

An Analysis of Argumentative Essay Writing Errors of EFL Students in Palembang: A Study of Three Universities

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Abstract: This research was conducted in three universities in Palembang: UIN Raden Fatah Palembang, Universitas Sriwijaya, and Universitas Muhammadiyah Palembang. The total sample of this research was 30 students. In this study, test and checklists error were used as the research's instruments for gathering data. This study adopted Langan's classification of errors, which categorized errors into four types: unity, support, coherence, and sentence skills. The findings of this study revealed four writing errors in students' essays. 1) Students of three universities in Palembang as the sample of study contributed four types of errors in their essay writing, those were (1) unity (6,48%), support (14,21%), coherence (11,97%), and sentence skills (67,33%). 2) The most common errors in essay writing contributed by three universities students in Palembang was sentence skills with the occurrence 270 errors (67,33%). The urgency of this research lies in the critical role that effective writing skills play in academic success and professional communication. Despite the increasing demand for proficient writing abilities in higher education, many students still struggle with fundamental aspects of essay writing. Identifying and addressing these issues is essential for improving students' academic performance and preparing them for future career challenges.

Keywords: Error Analysis, Essay Writing, Argumentative Essay

A. Introduction

In learning English, the students in universities are expected to be able to master four language skills, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In order to master the English language, students must be exposed to all four fundamental skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Therefore, students must study in depth about those four skills so that they can master English easily. However, from those four skills, writing is the most difficult skill for second and foreign language learners to master. Writing is a skill that requires the students to utter their thoughts and feelings into written form. Ekarista (2018) claims that writing is the ability to form a written language from words into sentences coherently so that readers may understand what is being written. Thus, writing is a skill that demands students to transfer their thoughts and organize them into a good paragraph that must be fulfilled properly so that the sentence or paragraph can be easily understood by the readers.

The main cause of writing difficulty is that writing is a very complicated process that entails both generating and organizing thoughts as well as turning them into understandable texts. Furthermore, in order to master the complex skill of writing, students must first become proficient in three fundamental skills: speaking, listening, and reading (Yunus & Chien, 2016). In writing skills, learners must also use metacognitive and cognitive skills while writing; they must plan, identify, correct, revise, reread, monitor, and evaluate their writing. In regard to this, the cognitive process plays a role in how students come up with their thoughts, ideas, and methods for writing their

own essays. The cognitive process in writing also requires long-term memory to preserve information (Meinawati et al., 2021). In brief, writing is a difficult and complex skill in which writers must master three core skills and be able to apply metacognitive throughout the writing process in order to produce a decent paragraph that is understandable to readers.

The role of written language is crucial in educational fields. Permata and Hamzah (2019) claims that writing is significant since it is widely employed in higher education. For instance, proposal, memo, report, thesis, journal, article, essay and other forms of professional communication are all part of a college student's or successful graduate's regular activities. In short, written language plays a crucial part in the educational areas because there are many professional communication opportunities.

Writing is a crucial yet challenging skill for EFL learners, requiring the ability to generate, organize, and express ideas coherently in written form. Despite its significance in academic and professional settings, many university students struggle with writing due to linguistic, cognitive, and metacognitive difficulties (Ariyanti & Fitriana, 2017; Pratiwi, 2016). In Indonesia, where English is a foreign language, these challenges are even more pronounced. Previous studies (Aisyah & Rahmawati, 2019; Ferdanes & Fatimah, 2021; Sesriyani, 2017) have identified common errors in grammar, coherence, and cohesion among EFL students. However, research has primarily focused on general writing issues rather than a detailed analysis of errors in unity, coherence, support, and sentence skills—four fundamental aspects of essay writing.

In the Palembang context, limited research has examined the specific writing difficulties faced by university students. A preliminary study involving lecturers and students from three universities—UIN Raden Fatah Palembang, Universitas Sriwijaya, and Universitas Muhammadiyah Palembang—revealed persistent issues in structuring essays, developing topic sentences, maintaining coherence, and using appropriate grammar and diction. These findings indicate a pressing need to identify and address the most frequent errors in student writing to improve academic performance.

This study aims to fill the research gap by analyzing writing errors among university students in Palembang. It seeks to answer the following questions: (1) What were the errors in essay writing made by the students of three universities in Palembang 2) what were the most common errors in essay writing made by students of three universities in Palembang. The results of this research will provide insights for educators to develop targeted interventions and enhance writing instruction for EFL learners in Indonesia.

B. Literature Review

Argumentative Essay

Argumentative essay is the essay which show the point of view of the writer whether they agree or disagree about some issues. As supported by Ramadhani and Ahmad (2022), an argumentative essay is a complex activity in which the writer expresses his or her perspective on a topic while providing valid evidence and facts to support his or her position. Moreover, in an argumentative essay, the writers not only provide reasons to support their point of view, but they also discuss and rebut the arguments of the opposing side. Rebutting is pointing out flaws in the opposing side's supporting arguments in order to show that your opponent's point of view is incorrect. In summary,

an argumentative essay is an essay that discusses the author's point of view on an issue or problem and breaks the opponent's opinion that their opinion is not true.

Evaluating Essay

When evaluating an essay, several key criteria must be considered. Langan (2011) identifies four fundamental aspects for assessing writing errors: unity, support, coherence, and sentence skills. These elements serve as the foundation for effective essay writing and highlight the challenges faced by EFL students in Indonesia, particularly in Palembang.

Unity refers to the extent to which supporting sentences align with the thesis statement. A strong thesis statement guides students in structuring their essays, ensuring that all supporting details remain relevant. However, many students struggle with formulating a clear thesis statement, often making errors such as writing overly broad or narrow statements, including multiple ideas in a single statement, or presenting an announcement rather than a declarative thesis (Langan, 2011). In the Palembang context, students frequently face difficulties in constructing effective thesis statements due to limited exposure to academic writing conventions and insufficient practice in English composition (Sartika et al., 2020). These challenges result in essays that lack a clear central argument, making it difficult for readers to follow the writer's intent.

Support involves providing sufficient and specific evidence to reinforce the thesis statement. Effective supporting sentences help readers understand and engage with the essay's main argument. However, EFL students in Palembang often fail to develop ideas adequately, leading to weak and underdeveloped arguments. Research by Astrid et al. (2023) indicates that students at Indonesian universities, including those in Palembang, struggle with elaborating on their points due to limited vocabulary, difficulty in expressing ideas in English, and a lack of understanding of essay structures. Consequently, essays often contain vague or irrelevant details, reducing their overall effectiveness.

Coherence is essential for ensuring logical flow and connectivity between sentences and paragraphs. Incoherent writing often results from a lack of transition words, inconsistent use of pronouns, or abrupt topic shifts (Ferdanes & Fatimah, 2021; Langan, 2011). A study by Maharani et al. (2023) found that Indonesian EFL students frequently produce disjointed essays with weak transitions, making their writing difficult to follow. This issue is particularly prevalent among students in Palembang, where English exposure is limited compared to larger urban centers. Without clear connections between ideas, essays become fragmented and fail to effectively communicate the writer's message.

Sentence skills encompass grammatical accuracy, spelling, punctuation, and word choice. Errors in these areas create an unfavorable impression on readers and hinder comprehension (Langan, 2011). Studies have shown that Indonesian EFL learners, including students in Palembang, frequently make mistakes in subject-verb agreement, verb tense, and word order due to interference from their native language (Aisyah & Rahmawati, 2019). Additionally, many students struggle with spelling and punctuation, further complicating their writing clarity. The prevalence of these errors suggests a need for targeted grammar instruction and practice in academic writing courses.

In summary, while essay writing challenges are common among EFL learners, students in Palembang face unique difficulties due to limited access to English resources, inadequate writing practice, and linguistic interference from Bahasa Indonesia. By analyzing errors in unity, support, coherence, and sentence skills, this research aims to

provide insights that can help educators develop more effective writing instruction tailored to the needs of EFL students in Palembang.

Differences Errors and Mistakes

Many people mistakenly believe that error and mistake are the same thing, but it is actually not true. According to Syaprizal and Ramadona (2018), it is important to understand the difference between error and mistake when learning about error. Additionally, they claim that a native speaker and a learner of a foreign language can make an error that is obvious to both parties without being aware of the source of the error, and that their agent can only fix the error if the divergence is made clear to them. Clearly, an error is due to a lack of linguistic proficiency. Whereas, a mistake is a performance phenomenon, which implies that it may be corrected using previously gained knowledge.

C. Methods

Research Design

This research used quantitative content analysis design as an approach to describe the result of the study. According to Cohen et al. (2018), the goal of content analysis is to structure and organize technique study in order to describe communication content. Therefore, this study used a quantitative method by using content analysis design. The researcher solely examined and explained the types of errors made by students from universities in Palembang, and then the data were calculated statistically and then interpreted by using percentage.

Population and Sample

Population

The population refers to the entire study of the research topic. The population refers to the entire study of the research topic. Creswell (2018), a population is a large target group about which researcher wants to learn more but cannot research directly. The population of this research were English students from three universities in Palembang with the differences in accredited. First, Universitas Sriwijaya Palembang which is accredited A (1056/BAN-PT/Ak-PPJ/PT/XII/2021). Second, UIN Raden Fatah Palembang which is accredited B (574/SK/BAN-PT/Ak/PPJ/PT/VIII/2020). Third, Universitas Muhammadiyah Palembang which is accredited B (330/SK/BAN-PT/Akred/PT/XII/2018). The following is the population distribution:

Table 1. The Population of The Research

No	Universities	Total Students
1	PBI A (Universitas Sriwijaya Palembang)	19
2	PBI 1 (UIN Raden Fatah Palembang)	39
3	PBI A (Universitas Muhammadiyah Palembang)	34
	Total	92

Sample

The sample is a subset of the population with characteristics that are identical to those of the entire population. In line with Creswell (2018), sample is a small fraction of the total population that is examined; data is collected and evaluated from the sample, and conclusions are produced, which are then applied to the entire population. As a result,

the researcher took three classes from three universities in Palembang as the sample of study.

One of the methodologies in probability sampling quantitative research that used in this study was stratified random sampling because the research's target sample must reflect the study's problems, it must be precise in its selection of samples based on sample degree. According to Fraenkel et al. (2015), stratified sampling technique is used when the population of members or elements is not homogeneous and proportionally stratified.

The researcher used stratified random sampling in this study because in addition to selecting 10 randomly selected students from every university as the characteristic of quantitative research, the researcher also chose accredited universities to represent the research as a whole. Furthermore, the minimum of quantitative sample was 30 samples (Fraenkel et al., 2015). Therefore, the researcher took 30 students from UIN Raden Fatah Palembang, Universitas Muhammadiyah Palembang, and Universitas Sriwijaya as the sample of the study. The sample of the study was divided into 10 students per-university. The distribution of the sample is as follows:

Table 2. The Sample of The Research

No	Universities	Total Students
1	PBI A (Universitas Sriwijaya Palembang)	10
2	PBI 1 (UIN Raden Fatah Palembang)	10
3	PBI A (Universitas Muhammadiyah Palembang)	10
	Total	30

Data Collection

To complete this research, test and checklist were used to collect the data from the sample of the study.

Test

In this research, the researcher used writing test as the instrument to collect the data about students' errors in essay writing. According to Fraenkel et al. (2015), test is a method or procedure in the context of measurement and assessment, in the form of giving the testee a task that must be done, so that on the basis that the data obtained can represent the result of the variable studied. Therefore, the researcher used a writing task to collect the data, which is in accordance with the syllabus of an essay writing subject that has been developed by the lecturer.

Checklist

The errors in writing of university students' essays were examined using checklists of errors and expert judgments. According to Fraenkel et al. (2015), checklist is list of the several characteristics that resents the research to answer the research question. The writing task had done at first and then the essay writing task was checked based on checklist error by Langan's Theory (2011). Therefore, the checklist table was filled by checking the students' error in writing essay which is from rubric evaluating essay and the checklists in essay writing task were chosen based on writing aspects and types of errors by Langan (2011).

Validity and Reliability

Validity

Validity is the most important quality and is concerned with what a test measured and for whom it is appropriate. According to Creswell (2018), validity is the development of sound evidence to demonstrate that the test interpretation matches its proposed use. This study used content validity to convey the result of data. The content validity was needed to identify the instruments of this research namely, test and checklist writing errors. Thus, in order to check the validity of the test, the researcher asked for help from two validators who teach at UIN Raden Fatah as expert judgements related to the material test.

The content validity has procedures to check the format of instruments. First, the procedure was begun by knowing the syllabus of an essay writing subject that has been developed by the lecturer. Second, the validators checked the syllabus to convey the topics area, instruction, and allocation time of writing test. As a result, the writing sheet was accepted by two validators because the writing sheet test has already appropriate with the syllabus. Based on the previous explanations, the researcher used a writing test to collect the data, which is in accordance with the syllabus of an essay writing subject that has been developed by the lecturer who teaches writing class in UIN Raden Fatah Palembang:

Table 3. Writing Sheet Test

Name	:
Class	:
University	:

Direction:

1. The test is used for scientific research
2. There is no effect on your score in English writing subject
3. Time allocated in 100 minutes\

Instruction:

1. Write down your name, class, and university on the provided answer sheet
2. Write an argumentative essay by choosing one of the topics below:
 - a. College education is necessary to gain better skills, knowledge, and future career. Do you agree or disagree?
 - b. Standardized test is used to determine students' graduation. Do you agree or disagree
 - c. Youtube is a career. Do you agree or disagree?

Thank you for your participation

Second instrument, the validators checked checklist of students' errors in argumentative essay, the procedure were: First, the researcher offered each validator rubric adapted from Langan (2011) for evaluating essay and a checklist table based on the types of essay writing errors from Langan's theory.

Table 4. Types of Errors in Writing an Essay (Langan, 2011)

Writing Aspect	Types of Errors
Unity	1. Announcement rather than statement 2. Statement is too broad 3. Statement is too narrow 4. Statement contain more than one ideas
Coherence	1. Common method organization 2. Transition 3. Other connecting word
Support	1. Supporting sentence is not appropriate
Sentence Skills	1. Faulty Paralellism 2. The use of incorrect verb 3. The use of incorrect forms of pronoun 4. Do not use specific words 5. Wordiness 6. Choosing words incorrectly 7. Spelling errors 8. Writing run-ons sentence 9. Subject and verb are not in agreement 10. Using punctuation incorrectly 11. Using capital letters incorrectly 12. Writing fragments rather than complete sentence

Reliability

Reliability is the essential element in the research instrument. A reliable instrument is an instrument that, when used several times to measure the same object, will produce the stable and consistent scores (Creswell, 2018). The consistent of this research data used inter-rater as the reliability in quantitative data to see the consistency of between two raters in checking the errors in writing.

The reliability was counted by SPSS 25 version. If the r value of Pearson Correlation is higher than r (0,70) is generally considered strong. In this research, the r value is (0,737), it is higher than r (0,70) which means the reliability between two raters is consistent or reliable. Moreover, the p -sig is 0,000 which is lower than p -sig 0,05. Thus, there was a correlation between rater 1 and rater 2. It indicated that the test was reliable to be used to measure students essay writing of universities in Palembang.

Table 5. The Correlation between Rater 1 and Rater 2

		Rater 1	Rater 2
Rater 1	Pearson Correlation	1	,737**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
	N	30	30
Rater 2	Pearson Correlation	,737**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
	N	30	30

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The researcher used Try Out in order to find out the reliability of the test. 30 students from UIN Raden Fatah Palembang took part in the researcher's Try Out.

Data Analysis

To examine the students' errors in writing an essay, the methodologies of error analysis described by James (2013) was used in this study. According to James (2013) The procedure includes several stages such as detecting error, identifying error, describing error, and classifying error. After that, the researcher asked the raters to crosscheck the identification and description that were made by the researcher.

Lastly, the researcher used the subsequent such as counting the total number of each type of students' errors, counting the total number of all types of students' errors in writing an essay, making percentage for each type of errors that students made in their essays, in order to find out the most frequent type of essay errors by the total number of all types of essay errors and then multiplying with one hundred percent. The researcher used the following formula which adopted from Calmorin (2016):

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

P :Percentage of errors

F : Frequency of error occurred

N : Total number of all types errors

100% : Constant value

D. Results and Discussion

Types of Errors Committed by Universities Students

This study aimed to find out the errors in students' essays writing of universities in Palembang. There were 30 argumentative essays made by students from three universities in Palembang. After collecting the data from the students, the researcher analyzed, identified, and classified students' essays that contained errors by using four essay writing aspects which was adopted from Langan's Theory (2011). Those four aspects are unity, coherence, support, and sentence skills. The checklist error is applied as the instrument to check writing errors that students made in their essays. As a result, there were 401 total errors of unity, support, coherence, and sentence skills found in students' essays writing. There were 26 errors were found in unity, 48 errors were found in coherence, 57 errors were found in support, and 270 errors in sentence skills. The distribution of errors is shown in the following table:

Table 6. The Distribution of Errors

No	Type of Errors	The Number of Errors	Percentage
1	Unity	26	6,48%
2	Support	48	11,97%
3	Coherence	57	14,21%
4	Sentence Skills	270	67,33%
	Total	401	100%

Errors Regarding to Unity

Errors in unity are related to the formulation of thesis statement. This is due to the fact that thesis statement will be the guidance for the students during the process of writing argumentative essay. Based on the checklist table above, from 30 students, there were

26 students made errors in unity aspect and the total number of error was 26 errors. 10 errors were found in the form of announcement rather than statement, 8 errors were found in the thesis statement is too broad, 2 errors were found in the thesis statements is too narrow, and 6 errors were found in the thesis statements which contain more than one idea. Thus, the majority of students composed their thesis statements in the form of an announcement rather than a statement. After the errors were classified, then in order to know the percentage of unity errors, the following formula was used:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

$$P = \frac{26}{401} \times 100\% = 6,48\%$$

It can be concluded that the overall percentage of unity errors were 6,48%. Furthermore, in order to know the percentage in four types of error in unity namely announcement rather than statement, statement is too broad, statement is too narrow, and statement contains more than one idea, the same formula was used. Furthermore, in order to know the percentage in four types of error in unity namely announcement rather than statement, statement is too broad, statement is too narrow, and statement contains more than one idea, the same formula was used. It is possible to display the percentage of unity errors found in Figure 1:

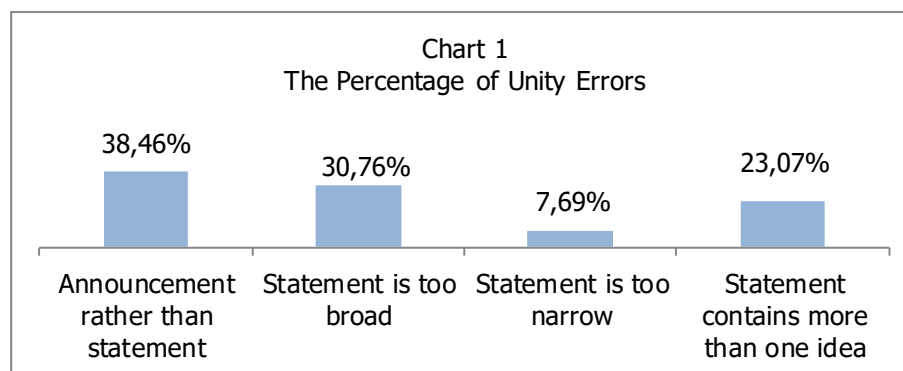


Figure 1. The Percentage of Unity Errors

From Figure 1, the results show that the most common errors in unity were found in announcement rather than statement with frequency 38,46% errors, 30,76% errors were found in statement is too broad, 7,69% errors were found in statement is too narrow, and 23,07% errors were found in statement contains more than one idea.

Errors Regarding to Support

Errors in support are related to incoherent details and the lack of spesific and adequate details. Some students had very few details, yet they were quite specific, for their argumentative essays. Even though some of them contained sufficient details, none of them supported an argument. As a result, from 30 students, there were 26 students made errors in support aspect and the total number of errors which contributed by students was 57 errors. These errors demonstrated that students' supporting points essays lacked coherence, specificity, and enough description.

After the errors were classified, then in order to know the percentage of unity errors, the following formula was used:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

$$P = \frac{57}{401} \times 100\% = 14,21\%$$

The percentage of supporting errors was 14,21%, as could be presented.

Errors Regarding to Coherence

Errors in coherence are related to the ability of writer to connect the ideas between first paragraph to another paragraphs without obvious alternations or jumps. It means that writer must make sentences and paragraphs flow smoothly and logically in order to make the readers comprehend easily with what the content of the essay about. Based on the checklist table above, from 30 students, there were 23 students made errors in coherence aspect. Moreover, there were 8 errors that students made in common method of organizations, 34 errors in transitions, and 6 errors in other connecting words. As a result, there were 48 total numbers of errors in coherence that students made in their essays. Those errors showed that students were not able to connect the ideas between one paragraph to another paragraphs properly. After the errors were classified, the following formula was used in order to know the percentage of coherence errors:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

$$P = \frac{48}{401} \times 100\% = 11,97\%$$

It could be concluded that the overall percentage of coherence errors were 11,97%. After that, in order to know the percentage of three error types in coherence namely common method of organizations, transitions, and other connecting words, the same formula was used. The same formula was used. The percentage of amount identified coherence errors could be illustrated in Figure 2:

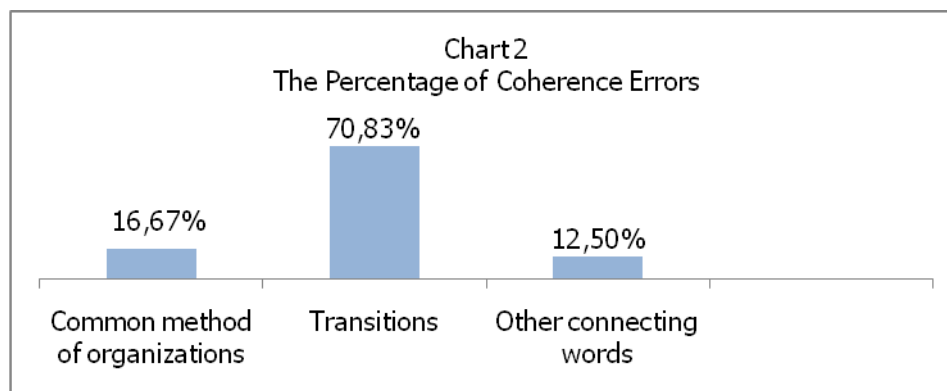


Figure 2. The Percentage of Coherence Errors

From Figure 2, the results show that 16,67% errors were found in common method of organization, 70,83% errors were found in transition, and 12,50% errors were found in other connecting words.

Errors Regarding to Sentence Skills

Errors in sentence skills are related to the skills which needed to make an effective sentence. In order to make an effective essay the writer must follow agreed-upon rules, or conventions, of written English-simply called sentence skills. Based on the preceding checklist table, from 30 students, there were 29 students made errors in sentence skills aspect. Furthermore, there were 270 errors found in sentence skills. From all 270 errors, 24 errors were found in writing fragment rather than a complete sentence, 4 errors were found in writing run-ons, 9 errors were found in the use of incorrect verb, 10 errors were

found in subject and verb agreement, 14 errors were found in faulty parallelism, 27 errors were found in faulty modifier, 8 errors were found in the use of incorrect pronoun, 58 errors were found in the using capital letters, 24 errors were found in the use of punctuation, 16 errors were found in wordiness, 20 errors were found in choosing words incorrectly, and 57 errors were found in spelling errors. These errors demonstrated that students were unable to construct effective sentences that would make readers feel at ease while reading the content and enable them to quickly understand its meaning. After that in order to know the percentage of sentence skills errors, the following formula was used:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

$$P = \frac{270}{401} \times 100\% = 67,33\%$$

It could be seen that the overall percentage of sentence skills errors were 67,33%. Furthermore, in order to know the percentage of twelve errors in sentence skills, the same formula was used. The percentage of discovered errors in sentence skills is displayed in Figure 3:

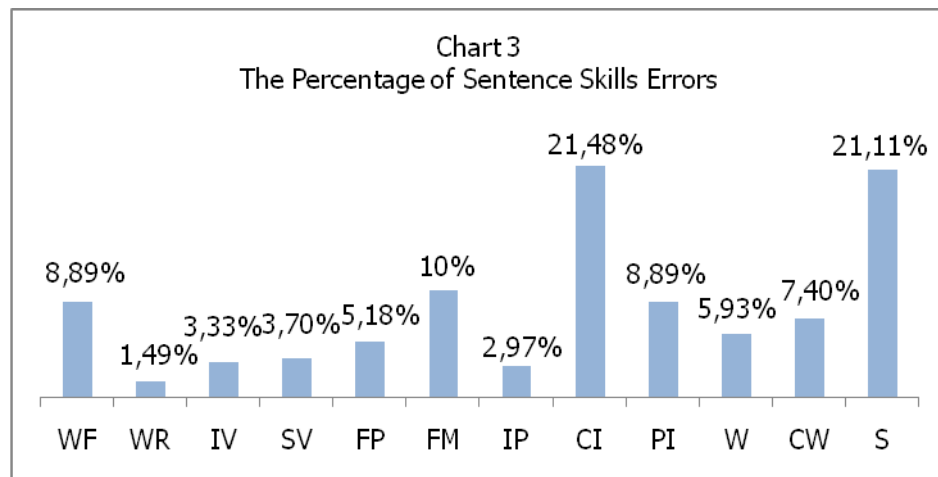


Figure 3. The Percentage of Sentence Skills Errors

From Figure 3, the results show that 8,89% errors were found in writing fragment rather than a complete sentence, 1,49% errors were found in writing run-ons, 3,33% errors were found in the use of incorrect verb, 3,70% errors were found in subject and verb agreement, 5,18% errors were found in faulty pararellism, 10% errors were found in faulty modifier, 2,97% errors were found in the use of incorrect pronoun, 21,48% errors were found in using capital letters incorrectly, 8,89% errors were found in using punctuation incorrectly, 5,93% errors were found in wordiness, 7,40% errors were found in choosing words incorrectly, and 21,11% errors were found in spelling errors.

Most Common Errors in Essay Writing

Based on the findings of the study above, The students from three universities in Palembang had done writing errors in four aspects namely unity, support, coherence, and sentence skills. From the preceding explanations above, it can be concluded that the most common errors in essay writing which students made in their argumentative essays was in sentence skills aspect with total number 207 errors and frequency 67,33%. In sentence skills, the most frequently committed error was in using capital letters (21,48%). The percentage of discovered errors in essay writing is displayed in Figure 4:

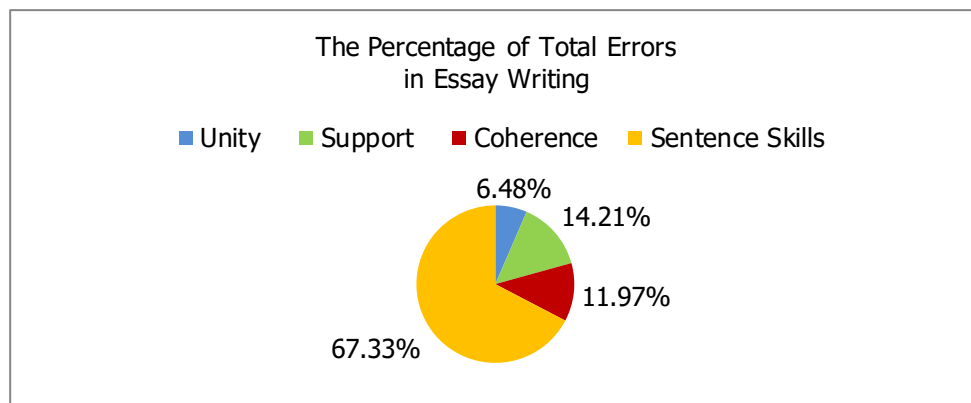


Figure 4. The Percentage of Total Errors in Essay Writing

Discussion

The findings indicated that the students in Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang, Univeristas Sriwijaya, and Universitas Muhammadiyah Palembang had done the four writing aspect errors on their writing argumentative essay. According to Langan (2011), there are four types of in writing essay such as unity, support, coherence, and sentence skills. Based on the results mentioned previously, it was revealed that the students made errors in unity with frequency 6,48% errors, in support 14,21% errors, in coherence 11,97% errors, and sentence skills 67,33% errors. In unity errors, students made errors in thesis statement, they tended to write thesis statement in the form of announcement rather than statement. This error had the same issue as Ramadhani and Ahmad (2022) research findings, which found that students frequently write their thesis in the form of announcements rather than statements. Additionally, some of them created thesis statements that were too wide or too narrow to be explored in an essay. On the other hand, other students created thesis statements that consisted of multiple ideas, making it difficult for them to provide sufficient evidence. Moreover, the results of this study were consistent with Ariyanti and Fitriana's study (2017), in that thesis statements were the most frequently encountered area of difficulty for EFL students. The ideas present in all of the paragraphs in this instance were not connected to one another since they were not included in the opening paragraph.

Supporting errors revealed that students' supporting points essays were incoherent, lacked of specificity and enough description. According to Langan (2011), supporting points must have spesific details in order to excite the reader's interest. However, the result of study from Pratiwi (2016) showed that in the content aspect, English students at University at Bengkulu did not have any problems or difficulties in the content aspect but they had major difficulties in arrangement, tense, number, and word order or fragments.

Coherence illustrated that students were not able to connect the ideas between one paragraph to another paragraphs properly. The outcomes of this study had the same issue as those from Ariyanti and Fitriana (2017): EFL students had trouble producing essays, particularly in terms of grammar, cohesiveness, and coherence.

Sentence skills errors demonstrated that students were unable to construct effective sentences that would make readers feel at ease while reading the content and enable them to quickly understand its meaning. The findings aligned with those of studies by

Pratiwi (2016) Aisyah and Rahmawati (2019), showing that EFL students had significant issues in sentence-related skills, including language use, mechanical aspects, and structure. Errors can be produced by language mixing, L2 competency levels, literary L1 skills, social circumstances, and individual differences in addition to L1 influence.

From all discussions above, it can be concluded that students at three universities in Palembang tend to make errors in their writing essays such as in unity, support, coherence, and sentence skills. Furthermore, the most common errors in students' essays was in sentence skills with 207 total number of errors and frequency 67,33%.

E. Conclusion

Based on the findings of an error analysis in essay writing class made from three universities in Palembang namely, Universitas Sriwijaya, UIN Raden Fatah Palembang, and Univeristas Muhammadiyah Palembang. The researcher found the 401 errors based on the classification of error in writing an essay by Langan (2011) namely, (1) unity with the total numbers of error were 26 errors with a frequency of 6,48%, (2) support with the total numbers of error were 57 errors with a frequency of 14,21%, (3) coherence with the total numbers of error were 48 errors with a frequency of 11,97%, (4) sentence skills with the total numbers of error were 207 errors with a frequency of 67,33%. Based on the data of this research, it can be concluded that the most common errors in students' essay writing was in sentence skills with the total number of errors 207 and the frequency (67,33%). The researcher expects that many more scholars in the future will be more interested in conducting the study of writing skill to improve students' writing abilities, particularly for university students. Future studies can also identify a solution to the issue of error analysis in academic writing for university students.

F. Acknowledgement

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