to not recheck his work, and the rest are flexible because they depended on the deadline if they have the longer time they will recheck their work and vice versa.

Based on the interview it was found that a few of them are detail people, they will recheck their work twice or more before submitting it, one student choose to not recheck his work, and the rest are flexible depending on the deadline if they have the longer time they will recheck their work and vice versa.

From the case that researcher gave, the students have a high willingness to improve themselves, especially in grammar, without any hesitation they are willing to explore and learn grammar from the basics. Unfortunately, students agreed that writing an essay is hard, most of them were feeling the same thing, they struggle to determine the topic, continued by two others who got stuck in arranging the sentences and continuing the next part, and the

least claimed that the more references won't work it just make you more complicated.

Study background

The students come from different circumstances, ages, experiences, and competencies that influence the production of an essay. Most of the students have been learning English for 13 years and one of them has been learning English for 6 years, one of them claimed that he was not even interested in writing practice and the rest also claimed that they used English for writing when they have assignments.

However, the researcher find out that there were opinions and suggestions from the students toward the English Writing class, two of the student agreed that the class isn't effective enough because sometimes the material is discussed often and it will be better to discuss it one by one. She also stated that there is no evaluation section which meant they need to know how far their progress is, moreover the book sources of this class were not easy to find. The least said that the class is helpful, especially in improving his willingness to read.

The result of the document analysis and the interview reflected that the students of the 2nd semester in the English Department of Kuningan University committed errors in 8 of 9 kinds of morpho-syntactic errors, starting from errors in using prepositions is the most frequent error committed by 3 students for 6 errors or 25.24%, the second position is errors in using verb group 4 errors or 16.5% committed by 2 students, the third-place of error is committed by 2 students for 3 errors or 12.5% which were errors in using articles, errors in word order, and errors in using relative clauses and relative pronouns, the next is errors in using tenses and errors in using adverbs for 2 errors or 8.3% committed by 2 students, the fifth-place is 1 error or 4.16% committed by 1 student which was errors due to lack of concord, and the last is errors in using conditional sentences for none error.

The order of errors based on morphology started with errors in using prepositions for 25.24% and errors in using articles for 12.5%. Meanwhile, the error based on syntactical started with errors in using verb group at 16.5%, continued by errors in using relative clauses and relative pronouns and errors in word order at 12.5%, and followed by errors in using adverbs and errors in using tenses 8.3%, and the last is errors due to lack of concord for 4.16%. In conclusion, since syntax errors have more kind than morphology errors, they affected the students are committed syntax errors frequently.

Supported by Alisha, Safitri, & Santoso (2019), university student had a significant problem with writing skill because of their poor vocabulary and language uses. The students had limited insight into formulating sentences grammatically, their poor vocabulary mastery confuses word selection, and also spelling has a role in writing problems. is proven by the conducted interview.

All of the students comprehend that argumentative text is about opinions and ideas, a few students also remember the structure of the argumentative text but most of the students claimed that they don't even know the language features of the argumentative text. The language feature of the argumentative text is abstract nouns, verb action, temporal connectives, capital auxiliaries, technical terms, reasoning connectives, and simple present tense proven by the document analysis that there are so many errors committed by the subject of this research in total 24 errors.

The errors also happened because the students learn grammar theoretically instead of practicing more often, these things proven by the interview session that students comprehend the grammar definition and function, grammar has a big role in stating or claiming the meaning of a sentence but they were not aware how and when to use grammar in academic writing specifically argumentative text.

Mostly, the students struggled to determine the topic and arrange the sentences these things are supported by the finding that syntax errors are frequently committed by the participants starting from errors in using verb group for 16.5%, continued by errors in using relative clauses and relative pronouns and errors in word order at 12.5%, followed by errors in using adverbs and errors in using tenses at 8.3%, and the last is errors due to lack of concord for 4.16%

The students come from different circumstances, ages, experiences, and competencies that influence the production of an essay. Most of the students have been learning English for 13 years and one of them have been learning English for 6 years but it has no correlation with their writing skill, relating to the rare writing practice or differences in willingness, students committed errors in a variety total such as student 1 has 9 errors or 37.7%, student 2 for 5 errors or 21%, student 3 has 2 errors or 8.3%, student 4 and student 5 have 4 errors or 16.5%. The highest error is committed by student 1 and then followed by student 2, student 4, and student 5, and the lowest error is committed by student 3.

CONCLUSION

Morpho-syntactic error analysis is a tool that can be used by the teachers and the students to design the class or the material based on the real situation or students' needs. Morpho-syntactic error analysis also can be a tool to evaluate students' progress, especially in writing skills. Writing skills is complicated and it's hard to start the writing process according to the results of the interviews students struggled in to determine the topic and arrange the sentences so the difficulties that have been found in this research; are the incomplete material of language features, the less able to develop the content, grammatical, vocabulary election, writing strategy, personality background, study background, and the environment including learning sources are affected the students' performances in writing skills.

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