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REFINING SCHOLARLY ARGUMENTS: THE ROLE OF TOULMIN'S QUALIFIERS AND REBUTTALS IN MASTER'S STUDENTS' RESEARCH ARTICLES IN SINTA JOURNALS

by

Frisca Clara Wilar*

Postgraduate of English Education, Manado State University, Indonesia

friscawilar@gmail.com

Swita Wulan Kumaat

Postgraduate of English Education, Manado State University, Indonesia

switak79@gmail.com

Olga Rorintulus

English Language and Literature, Faculty of Language and Art, Manado State University,
Indonesia

olgarorintulus@unima.ac.id

**Corresponding author*

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Abstract:

Academic writing requires argumentative patterns to make it strongly appeal to readers. One argumentative pattern frequently used by writers is the Toulmin Argument Pattern. Some basic elements of the Toulmin Argument Pattern, such as Claim, Data, and Warrant, are often found in academic writing and articles, but many also neglect additional elements, such as qualifiers and rebuttals, so that the writing is not balanced. This article analyzes how Toulmin's additional elements, such as qualifications and rebuttals, strengthen the structure of an article, making it more complete, balanced, and complete, and thus more widely accepted by readers. Using a descriptive qualitative design, this study analyzed three articles written by Indonesian master's students in the 4-indexed Sinta Journal, using the Toulmin Argument Pattern (TAP) as a diagnostic framework. The results revealed and demonstrated that 100% of the articles analyzed by master's students successfully integrated qualifications and rebuttals. The use of these elements correlated significantly with higher quality argumentation, indicating greater rhetorical precision and dialectical balance. The study concludes that master's students demonstrate a developed awareness of rhetorical precision, utilizing qualifiers to limit overgeneralization and rebuttals to anticipate counter-arguments. These results suggest that Toulmin's model is an effective diagnostic tool and should be explicitly integrated into academic writing curricula to bridge the gap between undergraduate and master's student writing proficiency.

Keywords: *academic writing, master students, qualifier, rebuttal, Toulmin's argument model*

Abstrak:

Penulisan akademis membutuhkan pola argumentasi agar menarik bagi pembaca. Salah satu pola argumentasi yang sering digunakan penulis adalah Pola Argumen Toulmin. Beberapa elemen dasar Pola Argumen Toulmin, seperti Klaim, Data, dan Jaminan, sering ditemukan dalam tulisan dan artikel akademis, tetapi banyak juga yang mengabaikan elemen tambahan, seperti kualifikasi dan sanggahan, sehingga tulisan menjadi tidak seimbang. Artikel ini menganalisis bagaimana elemen tambahan Toulmin, seperti kualifikasi dan sanggahan, memperkuat struktur artikel, membuatnya

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lebih lengkap, seimbang, dan menyeluruh, sehingga lebih diterima secara luas oleh pembaca. Dengan menggunakan desain kualitatif deskriptif, penelitian ini menganalisis tiga artikel yang ditulis oleh mahasiswa magister Indonesia di Jurnal Sinta yang terindeks 4, menggunakan Pola Argumen Toulmin (TAP) sebagai kerangka diagnostik. Hasil penelitian mengungkapkan dan menunjukkan bahwa 100% artikel yang dianalisis oleh mahasiswa magister berhasil mengintegrasikan kualifikasi dan sanggahan. Penggunaan elemen-elemen ini berkorelasi signifikan dengan argumentasi berkualitas tinggi, mendemonstrasikan ketepatan retorika dan keseimbangan dialektis yang lebih besar. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa mahasiswa magister menunjukkan kesadaran yang berkembang tentang ketepatan retorika, menggunakan kualifikasi untuk membatasi generalisasi berlebihan dan sanggahan untuk mengantisipasi argumen tandingan. Hasil ini menunjukkan bahwa model Toulmin merupakan alat diagnostik yang efektif dan harus secara eksplisit diintegrasikan ke dalam kurikulum penulisan akademik untuk menjembatani kesenjangan antara kemampuan menulis mahasiswa sarjana dan magister.

Kata kunci: *penulisan akademis, mahasiswa pascasarjana, kualifikasi, sanggahan, Pola Argumen Toulmin*

INTRODUCTION

Writing a research article is more than simply writing and expressing thoughts and research content. In the context of higher education, for example, for master students, these students are required to compose coherent, clear, and organized writing for their professional and academic success. Furthermore, master's students are expected to transform knowledge through more sophisticated rhetorical strategies to build a strong academic position (Luna et al., 2020). In other words, academic writing is viewed not only as a structural task but also as a cognitive process of knowledge transformation.

Toulmin's model of argumentation is extensively used to help students support and enhance their scholarly discourse. Stephen E. Toulmin's argumentation model offers a comprehensive diagnostic framework to analyze the structural integrity of the discourse. Toulmin (2003) classifies argumentation into six components namely three core elements and three secondary elements. The core of an argument includes a claim (the main statement or point of view), a basis/data (evidence supporting the claim), and a warrant (the often-implicit logical bridge connecting the basis to the claim). While these core elements form the basic structure, it is the additional components that demonstrate advanced reasoning such as support (rationalization of the claim), qualifications (limitations that reflect the extent to which the claim is valid), and rebuttals (acknowledgement of counterarguments and exceptions). The additional components, the interplay of qualifiers and rebuttals, determine the rhetorical precision and dialectical balance of an article. By applying a sound core structure, such as

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Claim, Data, and Warrant, and applying additional elements to enhance the structure, such as Qualifiers and Rebuttals, academic writing can be presented clearly, logically, and persuasively.

A study conducted by Qin & Karabacak (2010) on the use of secondary elements of Toulmin, examined the structure of college students' argumentation. Their document analysis revealed that although students successfully formulated claims and data, they had significant difficulty integrating rebuttals and support. Further expanding on this foundation Stapleton & Wu (2015) assessed the quality of an argument by examining the relationship between surface structural elements and the overall substance. They concluded that the mere presence of counterarguments does not guarantee rhetorical quality if they are not integrated effectively and appropriately.

On the same note, on the ongoing scholarly discussion, situated in the Indonesian context, studies have reported a recurring pattern of minimal or no rebuttals. For example, Nugroho & Stardy (2022) found that undergraduate students rarely used counterarguments, with more than half of the students in some groups providing no rebuttals. Therefore, without well-integrated process of these elements in Toulmin's model, arguments are likely to appear as overly superficial and underdeveloped. To align with academic rhetorical in academic discourse, writers must move beyond simple assertions and engage in dialectical reasoning.

Notwithstanding the importance of this framework, current body of literature indicates that students may attain the mastery of fundamental aspects such as claims and data but often overlook the supplementary elements that is essential for high-quality discourse. Framed from mixed-methods design, involving Indonesian junior high school students as the study participants, Utomo et al., (2019) revealed clear weaknesses in the use of rebuttals and qualifiers. They concluded that more than half of the students demonstrated only basic argumentation skills limited to claims, warrants, and data, which also tended to emphasize the presence of structural elements rather than the correlation between these additional elements and the overall quality of the argument. Furthermore, research by Siregar et al. (2021), uncovered that that novice writers often neglect the articulation of warrant, which is also a crucial element of the Toulmin model, and they mistakenly assume the logical connection is obvious, thus making their arguments logically weak. The study left open the question of whether advanced students exhibit similar logical weaknesses. On the same note, Alameda

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(2023) analyzed published article and found that a small percentage of rebuttals were presented, making many arguments potentially weak in academic writing.

The absence of these elements has significant implications. Sundari et al., (2021) described the challenges students face due to limited knowledge, vocabulary, and practice. Specifically, writers experience difficulty formulating arguments, finding support, and responding to counterarguments. Collectively, some existing literature suggests that failing in the use of qualifiers and rebuttals will undermine the clarity, credibility, and balance of academic writing or written discourse (Qin & Liu, 2021). Mallahi (2024) spotted that students' use of writing strategies remains low because they often rely on prior competencies rather than adapting to new writing models. Likewise, Osman et al., (2021) demonstrated that the quality of an argument in academic writing is determined not only by the presence of a claim, but also by the writer's ability to integrate complex elements, such as rebuttals, to demonstrate depth. Lacking or missing these key components in the articles can undermine writers' critical thinking and contribute to ideological polarization by failing to address alternative viewpoints.

However, significant gaps remain in existing research. Most previous studies have focused on undergraduate writing. Little study has been dedicated to analyze argumentation quality at the master's level and on published articles in journals as the focus on analysis, where expectations for analytical depth and balanced arguments are much higher. At this level, the inability to effectively use supporting elements, qualifiers, and especially rebuttals is not only a structural deficiency but also a significant barrier to engaging in persuasive academic discourse.

This study provides valuable insights and empirical evidence for the academic writing domain. Specifically, the findings point diagnostic indications for educators, as well as curriculum designers, to include additional Toulmin elements such as qualifiers and rebuttals in upper-level writing courses to enhance students' argumentation quality. This research provides concrete evidence to readers from the evidence provided by Indonesian graduate students to substantiate the complex rhetorical structures they make, thus also creating credibility to the scholarly argument they argue. The documentation of these frequently employed constituents' questions and expands previous assumptions of argumentative

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weaknesses in the context of Indonesian EFL and sets the foundation for future comparative studies of professional academic writing across different skill levels.

Therefore, to fill the void on the existing literature, this study intends to investigate the quality of written argumentation by examining the use of additional elements, such as qualifiers and rebuttals, in master's students' research articles. The present study is driven by the following research questions:

1. To what extent are the additional components, specifically Qualifiers and Rebuttals, of the Toulmin Argument Model, used in Master's students' articles?
2. How does the use of these elements relate to the overall argumentative quality of the arguments developed?

METHOD

Design

This study employed a descriptive qualitative design to provide a comprehensive summary of the phenomenon in everyday terms (Seixas et al., 2018). The dual focus of the analysis is to identify these supplementary elements and evaluate their correlation with argument quality. Operationally, qualifiers are defined as linguistic boundaries that prevent overgeneralization, while rebuttals are statements that actively address counterarguments to maintain dialectical fairness. The overall argumentative quality is thus measured by how these elements collaboratively establish a persuasive and structurally sound discourse, specifically through the rhetorical precision of qualifiers and the dialectical balance of rebuttals.

Subject

The data were gleaned from students' academic writing written by master's students as primary data. The subject was taken from the Sinta Journal because it is an accredited journal that includes various research articles by students and other authors. It consists of 3 (three) academic research articles published by Master's students in Sinta Journal index 4 and will be coded as S (Subject).

Instrument

The main instrument in this research is the research articles of Master's students. The authors are using the Content Analysis Sheet (Coding Sheet) and Toulmin's structure to

identify the representative elements in this analysis: C for Claim, Q for Qualifier, and R for Rebuttal. This coding sheet was used to identify, classify, and assess the quality of argument elements in master's students' articles.

Data collection technique

The selection of the three research subjects (S1, S2, and S3) was based on a purposive sampling technique. The main selection criteria were: (1) the articles were written by active Master's program students in Indonesia, and (2) the articles were published in accredited national journals (SINTA's index 4). The selection criteria were applied to guarantee that the collected and analyzed data was peer-reviewed.

Data analysis technique

After collecting all the data, data analysis was conducted using qualitative descriptive content analysis, using the Toulmin Argument Pattern (TAP) as a framework for diagnosis. The researchers focused the core data on the Introduction (to identify Claims) and Discussion (to identify Qualifiers and Rebuttals). Each sentence containing argumentative elements was separated from the rest of the narrative text. The coding process consisted of three phases: 1) Identification: Each component of claim (C), qualifiers (Q), and rebuttals (R) was recognized and extracted. 2) Clarity assessment: The researchers distinguished between explicit use, indicated by linguistic markers such as "nevertheless," "although," "especially," "usually," and "mostly," and implicit use, were qualifiers or rebuttals function contextually or structurally, as seen in S2, even without the use of obvious linguistic clues. 3) Argumentative quality assessment: The quality of the argument was evaluated based on two criteria: a) dialectical balance, which reflects the writer's ability to anticipate counterarguments through rebuttals, and b) rhetorical precision, which measures the ability to restrain claims from excessive use of qualifications. A positive correlation is noted when the presence of Q and R simultaneously increases the balance and accuracy of an argument compared to an argument that lacks these components.

Investigator triangulation

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, the analysis process involved 2 (two) practitioners and professionals in the field of language education as co-researchers. Text interpretation adhered to professional standards required for master's-level academic writing.

This process ensured that the researchers' interpretations of the texts conformed with the quality standards of academic discourse expected at the master's student level.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

RQ1: The role of qualifier and rebuttal

A compelling argument has the ability to persuade the reader regarding the findings or issues being discussed and examined. Toulmin's model can enhance students' intuitive argument-building skills. This aligns with rhetoric's longstanding role as the art of persuasion, emphasizing not mere belief but reasoned persuasion tailored to specific audiences (Magalhães, 2020). For an argument to be persuasive, it should be clear and straightforward. Furthermore, the importance of using a structured argumentative pattern is reaffirmed by Boeriswati et al., (2024), who state that Toulmin-based teaching materials are crucial for meeting current academic writing quality standards. The data were collected through 3 analyzed Master's students' published articles. The analysis demonstrates an understanding of the supplementary components, especially the qualifier and the rebuttal of Toulmin's argument model utilized in the articles, and their correlation with the overall argumentative quality developed in master's students' articles.

Table 1. Analysis of Toulmin's elements (qualifier and rebuttal) in master's students' articles

Data	Description
<i>S1</i>	<i>Contrast between speaking & writing skills of Indonesian seafarers.</i>
<i>Use of Qualifier</i>	<i>Restricts the claim specifically to the context of the seafaring profession.</i>
<i>Use of Rebuttal</i>	<i>Acknowledges low English competence among seafarers despite it being a lingua franca.</i>
<i>Impact on Argumentative Quality</i>	<i>High Precision: Avoids overgeneralization and demonstrates a deep understanding of communication risks.</i>
<i>S2</i>	<i>Effective language mastery strategies (habits).</i>
<i>Use of Qualifier</i>	<i>Emphasizes that daily habits are the strategy for learning progress (defined interpretively).</i>
<i>Use of Rebuttal</i>	<i>Addresses fear/nervousness but rebuts it by highlighting commitment and consistent practice.</i>
<i>Impact on Argumentative Quality</i>	<i>Dialectical Balance: Shows critical thinking by anticipating the readers' psychological barriers</i>

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<i>S3</i>	<i>Metacognitive strategies in EFL academic writing.</i>
<i>Use of Qualifier</i>	<i>Limits findings to the genre of "essay writing" only, rather than all academic writing genres.</i>
<i>Use of Rebuttal</i>	<i>States that while planning is beneficial, it is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for success</i>
<i>Impact on Argumentative Quality</i>	<i>Academic Credibility: The argument becomes moderate, reliable, and resistant to criticism by avoiding unsubstantiated claims.</i>

As shown in Table 1, qualifiers are present in all data and help maintain the argument's focus and avoid overgeneralization. This indicates that qualifiers are used extensively in articles, with a high level of utilization to strengthen the credibility of the argument by acknowledging limitations. Moreover, the rebuttal acknowledges a counterargument or potential weakness, making the argument more balanced and stronger. Overall, the extent of Qualifier and Rebuttal usage was very high (100% across all articles), indicating that these Master's students understood and applied Toulmin's Model well. However, in some cases (such as S2), Qualifiers were defined interpretively due to the lack of explicit linguistic indicators, indicating that utilization was not yet fully mature or consistent in linguistic marking, but it is still defined as the qualifier because it aligns with the discussion, and that strengthens the claim made by the author of the article. This shows that qualifiers and rebuttals are actually supporting elements that are needed to perfect an academic writing.

RQ2: The positive contribution to argumentative quality

To provide a more comprehensive response to the second research question, it was found that incorporating rebuttals and qualifiers was positively associated with the overall quality of arguments in this master's student's article. Both help strengthen, make more credible, and make more balanced arguments by addressing potential weaknesses and avoiding overly exaggerated claims. The correlation with argument quality is that rebuttals correlate with higher quality because they acknowledge counterarguments, making arguments more persuasive and resistant to criticism. Turmudi (2017) has argued that argumentative essays strongly persuade readers. In S1, Rebuttal fills in gaps in the argument, preventing the argument from appearing weak. In S2 and S3, Rebuttal demonstrates critical thinking by addressing challenges such as fear and inadequate planning, thereby strengthening the main claim. Without Rebuttal, the argument might appear one-sided and less convincing; with

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Rebuttal, the argument's quality improves, as it becomes more holistic and responsive to the reader. On the other side, Qualifiers correlate with quality because they limit claims, prevent overgeneralization, and maintain focus. In S3, Qualifiers reduce the certainty of the claim (e.g., from "all academic writing" to "essay writing only"), which makes the argument more precise and reliable. In S1 and S2, Qualifiers maintain the context's relevance (sailors), making the argument more specific and robust. The positive correlation is that Qualifiers increase the precision of arguments, thereby improving their overall quality by avoiding overly broad or unsubstantiated claims. Dharmawan et al., (2023) emphasized that the comprehensive integration of Toulmin elements is a characteristic of a more mature and competitive argumentative essay format.

Putting these two elements together (as will happen with all the data) indicates the overall relationship, which reflects more mature arguments. Arguments become more "argumentative" because they not only state claims but also limit them (with Qualifiers) and anticipate objections (with Rebuttals), in line with Toulmin's principles for strong arguments. Such integration also reveals the reflective critical thinking patterns that students use when creating coherent argumentative paragraphs and are demonstrated by their insight regarding critical thinking modes with reference to Toulmin's theory. Moreover, proficiency in using qualifiers demonstrates the writer's ability to limit the power of claims proportionally, which, according to Yang et al. (2023), It is crucial for enhancing objectivity and academic tone in second language (L2) writing. However, this correlation is not perfect—in S2, Qualifiers are less explicit, which slightly reduces quality because the argument feels less structured, but it demonstrates strong balance because the author was able to anticipate the reader's fear and provide a response that supported the main claim about the effectiveness of the habit.

Discussion

From Table 1, as shown in the results section, the elements of argumentation used in master's students' research articles are presented in each research finding and discuss the specific roles of qualifiers and rebuttals, and their correlation to make perfect argumentative writing. In essence, the findings of this article show that master's students demonstrate effective and argumentative use of Toulmin elements. Below is an analysis of the sentence coding, each of which demonstrates Toulmin's argumentative structure of Claim, Qualifiers, and Rebuttals.

Toulmin's structure of qualifier and rebuttals**S1. An article by master's students from Indonesia was found in the Sinta Journal**

Researchers still use claims as the core of the writing context, so that the supplementary elements, such as qualifiers and rebuttals, which are the focus of this analysis, can be identified.

Claim

A claim is a sentence that is revealed as the author's core and purpose.

"The phenomenon of contrast in the speaking and writing skills of Indonesian seafarers shows significant differences in the way they use spoken and written language in certain situations." (C)

The author conveys that the contrast between speaking and writing is one of the most important aspects of language, used in various situations.

Qualifier

To limit or narrow the Claim, the writer uses the other argumentative pattern, which is "qualifier".

"The difference between speaking and writing skills in language often creates an interesting contrast phenomenon to research, especially in the context of the seafaring profession." (Q)

The author reveals the boundaries of the topic related to this phenomenon through the experiences of the respondents in the seafarer context.

Rebuttal

The following sentence is recognized by researchers as a rebuttal

"English is used as a lingua franca in the maritime industry, but many seafarers do not have high competence in this language. This leads to misunderstandings in communication, especially in critical situations such as navigation or emergencies." (R)

The author expresses other thoughts to strengthen the argument. Therefore, the author uses contrasting opinions to fill in gaps that would weaken the author's position.

From the data above, it was found that qualifiers and rebuttals were used by the article writer to strengthen the claim related to the phenomenon between speaking and writing, especially in the world of shipping, and the counterargument was that most sailors did not

have good competence for it, which led to misunderstandings on board. In this case, the use of qualifiers and rebuttals highlights to the reader that complex problems have a big influence on daily life on board.

S2. An article by master's students from Indonesia was found in the Sinta Journal

Claim

A statement that pointed to the topic that the writer revealed as the main idea of the discussion.

"Students can achieve a good mastery of language through the most effective strategies, methods, or approaches." (C)

Qualifier

This element is important for writers to stay focused on the topic being discussed. However, in this statement, the researcher does not find the linguistic indicator that serves as the qualifier, but it is defined as the qualifier because it aligns with the discussion.

"They stated that if they practice every day or every time, it will probably become their habits and they will get a progress in learning." (Q)

Through the statement, the author informed that habits become effective strategies to learn English, especially speaking and writing skills, for professional sailors.

Rebuttal

In the following statement, the author of the article does not employ exceptional statements in defending the argument. The exceptional statement is one of the elements in an argument that is used to strengthen the claim, and it is used to be recognized as a rebuttal. (Toulmin, 2003).

"They reveal that the fear and nervousness when speak in front of the crowd is being their challenge in developing their speaking ability. Nevertheless, in facing fear and nervousness the cadets practice a lot to build their confidence." "Despite challenges like fear and nervousness, cadets' commitment to overcoming these barriers through consistent practice led to enhanced self-confidence and speaking skills." (R)

The Rebuttal above shows that the writer is thinking carefully about the response of the reader.

Regarding the S2, the use of Qualifiers comes to emphasize habit as an effective strategy for language learning, particularly for professional seafarers, and Rebuttal addresses challenges such as fear and nervousness in speaking, demonstrating that consistent practice

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can build confidence. In the article, it expresses the claim straightforwardly, but subtly presents other Toulmin elements such as Qualifiers and Rebuttals.

S3. An article by master's students from Indonesia was found in the Sinta Journal

Claim

The sentence is an interpretation of that data.

"The results of this study reveal that each metacognitive strategy planning, monitoring, and evaluation uniquely contributes to specific dimensions of EFL academic writing performance."(C)

The authors are asserting a meaning derived from the numbers, specifically that the contribution is unique and specific rather than random or general. This sentence synthesizes the core finding of the research: that these strategies are not just generally good, but have distinct, individual impacts on different parts of writing (coherence, accuracy, and clarity).

Qualifier

A statement that limits the strength or scope of the main argument.

"This study has some limitations that may affect the generalizability of its findings. First, it focused exclusively on essay writing, which may not fully represent other academic writing genres."(Q)

The authors previously claimed that these strategies improve EFL academic writing. This sentence steps back and says, "Wait, we only tested *essays*. It might not work for *reports* or *theses*." It reduces the certainty of the claim from all academic writing to essay writing specifically.

Rebuttal

This indicator refers to the gap between supporting evidence and the required limitations

"However, working with plan can be an affective writing strategy for some, but planning is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for writing success."(R)

This presents a logical limitation that tempers the initial claim, ensuring the reader understands that planning is a useful strategy and not an automatic guarantee of success. To answer the first research question, the author of this article uses a Qualification to limit a finding to essay writing, not all academic writing styles, and presents a Disclaimer to

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emphasize that planning is neither sufficient nor necessary for successful writing, although it is beneficial.

The role of qualifiers in rhetorical precision

Based on Toulmin's framework, qualifiers determine the degree of certainty or limitation of a claim. The findings show that master's students effectively use qualifiers to provide strength and scope to their main arguments. This aligns with Toulmin's definition of qualifiers as limitations that indicate the degree of certainty inherent in a claim. By using and utilizing these elements, the authors demonstrate academic knowledge by actively avoiding excessive generalities. In S1, the authors use qualifiers to limit the claim specifically to the profession of seafarers, thus establishing a clear boundary regarding the contrast between speaking and writing skills. Similarly, in S3, the authors use qualifiers to reduce the certainty of the findings, explicitly acknowledging that this study focuses exclusively on essay writing and may not be applicable to other genres. This ability to address, as raised by Qin et al. (2021), that ignoring qualifiers can undermine the credibility and clarity of written discourse. This aligns with Supriyadi (2023) that the argument in Toulmin's components can improve students' critical thinking skills and writing achievement. Reducing one component can result in a more tolerant writing style, but to create more critical writing, additional components are needed to enhance it. Specifically, qualifications play a crucial role in refining this claim. By using different instruments, both studies underscore that critical writing can be enhanced by utilizing each of the Toulmin's models.

The seamless application of qualifiers in the first and third articles demonstrates that these authors understand the provisional nature and contextual dependence of academic truth. For example, the first article explicitly narrows its claims to the profession of sailor, while the third article limits its findings specifically to the essay writing genre. Furthermore, the stressful publishing environment is a significant factor. This context demands a heightened awareness of the audience, forcing authors to anticipate scrutiny from critical readers.

The strategic integration of rebuttals

One of the most striking findings in this study was the 100% integration of rebuttals across the sample. According to Zikrillah et al. (2024), the quality of an academic argument is largely determined by the writer's ability to anticipate and respond to opposing arguments

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through complex elements such as rebuttal. The integration of these elements creates a more dynamic writing dialectic, where the article is no longer one-way but rather a critical dialogue that considers various possible interpretations. This finding directly contradicts the trend reported by Nugroho et al. (2022), who noted that undergraduate students rarely use counterarguments, often ignoring them altogether. The students in this study specifically master student demonstrated the cognitive ability to anticipate and address opposing views in line with the pattern observed by Liu (2020). In S1, the author acknowledges the gap between English as a lingua franca and the seafarers' actual low competency, using this contrast to highlight the communication risks, thus making the information more focused. Furthermore, in S2, the authors anticipate the counterargument regarding fear and nervousness in speaking, but rebut it by emphasizing the mitigating role of commitment and practice, making the main point of the paper more compelling. In S3, by bridging the supporting evidence with the necessary limitations, noting that while planning is effective, it is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for success. This ability to integrate arguments and counterarguments goes hand in hand with Perdanasari et al. (2021) view on how important it is to create dialectical balance in academic writing to make arguments more persuasive and more resistant to criticism. These authors use rebuttals not to weaken their claims, but to demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the topic, effectively addressing gaps that would otherwise make their arguments one-sided or lacking in nuance. This also demonstrates the crucial role of rebuttals: the power of sentences to further persuade readers.

Yang (2022) using the paired-sample t-tests and repeated-measures analyses, the study demonstrates that master's students' academic writing requires the ability to formulate a defensible position through rigorous evidence. The results revealed a significant increase in master's students' successful integration and demonstrated a positive correlation between their use of Toulmin's additional elements, particularly qualifiers and rebuttals, and the overall quality of their arguments across various stages. This indicates a significant gap in undergraduate student research, between frequently identified argumentative weaknesses, particularly the absence of counterarguments, noted by Nugroho et al., (2022). The comprehensive utilization of the elements identified in this study demonstrates significant progress in rhetorical maturity. This gap in proficiency is best attributed to a cognitive shift from a simple mode of knowledge transmission, where students simply retrieve and present

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facts, to a more complex process of knowledge transformation, where writers actively shape their arguments to persuade a critical audience.

Through Toulmin's model, rebuttal becomes a defensive strategy that allows writers to mitigate potential deficiencies or counterarguments in a more sophisticated and precise manner, such as a lack of linguistic competence in the first article or psychological struggles arising from fear and nervousness in the second article. This differs slightly from research obtained by Turmudi (2020) which reported no rebuttals or counterarguments in most of the content areas he examined. This clearly means that an understanding of the argumentative and rhetorical nature of a genre needs to be practiced. This relates to the discussion genre, where each party presents arguments and counterarguments and/or rebuttals. In a different study Liu and Stapleton (2020), it was found that most students were able to generate counterarguments and rebuttals when used with an organized support system (e.g., contextualizing the topic, providing clear and unambiguous directions, and adopting a prescriptive approach). Academic writing relies on the ability to generate strong arguments. Ultimately, the complexity of the chosen field will require this nuance, and oversimplified arguments will fail to capture the real-world aspects of the field we are researching-from metacognitive tools to safety at sea.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion of this study, it was confirmed that supplementary elements, such as qualifiers and rebuttals, have power and play an important role in master's students' research articles, demonstrating that this academic writing is strong in argumentation and makes a positive contribution to it. At the same time, it was found that, unlike undergraduate students who often struggle with the nuances of argumentation, master's students demonstrate a high degree of rhetorical maturity by effectively utilizing the supplementary elements of Toulmin's Argument Model. The analysis reveals that the strategic use of qualifiers and rebuttals is not merely ornamental but fundamental to constructing credible, balanced, and persuasive academic discourse. Qualifiers were essential for establishing the precise scope of the research findings, while Rebuttals allowed authors to demonstrate critical foresight by anticipating and addressing potential limitations or counterarguments.

Limitation

While providing in-depth insights into students' rhetorical structures, this study is limited by its very small sample size (3 articles) in Sinta's 4 Indexation. This study did not compare across different disciplines, which may have different argumentative styles. Therefore, future research is recommended to expand the sample size, examine higher indexing levels of journals, compare across disciplines, and explore the correlation between these argumentative structures and the acceptance rates of students' articles in reputable international journals.

Implication

Theoretically, this study supports the applicability of Toulmin's model as a diagnostic framework for advanced academic writing. Pedagogically, it suggests that while master students intuitively or explicitly use these elements, formal instruction on the function of rebuttals and qualifiers could further refine their ability to produce high-impact research. At the end, Toulmin model teaching should not just stop at Claim and Data, but should reach Qualifier and Rebuttal to bridge the competency gap.

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BIO-PROFILE:

Frisca Clara Wilar: a master's student at Manado State University who also works at a merchant marine institution. Her interest in English Education and Language, concentrating on linguistics, and an enthusiast about cross-cultural communication, studying the context of language use. Corresponding email author: friscawilar@gmail.com

Swita Wulan Kumaat: studying a master's in English Education program, Bachelor of English Education at Manado State University in 2023, with an academic interest in English language teaching. Email: switak79@gmail.com

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Olga Rorintulus: an associate professor and senior lecturer who serves as the coordinator of the English Language and Literature study program at the Faculty of Languages and Arts, Manado State University. She earned her Doctoral degree in American Studies from Gajah Mada University, Indonesia, and a Magister degree in Women's Studies from Flinders University, Australia. Her academic interests include literature, women's studies, and literary theory in ELT. Email: olgarorintulus@unima.ac.id

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