CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Background of the Study

Budiono (1999:1) says, "The students of the English Department are expected to master a set of skills namely Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking as they are expected to be able to communicate, share, and express their feelings, ideas, opinions and attitudes well both in oral and written in English." In order to reach that expectation, the students need a lot of practice. But from time to time, most students think that, of the four skills, writing is the most difficult one because to be able to produce a good piece of composition, a student needs more time to think, to choose appropriate words, to try out ideas on paper, to rethink, to read, and to revise what he has written, and most important of all is to consider the effect of his writing on readers (Heffernan & Lincoln, 1986:4). As such Writing, as a means of communication, must be consciously learnt because "... a part of what makes it hard to learn is that written words usually have to express our meaning in our absence, have to "speak" all by themselves" (Heffernan and Lincoln, 1986:3).

There are four kinds of writing. They are narration, description, exposition, and argumentation. According to Heffernan and Lincoln (1986:105), we can narrate if we want to tell something, describe if we want to represent the character of something, expose if we want to explain something, or argue if we do

not agree on something. This thesis deals with argumentative writing with special reference to argument logical indicators.

Argumentative writing is the type of writing that presents opinions logically. It is the last of the writing course series taught to the students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Surabaya Catholic University, as a preparation to write term papers and theses. Through this course, the students are taught and trained to put their arguments on paper logically and soundly (Tukan, 1991:X).

According to Bassham (2002:25), an argument is a claim put forward and defended with reasons. In other words, an argument consists of one or more premises and a conclusion, and all must be stated clearly, so the readers may not easily get lost or begin to wonder where the argument is going to and whether or not the writer understands it himself (Heffernan and Lincoln, 1986:4). Here, the presence of inference markers or logical indicators is needed to show that the statement that follows is a reason (premise/data) or a conclusion (claim), even though it's possible to write a composition that doesn't contain any logical indicators (Beardsley, 1976:2-4).

There are words, phrases or clauses that can be used as logical indicators. Here are some examples of premise indicators: "since..., because..., for..., in view of the fact that.., in as much as...," and some conclusion indicators: "therefore..., hence..., so..., suggest that..., as shown by..." (see Beardsley (1975), Facione-Scherer (1978), Copi (1982), Charlsen-Jones (1983), Fisher (1990), Tukan (1991), and Bassham (2002).

So far, there have been several theses which report studies on argumentative compositions of the students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Surabaya Catholic University. These studies are among others carried out by Teopilus (1986), Tukan (1991), Budiono (1999), and Bono (2001). Their main concern is on the students' argument logicality, logical errors, correlation between students' logic and argumentative composition achievements, and the structure of argument. None of them has especially dealt with logical indicators, the signals of the presence of an argument in the students' compositions used by the students in argumentative compositions, although Tukan (1991) discusses them briefly in the second chapter of his thesis.

Being aware of the importance of logical indicators in signaling the presence of an argument, and realizing that there are many logical indicators that students might choose to construct their arguments coherently and convincingly, the writer carried out the study under report with the following title: Logical Indicators Encountered in the Argumentative Compositions of the Students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Surabaya Catholic University.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In accordance with the background, the research questions of the study under report were formulated as follows:

The main research question is, "What logical indicators are encountered in the argumentative compositions of the students under study?"

It is broken down into six sub-research questions;

1. Which logical indicator is used the most by the students under study?

2. Which logical indicator is used the least by the students under study?

3. Which premise indicator is used the most by the students under study?

4. Which premise indicator is used the least by the students under study?

5. Which conclusion indicator is used the most by the students under study?

6. Which conclusion indicator is used the least by the students under study?

1.3 Objective of the Study

Closely related to the above research problem, the major objective of the study is to identify the logical indicators which are encountered in the argumentative compositions of the students under study.

The minor objectives are:

a. To identify the logical indicator which is used the most by the students under study.

b. To identify the logical indicator which is used the least by the students under study.

c. To identify the premise indicator which is used the most by the students under study.

d. To identify the premise indicator which is used the least by the students under study.

e. To identify the conclusion indicator which is used the most by the students under study.

f. To identify the conclusion indicator which is used the least by the students under study.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will hopefully contribute something to the development of the argumentative writing teaching. On the practical side, the findings of this study are expected to contribute to the writing teachers of the English Department in their efforts to teach their students various types of logical indicators and how to use them in shaping their arguments, so that their compositions will be more logical and sound.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The subjects of the study under report are limited to Writing D students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Surabaya Catholic University, who got Argumentative Writing in the fifth semester according to the curriculum of 1994. Since there are six groups of the students taking Writing D (A, B, C, D, E, F), and due to the writers' limited time and energy, the writer only analyzed the argumentative compositions of the students of group D. They were the only data that the writer could get. The study does not touch upon the logicality and the soundness of the arguments being analyzed.

1.6 Basic Concept Framework

This study is based on the basic concept of *argumentative writing* with special reference to *argument* and *logical indicators*. Argumentative writing is characterized by who to write to, what and why to write, for what purpose and how to organize arguments based on logical thinking. In argumentative writing, one tries to put his arguments as convincingly as possible by defending his claims with sound reasons. In order to make it easier for his readers to understand or to get his points and hopefully take his side (position), a writer makes use of words, phrases, or clauses that indicate the presence of an argument. They are called logical indicators. Though it's possible to write an argument without any logical indicators; for students learning to argue on paper, the presence of logical indicators is very important to consider and make use of.

1.7 Definition of key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding, it is important to define the key terms here before we proceed to the next chapters of this thesis. They are;

1. An **argumentative writing** is the kind of writing that takes a position on an issue and defends it with evidence to persuade someone else of the position (Lee, in Ankers, 1998: 160).

2. An **argument** is a claim put forward and defended with reasons, (Bassham, 2002:25); or writing or speaking to convince, using methods of reasons (Mayberry, 1990:2).

3. **Logical indicators** are words, phrases, or clauses signaling the presence of an argument (Tukan, 1989:17).

4. **Premise indicators** are words, phrases, or clauses showing that the statement that follows is data/ reason (Beardsley, 1975:13).

5. **Conclusion indicators** are words, phrases, or clauses showing that the statement that follows is a claim (Beardsley, 1975:13).

1.8 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter one is the Introduction that gives the reasons why the writer chose this topic. Chapter two conveys some basic concepts and previous studies related to this study. Chapter three discusses the research method used in carrying out this study. The next chapter talks about the findings and the discussion of the findings. And the last chapter deals with the conclusion and suggestions.