CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the study

The students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya learn about English. It means that they also learn four skills that can be found in studying English. The four skills are speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. Writing skill is an important skill because in writing, the students can express their ideas in their minds through a composition, and they also need to read a lot in order to be able to produce such a good composition. There are several kinds of composition such as: narrative, descriptive, explanation, and also argumentative composition. Every composition has its own pattern that can help the reader to understand the organization of ideas in the composition. The writer called it as the rhetorical pattern or thought pattern.

The students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya learn the writing skill through some courses. In the first level, they get Writing 1 course. If they can pass that course, they will continue with the more difficult level which is called Writing II course. The last level for the students to learn about writing is Writing III course. The students who join the Writing III course are expected that they will be able to write good argumentative compositions through some learning strategies such as: mini lectures, question-and-answer, discussion, and individual and group writing exercises.

The objective of Writing III course given by the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya (Pedoman Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Tahun Kuliah 2004 / 2005, 2004: 127-128) is *"The course provides students with the knowledge and skills to write English composition."* From that statement, the writer concludes that after the students have passed the Writing III course, they are expected to be able to make good English compositions.

Related to the course objective of Writing III that has been sated above, the students of Writing III course in the end of the lesson are strongly hoped that they are able to make a good and meaningful argumentative composition since they have taken and passed Writing 1 and Writing 2. In addition, they have completed "IC" (Integrated Course) and Structure 1 so it means that they had enough vocabulary and grammatical knowledge to construct a good composition.

In producing the composition, the writer turns ideas into words. Here, the composition reflects the writer's schema of language, background, experience, knowledge, and values. In this case, the reader uses his knowledge, language, thought, and his view to interpret what the writer has expressed in the composition. Understanding problem sometimes occurs, especially when the reader and the writer come from different cultural backgrounds (Ngadiman, 1998: 1).

There is no doubt that the mastery of a language is helpful in an effective cross-cultural communication (Smith, 1987: 1). Communication problems may arise because of different expectations about the structure of information and

argument (Smith, 1987: 2). It is clear enough that when someone try to write a composition by using other countries' writing style, the result will not be as perfect as when we he/ she uses his/ her own writing style. But, still he/ she can do it by learning their writing style, mastering their language, and also broadening our knowledge. For example in this case, the students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University, who are Indonesians, tend to construct an argumentative composition in a zigzag pattern while the pattern of writing that is taught by the lecturers is the pattern that is used by the Plato-Aristotelian writing style;. that is the linear straight-line pattern. This arises a problem when, for example, the students try to switch to the Plato-Aristotelian pattern while they used to do a zigzag pattern or may be spiral pattern.

Based on his investigation on six hundred compositions written by foreign students in the U.S., Kaplan (1980: 400) presents strong evidence about the above phenomenon. His study showed that each language and each culture has its preference or taste in organizing ideas. The typical characteristic of English rhetoric, for example, is that it is dominantly linear in its development. While Semitic, the Oriental, and the Romance language groups deviate from preferred English paragraph development.

Those of the Semitic language group tend to use excessive parallel construction instead of subordination; those of the Oriental group are marked by what is called an approach by indirection and those of Romance group prefer to use excessive digression to a linear flow of thoughts or ideas.

Kaplan's finding on the Oriental language group's paragraph development has been confirmed for Chinese (Fagan and Cheong, 1987), for Hindi (Yamuna Kachru, 1988), for Thai (Chantanee Indrasuta, 1988), for Japanese, Korean, Chinese, and Thai (Hinds, 1990), and for Korean (Lee and Scarcella, 1992). For instance, Lee and Scarcella's findings (1992). They found that in producing good essays, Korean writers do not generally follow the same Western writing process. The second example is Kachru's findings (1988). In her effort to illustrate the difference between the conventions of writing in English and in Hindi, she found that the conventions of writing in Hindi seem to be different from those of American English. The structure of a paragraph in Hindi is not always circular or spiral. There are paragraphs which show the straight linear structure that is the structure of the preferred structure for argumentative writing in English and there are paragraphs that exemplify the spiral or circular structure.

Based on some contrastive studies such as done by Kaplan (1996) and his followers as mentioned above which emphasize the close relationship between rhetoric and culture, it has been quite commonly realized that the society and culture transcend and control individuals. They can write meaningfully only by accepting and following the conventions of their own rhetorical culture.

Moreover, Budiharso (2006) has also conducted a preliminary study on this matter. His study was aimed at analyzing the similarities and differences between English and Indonesian essays made by EFL undergraduate students. During his study, the problem rise from transfer of first language (L1) cultural conventions to second language (L2) performance. There were three rhetorical

aspects that were analyzed. They were the general patterns of thought (linear or non-linear), development of ideas, and coherence. Those three aspects were compared in his study and were analyzed by using content analysis. After comparing and analyzing the data, he found that EFL students devoted similar rhetoric features in writing English and Indonesian essays. The rhetoric similarity was shared in the use of linearity and non-linearity of ideas, the development of ideas in the whole essays as well as the coherence quality.

Before writing a composition, first of all the students have to make a writing outline which has its own rhetorical pattern. As there are some patterns in making an argumentative composition, then this study was intended to find out the rhetorical pattern that is frequently used by the Writing III students in writing an argumentative composition.

1.2. Statement of the problem

It is important to investigate what type of rhetorical pattern is frequently found in argumentative compositions of the English Department students of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya since the result of the investigation can be very useful in helping the lecturers to know whether the students have understood the lessons they had taught to them or not. In other words, the statement of the problem can be formulated as:

- What rhetorical pattern is frequently found in argumentative compositions of the English Department students of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya?

1.3. The Objective of the study

According to the background and the research problem, in general this study was intended to investigate the rhetorical pattern which is frequently found in argumentative compositions of the English Department students of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya.

1.4. The Significance of the study

This study is expected to have both practical and theoretical contributions. Practically, this study may provide beneficial information about the characteristics of Indonesian students' rhetorical pattern of their argumentative composition.

Theoretically, this study will provide a better clarification on the relationship between written discourse and culture. Moreover, hopefully this study will give a lot of benefit for the future researches and also for teaching writing so that the future students will be able to construct a better argumentative writing.
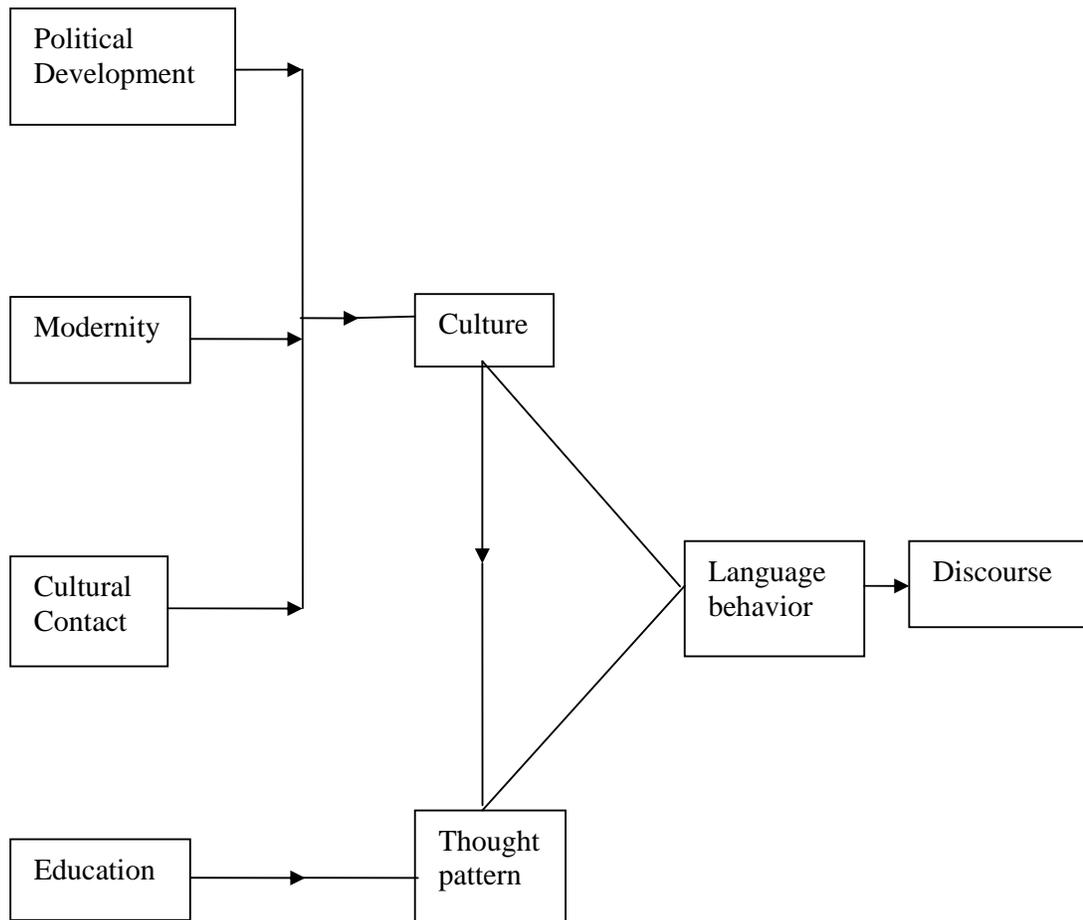
1.5. Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the theory which states that thought, culture, and language are interrelated. Their interrelation is applied not only in smaller linguistics aspects, such as vocabulary and sound system, but also in larger unit, such as rhetoric.

Bander (1981) asserts that ideas do not fit together in the same way from language to language. A Russian, an Egyptian, a Brazilian, and Japanese tend to arrange their ideas on the same subject in quite different ways. They do this

because each culture has its own special way of thinking and preference or taste in organizing ideas. And how a person thinks largely determines his mode of discourse, how he speaks or writes. This arrangement of ideas is called thought pattern. The connection of culture, thought pattern and discourse can be illustrated in the following figure.

Diagram 1

The Connection between culture, thought pattern, and discourse

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┌──────────────┐
│ Political    │─────┐
│ Development  │     │
└──────────────┘     │
                     │
                     │
┌──────────────┐     │   ┌──────────┐              ┌───────────┐    ┌───────────┐
│ Modernity    │─────┼──▶│ Culture  │              │ Language  │───▶│ Discourse │
└──────────────┘     │   └──────────┘              │ behavior  │    └───────────┘
                     │        │                    └───────────┘
┌──────────────┐     │        │
│ Cultural     │─────┘        ▼
│ Contact      │          ┌──────────┐
└──────────────┘          │ Thought  │
                          │ pattern  │
┌──────────────┐          └──────────┘
│ Education    │──────────▶
└──────────────┘
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Culture is not static. Because of its being adaptive, culture is elative and is constantly changing. Education usually contacts with other cultures and political development plays an important role in this process. This cultural flux affects the pattern of thought of the members of the respective culture which in turn influences their language behavior and is applied in the discourse that they produce.

Kaplan (1980) states that rhetoric is based on logic and logic is based on culture. Logic is not universal nor static. It evolves out of time. Rhetoric then, is not universal either. It varies from culture to culture and even from time to time within a given culture at a given time.

1.6. The Assumptions

The presence of this study is based on the following assumptions:

- The subjects of this study have been taught how to make argumentative composition both theoretically and practically. Firstly, they are taught about the theories underlying in constructing an argumentative composition before they are taught practically by making an argumentative composition. In addition, they have completed "IC" (Integrated Course) and Structure 1 so it is assumed that they had enough vocabulary and grammatical knowledge to construct a good composition.

- The argumentative compositions reflect the writers' background knowledge, beliefs, world-view and cultural rhetorical pattern.

1.7. The Scope and Limitation of the study

Firstly, this study focuses on the analysis of argumentative composition written by the students at B class in Writing 3 of the English Department of the Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya. It is aimed in finding the rhetorical pattern which is frequently found in argumentative compositions of the English Department students of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya. Second, the primary source of data for this study is the argumentative composition written by the students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya who took Writing 3 and belonged to B class. Those data were collected from the Writing III course examination done on May 31st, 2007.

The students of the English Department of the Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya actually are taught how to make some types of composition-narrative, descriptive, expository and argumentative. The focus of this study is limited to the argumentative composition since the writer think that argumentative composition is very useful and commonly used as it is used to argue and to convince people and people often argue everyday. Moreover, in general this study addresses the following question: what rhetorical pattern is frequently found in argumentative compositions of the English Department students of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya?.

1.8. The Definition of the Key Terms

This section gives the brief explanations of some key terms used in this study in order to avoid misunderstanding.

1.8.1. Rhetoric

It is a mode of thinking or finding all available means for the achievement of a designated end (Kaplan, 1980: 399).

1.8.2. Thought Pattern

It is the rhetoric operations which direct and order out perceptions, ideas, and feelings (Guinn and Marder, 1987: 7).

1.8.3. Composition

It is a unified written text of whatever length which has a beginning, a middle, and a closure as well as a purpose (Kinneavy, 1980).

1.8.4. Argumentative Composition

It is a form of discourse in which the writer or speaker tries to persuade an audience to accept, reject, or think a certain way about a problem that cannot be solve by scientific or mathematical reasoning alone (White and Billings, 2005: 4).

1.8.5. Paragraph

It is a division or part of a composition or chapter in a book. It is composed of a group of sentences expressing one central idea. It is therefore complete itself. A paragraph is set off by an indentation of its

first sentence or by some other conventional device, such as extra space between paragraphs (Kaplan, 1980).

1.8.6. Controlling Idea

It is the author's most general statement which limits or controls which ideas and information the author will include in the text, as well as the selection of rhetorical devices (Arnaudet and Barret, 1984: 2). It is also defines as Thesis statement.

1.8.7. Topic Sentence

It is a sentence which indicates what a paragraph is about, what it will describe or discuss (Sillivan, 1976: 17).

1.8.8. Supporting Ideas

It is a specific ideas which relate somehow to the controlling idea and are organized in reference to it in some way (Arnaudet and Barret, 1984: 3).

1.9. Organization of the thesis

This thesis consists of 5 chapters. The first chapter is the introduction. It gives the readers some explanations about background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, significance of the study, theoretical framework, assumptions, scope and limitation of the study, definition of the key

terms, and organization of the study. The second chapter reviews related literature studies and previous related studies. The third chapter discusses the nature of the study, research design, subject of the study, data of the study, data analysis, triangulation, data analysis technique and parameters, and the instrument. The fourth chapter consists of findings and discussion of the findings and the last chapter is conclusion and suggestions.