

**PREPOSITION ERRORS MADE BY ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS  
IN WRITING ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY:  
A Study at University of Ekasakti Padang**

**THESIS**



**By**

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*This thesis is submitted to fulfill one of the requirements to obtain  
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## **ABSTRAK**

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Preposisi adalah salah satu elemen bahasa yang memainkan peranan penting untuk menggabungkan kata-kata untuk membangun kalimat. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui kesalahan-kesalahan kata depan yang muncul dalam tulisan karangan argumentasi. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga bertujuan untuk mengetahui penyebab kesalahan-kesalahan tersebut. Sumber data penelitian ini adalah tulisan mahasiswa semester lima program studi bahasa Inggris Universitas Ekasakti yang terdiri dari 50 mahasiswa. Para mahasiswa tersebut dipilih secara acak dengan mengurutkan nama-nama mahasiswa tersebut dari nomor 1 sampai 50, kemudian peneliti memilih nama-nama mahasiswa pada setiap nomor kelipatan dua sebagai sampel dalam penelitian ini. Maksudnya, dari mahasiswa nomor 1 sampai nomor 50, peneliti hanya memilih mahasiswa nomor 2, mahasiswa nomor 4, mahasiswa nomor 6, mahasiswa nomor 8, mahasiswa nomor 10, mahasiswa nomor 12, mahasiswa nomor 14, dan seterusnya hingga didapatkan 20 siswa.

Jenis penelitian yang digunakan dalam tesis ini adalah penelitian deskriptif. Penelitian ini adalah tentang eror dalam penggunaan preposisi oleh mahasiswa semester lima Bahasa Inggris Universitas Ekasakti Padang. Data penelitian ini adalah preposisi yang salah yang ditemukan dalam esai argumentatif yang ditulis oleh mahasiswa. Data tersebut dikumpulkan melalui pemberian tes menulis esai argumentatif kepada mahasiswa. Untuk mengetahui penyebabnya, data dikumpulkan melalui interview. Penelitian ini menginvestigasi tipe-tipe eror, dan apa penyebabnya.

Temuan menunjukkan bahwa siswa melakukan kesalahan dalam penggunaan preposisi. Semua itu termasuk dalam omissions, insertions, and misselection. Sementara itu, tuntunan interview didasarkan pada teori Richard tentang penyebab eror. Adapun penyebab kesalahan mahasiswa tersebut yaitu dikarenakan overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restriction, incomplete application of the rules, dan false concept hypothesized. Dari temuan penelitian tersebut disimpulkan bahwa mahasiswa membuat kesalahan dalam penggunaan preposisi dalam menulis esai argumentasi.

## ABSTRACT

**Arwendi. 2020. Preposition Errors Made by English Department Students in Writing Argumentative Essay: A Study at University of Ekasakti Padang. Thesis. Graduate Program of Padang State University.**

Preposition is one of language elements that plays an important role to join the words to build sentences. This research was aimed to find out the students' preposition errors in writing argumentative essay. Besides, it is also to find out the causes of the errors. The source of data was writing of English Department Students of University of Ekasakti who were in the fifth semester that consist of 50 students. The students were chosen randomly by ordering the names of the students from number 1 up to 50, then the researcher chose the names of the students in every the second stage as samples of this research. It means that from the student number 1 until the student number 150, the researcher just chose the student number 2, student number 4, student number 6, student number 8, student number 10, student number 12, student number 14, and so on, until the researcher got 20 students as the samples of the research.

The type of this research was a descriptive research. This research was about the errors of preposition used in the argumentative essay done by the fifth semester students of English Department of University of Ekasakti Padang. The data of this research were the incorrect prepositions found in the argumentative essay written by the students. The data were collected through giving the students a writing test of argumentative essay. In order to know the causes of the errors, the data were collected by doing the interview. This research investigated about the types of errors, and what were the causes.

The findings showed that the students made some errors on the use of preposition. They were omissions, insertions, and misselection.. Meanwhile, the interview guideline was derived from Richard' s theory of causes of errors. The causes of error were namely overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restriction, incomplete application of the rules, and false concept hypothesized. From the data gotten, it could be concluded that the students made errors in using prepositions in writing argumentative essay.

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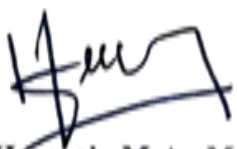
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## **SURAT PERNYATAAN**

Dengan ini saya menyatakan bahwa:

1. Karya tulis saya, tesis dengan judul "PREPOSITION ERRORS MADE BY ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS IN WRITING ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY: A Study at the English Department of University of Ekasakti Padang" adalah asli dan belum pernah diajukan untuk mendapatkan gelar akademik baik di Universitas Negeri Padang maupun di perguruan tinggi lainnya.
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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **A. Background of Research Problems**

The study of preposition has been performed by numbers of grammarians for more than centuries as one of linguistic branches among some large amounts to constitute the unity of English composition. This point undertakes above one circumstances in which the preposition owns its site from some grammatical elements of English comprises is one unity as one language system. Its function as the unifying sentence has made its using becomes a prominent aspect in language to be studied. The existence of preposition as the word linker allows all words to connect together. This one is viewed by Klasone (2013) who states that prepositions are used all the time in English, but it is often difficult to know which preposition to use. She also further explains that prepositions are “little words” but they carry a lot of meaning. Therefore, it is important to use the preposition correctly in order to be eligible to construct the language substantially. Unless, it is used incorrectly within a sentence, the intended meaning will not be able to express.

Moreover about the preposition, it is often used to utilize the sentences in order to be able to build them into a whole sentence. This point becomes the reason why the use of the preposition is an important aspect of languages. Mackova (2012) has also stated this one in which she explains that the basic information of the usage of prepositions along with the characteristics of

prepositions as a word class can usually be found in every grammar of English. Therefore, this statement brings us into an understanding that the use of preposition is a part of sentence compositions that always be found in every language. This point also means that every language carries the preposition as its linguistic part in sentence building.

Moreover, it is an important thing as well for every language user to have knowledge and understand the preposition well when a language is being used. It is because it plays a significant role on sentence constructions as it gives spice and sentence to make sense of it and to convey message completely as they express relationships between two parts of a sentence (Bilal et al., 2013). By seeing this fact, it can be inferred that the use of preposition on sentence development is essential since it completes the sentences by connecting the parts of a sentence.

Despite the importance of preposition in language using, in a particular situation, some mistakes of using it cannot be circumvented. As the proof, some studies have proven the complexity of the use of preposition. Furthermore about this fact, for EFL students, the issue of preposition gives various obstacles for them to face. Gethin and Gunnemark in Swanepoel (1998) view that the prepositions are famous are being used in their own special and 'different' way in each language, and cause great difficulties to students all over the world. Therefore, the issue of the use of preposition is placed in the middle of linguistic review as the important part of language use.



Despite of some points above, within the importance of grammatical competence of the linguistic studies, several types of grammatical competence have been concerned to be the center of attention. In this case the grammatical error needs to be studied in order to reveal the actual language teaching condition. Regarding to the issue of error in using English proposition, Nokukhetkhong (2013) states his mind about the concept of grammatical error analysis. He describes that making errors is common, especially grammatical errors as it is regarded as a part of learning a second language or a foreign language. Therefore, as long as the final aim is to see the students' real grammatical condition, the error analysis study is eventually needed.

Dealing with this point, the error analysis is important to be done in order to know the errors that the students make in using proposition especially in writing argumentative essay. This one is committed to see and reveal the true condition of deviation in using the English preposition; therefore this point becomes the basic thought of this study.

As the matter of fact, the material of preposition has been performed since elementary school until university level. In this case writing was one of the compulsory subjects which the students should get at University of Ekasakti Padang. Related to its curriculum, some subjects such as Structures and Writing had been given to the third semester students. In this case, all of the students were refined by those subjects i.e Structure 1, Structure II, structure III, and Structure IV. Besides, they also had received Writing I, Writing II (Essay

Writing). Although they had those materials, the researcher still found the errors in their writing.

Based on the preliminary research done by the researcher at University of Eka Sakti Padang, the students did not use all of the prepositions correctly. They still made the errors regarding to the use of preposition in writing. It was supposed that they used them correctly and appropriately due to the correctness of using preposition is important and the students had studied all subjects that had brought them into in depth understanding of preposition. This circumstance had leaded us into a conclusion that the students still had problem in using the proposition especially in their English writing.

For the evidences, some errors were found related to the issue of prepositions on their essay writing. Some of them are listed below:

“.... the students *in* there...”

The above sentence carries an error on the use of preposition. The words “... the students in there “are incorrect, especially in preposition used. In this case, the preposition is not needed to be used. The correct form of this sentence is “the students are there”. Therefore, the use of preposition “*in*” in this case is not necessary.

- “...some of them live *at* Padang...”

This sentence carries an error related to the preposition use. The preposition of “*at*” should use “*in*” as the instead. This sentence should be in this form; “ ... some of them live *in* Padang...”

These sentences contain some errors in using preposition. In order words, in writing the paragraphs, the students did not use the preposition appropriately. Brown in Ningsih (2004; 16) highlights the definition of error that it means the feature of the learner’s utterances which differ from those of any native speaker.

By seeing this situation, it was realized that the students still had problems with language system especially in using the preposition. They made some errors in the target language. This might become the reason that the writing products the students had made were not eligible enough for the advanced English Department Students. Moreover, the errors in using the preposition might also cause the misunderstanding for the readers. These facts were taken as the background considerations of the up-next steps to conduct the research ahead to see how were the errors of the use of the prepositions.

Thus, the research on the errors of the use of preposition in the students’ writing was needed in order to uncover the real condition of teaching and learning and the students’ learning development, in which it would be able to show why the students still made those errors. This point is mentioned by L. Strauss in Khider (2013:17) that writing might, that is to say, be regarded as a form of artificial memory, whose development should be accompanied by a

deeper knowledge of the past and, therefore, by a greater ability to organize the present and the future. This statement is a clear sign to show that analyzing the students' error in writing is important since writing activity is able to show the learning development in this case is related to the use of preposition.

Related to teaching and learning writing, there had been many researches discussed about the students' grammatical ability. Julinarti (2008) conducted her research about students' grammatical ability. Amalia (2008), Daarus (2009), Herlina (2011) conducted researches about error analysis of students' writing with different settings of research and participants. Then, Septiana (2011) and Yuniswati (2010) conducted researches related to the students' grammatical and lexical errors. Those researches had similarities with this research in investigating grammatical errors on the students' writings. In this research, besides investigating the students' preposition errors, this research also investigated the processes of how the errors occur on the students' writing and the causes of the errors. These cases make this research is different with those researches.

Therefore, after seeing all of these matters, it can be said that, problem in writing still exist on writing composition. The objective of good writing product, especially in argumentative essay, will not be able to achieve unless the grammar use is still incorrect. A good essay writing should not contain any errors at all especially in using the word linker (preposition).

Considering the problems above, the researcher conducted an investigation to find out the preposition errors found in the students' writing of argumentative essay and the causes of the errors. The researcher chose the argumentative essay as an object of the investigation because it had been learned by the students, so it was not difficult for the researcher to ask the students to write the argumentative essay because they had already known about it. Besides, many students made errors in using the correct preposition in constructing the sentences in writing argumentative. It means that the students found difficulties using the correct preposition so that grammatical errors could be found in their writing.

Based on the fact in the field, there were still many grammatical errors committed by English students at University of Ekasakti, especially in writing an argumentative essay. Actually, error is common for the English as foreign language students. However, the students' ability in using preposition was needed to be analyzed properly. According to Foley and Hall (1997), preposition is a common cause of students' confusion because each preposition has a number of different uses. According to Touchi (1986) errors need to be investigated because they are significant in three respects; errors are significant to the teachers because they indicate learners' progress in language learning, they are also important for researchers as they provide insights into how a language is learnt, and errors are significant to the language learners as they get involved in hypothesis testing. Moreover, if the errors are not concerned earlier, the errors may become a permanent error or "fossilization". Myers and Scotton (2006:358)

state that errors are fossilized since they are not detected earlier. They also explain that the earlier errors are serious matter to be explored and analyzed because it remains in the learners' memory that leads to fossilization of the errors.

## **B. Identification of Research Problems**

In the field, there were still many errors made by English students especially in writing an argumentative essay. Actually, error is common for the English as foreign language students. However, the errors need to be detected and corrected earlier so the lecturer and students know their errors they make in writing. Moreover, the tendency of students to commit the errors is greater while the errors are noticed less. Based on the background of the research problem, there were several possible research problems that can be identified: conducting a linguistic study on the preposition used by the students, improving the students' ability in using preposition, measuring the students' comprehension in preposition, and analyzing the students' errors of using preposition in essay writing.

## **C. Limitation of Research Problems**

Based on the problems identified above, this research focused on analyzing the students' errors of using preposition in writing argumentative essay at English Department of academic year 2017/2018 at University of Eka-  
sakti Padang. The errors of the use of preposition investigated in this research included

the types of prepositions' errors made by students in writing argumentative essay and the factors cause those errors in students' learning.

#### **D. Formulation of the Problem**

Based on the background of the problem above, this research problem is formulated as follows: *How do the preposition errors in writing argumentative essay of the students at English Department at University of Ekasakti Padang appear?*”

Based on the formulation of this research problem, the research questions of this research are as follow:

1. What are the types of preposition errors found in the students' writing argumentative essay made by the students at English Department of academic year 2017/2018 at University of Ekasakti Padang
2. What factors cause the errors of using preposition in writing argumentative essay made by the students at English Department of academic year 2017/2018 at University of Ekasakti Padang?

## **E. Purposes of the Research**

Based on the research questions above, the purposes of the research are to find out:

1. The types of preposition errors found in writing argumentative essay made by the students at English Department of academic year 2017/2018 at University of Ekasakti Padang.
2. The factors cause the errors of using preposition in writing argumentative essay made by the students at English Department of academic year 2017/2018 at University of Ekasakti Padang.

## **F. Significance of the Research**

This research hopefully gives contribution in English Language Learning and other researchers by providing information about the students' errors and the causes in using preposition in writing argumentative essay. It is also expected that the result of the research gives beneficially input for the teachers to help them understand better the errors in using preposition made by the students in writing argumentative essay. The students' abilities in using preposition needed to be analyzed. Even though preposition is only little part of grammar, but it could reflects the students' ability in grammar itself. Preposition is a common cause of students' confusion because each preposition has different usages and functions. Therefore, based on this point, the researcher should observe the



students' in using a preposition. Moreover, if the errors are not concerned earlier, the errors may become a permanent error or "fossilization".

#### **G. Definition of the Key Terms**

To avoid misunderstanding of the terms used in this research, the key terms are defined as follow:

1. Error in this research is the students' errors in using preposition found in students argumentative writing
2. Preposition: In this research the prepositions would be identified as all linker words which are listed as prepositions.
3. Argumentative essay is a type of writing used in this research as the source of data for students' errors in using preposition.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION, AND SUGGESTION**

#### **A. CONCLUSION**

After the research had been conducted and the data had been analyzed, it can be concluded that the students frequently produced various type of errors in the use of preposition that are caused by the students' intralingual factors. The use of preposition is only a little part of English grammar theory. However, it should not be ignored. There were several errors committed by the English Department students of University of Ekasakti years 2017/ 2018, who have had grammar and writings subjects, and were expected to be able to use English preposition properly in a well formed sentence or utterance.

#### **B. IMPLICATION**

From the result of this research, several implications related to the use of preposition in writing argumentative text are issued as the following:

1. The English lecturers, especially at the English Department of University of Ekasakti, can be informed through this research about the errors committed by the students to improve students' ability in using preposition.

2. Other research could extent this research to student preposition errors in other types of writing

### **C. SUGGESTION**

Based on the result of this study, several suggestions might be given.

1. The first suggestion is that the lecturers at English Department of University of EkaSakti should give more practice on the, prepositions since many errors were still found.
2. It is also suggested that the lecturers at English Department students of University of EkaSakti give deeper explanation on English preposition because of their complexity in the use. Therefore, it is important to expand the part of preposition explanation in the grammar classes.
3. Next, it is suggested to the lecturer of English Department of University of EkaSakti that the fossilization might happen in the study of preposition, therefore, the lecturer need to anticipate it.
4. Next, it is suggested to the faculty of English education of EkaSakti University that the students have to finish all the grammar classes before taking the writing classes
5. The last, a further research need to be conducted related to the students' ability in using preposition along with the strategy to improve their comprehension, and to avoid their errors in English preposition.

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