CHALLENGES PERCEIVED BY INDONESIAN EFL STUDENTS IN ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY WRITING

THESIS

Submitted by

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CHALLENGES PERCEIVED BY INDONESIAN EFL STUDENTS IN ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY WRITING

THESIS

It has been defended in *Sidang Munaqasyah* in front of the board of the Examination for the working paper and has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor's degree in Education in English Language Teaching.

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Hereby declare that in writing this thesis, I:

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3. Did not use others' works without proper citation or permission;
4. Dd not manipulate or falsify data;
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This statement is made truthfully and without coercion from any party.

Banda Aceh, 23 January 2026

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Writing argumentative essays is a challenging task for many EFL students, particularly in higher education contexts. This study aims to investigate the challenges perceived by Indonesian EFL students in writing argumentative essays. Using a qualitative approach, data were collected through interviews to explore students' experiences and perceptions. The findings reveal that students face interconnected challenges in lexical aspects, technical aspects, and psychological factors. Lexical challenges mainly involve limited academic vocabulary and uncertainty in using formal language. Technical challenges include difficulties in developing ideas, maintaining coherence, constructing clear thesis statements, and using appropriate transitions. Psychological challenges, such as lack of confidence, fear of grammatical errors, and hesitation in expressing arguments, further hinder students' writing performance. Overall, the study highlights that argumentative essay writing difficulties cannot be viewed in isolation, as linguistic and technical issues are closely linked with students' affective conditions. These findings suggest the need for instructional practices that address both writing skills and students' psychological readiness in academic writing.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Essay writing is one of the competency courses that must be mastered by EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students in higher education. Through essay writing, students not only learn to organize ideas logically but also develop critical thinking skills and the ability to communicate effectively. Academic essay writing helps students articulate complex ideas, defend a point of view, and participate in academic discourse (Hyland, 2019). Therefore, in many English study programs in Indonesia, essay writing has become an important part of the curriculum as it reflects students' ability to express ideas coherently and academically in English, which is crucial for their academic and professional development.

However, despite its importance in academic contexts, many EFL students in Indonesia face major challenges in learning essay writing. Writing difficulties among EFL learners have long been discussed in second language writing research. Richards and Renandya (2002) argue that writing is the most difficult skill for EFL learners because it requires the integration of linguistic knowledge, cognitive processing, and rhetorical organization. These challenges include difficulties in organizing ideas cohesively, building a strong thesis statement, using academic language appropriately, and maintaining grammatical accuracy (Aulia & Sari, 2023). In addition, students often experience difficulties in maintaining a logical flow between paragraphs, resulting in arguments that lack strength. Emotional factors such as writing anxiety, low self-confidence, and lack of motivation also exacerbate the challenges faced by students (Lestari & Widodo, 2022). As a result, writing activities are often perceived as a heavy burden by many EFL learners.

Several previous studies have revealed the challenges faced by EFL students in academic writing, especially in the context of higher education in Indonesia. Hyland (2019) emphasizes that academic writing challenges often stem

from limited exposure to authentic academic discourse and insufficient understanding of genre conventions. Similarly, Manan, Azis, and Rahman (2020) found that Indonesian university students commonly struggle with limited vocabulary, weak grammatical mastery, and a lack of awareness of essay structure. These findings highlight the complexity of the problems faced by students in producing structured and coherent academic essays.

In addition, recent research by Sari and Kusumaningrum (2023) examined the difficulties Indonesian EFL students face in different types of essays, including descriptive, narrative, and argumentative essays. Their results indicate that although students tend to be more comfortable writing descriptive and narrative essays, they experience greater difficulty when writing argumentative essays. This difficulty arises from the demands of critical thinking as well as the need to develop arguments supported by strong evidence. The study also found that students still lack the skills required to construct effective counter-arguments and rebuttals, which are essential components of argumentative writing.

In the Indonesian EFL context, Emilia (2011) highlights that students frequently struggle with constructing arguments, supporting claims with evidence, and maintaining coherence due to limited instruction in academic argumentation. These difficulties indicate that argumentative essay writing poses distinct challenges compared to other essay types, as it requires systematic reasoning, logical organization, and persuasive academic language. Although various studies have provided an overview of general writing challenges faced by Indonesian EFL students, there remains a lack of studies that specifically explore challenges in argumentative essay writing from the students' own perspectives.

Grounded in theories of EFL academic writing, argumentation, and learner perception, this study views writing challenges not only as observable linguistic or structural problems but also as experiences perceived and interpreted by students. According to Wenden (1991), learners' perceptions play an important role in shaping their learning behavior, confidence, and engagement in academic tasks. Therefore, understanding how students perceive their challenges is essential for

gaining deeper insight into both the linguistic and psychological dimensions of argumentative writing.

This research focuses on examining the challenges perceived by Indonesian EFL students in the context of argumentative essay writing. By narrowing the focus to argumentative essays, this study aims to identify the linguistic, cognitive, and affective challenges perceived by students. To ensure that these perceptions are grounded in actual writing practices, students' argumentative essays are also analyzed as supporting data. Understanding these perceived challenges is important for designing more effective instructional approaches that address both students' academic writing skills and their affective needs in higher education settings.

B. Research Question

This study addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the challenges perceived by Indonesian EFL students in argumentative essay writing?

C. Research Aims

The purposes of this research are:

1. To identify the challenges perceived by Indonesian EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students in writing an argumentative essay.

D. Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it provides insight into the challenges perceived by Indonesian EFL students in writing argumentative essays, particularly in lexical, technical, and psychological aspects. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the difficulties students face when using academic vocabulary, constructing clear and coherent arguments, and managing confidence and anxiety in academic writing. This significance lies in its contribution to English language teaching, as the results can inform teachers and educators in designing more effective instructional strategies and writing support that address both linguistic

competence and students' affective needs.

E. Terminologies

Certain terms require more explanation in order to prevent misunderstandings.

1. Challenges

   In the context of this study, challenges refer to various obstacles or difficulties faced by EFL students when writing argumentative essays, whether linguistic, cognitive, or affective in nature. These challenges can be in the form of limitations in vocabulary mastery, difficulties in composing logical arguments, inability to develop a systematic essay structure, and anxiety in writing. (Sari & Kusumaningrum, 2023)

2. EFL Students (English as a Foreign Language Students)

   EFL students are students who use English as a foreign language in their learning, not as a first or second language. In this study, EFL students refer specifically to Indonesian students studying English at the tertiary level. (Manan, Azis, & Rahman, 2020)

3. Argumentative Essay

   An argumentative essay is a type of academic writing that aims to present an opinion or claim supported by logical reasons and strong evidence. In this essay, the writer must be able to present the main argument, support it with data or theory, and refute opposing arguments. According to Sari and Kusumaningrum (2023), the ability to develop effective counter-arguments and rebuttals is one of the important characteristics in argumentative essay writing.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Academic Essay Writing

Essay writing is a formal form of writing used to express ideas, opinions, or arguments in a variety of contexts, including educational, social, and professional. Essays are characterized by a logical structure, use of language appropriate to the audience, and support for objective arguments. The goal is to convey an idea or point of view in an organized and structured way. Common characteristics of essay writing include the use of an appropriate language style, logical organization of ideas, and sentence construction that is free of grammatical errors.

A good essay should also pay attention to coherence and cohesion between paragraphs so that the reader can follow your train of thought clearly. The use of supporting evidence or illustrations from credible sources is also an important factor in strengthening the arguments presented. According to Oshima and Hogue (2006), an effective essay combines the logic of critical thinking, systematic organization of ideas, and proper application of language conventions so that the writing is not only informative but also interesting and persuasive to the reader.

In recent developments, scholars emphasize the importance of originality and ethics in essay writing. Research by Santos et al. (2023) showed that individuals who are mentored in essay writing techniques tend to produce writing with higher quality of analysis and lower levels of plagiarism. In addition, according to Park and Lee (2022), the use of artificial intelligence-based technology in assisting the essay writing process needs to be balanced with an understanding of ethical principles and writer creativity so that the work remains authentic. Thus, mastery of basic writing techniques, ethical awareness,

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and critical thinking skills are the keys to success in producing high-quality essays.

B. Indicators of Quality Essay Writing

Essay quality can be measured through several indicators, including.

a. Coherence and cohesion

Coherence and cohesion are key elements in essay quality as they determine how effectively ideas are connected to each other. Without strong cohesion, readers may experience confusion in following the flow of argumentation. Research by Martinez and Jun (2023) showed that students who consistently used connecting devices between sentences and ideas produced essays with higher levels of readability and clarity of argumentation than those who did not do so effectively. Therefore, the emphasis on transition skills between ideas is important in essay writing training.

b. Clear Structure

A clear essay structure, with a systematic division between introduction, body, and conclusion, provides a strong framework for readers to understand the overall argument. In a recent study, Zhang and Liu (2023) found that essays with a well-organized structure are able to improve the perception of academic quality and credibility of the writer in the eyes of the reader. This structure also helps in leading the reader from the background of the problem to the conclusion in a logical and effective manner.

c. Proper Use of Language

The use of proper language in an essay signifies the level of professionalism and seriousness of the writer in conveying ideas. The use of informal language or grammatical errors can undermine the credibility of academic writing. According to research by Anderson and Kim (2023), grammatical accuracy and the use of formal diction contribute significantly to the positive assessment of the quality of academic essays by lecturers and reviewers of scientific journals.

d. Argument Support with Evidence

Including relevant evidence or references to support an argument is an important indicator of the quality of an essay. Evidence strengthens claims and shows that the writer's argument is based on valid data. Research conducted by Ahmed and Sun (2023) states that essays that integrate primary and secondary sources effectively tend to get higher scores in the critical analysis aspect than essays that are only opinion-based without evidence to support.

C. The Importance and Models of Argumentative Essay Writing

Argumentation is a core component of academic essay writing because it trains students to think critically, logically, and analytically. In argumentative essays, writers are required to take a clear position on an issue and support it with valid reasons and relevant evidence. This process helps students move beyond simple description and develop deeper academic reasoning.

For EFL students, argumentative writing is particularly challenging but essential. It supports the development of academic language, logical organization, and the ability to express opinions in a structured and convincing way. Argumentative writing also encourages students to evaluate different perspectives and respond to opposing views, which are important skills in higher education. Therefore, understanding how arguments are constructed is crucial for improving students' writing competence.

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In the Indonesian EFL context, students frequently encounter difficulties in writing argumentative essays due to limited exposure to academic argumentation and differences in rhetorical conventions between Indonesian and English. Many students tend to express opinions descriptively without adequate justification, evidence, or engagement with counterarguments. Therefore, the use of clear argument models is essential to guide Indonesian EFL students in constructing effective argumentative essays.

1. Toulmin's Model of Argument

Toulmin's model is one of the most comprehensive frameworks for analyzing and constructing arguments in academic writing. According to Toulmin (2003), an effective argument consists of six interconnected components: claim, data, warrant, backing, qualifier, and rebuttal. In Indonesian EFL argumentative essays, students often succeed in stating claims but struggle to support them with strong evidence and logical warrants (Emilia, 2011).

The claim represents the writer's main position, which should be stated clearly in the thesis statement. However, many Indonesian EFL students produce vague or overly general claims. The data or evidence, such as facts, statistics, or examples, is often insufficient or not clearly linked to the claim. The warrant, which explains the relationship between the claim and the evidence, is frequently implicit or missing, indicating students' limited awareness of logical reasoning in English academic writing.

The rebuttal component is particularly challenging for Indonesian students, as they are not accustomed to anticipating and responding to opposing views. Research shows that many EFL students avoid counterarguments due to lack of confidence and critical thinking skills (Wingate, 2012). Therefore, Toulmin's model is highly relevant for Indonesian EFL instruction because it explicitly trains students to develop logical, evidence-based arguments and engage critically with alternative perspectives.

2. Claim–Reason–Evidence (CRE) Model

The Claim–Reason–Evidence (CRE) model is widely used in Indonesian EFL classrooms due to its simplicity and instructional clarity. This model guides students to present a claim, explain it with a reason, and support it using evidence (Oshima & Hogue, 2007). For Indonesian

undergraduate students, this model is particularly effective at the early stages of learning argumentative writing.

Many Indonesian EFL students tend to state opinions without sufficient support. The CRE model helps address this issue by emphasizing that every claim must be justified logically and supported by evidence. Studies indicate that when students are taught using structured models such as CRE, their essays show improved coherence and argument clarity (Lestari & Widodo, 2022). However, while this model is useful for basic argument development, it does not explicitly address counterarguments, which limits its effectiveness for advanced argumentative writing.

3. Aristotelian Model of Argument

The Aristotelian model focuses on persuasion through three rhetorical appeals: logos, ethos, and pathos (Aristotle, 2007). In the context of Indonesian EFL argumentative essays, the logos aspect is the most emphasized, as academic writing prioritizes logical reasoning and evidence-based arguments.

Indonesian EFL students often face difficulties in maintaining logical flow and coherence throughout their essays. By applying the Aristotelian model, students can learn to strengthen their logical reasoning and improve argument consistency. However, ethos, which relates to the writer's credibility, is less frequently addressed in Indonesian EFL instruction, even though the use of credible sources and appropriate academic tone can enhance the persuasiveness of essays.

The pathos element is generally used cautiously in academic writing. While emotional appeal is not dominant in scholarly essays, controlled use of pathos can help engage readers, especially in essays discussing social or educational issues relevant to the Indonesian context.

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4. Rogerian Model of Argument

The Rogerian model emphasizes mutual understanding and respect for opposing viewpoints. This model is particularly suitable for Indonesian EFL students because it aligns with cultural values that prioritize harmony and indirect communication (Emilia, 2011). Instead of directly refuting counterarguments, students first acknowledge alternative perspectives before presenting their own position.

In argumentative essays, this model helps Indonesian students develop a balanced tone and avoid overly confrontational language. However, some students may focus too much on agreement and fail to assert their own stance strongly. Therefore, explicit instruction is needed to ensure that students maintain argumentative strength while applying the Rogerian approach.

5. Problem–Solution Model

The Problem–Solution model is commonly used by Indonesian EFL students when writing essays on social, environmental, or educational issues. This model involves identifying a problem, explaining its causes or impacts, and proposing solutions supported by arguments and evidence (Hyland, 2004).

Indonesian students are generally comfortable describing problems but often provide weak justification for proposed solutions. This indicates a need for structured guidance to ensure that each solution is logically supported. When applied effectively, the Problem–Solution model can help students develop clear, systematic, and practical argumentative essays.

Overall, argument models play a vital role in improving Indonesian EFL students' ability to write argumentative essays. Each model offers specific advantages depending on students' proficiency levels and instructional goals. The Toulmin model supports advanced critical reasoning, the CRE model assists beginner writers, the Aristotelian model enhances rhetorical awareness,

the Rogerian model promotes balanced argumentation, and the Problem–Solution model supports logical organization. Integrating these models into EFL writing instruction can significantly improve students' argumentative competence and academic writing quality.

D. Essay writing in the Argumentative type

An argumentative essay is a type of academic essay that aims to convince readers of a claim or opinion by using logical reasons and evidence. In the context of learning English as a foreign language (EFL), argumentative essay writing trains students to think critically, organize arguments, and convey ideas systematically and persuasively. This type of essay writing helps students build logical and argumentative thinking skills that are essential in academic communication. As stated by Oshima and Hogue (2006), argumentative writing is essential for developing a reasoned position on a controversial issue and supporting it with logical evidence. Therefore, argumentative writing skills are essential for EFL students in developing language skills that are not only communicative but also reflective and analytical.

Here is an example of a short argumentative essay (3 paragraphs) on the topic of, which is relevant to real life:

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Background

Claim

Reasons

Rebuttal

Conclusion

The Use of English as a Medium of Instruction in Indonesian Schools

The use of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) in Indonesian schools has become an increasingly discussed issue in recent years **(Background / Issue – Classical Model)**. Many educators believe that teaching certain subjects in English can improve students' language proficiency and prepare them for global competition. However, others argue that the use of English may create learning difficulties for students who are not yet proficient in the language **(Counterclaim / Opposing View – Toulmin & Classical Model)**. Despite these concerns, the use of English as a medium of instruction can bring significant educational benefits if it is implemented appropriately **(Main Claim – Toulmin Model).**

One of the main advantages of EMI is its potential to improve students' English exposure (Reason – Toulmin Model). In Indonesia, students often have limited opportunities to use English outside the classroom **(Ground – Toulmin Model)**. By learning subjects such as science or mathematics in English, students are exposed to academic vocabulary and authentic language use on a regular basis. This exposure can help students develop better listening, reading, and academic communication skills (Hamid, Nguyen, & Baldauf, 2015) **(Backing – Toulmin Model)**.

Opponents of EMI argue that using English in content subjects may reduce students' understanding of the material. They believe that students may focus more on understanding the language than the content itself, which could lead to confusion and lower academic achievement. This concern is reasonable, especially for students in rural areas or schools with limited English resources **(Acknowledgment – Rogerian Element)**.

However, this problem does not mean that EMI should be rejected entirely **(Rebuttal – Toulmin Model)**. Instead, it indicates the need for careful implementation **(Warrant – Toulmin Model)**. Teachers can use bilingual strategies, such as combining English with Indonesian explanations, to ensure that students understand both the content and the language (**Solution – Problem–Solution Model)**. In addition, EMI should be introduced gradually and supported by teacher training and appropriate learning materials.

In conclusion, while the use of English as a medium of instruction in Indonesian schools presents certain challenges, it also offers valuable opportunities for improving students' English competence and academic readiness **(Restatement of Claim – Classical Model)**. With proper planning, teacher support, and flexible language use, EMI can be an effective approach in Indonesian education **(Conclusion – Toulmin & Classical Model)**.

This essay was analyzed to identify the argumentative structure used in the essay and determine the most dominant argumentative model. The analysis was conducted by examining the elements of claims, reasons, evidence, reasoning, and conclusions that appear in the text.

6. Toulmin's Argument Model

This essay predominantly reflects Toulmin's Argument Model. The author presents the main claim, which is that the use of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) in Indonesian schools provides benefits in improving students' language competence and global readiness. This claim is supported by grounds, such as the demands of globalization, the need for international communication, and increased exposure to English in the academic environment.

The warrant element appears implicitly, namely, the assumption that increased exposure to English will have a positive impact on students' language skills. Some backing is also seen through references to the global education context and education policy, although not always accompanied by strong empirical data. However, rebuttals or anticipations of opposing arguments (e.g., the impact of EMI on material comprehension or student disparities) are still limited and have not been discussed in depth.

7. Classical (Aristotelian) Argument Model

The structure of the essay also shows elements of the classical argument model. The essay begins with an introduction explaining the context of English language use in Indonesian education, followed by a presentation of the main arguments, and concludes with an affirmation. However, classic stages such as refutation were not explicitly developed, so this model only appeared partially.

8. Problem–Solution Model

This essay also displays characteristics of the problem–solution model. The problem raised is the low level of readiness of Indonesian students to face the global demands of English language proficiency. As a solution, the author proposes the use of English as the medium of instruction in schools. However,

the relationship between the problem and the solution is still general in nature and is not fully supported by specific research data.

Based on the results of the analysis, the essay “The Use of English as a Medium of Instruction in Indonesian Schools” most strongly represents Toulmin's Argument Model, with partial support from the classical argument and problem–solution model. The essay demonstrates the author's ability to convey claims and reasons logically, but still needs strengthening in terms of rebuttal, use of academic evidence, and more critical argument development. These findings reveal the general characteristics of argumentative essay writing by Indonesian EFL students, who tend to be strong in expressing opinions but still limited in their depth of academic argumentation structure.

E. Challenges in Student Essay Writing

Essay writing is an important skill in the academic world, especially for English as a foreign language (EFL) students. It not only reflects linguistic proficiency but also demonstrates students' critical thinking and academic logic. However, many studies show that EFL students in Indonesia face various difficulties in the essay writing process, both in terms of structure, language, and ideas (Aulia & Sari, 2023; Lestari & Widodo, 2022). Similar difficulties are also reported in undergraduate contexts, where students struggle to organize ideas and express arguments coherently due to limited experience with academic writing conventions (Tasya, 2022; Ananda et al., 2024).

These difficulties become more complex when students are faced with the task of writing an argumentative essay, which requires them to state a clear claim, support arguments with logical evidence, and respond to alternative viewpoints. Argumentative writing demands systematic reasoning and critical thinking skills. Emilia (2011) emphasizes that effective argumentative writing involves constructing claims supported by grounds and backing. However, many students tend to perceive argumentation merely as expressing opinions rather than building evidence-based arguments (Alexaander et al., 2023).

Many studies have highlighted challenges faced by students in writing argumentative essays. These challenges are not limited to linguistic problems but also include weaknesses in argumentative structure, logical reasoning, and evidence integration (Ananda et al., 2024; Alexaander et al., 2023). Research indicates that students often fail to establish clear relationships between claims, reasons, and evidence, resulting in weak and unconvincing arguments (Tasya, 2022).

One major difficulty occurs at the initial stage of writing, particularly in formulating a thesis statement. Students often struggle to determine a clear argumentative position, causing thesis statements to be vague or descriptive rather than argumentative. This issue reflects students' limited understanding of the function of a thesis in an argumentative essay (Emilia, 2011; Tasya, 2022).

Another challenge lies in developing coherent arguments across paragraphs. Lestari and Widodo (2022) report that students frequently fail to connect supporting ideas logically to the thesis. Similarly, findings from Confronting the Challenges of Undergraduates' Argumentation Writing reveal that students experience difficulties in maintaining logical progression and cohesion throughout their essays.

Linguistic difficulties also significantly affect students' argumentative writing. Problems related to grammatical accuracy, limited academic vocabulary, and inappropriate sentence structures are commonly found in students' essays (Aulia & Sari, 2023; Tasya, 2022). These language limitations hinder students' ability to express complex reasoning and develop convincing arguments (Ananda et al., 2024).

In addition to technical challenges, affective factors play an important role in writing difficulties. Writing anxiety, low confidence, and fear of making mistakes often cause students to hesitate in expressing ideas or elaborating arguments (Husna et al., 2021). Similar findings are also reported in

undergraduate argumentation studies, which indicate that students' lack of confidence negatively affects their argumentative performance (Alexaander et al., 2023).

Finally, insufficient exposure to academic argumentative texts and limited guided practice further contribute to students' writing difficulties. Emilia (2011) notes that students rarely receive explicit instruction on argumentation strategies. This lack of exposure is also highlighted in previous studies, which emphasize that without adequate modeling and feedback, students tend to rely on personal opinions rather than evidence-based arguments (Tasya, 2022; Ananda et al., 2024).

Overall, the findings of this study are consistent with previous research (Emilia, 2011; Aulia & Sari, 2023; Lestari & Widodo, 2022; Husna et al., 2021; Tasya, 2022; Ananda et al., 2024; Alexaander et al., 2023), which highlights that argumentative writing difficulties among EFL students stem from a combination of limited structural knowledge, linguistic constraints, insufficient practice, and affective barriers. Therefore, improving students' argumentative writing ability requires explicit instruction in argumentative structure, guided practice in developing claims and evidence, continuous feedback, and supportive learning environments that reduce anxiety and build students' confidence. Addressing these aspects holistically is crucial for helping EFL students develop stronger academic argumentative writing skills.

F. Conclusion

Based on the reviewed literature, many EFL students experience various challenges in writing essays, particularly argumentative essays. The most commonly reported challenges in essay writing include difficulties in using academic vocabulary, applying correct grammar, and maintaining coherence and cohesion between sentences and paragraphs. Students also face problems in developing clear ideas, constructing logical arguments, and organizing essays

systematically. These challenges indicate that essay writing is not only about expressing ideas but also about applying appropriate language use and academic writing conventions.

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CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

A. Research Design

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach, which aims to describe in detail and in depth the phenomenon under study based on the perceptions and experiences of the research subjects. In this case, the phenomenon studied is the challenges EFL students face in writing argumentative essays and the strategies they use to overcome these challenges.

The qualitative approach was chosen because it is in accordance with the exploratory and interpretative research objectives, not to test hypotheses, but to understand the meaning behind the participants' experiences. Qualitative research also allows researchers to explore subjective and contextual data directly from data sources.

According to Sugiyono (2017), qualitative methods are suitable for researching natural object conditions, where researchers are key instruments, data collection is done in triangulation (combined), data analysis is inductive, and research results emphasize meaning rather than generalization.

Although this study emphasizes students' perceptions, the data were collected through interviews and supported by the analysis of students' argumentative essays. The interviews serve as the primary data source to explore students' perceived challenges in writing argumentative essays, as they allow participants to express their experiences and interpretations in their own words. Meanwhile, the analysis of students' argumentative essays functions as supporting data to provide contextual and empirical evidence of the challenges described by the participants.

Multiple data sources were employed to strengthen the credibility of the findings. According to Creswell (2012), the data credibility allows researchers to

cross-check findings and ensure that participants' perceptions are supported by observable data. Therefore, the inclusion of essay analysis does not shift the focus of the study from students' perceptions, but rather strengthens the interpretation of their perceived challenges in argumentative essay writing.

B. Population and Sample

The population in this study was students of the English Education Study Program at the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Keguruan, State Islamic University (UIN) Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, students who were active in semester 6 and above, and who had passed the English Academic Purpose (EAP) course.

The sample in this study was selected using a purposive sampling technique, which is a deliberate sampling technique based on certain criteria relevant to the research objectives. According to Creswell (2012), purposive sampling is a method that allows researchers to select participants who are considered to be able to provide in-depth information and rich data based on certain characteristics or experiences.

The criteria used in the sample selection are as follows:

1. Active students in semester 6 and above,
2. Have passed the English Academic Purpose (EAP) course,
3. Have experience in writing argumentative essays in an academic context,
4. Willing to be a participant and take part in interviews and provide writing samples.

The number of participants was 5 students from English Language Education Department in UIN Ar-Raniry in Banda Aceh.

C. Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations are essential to ensuring that research respects the rights, dignity, and well-being of all participants. In line with the principles proposed by

Beauchamp and Childress (2019), this study adheres to the principles of autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, and justice throughout the research process. These principles also build trust, maintain research integrity, and ensure credible, responsible data management (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

First, the researcher established clear criteria for selecting participants. Participants were required to be active university students in their sixth semester or above, be available to participate in the study, agree to participate voluntarily, and have prior experience writing argumentative essays. The researcher carefully carried out this recruitment process to ensure that the individuals involved could meaningfully contribute to the study, as recommended by Berg and Lune (2017).

After determining the participant criteria, researchers coordinate with the university department office to contact potential participants through official channels. Participants are informed about the purpose of the research, the research procedures, and their expected involvement. Participation is voluntary, and participants are clearly informed of their right to withdraw from the research at any time without negative consequences. To ensure informed consent, researchers provided a written consent form that explained all aspects of the research, including the procedures and the possible risks and benefits. This process followed ethical guidelines that emphasized transparency and respect for participants' rights (BERA, 2018).

Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained throughout the research process. Participants' identities were not revealed in any reports or publications. All collected data were securely stored, and access was restricted to the researcher and authorized members of the research team only. These measures were implemented to create a safe environment for participants, encourage honest responses, and uphold ethical standards related to data protection (Wiles, 2013; Israel & Hay, 2006).

The ethical procedures implemented in this study ensured that participant rights were protected and that the research was conducted responsibly. The researcher was

able to foster trust and uphold the integrity of the research process by setting clear selection criteria, obtaining informed consent, ensuring voluntary participation, and protecting confidentiality.

D. Data collecting

The data was collected through two main techniques, namely:

1. Writing samples

The researcher also analyzed samples of argumentative essays that the participants had written to directly identify linguistic, organizational, or content difficulties that appeared in their writing.

2. Semi-structured interviews.

The interviews were conducted to explore students' perceptions of the challenges they face in writing argumentative essays, as well as the strategies they use to overcome them. The interview questions were open-ended and flexible to allow for in-depth exploration. The interviews were conducted individually and scheduled according to the availability and personal circumstances of the participants to ensure comfort and meaningful responses.

The interviews were recorded with the participants' consent and then transcribed for further analysis. The primary data of this study were obtained through semi-structured interviews, which aimed to explore students' perceptions of the challenges they face in writing argumentative essays. The secondary data were obtained from students' argumentative essay writing samples. These writing samples were analyzed to support and illustrate the challenges mentioned by the participants during the interviews.

E. Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study was conducted using argument structure analysis and thematic analysis. These two approaches are used to comprehensively understand

the challenges students face in writing argumentative essays as well as the strategies they use to overcome them.

1. **Argumentative Structure Analysis**

Before the interviews were conducted, the essays written by the participants were analyzed. This analysis was carried out to identify the argumentation models used by Indonesian EFL students, as explained in Chapter II, namely Toulmin's Model of Argument, the Claim–Reason–Evidence (CRE) Model, the Aristotelian Model, the Rogerian Model, and the Problem–Solution Model.

The analysis focuses on the main elements of argumentation that appear in the participants' essays, such as claim statements, supporting reasons or data, use of evidence, the presence of counterarguments, and solutions or reaffirmation of the author's position. Each essay was analyzed qualitatively by identifying the dominant argumentation patterns and then matching them with the characteristics of each argumentation model.

In analyzing the participants' essays, the researcher first identified the main claim stated in the introduction or thesis of the essay. Next, the researcher analyzes the reasons and data or evidence used to support the claim. If the essay shows a clear logical relationship between the claim and the data, the essay is categorized as having a strong argumentative structure.

2. **Thematic Analysis**

Thematic analysis is used to identify, analyze, and report patterns or themes in qualitative data, particularly from interviews and field notes. This procedure aims to find the main themes relevant to the research focus. The steps of thematic analysis refer to the stages proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), namely:

a. Getting to know the data by transcribing and reading the data repeatedly to understand the overall meaning.

b. Initial data coding, which is labeling or coding relevant units of meaning.
c. Searching for themes from the set of codes that have been made, and grouping them into initial themes.
d. Reviewing the themes, ensuring that each theme fits the data and is related to the others.
e. Defining and naming the themes, to formulate a clear and representative final result.
f. Compiling a report on the results of the analysis, systematically and narratively.

To ensure the validity and validity of the data, triangulation techniques were used, namely by comparing data from interviews, student writing documents (essays), and field notes. (if available). According to Moleong (2017), validity in qualitative research is obtained through in-depth observation, data triangulation, and researcher involvement in the process continuously.

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CHAPTER IV
FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This chapter focused on analyzing the essays by the participants, elaborating findings and discussions on the data that has been collected through interviews to answer the research questions in the first chapter.

A. Research Finding

The analysis of the data revealed several significant findings, which are systematically presented based on the research questions.

Research findings from the essay:

1. Argumentative Essay by SW

Claim

Reasons

Does Reading Books Improve Students' Knowledge?

The answer is: Reading books really does improve students' knowledge. Reading books is done from the beginning to increase knowledge. During school, teachers usually direct students to read books.

Textbooks are designed for students and tailored to their level. This way, students will easily absorb knowledge. The more often and more they read, the more knowledge they can gain.

Besides the school textbooks, books such as encyclopedias, novels, and even comics are very helpful in expanding students' knowledge. Some say that books are windows to the world. Within those small books, there are many things that can broaden one's horizons.

The personal experiences can be lessons for students, the experiences of others coming from books can also be valuable lessons. Therefore, if you want to gain a lot of knowledge, read more books.

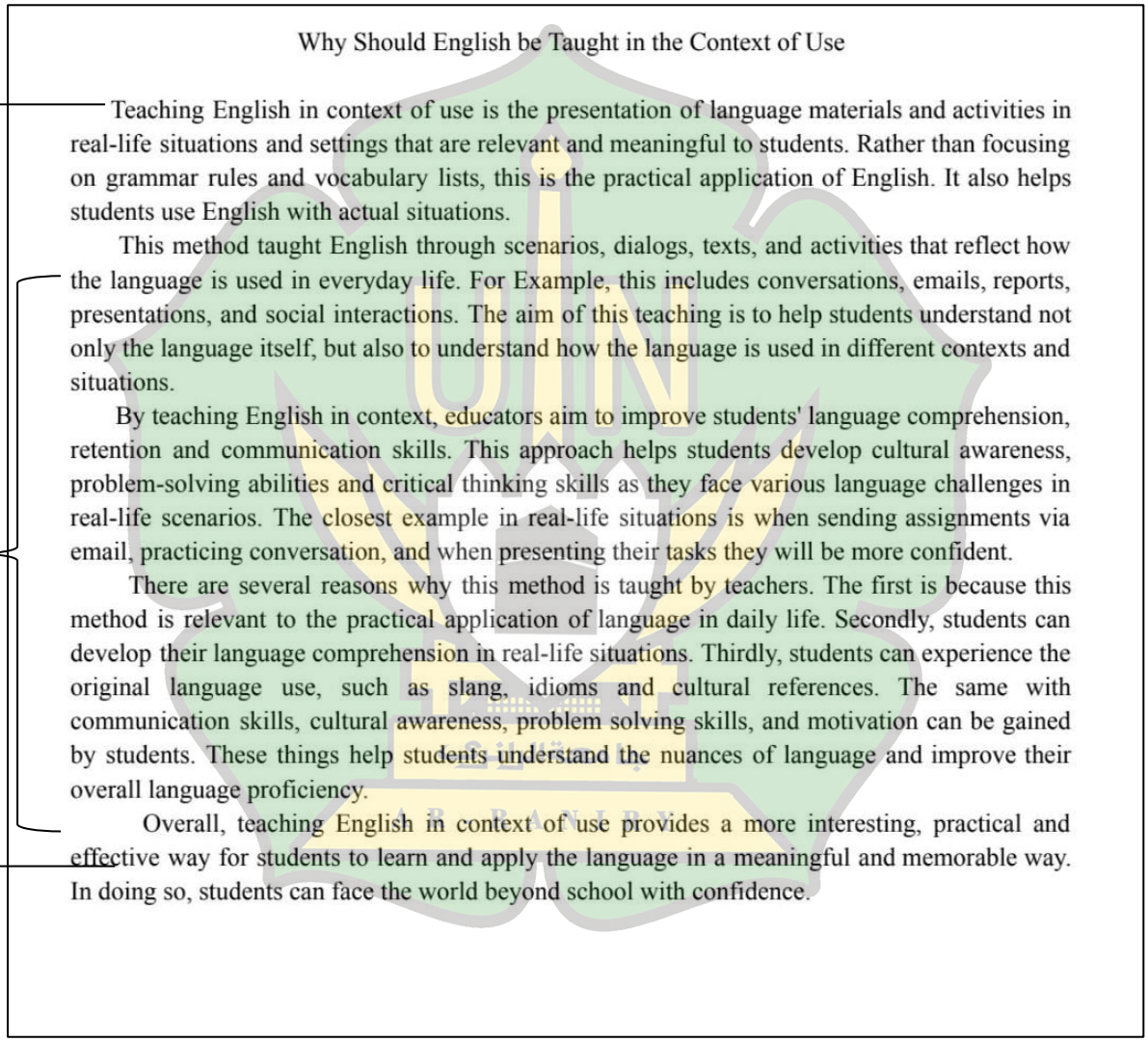
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Analysis:

The argument in this first essay structure is still simple and weak; claims are stated directly at the beginning, but the reasons and supporting evidence are general and repetitive without strong logical development. The vocabulary used

is basic and non-academic, with frequent repetition of the words “books” and “knowledge.” The grammar is generally understandable, although some sentences are ineffective and imprecise. Coherence between paragraphs is enough, but cohesion is weak due to a lack of connecting ideas. Transitions are almost non-existent and only appear implicitly, making the flow of the argument feel flat.

2. Argumentative Essay by LH



Why Should English be Taught in the Context of Use

Opening

Teaching English in context of use is the presentation of language materials and activities in real-life situations and settings that are relevant and meaningful to students. Rather than focusing on grammar rules and vocabulary lists, this is the practical application of English. It also helps students use English with actual situations.

Contents

This method taught English through scenarios, dialogs, texts, and activities that reflect how the language is used in everyday life. For Example, this includes conversations, emails, reports, presentations, and social interactions. The aim of this teaching is to help students understand not only the language itself, but also to understand how the language is used in different contexts and situations.

By teaching English in context, educators aim to improve students' language comprehension, retention and communication skills. This approach helps students develop cultural awareness, problem-solving abilities and critical thinking skills as they face various language challenges in real-life scenarios. The closest example in real-life situations is when sending assignments via email, practicing conversation, and when presenting their tasks they will be more confident.

There are several reasons why this method is taught by teachers. The first is because this method is relevant to the practical application of language in daily life. Secondly, students can develop their language comprehension in real-life situations. Thirdly, students can experience the original language use, such as slang, idioms and cultural references. The same with communication skills, cultural awareness, problem solving skills, and motivation can be gained by students. These things help students understand the nuances of language and improve their overall language proficiency.

Conclusion

Overall, teaching English in context of use provides a more interesting, practical and effective way for students to learn and apply the language in a meaningful and memorable way. In doing so, students can face the world beyond school with confidence.

Analysis:

The structure of this second essay is fairly clear but not strong; it implicitly claims that English should be taught in the context of use, but the development

is more explanatory than critical argumentation. The vocabulary is relatively common and tends to be repetitive, with some less academic word choices. The grammar is generally understandable, but there are some long and ineffective sentences and a few minor errors. Coherence between paragraphs is fairly well maintained because the topic is consistent, but cohesion is still weak because ideas are often added without strong connectors. Transitions are used explicitly (e.g., the first, secondly, thirdly), but they are still simple and mechanical.

3. Argumentative Essay by SA

"In some parts of the world, people have become more focused on themselves than their communities. What problems can this situation cause, and how can they be solved?"

Opening

These days, the more technology advances, the more different people's mindsets and habits become. In some parts of the world, people have become more focused on themselves than their communities. Technology has taken over things and replaced the human position so people no longer need others.

Claim

This attitude is called individualism. Being an individualist has a bad impact on a person. Some of them include becoming more selfish, decreasing the ability to socialize and get along, not being able to work together in groups, thinking that everything he/she does must be right, and losing a sense of solidarity with others. If this continues, the next generation is bound to be even worse off from being unsocial.

Solutions

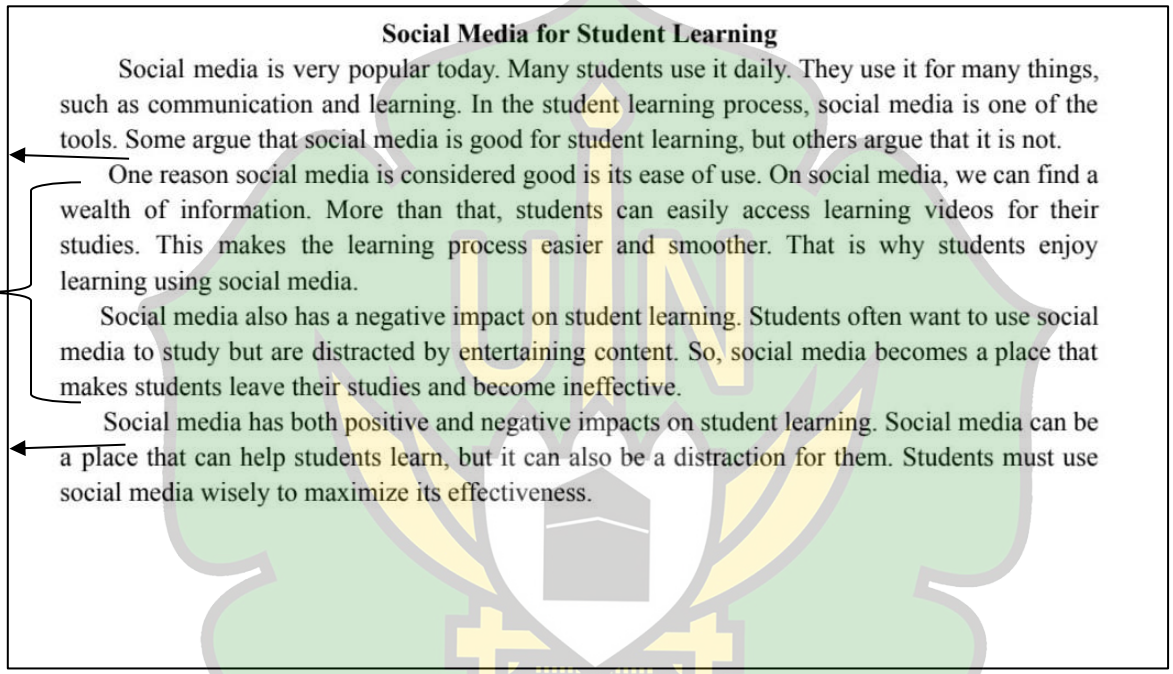
We can change this individualized attitude by limiting ourselves from relying on technology. We can organize our time to socialize and interact with others. We start with ourselves and then remind those around us to be less individualistic. Then implement some rules at home, school, work and other places that limit the use of technology. Organize many activities that require cooperation as well as cohesiveness in groups. Also we should prioritize teaching our children not to be too individualistic.

Being individualistic makes us selfish, unsocial and lacking in solidarity. We can start from our utilize technology. We can apply some rules at home, school, office and other places that limit the use of technology. We must start now in order to save the next generation.

Analysis:

The argument structure of the third essay uses the problem–solution model, but it is still simple and underdeveloped. The vocabulary is basic and repetitive, and the grammar is fairly understandable despite some errors. Coherence is maintained because the flow from problem to solution is clear, but cohesion and transitions are weak because the connecting ideas are very limited.

4. Argumentative Essay by AT



Social Media for Student Learning

Social media is very popular today. Many students use it daily. They use it for many things, such as communication and learning. In the student learning process, social media is one of the tools. Some argue that social media is good for student learning, but others argue that it is not.

One reason social media is considered good is its ease of use. On social media, we can find a wealth of information. More than that, students can easily access learning videos for their studies. This makes the learning process easier and smoother. That is why students enjoy learning using social media.

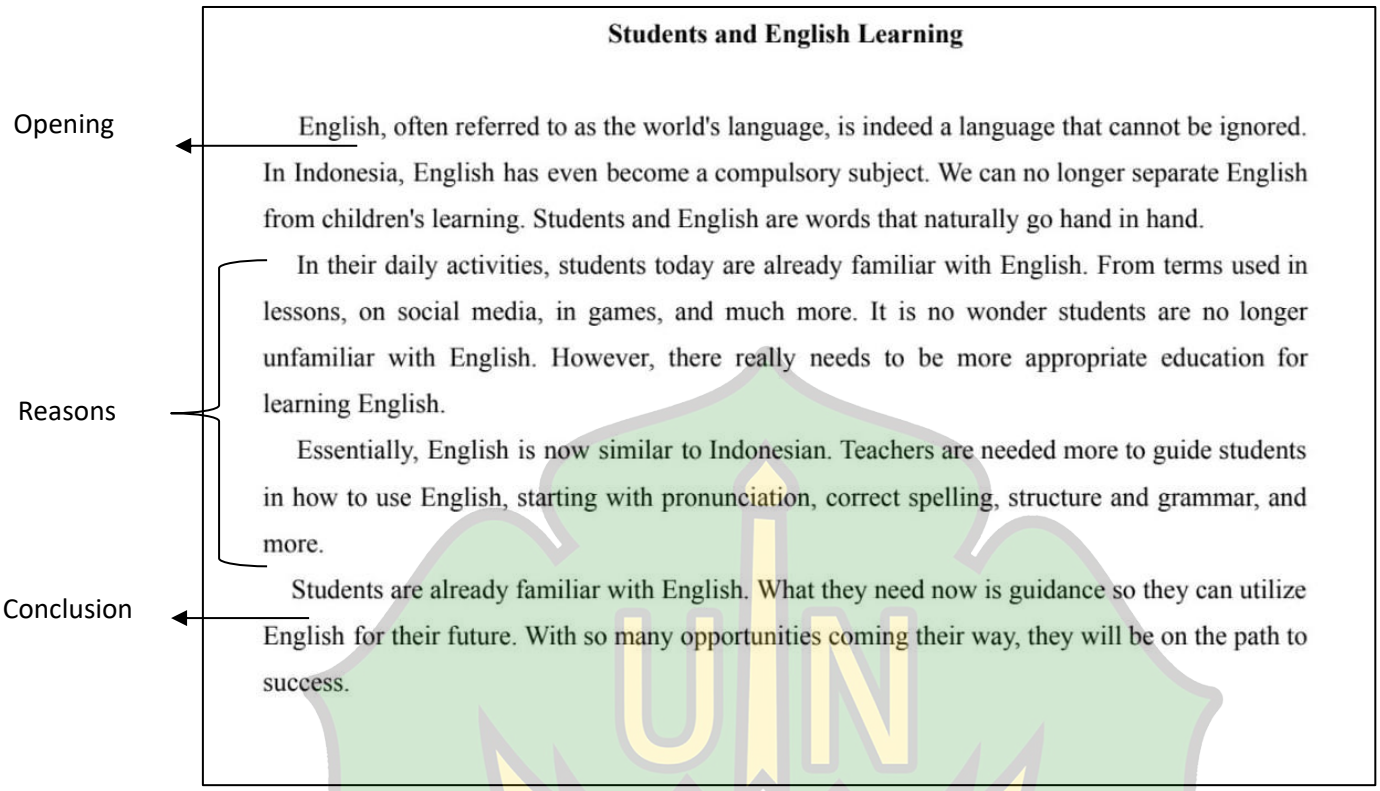
Social media also has a negative impact on student learning. Students often want to use social media to study but are distracted by entertaining content. So, social media becomes a place that makes students leave their studies and become ineffective.

Social media has both positive and negative impacts on student learning. Social media can be a place that can help students learn, but it can also be a distraction for them. Students must use social media wisely to maximize its effectiveness.

Analysis:

The structure of the fourth essay is simple and balanced, presenting two sides (positive and negative) without in-depth argument development. Claims are made in general terms and supported by reasons that are still descriptive. Vocabulary is basic and repetitive, with limited use of academic terms. Grammar is relatively easy to understand, although some sentences are ineffective. Coherence between paragraphs is quite good because ideas are arranged sequentially, but cohesion is still weak because the relationships between ideas are not reinforced with varied connectors. Transitions are used very sparingly and tend to be implicit.

5. Argumentative Essay by UH



Students and English Learning

Opening

English, often referred to as the world's language, is indeed a language that cannot be ignored. In Indonesia, English has even become a compulsory subject. We can no longer separate English from children's learning. Students and English are words that naturally go hand in hand.

Reasons

In their daily activities, students today are already familiar with English. From terms used in lessons, on social media, in games, and much more. It is no wonder students are no longer unfamiliar with English. However, there really needs to be more appropriate education for learning English.

Essentially, English is now similar to Indonesian. Teachers are needed more to guide students in how to use English, starting with pronunciation, correct spelling, structure and grammar, and more.

Conclusion

Students are already familiar with English. What they need now is guidance so they can utilize English for their future. With so many opportunities coming their way, they will be on the path to success.

Analysis:

The structure of the fifth essay's argument is weak and implicit; there are no clearly stated claims and the argument develops descriptively. The vocabulary used is simple and repetitive, with some common expressions that are not very academic. The grammar is generally understandable, but there are sentences that are ineffective and lack precision. Coherence is fairly well maintained because the topic remains consistent, but cohesion is weak because ideas are often repeated without clear development. Transitions are rarely used, so the flow of the argument feels flat and unstructured.

Conclusion

Overall, the essays demonstrate basic ability to convey ideas and opinions, but the arguments are still simple and tend to be implicit. The argumentative structure is not yet well developed, with general reasoning and minimal

elaboration. Vocabulary and grammar usage are fairly understandable, but still limited and lacking in academic sophistication. Coherence is generally maintained due to consistent topics, but cohesion and the use of transitions are still weak, so the flow of arguments is not yet fully logical.

Research findings from interview data:

The analysis of interview data revealed several major themes related to students' challenges in writing argumentative essays. These findings are presented thematically and supported by participants' responses.

1. Challenges in Using Academic Vocabulary

One of the most common challenges is the use of academic vocabulary. EFL students feel that academic vocabulary differs significantly from everyday English. Limited mastery of academic vocabulary makes them hesitant in choosing the right words that are appropriate for an academic context.

SW stated:

> "*I often have difficulty because academic vocabulary is different from everyday English, and the choices are limited.*"

LH stated:

> *"I also experience difficulties in using language because my academic vocabulary is still limited and quite different from the English commonly used in everyday life."*

SA stated:

> *"I rarely hear or read academic essays in English. This makes me less familiar with the use of formal or academic language."*

AT stated:

"*I often have difficulty because academic vocabulary in English is quite different from everyday English. I am also afraid of using words incorrectly so that the meaning is not accurate*."

UH also stated:

"*For me, academic language is quite difficult if you are not accustomed to reading texts that use language appropriate to the context*."

In general, students feel that academic vocabulary is difficult because it is very different from everyday English. Limited exposure to academic texts makes them unfamiliar with the appropriate word choices, causing them to feel uncertain and afraid of making mistakes when using academic vocabulary.

2. Difficulties in Maintaining Formal Academic Language

Students often feel unsure whether the language they use is formal enough for academic essays. Lack of exposure to English academic texts makes it difficult for them to distinguish between informal and formal language. This results in the use of everyday language in academic writing.

SW stated:

"*I often feel unsure whether the words I choose are formal enough. Sometimes, without realizing it, everyday English style still carries over into my academic writing.*"

LH stated:

"*I rarely hear or read academic essays in English. This makes me less familiar with the use of formal or academic language*."

UH stated:

"*The problem is that I am often unsure whether the words I use are formal enough. My sentences sometimes become too stiff or unnatural.*"

Students generally feel uncertain and lack confidence about the level of formality they should use in academic essays. Limited exposure to academic texts makes it difficult for them to distinguish between formal and informal language, resulting in the frequent use of everyday language or sentences that sound stiff and unnatural.

3. Challenges in Grammar Error

Difficulties in grammar errors are also a significant challenge. Students stated that a limited understanding of grammar and fear of structural errors made it difficult for them to construct more complex and academic sentences. This has an impact on the quality of the arguments presented.

SA stated:

> "*I find it difficult to write complex sentences because it requires a good command of grammar. I often get confused when constructing clauses and am afraid of making structural mistakes.*"

AT stated:

> "*Due to my limited understanding of grammar and my fear of making mistakes in sentence structure, write complex sentences is hard for me.*"

LH also stated:

> "*I am concerned about making grammatical errors when writing long argumentative sentences.*"

Students feel that their limited understanding of grammar causes them to write long sentences, but these sentences are often unclear and difficult to understand. Fear of structural errors also prevents ideas and arguments from being conveyed effectively in academic essays.

4. Problems with Coherence and Idea Development

EFL students have difficulty developing ideas and maintaining coherence between sentences and paragraphs. Ideas in essays often feel disjointed and lack logical flow, which affects the clarity of the overall argument.

SW stated:

> "*Sometimes the ideas between sentences or paragraphs feel disjointed and lack flow.*"

LH stated:

> "*I often have difficulty maintaining the flow of my writing so that the ideas between sentences and paragraphs are clearly and coherently connected.*"

AT stated:

> "*I often have difficulty to develop and connect ideas coherently in English because I do not yet fully understand how to do it properly.*"

UH stated:

> "*Sometimes the ideas between paragraphs feel disconnected and are not clearly linked.*"

In general, students find it difficult to develop ideas and maintain coherence between sentences and paragraphs. They realize that the ideas in their essays often feel disjointed, lack flow, and are not logically connected, making their arguments unclear and difficult to follow.

5. Difficulties in Using Transitional Devices

The use of transitional words is another challenge faced by students. They admit that they do not fully understand the functions of various transitional devices, so they often use the same connecting words repeatedly or inappropriately for the ideas they want to convey.

SW stated:

> "*I often get confused when choosing the right transition words and sometimes I don't even use them. You know, I don't fully understand the function of each connecting word.*"

LH stated:

> "*It is difficult when you do not find out the function of each conjunction used in a sentence and the one that follows.*"

SA stated:

> "*I have not mastered many conjunctions in English and am often confused about when and how to use them correctly.*"

AT stated:

> "*The choice of transitional words is also a problem because I am often confused about determining the appropriate transition, so that the relationship between ideas in the writing is unclear*."

UH also stated:

> "*I often have trouble choosing the right transition words that are not repetitive.*"

Students still have difficulty applying transitional words due to a lack of understanding. As a result, they feel that their ideas and writing are not coherent. There are also times when they do not use transitional words at all.

6. Lack of Confidence in Stating Arguments

Some students feel hesitant to express their positions or opinions assertively. This hesitation arises because they feel that their arguments are not strong enough or are not supported by sufficient evidence.

SA stated:

> "*It is quite difficult to formulate a specific thesis and support it with consistent arguments*."

AT stated:

> "*In the early stages of writing, I find it quite difficult to determine a clear and focused thesis. This process usually takes a long time and requires several revisions.*"

UH stated:

> "*I have trouble expressing my ideas in English, so I find it difficult to state an argument.*"

Some students experience difficulty expressing their positions or opinions clearly and confidently. This hesitation is mainly caused by uncertainty in formulating a clear thesis and developing consistent supporting arguments. Limited ability to express ideas in English also makes students unsure about the strength of their arguments, which leads to unclear or weakly stated positions in their essays.

B. Discussion

This study aims to answer the research question: What are the challenges perceived by Indonesian EFL students in argumentative essay writing? Based on the findings, it is evident that Indonesian EFL students experience multiple and interconnected challenges when writing argumentative essays. These challenges cover lexical difficulties, technical aspects of writing such as grammar and sentence structure, problems in organizing and developing

arguments, and psychological factors that influence students' confidence in expressing ideas. The findings indicate that argumentative writing is a complex skill that requires not only linguistic competence but also critical thinking, structural awareness, and emotional readiness.

One of the major challenges identified in this study relates to lexical aspects, particularly the use of academic vocabulary. Many students find academic language significantly different from everyday English, which makes them unsure when choosing appropriate words for academic contexts. This finding supports Aulia and Sari (2023), who argue that limited mastery of academic vocabulary causes students to rely on simple and informal expressions in their essays. Similarly, Tasya (2022) reports that students' lack of exposure to academic texts results in unfamiliarity with formal language conventions. As a result, students tend to avoid precise academic terms and struggle to convey complex ideas clearly. This lexical limitation directly affects the quality of arguments, as students are unable to express reasoning in a convincing and academically acceptable manner.

In addition to lexical problems, technical difficulties, especially in grammar and sentence construction, also play a significant role in students' argumentative writing challenges. The findings show that students often produce long sentences that lack clarity due to weak grammatical control. Fear of making grammatical errors leads students to hesitate when writing complex sentences, which are essential in argumentative essays. This result is consistent with Lestari and Widodo (2022), who found that grammatical inaccuracy and inappropriate sentence structure frequently reduce the clarity of students' arguments. Ananda et al. (2024) also emphasize that grammatical weaknesses limit students' ability to present logical reasoning and support claims effectively. Therefore, technical challenges not only affect language accuracy but also weaken the overall argumentative strength of students' essays.

Another prominent challenge revealed in this study is related to organization and coherence. Students experience difficulties in developing ideas and maintaining logical flow between sentences and paragraphs. Ideas in their essays often appear disconnected, making arguments difficult to follow. This finding aligns with Emilia (2011), who explains that many EFL students lack a clear understanding of how arguments should be structured in academic writing. Similar results are reported by Tasya (2022), who found that students often fail to link supporting ideas to the main thesis coherently. Without strong organizational skills, students' arguments become fragmented, reducing the effectiveness of the essay as a whole.

Furthermore, the use of transitional devices is another area of difficulty. The findings indicate that students either overuse certain transition words, use them inappropriately, or omit them entirely. This problem reflects students' limited understanding of the function of transitional words in showing relationships between ideas. These findings are in line with Aulia and Sari (2023), who report that students' lack of knowledge about cohesive devices results in repetitive or unclear transitions. When transitions are poorly used or absent, the logical connection between arguments becomes weak, making the essay less coherent and harder to comprehend.

Difficulties are also evident in the development of thesis statements and argumentative positions. Many students struggle to formulate a clear and focused thesis, which causes their essays to become descriptive rather than argumentative. This supports the findings of Emilia (2011), who highlights that students often misunderstand the role of a thesis statement in argumentative writing. Tasya (2022) similarly notes that unclear thesis statements lead to inconsistent arguments throughout the essay. When students are unable to state a strong position, their arguments lack direction and fail to persuade readers effectively.

In addition to lexical and technical challenges, psychological factors significantly influence students' argumentative writing. Writing anxiety, low self-confidence, and fear of making mistakes cause students to hesitate in expressing opinions assertively. This finding is consistent with Husna et al. (2021), who emphasize that affective factors such as anxiety negatively affect students' writing performance. Alexander et al. (2023) also report that students' lack of confidence leads them to avoid elaborating arguments or presenting strong claims. These psychological barriers often interact with linguistic difficulties, as students with limited language proficiency tend to feel more anxious when writing academically.

Although most of the findings in this study are in line with previous research, a slight difference can be observed in the emphasis of the challenges faced by students. Several previous studies tend to highlight argumentative structure and logical reasoning as the main difficulties in argumentative writing (Emilia, 2011; Tasya, 2022; Ananda et al., 2024). However, the findings of this study indicate that lexical and technical challenges, such as limited academic vocabulary, grammatical uncertainty, unclear long sentences, and improper or absent use of transitional devices, are equally dominant. These linguistic and technical problems often prevent students from expressing arguments clearly, even when they have ideas to convey. In addition, psychological factors such as low confidence and fear of making mistakes appear to strongly influence students' hesitation in stating clear positions, suggesting that affective issues play a more central role in argumentative writing difficulties than emphasized in some previous studies.

Overall, this study reinforces previous findings (Emilia, 2011; Aulia & Sari, 2023; Lestari & Widodo, 2022; Husna et al., 2021; Tasya, 2022; Ananda et al., 2024; Alexaander et al., 2023) while providing a more integrated understanding of the challenges faced by Indonesian EFL students in argumentative essay writing. The results indicate that effective instruction should combine explicit teaching of argumentative structure, development of academic vocabulary,

improvement of technical writing skills, and psychological support to build students' confidence. Such a comprehensive approach is essential to help students develop stronger, clearer, and more persuasive argumentative essays.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusion

This study explored the challenges perceived by Indonesian EFL students in writing argumentative essays. The findings show that students mainly experience lexical challenges, particularly in using appropriate academic vocabulary, and technical challenges, including grammatical accuracy, sentence clarity, coherence, and the use of transitions. In addition, psychological challenges, such as lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, and hesitation in expressing arguments, also influence students' writing performance. Overall, these challenges indicate that argumentative essay writing remains a demanding task for EFL students and requires continuous support in both academic language development and affective aspects of writing.

B. Suggestion

Based on the conclusions above, several suggestions are proposed.

For students, it is suggested that they improve their understanding of argumentative essay structure by practicing writing clear thesis statements, claims, and supporting arguments. Increasing exposure to academic texts may help students develop academic vocabulary and become more familiar with formal language use. Students are also encouraged to practice integrating evidence and references to strengthen their arguments and gradually reduce anxiety through continuous writing practice.

For teachers, it is recommended that explicit instruction be provided on argumentative essay components, including thesis statements, claims, reasons, evidence, and coherence. Teachers should also address linguistic challenges by focusing on grammar and academic vocabulary development. In addition, guidance

on academic literacy skills, such as the use of sources and citation, should be integrated into writing instruction. Creating a supportive classroom environment is essential to reduce students' psychological challenges, such as fear of making mistakes and lack of confidence.

This study has several limitations. The number of participants was limited, and the data were collected mainly through interviews and essay analysis. Therefore, the findings may not represent all Indonesian EFL students' experiences. Future studies are recommended to involve a larger sample size and use additional data collection methods, such as classroom observation or longitudinal studies, to gain deeper insights into students' writing development.

Further research may also focus on specific types of challenges, such as academic literacy challenges or psychological challenges, and investigate instructional strategies that can effectively address these issues in argumentative writing.

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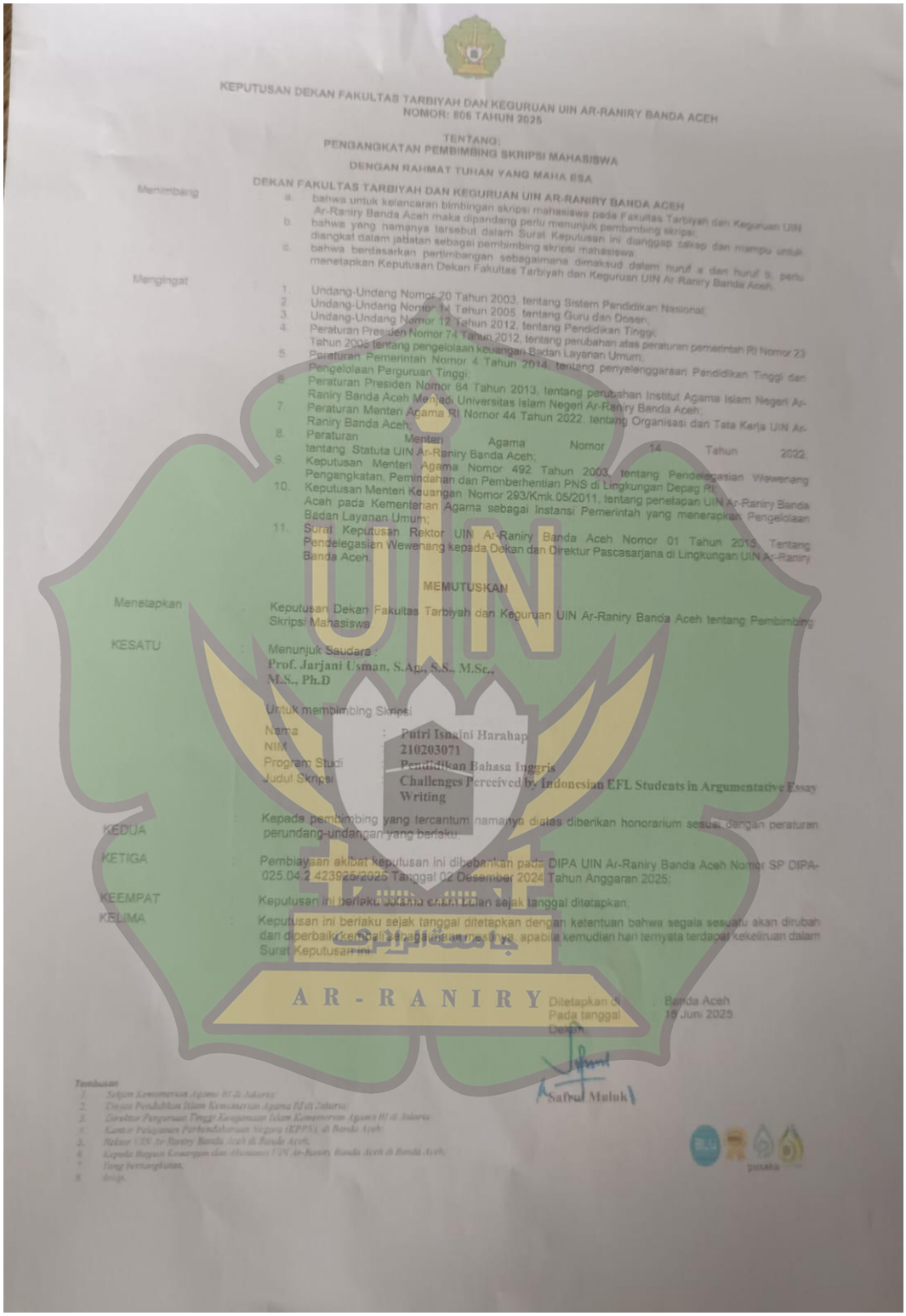
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LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A: Appointment Letter of Supervisor



KEPUTUSAN DEKAN FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN UIN AR-RANIRY BANDA ACEH
NOMOR: 806 TAHUN 2025

TENTANG:
PENGANGKATAN PEMBIMBING SKRIPSI MAHASISWA

DENGAN RAHMAT TUHAN YANG MAHA ESA

DEKAN FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN UIN AR-RANIRY BANDA ACEH

Menimbang :
a. bahwa untuk kelancaran bimbingan skripsi mahasiswa pada Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh maka dipandang perlu menunjuk pembimbing skripsi;
b. bahwa yang namanya tersebut dalam Surat Keputusan ini dianggap cakap dan mampu untuk diangkat dalam jabatan sebagai pembimbing skripsi mahasiswa;
c. bahwa berdasarkan pertimbangan sebagaimana dimaksud dalam huruf a dan huruf b, perlu menetapkan Keputusan Dekan Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh;

Mengingat :
1. Undang-Undang Nomor 20 Tahun 2003, tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional;
2. Undang-Undang Nomor 14 Tahun 2005, tentang Guru dan Dosen;
3. Undang-Undang Nomor 12 Tahun 2012, tentang Pendidikan Tinggi;
4. Peraturan Presiden Nomor 74 Tahun 2012, tentang perubahan atas peraturan pemerintah RI Nomor 23 Tahun 2005 tentang pengelolaan keuangan Badan Layanan Umum;
5. Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 4 Tahun 2014, tentang penyelenggaraan Pendidikan Tinggi dan Pengelolaan Perguruan Tinggi;
6. Peraturan Presiden Nomor 64 Tahun 2013, tentang perubahan Institut Agama Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh Menjadi Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh;
7. Peraturan Menteri Agama RI Nomor 44 Tahun 2022, tentang Organisasi dan Tata Kerja UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh;
8. Peraturan Menteri Agama Nomor 14 Tahun 2022, tentang Statuta UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh;
9. Keputusan Menteri Agama Nomor 492 Tahun 2003, tentang Pendelegasian Wewenang Pengangkatan, Pemindahan dan Pemberhentian PNS di Lingkungan Depag RI;
10. Keputusan Menteri Keuangan Nomor 293/Kmk.05/2011, tentang penetapan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh pada Kementerian Agama sebagai Instansi Pemerintah yang menerapkan Pengelolaan Badan Layanan Umum;
11. Surat Keputusan Rektor UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh Nomor 01 Tahun 2015, Tentang Pendelegasian Wewenang kepada Dekan dan Direktur Pascasarjana di Lingkungan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh.

MEMUTUSKAN

Menetapkan : Keputusan Dekan Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh tentang Pembimbing Skripsi Mahasiswa

KESATU : Menunjuk Saudara :
Prof. Jarjani Usman, S.Ag., S.S., M.Sc., M.S., Ph.D

Untuk membimbing Skripsi :

Nama	:	**Putri Isnaini Harahap**
NIM	:	**210203071**
Program Studi	:	**Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris**
Judul Skripsi	:	**Challenges Perceived by Indonesian EFL Students in Argumentative Essay Writing**

KEDUA : Kepada pembimbing yang tercantum namanya diatas diberikan honorarium sesuai dengan peraturan perundang-undangan yang berlaku;

KETIGA : Pembiayaan akibat keputusan ini dibebankan pada DIPA UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh Nomor SP DIPA-025.04.2.423925/2025 Tanggal 02 Desember 2024 Tahun Anggaran 2025;

KEEMPAT : Keputusan ini berlaku selama enam bulan sejak tanggal ditetapkan;

KELIMA : Keputusan ini berlaku sejak tanggal ditetapkan dengan ketentuan bahwa segala sesuatu akan dirubah dan diperbaiki kembali sebagaimana mestinya, apabila kemudian hari ternyata terdapat kekeliruan dalam Surat Keputusan ini.

Ditetapkan di : Banda Aceh
Pada tanggal : 16 Juni 2025
Dekan,

Safrul Muluk

Tembusan
1. Sekjen Kementerian Agama RI di Jakarta;
2. Dirjen Pendidikan Islam Kementerian Agama RI di Jakarta;
3. Direktur Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Kementerian Agama RI di Jakarta;
4. Kantor Pelayanan Perbendaharaan Negara (KPPN) di Banda Aceh;
5. Rektor UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh di Banda Aceh;
6. Kepala Biro Keuangan dan Aset UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh di Banda Aceh;
7. Yang bersangkutan;
8. Arsip.

Appendix B: Recommendation Letter from the Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan to Conduct Field Research

KEMENTERIAN AGAMA REPUBLIK INDONESIA
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI AR-RANIRY BANDA ACEH
FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN
Jl. Syeikh Abdur Rauf Kopelma Darussalam Banda Aceh Telp/Fax. : 0651-752921

Nomor : B-312/Un.08/FTK.1/TL.00/1/2026
Lamp : -
Hal : ***Penelitian Ilmiah Mahasiswa***

Kepada Yth,
Ketua Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.

Fakultas Tarbiyah Dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry dengan ini menerangkan bahwa:

NIM : 210203071
Nama : PUTRI ISNAINI HARAHAP
Program Studi/Jurusan : Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris
Alamat : Jl. Panglima Sigli Dusun Bawal Ulee Lheue

Saudara yang tersebut namanya diatas benar mahasiswa Fakultas Tarbiyah Dan Keguruan bermaksud melakukan penelitian ilmiah di lembaga yang Bapak/Ibu pimpin dalam rangka penulisan Skripsi dengan judul ***CHALLENGES PERCEIVED BY INDONESIAN EFL STUDENTS IN ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY WRITING***

Banda Aceh, 20 Januari 2026
An. Dekan
Wakil Dekan Bidang Akademik dan Kelembagaan

Prof. Dr. Buhori Muslim, M.Ag.
NIP. 197508152001121002

Berlaku sampai : 27 Februari 2026

Appendix C: Recommendation Letter from UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh for Conducting Research



KEMENTERIAN AGAMA REPUBLIK INDONESIA
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI AR-RANIRY
FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN
PRODI PENDIDIKAN BAHASA INGGRIS
Jln Syeikh Abdur Rauf Kopelma Darussalam Banda Aceh
Email : pbi.ftk@ar-raniry.ac.id. Website : https://ar-raniry.ac.id

SURAT KETERANGAN
Nomor: B-052/Un.08/PBI/Kp.01.2/1/2026

Ketua Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Darussalam Banda Aceh menerangkan bahwa yang nama tersebut di bawah ini:

Nama	: Putri Isnaini Harahap
NIM	: 210203071
Prodi	: Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris
Alamat	: Ulee Lheue, Meuraxa, Banda Aceh

Benar telah melakukan pengumpulan data untuk penelitian pada Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh dalam rangka penyusunan Skripsi yang berjudul:

"CHALLENGES PERCEIVED BY INDONESIAN EFL STUDENTS IN ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY WRITING"

Demikianlah Surat Keterangan ini kami buat agar dapat dipergunakan seperlunya.

Banda Aceh, 27 Januari 2026
Ketua Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris,

Syarifah Dahliana

Appendix D: Interview questions

Interview's Questions List:

1. What is your understanding of an academic argumentative essay?
2. What differences do you feel between writing argumentative essays and other types of essays?
3. In your opinion, what makes an argumentative essay good or effective?
4. Which aspects of quality writing (content, organization, language, or argument) do you find most difficult to achieve?
5. What difficulties do you usually face when writing an argumentative essay in English?
6. Do you find it difficult to develop a clear thesis and supporting arguments? Please explain.
7. What language-related challenges (grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure) do you experience?
8. Do you face difficulties in using evidence or references to support your arguments?
9. What strategies do you usually use to overcome difficulties in developing ideas and arguments?
10. How do you deal with language problems when writing argumentative essays?
11. What do you do to improve the organization and coherence of your essay?
12. How do you manage feelings such as anxiety or lack of confidence when writing?
13. What kinds of guidance or feedback from lecturers help you most in writing argumentative essays?
14. What learning activities or practices do you think are effective in improving your argumentative writing skills?
15. Overall, what strategies do you find most helpful in overcoming challenges in argumentative essay writing?

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AR-RANIRY

Appendix E: Documentation











Appendix F: Autobiography

Name	: Putri Isnaini Harahap
Student Number	: 210203071
Place/Date of Birth	: Banda Aceh/May 16th 2002
Gender	: Female
Religion	: Islam
Status	: Single
Occupation	: Student
Nationality	: Indonesia

جامعة الرانري
AR-RANIRY

Address : Desa Ulee Lheue, Kecamatan Meuraxa, Kota Banda Aceh.

Parents

Father's Name : M. Yasin Harahap
Father's Occupation : Self-Employed
Mother's Name : Salmiati
Mother's Occupation : Housewife

Educational Background

Elementary School : SDN 2 Banda Aceh (2007-2013)
Junior High School : MTs Darul 'Ulum Banda Aceh (2013-2016)
Senior High School : MA Darul 'Ulum Banda Aceh (2016-2019)
University : UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh (2021 until now)

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