

Analysis on Cohesive Devices Errors in EFL University Students' Argumentative Composition

Nabilah Chusna Khairunisa

English Education, Faculty of Languages and Art, State University of Surabaya
nabilahck@yahoo.com

Wiwiet Eva Savitri

English Education, Faculty of Languages and arts, State Univerity of Surabaya
wiwieteva@unesa.ac.id

Abstrak

Kemampuan untuk menyusun koheren dalam bahasa target bisa sangat . Untuk mengungkapkan kontinuitas yang ada antara satu bagian teks dan yang lainnya, perangkat kohesif digunakan. Dengan menggunakan cohesive devices, diharapkan teks tersebut akan koheren. Namun, penggunaan cohesive devices yang tidak akurat membuat pembaca salah paham dengan apa yang ingin disampaikan oleh penulis. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menyelidiki kesalahan penggunaan perangkat kohesif, dan untuk penyebab kesalahan penggunaan perangkat kohesif dalam esai argumentatif mereka. Selanjutnya, penelitian ini dilakukan dengan menguraikan analisis wawancara dan dokumen, dan untuk memvalidasi digunakanlah hasil dari inter-rater. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa siswa melakukan sejumlah kecil kesalahan kohesif (2%) dari 2049 perangkat kohesif. Selain itu, strategi pembelajaran bahasa kedua, pelatihan transfer, dan transfer bahasa merupakan sumber kesalahan penggunaan perangkat kohesif. Meskipun mereka menggunakan perangkat kohesif yang tidak akurat, sebagian besar esai tidak mengganggu keseluruhan makna dan tujuan esai argumentatif.

Kata Kunci: analisis eror, karangan argumentatif, perangkat kohesif

Abstract

The ability to compose coherently in target language can be overwhelming. To expresses the continuity which is exists between one part of the text and another, cohesive devices are used. By using cohesive devices, it is expected that the text will be coherent. However inaccurate uses of cohesive devices lead the readers to misunderstanding what the writer intends to convey. The purpose of this study are to investigate the frequency of use and error , to investigate the forms of cohesive errors, and to find out the factors which cause the EFL university students commit cohesive errors in their argumentative essays. Furthermore, this study was conducted by elaborating interview and document analysis, and to validate the the result inter-rater is reliability is incorporated. The results showed that the students commit small number of cohesive errors (2%) out of 2049 cohesive devices. Moreover, second language learning strategy, transfer training, and language transfer are the sources of students' cohesive errors. Even though they use inaccurate cohesive device, most of essays were not disturb the whole meaning and purpose of the argumentative essays.

Keywords: error analysis, argumentative composition, cohesive device.

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, EFL university students should be able to deliver their thoughts and arguments clearly. However, writing in target language is not always an easy task. As a complex productive skill in language learning, learners need to master the elements of writing. Learners will not only learn the grammatical and rhetoric elements but also the entire writing components (Heaton, 1988 as cited in Kisworo 2016). Similar to which, Harmer (2007) stated writing deals with complicated aspects of language such as text construction and style. In addition, a well-mannered writing will lead to a good communication

because communication is not only dealing with the well speaking but also dealing with a good writing. Writing involves a complex sociocognitive process, not an innate natural skill which has to be acquired through trainings and practices.

Myles (2002) stated that to link new ideas can be difficult because it involves assembling more information which is more complicated than writing a narrative text. This indicates that linking new ideas can be difficult because it must go through the ideas that are used before, so the whole organization will correspond to one and another. Exceptionally, writing an argumentative essay which is a type of composition that postulating

reasons to strengthen the arguments and convincing readers that our perspectives are true (Oshima & Hogue, 2006)

Although learners have learned English for years adult learners' ultimate attainment of L2 proficiency does not become native-like. This is due to the fact that the properties of English and Bahasa Indonesia are certainly different. Correspondingly, in order to transfer knowledge from one language to another, students need abundant of understanding to target language proficiency. Therefore, appropriate genre knowledge and structure is essential to organize and present students' thoughts to the structure of the whole text

Despite this condition, the skill to compose coherently in target language can be intimidating. For English Education students, it is such a priority for the students to write fluently and confidently in English due to the fact that they will compose a number of written assignments such as research reports and papers. Important factors are needed to compose a good writing – unity, coherence, and 'adequate development' (Sutama, 1997). Moreover, a good essay must be in a chronological order, shows unity and coherence that creates the flow of information in unified way (Oshima and Hogue, 2006; Hinkel, 2004).

Notably, cohesive devices are the essential to cohesion and coherence. Cohesive devices are transitional words or expressions that boost cohesion and coherence within the text. It provides internal unity or texture so that the text is easy to comprehend by tying all of elements of any structure has and ensure that they express all of part of the text. Cohesion occurs where the interpretation of some discourse parts is dependent on another. Meaning that between two or more sentences should be dependent on each other.

According Halliday and Hasan (1976), the classification of cohesive devices are divided into two; grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion. Grammatical cohesion consists of the use of reference, conjunction, substitution, and ellipsis.

Reference is commonly known as semantic relationship which holds a word and other elements in a text that involves an act of referring to an element within.

There are four identification of conjunction; additive, adversative, clausal, and temporal. This category signals what is about to be said to what has been said before. Conjunction is different from other types of cohesive relation, from both reference and substitution and ellipsis.

According to Halliday and Hassan (1976), substitution is one feature in a text that replaces a previous word or expression. It is a relation between

linguistic items, such as words or phrases, rather than a relation between meanings.

Cohesion through ellipsis can be thought of as the omission of an item in which the form of substitution is replaced by nothing. In other words, it can be regarded as substitution *by zero* (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). It means that an item in a text is replaced by nothing but the meaning still be able to be understood by reader or listener by looking back to the preceding item.

In the other hand, lexical cohesion offers only two subcategories; reiteration and collocation. Lexical cohesion refers to relationships between and among words in a text (Gerot and Wignell, 1994). It involves the repetition of a noun phrase, or the use of another noun phrase which bears a relation to the antecedent noun phrase. Halliday and Hasan (1976) divide lexical cohesion into two main categories: reiteration and collocation.

Nevertheless, inaccurate uses of cohesive devices lead to confusion between the readers and writers' intention. The factor of students' weak knowledge of cohesive devices will affect their composition. Students tend to use more connectors to maintain logicity on the surface only. Correspondingly, the grammar which the students use might be inadequate. When the grammar is not appropriately used, the sentences or ideas in a text may disrupt the flow of the text and cause incoherence.

Common source of errors is also suggested by Selingker (1972). There are five sources of errors classified by Selingker (1972); language transfer, transfer of training, strategies of second language learning, strategies of second language communication, and overgeneralisation of the target language.

1. Language Transfer

In language transfer, two classes of error source are classified. The first one is positive transfer which the learner is being benefited by the mother tongue language structure in the process of learning the target language whereas the negative transfer is a transfer where the mother tongue interfering the process of learning the target language.

2. Transfer Training

On transfer training, prior learning dominates the future situation of performing the language. In short, how students aware or understand the learning materials will affect the next performance on learning target language.

3. Second Language Learning Strategy

Strategies of second language learning are employed by the learners to achieve the target language. Those strategies will encompass the linguistic and sociolinguistic competence when they perform on the target language.

4. Communication Strategy on Second Language

The strategy of second language communication has similar designation to previous category. Nonetheless, it emphasizes the communicative problems that develop in interaction or communication.

5. Overgeneralisation

Overgeneralisation of the target language occurred when the learner attempts to employ the rules of the target language. However, the rules are altered and contrasted but they do not convey a significant contrast for the learners.

Numbers of researches address the problem of erroring using cohesive devices, mainly in reference and conjunction. One of them is conducted by Wijayanto (2014). He conducted a research where he analysed the error on cohesive device in personal pronoun of eleventh grade senior high. In his research, he found that the most error found in the students' writing was misformation error. The error of misformation was mostly due to incomplete application of rule. They were unable to use the changing form of personal pronouns in writing.

Nurhayati (2012) Amaliyah (2015) and Sutarmi (2016) found that EFL university students commit errors in their compositions. The contribution of cohesive devices was explained whereas the cause of the errors is still vague. More expanded view from analysing the form of error and the source is needed to this scope. Error is seen as valuable information to give clues about progress of the students, to provide evidence as to understanding language is acquired or learnt, to give resources in order to learn intensely in specific aspect (Corder, 1967). As well as analysing the error, focusing the error source can be advantageous for both parties in terms of writing skill, comprehension, and teaching process.

Therefore, the writer is intended to investigate the frequency of use and error, the forms of cohesive errors committed by EFL university students' argumentative essays, and to explain the factors which cause the EFL university students commit cohesive errors in their argumentative essays.

METHOD

To answer the research questions about the form of errors, percentage of errors and sources of errors, this study used qualitative approach with document analysis as research design. This research design was chosen because it focuses on analysing and interpreting recorded material and can involve numerical data process (Ary et. Al, 2009). This will help to investigate and describe the errors and sources of cohesive devices use in argumentative composition.

The advantages of using content analysis are (1) easily replicated and the observation is not influenced by the presence of the researcher and (2) the document can be saved in order to keep safety and the observer can analyse using the replicated document. Cohen (2007) pointed out that content analysis involves coding, categorizing (creating meaningful categories into which the units of analysis – words, phrases, sentences, etc. – can be placed), comparing (categories and making links between them), and concluding – drawing theoretical conclusions from the text.

To collect the data, a class consists of 17 students were randomly chosen. The reason they were randomly chosen is that it is unnecessary to stratify their writing skill when they were sitting in one class. All of the students wrote argumentative essays for their exams so that it will also take longer time put them into different classification. The data were obtained from interview and argumentative essays that students have written. The essays were analysed to get the data of cohesive devices.

To answer the research questions, documents, researcher, and interview guidelines were used as instruments. The documents – students' essay – were categorised based on Halliday and Hassan (1967) cohesive devices categories - reference (personals, demonstratives, and comparatives), substitution, ellipsis, conjunction (additive, adversative, casual, and temporal) and lexical cohesion.

In order to categorise them, the cohesive devices that are found were symbolised by coloured marker to ease the sorting process. After marking cohesive devices uses and errors, they were put in the form of error proposed by Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982). After they were categorised, the percentage of each category were counted. To count the percentage, the formula used is in the table below:

table 3.1. Formulae to count the frequency of cohesive devices use

Formula	Note
$\frac{F}{n} \times 100\%$	F = frequencies of CD found in a category n = Total Number of the CD found in the essay

After analysing and categorising the cohesive devices, the interview was conducted. 10 students were chosen to be interviewed based on their use of cohesive devices in their essays. The interview questions are open-ended questions so that the students answer the questions willingly. The transcript was read thoroughly to find supplementary data as well as the statements containing the clues of error cause will be coded.

Data analysis was conducted after the data was collected. First, the essays and the interview transcripts were read to recognize the cohesive devices and the students' opinion. This step would help the researcher to retrieve the data. Second, coding the interview transcript is necessary to analyze the source of errors. In addition, coding is also required to analyze the sentence that contains error. The errors are analyzed based of sources of errors. The documents that have been color-coded will be compared with the transcript. It would reveal in which category of cohesive devices with that contained the most error. Next is presenting the charts that contain information about how many cohesive devices uses and errors are found. The errors are analyzed based of sources of errors. Then, the findings were described. The referential code is listed below:

Table 3.2. Referential Code

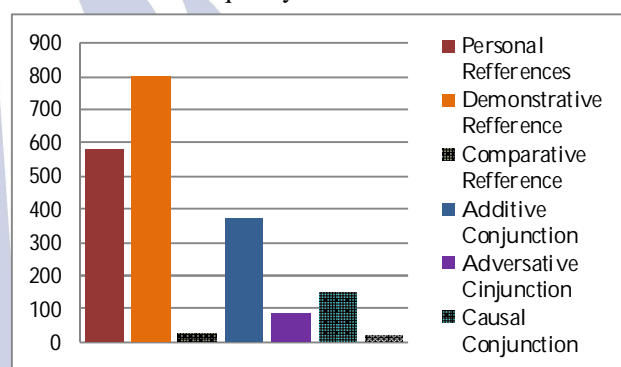
Forms of Error	Code
Omission	OM
Misinformation	MIS
Addition	ADD
Misordering	MOD
Source of Error	Code
Language Transfer	LT
Transfer Training	TT
Second Language Strategy	SL
Communication Strategy	CS
Overgeneralisation	OV

Researcher alone will not enough to validate this study. Therefore, inter-rater was involved to validate this study. The rater was given the referential codes and asked to assess students' compositions. The essay assessment was blind assessment where the rater did not know the time frame in which the essays were written or by whom those multiple essays were written by. After scoring, the analytic ratings were combined into an overall rating for each essay. After the rater finished analyzing, the percentages of each cohesive devices error based on rater's assessment were counted.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Cohesive Devices Used

Chart 4.1. Frequency Of Cohesive Devices



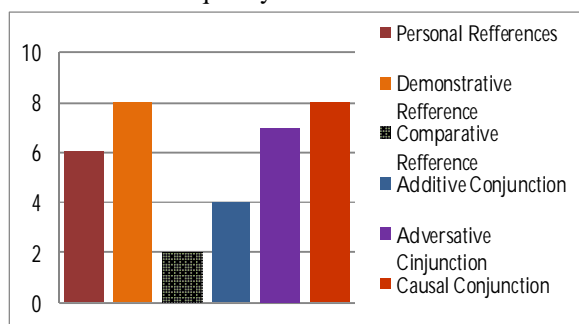
Personal reference is widely used, mostly to indicate the writer's position in the essay and to feature a person or an object that is referred to in the essay. Therefore, *they, I, he, him, and them* are frequently found throughout 17 essays. Demonstrative references which are found in the essays are utilized by using *the, this, and that*. They are mostly used to signal noun e.g *the parents, the class, this method, the school the test, the national examination, those facts, this issue, etc*. Meanwhile, comparative references found in the essays are only used as adjectives such as *more stressful, more brutal, better quality*.

In the use of conjunction, additive conjunction is widely used in the essays. Since the concept of additive conjunction is 'and', the use of this type of conjunction is widely used as expected (*and, or, also, moreover, furthermore, in addition, for example, and in addition*). The use of adversative conjunction is basically to show 'the opposite from the expectation'. The students can utilize this type of conjunction with the fair amount of use, such as *however, on the other hand, but, nonetheless, actually, yet, and in fact*. In the use of causal conjunction, the idea of 'because.. so' and 'if...then' are used limitedly. *Therefore, then, thus, because, because of, so, and for* are frequently used.

As far as it is concerned, the students are not skillful to use temporal conjunctions since there is a lacking of conclusion paragraph. There are only few students that are able to use this type. Temporal conjunction mostly used for *showing sequence* e.g. *first, second, then, next, at the same time* and *signaling conclusion* e.g. *to sum up, in brief, in short, in conclusion*.

B. Cohesive Devices Errors

Chart 4.2. Frequency Of Cohesive Devices Error



The students commit cohesive errors in their essays. 35 errors are found in the essays. Most of the errors are error in personal and demonstrative references. Throughout the use of demonstrative references, errors in the use of *the, this* and *that* were found frequently. Specifically, *the* was shifted to other article *a* to sign a noun which made it incorrect. Sometimes, *the* in the essays were omitted.

The errors in personal pronoun are mostly pronoun shift. This occurred when the students failed to refer back to previous pronoun. In addition, students also omit the pronoun as well. This missing pronoun might cause misperception to the reader. The students also alternate the form of pronoun that did not suit with the structure agreement.

These are the examples of personal personal reference error:

Moreover, based on Piaget theory, **a child** at the age of 2 until 7 is on the adaptation step, while giving them test will only quicken the proses so they will not be ready. (student B)

That is why when he plays he includes all of his feeling, sense, emotion physical condition and the whole part of his body, they sometime ignore what Ø parent says. (student N)

Therefore, Indonesia must create a law on mandatory high school education for Indonesians. Its mean people must be punished if they do not finish Ø high school education and get their diploma.(student S)

In terms of error sources, this indicates as language transfer. On language transfer are mostly found the negative transfer since the mother tongue influence the production of target language. The students keep referring singular pronoun to plural pronoun or vice versa. Furthermore, error in personal pronoun also occurred when the students were confused to use personal pronouns, possessive pronouns and possessive adjectives. The students tend to omit or misuse the definite article *the* and to shift pronouns within or between clauses from single to plural or the other way around. (Kargozari, Ghaemi, & Heravi, 2012; Amalliyyah, 2015). In addition, Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982) also stated that language learners often omit grammatical morpheme.

There are also findings regarding incorrectly use of comparative reference. Different error forms of comparative references that are found are ignorance of restricted rule and misordering..

Student neglected the restricted rule without paying attention to other morpheme. In the use of comparative reference, Halliday and Hasan (1976) stated that it can be used as adverbs or adjectives. However, the finding on this study only shows that the students only use it as adjective. Misordering in comparative reference also shows that the student failed to arrange the sentence correctly and makes the sentence looks chaotic. These are the examples of comparative reference error:

Indonesian school system must be repaired in order to achieve the truest goal of education and to build Indonesia becomes the greater nation. (student M)

In addition, homeschooling provides safety much more than formal school. (Student G)

Next, incorrectly use of additive conjunction is mostly altering forms. This might happen because the student thought that even more is similar to moreover and have the same meaning '*terlebih lagi*' in Bahasa Indonesia.

Even more, students will feel worse if their rank drops. (student K)

Misuses of additive conjunction are also found in the students' essays. Additive conjunction supposed to add an idea of preceding sentence. However, it does not add any new idea or introduce a new idea

Regarding the use of adversative conjunction, students generally misuse and add simple addition of adversative conjunction in their essays. The use of *and* and *but* to begin a sentence is improper instead of using

transition signal; furthermore, in addition – to connect two clauses. The use of *but* and *so* to be a sentence connector and put in the beginning of a sentence is inappropriate. Both of them should be placed between independent clauses.

But in the same time, when parents shout it up their children, it killed and damaged children brain cells. (Student N)

There are also other instances where the students misuse entire conjunction. An adversative 'even though' is generally found in the beginning of a sentence without followed by an independent clause. The use of *even though* alone can be considered as 'marking dependent clause'. In the essays, some of students left the dependent clause behind making the sentence not expressing a complete thought. The use of even though is put in the beginning of the sentence without a following clause and it is inappropriate. This happens because the students directly translate their L1 (*meskipun begitu*) to L2 (*even though*).

Even thought, students have more holidays to gather with their family. (student J)

Even though, Government Regulation number 17, 2010 point 66 explained to make a good environment and playing as the model of children learning. (student M)

The identified errors on causal conjunctions are generally omission and misuse. Most of the misuse are in the form of 'thus'. In example 14, *thus* is not used as 'introducing a causal result'.

Thus, Let me remind you of a quote from Ki Hajar Dewantara "Ing ngarso sing tulodho" means that a teacher must be a good model for the students. (Student E)

Thus, to avoid this case, homeschooling becomes the best solution because by studying at home, they will be safe from all kinds of violence that happen in school. (Student H)

An omission of an item in *because of* is commonly found. This might happen due to student's confusion in using a proper conjunction. The student is possibly lacking the knowledge and therefore ignores the restricted rule.

Moreover, they will be so difficult to obey the rules **because** Ø the flexible system. (student F)

Concerning the errors that the students have made, there are three significant kinds of error sources. The source of error was analyzed from the interview with the students. By conducting the interview, the researcher found that the sources of errors are second language learning strategy, transfer training, and language transfer.

The first source is second language strategy. Second language strategy is an approach used by learner to learn the material. They tend to look-up the sources on internet, checking resources such as notes, and modify the cohesive devices. The student said modify because she intended to avoid repetition.

The second is transfer training. On transfer training, the learning process and how understand the students is about learning materials will affect the next performance on learning target language. This happens when the students were explained about the use of cohesive devices and how to use it. It was found that some students understand when to use it, but in practice they somehow use it inaccurately. It was also discovered that they practice their knowledge according to what they have been taught.

Since the lecturer only mention or explained briefly, these students need more resources as they were asked to produce a well-written essay. Moreover, as mentioned above, word-by-word translation from L1 to target language has been found in the form of misordering. This indicates negative transfer. From the interview, the student also admits to often to translate word-by-word when the student does not know the proper form of cohesive ties.

When the students have misconception of cohesive ties, it usually deals with what they learn in the classroom. Students show tendency to use 'thus' to introduce an idea and correlate sentence without a context. Moreover, incomplete application of rule also plays sufficient role for students to committed errors.

On language transfer are mostly found the negative transfer since the mother tongue influence the production of target language. In this case, negative transfer is variously found as pronoun shifts. The students keep referring singular pronoun to plural pronoun or vice versa. In grammatical cohesion, incomplete application rule is easily appearing since the students may pay more attention to a different structure form. Although the students understand how to utilize the cohesive device, there are still inaccurate uses in practice. They focus more on the essay structure than linguistic structure. Even though they use inaccurate cohesive device, most of essays were not disturb the whole meaning and purpose of the argumentative essays.

CLOSING

Conclusion

The analysis was based on the framework proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976) on the concept of cohesive devices. The various use of cohesion were described and exemplified and the report of error source had been embedded in the previous chapter. Therefore, the conclusion is drawn based on the results and discussion.

The result of this study shows that 2049 uses of cohesive devices were found throughout the essays and the errors committed by the students are less than 40. The demonstrative reference, personal reference, and additive conjunction are category in which the uses are frequently found. Conversely, only 35 error uses were found throughout all essays. The errors found are in the form of omission, misinformation, simple addition, and misordering. Likewise, pronoun shift also contribute to the error made by the students.

The error sources are also identified. The sources of errors are second language learning strategy, transfer training, and language transfer. They occupy several learning strategies to use cohesive devices which are resourcing from internet, reading learning material that is given from the lecturer and modifying the form of cohesive devices to avoid repetition. Moreover, there is a gap between what they understand during the lesson and during the practice, that is they cannot utilize cohesive devices well. However, even though the cohesive devices are clearly applied by the EFL students, it is still problematic since the students may deal with some obstacles as a result of lack competence. It may also be caused by the teachers who are not able to teach them properly as the result of lack knowledge in teaching writing skill.

Suggestion

It is important for English Department students to understand not only when to use cohesive devices but also how to use them. Furthermore, it is necessary for them to realize various kinds of cohesive devices besides what the lecturer had taught. Moreover, it is important for the students to find more sources regarding the examples of cohesive devices. It does not necessarily means that they have to use large amount of cohesive devices within their essays. By reading more sources and understanding when to use it, they will be more skillful to elaborate their idea in argumentative as well as using cohesive devices.

It will be beneficial if the lecturer also emphasis the use of cohesive ties so that the students pay attention to the flow of argument they will write. Indeed, lecturer's

assistance to improve students' use of cohesive ties is necessary.

REFERENCES

- Amaliyyah, Siti Ma'rifatul. (2015). *Analysis On The Use Of Cohesive Devices On The College Students Essay At STKIP PGRI Pasuruan*.
- Ary, Donald, Jacobs, Lucy Cheser, & Sorensen, Chris. (2010). *Introduction to Research in Education* (8th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Amaliyyah, Siti Ma'rifatul. (2015). *Analysis On The Use Of Cohesive Devices On The College Students Essay At STKIP PGRI Pasuruan*.
- Ary, Donald, Jacobs, Lucy Cheser, & Sorensen, Chris. (2010). *Introduction to Research in Education* (8th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Halliday, M.A.K., & Hasan, Ruqaiya. (1976). *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman.
- Hinkel, Eli. (2004). *Teaching Academic ESL Writing: Practical Techniques in Vocabulary and Grammar*. New Jersey: Laurence Elbaum Associates, Inc. Publisher.
- Mawardi. (2014). An Analysis Of The Cohesion And Coherence Of The Students' Narrative Writings In The English Language Education Department Of Nahdlatul Wathan Mataram University. *Ganeç Swara*, 8(01).
- Nurhayati, Yanti. (2012). "The Error Analysis On The Use Of Cohesive Devices In English Writing Essay Among The Seventh Semester Students Of English Department Of Stain Salatiga In The Academic Year Of 2011/2012". STAIN Salatiga, Salatiga.
- Oshima, Alice, & Hogue, Ann. (2006). *Writing Academic English*. New York: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Richards, J. C., & Renandya, W. A. (2002). *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Selingker, Larry. (1972). Interlanguage. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 10(3), 209.
- Sutama, I Made. (1997). *Perkembangan Koherensi Tulisan Siswa Sekolah Dasar*. IKIP Malang. Unpublished Dissertation.
- Sutarmi, Eka. (2016). *Misuse Of Cohesive Devices In Students' Argumentative Essay Writing*. Iain Tulungagung.
- Watcharapunyawong, Somchai, & Usaha, Siriluck. (2013). Thai EFL Students' Writing Errors in

Different Text Types: The Interference of the First Language. *Canadian Centre of science and Education*, 6, 67-78.

Wijayanto, Aru. (2014). *Error Analysis in the Use of Personal Pronouns Made by Eleventh Graders in Writing*. Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya.

