

# THOUGHT PATTERNS REFLECTED IN THE LINGUISTIC FEATURES IN INDONESIAN AND ENGLISH LETTERS WRITTEN BY INDONESIANS

**Eddy Subandrijo**

*Universitas Mulawarman, Samarinda*

**Susilo**

*Universitas Mulawarman, Samarinda*

**Abstract:** This is a report of a qualitative study on contrastive thought patterns of Indonesian bilingual writers. The data are the thought patterns reflected in the linguistic features in English and Indonesian letters. The results reveal that rhetorical organizations developed and organized in both letters are similar in three ways. The paragraphs in both letters indicate similarities in terms of coherence. Three ways of sentence construction are found; four different shifts in grammatical style are made by the writers. The diction shows that for the English letters, in addition to using the *colloquial* lexemes, two kinds of lexemes are found: (a) *jargon*, and (b) *attitudinal*. For the Indonesian letters, three kinds of lexemes are found: (a) *jargon*, (b) *attitudinal*, (c) *formality*. In general, the results show that a large number of Indonesian letters follow quasi-linear thought patterns (QL), while a small number still follow the non-linear thought patterns (NL). For the English letters, the results reveal that the most percentage is converged on the line of category linear (L); less percentage is on category QL.

**Key words:** thought pattern, discourse, linguistic feature, letter, Indonesian writer.

One long-standing claim, which has intrigued many anthropologists and linguists concerning the exact nature of the relationship between language, thought, and culture, is that the structure of a language determines the way in which speakers of that language perceive the world. This claim has come to be known as the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, which has incorporated two important theories: the theory of linguistic relativity and the theory of linguistic determinism.

The theory of linguistic relativity asserts that different ways of interpreting the same world is caused by different culture backgrounds of the interpreters and that languages encode these differences. The theory of linguistic determinism states that the world-view of speakers of a certain language influences their language and the language they use profoundly affects how they think. Language can be said to provide a framework for speakers' thought and according to this theory, it is very difficult for them to think out-side that framework. Once a linguistic system is in place, it influences the way in which members of a speech community talk about and interpret their world (Sapir, 1974; Whorf, 1974; Thomas and Wareing, 1999).

Indeed, it is not quite an illusion to state that the relationship among language, thought, and culture is fairly close. This interrelation is not only manifested in terms of linguistic aspects but more than that in terms of supra-sentential aspects of language, i.e. rhetoric or thought patterns (Kaplan, 1980). Related to these aspects, ideas do not fit together in the same way from language to language. One's way thinking largely determines his/her mode of discourse, his/her speaking or writing, and, his/her idea-arrangement. This way of thinking is called thought pattern. This study intends to compare and contrast the thought patterns as reflected in the linguistic features in the English and Indonesian letters written by Indonesian writers. Specially, this study compares and contrasts: (a) the rhetorical organizations, (b) the coherence, (c) the sentences complexity, (d) the grammatical style, and (e) the diction in those letters.

Studies of rhetoric, which belong to the interest of discourses analysis (i.e. text analysis), principally, investigates, the thought patterns of the writer. Empirically, studies of rhetoric, especially contrastive rhetoric, obtained their flourishing development since Kaplan (1980) conducted the research revealing that there are four different thought patterns behind different culture backgrounds in the world, i.e. Anglo-Saxon, Semitic, Oriental, and Franco Italian. First, the Anglo-Saxon model is used by western people who have typical characteristic of being linear, while the second is the Semitic model which is used by the Persians and Arabs who have the tendency to manifest excessive parallel construction instead of coordination. The Oriental model is the model whose followers are Asian people who often use the style of indirection, and the Franco-Italian model, including Spanish, which does not reflect a linearflow of thought.

Following Kaplan's findings, several studies comparing L1 English texts and ESL texts written by a group of students from different L1 backgrounds have been conducted. For example, Norment's (1984) study proved that there are distinct linear organizational patterns in the texts of L1 English writers, centrifugal patterns in

those of L1 Chinese writers, and linear patterns with tangential breaks in those of L1 Spanish writers. Moreover, Tian, (1990) using an experimental study found the effect of rhetorical organization in expository prose on ESL readers in Singapore. These findings, among other things, show that different rhetorical organizations have differential effects on the recall of Singapore readers and readers who recognized and used the rhetorical organization of the text recalled more idea units in their recall protocols. Similar in terms of methodology, Field and Oi (1992) explored the comparative analysis of organization of cohesive devices in English essays of 6 writers from native speakers group and three groups of Cantonese speakers. This study revealed that Cantonese writers use significant higher frequency of devices in their English writing than their native speaker counterparts. In addition, Carson and Kueln (1992) conducting an experimental study investigated the roles that transfer and/or loss of L1 writing abilities play in the development of L2 writing proficiency. The finding tells us that good L1 writers tend to become good writers in their L2, but that L1 writing proficiency may decline as L2 writing proficiency increases.

According to Burtoff's (1983) study, there are patterns similar to those posited by Kaplan in the texts written in English by native speakers of English, Arabic, and Japanese. Further, Ostler (1987) comparing the structure of 22 expository essays written in English by Saudi Arabian students with those written by native English speakers found that the mean length of T-units (sentential units) for Arabic speakers was 70% higher than that for English speakers. In terms of discourse units 77% of the Arabic essays had three, almost half had four and some had five discourse units, while no English essay contained more than one discourse unit. Moreover, Ostler (1990) comparing ESL essays written by four language groups found rhetorical differences in essays written by English, Arabic, Spanish, and Japanese speakers. Serving different method, Kamimura (1996) conducted a study using mixing design, i.e. qualitative and quantitative analyses, in exploring interrelationships between composing in Japanese as a foreign language and composing in English as a second language. The findings revealed that the subjects' Japanese and English writing behaviors were, by and large, positively correlated. However, there seemed to be a threshold English proficiency level: the students above these level composed similarly in Japanese and English, whereas some of the students below this level had considerably more problems in composing in English and Japanese.

In summary, these studies both qualitatively and quantitatively investigated the rhetorical issues in the essays written by different students from different backgrounds.

Other studies focused on the comparison of ESL texts and texts written by the same writers in their first language. For instance, Indrasuta (1988), examining narrative writing by Thai advanced secondary school students in Thai and in English, revealed that ESL essays and L1 Thai essays were similar with regard to narrative style and function and were different in terms of linguistic components. Furthermore, Bicker and Peyasantiwong (1988) investigating reflective writing in English and Thai focusing on the structure of the writing samples showed that although the English and the Thai essays began with a topic sentence followed by the supporting ideas, the nature of supporting ideas was different. Another researcher, Kachru (1988) found that the conventions of writing in Hindi appeared to be different from those of English in two genres: scientific text and literary criticism.

Still, in line with this stream, more studies on the comparison of upper secondary school essays and textbooks in English and German are conducted (e.g. Clyne, 1983; Leap, 1983; and Hinds, 1983). Clyne (1983) reveal the finding that form is of great importance in educational discourse in English-speaking countries than in German-speaking countries. Meanwhile, Leap (1983) found that the written English of American Indian students contained a set of phonological and grammatical features related to their first language. Further, Hinds (1983) stated the finding that Japanese expository prose contained details in the initial parts, burying the thesis in the prose, besides the digression and unrelated information.

In Indonesian, in line with Kaplan' study (1980), Wahab (1995) conducted a preliminary study on the rhetoric of academic writing by Indonesian writers, examining argumentative and expository papers. The findings reveal that the Indonesian thought pattern is in the process of change, shifting from circular patterns into linear patterns. As manifested in paragraphs of the Indonesian scholars, some types of paragraphs show the straight linear approach, some exemplify circular or spiral structure, and some other are neither linear nor circular. Emphasis of change is indicated by the use of linear structure as a result of technology (e.g. in the utility of computer) that requires a tendency to use direct thought patterns rather than indirect ones. Furthermore, according to Harjanto (1999), the rhetorical structure of essays written by students of the English Department of the Graduate School of the State University of Malang reflects the overall features of the academic writing essays. In addition, the finding states that the rhetorical development of ideas in the

essays does not entirely follow the linear staging of the information as expected by the English-speaking readers.

## **METHOD**

This study is qualitative in nature, used a multi-site study requiring many sites or subjects. The subjects in this study were five different Indonesian persons, resulting in different settings, and hence different contexts when they were writing personal letters. In adherence to the qualitative research, analytic induction is used to collect and analyze the data as well as to develop and test a theory. Data were collected and analyzed to develop a descriptive model that encompasses all cases of the phenomena. That is why snowball sampling technique is used in this study.

The data sources of this study were English and Indonesian letters written by the subjects. Subjects of the study were the Indonesian persons who meet the criteria developed in the exploratory study. The data were the thought patterns as reflected in the linguistic features in those data sources.

Those data sources were collected by eliciting the letters from the subjects in two ways: *semi-authentic* and *authentic ways*. *Semi-authentic elicitation* is a technique in which the researcher's intervention was involved in the process of data elicitation, that is to say that subjects to produce the data after they were asked to respond to the letters initiated by the researcher and the native speaker with whom the researcher worked. The second elicitation was the *authentic* one, where the data were produced by the subjects without any intervention from the researcher. In this case, the letters were the ones that the subjects had recently written either through e-mail or mail are collected.

These two phases of elicitation procedures were proceeding simultaneously as the researcher analysed the data. The researcher stopped analyzing when he reached a point of saturation in the data analysis, that is to say, when the researcher found repeated patterns in the data analysis. The key instrument of this study was the researchers. The supplement instrument was an interview guide.

## **FINDINGS**

### **Rhetorical Organization**

Rhetorical organization in this study refers to how a writer gets the ideas in her/his head into the letter. Therefore, the rhetorical organization is analyzed on the

basis of how the writer develops and organizes parts of the letters as a whole (i.e. introduction, body, and closing).

### **The Existence of the Introduction in Indonesian and English Letters**

Introduction refers to the first part of tripartite structure in the letter in which the writer begins the letters with the first words that primarily function simply to provide a backdrop against which the reader interprets the rest of the letter. In other words, the writer begins the letter by referring either to a letter she/he has recently received, or to an event, which has prompted him/her to write.

On the basis of the existence of the *introduction*, the Indonesian letters written by Indonesian writers under study tend to have five variations: (a) brief introduction, (b) no introduction, (c) employing two/more-paragraph introductions incorporating more than one topics of discussions, (d) conceptual introduction, i.e. part of the letter which is physically included in the body, but substantially shows introductory remarks, (e) very long introductions encompassing the long details of discussion, some part of which the body should serve.

In contrast, the English letters written by Indonesians constitute four variations according to the existences of the introduction: (a) no introduction, (b) brief introductions, ranging from one/two words up to one paragraph in length, discussing one idea, (c) very long introductions with different topics of discussions: and (d) conceptual introductions.

### **The Existence of the Body in Indonesian and English letters**

Body means the second part of tripartite structure in the letter, which tends to be longer than either the introduction or the closing and the ideas in this part, are more thoroughly developed. In addition, in this part, the writer starts to explain why he/she is writing. She/he takes very great care to answer exactly the questions he/she has been set, and at the same time, includes detail, which will make his/her letter interesting.

Three variations of Indonesian letters are written by Indonesian writers based on the existence of the body: (a) the body consisting of more than two paragraphs discussing in detail different topics in each paragraph, (b) one paragraph with one topic of discussion, (c) one paragraph encompassing several different ideas, which principally should be developed into several paragraphs.

Similarly, three variations of English letters in terms of the existence of the body are found: (a) the body with several paragraphs discussing several ideas, (b) one-long-paragraph body with one idea of discussion, (c) the body with one idea of discussion but are separated into several paragraphs.

### **Modes of Discourse in the Body in Indonesian and English Letters**

Mode of discourse means telling how the ideas in bodies of the letters are organized by the writer, referring to whether the bodies follow the four modes of discourse: descriptive, narrative, expository or argumentative/persuasive writings.

Looking at the modes of discourse employed in the letters under study, four modes of discourse are found in the bodies of both English and Indonesian letters: (a) sensory/descriptive, (b) imaginative/narrative, (c) practical/informative, and (d) analytical/expository.

*Sensory/descriptive* mode is nothing but the descriptive discourse. Gathering details of information through all five senses and using those details to present a word-picture of a person, place and object are all points of this mode. *Imaginative/narrative* mode resembles narrative discourse, in which it requires the writers to focus on events, actual or imaginary, and to arrange the parts in a time/order frame. *Practical/informative* is the modes in which the writers provide clear information without much interpretation or analysis. Similar to imaginative/narrative, this mode is included into narrative, but they are different in terms of presenting the tone of writing, that is to say, whether the writer's attitudes are incorporated. *Analytical/expository* is the mode where explanations, persuasions and analyses are included. In other words, this mode incorporates expository and argumentative, hence persuasive discourses.

### **The Existence of the Closing in Indonesian and English Letters**

Closing refers to the last part of tripartite structures in the letter, which is the summarizing words of one or more points that had been made earlier. Moreover, the writer in this part brings the letter to a satisfactory conclusion with a polite wish, in the form of expressing the hope to see someone soon, sending regards or being remember to friends, etc.

Referring to the existence of the closing in the Indonesian letters, it is evident that three variations are constituted: (a) no closing; (b) brief closing consisting of

two words up to one paragraph, (c) conceptual closing, the closing remarks which are mingled with the body.

Unlike the finding in the Indonesian letters, those of the English letters show that there are four variations: (a) those with brief closings, (b) the ones with no closing, (c) those with one-paragraph closings talking one idea, and (d) the ones which have conceptual closing that are included into the body.

### **Patterns of the Rhetorical Organization in the Letters**

In terms of the existence of the whole tripartite parts, i.e. introduction, body, and closing, the findings reveal that three possible patterns are used by the writers in writing both Indonesian and English letters. In other words, in terms of patterns of the rhetorical organization, between the English and Indonesian letters, no difference is found. However, they are different in terms of the number of the letters using those three patterns.

The first pattern is that the letters which employ the complete tripartite parts: introduction, body, and closing, having both conceptual and mechanical ways of presentation. In the conceptual ways of presenting the tripartite parts, the letters are written in one paragraph which conceptually presents the essence of the introduction, body, and closing. In the mechanical ways, the letters are expressed through each of the tripartite parts separated in different paragraphs.

### **Coherence in the Letters**

Coherence in this study refers to two aspects: logical arrangement and smooth flow. The logical arrangement refers to how the writers of the letters arrange their ideas in an orderly way to make them understandable. The smooth flow refers to how well one idea in the letters leads to another. In other words, the former talks about the order of sentences in the letters, the latter says about the transitional signals used to arrange those sentences.



**Table 1: Patterns of the rhetorical Organization in both Indonesian and English letters**

No	Pattern of the Letter	The Existence of the Tripartite Structure
1	First Pattern	Introduction, body, and closing
2	Second Pattern	Either Introduction and body, or Body and Closing
3	Third Pattern	Body

The logical arrangement is analyzed by examining whether the writers use order of space, order of time, order of size/importance, classification, process, structure, etc., depending on the modes of writing. The smooth flow is evaluated by examining what kind of transitional expression and sentence combination the writers use in the letters.

In terms of coherence, the paragraphs in both Indonesian and English letters written by Indonesian under study tend to be polarized: completely coherent or incoherent. Being completely coherent means that the paragraphs serve two aspects, i.e. logical arrangement and smooth flow. Being incoherent refers to the nation that the paragraphs lack either the logical arrangement or smooth flow or both.

### **Linguistic Features in the Letters**

Linguistic features in the letters in the current study refer to three aspects: sentence complexity, grammatical style, and diction. *Sentence complexity* is concerned with sentences combining or linking more than one idea into one sentence such as in complex, compound or compound-complex sentences. *Grammatical style* refers to the choice of sentence structures to show certain emphases. *Diction* means the choice of words in writing the letters.

### **Sentence Complexity in the Letters**

Sentence complexity is analyzed based on the varieties of sentence types that the writers use in their letters, i.e. simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences. The writer's abilities to smoothly arrange one idea with another are in a great extent determined by how well the complex, compound, or compound-complex sentences they construct in their letters. Setting down ideas

which often come disarrayed in the paragraph can be achieved by making subordination in the sentence construction, that is to say emphasizing main points, subordinating the less important. In other words, one of the components to make the paragraph coherent is smooth flow which is achieved by the sentence combination available in the paragraph.

With regard to the sentence complexity, the subjects under study, in writing their English letters, organize their ideas in paragraph with greater variations of sentence types.

### **A Simple Sentence**

A simple sentence, the sentence which does not contain a subordinate sentence as the realization of one of its function, is found mostly in the paragraphs of the English letters.

### **Compound and Complex Sentences**

Combinations of two or more simple sentences are also found in the paragraphs of the English letters under study. These combinations are achieved by two syntactic devices: (a) *subordination* (i.e. forming the so-called complex sentence), and (b) *coordination* (i.e. forming the so-called compound sentence). Subordination and coordination are two syntactic devices with which the writers apply in order to combine propositions that would have to be stated in strings of independent sentences. *Subordination* is the use of a sentence in an element in the structure of another sentence. *Coordination* is the linking of two or more sentences.

### **Compound-complex Sentence**

These two syntactic devices are also found to be used simultaneously in the paragraphs under study. This kind of sentence is called *compound-complex sentences*.

In addition, besides being combined, two or more simple sentences are also found to be condensed. Similarly, two syntactic devices are used to condense two or more simple sentences: substitution and ellipsis. Substitution is the replacement of one or more items by a substitution or pro-form. Ellipsis is the process of abbreviating sentence by omitting elements that are retrievable from context.

Finally, the percentage of the existence of the combination of simple compound, complex, or compound-complex sentences in a paragraph in English letters under study varies. On the basis of the percentage of the existence of that combination in a paragraph, the paragraphs in the letters under study are categorized into three kinds: 1) *category I*, the paragraph consisted of mostly simple sentences, 2) *category II*, the paragraph with 50% simple sentences and another 50% compound, complex, compound-complex sentences, and 3) *category III*, the paragraph consisting of mostly compound, complex or compound-complex sentences.

With regard to the Indonesian letters, it is just like in the English paragraph, the sentence complexity in the paragraphs made by the subjects under study are various.

### **A Simple Sentence**

It is mostly found in the Indonesian paragraphs that a simple sentence is the sentence that does not contain a subordinate sentence as realization of one of its functions.

### **Compound and Complex Sentences**

In the paragraphs of the Indonesian letters under study, similar to the English paragraphs, combinations of two or more simple sentences are also found. In this combination, two syntactic devices are still used: subordination (i.e. forming the so-called *complex sentence*), and coordination (i.e. forming so-called *compound sentence*).

#### **Compound-complex Sentence**

It is also found that two syntactic devices, as they are employed in the English sentences, are used simultaneously in Indonesian paragraphs under study, which form the so-called *compound-complex sentence*.

Similarly, despite the combination of sentences above, two or more simple sentences are condensed. Still, two syntactic devices are used to condense those two or more simple sentences, i.e. *substitution* and *ellipsis*.

Similar to the English paragraphs, on the basis of the percentage of the existence of that combination in a paragraph, the paragraphs in the Indonesian letters under study are categorized into three kinds: 1) *category I*, the paragraph which consists mostly of simple sentences, 2) *category II*, the paragraph with 50% simple

sentences and other 50% compound, complex, compound-complex sentences, and 3) *category III*, the paragraphs consisting of mostly compound, complex or compound-complex sentences.

### **Grammatical Style in the Letters**

*Grammatical style* refers to choice of sentence structures to show certain emphases. A cultivated sense in syntax is needed in this point. In the other words, the variations of sentence structures indicating certain emphases tell how the writers show their linearity in expressing ideas in the letters.

In terms of grammatical style, in both Indonesian and English letters, the writers use great variations of sentence structures in line with their intentions of expressing message. The shift in using various sentence structures happens not because of the writers' grammatical inabilities, but because the writers intend to make certain effects on the writing for the sake of expressing different message.

With regard to the English letters, there are four shifts in using sentence structures for the sake of making certain effects on the message expressed.

#### **A shift in Voice**

One way of throwing more or less attention upon the detail of ideas, in the English letters under study, the writers employ two voices: either *active or passive* voice. In the active voice, the writers emphasize the doer of an action, indicating to the more conversational tone, while in the passive one, the receiver of the action is stressed, suggesting the very formal tone of writing.

#### **A shift in Mood**

Another way to express detail of ideas with certain effects on the message is a shift in mode. Three different moods are made in the English letters with the purpose of expressing different messages to the readers: indicative, imperative, and subjunctive mood. Syntactically, *indicative* mood is the sentence, which is in the form of a statement or a question; *imperative* means the command or request sentence, and *subjunctive* refers to conditional sentence or other-than-real statement. Pragmatically, these different moods are related to the different function in communication.

### **A Shift in Coordination or Subordination**

Combining more than one unit of ideas in the form of coordination or subordination of sentence is also the way the writers of the letters under study use to give certain attentions to those units of ideas expressed. *Coordination* is one way to combine two or more sentences with the purpose of communicating balance or sequence in ideas. *Subordination* refers to the use of a sentence as an element in the structure of another sentence, aiming at reducing the light on minor ideas (i.e. those in dependent clause) and drawing attention to more important ones (i.e. those in dependent clause).

### **A Shift in Modifier Positioning**

Finally, the way to give an impact to the message expressed in the sentences made by the writers under study is by having different modifier positions. Positioning modifiers bring about a shift in two types of sentences: a cumulative and a periodic sentence. The *cumulative* sentence is a sentence that starts with a subject and verb, while the periodic one is the sentence that begins with introductory words, phrases, or clauses.

Like the English letters, sentence structures in Indonesian letters are found to follow the four shifts in order to make certain effects on the message expressed.

### **A Shift in Voice**

This is the first way of throwing more or less attention upon ideas in detail in the Indonesian letters under study. The writers employ two voices: either *active or passive* voice. In the active voice, the writers emphasize the doer of an action, while in the passive one, the receiver of the action is stressed.

### **A Shift in Mood**

Three different moods, i.e. indicative, imperative and subjunctive are another way to express details of ideas with certain effects on the message. Syntactically, *indicative* mood appears in sentences that are in the forms of statements or questions; *imperative* means the command or request sentences; and *subjunctive* refers to the conditional sentences or other-than-real statements.

### **A Shift in Coordination or Subordination**

Combining more than one unit of ideas in the form of coordination or subordination of sentence is the other way the writers of the Indonesian letters use to give certain attentions to those units of ideas expressed.

### **A Shift in Modifier Positioning**

Finally, the way to give an impact on the message expressed in the sentences that are made by the writers in Indonesian letters is by having different modifier positions.

### **Diction in the Letters**

*Diction* means the choice of words in writing the letters. Good choice of words shows the writers' attitudes toward what she/he is talking about in the letters, which in turn, determines the linearity in expressing ideas in the letters.

With respect to the diction, two sorts of aspects are looked at: the choice of words relying on *the rightness of tone* and those depending on the *accuracy of words*. Firstly, the rightness of tone refers to the writers' attitudes indicating how they feel about the topics and the readers. In other words, the choice of words in the letters reflects whether the writers take the topic seriously, whether they are annoyed or pleased. The words also show what the writers assume about the readers; whether they think the readers are intelligent, informed, or sophisticated; whether the writers feel superior, inferior, or equal to the readers.

In conjunction with the paragraphs of the body in English letters, it is evident that most writers use diction, which reflects the subjunctive and emotive tone. In this tone, the writers' attitude toward the topics is clear, i.e., personally involved in expressing the details of the topic. Furthermore, in this tone, the writers feel superior to the readers.

With respect to the diction in the paragraphs of *introduction* and *closing* of the English letters, the writers tend to employ two different tones: *Slangy* and *formal*, depending on who the readers are. The former means the paragraphs where the writers use their choice of words in such a way that the introduction and/or closing seem very informal. In this case, the letters are intended to the readers who are the writers' close friend or peers. The latter, on the other hand, refers to the paragraphs

in which the writers choose the diction showing formal tone. In this sort, the readers are the writers' parents, or superiors, like their lectures, chief, etc.

Regarding to the Indonesian letters, concerning the paragraphs of the body in the letters, similar findings are revealed, i.e. that most writers use diction, reflecting the subjective and emotive tone. They also seem personally involved in expressing the details of the topic. However, the writers do not feel superior to the readers; they are neutral toward the reader.

Concerning the diction in the paragraphs of *introduction* and *closing* of the Indonesian letters, similarly, it is found that the writers tend to employ two different tones: *slangy* and *formal*, depending on who the readers are. The former means the paragraphs where the writers use their choice of words in such a way that the *introduction* and/or *closing* seem very informal. In this case, the letters are intended to the readers who are the writers' close friends or peers. The latter, on the other hand, refers to the paragraphs in which the writers choose the diction showing formal tone. In this sort, the readers are the writers' parents, or superiors, like their lecturers, chief, etc.

The second aspect looked at to evaluate the diction in the present study is *accuracy of the words* referring to whether the words in the letters are accurate; describing what the writer is talking about. With respect to the accuracy of words, for the English letters, in addition to using the *colloquial or conversational* lexemes, the subjects under study tend to use both technical lexemes that are not parts of everyday language but those which are appropriate to the activity engaged in many subject matters discussed in the letters, such as trade, religion, politics, etc. These technical dictions are different from daily vocabularies in that they describe the substances of certain topics in particular subject matters accurately. The followings are examples of the technical dictions found in the present study.

Subject Matter	Technical Vocabulary
Politics	Elite, riot, racial, violence
Education	Alumnus, alma mater, freshman, EFL, Lecturing, ethnography
Social Science	Malechauvisnist, divorce rate
Religion	Taosism, Buddhism, baptized, old testament

*Attitudinal* lexemes or *connotations* refer to the diction with which the writers reveal their attitude in respect to what they are talking about in the letters. These lexemes are either negative-attitude-reflecting words or positive-attitude-reflecting

words, depending, to a great extent, on the context. These lexemes can be seen in the following set of examples, which is quoted from the collected letters.

Attitudinal dictions:

*Fierce competition*

*Spare some fund*

*Riot*

*Incident*

Unlike in the findings of the English letters, in terms of *the accuracy of the words*, in the Indonesian letters, it is found that besides using the *colloquial or conversational* lexemes, three kinds of lexemes are found: (a) *technical* lexemes or *jargon*, (b) *attitudinal* lexemes or *connotations*, and (c) *stylisticall or formality* lexemes. *Technical* lexemes found in Indonesian letters are exemplified as follows.

Subject Matter	Technical Vocabulary
Education	Ujian komprehensif, seminar proposal, penelitian, dosen, ujian promosi, PPL (In English respectively; comprehensive exam, proposal seminar, scientific paper, professor, lecturer, final exam for doctoral degree, practice teaching)
Kesehatan	Pengobatan alternative, akpresur, kronis, jamu, paramex, kartu askers (In English, respectively; traditional medical treatment, a name of traditional medical treatment, chronic, a matter of tonic, a name of drug, health card)

*Attitudinal* lexemes found in the current study are represented by this set of examples.

Attitudinal dictions:

*Gawat* (In English: critical, serious)

*Sebel* (In English: upset, angry)

*Suntutuk* (In English: too late, entire length of time)

*Pelik* (In English: complicated, intricate)

*Stylisticall or formality* lexemes are the dictions that the writers use to suggest the level of formality. In these dictions, the writers in the letters reflect whether



they talk in a very formal manner or in a conversational way about the topics or with the readers. A set of examples quoted from the collected letters is presented below.

Slangy Dictions	Formality dictions:
Udah	Sudah (in English: Already done)
Gimana	Bagaimana (In English: How)
Ngadain	Mengadakan (In English: to hold, to conduct)

### Thought Patterns as Reflected in the Linguistic Features in the Indonesian and English Letters

Thought pattern refers to how a writer of a letter expresses ideas using logic, analytic, wordings, and sentences, which is reflected in the linguistic features when she/he is writing the letter. This thought pattern might lie in a continuum between non-linear to linear fashion of development, forming several categories with which the writer has her/his possible tendency. In the present study, the continuum line is perceived as the percentage of the degree of linearity, starting from *Non-linear thought pattern* (NL), which has 0% degree of linearity up to *Linear thought pattern* (L), which is 100% in line with the characteristics of linear fashion of thought. The degree of linearity is evaluated against two indicators: linearity within the entire letters, and linearity within paragraphs in the letters.

**Table 2: Category of the Indonesian Letters of All Subjects**

No	Category	Number of Letter	%
1	NL	1	3.12
2	QL	9	28.12
3	QL <sup>1</sup>	3	9.37
4	QL <sup>2</sup>	11	34.37
5	L	8	25.00
	Total	32	100

The results reveal that there are five categories of thought patterns lying along the continuum line: 1) Category I: *NL* (non-linear) which is of the condition 0% similar to the characteristics of the linear thought pattern, 2) Category II: *QL* (Quasi-linear) which is in the condition of 1-50% close to the characteristics of linear fashion of thought, 3) Category III: *QL*<sup>1</sup> (Quasi-linear 1) which is the pattern 51-75% appropriate to the characteristics of the linear fashion; 4) Category IV: *QL*<sup>2</sup> (Quasi-linear 2) which is 76-99% similar to the characteristics of the linear fashion on thought, and 5) Category V: *L* (Linear) which is under the condition of 100% meeting the characteristics of the linear thought pattern (see Table 2).

As stated in Table 2, of all Indonesian letters written by the subjects under study, 34.37% of them lie in Category IV: *QL*<sup>2</sup>; 28.12% in Category II: *QL*; 25% in Category V: *L*; 9.37% in Category III: *QL*<sup>1</sup>; and 3.12% in Category I: *NL*. This means that there is 34.37% of the Indonesian letters in which the writers employ the thought patterns with the characteristics 76-99% close to those of the linear fashion of thought; 28.12% of them are written by the writers serving the thought patterns in which 1-50% of their characteristics is appropriate to those of the linear fashion; the other 25% of the letters are those whose writers use the real linear fashion of thought; and in the rest 9.37% of the letters, the writers have the thought patterns with the characteristics 51-75% close to those of the linear fashion.

**Table 3: Percentage of Category of Indonesian Letters According to Each Subject**

Category	Subject				
	1	2	3	4	5
NL	14.28%	0%	0%	0%	0%
QL	14.28%	0%	75%	0%	40%
QL <sup>1</sup>	28.57%	0%	0%	0%	0%
QL <sup>2</sup>	0%	0%	25%	77.77%	60%
L	42.85%	100%	0%	22.22%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

With respect to the Indonesian letters classified according to each subject, the percentage of the category varies (see Table 3). For subject 1, the higher percentage is category V: *L* (42.85%), followed by category III: *QL*<sup>1</sup> (28.57%); while

Category II:  $QL$  and Category I:  $NL$  result in the same percentage: 14.28%. With Category IV:  $QL^2$ , subject 1 does not use it (0%). Different from subject 1, subject 2 employs Category V:  $L$  in all letters (100%). For the rest of the subjects, i.e. subject 3, 4, and 5, of the five categories, only two are served by each of those subjects differently: subject 3 uses Category II:  $QL$  and Category IV:  $QL^2$  (75 % and 25%, respectively); subject 4 employs Category IV:  $QL^2$  and category V:  $L$  (77.77% and 22.22%, respectively); and subject 5 serves Category II:  $QL$  and Category IV:  $QL^2$  (40% and 60%, respectively). Obviously, two categories are employed by each subject individually in a bigger number of percentage:  $QL^2$  and  $L$ . This implies that individually the subject writes her/his letters mostly using the thought patterns with the characteristics which are 76-99%, even 100%, similar to those of the linear fashion.

**Table 4: Category of the English Letters of All Subjects**

No	Category	Number of Letter	%
1	NL	6	15.38
2	QL	8	20.51
3	QL <sup>1</sup>	3	7.68
4	QL <sup>2</sup>	9	23.07
5	L	13	33.33
Total		39	100

With regard to the English letters, Table 4 shows the variation of percentage of categories used in all letters regardless of the classification of the subject. The highest percentage is Category V:  $L$  (33.33%), followed by Category IV:  $QL^2$ , Category II:  $QL$  Category I:  $NL$ , and Category III:  $QL^1$  with percentage of 23.07%, 20.51%, 15.38% and 6.67%, respectively. This indicates that most of the letters lie in the continuum of thought patterns, 100% of which meet the characteristics of the linear fashion; while the rest of them follow the thought patterns which have the characteristics with various percent appropriate to those of the linear fashion: 76-99% close to those of the linear fashion; 1-50% close to those of the linear fashion; and 51% close to those of the linear fashion. However, other letters follow the thought patterns that have the characteristics of Non-linear.

In conjunction with the English letters that are classified on the basis of each subject, it is found that various percentage of categories are served by each subject

(see Table 5). Subject 1 employs all categories variously: 6.66 % for Category IV:  $QL^2$ ; 13.33% for Category I:  $NL$ ; 33.33% for Category III:  $QL^1$ ; 26.66% for Category V:  $L$ ; and 33.3% for Category II:  $QL$ . For subject 2 and 4, of the five categories, two are served by each of those subjects differently, i.e. Category V: $L$  and Category IV:  $QL^2$  (75% and 25%, respectively for subject 2, and 11.11% and 88.88% respectively for subject 4). Differently, subject 3 employs 3 categories:  $L$ ,  $QL$  and  $NL$  with the percentage of 33.33%, 22.22% and 44.44% respectively. Finally, subject 5 uses 100% Category V:  $L$ . The bigger percentage of categories used by the subjects individually are  $QL^2$  and  $L$ . This suggests that mostly the thought patterns reflected in English letters according to each subject are 76-99% close to linear fashion and even really linear with 100% meeting the characteristics of the linear fashion.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of the study disconfirm Kaplan's (1980) substantial findings that Asians tend to follow an indirect style. If such indirection style means serving 100% characteristics of non-linear thought patterns, Indonesian people who are Asian should have followed the non-linear fashion of thought. However, the findings of this study do not show with this assumption. Although small number of the subjects of the current study are still in their non-linear ways, most of them are along the line of coming to linear, even really coming to linear fashion. In contrast, therefore, the findings confirm the notion that is pioneered by Wahab's (1995) study that the Indonesian rhetoric thought patterns is in the process of change, shifting from circular patterns into linear patterns. This study mentions that as reflected in the paragraphs the Indonesian writers made, some types of paragraphs show the straight linear approach, some exemplify circular or spiral structure, and some other are neither linear nor circular. Emphasis of change is indicated by the use of linear structure as a result of technology (e.g. in the utility of computer) that requires the tendency to use direct thought patterns rather than indirect thought ones. The current study contends that individually or as a whole, there is presumably a strong process of change in the thought patterns used by the subjects in writing English and Indonesian letters.

**Table 5: Percentage of Category of English Letters According to Each Subject**

Category	Subject				
	1	2	3	4	5
NL	13.33%	0%	44.44%	0%	0%
QL	33.33%	0%	22.22%	0%	0%
QL <sup>1</sup>	13.33%	0%	0%	0%	0%
QL <sup>2</sup>	6.66%	25%	0%	88.88%	0%
L	26.66%	75%	33.33%	11.11%	100%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Thought Patterns of the Bilingual Writers**

It is understandable that the logic of two cultures, i.e. Indonesian and AngloSaxon cultures, is of great influence to the subjects who are bilinguals of Indonesian and English. The logic rooted in the Indonesian culture apparently follows non-linear fashion of thought. As a matter of fact, the subjects of the current study are Indonesian native speakers. It is quite obvious that they serve the logic underlying the non-linear fashion, i.e. the logic of Indonesian culture. However, since the subject have been learning English in a relativity long time, they are accustomed to writing English papers, letters, or other artifacts, or reading English texts. In addition, they have been taught by English teachers who have also been following the linear thought patterns. Consequently, the influence of the teachers’ thought patterns is significant to the subjects.

Because of these two cultures’ influence, the thought patterns of these bilingual writers lie in between the non-linear and linear fashion. In other words, they are in the process of change, coming toward the linear. Indeed, this changing process occurred has been taking place in a relativity long time, that is why in a relativity long time too the thought patterns of the bilingual writers still lies in between non-linear and linear fashion. Accordingly, it is apparent that the thought patterns are constant irrespective of the languages the bilingual writers use to write the letters. Only when they write letters to certain persons or in a certain situation, they might use different ways of expressing something, not because of the changing thought, but rather it is a matter of meta-cognitive competence to realize who the interlocutors are and in what context they are writing.

Finally, it is necessary to state that language influences the thought patterns of the bilingual writers. This notion really supports the theory of linguistic determinism as stated in the weaker version of the Whorfian hypothesis i.e. the language they use affects how they think. Indeed, the current study shows that this influence is not only in the sentence-level (i.e. the sentence-based analysis of linguistics), but also in the discourse-level (i.e. the discourse block and unit as the central of analysis).

## **CONCLUSION**

The change of the thought patterns of the bilingual writers from non-linear to linear fashion might be influenced by their habit of writing English compositions or reading English texts. If this is the case, the logic of Anglo-Saxon culture influences the bilingual writers' thought patterns which are initially under the influence of the logic of their native culture, i.e. Indonesian culture. In other words, it is probably the case that the strong influence factor to mould the thought patterns of the bilingual writers is their competence in English from which the linear logic, as the basic of linear thought, is rooted.

The changing process of logic, hence the thought pattern needs a relatively long time. Accordingly, when the thought pattern lies in a certain point, it might remain constant in a relatively long time. During this time no matter what language the bilingual writers use, presumably the thought pattern also remains consistent, showing similarities. This implies that the length of being bilingual probably leads the individual to choose either linear or non-linear fashion of thought patterns depending on the context (who speaks to whom, when, why, and in what kind of events or degree of formality).

## **SUGGESTION**

On the basis of the findings, it is important to reveal both fundamental values and practical avenues for the applied linguists as well as EFL teaching practitioners. Therefore, for several practitioners, the current study provides several suggestions. The first suggestion is directed to the writing lecturers as follows: (a) once the students recognize the differences in rhetorical structures, the lecturers should ask them to apply those macrostructures in the text-writing exercise, (b) the writing lecturers should develop more definitive models for characterizing differences in rhetorical conventions by culture and genre for their writing class, (c) the lecturers

can predict and describe the patterns that will cause difficulty in learning, and those that will not cause difficulty by comparing systematically the language and the culture to be learned with the native language and culture of the students.

The second suggestion is directed to the future researchers: (a) a study of other text genres such as business letters, brochures, application letters, etc. is a promising area for the future research, (b) the other three discourse forms are still potential to study, such as literary discourse (e.g. jokes, drama, etc), or informative discourse (e.g. reports, news articles, etc.) and persuasive discourse (e.g. advertisements, editorials, etc), (c) since cultures and genres are viewed as dynamic and fluid, it is advised that the future researchers investigate the thought patterns from texts diachronically.

The third suggestion is directed to the translators. The new model of the theory of translation look at exiting translations from two perspective: *as approximations of their source texts* and *as genuine members of the target literary system*. Relying on this notion, the end products that the translators have produced should require the acceptability of the target culture. This requires the translators to be aware of the factors, which govern the acceptability of text and textual-linguistic features in that culture.

## REFERENCES

- Bicker, R. and Peysantiwong, P. 1988. Cultural Variation in Reflective Writing. In Purves, A.C. (Ed.). *Writing Across Languages and Cultures: Issues in Contrastive Rhetoric*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Burtoff, M. 1983. *The Logical Organization of Written Expository Discourse in English: A Comparative Study of Japanese, Arabic, and Non-native Speaker Strategies*. Ann Arbor: Unpublished Dissertation, Georgetown University.
- Carson, J.E., and Kueln, P.A. 1992. Evidence of Transfer and Loss in Developing Second Language Writers. *Language Learning*, 42 (2): 157-182.
- Clyne, M.G. 1983. Contrastive Studies: English and German. In Kaplan, R.B. (Ed.). *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*. Rowley, M.A: Newbury House.
- Field, Y., and Oi, Y.L.M. 1992. A Comparison of Internal Conjunctive Cohesion in the English Essay Writing of Cantonese Speakers and Native Speakers of English. *RECL Journal*. 23 (1): 15-28.

- Harjanto, I. 1999. *English Academic Writing Features by Indonesian Learners of English*. Malang: Unpublished Dissertations, PPS IKIP MALANG.
- Hinds, J. 1983. Linguistics and Written Discourse in English and Japanese: A Contrastive Study. In Kaplan, R.B. (Ed.). *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*. Rowley, M.A.: Newbury House.
- Indrasuta, C. 1988. Narrative Style in the Writing of Thai and American Students. In Purves, A.C. (Ed.). *Writing Across Language and Culture: Issues in Contrastive Rhetoric*. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Kachru, Y. 1988. Writers in Hindi and English. In Purves, A.C. (Ed.). *Writing Across Language and Culture: Issues in Contrastive Rhetoric*. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Kamimura, T. 1996. Composing in Japanese as a first Language and English as a Foreign Language: A study of Narrative Writing. *RELC Journal*. 27 (1): 47-69.
- Kaplan, R.B. 1980. Cultural Patterns Thought in Inter-Culture Education. In Croft, K. (Ed.). *Readings on English as a Second Language for Teachers and Teacher Trainers* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) Cambridge, Massachusetts: Winthrop Publishers, Inc.
- Leap, W.L. 1983. Contrastive Studies: English and American Indian Language. In Kaplan, R.B. (Ed.). *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*. Rowley, M.A.: Newbury House.
- Norment, N. 1984. *Contrastive Analysis of Organizational Structure and Cohesive Elements in Native and ESL Chinese, English, and Spanish Writing*. Ann Arbor: Unpublished Dissertation, Fordham University.
- Ostler, S.E. 1987. English in Parallels: A Comparison of English and Arabic Prose. In Connor, U., and Kaplan, R.B. (Eds.). *Writing Across Language: Analysis of L2 text*. Reading, M.A: Addison-Wesley.
- Ostler, S.E. 1990. *The Contrastive Rhetoric of Arabic, English Japanese, and Spanish*. Paper presented at the 24<sup>th</sup> annual TESOL Convention, San Francisco.
- Sapir, E. 1974. Language. In Blount, B.G. (Ed.). *Language, Culture, and Society*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Winthrop Publishers, Inc.
- Thomas, L. and Wareing, S. 1999. *Language, Society and Power*. Padstow, Cornwall: T.J. International, Ltd.



- Tian, G.S. 1990. The Effects of Rhetorical Organization in Expository Prose on ESL Readers in Singapore. *RECL Journal*. 21 (2): 1-13.
- Wahab, A. 1995. *Isu Linguistik. Pengajaran Bahasa dan Sastra*. Surabaya: Airlangga University Press.
- Whorf, B.L. 1974. The Relation of Habitual Thought and Behavior to Language. In Blount, B.G. (Ed.). *Language, Culture and Society*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Winthrop Publisher, Inc.