

**THE IDEAS DEVELOPMENT OF ARGUMENTATIVE DISCOURSES
OF INDONESIAN WRITERS
FOUND IN THE *OPINION FORUM OF THE JAKARTA POST***

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ABSTRACT

In this era, English is established as the world language of research and publication. This makes the English language significant for students and professionals. Tangkiengsirisin (2010, 1) states that text flow through a sequence of sentences is a main criterion for advanced writing. This research is aimed at finding out the flows of ideas of the English Arguments of Indonesian writers. This research applies topical, paradigmatic analysis. It involves identifying topics and sequences of topics/ ideas. After the topical analysis is done, the investigator contemplates the ideas development pattern of the entire essay. After analyzing fourteen English Arguments of Indonesian writers, it is found out that English Arguments of Indonesian writers are mostly developed linearly. It contradicts with Kaplan's explanation (1966) that oriental groups express their ideas mostly in indirect ways. It means that at present Kaplan's theory is partly valid. Even though the English Arguments of Indonesian writers are mostly developed linearly, it doesn't mean that the teachers can ignore it in teaching Advanced Writing. Flow of ideas should become one of the materials of Advanced Writing to Indonesian learners, but it doesn't need more teaching time allotment.

Keywords: *argumentative discourses, flow of ideas, linear, circular, parallel, digress*

I. Introduction

In this era, English is established as the world language of research and publication (Flowerdew, 2001: 1). This makes the English language significant for students and professionals as stated by Light (2001) in McNamara et al. (2010: 58) that for professionals, writing skills are essential for their day-to-day work and critical for entry and promotion in their disciplines. Writing provides the ability to articulate ideas, argue opinion, and synthesize multiple perspectives. Geiser and Studly (2001) in McNamara et al. (2010: 58) state that for students, writings

are among the best predictors of success in course work during their years of study.

According to Storrer (2002: 1), authors should design a text in such a way that the addressee may detect the relationships linking individual text constituents. In other words, the authors should write a coherent text. He further explains that the concept of text coherence is developed for linear text, i.e. text of sequentially organized content. However, writing coherently is not an easy task, even for advanced writers.

Cameron (2007: 43) finds out that writing skill is not only difficult for the students but also for scientists, writers and

editors. Some English-as-a-second-language writers are able to write in English with ease, but a great many spend countless hours struggling to express themselves at the level of sophistication of which they are capable in their native languages. Similar with Cameron, Almaden states that writing is a highly complex process for novice and non novice writers alike since it involves advanced skills that include critical thinking, logical development, and coherence of ideas (2006: 127). Dastjerdi and Shirzad (2010: 157) add that the difficulty in second language writing is also because of the different conventions the writers are familiar with, from the second language conventions and cultures.

Tangkiengsirih (2010: 2) finds out that even advanced learners at a high proficiency level of English have problems with academic writing at the level of text organization and cohesion, even though they have started learning English since elementary school level throughout the school years. Tangkiengsirih further explains that coherent writing is badly needed for professionals and university students since it plays a crucial role in disseminating information.

The parameters of coherent writing are as follows: (1) Linear organization, (2) Does not shift topics or digress, (3) Generic coherence (clear schematic structure with a clear purpose), (4) Situational coherence (clear context of situation), (5) Skillfully uses metadiscourse markers/ cohesive ties, (6) Fullness of paragraph development, (7) Begins with clear and effective introduction, (8) Concludes with a statement that gives the reader a definite sense of closure, (9) Makes few or no grammatical errors that interrupt the discourse flow or the reading process, (10) Relevant title formulation (Eggins, 1994: 87; Storrer, 2002; Bearsdly, 1976; Celce Murcia and Olshtain, 2000: 125; Halliday and Hasan, 1976: 3; Ngadiman, 1998: 152-153; Almaden, 2006; Lee, 2002: 36-37;

Bamberg, 1983). Tangkiengsirih (2010, 1) states that text flow through a sequence of sentences (refer to parameters 1, 2) is a main criterion of advanced writing. Based on this reason, I investigated the flow of ideas or the ideas development of Argumentative Discourses of Indonesian writers.

Texts are groups of hierarchically related clauses which bear various informational relations to one another. In other words, texts are hierarchically organized groups of propositions or ideas/ thoughts. It means that in writing, a writer recursively organizes ideas. The flow of ideas or the pattern of organization of the ideas will determine the level of coherence of the text which is produced. D'Angelo (1980: 70, 80) calls this flow of ideas as thought pattern. He states that thought pattern is a way or mode in which ideas are arranged or developed from the beginning of an essay to its conclusion. While Kaplan (1980: 400) calls this flow of ideas as rhetoric. He states that rhetoric is mode of thinking for the achievement of certain goal.

The flow of ideas of a discourse is classified into linear and non linear development pattern that can be explained as follows.

1. Linear development pattern.

The criteria for linear development are as follows: organizing one central idea; having direct, clear, unified, logical, top-down flow of ideas. The discourse topic is realized in title, thesis statement at the introduction paragraph, then by series of sub divisions of this thesis statement into topic sentences into body paragraphs (Kaplan, 1987; Brown, 1998; McLoughlin, 2002; Cameron, 2007). Thus, the title of the text is relevant or reflects the content of the text, the thesis statement is clearly stated in the introductory paragraph(s), the thesis statement is subdivided clearly into topic sentences in the body paragraphs.

2. Non linear development pattern.

This pattern can be classified into circular, parallel/ zig-zag, digress patterns that will be explained below.

a. Circular pattern

The circular model is marked by indirection approach. The writer avoids a direct statement of thesis in the opening section, thus, the subject is never looked at directly. Things are developed in terms of what they are not, rather than in terms of what they are. Too many things are mentioned within one paragraph. It is characterized by flowery language. The material presented has connection but not directly. In this style, the main idea is placed toward the middle or at the end of the text, or when the text is about to end or never clear at all (Kaplan, 1987; Brown, 1998; Xing et al., 2008; McLoughlin, 2002; Reid, 1990; Simpson, 2000).

b. Parallel pattern

Parallel pattern is characterized by repetition of thesis statement; it is also called overlay pattern, thus, the thesis is stated recursively at both paragraph and discourse levels. It contains a complex series of parallel constructions. The main points may be over emphasized and overstated, resulting in restatement. Such a style of writing might strike an English speaker as awkward. It may cause undep discussion of the central idea. Repetition seldom appears in the linear style except for strengthening the tone of the writing to enhance persuasiveness (McLoughlin, 2002; Hinds, 1990; Kaplan, 1987; Conor et.al., 1990).

c. Digress pattern

Digress pattern is characterized with change of topic, leaving an argument in mid-air and starting a new one, thus, the discussion of the main theme is left unfinished. A text with digress pattern has no thesis development. The development does not contribute to the central idea. It is a list of points revolving loosely around an unstated central theme. It is often together

with indirection. In English, this pattern would strike the reader as awkward and inefficient (Almaden, 2006; McLoughlin, 2002; Kaplan, 1987).

This research about the ideas development of Arguments of Indonesian writers is aimed at finding out the flows of ideas of the English Arguments of Indonesian writers. The research results will have theoretical and pedagogical significances. Theoretically, the study will provide useful information about the English written texts by Indonesians as a linguistic phenomenon, especially the organizational patterns of the English Arguments of Indonesian writers. The study will develop Kaplan's theory of flow of ideas. Pedagogically the study may provide teaching experts with beneficial information about the flows of ideas of the English Arguments of Indonesian writers. Then, the teachers can apply it in teaching Advanced Writing as stated by Tran (2007) that the articles of opinion in Newspaper are comparable to college writing, and they are valid choices to represent advanced writings, besides they present a wide range of topics. Tran further explains that the articles are preferable data for advanced writing research because students' essays are usually short, and rigidly controlled by the organizational framework provided in class.

II. Research Method

The study is a descriptive and qualitative in nature. It describes the observed phenomena in the form of words rather than numbers. The flows of ideas of the English Argumentative discourses written by Indonesians will be identified and analyzed. The study belongs to Discourse Analysis. Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000: 4) state that discourse study is the study of language in use that extends beyond sentence boundaries. This section will discuss research design, object of the study, method of data collection,

data validation and enhancement, method of data analysis.

1. Research Design

To achieve the goal of the research, the study will be conducted in three stages: exploratory stage, descriptive stage, explanatory stage. In the exploratory stage, some phenomena will be observed. It is conducted by referring to the research objective. In the descriptive stage, careful descriptions will be developed. It is conducted by describing patterns obtained in the exploratory stage. In this stage, an empirical generalization will be formulated. In the explanatory stage, explanation concerning the empirical generalization will be developed. In this explanatory stage, a theory used to explain the empirical generalization is developed.

2. Object of the Study

The study analyzes 14 articles from *The Jakarta Post* in the last 3 years (2009, 2010, 2011). Various topics with writers of various professions are taken.

3. Data of the Study

Since the objective of the study is to find out the flows of the English Argumentative Discourses written by Indonesians, thus, the data of the study are the English Argumentative Discourses written by Indonesians. The objects of the study from which the data are taken are articles in the *Opinion Forum* of *The Jakarta Post* newspapers.

4. Method of Data Collection

Flows of ideas can only be learnt through the sequence of ideas the writers express in the text. Thus, threads of ideas of the texts will be collected. In collecting the data, the first step taken is taking the English Argumentative texts written by Indonesians from the *Opinion Forum* of *The Jakarta Post* in the last three years. Then, the texts are classified based on the topics and writer professions. Afterwards, 14 articles (which are not too long but not

too short, and complete to be thoroughly analyzed) are selected. In the second step, the investigator will make field notes concerning the profile of the Argumentative Discourses, i.e. the title, controlling idea (both the thesis statement and topic sentences), supporting ideas, the relationship between controlling and supporting ideas.

5. Data Validation and Enhancement

Due to the fact that the key instrument of the study is the investigator herself, there is a possibility of invalid data and analysis. For this problem, triangulation is used to increase validity (Patton: 1983). Lincoln and Guba (1985: 219, 301) as cited by Purwanto (2007: 100) suggest that triangulation can be of methods, sources, investigators and theories. This dissertation uses investigator's triangulation. An academican from Sanata Dharma University is asked as an expert to evaluate the data (threads of ideas) and the data analysis.

6. Method of Data Analysis

The data are analyzed at two levels of analysis, (1) at micro or paragraph level and (2) at macro or overall composition level. Thus, each text will be analyzed at the paragraph level as well as at the overall composition level. This is in line with Brown's and Yule's suggestion that with written discourse, discourse analysts focus on their attention on the description and analysis of language beyond the sentence level and the contexts which affect language in use. They are concerned with "the principles of connectivity which bind a text together and force co-interpretation" (1983: 190).

At the whole composition level, the complete picture of the text features is tried to be found out. The following points are successively analyzed at the whole composition or macro level: (a) title formulation, (b) thesis (in the thesis statement)/ macro theme (Martin, 1992),

(c) sub thesis/ sub topic (in the topic sentence) at every paragraph/ hyper theme, (d) coherence between paragraphs (relatedness between thesis [of the whole discourse] with the topics of the paragraphs), (e) the flow of ideas or the pattern of organization. The pattern of organization can be straight linear pattern or non linear (circular, digressed, parallel) (Kaplan, 1987). At the paragraph level, the controlling idea which is called a topic (in the topic sentence) and the supporting ideas or sub topics (in supporting sentences) are identified. The analysis includes: (a) topic, (b) sub topics, (c) coherence within paragraph or paragraph unity.

From the explanation above, it is clear that the analysis of the data in this dissertation involves identifying topics and sequences of topics/ ideas. This analysis is called, topical/ organizational/ linear analysis (Lautamatti: 1987; D'Angelo: 1980). After the topical analysis is done, the investigator contemplates the ideas development pattern of the entire essay. D'Angelo calls this activity as paradigmatic analysis. He says that

paradigmatic analysis is done by rereading and contemplating the essay carefully and then the pattern of the essay is abstracted and put into a paradigm. Thus, this dissertation applies topical, paradigmatic analysis.

Overall the data of the study will be analyzed using the following procedure: 1) Data reduction. The raw materials (the articles) are selected. 2) Displaying the data. The data which have been selected will be analyzed, classified into linear or non linear pattern, and displayed. 3) Drawing conclusions (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 429).

III. Results and Discussion

After analyzing fourteen English Arguments of Indonesian writers, it is found out that nine Argumentative Discourses are developed linearly, while five others are developed non linearly. Thus, English Argumentative Discourses written by Indonesians are mostly developed linearly. The details of the findings can be drawn in the following table.

Text	Title	Flows of ideas
1	Is fasting during Ramadhan really a healthy ritual?	Linear
2	Prosecuting the death penalty	Non linear (digress)
3	Irony of an excessive women's emancipation	Non linear (circular)
4	Don't cry Indonesia	Non linear (parallel)
5	High economic growth and energy challenges	Linear
6	Victimizing the minority for popularity	Linear
7	Inclusive education for children with special needs	Linear
8	Character development and nation building	Linear
9	Politicization of Nazaruddin's case	Non linear (circular)
10	Closing economic gap: Urgent for Papua	Linear
11	Live broadcast limitations are often necessary	Linear
12	Stopping political corruption starts with election reform	Linear
13	Strengthening banks' financing for organic farming	Linear
14	SBY's re-election: A start to a dictatorship regime?	Non linear (circular)
		Linear: 9 (64 %), Non linear: 5 (36 %)

Argumentative Discourse is developed linearly when it follows the criteria as follows: organizing one central idea, having direct, clear, unified, logical,

top-down flow of ideas. The discourse topic is realized in title, thesis statement at the introduction paragraph, then by series of sub divisions of this thesis statement

into topic sentences into body paragraphs (Kaplan, 1987; Brown, 1998; McLoughlin, 2002; Cameron, 2007). Thus, the title of the text is relevant or reflects the content of the text, the thesis statement is clearly stated in the introductory paragraph(s), the thesis statement is subdivided clearly into topic sentences in the body paragraphs. The example of the illustration of the linear flow of ideas of the English Argumentative Discourses of Indonesian writers is presented in the following.

Passage 7 is entitled *Inclusive education for children with special needs*. It is opened with a background concerning *The meaning of education based on the National Education's Ministry's regulation*. The thesis of the passage is directly stated in the first sentence of paragraph 2, i.e. *Inclusive education aims to give opportunities to students with physical, mental and social disabilities as well as talented students to receive quality education that is suitable to their needs*. In paragraphs 3, 4, 5, the writer presents the principles of inclusive education and the meaning of special needs, i.e. *Principles of inclusive education based on the 2003 National Education System Law. The coverage of the definitions of "special need"*. In paragraphs 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, the writer explains "to what kind of school the students with special needs can go" and the writer also mentions the requirements including the program the mainstream school should fulfill in order to maximize the teaching-learning process for the students with special needs. In paragraphs 11, 12, 13, the writer clarifies the very important role of teachers and management for the success of inclusive education. Paragraphs 14, 15 present the problems to implement inclusive education in Indonesia, i.e. *The problems of Indonesian public schools: big classes, lack of human resources. Problems or consequence of smaller classes: require more funds*. Then, the passage is concluded with a summary and a comment/ opinion from the writer: *All*

children, including children with special needs deserve quality education. People can learn from children with special needs. It is clear from the above illustration that the writer presents the ideas in a systematic arrangement, deductively. She starts with a bigger topic, subdivided the topic into the smaller ones and reformulates the topic in the conclusion stage. So, the passage entitled *Inclusive education for children with special needs* is developed with linear pattern.

The non linear pattern development can be classified into circular, parallel, digress patterns. The circular model is marked by indirection approach. The writer avoids a direct statement of thesis in the opening section, thus, the subject is never looked at directly. Things are developed in terms of what they are not, rather than in terms of what they are. Too many things are mentioned within one paragraph. It is characterized by flowery language. The material presented has connection but not directly. In this style, the main idea is placed toward the middle or at the end of the text, or when the text is about to end or never clear at all (Kaplan, 1987; Brown, 1998; Xing et al., 2008; McLoughlin, 2002; Reid, 1990; Simpson, 2000). The illustration of a discourse developed with circular pattern will be explained in the following.

The title of text 9 *Politicization of Nazaruddin's case* promises the passage to be about the reasons that Nasarudin's case is politicized. The opening paragraphs 1, 2, 3 start with the history of Nasarudin's case:

The case of Nasarudin began in May 2011 when he was named as a suspect of bribery scandal. Nazaruddin flew to Singapore to seek treatment for unspecified illnesses, however, media claimed that he fled to avoid the KPK's summons.

Speculation about Nazaruddin's extradition developed before the announcement that he was no longer in Singapore.

The content of the 3 paragraphs is appropriate background for the discourse. However, paragraphs 4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11 are not expected to appear in the discourse. They discuss about extradition which is beyond the topic of the discourse:

The difficulty to extradite Nazaruddin due to some reasons: no treaty, political case. Definition of extradition according to Law No. 1/1979. To do extradition, there must be a treaty between the requesting state and the surrendering state. No extradition treaty exists between Indonesia and Singapore. Disagreement of the Defense Cooperation Agreement between Singapore and Indonesia. It is impossible to pick up and apprehend Nazaruddin in Singapore. Even with a treaty, for some reasons, an extradition is not granted. A state may not extradite a man with political case, this has been practiced in numerous states and supported by numerous professors of law.

In this essay, the thesis appears in the first sentence of paragraph 12 when the essay is about to end, i.e. *Reasons to justify that Nazaruddin's case is political in nature*. This thesis is then developed:

Reasons to justify that Nazaruddin's case is political in nature: first, his position as the treasurer of the Democratic Party

causes many interests vested in this case. The evidence is the controversial dismissal of Nazaruddin from his position to disassociate the party from any further consequences. Second reason, the way his case was reported (summoned to the Presidential office), order of his capture (the president instead of the police). The media coverage of the case affects negatively toward public opinion.

In sentences 2, 3 of paragraph 15, the writer makes a conclusion: *The case is heavily politicized to accommodate certain political interests*. But after this closing, he still presents another argument in paragraph 16 and in sentence 1 of paragraph 17. He quotes Nababan's opinion: *Nazaruddin's case is both fabricated and highly politicized*. *This case is "politik KPK"*. Then, in sentence 2 of paragraph 17, the writer presents additional thesis statement: *The fact that no case upon which a suspect was declared innocent, clearly shows a bias within the KPK*. It is clear that the discourse is developed circularly. It is started with lengthy background and it digresses from the main topic. The thesis appears when the discourse is about to end. After the closing, he presents another thesis and leaves it.

Parallel pattern is characterized by repetition of thesis statement; it is also called overlay pattern, thus, the thesis is stated recursively at both paragraph and discourse levels. It contains a complex series of parallel constructions. The main points may be over emphasized and overstated, resulting in restatement. Such a style of writing might strike an English speaker as awkward. It may cause undeeep discussion of the central idea. Repetition

seldom appears in the linear style except for strengthening the tone of the writing to enhance persuasiveness (McLoughlin, 2002; Hinds, 1990; Kaplan, 1987; Conor et.al., 1990).

Text 4 entitled *Don't cry Indonesia* exemplifies this kind of organizational pattern. To attract the readers, the writer uses personification metaphor in the title. She treats Indonesia as a human being. It indicates that she loves Indonesia. The title is taken from the suggestion in the discourse. And it is relevant with the discourse topic: Indonesia is a strong country that can tackle the complicated problems, especially terrorism; and it never despairs of its fate. In the opening paragraphs (1-3), the writer presents the incident of bomb explosion that causes victims. In paragraph 4, the thesis of the discourse is stated, i.e. bombings will never make Indonesia down/ cry. This thesis is developed by explaining what Indonesia does to overcome the problems. *Indonesia* then becomes the themes of the following paragraphs. It is mentioned again and again as the theme of most sentences, making the text sounds awkward to the readers. Here are the examples: paragraph 5 – *Indonesia was able to maintain stability*, paragraph 6 – *Indonesia was able to search and combat the terrorism*, paragraph 10 – *Indonesia has made headlines for wrong reasons: economic crisis, ethnic conflicts, terrorism, dictator ruler*, paragraph 11 – *Indonesia is a resilient nation that can overcome the problems*, paragraph 14 – *Indonesia is very proud of its democratic ideology*, Paragraph 15 – *Indonesia is a strong nation*.

Digress pattern is characterized with a change of topic, leaving an argument in mid-air and starting a new one, thus, the discussion of the main theme is left unfinished. A text with digress pattern has no thesis development. The development does not contribute to the central idea. It is a list of points revolving loosely around an unstated central theme. It is often together

with indirection. In English, this pattern would strike the reader as awkward and inefficient (Almaden, 2006; McLoughlin, 2002; Kaplan, 1987).

Text 2 entitled *Prosecuting the death penalty* exhibits digress development. The broad title promises explanation of “What legal requirement/ rule must a prosecutor consider to prosecute death penalty?”, “How is death penalty executed?”, “What is the impact of death penalty to the crime level?” But in fact, the content of the essay does not fulfill the expectation. The discourse topic is *death penalty violates human rights*. Thus, the title is too broad. The more appropriate title maybe *Prosecuting death penalty resulting in violating human rights*. The opening paragraph starts with public debate of death penalty. In the second paragraph, the thesis is stated “Why do judges and attorneys often apply the heaviest possible punishment to criminals?” Paragraph 3 presents the data of people getting death penalty. Paragraph 4 tells the history of death penalty. Paragraph 5 offers suggestion to evaluate death penalty. In paragraphs 6 and 7, the author presents the reasons for evaluation, i.e. that law should respect human rights and should not threaten humanity. Paragraph 8 offers a suggestion that humanity argument is used to erase death penalty. Paragraph 9 presents the data of the countries that still apply death penalty. Paragraph 10 presents the reasons for applying death penalty; this is the main paragraph developing the thesis stated in the second paragraph. The impacts of death penalty are presented in paragraphs 11 and 12, i.e. it doesn't decrease the crime. Paragraphs 13 and 14 present the execution delay of death penalty. Paragraphs 15 and 16 explain that the delay is inhumane and contradicts with international law. In paragraph 17 and 18, the author gives suggestion to Indonesia and to authorities that death penalty be abolished since it violates the right to live. Then in the last paragraph (19), the author

concludes that death penalty violates human rights. From the explanation of the flow of ideas above, it is clear that the thesis of the discourse is not developed. It is left in the air. The paragraphs that are relevant with the thesis are paragraphs 3,10,11,12. The author starts a new thesis stated in paragraph 6, i.e. that the law should respect human rights. And the author develops this new thesis up to the end of the discourse.

IV. Conclusion

After analyzing the data, it is found out that English Arguments of Indonesian writers are mostly developed linearly. The findings reveal that 64 % of the compositions are developed linearly or directly. It contradicts with Kaplan's explanation (1966) that oriental groups express their ideas mostly in indirect ways. It means that at present Kaplan's theory is partly valid. Even though the English Arguments of Indonesian writers are mostly developed linearly, it doesn't mean that the teachers can ignore it in teaching Advanced writing. Flow of ideas should become one of the materials of Advanced Writing to Indonesian learners, but it doesn't need more teaching time allotment.

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