

# **CHAPTER I**

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### **1.1 Background of the study**

In learning English, students are demanded to master the four language skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In listening, the students are asked to be able to listen and understand oral language. Reading has almost the same purpose as listening. In reading, however, the students are required to be able to read and understand the meaning of written language. While speaking, it is commonly performed in face to face interaction. Thus, the students are usually involved in a part of dialogue or other form of verbal exchange. Whereas in writing, they are allowed to communicate with the readers using only written language.

Among the four language skills, writing is regarded to be the most difficult one. It demands the writer to communicate with the readers in space and time. White (1981:260) states that there is a transmission of a message from one place to another and from one point of time to another. In other words, there is a gap of place and time between the writer and the readers which means that they are *physically separated*. That is why, the writer has to write the message in a clear way, so that the readers can read it and find no confusion and questions.

There are several modes of writing, namely: narration, description, exposition, and argumentation. From all the modes, the last mentioned is regarded as the most

difficult one. In writing argumentation, the students have to deal with an issue that is, something about which there is controversy and a variety of opinions, and have to be able to provide a reason to support their point of view. Tukan (1991:4) claims that “To be able to argue effectively (clearly and straightly) in English, the students must possess a sound knowledge in reasoning (constructing arguments) besides the knowledge and skill in using the written English. Further, the reason must be based on rational thought. Reid (1982:103) adds “In argumentative essays, rational thought is a strong persuader. If the essay is based on emotions or feelings, or if the rational thought is flawed (and therefore not rational), the argument loses its strenght”. Thus, if the students are taken along by the flow of their emotions or feelings, they will make some logic errors or logical fallacies in their essays.

Based on the writer’s experience when taking Argumentative Writing, she found that most of her friends had problems in expressing logical views in their essays. After having observed and interviewed some of her friends informally, she concludes that they intended to persuade the readers by providing some reasons and wanted the readers to have the same point of view as theirs. Unfortunately, the reasons given were irrational.

Reviewing the facts above, the writer is interested to find out whether the sixth-semester students still make some logical fallacies in their Argumentative Writing. Moreover, she also wants to know which types of logical fallacies that students often make.

## **1.2 Statements of the problems**

Based on the background above, this study has some research questions as follows:

- a. Do the sixth-semester students of English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya still make logical fallacies in their argumentative essay?
- b. Which types of logical fallacies do the sixth-semester students of English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya often make?

## **1.3 Objectives of the study**

The objectives of this study are:

- a. To find out whether the sixth-semester students of English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya still make logical fallacies in their argumentative essays.
- b. To identify which types of logical fallacies that the sixth-semester students of English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya often make.

## **1.4 Significance of the study**

The writer hopes that the finding of this study can give some useful information to the Argumentative Writing teachers, especially those whose students tend to make certain types of logical fallacies. Therefore, the teachers are expected to give more

exercises in this mode of writing so that logical fallacies in the essays can be avoided or omitted. As a result, those students will not make any logical fallacies or logic errors in the future.

### **1.5 Limitation of the study**

Because of time limitation, in choosing the subjects of the study the writer selected the 1997 students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University. These students are in the sixth-semester and having the lecture of Argumentative Writing. The compositions that would be analyzed are taken from the result of their Argumentative Writing final-term test papers. In analyzing the data, the writer focuses on the contents and sometimes she finds some faulty statements in the students' papers which cannot be comprehended at all; therefore such statements are not included in this analysis. Further, she ignores the organization, mechanism, and the grammar.

### **1.6 Definition of key terms**

To avoid misinterpretation toward this study, the writer would like to define the terms clearly in order to give the readers a better understanding.

#### **a. Writing**

Writing is composition with purposeful selection and organization of experience, facts, opinions, or ideas so that they will produce a certain effect on the reader or accomplish a certain end (Beardsley, 1976:39).

b. Argumentative writing

Argumentative writing is a persuasive writing, in which the writer should take a stand on an issue and support that stand or opinion with reasons and evidences. Besides that, the writer should address the opposing point of view and let the readers know that the writer has considered all sides of the issue before making his stand (Goffman and Berkowitz, 1990:108).

c. Logical fallacies

Logical fallacies are the plural forms of logical fallacy. A logical fallacy is an irrational thought in giving reasons in argument. It happens because the reasons are based on emotions or feelings, and the flaw of the logical mind (Reid, 1982:103).

## 1.7 Organization of the study

This thesis consists of five chapters. In Chapter one, the writer presents the introduction of the study. Chapter two concerns review of related literature which supports the study. Chapter three discusses the analysis of the logical fallacies in Argumentative Writing encountered by the students. The interpretation of the findings will be discussed further in Chapter four. Finally, Chapter five deals with the conclusion and suggestion of the whole thesis.