

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Writing is an English language skill taught at Indonesian secondary levels. It is essential because it has many benefits, such as gaining more information and knowledge and developing creativity. As an essential skill to master, writing can provide helpful information to other people. (Yenti, 2022). No matter how simple the words written are, they will be helpful for those who need the information.

Students at the university level deal with several forms of written discourse, such as narration, description, exposition, and argumentation. An Argumentative essay is a critical genre in academic writing, particularly at the university level. (Ade, 2019). An argumentative essay is a vital tool in academic contexts for students who must write persuasively to persuade others to embrace their point of view on a particular issue, for test-takers to generate in various tests or exams such as CEFR tests, TOEFL, IELTS, and for individuals in the workplace may attempt to persuade others to endorse their suggestions or opinions. It aims to convey a written opinion to the reader with reasons and evidence supported by facts. (Dang et al., 2020). If students wish to become fluent in English, they need to learn the language in everyday contexts (Rianti et al., 2024).

Writing an argumentative essay is a compulsory task in the Foundation Functional Grammar course at one of the universities in Tasikmalaya. Dealing with argumentative essay writing, based on the pre-interview, several university students experienced argumentative essay writing in a course, namely Foundation Functional Grammar. In this course, the lecturer provides several themes for an argumentative essay; the template is in the enclosure. However, the students found it challenging to determine the topic of an argumentative essay, look for references that are relevant to the argumentative essay issue that has been determined, create a functional English manuscript, consult and revise with the lecturer regarding the argumentative essay manuscript, then the revised results from the lecturer are uploaded to the Google Drive provided. Therefore,

researchers want to explore the challenges and solutions experienced when writing argumentative essays.

Several previous researchers have investigated writing argumentative essays based on prior research from Ka-kan-dee and Kaur (2014) The study's findings unveiled the significant challenges encountered by Thai EFL English major students, particularly in vocabulary and grammar structure, shedding light on the areas that require further attention. Then from Rahmatunisa (2014), this comprehensive study delved into the multifaceted problems some EFL students encounter when composing argumentative essays. The results of the data analysis revealed that students grapple with issues in three distinct categories: linguistic, cognitive, and psychological. Then, from Yassin and Hamed (2023), the research revealed five difficulty themes: lack of accuracy, lack of concision, lack of orientation, mechanical issues, and grammatical challenges. Writing difficulties were related to the following cognitive competencies in the five themes: comprehension, analysis, and assessment. In addition, Ariyanti and Fitriana (2017) I found that fourth-semester students of Widya Gama Mahakam University have problems writing essays using correct grammar in sentences, compiling cohesive and coherent paragraphs, and choosing the appropriate diction. Lastly, another research found issues students face when writing argumentative essays and how they resolve them. The result shows that the students face psychological, linguistic, and cognitive problems when writing an argumentative essay.

It has been explained that many research studies have been conducted about challenges, and only a few studies have discussed solutions for writing argumentative essays. Previous research also focused on the difficulties in writing topic sentences for argumentative essays, and the participants are Saudi undergraduate male students (Yassin & Hamed, 2023). Current research focused on the EFL students' challenges and solutions in writing argumentative essays, with the participants being college students. This research is similar to Setyowati et al., (2020) about the issues that students face when writing argumentative essays and how they resolve them. However, there are differences between this research and the previous one. This research used a qualitative design with participants

from three eight-semester English language education students who have taken the Foundation Functional Grammar course.

1.2 Research Question

Guided by the observed phenomena, this study addresses the following crucial research questions:

- 1.2.1 What are the challenges in writing an argumentative essay in the Foundation Functional Grammar course?
- 1.2.2 What are the solutions to the challenges in writing argumentative essays in the Foundation Functional Grammar course?

1.3 Operational Definitions

1.3.1 Writing Skills

Writing skills are the skill of expressing ideas, notions, and feelings in the form of written language so that other people who read can understand the contents of the writing well. In this context, it is students' writing skills in argumentative essays.

1.3.2 Writing Challenges

Writing challenges are struggles in generating ideas, grammar, organizing thoughts, composing, editing, and other problems relevant to written expression. In this context, the writing challenges faced by English language education students when writing argumentative essays.

1.3.3 Argumentative Essay

An argumentative essay is a genre of writing that expresses an argument about a particular topic to persuade the reader. In this context, this argumentative essay is a final project carried out by English language education students whose theme in the field of English Language Education (e.g., Lesson Planning, Language Teaching, Language Learning, Language Evaluation, etc.) or Applied Linguistics (Systemic et al.) by following the rules excellent and correct writing by the provisions.

1.4 Aim(s) of the Study

This research aims to determine students' challenges and solutions in writing argumentative essay

1.5 Significance(s) of the Study

1.5.1. Theoretical Significance

This research will expand and enrich the literature on EFL students' difficulties writing argumentative essays and the strategies they use to overcome them in the Foundation Functional Grammar class.

1.5.2. Practical Significance

The results of this study will discuss EFL students' challenges in writing so that the students can write essays, especially argumentative essays, properly and correctly to achieve academic success and professional success later with the strategies offered. Students will have no difficulty writing argumentative essays when faced with the same thing.

1.5.3. Empirical Significance

This research will offer insight and understanding about how to collect and analyze the data related to challenges and solutions in writing argumentative essays for researchers who deal with EFL students' challenges and solutions for writing argumentative essays in Foundation Functional Grammar classes and motivate students to learn to write argumentative essays.