

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Transitional signals are connectors between statements and or ideas in paragraphs (Wiener, 1981). They help readers identify the direction of the writer's thoughts and announce where the writer is going and how to follow him. Similarly, Duke (1983:65) asserts that the transitional signals indicate the relationships between sentences and help connect one sentence to the next. They help readers follow the movement of a discussion and understand the relationship between ideas (Harris, 2010). The function of transitional signals is then, to make the sentences and paragraphs run smoothly and coherently. In order that readers understand the writer's message.

By design, Writing IV students of the English Department should have already learnt and practiced using

transitional signals specific to each text type since they took Writing I. Consequently, they are supposed to have mastered various types of transitional signals.

Discussion text is a writing genre in which the writer discusses a controversial issue from the pros sides and cons sides equally. It is offered to the 5th semester students. Tukan and Palupi (2008) claim that discussion text is a writing genre which deals with both sides of a controversial issue - the for and against arguments in the same essay. In constructing this type of text, Anderson and Anderson (1997:118) state that the writer of a discussion text has to include the following points. Introductory paragraph that has a statement or question about the issue, a series of paragraphs that give evidence, opinions, or reason for and against the issue, and a conclusion that gives a final point of view, either for or against the issue. Both sides should be treated equally.

In order to make the claim and its reasons both for and against run coherently and cohesively, transitional signals of discussion texts are highly needed. Transitional signals showing

movement from either the pro side to the con side or the other way around, like “on one hand”, “on the other hand”, “however”, “those in favor of”, should be clearly and demonstrated in a discussion text. Ideally, writing IV students should have been able to create discussion texts of this quality. In practice, however, this might not be the case. The writer’s experience and complaints from her friends and Writing IV’s lecturers, tell her that inappropriate transitional signals still occur in student’s texts. This attracts her to study the topic under report. She would like to get a clear picture about the transitional signals and their types used by the Writing IV students.

Agustin (2007) and Hutama (2006) have already researched transitional in argumentative writing of the English Department Students. However, they only focuses on either arguments for or arguments against, none has analyzed discussion texts in which both sides, for and against, are presented. Besides, they did not touch the transitional signals used as a bridge between arguments for and arguments against the issue.

Since there has been no study analyzing the transitional signals in discussion texts yet, signals used in the arguments both for and against and also signals used as a bridge between arguments for and arguments against, the writer decided to do the research under report entitled Transitional Signals Encountered in Discussion Text Written by the 5th Semester Students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya.

1.2 Statement of the Problems

In line with the background of the study under report, the writer formulates the major problems of this study as follow:

1. What transitional signals are used in the discussion texts written by the students of English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya?
2. What types of transitional signals are used in the discussion texts written by the students of English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya?

3. What types of transitional signals are most frequently used in the discussion texts written by the students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya?
4. What types of transitional signals are most frequently used in arguments for the issue in the discussion texts written by the students of English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya?
5. What types of transitional signals are most frequently used in arguments against the issue in the discussion texts written by the students of English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya?
6. What transitional signals are used as a bridge between arguments for and arguments against in the discussion texts written by the students of English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Directly derived for the statement of the problem, the objectives of the study are :

1. To find out the transitional signals used in the discussion texts written by the students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya.
2. To find out the types of transitional signals used in the discussion texts written by the students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya.
3. To find out the types of transitional signals most frequently used in the discussion texts written by the students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya.
4. To find out the types of transitional signals most frequently used in arguments for the issue in the discussion texts written by the students of the English

Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University
Surabaya.

5. To find out the types of transitional signals most frequently used in arguments against the issue in the discussion texts written by the students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya.
6. To find out the transitional signals are used as a bridge between arguments for and arguments against in the discussion texts written by the students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya.

1.4 Significance of the study

The findings of study under report are expected to provide useful contribution to the Writing IV lecturers and students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya.

For the lecturer, the findings of the study under report are expected to give information directly about the transitional signals used in the discussion texts, the types of transitional signals used in the discussion texts, and the types of transitional signals most frequently used in arguments for and against the issue in the discussion texts. Hopefully the writing IV lecturers will teach to all the students to use the transitional signals used in the discussion text.

For the writing IV students who read this thesis, they will understand about the transitional signals used in the discussion text from their lecturers.

For the English Department, the findings of the study under report are expected to give information about the transitional signals used in the discussion text and the English Department will revise the curriculum and syllabus for writing IV about the discussion text especially in the transitional signals.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the study

This study analyzes discussion texts written by the students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya. The data source is mid-term test compositions of Writing IV students. There are eighteen pieces from Writing IV group C1 final tests of 2008/2009 academic year. The writer focuses on transitional signals used in mid-term test compositions of Writing IV group C1's students.

Besides the scope, the study also has limitations as described in the followings. The writer does not analyze the vocabulary, tenses, and grammar. If the writer included these in her analysis, this study will be more accurate. The writer admits that she finds difficulty in identifying whether the transitional signals in discussion texts are appropriate or not because of limited sources.

1.6 Definition of Key Term

In order to avoid misunderstanding or misinterpretation, it is necessary to define the following terms :

- Discussion text is a text type in which the writer presents two opposing ideas concerning a controversial issue in a more balanced way. (Tukan and Palupi, 2008:11).
- Organization refers to the order of the writer's ideas and the way he/she moves from one idea to the next (Peha, 1995:3).
- Transitional expression is a connector between statements and ideas in paragraphs (Wiener, 1981:13).

1.7 Theoretical Framework

The underlying theories in this study are the theories of discussion text and transitional signals.

According to Tukan and Palupi (2008) discussion is a text type in which the writer presents two opposing ideas concerning a controversial issue in a more balanced way". Harris (2007), transitional words and phrases provide the glue that holds ideas

together in writing. Transitional signals are important to make the paragraphs coherent and without them, the readers would find the writing disjointed and hard to follow. Realizing that a discussion text is the text types which needs two different point of views, the transitional signals are highly needed in connecting ideas.

1.8 Organizations of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter one is introduction which include background of the study, objective of the study, significance of the study, limitation of the study, definition of key term, theoretical framework, research methodology, and organization of the study. Chapter two is review of related literature which includes good writing, organization, transitional signals, the types of transitional signals, discussion text, the nature of discussion text, the construction of discussion text, language features, and the last is the previous related studies. Chapter three is research methodology which includes the nature of the study and its design, the subject of the study, the source of

data, the research instrument, parameters, the procedure of data collection, and the procedure of data analysis technique. Chapter four is findings and discussion of findings. The last one is chapter five is conclusion and suggestions.