

Error Analysis in Argumentative Essays Written by the Fifth Semester Students

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Abstract: The objectives of this study were to find out: (1) The argumentative essay achievement of the fifth semester students of English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University, (2) kinds of errors in argumentative essays made by the same students, (3) possible causes of errors in argumentative essays made by them, (4) kinds of errors mostly found in argumentative essays made by the students, and (5) possible ways to eliminate errors made by them. The sample of this study were 20 fifth semester students selected by employing stratified sampling from two different class campuses--Indralaya and Palembang. Argumentative essay writing tests were used to collect the data which were then analyzed by using two error taxonomies, namely Surface Strategy Taxonomy and Linguistic Strategy Taxonomy. The result showed that the students' argumentative achievements reached the Meeting Standard score with 8.5 as the highest score and 6 as the lowest score. Errors in Grammar, Lexicon, Semantics, Syntax, and Mechanics as well as in Omission, Addition, Misformation, and Misorder were found, which were caused by one or two of the following factors: overgeneralization, first language interference, and/or carelessness. Among those errors, errors on grammar and omission were mostly found. Some suggested ways to eliminate errors include doing remedial teaching focussing on teaching material covering the use of punctuation, conjunction, subordinate conjunction, and a brief theory about translation.

Keywords: *argumentative essay, error analysis, linguistic category taxonomy, surface strategy taxonomy*

Abstrak: Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui (1) pencapaian kemampuan mahasiswa semester 5 Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Sriwijaya dalam menulis esei argumenatative, (2) jenis kesalahan yang dibuat oleh mereka, (3) kemungkinan penyebab terjadinya kesalahan tersebut, (4) jenis kesalahan yang paling banyak terjadi, dan (5) beberapa cara yang mungkin dapat diterapkan untuk mengurangi terjadinya kesalahan-kesalahan tersebut. Sampel penelitian ini terdiri dari 20 orang mahasiswa pada program studi yang sama yang dipilih dengan menggunakan teknik pengambilan sampel secara bertingkat dari dua lokasi kampus—Inderalaya dan Palembang. Tes dalam menulis esei argumentattive digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data yang diperlukan yang kemudian di analisis menggunakan dua cara untuk mengetahui jenis kesalahan (two error taxonomies), yakni Surface Strategy Taxonomy dan Linguistic Strategy Taxonomy. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa kemampuan mahasiswa dalam menulis esei argumentative mencapai nilai standar cukup bagus, 8.5 untuk nilai tertinggi dan 6 untuk nilai terendah. Jenis kesalahan yang ditemukan berkaitan dengan tataahasa, kosakata, makna, sintaks, mekanik, penghapusan, penambahan, salahpembentukan, dan salah susun. Kesalahan-keasalahan tersebut disebabkan oleh salah satu atau dua dari faktor overgeneralization, first language interference, and/or carelessness. Di antara beberapa jenis kesalahan di atas, keasalahan yang paling banyak ditemukan adalah kesalahan dalam tataahasa dan penghapusan (omission). Beberapa cara yang mungkin dapat diterapkan oleh dosen untuk mengurangi atau membatasi terjadinya kesalahan oleh para mahasiswa adalah mengadakan perbaikan proses pengajaran, misalnya yang mencakup materi ajar seperti cara penggunaan tatabaca, kata penghubung, termasuk teori singkat tentang penerjemahan.

Kata-kata kunci: *argumentative essay, error analysis, linguistic category taxonomy, surface strategy taxonomy*

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According to Brown (2000), error analysis leads to a study of learners' errors which can be observed, classified, and analyzed to describe kinds of errors. Basically, there have been two schools of thoughts with respect of learners' errors (Corder, 1967, p.162). The behaviorist school believes that the occurrences of learners' errors must be avoided since it is regarded as a sin. In contrast, the cognitive school maintains that the occurrences of learners' errors are inevitable as they are the sign of learning. Corder (1981) acknowledges that errors are important as they are regarded as a device the learners use as reminders not to repeat similar incorrect forms in the future as well as a means to improve themselves if they pay attention to the errors they make (Ihsan, 1999). Therefore, linguists and language researchers have been greatly interested in studying errors made by second language learners since it is believed that learners' errors hold a significant role in improving language teaching-learning process (Lasaten, 2014).

Errors in language learners' skill performance, especially writing has become the subject of interest among teachers, linguists, and syllabus planners (Darus & Ching, 2009). Additionally, error analysis becomes an interesting task for teachers as it helps them to identify their own teaching methodologies and to guide them in choosing the strategies and topics that best suit the students' capacity (Richards, Platt & Platt, 1992). Possessing good writing skills in college life brings enormous benefits. Bean (1996) points out that writing is a key qualification for all academic purposes because the writing itself is the core feature that provides people with a set of powerful aids for the mastery of all intellectual tasks. Writing ability in university level is something students need to master as it helps university students to survive in academic life besides giving important benefits for developing their quality as learners. Furthermore, in Surat Dirjen Dikti No. 125 E/T 2012, it is expected that undergraduate students should write a paper published in academic journal in order to finish the study in a particular major (Directorate General of Higher Education, 2012). Braker, Breezy, and Angeli (2013) summarize the types of essays into four main types, namely expository essay, descriptive essay, narrative essay, and argumentative (persuasive) essay. The latter type is mostly chosen by instructors to ask

the college students to argue the evidence of particular issue of some materials.

It can be understood that writing ability determines success in college education, but in fact college students enter university with poor writing skills. Indonesia is only placed on the 57th of SCImago Journal and Country Rank (2007) with 32.355 published academic journals which is very low if compared to Malaysia with 153.378 (35th rank) and Thailand with 109.832 (43th) published academic journals respectively. In addition to this, the quality of students' writing is not satisfying due to the mistakes that students commit in their writing. For instance, one of the previous related studies done by Darus and Subramanian (2009) revealed that Malay students made errors in their writing namely singular or plural form, verb tense, word choice, preposition, subject-verb agreement and word order. Additionally, Ihsan (1999) who analyzed errors committed by the fifth semester students of the English Education Study Program at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Sriwijaya University, in the academic year 1994/1995, found out that errors in syntactical category became prominent since it reached 59.3% (99 errors out of 167 found errors) whilst errors in morphological only reached 2.4% (4 errors) and errors in orthographic reached category 37.1% (67 errors). Unsatisfactory achievement in academic writing is also faced by the fifth semester students of English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University in academic year 2016/2017.

It is in this context that the writer was encouraged to conduct an error analysis based on the importance of academic writing in college followed by the urgency of argumentative essay mastery and the low achievement of students of English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University in writing course. The writer was interested in doing a research entitled "Error Analysis in Argumentative Essays Made by the Fifth Semester Students of English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University."

Based on the problems of the study, the objectives of this study were to find out: : (1) The argumentative essay achievement of the fifth semester students of English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University., (2) Kinds of errors in argumentative essays made by the fifth semester students of English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University., (3) Possible causes of errors in argumentative essays made by the fifth

semester students of English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University., (4) Kinds of errors mostly found in argumentative essays made by the fifth semester students of English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University., and (5) Possible ways to eliminate errors of English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University.

Essays are shorter pieces of writing that often require the student to develop a number of skills such as close reading, analysis, comparison and contrast, persuasion, conciseness, clarity, and exposition (Baker, Brizee, & Angleli, 2013). A common good essay contains three important parts namely an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. An introductory paragraph contains two essential parts, general statements and the thesis statement. Normally the developmental paragraphs consist of two or three (or more) paragraphs in employing their function which are to explain, illustrate, discuss, or prove the thesis statement. Concluding paragraph ends the discussion of the whole essay by recalling the readers with a brief summary of the introduced thesis statement.

An argumentative essay is an essay which people agree or disagree with an issue by using reason to support the opinion (Oshima and Hogue, 1999). In addition, argumentative writing is a crucial skill during the school years and beyond (Nippold, 2000; Crowhurst, 1990) because the argumentative essay is a genre of writing that requires the student to investigate a topic; collect, generate, and evaluate evidence; and establish a position on the topic in a concise manner by calling for extensive research of literature of previously published material or simply requiring empirical research where the students collect data through interviews, surveys, observations, or experiments (Baker, Brizee & Angeli, 2013).

Error analysis is one of the most influential theories of second language acquisition as it is concerned with the analysis of the errors committed by L2 learners by explaining the identified errors through comparing the learners' acquired norms with the target language norms (James, 1988). Equally important, Corder (1981) acknowledges that the investigation of the language of second language learners is clearly accepted as the act of error analysis. It can be concluded that error analysis in relation to second language acquisition is defined as the study which not only analyzes but also explains errors committed by foreign language learner. Error

analysis not only functions as an experimental technique for validating the theory of transfer but also indicates the psycholinguistic process of language learning. Despite of the two debatable thoughts in respect to learners' errors; the former believes that errors should not exist as the evidence of an adequate teaching technique whereas the latter argues that errors signs the process of learning (Corder, 1981), the analysis of student's errors contributes some valuable findings for an advanced language learning process.

METHOD

This study was conducted by employing descriptive method. This study was meant to describe the collected data in form of the errors in writing argumentative essays which were written by students, and to explain the reasons why those errors happened. The population of this study was all the fifth semester students of English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University in the academic year 2016/2017. In this study, the writer took 20 samples from the population due to the consideration of the writer to do a depth analysis on students' argumentative essays by using a random sampling method.

Employing random sampling to generate the sample from the population, stratified sampling was employed to specifically balance the characteristic of the sample since the number of female students outnumbers the male students. Firstly, the writer employed Research Randomizer [www.randomizer.org] to blindly choose the samples. After that, the writer employed stratified sampling in order to select the proportional representation of the total population. In this case, the subgroup were the genders of the fifth semester students with total number of 20 students as the samples, in which the writer took 10 samples in each stratum (Indralaya and Bukit).

In collecting the data for this study, the writer conducted argumentative essay writing test. Content-related evidence of validity was involved before administering the test. The validity of the writing test was checked by using expert judgment. The result of the validity from expert judgment was an appropriate item category. It means the test was valid and appropriate to give. To estimate the reliability of the test, inter-rater reliability was applied. In this study, the writer employed inter-rater reliability which was evaluated through Kappa Reliability Test using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient by utilizing SPSS 22 version. The interclass

correlation coefficient of the test was 0.709. The Kappa score was 0.709 (K=0.709) which showed a moderate consistency score between the two raters.

The main steps in analyzing the data were as follows:

1. Collecting the data
The writer gave argumentative essay writing test to the 20 students who were the samples of the study. The topics given for the argumentative essay writing test were: (1) Is there too much pressure on teenagers to go to college?, (2) Should students be able to grade their teachers?, and (3) Should people be allowed to obscure their identities online?. The time allocation were 60 minutes.
2. Identifying the errors
The writer identified the errors that were found in essay writing. Therefore, the writer read every student's sentence in detail and marked the error carefully. On the other hand, the Rubric for Argumentative College Essay was employed to discriminate the quality of the samples' writing content by asking helps from two raters.
3. Classifying the description of the error
In classifying the errors, the writer employed the surface strategy taxonomy and linguistic category taxonomy which is constructed by Darus et al. (2007). Firstly, the writer categorized the errors that appeared on the students' writing to five main aspects of linguistic category; (1) Grammatical errors; (2) Syntactic errors; (3) Lexical errors; (4) Semantic errors; (5) Mechanics/substance errors. After that, the errors were classified into four main categories of surface strategy taxonomy: (1) Omission; (2) Addition; (3) Misformation; (4) Misordering.
4. Presenting the percentage of errors based on the categories
After classifying the errors based on linguistic category and surface strategy taxonomy, the writer tabulated and calculated the percentage and the rank on four categories, as well as the five aspect of linguistic category.

Descriptive analysis employs descriptive statistic, so one of relative frequency tables which was percentage was employed. The formula of calculating a percentage is $\% = \frac{f}{n} \times 100$, where f is the frequency of

cases in a category and n is the total number of cases in all categories.

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE STUDY

Findings

The findings of the study were the results of writing test. The writing test was administered to find the students' writing capability in general and errors in essay writing that they committed. Employing Rubric for Argumentative College Essay to discriminate the students' essay writing, writer found out that all of the students did not achieved score 10 which is above standard for each category. The students' writing achievement showed that the highest score from the 20 essay writing samples was 8.5, whereas the lowest score was 6. The results were influenced by the errors that each student committed in their essays. Therefore, the essays made by the fifth semester students of English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University were not satisfying enough to meet the maximum score set by the rubric.

Based on the collected data, there were 316 errors committed by the students. The linguistic taxonomy which includes grammar, syntax, lexical, semantic, and mechanic was employed to reveal kinds of the committed errors. The results showed that students committed all the kinds of errors in their essays, although the occurrences of the errors were not prevalently done. It was found out that the most occurred error in the students' essay was on grammar, while the errors in semantic occurred less. Furthermore, the writer also employed surface strategy taxonomy (which includes omission, addition, misformation, and misorder) and revealed that omission errors were the most common errors frequently committed.

Error Analysis in Essay Writing

Based on the results of the writing test, the result showed that the students have moderate writing skill with *Meeting Standard* score as the highest one by employing Rubric for Argumentative College Essay. In line with this, the writer still found many errors that students committed on their essays. There are some writing errors that they made. Table 1 below presents the list of writing errors (employing Linguistic Strategy Taxonomy) that the students committed in their writing.

Table 1. Total of Linguistic Errors

Linguistic Errors	Frequency	Percentage
Grammar	107	33.86%
Syntax	59	18.68%
Lexical	42	13.29%
Semantic	14	4.43%
Mechanic	94	29.74%
Total	316	100%

These errors were categorized based on the Linguistic Strategy Taxonomy items, and were tabulated according to the errors' frequency and percentage. The types of linguistic errors that were analyzed for this study are grammar, syntax, lexical, semantic, and mechanic. There were 107 (33.86%) grammar errors, 59 (18.68%) syntax errors, 42 (13.29%) lexical errors, 14 (4.43%) semantic errors, and 94 (29.74%) errors. Based on the findings, it was found that errors in grammar outnumbered the rest types of errors. Furthermore, the errors were also categorized into surface strategy taxonomy (which includes

omission, addition, misformation, and misorder). Table 2 below presents the list of writing errors (employing surface strategy taxonomy).

Table 2. Total of Surface Strategy Errors

Surface Strategy Errors	Frequency	Percentage
Omission	139	43.99%
Addition	52	16.45%
Misformation	118	37.34%
Misorder	7	2.21%
Total	316	100%

Based on the findings, it was found that the errors in omission become the highest error in occurrences with 139 errors out of 316, whereas errors in misorder become the lowest with 7 occurrences of errors. Table 3 below presents the matrix of categorization which employs the two taxonomies.

Table 3. Matrix Categorization of the Errors

Linguistic Error Taxonomy	Surface Strategy Taxonomy				Total
	Omission	Addition	Misformation	Misorder	
Grammar	47	24	36	0	107
Syntax	22	12	21	4	59
Lexical	11	8	22	1	42
Semantic	3	3	6	2	14
Mechanic	56	5	33	0	94
Total	139	52	118	7	316

Here are some examples representing each kind of errors found in argumentative essays made by the fifth semester students of English Education Study Program.

- *In conclusion, students' critical thinking can bring two different *side* of effects. (Grammar, Misformation)

In conclusion, students' critical thinking can bring two different **sides** of effects.

That sentence does not follow the rule of plurality, and misformation error occurred here. Since the sentence contains number to show the quantity of thing, the noun following the number should be in agreement with that. Thus, the noun (*side*) should be written in its plural form (*sides*).
- *First of all, there are many *crime* happens through internet, especially social media. (Grammar, Misformation)

First of all, there are many **crimes that** happen through internet, especially social media.

- That sentence does not follow the rule of plurality, and misformation error also occurred here. Since the sentence contains quantity expression of plurality (*many*), the noun following the expression should be in agreement with that. Thus, the noun (*crime*) should be written in its plural form (*crimes*).
- *Loan for some students is a good choice since it can benefit them after they are graduate. (Grammar, Addition)

Loan for some students is a good choice since it can benefit them after they **graduate**.

In the sentence above, addition error occurred as one of the words in that sentence showed unimportant addition. The word *graduate* is preceded with to be 'is' which was not needed. Thus, it violates the normal form. Therefore, to be 'is' should be omitted in order to have the correct form of the verb

- (graduate).
4. *To sum up, those two concerns that *has been become* the pressure on teens if they want to continue their study to college *makes* pressure on teens when they are still in high school. (Grammar, Addition)
 To sum up, those two concerns that **become** the pressure on teens if they want to continue their study to college **make** pressure on teens when they are still in high school.
 In the sentence above, addition error also occurred. The presence of 'has been' violates the well-formed sentence. Hence, 'has been' should be omitted in order to have the accepted form of English sentence structure.
 5. *If they have access to who you really are and your true identity and profile, it is going to make impact on the ease for the bad people to find you. (Grammar, Omission)
 If they have access to who you really are and your true identity and profile, it is going to make **an** impact on the ease for the bad people to find you.
 In the sentence above, omission error occurred. Since the noun *impact* was written in its singular form, it is better to place an article 'a' preceding the noun (an impact). Otherwise, if the noun 'impact' is possible to be written in its plural form, it is also better to add suffix -s to make it into plural (impacts).
 6. *We can say that only friends that user know that can join or follow *user account*. (Grammar, Omission)
 We can say that only friends whom user knows who can join or follow **user's account**.
 The sentence missed possessive case for the word *user account*. Since noun *user* is considered to own the *account*, the possessive form is needed to have a complete meaning. So, the noun *user* should be attached with 's (user's).
 7. *For example, people use a fake identity for fraud, *kidnap*, and bullying. (Grammar, Misformation)
 For example, people use a fake identity for fraud, **kidnapping**, and bullying.
 The sentence does not have a correct form of noun (kidnap) which comes directly after a preposition. Basically, verbs should be changed into its -ing form if they are preceded by preposition. Therefore, the noun (kidnap) should be transformed into its correct form of noun or -ing form (kidnapping).
 8. *Summarily, to avoid cyber crime and *maintaining the followers* are the two reasons why teenagers should obscure their identities online. (Syntax, Misformation)
 In summary, to avoid cyber crime and **tomaintain the followers** are the two reasons why teenagers should obscure their identities online.
 The sentence above showed the incorrect use of conjunction in which the nouns connected by should be written in the same form. Thus, the second phrase which comes after the conjunction *and* should be written the same with the first one or the otherwise.
 9. *Well, nowadays many people use internet to help that activity because it gives many advantages for people and also they can communicate easily while they are from different countries. (Syntax, Misorder)
 Well, nowadays many people use internet to help that activity because it gives many advantages for people and also they can communicate easily **even though** they are from different countries.
 The sentence above showed the misorder error. The use of conjunction (while) in that sentence was not appropriate to be used because the following clause does not discuss the activity done during the same time but the opposite statement from the first clause. Therefore, it is appropriate to replace the conjunction *while* with *even though*.
 10. *People would still find a way to do it. *And* the government cannot shut them off unless it turns into a dictatorial one. (Syntax, Misorder)
 People would still find a way to do it, **and** the government cannot shut them off unless it turns into a dictatorial one.
 That sentence is called run-on sentence since the conjunction *and* appeared in the beginning of the sentence. Furthermore, it is a misorder error. It is really appropriate to replace the period with comma, and rewrite the conjunction using the upper case letter.
 11. *They will come to the night-life, *theydring*, *smoke*, and sometimes *they*

- will come to free sex.* (Lexical, Addition)
 They will come to the night-life, **drinking, smoking**, and sometimes doing **free sex**.
 In this sentence, many additional words were used. They are actually unimportant since their presence violates the structure of the sentence. Basically, the nouns written after and before conjunction should be written in the same form. However, the sentence above is not. Hence, their forms should be changed into the appropriate one.
12. *Students can help the teacher *being professionalism* more by being open minded of the grading that the students are the best critic for the teacher.
 (Lexical, Misformation)
 Students can help the teacher **to be more professional** by being open minded on the grading that the students are the best critic for the teacher.
 The word choice used in that sentence violates the meaning. The word 'professionalism' is not appropriate to be written since it does not compliment the word 'teacher'. Hence, it should be written in its adjective form in order to modify the noun.
13. *Furthermore, the grading may provide clear information about teaching and learning goals and how to achieve it then.
 (Lexical, Omission)
 Furthermore, the grading may provide clear information of what teaching and learning goals are and how to achieve it.
 In this sentence, the noun clause connector '*what*' should be written because it is in accordance with the second phrase following the conjunction '*and*'. Otherwise, the sentence is not in parallel agreement.
14. *There are other *websites online* that force you to give out your real name to the world when it is not necessary. (Lexical, Misorder)
 There are other **online websites** that force you to give out your real name to the world when it is not necessary.
 In this sentence, the word *online* and *websites* should be written in reverse since *online* gives meaning to *websites*. In other word, it is possible to have online modify the word *websites*.
15. *You can manage your information to be seen by your true friends, so strangers cannot see it because we know *well* there are many articles or some news about identities online of someone which are stolen for bad activities. (Lexical, Addition)
 You can manage your information to be seen by your true friends, but strangers cannot see it because we know there are many articles or some news about identities online of someone which are stolen for bad purposes.
 It is not necessary to write adverb *well* in that sentence. It is better to omit that since it is not an important item needed to create a meaningful English sentence.
16. *Because teachers teach students, so students can feel where the right and wrong strategies in their learning process are. (Semantic, Addition)
Students can determine whether their teachers have applied successful strategy or not in their teaching and learning process.
 This sentence shows addition error. It uses the subordinate conjunction '*because*' and '*so*' which violates the meaning of the sentence. In other words, the use of those subordinate conjunctions makes the sentence become ineffective.
17. *Therefore the win-win solution occurs. (Mechanics, Omission)
 Therefore, the win-win solution occurs.
 In this sentence, the comma should be written because *therefore* is one of transition signals. Hence, when it appears in the beginning of the sentence, the comma is needed.
18. *They use the internet for some applications, such as, facebook, twitter, blog, and etc. (Mechanics, Addition)
 They use the internet for some applications, such as Facebook, Twitter, blog, etc.
 In this sentence, the comma is not appropriate to be written because *such as* will be directly followed by the nouns.
19. *Then, there comes a question, "Should students grade the teachers as well?" since we know, grading is really important in learning and teaching process. (Syntax, Omission)
 Then, there comes a question, "Should students grade the teachers as well?" since we know **that** grading is really

important in learning and teaching process.

The sentence was not written correctly since it missed conjunction to connect two clauses (since we know and grading is really important in learning and teaching process). Thus, the conjunction 'that' is appropriate to connect the two clauses.

20. *It is because when we talk about a teacher, *so* we talk about how to change the student's life. (Syntax, Addition)

It is because when we talk about a teacher, we talk about how to change the student's life.

The use of conjunction *so* in that sentence is not really appropriate because the second clause is clearly considered as the result of the conjunction *because*.

21. *Moreover, not everyone can steal people's identities on internet, but we have to consider and think again, especially when stranger asks us about our identity, *don't* trust someone or people that we don't know yet because on the internet many people hide their identities, so do we. (Mechanics, Misformation)

Moreover, not everyone can steal people's identities on internet, but we have to consider and think again, especially when a stranger asks us about our identity. **Do not** trust someone or people that we don't know yet because on the internet many people hide their identities, so do we.

This sentence is said to be having comma splices in which it uses many commas without considering the rules. It is better to separate that one long sentence into two sentences since there is no conjunction found (after the comma which precedes the phrase 'don't ...'). Hence, the period is needed to replace the comma.

22. *For example in UNSRI, when students want to *look* their *IPK*, they have to *fill* some questions first. (Semantic, Misformation)

For example in UNSRI, when students want to **look up** their **GPA**, they have to **fill out** some questions first.

In this sentence, some words even arbitration were not written in their English equivalence. Thus, it is really appropriate to rewrite *look* with *look up*, *fill* with *fill out*, and *IPK* with *GPA*.

Interpretation

Based on the findings acknowledged in the previous discussions, there were some errors committed by the fifth semester students of English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University. Consequently, the students' writing achievement did not achieve the maximum level of assessment set by the Rubric for Argumentative College Essay. The errors which occurred in their argumentative essays were various, yet the errors were not evenly done. It was found out that the students committed all the kinds of errors which frequently obscure the meaning of the sentences. Moreover, the kind of errors mostly done by the students is grammar. This finding implies that students do not comprehend the grammar rules well yet. Obviously, that is not the only possible cause of the committed errors.

The causes of students' argumentative essays are various. Based on the errors found, students mostly misspelled the words. Furthermore, they frequently misused the punctuations in which it distracts the comprehension of the whole sentences. The writer concludes that the possible cause of those errors is the students' carelessness to reread and recheck their essay writing before they submit or even they feel reluctant to look up the words in dictionary. This attitude is fully supported by Ihsan (1999) who states that "misspelled words are generally caused by learners, carelessness, and negative attitude toward learning as they even feel reluctant if not lazy to look words up in a dictionary."

In some occasions, the writer found out that students used connectors and conjunctions redundantly. They tend to have more connectors or subordinate conjunctions, and punctuations in one sentence. This resulted in some sentences with ambiguous meaning. Witnessing those errors, the writer concludes that the possible cause of these is overgeneralization habit in their orthography. It is in line with Brown (1987) who states that "the incorrect generalization of rules within the target language is a major factor in second language learning." The other possible cause of errors in students' argumentative essays is first language interference. Although the errors caused by this interference did not occur quite so often, the problems resulted in comprehending the meaning of the sentence became stressful. Students were probably not encouraged to find the equivalence meaning of some words from Bahasa to English.

Nonetheless, they ended up creating words or even phrases which were not accepted in English.

After acknowledging the possible causes of the errors, some preventive actions need to be done by the students of English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University. Firstly, the students should review some materials concerning the use of connectors or subordinate conjunctions in written English as well as the use of punctuation. It will hopefully help them to distinguish kinds of conjunctions or subordinate conjunctions based on their meaning. Therefore, redundancy of using transition signals can be eliminated. Secondly, they also need to acknowledge the rules of translation. By being informed with translation theories, one can consciously avoid using a word, phrase or even sentence which is not in equivalence from the source language to the target language. Lastly, it is preferable for them to read many kinds of English essays in order to be acquired with advanced and correct English sentence structures.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

This study aimed to find out students' essay writing achievement and analyzed the errors that they committed in their writing. Therefore, the writer decides to draw five conclusions which are in accordance with the objectives of this study. First of all, the argumentative essay achievement of the fifth semester students of English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University showed that that the highest score was 8.5, whereas the lowest score was 6. In conclusion, the students' argumentative essays were not satisfying enough since the higher score (8.5) is only said to be *Meeting the Standard*. Secondly, it was found out that students committed all kinds of errors which are categorized into two different error classifications, although the errors were not evenly done. Thirdly, the possible causes of the errors committed by the students in their essays are their carelessness, their habit to over generalize the structure of English sentences or English grammar rules in general, and their first language interference. Fourthly, the kinds of errors mostly found in the students' essay are grammar (Linguistic Error Taxonomy) and omission (Surface Strategy Taxonomy). Lastly, the possible ways to eliminate errors committed by the students are by trying to

review some material concerning the use of connectors or subordinate conjunctions, acknowledging the translation theories, and reading kinds of essays as many as possible.

Suggestions

Some suggestions are offered to the fifth semester students of English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University. It is undeniable that errors may occur in students' essays, but it is not the main problem discussed in this study. This study aims to reveal errors committed by students in order to give solutions or ways to reduce the error. Firstly, students should be able to acquire themselves with linguistic aspects comprehensively. This will hopefully help them to be alert of the structural rules of English sentence. Furthermore, students should be encouraged to acknowledge translation rules and theories in order to be skilful in finding or creating the exact equivalent of source language to target language. Nevertheless, errors caused by first language interference will occur less.

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