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Linguistics

An Analysis of Student's Critical Thinking Skills in Writing Argumentative Essay

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A B S T R A C T

Writing is a communication tool to deliver thoughts and ideas in written form. Generally, in writing an argumentative essay, students do not provide their supporting arguments and do not provide evidence to convince the readers and even believe at the writer. Students asked to comprehend how to develop their ideas or their thought based on elements of the argumentative essay as a guide for them in applying their thought or their critical thinking in writing English essay. Based on the problem above, the researchers analyzed students' critical thinking skills in writing an argumentative essay at STKIP Abdi Pendidikan Payakumbuh in 2017/2018 academic year. The population of this research was English department students on the second academic year at STKIP Abdi Pendidikan Payakumbuh, and there were 13 sample students. In gathering the data, the instrument used by the researchers in this research was a written test. The researchers asked the students to write an argumentative essay about 300 words in 60 minutes. The instrument in this research has content validity based on SAP from SKTIP Abdi Pendidikan Payakumbuh 2017/2018 academic year, because the students had learned argumentative essay subject. The researchers used inter-rater reliability and coefficient reliability from two scorers to analyze students' critical thinking in writing an argumentative essay. The result revealed the student' critical thinking skills in writing an argumentative essay was 60, it belong to "average to good critical thinking skill category".

INTRODUCTION

Writing is a medium of human communication that represents their thought, feeling into the paper in order people can get the message. Writing is students should learn one of the basic skill subjects. As we know, students are always use writing skill, such as: exercises, final

examination and fulfill the administration requirement. In writing, there is an argumentative essay.

Argumentative essay is a genre of writing that requires the students to investigate a topic; generate, and evaluate evidence; and establish a position on the topic concisely. So, the college students are hoped to be critical in the argumentative essay. Because they have to bring up the issue that familiar by people and have their own argument before and how they can guide the readers into the writer's argument and believe it.

Critical thinking is the ability to analyze and evaluate information [1]. So, critical thinking is really important for the writer. Basically, if the critical thinkers face the issues, they will not just receive the message but they analyze it first. After that, they will compare that to the existed information and come to a conclusion [2].

In writing, critical thinking is really needed. The more critical people are the more quality their writing is going to be. Because it depends on how the writers bring the issue, give their thought on it but not judge at the same time and make the readers consider and even believe at the writers.

Writing is both a physical and a mental act [3]. At the most basic level, writing is the physical act of committing words or ideas to some medium, whether it is hieroglyphics inked onto parchment or an e-mail message typed into a computer. It means, writing is the mental work of inventing ideas, thinking about how to express them, and organizing them into statements and paragraphs that will be clear to a reader. Writing can be defined as a written communication to express feeling [4]. It means, writing is a tool to communicate with people and also a tool to express their feeling to someone else.

Writing also deals with personal meaning which reflects the idea or view of the writer toward a certain topic [5]. So, writing is a way to show people able to develop a topic in written form. Moreover, state that critical thinking is the general term given to a wide range of cognitive skills and intellectual dispositions needed to effectively identify, analyze, and evaluate arguments and truth claims; to discover and overcome personal preconceptions and biases; to formulate and present convincing reasons in support of conclusions; and to make reasonable, intelligent decisions about what to believe and what to do [6].

Innabi [6] states that critical thinking is that sort of thinking that deals with what should believe or do in any situation or event. Two main features mark this thinking. The first is that it is reasonable thinking that leads to deductions and sound decisions justified and supported by acceptable proofs. The second is that it is reflective thinking that shows a complete awareness of the thinking steps that leads to the deductions and the decisions.

Critical thinking is, very simply stated, the ability to analyze and evaluate information [1]. Critical thinkers raise vital questions and problem, formulate them clearly, gather and assess relevant information, use abstract ideas, think open-mindedly, and communicate effectively with others. This critical thinking is closely related to the way of writers to deliver their perception and argument toward certain issues. In writing, this kind of structure refer to argumentative writing. In argumentative essay is the writer need to develop arguments by doing reaserch about the topi, collect and select, and then deliver the statement of the position of the writer toward the issue [7]. Hence, students need to elaborate their writing by collecting the evidence and write a convincing statement or argument.

Argumentative writing is very close to undergraduate students, especially for students of arts, humanities and social science [8]. Although the nature of the essay varies considerably across and even within disciplines, the development of an argument is regarded as a key feature of successful writing by academics across disciplines.

METHOD

The design of the research was descriptive quantitative. In this research, the researchers wanted to analyze students' critical thinking skills applied in writing argumentative essay of the 2nd year students at STKIP Abdi Pendidikan Payakumbuh in 2017/2018 Academic Year.

Population is the group of interest to the researchers, the group to which she or he would like the result of the study to be generalized [9]. Population of this research was students on the second year of STKIP Abdi Pendidikan Payakumbuh. There were 13 students on the second year in writing class.

Sample is the process of selecting a number individual for a study in such a way that the individuals the present the large group from which they were selected [9]. In choosing sampling, the researchers used total sampling. It means, the researchers took all of the population as sample. So, the researchers took all of the second year students of STKIP Abdi Pendidikan Payakumbuh as the sample of this research. There were 13 students on the second year in writing class.

The instrument of this research was writing test. The researchers asked the learners to write argumentative essay based on the topics given by the researchers. The researchers used content validity. Validity refers to the degree to which a test measures what it is supposed to measure, consequently, permits appropriate interpretation of scores. Content validity means that the degree to which a test measure an intended content area [9]. The instrument in this research has content validity because all of the students had learnt Argumentative essay subject in third semester before. So, it can be said that instrument has content validity.

According to Gay et al [9], "Reliability is the degree to which a test consistently measures whatever it is measuring." After the researchers got the written of argumentative essay from every participants, the researchers analyzed students critical thinking skill in writing argumentative essay used inter – rater reliability. To score the students' critical thinking skill, the researchers used two scorers. And then, to know the coefficient reliability of those scores, the researchers calculated it by using Pearson Product Moment formula as suggested by Sudijono [10]. The formula can be seen as below:

$$r_{xy} = \frac{N \sum XY - (\sum X) (\sum Y)}{\sqrt{[N \sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2][N \sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2]}}$$

Where :

r_{xy} =index number correlation r product moment

N = number of students

X = score from scorer 1

Y = score from scorer 2

Then, in interpretation the correlation between scores from scorer 1 and scorer 2, the researchers used the table of coefficient of correlation suggested by Sudijono [10] as follow :

Table 1. The Coefficient Correlation

CRITERIA	INTERPRETATION
0.00-0.20	Very Low
0.20-0.40	Low
0.40-0.70	Average Correlation
0.70-0.90	Strong Correlation
0.90-1.00	Very Strong Correlation

If the coefficient of correlation is 0.00-0.20, it means there is a very low correlation between scores from scorer 1 and scorer 2. If the coefficient of correlation is 0.20-0.40, it means there is a low correlation between scores from scorer 1 and scorer 2. If the coefficient of correlation is 0.40-0.70, it means there is an average correlation between scores from scorer 1 and scorer 2. If the coefficient of correlation is 0.70-0.90, it means there is a strong correlation between scores from scorer 1 and scorer 2. If the coefficient of correlation is 0.90-1.00, it means there is a very strong correlation between scores from scorer 1 and scorer 2.

The researchers analyzed the score from the writing argumentative essay of the second year students of STKIP Abdi Pendidikan Payakumbuh and their score was 0.51. It means that the coefficient had Average Correlation. So, the test was reliable.

Table 2. Holistic Critical Thinking Scoring Rubric:

4	Strong	<p>Consistently does all or almost all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Accurately interprets evidence, statements, graphics, questions, etc. ○ Identifies the most important arguments (reasons and claims) pro and con. ○ Thoughtfully analyzes and evaluates major alternative points of view. ○ Draws warranted judicious, non-fallacious conclusions. ○ Justifies key results and procedures, explains assumptions and reasons. ○ Fair-mindedly follows where evidence and reasons lead
3	Acceptable	<p>Does most or many of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Accurately interprets evidence, statements, graphics, questions, etc. ○ Identifies relevant arguments (reasons and claims) pro and con. ○ Offers analyses and evaluations of obvious alternative points of view. ○ Draws warranted non-fallacious conclusions. ○ Justifies some results or procedures, explains reasons. ○ Fair-mindedly follows where evidence and reasons lead.
2	Unacceptable	<p>Does most or many of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Misinterprets evidence, statements, graphics, questions, etc. ○ Fails to identify strong, relevant counter-arguments. ○ Ignores or superficially evaluates obvious alternative points of view. ○ Draws unwarranted or fallacious conclusions. ○ Justifies few results or procedures, seldom explains reasons. ○ Regardless of the evidence or reasons, maintains or defends views based on self-interest or preconceptions.
1	Significantly weak	<p>Consistently does all or almost all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Offers biased interpretations of evidence, statements, graphics, questions, information, or the points of view of others. ○ Fails to identify or hastily dismisses strong, relevant counter-arguments. ○ Ignores or superficially evaluates obvious alternative points of view. ○ Argues using fallacious or irrelevant reasons, and unwarranted claims. ○ Does not justify results or procedures, nor explain reasons. Regardless of the evidence or reasons, maintains or defends views based on self-interest or preconceptions.

		○ Exhibits close-mindedness or hostility to reason.
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After scoring, the researchers analyzed the data by using formula that suggested by Sudijono (2009:318) as follow:

$$Mark = \frac{Raw\ Score}{Score\ Maximum\ Ideal} \times 100$$

Where:

Mark = Students Ability

Raw Score = Number of correct answer

Score Maximum Ideal = Total items

Then, it categorized into Harris rating scale (1969:134) as follow:

Table 3. Range of the qualities

Test Scores	Probably class performance
80 – 100	Good to excellent
60 – 79	Average to good
50 – 59	Poor to average
0 – 49	Poor

In addition, if the students get score between 80 until 100, it belongs to Good to excellent category. Then, the students who get the score 60 until 79, it means that average to good category. The students who get score 50 until 59 are in poor to average category. Finally, the students who get score 0 until 49 are in poor category.

After that, the researchers found the percentage of each category or criteria by used formula suggested by Sudijono (2010 : 43) as follow :

$$\rho = \frac{f}{N} \times 100\%$$

Where:

ρ = Percentage of students in each category

F = Frequency of students' category

N= Total of students

Finally, after analyzing the ability of students in each category, the researcher analyzed the category of all students included into sample by using formula suggested by Sudijono (1987:183) as follow:

$$Mx = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

Which:

Mx = Average of students ability

$\sum X$ = Total score

N = Total of students

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After the researchers analyzed the data based on Facione's et al category, researchers found that there were students who got average to good critical thinking skill and poor to average critical thinking skill, then there were no students who got good to excellent and poor critical thinking skill category. It can be seen on students' answer sheet, there were no students who have no mistake in their writing argumentative essay paper, and also there were no students who completely biased in their writing argumentative essay paper.

It can be seen, the researchers only found two category of critical thinking skill in writing argumentative essay at the second year of STKIP Abdi Pendidikan Payakumbuh 2017/2018 academic year. There was Average to good and Poor to Average category, and the final result was Average to good category.

In average to good critical thinking skill category in range 60 -79, there were 7 students in this category. It means 5.85% students in this category. Critical thinking is, very simply stated, the ability to analyze and evaluate information [1]. Critical thinkers raise vital questions and problem, formulate them clearly, gather and assess relevant information, use abstract ideas, think open-mindedly, and communicate effectively with others. It can be concluded that critical thinking is the action of how someone faces the claims. They will not just accept all of that but filter it first what should be believed and not by doing research. In the end they will make the conclusion "alternative thinking". From the students answer sheet, it can be seen that they actually have alternative thinking, but sometimes they forgot to gave an accurate reason.

From range 50-59, there were 6 students get poor to average critical thinking skill category. It means 46.15% of students in this category. When critical thinking applied in writing, the abilities or the skills that stated previously are expressed through the process of argumentation, producing argument [11]. It is regarded as the primary expression of critical thinking in higher education, Which means, to make a good writing the writer need to be critical thinking. Also, critical thinking can be seen by process of argumentation in writing. Based on the students answer sheet, it can be seen from their process of argumentation was almost poor, that was because they often forgot to gave the evidence to support their argument, their critical thinking skill almost reach the poor category.

Finally, the researchers found that the critical thinking skill in writing argumentative essay at the second year of STKIP Abdi Pendidikan Payakumbuh 2017/2018 academic year was in average to good critical thinking skill. After analyzing, the researchers found there was no students are in good to excellent category, 7 student are in poor to average critical thinking skill category, 6 of them are in average to good category and there was no students are in poor category. It means, in writing argumentative essay, they need to have an alternative thinking when analyzed the information in their process of argumentation.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the data before, the main concern of this research was to the student's critical thinking skills in writing argumentative essay on the second year students of STKIP Abdi Pendidikan Payakumbuh. The student's critical thinking skills in writing argumentative essay was 60, it belong to "average to good critical thinking skill category".

The result of this research shows that there were no students who got good to excellent and poor category. While, there were 53,85% of the students got average to good critical thinking category, and 46,15% of the students got poor to average critical thinking category. It means the student's critical thinking skills in writing argumentative essay on the second year students of STKIP Abdi Pendidikan Payakumbuh was in average to good critical thinking skill category.

The researchers would like to offer some suggestions. For the students, they have to increase their ability in writing argumentative essay by understanding step by step in writing argumentative essay process. They also have to read English book more to increase vocabularies. Also, they have to increase their critical thinking skill by giving an accurate evidence after gave an argument. Then, they should accurately interpret evidence, statements, relevant argument, procedures, explains and reasons. Then, the researchers expected the lecturer could give more exercise and task of argumentative essay to the students in order to increase the students' critical thinking skill in writing argumentative essay.

Finally, for the next researcher should comprehend more about the critical thinking skill. So, the next researcher probably can do a research about the aspect of students' lack of critical thinking skill.

English learners or non-English native speakers in Indonesia often get troubles to understand the meaning of English idioms. This is because according to Salim & Mehawesh, idioms are one's everyday language or culturally bound expressions. Idioms are also known as multi-word expressions which cannot be translated literally even if someone knows the meaning of the words and the grammar of the phrase [12].

Seeing that case, the writer conducts a research about how the translator from Indonesia translates English idiom into Bahasa Indonesia properly. In term of translation, it is typically defined as the process of transferring words or text from one language into another or target language. The aim of translation is to convey the exact meaning from a source language to target-language. A translator needs to be not only bilingual or multilingual but the translator also must be bicultural or multicultural.

Lack knowledge of translation strategies will lead to mistranslation especially when it comes to idiomatic expression. It happens because idioms in one language hardly match with idioms from other languages [13]. Each particular language has its own unique and specific idioms which give color to that language. Idioms offer the same kind of problems to non-native English speakers and writers. They are unclear because the meaning of the phrase is not literal or predictable. The translator must first analyze what the writer has intended to say before translating it.

Furthermore, regarding as idioms, the research focuses on the novel *The Catcher in the Rye*. This is a 1951 novel written by J. D. Salinger [14], a sixteen years old boy. A controversial novel which originally published for adult tells about a teenager named Holden Caulfield. The writer finds many humors during reading this novel. The way the author conveys the message in this novel is so enjoyable. The author can stimulate every sentence in this novel very well even though there are a lot of vulgar languages here. On the whole, the purpose in this research is to know the strategies and techniques of translation used by the translator to translate idioms from the novel *The Catcher in the Rye* into Bahasa Indonesia.

The main difficulties involved in translating idioms and fixed expressions are the ability to recognize and interpret an idiom correctly. The meaning of idiom is diverse from the meaning

which is expressed by the individual words. Also the meaning conveys and associates with culture-specific contexts which make it difficult to translate. The questions that come out due to these problems are:

- What groups of idioms found in the novel of *The Cather in the Rye*?
- What strategies and techniques of translation used by the translator to translate idioms from English into Bahasa Indonesia from the novel *The Catcher in the Rye*?

There are some previous researches have been done related to translating idiom. Some of them had applied the theory proposed by Mona Baker in analyzing the data [15]-[18], meanwhile the second author applied the theory about translation strategy by Nida and Taber. After analyzing their data, all authors find every strategy of translating idioms as proposed by Mona Baker and Nida. Similarly to this research, the author also applied Mona Baker theory in analyzing the data but the source of the data is different.

Idioms and fixed expressions which contain culture-specific items are not necessarily untranslatable. They are frozen patterns of language which allow little or no variation in form. Idioms often carry meanings which cannot be deduced from their individual components. They are not the specific items an expression contains but rather the meaning it conveys and its association with culture-specific context which can make it untranslatable or difficult to translate [13].

Furthermore, in a journal article written by Salim and Mehawesh [16], they mention some definitions about idiom by experts, as follow: " the term idiom is generally used in a variety of different senses. Idioms can be considered an integral part of language. They give information about conceptions of the world considered by linguistic communities. Moreover, idioms can be defined as multiword expressions whose meaning is not predictable from their component parts.

METHOD

There are three methods applied in this research, they are collecting the data, analyzing the data and presenting the result of analysis. The writer reads the English Novel for several times and then marking all English idioms found in the novel. After all idioms in English novel are identified, the writer also identifies the translation of it in target language. In analyzing the data, both idioms and the translation are compared in the table and then the strategies of the translation those idioms are identified.

There are 35 data are analyzed in this research and following are the result analysis of the data. 25 idioms among 35 idioms are translated by using paraphrase, it means the translator cannot find the appropriate idioms in target language and paraphrasing it is one way to solve the problem.

Translating Idiom Using An Idiom of Similar Meaning and Form

This strategy involves using an idiom in the target language which conveys roughly the same meaning as that of the source-language idiom. In addition, it consists of equivalent lexical items. This kind of match can only occasionally be achieved [13]. For example :

SL: *Remember to stay calm before the judge. Don't get nervous and lose your head!*

TL: *Ingat untuk tetap tenang di hadapan hakim. Jangan gugup dan **kehilangan akalmu!***

The English idiomatic expression *lose your head* is translated into Bahasa Indonesia by using idiomatic expression *kehilangan akalmu*. According to Ammer *lose one's head* mean to become so agitated that one cannot act sensibly [19]. This expression, which at one time meant literal decapitation and was used figuratively from the mid-nineteenth century.

Meanwhile in Bahasa Indonesia, according to Wahya & Waridah *kehilangan akal* mean putus asa; bingung(tidak tahu apa yang harus dikerjakan) [20]. In this case, both English and Bahasa Indonesia find the equivalent of idiomatic expression which refer to using an idiom of similar meaning and form.

Translating An Idiom of Similar Meaning but Dissimilar Form

It is an idiom or fixed expression in the target language which has a meaning similar to the source idiom or expression, but consists of different lexical items. It is often possible to find an idiom or expression in the target language which has a meaning similar to that of the source idiom or expression, but which consists of different lexical items [13]. This strategy uses different lexical items to express more or less the same idea. For example:

SL: *Patricia was late for work, and she couldn't find her car keys. She was running around his apartment like a chicken with its head cut off.*

TL: *Patricia terlambat pergi kerja, dan dia tidak bisa menemukan kunci mobilnya. Dia berlari sekitar apartemennya seperti cacing kepanasan.*

According to Ammer *like a chicken with its head cut off* mean behave distractedly and crazily. This graphic simile apparently is based on barnyard experience: the body of a decapitated chicken sometimes continues to totter about crazily for a time following the dirty deed [19].

Meanwhile, in Bahasa Indonesia according to according to Wahya & Waridah *seperti cacing kepanasan* mean tidak tenang; tidak mau diam; selalu bergerak [20]. Therefore, both expressions in the source language and its translation in the target language refer to the same meaning. In terms of form, both expressions cannot be said as equivalent.

Translating Idiom by Paraphrase

This is the most common way of translating idiom when a match cannot be found in the target language or when it seems inappropriate to use idiomatic language in the target text. This is because of differences in stylistic preferences of the source and target language. You may or may not find the paraphrases accurate [13].

Paraphrasing can be used to solve problems in the process of translating idiom. It can be an amplification technique used in a translated text or a cultural item paraphrased to make it intelligible to TL readers. This does not mean that paraphrasing as a strategy will necessarily lead to using an amplification technique. The result may be a discursive creation, an equivalent established expression, an adaptation, etc. For example:

SL: *They say the wedding's scheduled for December, but to tell you the truth, all bets are off.*

TL: *Mereka mengatakan pernikahan itu dijadwalkan bulan Desember, tetapi kenyataan yang terjadi sekarang, rencana itu dibatalkan.*

The English idiom *all bets are off* is translated into *rencana itu dibatalkan* in the target language. According to Ammer *all bets are off* mean the agreement is canceled, because the

relevant conditions have changed [19]. Therefore, the translator cannot find the equivalent in target language Bahasa Indonesia. Thus, the translator just translates idiomatic expression from source language to target language based on his/her understanding to that idiom. After that, the translator uses his/her own words to target language so that the meaning can be acceptable and understandable.

Translating Idiom by Omission

As with single words, an idiom may sometimes be omitted altogether in the target text. It is because it has no close equivalent in the target language, its meaning cannot be easily paraphrased, or for stylistic reasons [13]. For example:

SL: *I shall have to ask them what the name of the country is, **you know**.*

TL: *Tapi aku harus bertanya pada mereka nama negeri ini.*

It can be seen in the example above that **you know** is not realized in Bahasa Indonesia. According to Dictionary of Idioms and Phrasal Verbs, the idiomatic expression **you know** is used to open a conversation or switch to a new topic. The translator applies the omission strategy by letting the idiom **you know** be not translated to get effectiveness and considers that the readers will easily understand the meaning of the idiom.

Since it is very difficult to translate idioms into idioms, then a translator may apply non idiomatic translation in order to maintain the meaning of the translated expressions in the target language. Moreover, the translator has a choice not to realize an idiom in the translation since it has no close match in the target language or its meaning cannot be easily paraphrased.

Briefly, this means that one may either omit or play down a feature such as idiomaticity at the point where it occurs in the source text and introduce it elsewhere in the target text. This strategy is not restricted to idiomaticity or fixed expressions and may be used to make up for any loss of meaning, emotional force, or stylistic effect which may not be possible to reproduce directly at a given point in the target text.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing 35 idioms from the novel *The Cather in the Rye*, the writer finds there are 3 idioms using strategy translating an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form, 25 idioms using translating idiom by paraphrase.

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