# SOUND GRAMMAR, FLAWED REASONING: RHETORICAL FALLACIES IN ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING OF ENGLISH EDUCATION THESES

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**Abstract**

This study investigated the prevalence and types of rhetorical fallacies in the argumentative sections of English education theses, despite overall grammatical accuracy. Drawing on Toulmin's argument model, cognitive reasoning theories, and nexus-juncture analysis, three-fifty undergraduate theses from three universities in Indonesia were analyzed qualitatively. Common fallacies such as hasty generalization, false cause, strawman, circular reasoning, and either/or reasoning were identified and mapped onto Toulmin's components (claims, warrants, backing, rebuttals). Findings revealed that students demonstrated competency in grammatical structures but often lacked logical consistency in their arguments which led to flawed reasoning that undermined their thesis statements. The findings recommended that integrating rhetorical fallacy identification into writing instruction could improve both the clarity and validity of student arguments. This study highlighted the need for focused pedagogical strategies to address both grammar and reasoning skills in argumentative writing to promote effective and persuasive academic communication in English education.

**Keywords**: Rhetorical structure, Logical fallacy, Argumentative writing, Students' theses

## INTRODUCTION

One of the central goals of academic writing, particularly in the context of thesis composition, is to create arguments that are both logically sound and rhetorically effective (Lu, 2025; Lindahl & Borin, 2024). In the context of English Education, argumentative writing requires more than linguistic proficiency as it demands the ability to present claims persuasively through coherent reasoning and well-structured discourse (Stevani et al., 2024). However, many students struggle to produce logically consistent arguments and often resort to flawed reasoning patterns that deviate from accepted academic norms.

Argumentative writing is a cornerstone of academic literacy, requiring not only linguistic skill but also logical reasoning and rhetorical awareness. A sound argument-building ability is essential in English Education programs where future teachers engage critically

with pedagogical knowledge. However, many students produce grammatically correct but logically flawed arguments that often contain rhetorical fallacies which undermine the persuasiveness and academic rigor of their writing. This paradox exists where surface-level correctness masks deeper reasoning flaws, which highlights an underexplored issue in EFL academic writing: the prevalence and nature of logical fallacies within otherwise well-structured essay.

Logical fallacies, commonly found in student theses, arise challenges to rhetorical academic argumentation. As Misbah (2024) argues, reasoning errors reveal when argumentation deviates from normative standards. These errors are especially significant in English education where developing argumentation proficiency is vital for both academic success and critical thinking. The presence of fallacies in argumentative thesis writing suggests that students may face difficulties with rational argumentation, resulting in deviations from logical structures (Bengtsson & Schousboe, 2024).

Logical fallacies are not merely linguistic errors; they expose weaknesses in students' reasoning and their ability to engage in persuasive academic discourse (Scott, 2024). This is particularly relevant in English Education programs where the development of critical thinking and argumentative writing is essential for academic success and professional competence. The presence of fallacies in student theses suggests a gap between grammatical proficiency and higher-order reasoning skills. Much research in EFL writing focuses on cohesion, coherence, and grammatical accuracy (Stevani, 2024; Diep & Le, 2024), but the logical soundness of student arguments is often neglected, especially in undergraduate and graduate theses. While critical thinking (Li, 2024) and academic writing (Anindita, 2024) highlight the importance of reasoning, few studies have systematically examined rhetorical fallacies in EFL learners' academic writing. The disruption of argumentative flow by coherence problems, such as abrupt topic shifts and weak transitions, compromises text integrity despite grammatical accuracy. Indonesian EFL students, in particular, often struggle with unspecified topics, poor paragraph unity, and vague inference ties. This study addresses this gap by focusing on logical fallacies to evaluate the argumentative competence of English Education students.

Unlike previous research that isolates issues like grammatical errors or coherence lapses, this study takes a novel approach by examining the relationship between rhetorical structure and the quality of reasoning. It explores how English Education students formulate claims, support them with evidence, and whether their reasoning aligns with or deviates from accepted logical standards. In doing so, it contributes to the growing body of literature on critical writing in EFL contexts with a unique emphasis on fallacious reasoning as a rhetorical strategy grounded in both classical and contemporary rhetorical theory.

Academic argumentation involves more than stating opinions; it requires structured persuasion through claims, reasons, warrants, and rebuttals, as explained in Toulmin's model in 1958. As a result of students misuse these elements such as asserting claims without evidence or relying on emotional appeals, their writing often contains rhetorical fallacies, such as ad hominem attacks, false dilemmas, and slippery slope reasoning (Nippold, 2024). Although often unintentional, these errors reflect a gap between grammatical competence and critical reasoning. EFL students, particularly in Southeast Asia like Indonesia, often struggle with rhetorical conventions that differ from English academic discourse (Stevani, 2024). L1 discourse norms can lead to indirectness, circular reasoning, or overgeneralization, which are unsuitable in English argumentation.

Therefore, students' reasoning errors are shaped by both cognitive and cultural factors, influenced by language proficiency and rhetorical transfer. Students' use of logical fallacies can stem from cognitive limitations and language proficiency issues. Those with lower proficiency often rely on surface-level reasoning and memorized structures, which may not meet academic standards. Research shows that higher proficiency correlates with better argument coherence, critical thinking, and fewer fallacies (Mallahi, 2024; Daeng & Enre, 2024).

Logical fallacies can be divided into formal fallacies—where the structure of an argument is flawed (e.g., non sequitur, affirming the consequent)—and informal fallacies, which involve errors in content or persuasion (e.g., appeal to emotion, straw man). EFL writers are particularly prone to informal fallacies due to insufficient exposure to critical reasoning instruction and genre-specific conventions (Asbar et al., 2025). In theses, where extended argumentation is required, such fallacies become more prominent and disruptive to overall argument cohesion. This study is anchored in Toulmin's Argument Model in 1958, Hyland genre analysis in 1990, and cognitive theories of reasoning (Alatas et al., 2025). Toulmin's model enables a granular analysis of how students construct and support claims by showing whether their warrants and rebuttals are logically valid or fallacious. Hyland's model in 1990 further emphasizes effective argumentative writing depends not only on presenting ideas but also on organizing them using accepted academic structures, such as claim–counterclaim–rebuttal. However, its success relies on the writer's reasoning skills. Moreover, the application of cognitive theories such as Simon's bounded rationality in 1983 reveals that these rhetorical fallacies are not just stylistic missteps but reflect deeper cognitive limitations in the ways students process and use information. For example: a research result might argue, *"Either we adopt the new teaching method, or our students will fail,"* means oversimplifying the issue by ignoring alternative solutions.

Prior studies (Hong & Kim, 2024; Mallahi, 2024) have identified recurring problems in students' argumentation, such as lack of rebuttals, unsupported generalizations, and "a one-side" bias. However, few have investigated these phenomena through the lens of rhetorical fallacies in actual thesis writing. This study not only documents the presence of fallacies but also explores their pedagogical implications. It argues for the integration of explicit critical thinking and logic instruction into English Education curricula can help students avoid reasoning errors and develop more persuasive academic discourse. This study is driven by two main objectives: (1) to identify types of rhetorical fallacies in English education theses, and (2) to examine kinds of linguistic fallacies in evaluative (value-based) writing composition in English education theses. By highlighting flawed reasoning masked by sound grammar, this study underscores the need for a pedagogical shift that integrates critical reasoning with rhetorical awareness in EFL academic writing.
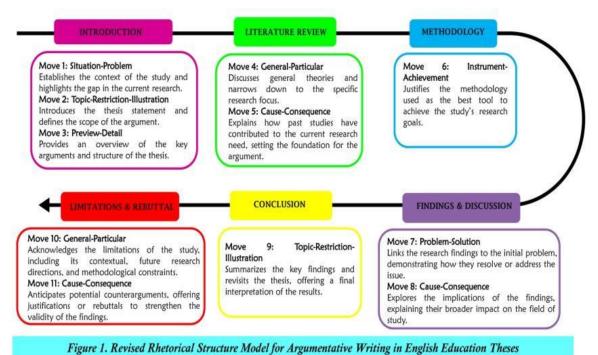
## METHOD

This study used a qualitative research design to investigate the rhetorical moves, rhetorical patterns, and types of logical fallacies present in argumentative thesis writing by undergraduate English Education students (Marnita & Zulprianto, 2024). The focus was on their use of logico-semantic, coherence (textual unity), cohesion (grammatical connectedness), and syntactic structure in constructing arguments based on Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) framework (Ha, 2024). The research was conducted over a 4-week instructional intervention in the English Education Departments of three Indonesian universities with which the researchers were academically affiliated, involving a purposive sample of 35 university students who had completed four semesters

of academic writing training. The intervention centers on enhancing argumentative writing by employing Toulmin's Argument Model, which comprises six key components: claim, data, warrant, backing, rebuttal, and qualifier. This model serves as the foundational rhetorical structure guiding the writing process. Complementing this, Thompson's emphasis on the writer's role highlights the importance of authorial presence and stance within the argument. Additionally, Hyland's analysis of rhetorical moves in academic writing informs the sequencing and organization of ideas. Together, these frameworks provide a comprehensive approach to developing coherent and persuasive academic arguments (Alatas et al., 2025).



*Figure 1. Revised Rhetorical Structure Model for Argumentative Writing in English Education Theses*

Students participating in the study had previously written various essay types, such as comparison/contrast, cause-effect, definition, and argumentative essays—and were familiar with basic paragraph structure and communicative functions. During the intervention, students were introduced to common logical fallacies, including hasty generalization, false cause, strawman, circular reasoning, and either/or reasoning. These fallacies were integrated into weekly writing analysis tasks to develop students' awareness of flawed argumentation. Each week, students engaged in the following procedures: First, they read peer-reviewed English journal articles on assigned topics (e.g., task-based grammar, communicative language teaching, speaking proficiency, and language learning technologies). Then, they were instructed to rewrite the core arguments of the text in their own words, producing texts of at least 550 words and up to five paragraphs. These rewritten essays formed the primary corpus for analysis. Following the writing stage, students analyzed both their own and peers' essays using nexus-juncture relations, as introduced by Foley and Van Valin in the 1980s (Dahl & Grieco, 2024). They examined features such as co-lexicalization, grammaticalization, serial verb constructions, and prosodic unity (logical flow and consistency in tense, aspect, and mood) to evaluate how cohesion were built across clauses and paragraphs. This linguistic analysis provided a deeper understanding of how students constructed logic within their arguments based on Toulmin's model, while also considering stance and authorial voice in Thompson and Hyland's frameworks.

*Figure 2. The Steps of Writing Activity*

To ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the study, several strategies were used. Triangulation was achieved by combining data from student essays, self-reflections, and peer analyses to cross-check findings and offer a fuller picture of rhetorical moves and fallacies. Member checking allowed students to review and confirm the accuracy of the analysis and ensured their perspectives were accurately represented. Peer debriefing was also used with a colleague reviewing the coding and analysis to ensure alignment with established theories (Abidin et al., 2024). To minimize researcher bias, audit trails were kept, documenting the research process and decision-making for transparency and replicability.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 1. Introduction (Claim + Preview-Detail)

**Move 1 (Situation-Problem) → Establishing the general context and identifying the research gap**

> BEFORE: {1. Situation} Despite the **widespread belief** [widespread belief → concessive clause (contrast)] that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is the most effective method for improving speaking skills, {2. Problem} recent studies show [recent studies show] → evidential clause (new evidence)] a **disturbing trend: many students often feel unprepared** for **real-world communication** (Goh & Burns, 2012). {2. Continuation of Problem} Although CLT emphasizes interaction [although.. → concessive clause (expectation vs. reality)], **its** actual effectiveness in university-level ESL programs remains unclear. In fact, **many instructors find themselves reverting** to [reverting to.. → causal explanation] traditional **grammar-based methods** due to [due to.. → explicit cause (situational barriers)] time constraints and large class sizes.
>
> AFTER: {1. Situation} While [while.. → concessive contrast again (expectation vs problem opening)] Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is widely regarded as an effective approach for enhancing speaking skills, {2. Problem} recent studies [recent.. → evidential clause (presenting issue)] indicate that some students still feel unprepared for real-world communication (Goh & Burns, 2012). Despite the emphasis [despite.. → concessive clause] on interaction within CLT, {2. Continuation of Problem} its actual effectiveness **in university-level ESL programs** remains subject to debate. Furthermore, due to [due to.. → causal nexus (practical barriers)] challenges like large class sizes and time limitations, some instructors also incorporate traditional grammar-based methods. This suggests [suggests.. → elaboration, slight solution preview] that a more comprehensive approach, combining both CLT and traditional methods, can offer better support speaking proficiency.

*Logical fallacy: False dichotomy & Over-simplification*

The argument presents a false dichotomy by framing CLT and traditional methods as mutually exclusive and ignoring the value of a blended approach. It also over-simplifies by assuming traditional methods are ineffective with communicative practices. This fallacy stems from a lack of understanding of how these methods can complement each other, overlooking the complexity of effective teaching strategies.

The passage overuses of adjective + noun strings, like "widespread belief," "disturbing trend," "real-world communication," and "grammar-based methods," which could be simplified for clarity. It also includes misleading prepositional phrases, like "in university-level ESL programs," implying universal relevance without justification. Generalizations like "many students often feel unprepared" and "many instructors find themselves reverting" are lack evidence, while unclear referents like "it" creates ambiguity about whether the subject is CLT or the studies mentioned. Comparisons suggest CLT is better without proof, and vague determiners like "many students" and "many instructors" weaken credibility. Biased evaluative phrases like "disturbing" introduces a negative connotation without adequate explanation.

## Move 2 (Topic-Restriction-Illustration) → Introducing the thesis statement and argument scope

BEFORE: {1. Topic} **This thesis argues** [this thesis argues that → thematic statement with assertive claim] that integrating **task-based learning (TBL)** with traditional grammar-focused instruction enhances English learners' speaking proficiency in **specific and measurable ways**. {2. Restriction} The study will focus on [focus on → narrowing the subject scope] university students in non-English majors during a **semester-long course** [semester-long course → temporal restriction]. {3. Illustration} Specifically, [specifically → signaling elaboration and focus] it assess how TBL's **hands-on** [how TBL's hands-on approach → illustrating mechanism], addresses students' speaking needs with limited English exposure. By analyzing [by analyzing → purpose (means clause)] task types and grammar instruction methods, this research will **contribute to** [will contribute to → future impact] **a clearer understanding** of how these methods can be applied in real-world classroom settings and explores whether combining them leads to more sustained speaking improvement [whether... leads to → causal expectation; exploring outcomes].

AFTER: {1. Topic} This study **proposes** that [proposes that → hedging (modalization); slightly softer than "argues that"] integrating task-based learning (TBL) with grammar-focused instruction may support [may support → cautious causal link] English speaking proficiency development among non-English major university students. {2. Restriction} It specifically examines [specifically examine → strong focus, restricts to diverse proficiency levels] learners with varied proficiency levels in a semester-long [semester-long → temporal scope restriction] English course, {3. Illustration} aiming to [aiming to → purpose (goal-oriented illustration)] understand how **experiential,** communicative tasks—when combined with [combined with → additive relational clause: combining methods] explicit grammar input—might respond to learners' real-world speaking needs. The focus is on identifying [focus on.. → elaboration; specificity of outcomes] which combinations of task types and grammar teaching strategies appear most effective for students with limited exposure to English. Rather than asserting [rather than .. → contrastive nexus (concession)] universal applicability, this research **seeks to explore** [seeks to explore → purposive softening of claim] how adaptable strategies foster academic and spontaneous speaking competence.

*Logical fallacy: Hasty generalization*

The argument commits a hasty generalization by claiming task-based learning suits all university students without considering differences in proficiency and learning needs. This assumption overlooks the need for adaptable approaches across diverse student groups.

Phrases like "this thesis argues" overstates the claim and should be softened to "suggests," while informal terms like "hands-on" should be replaced with "experiential." Vague phrases like "specific and measurable ways" need clearer indicators to define how speaking proficiency will be assessed, and biased wording like "contributes to a clearer understanding" should be neutralized by changing into "aims to explore." There is overuse of adjective + noun strings like "task-based learning" and "semester-long course." The phrase "this hybrid approach" lacks a clear referent, and the thesis would be stronger with more hedging, such as "this study aims to explore" rather than making definitive claims.

**Move 3 (Preview-Detail) → Providing an outline of key arguments**

BEFORE: {1. Preview} The thesis will [modal "will" → predicting organization] first review the effectiveness of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and traditional grammar-based methods, {2. Detail} followed by [followed by → sequential relation (consequence); specifying the next step after review] a comparison of **task-based learning and traditional instruction**. The methodology section will outline [will outline → futurity + declarative intention] the quasi-experimental design to assess [to assess → purpose clause] speaking fluency and accuracy outcomes. Following this, [following this → sequential consequence; "focus on" = action intention] the discussion **will focus** on the **potential** benefits of integrating **both approaches**. {1. Preview} Finally, [finally → temporal conjunction; organizing the final part] the conclusion **will address** the practical implications for language instruction.

AFTER: {1. Preview} This thesis **aims to** [aims to → purposive modal verb; expressing study intention] **explore** the effectiveness of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and grammar-based instruction independently, {2. Detail} before examining [before examining → temporal subordinator; indicating sequence and causal flow toward research focus] how **task-based and traditional instruction** interact to influence fluency and accuracy. {1. Preview} The methodology section outlines [outlines → present tense; stronger declarative outlining structure] a quasi-experimental design assessing impacts across diverse learners. {2. Detail} The discussion section **will then analyze** [will then analyze → futurity + sequencing consequence] whether and how integration of **the two methods** might yield complementary benefits, **based on empirical findings** [based on.. → causal explanation]. {1. Preview} Finally, [finally → summarizing the last movement; particularly → exemplification] the study will consider **implications for instructional design**, particularly for specific learning contexts.

*Logical fallacy: Circular reasoning*

The thesis shows circular reasoning by claiming the integration of task-based and traditional methods is ideal without first proving the strengths of each approach on their own. It assumes blending leads to better results without clear justification.

Phrases like "task-based learning and traditional instruction" can be simplified to avoid repetition. Assertive verbs like "will focus" should be replaced with softer terms like "aims to explore" for academic tone. Overuse of intensifiers like "potential" may weaken the argument unless clarified with specific examples. The term "practical implications" should be changed to the more neutral "implications for practice," while "both approaches" should specifically refer to CLT and grammar-based instruction for clarity.

**2. Literature Review (Grounds + General-Particular)**

**Move 4 (General-Particular) → Presenting general theories before narrowing to the specific research focus**

BEFORE: {1. General} Many scholars agree [many scholars agree → presenting a general statement of consensus] that both fluency and accuracy are important in speaking instruction (Ur, 1996). Fluency-building tasks like [like → exemplification of a general principle] role-plays **obviously** help natural use of language, while [while → introducing a contrastive idea] grammar drills **clearly** improve accuracy. However, [however → introducing a contrast] **much of the current literature** is **extremely** focused on fluency, and it often neglects the **crucial role** of accuracy, especially in academic settings (Richards & Renandya, 2002). This **imbalance** shows [this imbalance shows → indicating cause-effect or logical reasoning] how **some researchers** prefer communicative methods over grammar-based approaches. {2. Particular} Therefore, [therefore → indicating consequence or conclusion drawn from the preceding general statements] this study will focus on comparing **task-based learning and traditional instruction** to highlight the benefits of both.

AFTER: {1. General} Many scholars [many scholars → presenting a general statement of consensus] argue that effective speaking instruction balances fluency and accuracy (Ur, 1996). Fluency-oriented activities such as role-play support [while → contrastive relation] grammar exercises ensure correctness. Nonetheless, [nonetheless → contrastive conjunction] **recent studies tend to emphasize** fluency, often underrepresenting the importance of accuracy in academic communication (Richards & Renandya, 2002). This trend suggests a prevailing preference for **communicative methods**, which [which → relative clause to elaborate] may neglect structured grammatical instruction. {2. Particular} Accordingly, [accordingly → indicating consequence, or the specific focus that results from the general theory] this study **aims to explore** the implications of task-based and traditional instruction for developing speaking proficiency.

*Logical fallacy: Confirmation bias*

The literature review shows confirmation bias by selectively highlighting studies that prioritize fluency over accuracy and presents an incomplete view. This may reflect the researcher's bias toward communicative approaches rather than an objective evaluation. A more balanced review would consider both fluency and accuracy to provide a well-rounded theoretical foundation.

Changing "task-based learning and traditional instruction" to "task-based and traditional instruction" is done to remove redundancy. Inappropriate intensifiers such as "obviously" and "clearly" were removed to maintain an academic tone. Biased evaluative phrases and unclear academic verbs were adjusted to avoid implying confirmed results—for example, "practical benefits" was revised to "implications." Terms like "some researchers" and "speaking fluency and accuracy" were corrected for clarity and conciseness, respectively, addressing confusing determiners and faulty noun phrases. Loaded expressions such as "crucial role" and "imbalance" were softened to maintain neutrality, while jargon like "communicative methods" was made more accessible. Overgeneralizations were also addressed, replacing "much of the current literature" with "recent studies tend to emphasize" to ensure claims are well-qualified.

### Move 5 (Cause-Consequence) → Explaining how past studies lead to current research needs



BEFORE: {1. Cause} Previous studies have demonstrated that **while** [while → introducing contrast] **task-based learning enhances fluency in speaking,** there is [there is → indicating a state of knowledge] **limited evidence** on how this method impacts accuracy (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). {2. Consequence} Given [given → causal relationship] the **critical role** of accuracy in academic contexts, further research is needed [further research is needed → direct consequence or call for action] to examine how fluency and accuracy when combining **task-based learning with traditional grammar instruction.**

AFTER: {1. Cause} Past research showed that **task-based learning improves fluency,** but [but → contrastive conjunction showing limitation] its effect on accuracy remains unclear (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). {2. Consequence} Accuracy is crucial in academic settings, so [so → showing consequence of previous statement] further studies are needed **to explore the relationship between fluency and accuracy in task-based learning combined with traditional grammar instruction.**

*Logical fallacy: Post hoc*

The argument commits a post hoc fallacy by implying that task-based learning directly causes fluency improvement. This assumption overlooks other influencing factors like learner differences and task context.

The analysis highlights issues like lexical redundancy, simplifying phrases such as "task-based learning enhances fluency in speaking" to "improves fluency" for clarity. Jargon like "task-based learning" and "traditional grammar instruction" was clarified for easier understanding, while metaphors like "critical role" were neutralized to keep the tone objective. Biased language was softened, and claims like "limited evidence" were made more cautious by specifying that effects on accuracy are unclear. Weak hedging and faulty noun phrases were also refined for clear academic tone.

### 3. Methodology (Instrument-Achievement)

### Move 6 (Instrument-Achievement) → Justifying the chosen methodology as a tool to achieve research objectives

BEFORE: {1. Instrument} The study will [will use → future intention and methodology definition] use a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative pre- and post-tests to measure fluency and accuracy, [employing → means of assessing variables] and qualitative interviews to explore [to explore → purpose of qualitative instrument] students' perceptions of task-based learning and traditional instruction. {2. Achievement} This combination will **clearly provide** [will provide → future achievement resulting from the chosen methodology] **a full understanding** of method effectiveness. **Obviously,** [guarantees → strong assertion of the expected outcome] using these tools **guarantees better results.** Task-based learning **plays** [plays → instrumental role of task-based learning in achieving learning goals] **a critical role** in shaping learners' speaking skills. Therefore, the results will **certainly prove** [will prove → conclusive result from combining instruments] **the effectiveness** of integrating both instructional approaches.

AFTER: {1. Instrument} This study adopts [adopts → methodology assertion] a mixed-methods approach, utilizing [utilizing → specific instruments for measurement] pre- and post-tests to assess students' fluency and accuracy, alongside interviews to explore [to explore → qualitative instrument's function in understanding perceptions] students' perceptions of task-based and traditional instruction. {2. Achievement}The combination of data sources **aims** [aims.. → purpose of combining quantitative and qualitative instruments] **to provide comprehensive insight,** though [though → recognition of potential limitations] that interpretations may vary. Task-based learning **is considered** [is considered → presenting task-based learning as a tool to achieve speaking skill development] **a potential strategy** to support speaking skill. The study seeks to understand [seeks to understand → research objective achieved through methodology] how different methods **contribute to learning outcomes,** with further research **possibly needed** [possibly.. → future implication of the study's scope] **for broader validation.**

*Logical fallacy: Overconfidence bias*

The methodology shows overconfidence bias by assuming that combining quantitative and qualitative data will fully capture the effectiveness of task-based learning without addressing possible conflicts between the two. It overlooks the challenge of integrating mixed-methods data, especially when results diverge.

The revised text improves by replacing exaggerated claims like "guarantees better results" with cautious phrasing such as "contribute to learning outcomes." Phrases like "clearly provide a full understanding" and "guarantees better results" were revised to "aims to provide comprehensive insight" and "contribute to learning outcomes" to avoid overstatements. Metaphors such as "plays a critical role" were replaced with more neutral wording like "is considered a potential strategy." Overconfident terms like "obviously" and "certainly prove the effectiveness" were either removed or softened with hedging, such as "possibly needed for broader validation." Faulty noun phrases and generalizations were refined for precision, and the paragraph was reorganized for better flow and logic.

## 4. Findings & Discussion (Warrant + Problem-Solution)

### Move 7 (Problem-Solution) → Linking results to research questions, showing how findings resolve the problem

BEFORE: {1. Problem} The results reveal that students in the integrated task-based and traditional instruction group outperformed those in the task-based-only group, showing [showing → elaborative nexus] a 15% improvement in speaking fluency and a 10% in accuracy. {2. Solution} This **clearly proves** [proves that → clausal assertion] **the superiority of the integrated method. Obviously,** all students benefited [benefited → assertion elaboration] from the combined instruction. The study therefore [therefore → clausal logical consequence] **guarantees better results** with the integrated model.

AFTER: {1. Problem} The results indicate that [indicate that → clausal assertion] the group receiving integrated task-based and traditional instruction demonstrated a 15% increase in fluency and a 10% increase in accuracy. {2. Solution} While [while → contrastive subordinating conjunction] these findings **suggest potential benefits,** individual differences in learning preferences and language proficiency **may influence** [may influence → modality and conditionality] **outcomes.** The data provides [provides that → assertive result elaboration] useful insight, though [though → concessive clause] further research is needed to confirm generalizability. This study contributes to understanding how [how → embedded explanatory clause] blended instructional approaches can support language development.

*Logical fallacy: Overgeneralization*

The claim overgeneralizes by assuming all students benefit equally from the integrated approach and overlooks differences in learning styles motivation and proficiency. This

stems from viewing the group as uniform rather than accounting for subgroups like beginners or advanced learners.

Biased phrases like "clearly proves" and "the superiority of the integrated method" were changed to "suggest potential benefits" to reduce overclaiming. Emphatic terms like "obviously" and "guarantees better results" were removed or softened with hedging such as "may influence outcomes." Incomplete assertions were revised using concessive structures and references to further research.

## Move 8 (Cause-Consequence) → Explains the implications of findings



*Logical fallacy: Straw-Man*

The paragraph commits a Straw-Man fallacy by oversimplifying critics' views—claiming they suggest "traditional methods are superior" and then refuting that distortion. The revision corrects this by fairly representing opposing views and presenting findings without bias.

Absolutist terms like "clearly proves" and "must" are replaced with neutral phrases like "suggest that" or "highlight opportunities" to avoid overclaiming. Exaggerations such as "transforms speaking outcomes entirely" are refined to "improving speaking proficiency" for clarity. Phrasing like "this view ignores the evidence" is restructured into balanced clauses like "While some scholars emphasize...," showing respect for differing views. The revision takes a balanced view by showing how traditional and modern methods can work together, following academic norms and supporting a clear "cause-consequence" flow.

## 5. Conclusion (Backing + Topic-Restriction-Illustration)

## Move 9 (Topic-Restriction-Illustration) → Summarizing key Findings and restating thesis

*Logical fallacy: Slippery Slope*

The argument shows a slippery slope fallacy by exaggerating the effects of not using task-based learning instead of presenting a balanced view that acknowledges its benefits without suggesting extreme outcomes. Phrases like "significant decline" were softened to "may affect" to reduce overstatement. Informal expressions like "fall behind" were replaced with academic alternatives such as "can affect overall language proficiency." Absolutist and redundant wording was revised for clarity, while nominalizations were made more direct. The concessive clause was refined to reflect balance, and generalized claims were adjusted to account for individual differences like "fall behind", acknowledging that factors like motivation and prior proficiency also play significant roles in language learning outcomes.

## 6. Limitations & Rebuttals (Rebuttal + Qualifier)

### Move 10 (General-Particular) → Discussing study limitations and constraints



*Logical fallacy: Cherry picking and Equivocation*

The original statement commits cherry picking by focusing only on the study's flaws and ignores its contextual strengths, while vague phrases like "may limit generalizability" show equivocation. The revision balances this by adding qualifiers like "nonetheless" and specifying that the study has depth within a certain context.

Negative words like "limitation" and "relatively small" were softened to "constraints," and informal phrasing like "did not account for" was replaced with "should consider" to sound more academic. Structural changes, like "while this study… nonetheless…," improve clarity. The sentence was revised to reduce heavy nominalization, changing "did not account for" to the more direct "should consider," and rephrased an absolute claim into a hedged suggestion like "to enhance generalizability."

### Move 11 (Cause-Consequence) → Anticipating counterarguments and providing justification



*Logical fallacy: False cause (Post hoc, Ergo propter hoc) and Middle ground*

The argument shows a *False Cause* fallacy by attributing fluency gains solely to unrelated factors and a *Middle Ground* fallacy by downplaying task-based learning's role. The revised version improves by acknowledging multiple influences while emphasizing task-based learning as a significant contributor. The use of "nonetheless" soften the critique without overclaiming.

Phrases like "merely a result" were replaced with clearer, academic alternatives such as "could be influenced by factors" to avoid unsupported claims. Run-on sentences were restructured, and vague or anecdotal reasoning was refined to ensure clarity, academic tone, and a stronger cause-effect link. The claim "merely a result of other factors" is unsubstantiated which weakens the argument and the revision strengthens it by adding a rebuttal that addresses these factors with more academic depth. While the original text leans heavily on anecdotal reasoning and hypothetical causes without evidence, the revision introduces a more balanced perspective that considers multiple variables to improve logical structure.

## DISCUSSION

This study provides critical insights into the rhetorical structuring of argumentative writing in undergraduate English Education theses. The analysis indicates that students predominantly rely on foundational argumentative elements, namely: the articulation of claims, the inclusion of supporting evidence, and attempts at refutation to build their arguments. These findings align with Swales' "move structure" model in 1990, which outlines the typical progression of argumentative discourse in academic writing. However, while most students follow these basic structures, the study also uncovers gaps in the depth and variety of rhetorical moves, particularly when compared to the more sophisticated frameworks proposed by scholars such as Hyland in 2005 and Thompson in 2001 (Sriwanat & Phoocharoensil, 2024).

Hyland's theory on hedging and modality in academic writing, developed in 2005 (Iftikhar et al., 2025), underscores the importance of cautious language to express uncertainty or the need for further investigation. However, the analysis shows that many student theses adopt an assertive, often overstated tone, presenting claims without sufficient qualification. This tendency not only diminishes the perceived sophistication of the argument but also risks alienating critical readers. Suratno & Aydawati (2025) support this view, arguing that hedging serves a dual rhetorical and relational function by signaling intellectual modesty and openness to alternative perspectives.

Furthermore, another significant finding in this study is the underdevelopment of counterargument integration. Although the rhetorical move of refutation is acknowledged in many theses, its execution is often incomplete or formulaic. Rather than critically engaging with opposing viewpoints, students tend to construct one-sided arguments, a finding that aligns with Song & Yong's (2024) assertion that effective argumentation necessitates meaningful dialogue with potential objections. The absence of this dialogic engagement weakens argumentative depth and suggests a gap in students' understanding of argumentative discourse as a process of negotiation, not simply assertion.

Another recurrent issue is the insufficient contextualization of arguments. Thompson, who developed the theory in 2001 (Kinnear et al., 2024), stresses the importance of situating claims within relevant academic and social contexts to enhance both coherence and persuasiveness. Yet in many cases, students fail to clearly establish the background or significance of their topics, leading to arguments that feel isolated or underdeveloped. This

lack of contextual framing limits the ability of readers to fully appreciate the relevance of the claims being made.

Furthermore, the study reveals that students often conflate summary with argument. Rather than using source material to interrogate, synthesize, or contest ideas, students primarily summarize existing literature which reflects a dependence on descriptive over critical writing. Based on Toulmin's model from 2003, while claims and evidence are present, essential elements like warrants, backing, and rebuttals are often underused which weakens overall argument coherence (Badjeber et al., 2024). The result is argumentative writing that may be structurally adequate but lacks rhetorical and analytical sophistication.

The pedagogical implications of these findings are substantial. There is a clear need for composition instruction to move beyond the teaching of isolated rhetorical moves toward fostering an integrated and recursive approach to argument development. As Gulen & Donmez (2024) argue, academic writing is not simply about presenting one's stance, but about managing complexity through interaction with other voices. Students should be guided to see writing as a dialogic process: one that requires engaging with alternative perspectives, situating claims within broader academic conversations, and continuously refining arguments in response to new evidence and critique.

A particularly relevant theoretical lens here is (Yulandari & Alfarisi, 2025) the concept of intertextuality, which frames academic writing as a conversation among texts. The failure of many students to meaningfully engage with scholarly voices suggests that they are not yet fully participating in this intertextual dialogue. Rather than constructing arguments as contributions to a disciplinary conversation, their writing often remains isolated which suggests the need for explicit instruction in how to position one's voice within a scholarly community.

Ultimately, this study calls for a pedagogical reorientation in the teaching of argumentative writing within English Education programs. Drawing on Flower and Hayes' cognitive process model, educators should emphasize writing as a dynamic and recursive process (Wambsganss et al., 2025). Instruction should prioritize critical thinking, engagement with counterclaims, and the development of cohesive rhetorical structures that reflect deeper analytical reasoning. By doing so, students can be better equipped to produce theses that are not only structurally sound but also intellectually substantive to reflect the complexity, caution, and engagement that characterize mature academic argumentation.

**CONCLUSION**

This study examined the rhetorical structure moves in argumentative writing found in English Education theses with a particular focus on logical fallacies in writing and highlighted both strengths and recurring challenges in student compositions. The analysis revealed that while most students successfully use fundamental elements such as claims and evidence but often neglect critical components like counterarguments, contextual framing, and rhetorical strategies such as hedging. These missing components are crucial for balanced, persuasive arguments, and their absence can lead to logical fallacies that weaken the argument's validity. Drawing on Toulmin's model, it was evident that while the foundational elements of argumentation are present, key features such as warrants, backing, and rebuttals remain underdeveloped. These gaps suggest a need to reframe argumentative writing instruction not merely as the organization of ideas, but as a dynamic process involving critical engagement with multiple perspectives and careful positioning within academic discourse. Though limited to a specific institutional context and may not

fully represent broader writing practices, its findings have important implications for composition pedagogy. Future research should explore instructional interventions that explicitly teach rhetorical moves and foster students' awareness of argument structure through scaffolded and recursive writing processes. Ultimately, enhancing students' understanding of these rhetorical strategies will lead to more coherent, credible, and impactful academic writing.

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