Penyunting menerima sumbangan tulisan asli tentang kajian kepustakaan atau hasil penelitian kebahasaan dan kesastraan yang belum pernah diterbitkan. Dimuatnya tulisan di *Parafrase* tidaklah mencerminkan visi Dewan Penyunting, tetapi semata-mata tanggung jawab penulisnya. Naskah hendaknya diketik pada kertas kuarto spasi ganda, 10-15 halaman. Penyunting berhak mengubah format tanpa mengubah isi. Selengkapnya, baca *Petunjuk Gaya Penulisan* di sampul belakang dalam.

DAFTAR ISI

RECOGNIZING THE FORMS
OF FALLACIOUS ARGUMENTS

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Abstract. Speakers and writers commit logical fallacies for several reasons. Scientific writers may commit fallacies due to their ignorance. Scriptwriters, however, frequently commit fallacies intentionally for commercial reasons. To make things worse, politicians intentionally commit fallacies and even manipulate them as their weapons to win an argument. This paper tries to describe several forms of fallacies commonly found in communication. This paper is significant for readers to be aware of such fallacies in any context they are dealing with.

Keywords: *argumen fallacies of faulty reasoning, fallacies of grounding, fallacies of language use.*

Introduction

Warnick and Inch (1994: 6) defined argument as a set of statements in which a claim is made, support is offered for it and there is an attempt to influence someone in a content of disagreement. Moreover Warnick and Inch (1994: 139-156) added that fallacies are arguments flawed by irrelevant or inadequate evidence, erroneous reasoning, or improper expression. Furthermore, they classified fallacies into fallacies of faulty reasoning, fallacies of grounding, fallacies of misdirection, and fallacies of language use. This paper intends to describe the forms and features of commonly used fallacies.

Fallacies of Faulty Reasoning

Warnick and Inch (1994: 140) stated that fallacies of faulty reasoning are caused by erroneous inferences made by the writer in drawing the claim. There are four types of faulty reasoning fallacies that commonly occur in arguments. They are: (1) false analogy, (2) hasty generalization, (3) false cause, and (4) slippery slope.

False Analogy

Analogy is comparing two objects of the same class that share many characteristics and concludes that a known characteristic that one object possesses is also shared by the other (Warnick and Inch 1994:115). A false analogy compares two things that

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are not alike in significant respects or have critical points of difference. The writer who uses analogy will overlook the possibility that the two objects he is comparing maybe unlike each other in significant ways that affect the probability of his conclusion. Heffernan and Lincoln (1986: 128) stated that although analogy can be used to explain, it cannot be used to argue. Moreover it is added that since no analogy is able to present a perfect likeness between two different objects, it cannot be used to prove that such a likeness exists. Below is the form of a false analogy used in an argument:

A is like B.
B has property P.
Therefore, A has property P.
(Where the analogy between A and B is weak.)

Hasty Generalization

Generalization is an argument which reasons that what is true of certain members of a class will also be true of the same members of the same class or of the class as a whole (Warnick and Inch 1994: 118). Generalization often extrapolates characteristics from some to all members of a class or may attribute the characteristics of a class to its individual members. Curtis (2002) defined hasty generalization as the fallacy of generalizing about a population based upon a sample which is too small to be representative. If the population is heterogeneous, then the sample needs to be large enough to represent the population's variability. With a completely homogeneous population, a sample of one is sufficiently large, so it is impossible to put an absolute lower limit on sample size. Rather, sample size depends directly upon the variability of the population: the more heterogeneous a population, the larger the sample required. For instance, people tend to be quite variable in their political opinions, so that public opinion polls need fairly large samples to be accurate. A hasty generalization draws a conclusion about a class based on too few or atypical examples. Below is the form of a hasty generalization:

N% of sample S has characteristic C. (Where S is a sample unrepresentative of the population P.)
Therefore, N% of population P has characteristic C.

False Cause

Fallacies can also be caused by erroneous causal reasoning. Commonly there are two common causal reasoning fallacies: *post hoc* which misidentifies a cause and single cause which fails to go far enough in accounting for possible causes.

Post hoc comes from the Latin *post hoc ergo propter hoc* which means "after this therefore because of this" or in other words "if X happened after Y, it must have happened because of Y". A *post hoc* fallacy mistakes temporal successions for causal sequence since the word "after" does not necessarily mean "because of". This kind of fallacy might be caused by the assumption that because two events are associated in

time, one event must have caused by the other. According to Heffernan and Lincoln (1986:129), post hoc ergo *propter hoc* argument is often used in political campaign. Below is the form of a *post hoc* fallacy:

> Event C happened immediately prior to event E.
> Therefore, C caused E.
>   or
> Events of type C happen immediately prior to events of type E.
> Therefore, events of type C cause events of type E.

Slippery Slope

The slippery slope argument is often used by those who wish to argue against a new policy or proposal for change. The slippery slope fallacy assumes, without evidence, that a given event is the first in a series of steps that will lead inevitably to some outcome. Because the argument fails to provide evidence or support for the claim that some event will lead to some predicted consequences, it is a fallacy of evidence use. We can say that the form of a slippery slope fallacy is like the following description:

Form of Semantic Slippery Slope
> A differs from Z by a continuum of insignificant changes, and there is no non-arbitrary place at which a sharp line between the two can be drawn. Therefore, there is really no difference between A and Z.

Form of Causal Slippery Slope
> If A is permitted, then by a gradual series of small steps through B, C,..., X, Y, eventually Z will be too. We should not permit Z. Therefore, we should not permit A.

Fallacies of Grounding

Warnick and Inch (1994: 145) stated that fallacies of grounding result from either the use of poor evidence or no evidence whatsoever. A poorly grounded argument would confuse the reader as the argument's claim is drawn from either missing or inappropriate premises.

Begging the Question

The fallacies of begging the question, also known as circular argument, assume the premise as the evidence of an argument the very claim or point that is in question. In other words, in this kind of fallacy, the argument's premises are used as the claims. Curtis (2002) defined begging the question fallacy as any form of argument in which the conclusion occurs as one of the premises, or a chain of arguments in which the final conclusion is a premises of one of the earlier arguments in the chain. The problem is that the truth of the premises that are being used as the claims have not been accepted yet by the reader. Below is the form of a begging the question fallacy:

Any form of argument in which the conclusion occurs as one of the premisses, or a chain of arguments in which the final conclusion is a premiss of one of the earlier arguments in the chain.

Fallacies of Misdirection

Fallacies of misdirection are often used by advocates to shift the reader's attention away from the argument or something else. A fallacy of misdirection appeals to the reader's prejudice and predisposition to think in a certain way. Generally, these types of fallacies evade substantive issues by appealing to something irrelevant to them. Warnick and Inch (1994: 147) classified fallacies of misdirection into (1) *argumentum ad hominem*, (2) *argumentum ad populum*, (3) *argumentum ad consequentiam,* and (4) *argumentum ad verecundiam.*

Argumentum ad Hominem

Argumentum ad hominem fallacies translated literally as "to the person" are attacks to the personal characteristics of certain persons or writers originating arguments instead of responding b to substantial issues raised in the arguments. Heffernan and Lincoln (1986: 128-129) implied that a good argument should focus itself on the point, not on the person. Below is the form of an *argumentum ad hominem* fallacy:

> There is a/an (irrelevant) personal premiss about x (the opponent)
> Therefore, x's idea is wrong

Argumentum ad Populum

Argumentum ad populum fallacy, translated literally as "to the people", argues that a position should be accepted simply because the public supports it. Here the popular opinion is used as the justification for the claim while like *argumentum ad hominem* fallacies, the substance of the argument is avoided. Below is the form of an *argumentum ad populum* fallacy:

> Idea i is popular.
> Therefore, i is correct

Appeal to Tradition (Argumentum ad Consequentiam)

Appeals to tradition argue that people should continue doing things the way they have always done them, even when good reasons for changing the attitudes or practices are offered. Appeals to tradition are based on the often mistaken assumptions that what has worked well in the past will work well in the future, that conditions have not changed, and there is no better way of doing things. Below is the form of an *argumentum ad consequentiam* fallacy:

> (Belief in) p leads to good consequences.
> Therefore, p is true.
> or

(Belief in) p leads to bad consequences.
Therefore, p is false.

Appeal to Authority (Argumentum ad Verecundiam)

Heffernan and Lincoln (1986: 130) stated that sometimes arguing from authority can be fallacious. This kind of fallacy happens when an authority has stepped outside his field of expertise, and as a result, his opinion is worth no more than anyone else's. There are some things to be considered when referring to an authority. The first one is whether the authority speaks on matter in his own field or of special expertise. The second is whether the authority is a reputable source, not just an "anonymous" one. The last thing to be considered is whether the authority capable to address the issue with certainty. Below is the form of an *argumentum ad verecundiam* fallacy:

Authority **A** believes that **P** is true.
Therefore, **P** *is* true

Fallacies of Language Use

Most fallacies of language use are intentional. Fallacies of language use are usually used to get the claims accepted by the reader while deliberately try to evade issues and avoid presenting solid evidence and reasoning in favor of what they advocate. Warnick and Inch (1994: 153) classified fallacies of language use into: (1) equivocation, (2) amphiboly, and (3) emotive language.

Equivocation

Many words contain more than one meaning, and occasionally arguers may exploit the ambiguity in language to make a fallacious claim. Equivocation exploits the fact that a word has more than one meaning to lead to a false conclusion. Equivocation is often used in deceptive advertising. Heffernan and Lincoln (1986: 130) referred to the use of words that fail to clarify their clear meanings as "vagueness". Below is the form of an equivocation:

An argument contains a single word or phrase that is ambiguous.
This ambiguity is not grammatical but lexical.

Amphiboly

Amphiboly exploits ambiguity in the grammatical structure of a sentence to deceive readers. Below is the form of an amphiboly: Amphiboly is an argument which trades upon grammatical ambiguity to create an illusion of cogency.

Use of Emotive Language (Emotional Appeal)

The use of emotive language can manipulate the connotative meaning of words to establish a claim without proof. It attempts to persuade the readers by getting them to respond emotionally to images and associations evoked by the language used rather

than judging the quality of the writer's evidence and reasoning. Below is the form of an emotional appeal fallacy: Emotional appeal is an argument which uses emotive language to influence the readers' beliefs.

Conclusion

Logical fallacies have been used and abused in communication, especially in argumentative discourses. Being able to identify and be aware of logical fallacies, readers can develop their critical thinking ability. In consequence, readers will not be easily influenced and misled by any fallacious argument they read.

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