

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

Writing is a medium of human communication that represents their thoughts, feeling into the paper so that people can get the message. Writing is one of the basic skill subjects that students should learn in learning English besides listening, reading, and speaking. As we know, students will always use writing skill in any field.

As a skill in English, writing has become an important skill for future life because it is required in various aspects such as science, technology, and others. Writing should become a common thing in students' daily life, because they do many tasks of their studies on paper. Writing practice can help the students to improve their vocabulary and increase their ability in grammar. In other word, writing is very important to develop the competent in English. Since writing is necessary to learn, students in the collage are expected to be master in writing skill.

In writing, there is an argumentative essay which 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 expected 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 lead the readers into the writer's argument and believe it.

In argumentative writing, there can be found fallacies. It can be defined as error in reasoning, shows illegitimate arguments or irrelevant points that will undermine the strength of a claim. Despite its significant role in determining the quality of an argument, the topic of logical fallacy has not been widely explored in the context of EFL.

Fallacy or *fallacia* in the Latin word, means deceit or trick. A fallacy is a claim or argument which uses tricks to be persuasive (Mayfield, 2007). A fallacy is a misleading or unsound argument (Indah, 2015). Fallacies should not be persuasive, but they often are. Fallacies may be created intentionally in order to deceive other people, or it may be created unintentionally (Dowden, 2010). When the inferences are defective. When defective styles of reasoning are repeated over and over, because people often get fooled by them (Sinnott-Armstrong & Fogelin, 2010) In this case, error in reasoning because of (1) the author did not recognize that their own arguments were flawed, and (2) the author intended to mislead their audiences and deliberately distracted the reasoning, or manipulate the language use to create a certain response. (Niamika & Utami, 2017).

Moreover, the presence of fallacy in students' arguments is often associated with problems in critical thinking. Student's argumentative writing can be used to measure the critical thinking skills covering the elements namely argument, evidence, recognition of opposition, refutation, conclusion, references, and fallacies (Stapleton, 2001). *Argument* or writer's view point on a topic is presented in the form of claims supported by a reason. *Evidence* constitutes statements or assertions which serve to strengthen the argument. *Recognition of opposition* refers to the

identification of statements that run counter or offering alternative interpretations to those expressed in the claim. *Refutation* deals with the statement that the opposing viewpoints are inadequate in some ways. A *conclusion* is a statement or series of statements in which a writer sets out what s/he wants the reader to believe. *References* are related to the use of citation to support the claim. *Fallacies* are errors in reasoning which do not support the claim. The last element becomes the central point of this study in which its recognition reflects the students' quality of critical thinking. In this study, the main objective is to see the quality of student's critical thinking in terms of the existing fallacious statements made in argumentative essay.

Ultimately, we develop our personal aspects holistically to be a better Muslim, serve others well, get closer to Allah s.w.t. and be hopeful for His rewards.

إِنَّ هَذَا كَانَ لَكُمْ جَزَاءً وَكَانَ سَعْيُكُمْ مَشْكُورًا

"Indeed, this is for you a reward, and your effort has been appreciated."
(QS Al Insan 76:22)

There have been various studies related to logical fallacy: particularly in EFL setting. A study conducted by Algozlu (2007) observed a number of fallacies produced by 76 Turkish sophomore undergraduate students in a literature class. The fallacies comprised oversimplification (41), straw man fallacy (36) irrelevant conclusion (24), hasty generalization (8), begging the question (1), and ad hominem fallacy (1). Atai and Nasser (2010) conducted a similar study which sought to examine the frequency of informal fallacies of argumentation in Iranian EFL learners. In addition to the identification of fallacies, they tried to probe whether

there was a pattern regarding the use and selection of these fallacies in their writings. The study also found that the three variables under research (i.e. gender, age, and discipline) did not have any significant effect on the use of informal fallacies of argumentation in Iranian EFL learners' writing.

In the context of Indonesian EFL setting, a study on logical fallacy was conducted by Indah and Kusuma (2015). The study resulted in the identification of fallacies in the students' argumentative writing, which were classified into fallacies in claims of facts, claims of value, and claims of policy.

Despite the different method used in the abovementioned studies, the studies had one thing in common: they relied on the researchers' judgment in the process of identifying and classifying the fallacies. The fallacy identification by the researchers alone also has its own inevitable shortcoming: while it is important for EFL teachers to map out the pattern of logical fallacy committed by students in their writing, the process of identification itself is quite complicated. Referring to her own study, Algozlu (2007) admitted that fallacies identification is considered the most challenging and intricate part of the analysis. The problem might come from the fact that there are simply too many varieties of fallacies (Sinnott-Armstrong and Fogelin, 2010), which make the topic has a scope problem (Aikin, 2016). The challenge for any researcher seeking to identify and classify fallacies is therefore quite obvious: "limitless" number of fallacies, different version of taxonomy, and in many cases, overlapped classification of fallacies in a single statement. Such a complication in fallacy identification has understandably led to the "simplification" of the categorization of fallacy to serve the researchers' practical purposes.

Based on those aforementioned previous studies, the researcher is interested to take a look on argumentative essay writing in which written by English students, conduct the research under title: **Fallacious Statements in English Students' Argumentative Writings.**

B. Research Question

Based on the aforementioned background of the study, the researcher is interested in fallacious statements in argumentative essay of English student, and the researcher wants to know what types of fallacy in argumentative essay written by English students. By conducting this study, the writer wants to investigate:

1. What types of fallacy in argumentative essay of English students?

C. Objective of Study

According to the aforementioned research question of the study, the main goal of this study is:

1. To know and to explore what types of fallacy in argumentative essay of English students.

D. Significance of Study

Based on the background explained above and the research objectives as mentioned earlier, the starting point of this study is to portray the identification of fallacious statement produced by English students. The finding is contributed to the area of critical thinking which explores the various logic. The identification will be the empirical bases which can contribute to the further aspects relating to linguistics area.

This study will be significant for identifying the pattern on the phenomenon of critical thinking discourse on Indonesian issues. Considering that the empirical data on the critical thinking skills especially on assessing sound argument through fallacies and critical discourse in Indonesian context is still inadequate, the findings of the study will be significant to understand of critical thinking.

The result of this study also brings important pedagogical contribution. Understanding the pattern of fallacies among the various types of argumentative is an important step to figure out the level of critical thinking. This will also lead to further studies on the area of linguistics.

E. Definition of Key Term

To avoid the readers' misinterpretation of this study, it is necessary to define the terms of this study as follows:

1. Fallacious Statement:

Fallacious statement means statement that uses tricks and shortcut to persuasive. Mayfield (2007) categorizes fallacy into four groups, comprise of manipulation through emotion, manipulation through language, manipulation through distraction, and inductive fallacy.

2. Argumentative Writing:

In this research, argumentative writing is an essay written by English students as the data that would be analyzed in this study. The essays are written by English students of English Education Department who had passed essay writing course.