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# Critical Reasoning of Students in Learning: Paragraph Analysis of Response Texts Using the Toulmin Model

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**Abstract:**
This study aims to describe elements of constructor, form, and pattern of reasoning text of critical responses of students of class IX SMPN 3 Malang. This research uses descriptive qualitative research design. Data collection is done by guided test. The data retrieval tool used in the form of assignment sheet. Data analysis is done qualitatively. The results of the study show that (1) the element of reasoning builder consists of foundation, foundation, assurance, support, modality, and refutation, (2) the form of reasoning consists of causality, generalization, analogy, coexistential syllogism and entimem, (3) over patterns I, II, III, IV, and V.

**Keywords:**
Reasoning, Critical Response Texts, Junior High School Students

**Abstrak:**
Penelitian ini bertujuan mendeskripsikan unsur pembangun, bentuk, dan pola penalaran teks tanggapan kritis siswa kelas IX SMPN 3 Malang. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian deskriptif kualitatif. Pengambilan data dilakukan dengan tes terbimbing. Alat pengambilan data yang digunakan berupa lembar penugasan. Analisis data yang dilakukan secara kualitatif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa (1) unsur pembangun penalaran terdiri atas pendirian, dasar, jaminan, dukungan, modalitas, dan sanggahan, (2) bentuk penalaran terdiri atas kausalitas, generalisasi, analogi, koeksistensial silogisme dan entimem, (3) dan pola penalaran terdiri atas pola I, II, III, IV, dan V.

**Kata Kunci:**
Penalaran; Teks Tanggapan Kritis; Siswa SMP

## INTRODUCTION

The success of teaching critical response texts largely depends on students' reasoning skills. This is due to the close relationship between language and the thinking process. Language plays a significant role in shaping intellectual readiness, which is one of the primary factors in achieving a better quality of life and social well-being.

Academic achievement also correlates with self-awareness in learning paragraph-based text materials (Ahmadi, 2024). This perspective aligns with the statement of Falasifa and Umdaturrosyidah (2021), who assert that intellectual readiness is fundamental to the development of knowledge and the enhancement of social welfare within society. Therefore, strong reasoning skills are essential for students to logically support their opinions, enabling them to produce high-quality critical response texts.

According to Ishak (2023), reasoning is a process or mental activity aimed at drawing conclusions or forming statements based on premises—statements whose truth is already known or accepted. Meanwhile, Age (2022) defines reasoning as linking evidence, consisting of known and accepted facts, with a claim or statement that remains uncertain or controversial.

Another term frequently associated with reasoning is argument or response, which are closely related. Reasoning refers to the process of establishing a rational relationship between evidence and a claim to conclude. In contrast, a response is a collection of statements that include a claim and support for that claim. Therefore, it can be concluded that reasoning is a process that produces a response.

Reasoning serves as a mental activity that underpins the formation of responses. Toulmin (1990) states that the elements of a response include a claim, grounds, warrant, backing, modality, and rebuttal. In the context of critical response texts, it is crucial to consider these elements as well as the types and patterns of reasoning employed. Thus, reasoning analysis can be conducted based on these elements, types, and patterns.

Moreover, writing and reading demand more effort and complex thinking processes compared to listening and speaking. This is because speaking and listening are direct and immediate activities where ideas can be conveyed with minimal preparation. In contrast, writing requires the construction of well-organized, easily understood sentences while paying attention to spelling and punctuation. Writers must also present ideas systematically and revise their work to ensure quality.

A writer cannot simply express ideas in written form without considering various aspects. Writing requires the integration of knowledge, experience, and reasoning skills. This perspective aligns with the view of Oktrifianty (2021), who states that writing is a complex activity involving diverse types of knowledge, experiences, and skills to process and reason ideas so that the message conveyed can be understood by the reader.

Writing proficiency heavily relies on strong reasoning. Writers must engage in thoughtful processes to produce logical responses or conclusions. Additionally, supporting elements such as facts, information, experiences, and expert opinions are essential in writing. This is consistent with the concept of reasoning proposed by Suparno (2006:1), defining reasoning as a systematic and logical thinking process aimed at drawing conclusions that lead to knowledge or belief.

For ninth-grade students in the second semester, critical response texts are taught as part of the curriculum. At this age, typically ranging from 13 to 15 years, students are in Piaget's formal operational stage of cognitive development. During this stage, they begin to think abstractly and logically using "possibility" thinking patterns. They develop scientific thinking models characterized by hypothetico-deductive and inductive reasoning, demonstrating abilities to conclude, interpret information, and formulate hypotheses (Alatas, 2023). This stage equips students to think effectively and systematically, including skills in combinatorial analysis, proportional reasoning, and generalization across various contexts.

Ideally, a critical response text should critically address surrounding phenomena by integrating diverse information. From a reasoning perspective, such texts should incorporate all essential elements. In terms of structure, critical response texts exhibit various forms, while in terms of reasoning patterns, they are composed with clear and comprehensible logic.

In practice, students' response texts reveal differences in the completeness of reasoning elements. Some students include only one element, while others incorporate all reasoning components. Regarding structure, responses range from brief to comprehensive, reflecting the quality of students' thinking. The organizational patterns of these texts also vary (Alatas, Romadhon, Efendi, & Zahroh, 2023). Although teachers do not formally assess students' reasoning directly, evaluations of the critical response texts produced by students indirectly reflect their reasoning abilities. Teks tanggapan kritis merupakan salah satu jenis teks yang dirancang untuk memberikan kesempatan kepada siswa dalam merespons fenomena yang ada di lingkungan sekitar secara kritis. Dalam konteks ini, siswa diajak untuk mengamati, mengidentifikasi permasalahan, serta menyusun kesimpulan dan saran. Tanggapan yang diberikan mencerminkan kemampuan penalaran siswa dan memperlihatkan aspek-aspek seperti kemampuan spiritual, sosial, pengetahuan, dan keterampilan mereka.

Several previous studies have explored students' critical reasoning in learning, particularly in the context of critical response texts. The research conducted by Yuliana

Setyaningsih and R. Kunjana Rahardi (2024) titled *A Study of Early Childhood Reasoning Using Toulmin's Theory* focuses on the reasoning abilities of young children using Stephen Toulmin's argumentation theory, which divides argumentation into three main elements: claim, ground, and warrant. The subjects of this study were two boys, aged four and six. The findings indicate that the dominant type of argumentation among young children is a combination of claim and ground, while the warrant element appears less frequently.

Additionally, research by Mujahidin, Irawan, Kusumaningrum, and Ekapti (2021) examined *Students' Reasoning and Learning Styles in Socioscientific Issues*. This study found that different learning styles correspond to varying levels of reasoning ability. Visual learners reached level 4 (backing), auditory learners reached level 5 (rebuttal), and kinesthetic learners reached level 6 (qualifiers) in reasoning. Although the study highlights the significance of understanding students' learning styles in shaping their reasoning, it does not delve further into the critical aspects of students' reasoning in response texts or argumentation-based learning.

This research brings novelty by analyzing students' critical reasoning in Indonesian language learning, specifically in the context of critical response texts using Toulmin's model. Unlike previous studies that focused on early childhood or students' learning styles in socio-scientific issues, this study emphasizes a critical analysis of reasoning in students' response texts at the junior high school level. It applies all six elements of Toulmin's model (claim, ground, warrant, backing, rebuttal, and qualifier), providing a more comprehensive depiction of reasoning structures among secondary school students.

In contrast to prior research, which primarily investigated reasoning in young children or socioscientific problem contexts, this study centers on the critical reasoning of junior high school students in Indonesian language learning, particularly within response texts. Furthermore, this study adopts Toulmin's comprehensive model, identifying and analyzing all six elements of reasoning, a method that has rarely been applied to students' critical response texts at this educational level. The research not only addresses argumentation aspects but also examines the structure and dynamics of reasoning within a broader learning context.

Based on this background, the researcher will conduct an in-depth analysis of reasoning in critical response paragraphs written by students at SMP Negeri 3 Malang. The selection of this text is based on the fact that it is relatively recent and has been seldom studied. Additionally, this type of text requires deeper reasoning, encouraging

students to engage in critical thinking. The choice of junior high school students is rooted in the belief that learners at this stage are beginning to develop critical thinking skills. Therefore, this study focuses on analyzing reasoning within students' critical response paragraphs.

**METHOD**

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design aimed at describing the reasoning present in the critical response texts of students at SMPN 3 Malang. The research was conducted in three main stages: preparation, field implementation, and data processing. The preparation stage involved developing a concept map, refining the concept map, drafting the research proposal, conducting a proposal seminar, developing research instruments, and selecting the research site. The field stage included obtaining permissions, piloting the instruments, determining research subjects, and collecting data. The data processing stage encompassed data transcription, data selection, coding, analysis, and interpretation.

The data sources for this study consist of student compositions in the form of critical response texts written by students in class IX.2 at SMPN 3 Malang. A total of 32 students were purposefully selected as subjects. The students' critical response texts were analyzed to extract information on the reasoning structures within the texts.

The research instruments included the researcher as the primary instrument, supplemented by supporting instruments for data collection, data coding, and data analysis. In qualitative research, the researcher plays a central role in gathering and interpreting relevant data.

The data collected in this study comprise the elements of reasoning, types of reasoning, and reasoning patterns. These data include sentences, paragraphs, and discourse containing reasoning elements, forming the materials or objects of analysis. In qualitative research, data typically consist of words or texts arranged in narrative form.

The data analysis technique employed in this study follows a flow model involving three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification. The data analysis process is divided into three primary parts: (1) analysis of reasoning elements, (2) analysis of reasoning types, and (3) analysis of reasoning patterns. This approach aligns with the qualitative data analysis model described by Miles and Huberman (1994), which emphasizes the importance of data reduction to

filter relevant information, data presentation to visualize findings, and conclusion drawing or verification to achieve deeper understanding.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Reasoning Components

Reasoning, according to Toulmin's model, consists of six components, each playing a significant role in the overall reasoning process. These six components are claim, ground, warrant, backing, modality, and rebuttal (Toulmin, Rieke, and Janik, 1979). Based on the findings of this study, these components were identified in the critical response texts written by junior high school students, comprising claim, ground, warrant, backing, modality, and rebuttal.

The results indicate that reasoning components in students' critical response texts involve all six elements: claim, ground, warrant, backing, modality, and rebuttal. These findings differ from a previous study by Amaroh (2013), which identified only three reasoning components: claim, ground, and conclusion.

In the critical response texts of grade IX students at SMPN 3 Malang, not all reasoning components appear fully within a single paragraph. Instead, these components are distributed across multiple paragraphs, with some paragraphs containing only one, two, or three components. The reasoning elements are spread throughout the entire text.

The reasoning components found in the critical response texts reflect students' levels of critical thinking. The more critical the students' reasoning, the more complete the components of reasoning they incorporate. This can be observed through sentences that describe their observations, interviews, and prior knowledge, which demonstrate the depth of their thinking.

This statement aligns with Piaget's theory, which explains that cognitive development in children is the result of a combination of intellectual maturation, nervous system development, and experiences that help them adapt to their environment. Ninth-grade students, who are in the formal operational stage (aged 11 and above), are capable of solving hypothetical problems, making complex deductions, testing advanced hypotheses, and analyzing reasoning as a foundation for scientific thinking (Dawud, 2008:128-129).

This study shares similarities with Dawud's (2008) research titled *Reasoning in Popular Argumentative Writing*. In that study, Dawud also emphasized that the main components of reasoning are: (1) claim, (2) evidence, and (3) conclusion.

**Forms of Reasoning**

The forms of reasoning, including causality, generalization, analogy, existential reasoning, syllogism, and enthymeme, show similarities to findings in previous research. Dawud (1998) identified reasoning forms such as generalization, analogy, and causality. Generalization reasoning involves examples and occurrences, causal reasoning deals with cause-and-effect relationships and analogy reasoning emphasizes comparisons between phenomena.

Based on the findings of this study, similarities with earlier research were observed in identifying the forms of reasoning, which include causality, generalization, analogy, existential reasoning, syllogism, and enthymeme. These six reasoning forms are described as follows:

### Causal Reasoning

The data show that ninth-grade students at SMPN 3 Malang used causal reasoning in their critical response texts. This form of reasoning states that a condition or event occurs as a consequence of another condition or event. In other words, causal reasoning involves connecting causes with their effects. This study identified variations of cause-effect relationships, including Effect-Effect-Cause, Effect-Cause, and Cause-Effect patterns.

### Generalization Reasoning

Generalization reasoning is a thought process that starts from individual phenomena to draw general conclusions. The findings indicate that generalizations begin with specific statements leading to general conclusions or general statements leading to specifics. Therefore, paragraphs containing generalizations may appear at the beginning or end of sentences. Students' generalizations were based on their knowledge or experiences, such as observations of their school environment, home, or daily life. This aligns with Toulmin's (1979) principle that generalization does not have strict numerical, temporal, or reliability constraints. As Khalimi (2011) suggests, students did not present entirely new information but provided arguments supported by simple evidence based on their knowledge or observations.

### Analogical Reasoning

Analogical reasoning starts with two events that share similarities, leading to the conclusion that what applies to one event also applies to the other. Akhadiah, Arsyad,

and Ridwan (1988) state that inductive analogy involves reasoning used to infer the truth of one phenomenon based on another with similar essential traits. Besides inductive analogies, declarative analogies explain unfamiliar concepts by comparing them to familiar ones (Keraf, 1985). In this study, students used analogies derived from their observations and experiences.

### Coexistential Reasoning

Coexistential reasoning provides justification based on directly or indirectly observable facts. This type of reasoning is grounded in facts or realities reflected in sentences describing observable phenomena. Students concluded from observable or factual data, whether directly or indirectly experienced.

### Syllogistic Reasoning

The study reveals that complete syllogisms were not employed in students' critical response texts, consistent with the theories of Keraf (1982) and Guinn and Marder (2006). Keraf explains that syllogisms often appear as two propositions, with one proposition implied rather than explicitly stated for practicality, although it remains understood mentally. In everyday contexts, syllogisms are typically used in incomplete, informal forms.

### Enthymematic Reasoning

This study aligns with Suparno's (2006) enthymeme theory, which emphasizes that the validity of an enthymeme must be tested by reconstructing it into a complete syllogism. In a complete syllogism, an enthymeme—initially consisting of two premises—includes three main components: a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion. By adhering to syllogistic principles, this research highlights the importance of identifying these components to evaluate the validity of arguments in learning contexts or reasoning. This provides a solid theoretical foundation for understanding the logical structure of students' reasoning, particularly in critical response texts.

### Reasoning Patterns

The reasoning patterns in the critical response texts of ninth-grade students at SMPN 3 Malang consist of four patterns with different variations. These reasoning patterns align with Toulmin's model, which includes six key elements: claim, ground, warrant, backing, modal qualifier, and rebuttal. The reasoning patterns in the critical

response texts are structured according to these elements in a predetermined sequence. Variations in these patterns depend on the number of elements used and the length of the sentences presented.

This study differs from Dawud's (1998) findings, which classified reasoning patterns into simple and complex types. The simple pattern involves only evidence and a conclusion, while the complex pattern includes two or more pieces of evidence along with a claim. Additionally, there is a complex pattern with a chain of reasoning.

It also contrasts with Amaroh's (2013) research, which described reasoning patterns as large blocks encompassing reasoning elements. In Amaroh's study, the main part of the text presents the claim in the introduction, followed by a section providing evidence, and ends with a conclusion as the closing statement.

This research employs variations of inductive and deductive reasoning in paragraphs that convey reasoning elements. These variations are illustrated in the following figure.
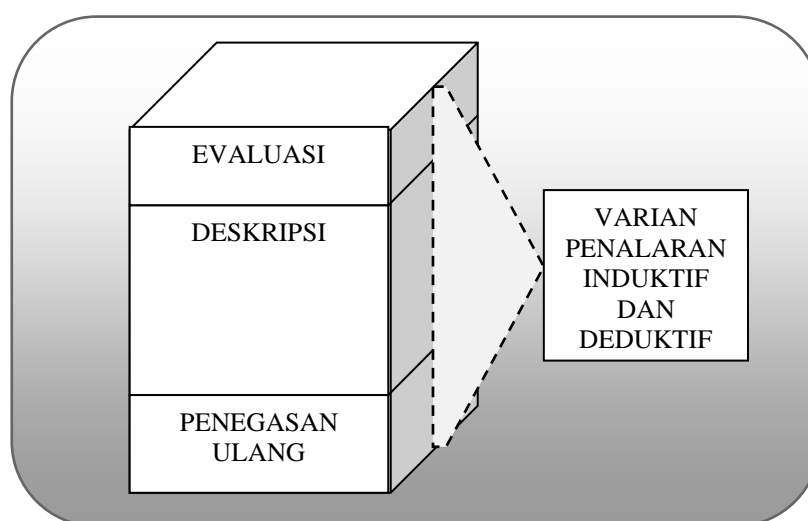


**Figure 1. The Structure of Critical Response Texts by SMPN 3 Malang Students**

The evaluation section in a critical response text functions to present the author's stance, which consists of the main issue or idea. This stance can take the form of a factual statement, value, or policy. In the description section, the author provides evidence to support the stance that has been presented, such as statistical data, authority, or analytical results. Subsequently, in the restatement section, the author presents a conclusion that summarizes the stance previously introduced, which may be an implicit or explicit inference. This conclusion is often accompanied by suggestions or expectations, which may be stated directly or indirectly.

The findings of this study reveal that the evaluation section in the critical response texts of students from SMPN 3 Malang presents the author's stance, which is the main issue or idea. In the description section, students provide evidence to support their stance. Meanwhile, in the restatement section, the conclusion serves to respond to the stance presented, which may be an inference, either implicit or explicit. This conclusion often includes suggestions or expectations provided by the students.

This study also indicates that the structure of the critical response text used by students at SMPN 3 Malang aligns with the article structure theory proposed by Rahardi (2006). According to Rahardi, a well-structured article is not in the shape of an inverted pyramid but rather a block that extends vertically. This structure consists of four main parts: (1) the title, (2) the lead-containing the introductory paragraph, (3) the body containing the explanatory paragraphs, and (4) the ending or concluding paragraph. The results of this study show similarities with Rahardi's theory, especially regarding the block structure, although the size of each part of the block is not always the same. The reasoning structure in the critical response text is organized based on the elements that build reasoning, as mentioned earlier.

**CONCLUSION**

This study identifies three main aspects related to reasoning in the critical response texts of 9th-grade students at SMPN 3 Malang: the elements that build reasoning, the forms of reasoning, and the patterns of reasoning. The elements that build reasoning in the students' critical response texts include claim, ground, warrant, backing, modality, and rebuttal. The students' claims vary between facts, values, and policies, with indicators such as "therefore," "in conclusion," and others. The grounds for the claims are based on facts, opinions, and data obtained by the students. Modality is used to indicate the level of certainty or possibility of a claim, while rebuttal serves to show opposition to the proposed claim.

Students use various forms of reasoning in their critical response texts, including both inductive and deductive reasoning. Inductive reasoning encompasses causality, generalization, analogy, and coexistence, while deductive reasoning includes syllogism and enthymeme. Causal reasoning, for example, describes cause-and-effect relationships, while generalization is used to draw general conclusions based on individual phenomena. Analogy and coexistence are also used to provide comparisons or observable reasons.

The reasoning patterns in the students' critical response texts integrate elements such as claim, ground, warrant, backing, modality, and rebuttal, forming a structured and interconnected framework, although the size of each element may vary. The evaluation section presents the claim or main idea, the description section provides supporting evidence, and the restatement section concludes with confirmation of the claim. Inductive and deductive reasoning are used variably throughout the texts, demonstrating the students' ability to think critically and construct arguments in a logical and structured manner.

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