

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

The students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Cathoilic University Surabaya (it is henceforth abbreviated to UWM) are expected to be able to communicate, share, and express their feelings, ideas, opinions, and attitudes well in both oral and writing in English, as they are important skills to be mastered in this era of globalization. To be able to master the English functional skills above, the students of the English Department of UWM are equipped with the teaching of reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills, plus grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation practice.

One of the required skills the students have to accomplish is writing a composition. Hence, the English Department of UWM provides the composition skills training for the students gradually, starting from the introduction of writing in the Intergrated Course in the first semester, continued by the Writing I class (the narrative writing) in the second semester, Writing II class (descriptive writing) in the third semester, Writing III class (expository writing) in the fourth semester, Writing IV class (persuasive writing) in the fifth semester, Writing V class (argumentative writing) in the

sixth semester, continued by Paper Writing class in the seventh semester and then finally Thesis writing.

Among the writing skills taught to the students of the English Department of UWM, the writer wants to highlight the argumentative writing taught in Writing V class, as it is considered as the most essential writing skill to determine the students' ability to write good paper and thesis which commonly contain elements of argument. In other words, the students are required to master the skills of writing a sound argument in the Writing V class before proceeding into the Paper Writing class and composing a scientific paper.

Renkema (1993:128) states that the main principle in writing an argument is whether it makes people change their attitudes. The attitudes here mean general evaluations people hold with regard to themselves, other people, objects, and issues. These general evaluations are believed to be an important determiner of people's behavior. The writer of an argumentative composition hopes to change the behavior of the reader by changing their attitudes toward a certain issue.

The English Department of the UWM has included the Writing V in its curriculum to teach the students to master the fundamental skill of writing an argumentative composition. However, the writer notices that some students who attend the Writing V class have difficulty in producing sound argument.

Some of the arguments written by the students of the English Department of UWM contain fallacies in the sense that there are errors made within the reasoning phase, grounding phase, directing phase, or in the language use that resulted in the failure to convince people to change their attitudes.

One major cause of the faulty argumentative compositions that fail to convince the readers to change their attitude is the error in providing the appropriate data (statements that support the claim) for the claim (conclusion of the argument). Inappropriate data statements to the claim will lead into invalid warrants. The writer believes that this problem can be solved by analyzing the structure of the argument to see the relationship between the data and the claim to see whether or not it needs additional backings to clarify the relation between the data and the claim.

In writing a pro and contra argument, a writer has to state both pro and contra statements in his/her composition. As the composition progresses, he/she has to take stand, either pro or contra, and refutes the opposing proposition, otherwise his/her claim will be less convincing since he/she will leave the judgement of the claim to the reader.

In studying this phenomenon, the writer has found a gap between the facts that some students of the English Department of UWM still make some errors in producing sound arguments and the expectation that at their level, they should be able to produce sound arguments. This research tries to find

the causes of this problem by analyzing the structure of argument within the argumentative compositions collected from the six-semester students of the English Department of UWM and some suggestions to solve them.

1.2. Statement of the Problems

Based on the background of the study, the following problems are stated:

1. *What patterns of argument are used by the sixth-semester students of the English Department of UWM in their argumentative compositions?*
2. *What types of argument errors are made by the sixth-semester students of the English Department of UWM in their argumentative compositions?*
3. *What solutions can be offered to minimize the argument errors contained in the argumentative compositions made by the sixth-semester students of the English Department of UWM?*

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are formulated as follows:

1. *The study is intended to determine the patterns of argument used by the sixth-semester students of the English Department of UWM in their argumentative compositions.*

2. The study is intended to determine the types of argument errors made by the sixth-semester students of the English Department of UWM in their argumentative compositions.
3. The study is intended to offer some solutions to minimize the argument errors contained in the argumentative compositions made by the sixth-semester students of the English Department of UWM.

1.4. Significance of the Study

The writer hopes that the findings in his study give some contributions to the development of Writing V or the argumentative writing teaching for the English Department of UWM, especially in the matter of stating and supporting the claim of argument in producing sound argumentative composition.

1.5. Limitation of the Study

Because of time limitation, in choosing the sample of the study the writer selected the E class of the 1994 students of the English Department of UWM because they had already passed the Writing V class during the time of the study. The compositions that were analyzed are pro and contra arguments from the result of their Writing V final term test. In analyzing the data, the writer ignored all of the grammatical mistakes/errors contained in

the compositions since the objectives of the study do not include the analysis of the grammatical items.

1.6. Definition of Key Terms

1. Analysis is a careful examination; especially to determine why something has happened or may be expected to happen (Barnart 1982:74).
2. Structure of argument is how an argument is formed based on the organization of its elements (Renkema 1993:130).
3. Compositions refer to the finished essays in which the words are arranged to form sentences and paragraphs in larger units so that thought may be communicated to the readers (Cobb 1985:6).
4. Argumentative composition is a piece of writing that expresses an opinion in the form of coherent and logical sentences and paragraphs and tries to persuade an audience (Glatthorn 1981:320).
5. Sixth-semester students of the English Department of UWM are the subjects whose composition papers are examined and discussed here. The writer chooses the sixth-semester students as his source of data because based on the curriculum the students get argumentative writing class at this semester.
6. Sound argument is a convincing and reasonable argument that is able to convince an audience to a certain point of view, response to what the

source asks them to do, or change the their points of view (Renkema 1993:128).

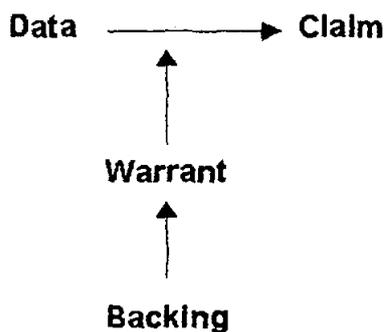
7. Faulty argument is an argument that fails to convince the readers to change their attitude toward the writer's points of view due to errors within the argument (Renkema 1993:128).
8. Errors in this study refer to the factors in the argument that cause it to be faulty (Renkema 1993:128).
9. Claim is the conclusion to an argument (Spurgin 1989:263).
10. Data are the reasons and evidences in the forms of statements to support the claim (Spurgin 1989:263).
11. Warrants are statements that show how the data and the claim are related (Spurgin 1989:263).
12. Backings are statements that support the warrants (Spurgin 1989:263).
13. Qualifiers are phrases that limit the scope or degree of probability of any statement (Spurgin 1989:263).
14. Rebuttals are additional statements used to clarify the relation between the data and the claim if the warrants do not provide a clear and definite link (Renkema 1993:131).

1.7. Theoretical Framework

In this study, the writer uses theories of argumentative discourse analysis based on the model of argument proposed by Stephen Toulmin (1958, as cited by Renkema 1993:131) and reasoning pattern theory of Falsification proposed by Karl Popper (1962) as his standpoint in analyzing the data.

1.7.1. Toulmin's Model on the Structure of Argument

In analyzing the data the writer uses the model of argument proposed by Stephen Toulmin in 1958 (section 2.1.3) as his parameter. However, because the low usage frequency of rebuttals and qualifiers encountered in the analysis of the data and the limitation of time, he decided to use the simplified Toulmin's model of argument as described below:



In the model above, the claim is the conclusion or the thesis of an argument, the data are statements that support the claim, while the warrant is an implicit statement that connects the data and the claim. Backing is

additional information to support the warrant. Further information on Toulmin's model of argument is discussed in the section 2.1.3.1.

1.7.2. Falsification

Karl Popper (1962) states the falsification method in stating an argument. In stating a pro and contra argument by using the falsification method, a writer sees things from two sides. The source may begin his/her argument by presenting the opposing points of view and then, as he/she has to take stand, refutes them, continuing until all oppositions have been dealt with and all positive arguments voiced. For example: in stating that abortion should be abolished, the writer of the argument may provide logical reasons of having an abortion early in his/her compositions. Later, the writer refutes all of them in taking the stand to state that he/she is against it. The opposing statements provided and refuted here will make the composition more convincing than if the argument deals only with one-sided point of view.

1.8. Assumptions

This study was carried out based on the three following assumptions:

1. *There are certain patterns of argument used by the students of the English Department of the UWM in composing their written arguments.*

2. The students have passed the Writing I, II, III, and IV classes; therefore, they have the necessary fundamental skills to take the argumentative writing class.
3. The students who are taking Writing V are assumed to have the ability of mastering all English sequences of grammar and vocabulary to enable them to express their ideas clearly.

1.9. Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter is the Introduction which deals with the Background of the Study (1.1.), Statement of the Problems (1.2.), Objectives of the Study (1.3.), Significance of the Study (1.4.), Limitation of the Study (1.5.), Definitions and Key Terms (1.6.), Theoretical Framework (1.7.), Assumptions (1.8.), and Organization of the Thesis (1.9.).

The second chapter, Review of the Related Literature discusses Discourse Theories on Argument (2.1.) and Argumentative Writing Theories (2.2.).

The third chapter, Research Methodology is divided into four sections. The first section is Research Design (3.1.) which discusses the nature of the study. The second section is Population and Sampling (3.2.) which describes the population and the sampling method used by the writer in this study. The

third section is Data Collection Procedure (3.3.) which describes the procedures used by the writer in collecting the data for this study. The final section of this chapter is Data Analysis Procedure (3.4.) which discusses the writer's procedures in analyzing the data.

The fourth chapter, *Findings and Interpretations of the Findings*, consists of three main sections, Findings (4.1.), Interpretations of the Findings (4.2.), and Solutions for Minimizing the Argument Errors (4.3.).

The last chapter, *Conclusion and Suggestions*, is divided into two sections. The first section is Conclusion (5.1.) which discusses the summary and the inferences made by the writer based on his analysis about the findings of the study. The next section is Suggestions (5.2.) which contains the writer's suggestions based on his conclusion that is related to the findings of the study.