CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the introduction of the study, which consists of the background of the study, the research questions, the aims of the study, the scope of the study, and the significance of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Aristotle's politics in Hendricks & Denton (2010: 1) proclaimed that humans "are political beings, [who] alone of the animals, [are] furnished with the faculty of language.". Thus, from their ability in using language, humans are naturally born as political beings. Politics itself is defined as a mechanism by which a group of people from different opinions or interests has reached collective decisions that is generally treated as a common policy that is also bound their group (Miller, 1991: 390). It is often said that politics exist because of people' disagreement. "They disagree about how they should live; who should get what? How should power and other sources to be distributed? Should society be based on cooperation and conflict? And so on." (Heywood, 2002: 3).

Disagreement in politics is strongly associated with a term "debate". Debate refers to a discussion about a subject on which the interlocutors have different views that they defend and attempt to persuade other debaters through argumentation (Kahlos, 2007: 62). In other words, an orderly debate attempts to provide an effective way of resolving conflict which is caused by people' disagreement.

In the United States of America, a debate is more than a political tool; it is also "a means of educating the young, honing professional skills, demonstrating personal worth, and enlightening the citizenry" (Jamieson and Birdsell, 1988: 19). As a democratic country, debate in the United States may also occur in the case of

the presidential election campaign. This is done to provide an overview to the public about their leaders' figure by comparing their plans for the country which are delivered through arguments in the debate. For many years, American presidential debates have appeared as "the most well-known political debates and the most researched political television programs" (Isolatus, 2011: 31).

The latest American presidential debate was conducted on October 22, 2012 at Lynn University, Boca Raton-Florida. The debate involved the two American presidential candidates, namely Barrack Obama from Democratic Party and his opponent Mitt Romney from the Republican Party. Even though the euphoria of the presidential debate has ended and the American people have already elected Barrack Obama as their leader for the second term, however, their latest debate was still of intense public discussion.

The latest debate focused on the foreign policies. In the debate, both presidential candidates argued about security flaws in Libya, how to restrain Iran's nuclear project, the turbulent crisis in Syria, the rise of China, and an end to the war in Afghanistan. As reported from vivanews.com on October 31, 2012, the debate which lasted for 96 minutes 17 seconds was unbiased, useful and dignified so that it invited the admiration from the world community. The Rector of the University of Paramadina, Anies Bawedan, assessed the U.S presidential debate as "a high quality debate" and should be studied by Indonesian presidential candidates. Bawedan further said that "Obama and Romney argued about the substance, they show differences, but elegantly conveyed, no personal attacks, even highly trained to deliver it".

Along with many compliments and flatteries against their debate, however, the winner of the latest debate is still questioned. CNN poll said Obama was ahead by winning 48 percent of the votes. He defeated his opponent, Mitt Romney, who had only 40 percent of the votes. Alex Castellanos, Republican strategist and CNN contributor, also acknowledged that Obama won the latest debate. However, he added, Romney has demonstrated a cool and calm leadership style, in contrast to Obama who appeared aggressively.

Another criticism was delivered by Frederick E. Allen, the Lead Editor of Forbes, who criticize through his online article entitled *"Who Won the Third Presidential Debate in Terms of Temperament?"*. He wrote that the last debate does not have a clear winner because both candidates looked pretty strong for much of the debate. He also mentioned that "both of the candidates remained calm in the face of sharp challenges, ready with quick answers without hesitation, and well-versed in incredibly complex matters". From the latest debate, he has learned that the presidential temperament is the most important thing to look in assessing the quality of each candidate's argument. According to Allen, strength of character allows a president to remain open-minded and flexible, to stay on top of all the events and even to convince the audiences about their capability in tackling the world's most difficult problems (Allen, 2012).

However, the number of emerging polls and opinions certainly does not provide satisfaction for me as a language researcher. The polls only represent the number of persons who like or do not like the performance of their presidential candidates without knowing the factors that influence them to make such a decision. Thus, those internal factors such as the power of language they have used in the debate and their effort to attract public attention, of course, could never be discussed in a poll. However, all of that can be identified by conducting linguistic research. In linguistic research, the winner of a debate can be determined theoretically by using the debate transcription as the research data. In this regard, the strength of each candidate's argument is measured using an appropriate language approach.

One of the linguistic approaches that draws the researcher's attention comes from Stephen E. Toulmin, an English philosopher and logician. In his book, *The Uses of arguments,* Toulmin (1958) presents a very useful method of analyzing an argument, namely "Toulmin Argumentation Model". In this model, an argument is identified into several parts, such as claim, grounds, warrant, backing, qualifier and rebuttal. The connection of each element is

analyzed according to their participation from the overall text. In short, Toulmin's Method is a suitable method of analyzing persuasive arguments because it allows the researcher to make judgments on how well the different parts of elements work together in an argument.

Calling it "Toulmin Argumentation Model", Toulmin (1984) continued his research on argument towards a more profound direction by introducing his second edition book entitled *An Introduction to Reasoning*. Toulmin (1984) has provided an effective way of measuring arguments' strength. According to him, there are two levels of analysis that must be traversed in measuring arguments' strength. The first level is *Soundness level*. It is delivered from a pattern of analysis where the elements of an argument are 'hanged' together. At the first level, the presence *backing* is required as an additional element for the three basic elements of an argument (*claim, grounds, warrant*). Afterwards, in the second level of analysis the researcher shall have to pay particular attention to the terms *qualifier* and *rebuttal*. In an argument, a *qualifier* is necessary in order "to indicate the kind of rational strength to be attributed to *claim* on the basis of its relationship to *the grounds*, *warrant* and backing" (Toulmin, 1984: 86). Whereas rebuttal is important to state precisely all of the conditions and premises on which someone have the reason to believe that an argument is a really strong argument.

There are many linguistic studies that have been conducted that raised arguments' strength as the main focus of their research. One of the studies is the work of Freeman in 2006 that used Cohen' concept of ampliative probability. This ampliative probability (1977) can be used to define and assess the strength of Toulmin's arguments. According to Freeman (2006), Cohen' notion of ampliative support and ampliative probability is not only able to determine the degree of arguments' strength, but also to decide whether the degree of arguments' strength is sufficient to make an acceptable conclusion. It was revealed that "if the premises of a warrant-establishing argument presented the data of some series of canonical tests, the strength of the argument would apparently be the same as the degree of inductive support" (Freeman, 2006: 39).

There is also another study which was conducted by Glazer and Rubinstein (2000). They addressed the issue of the relative strength of arguments and counterarguments. They classified three types of debate model in the form of a game to examine different aspects of debates, such as *one-speaker debate* where one of the debaters has to choose two arguments, *simultaneous debate* where the two debaters move simultaneously each one has to make one argument and *sequential debate* which contain two-stage game.

The Study of language, especially in the field of arguments' strength also came from Zhao et al. (2011). He used the term *Perceived Arguments Strength* as a complement to the conventional thought-listing measure of arguments' strength. Perceived Arguments' Strength is referred as "the audience members' perceptions of the quality, strength, and persuasiveness of the arguments" (Zhao et al., 2011: 95). In his research results, Zhao et al. (2011) concluded that the perceived argument strength scale with its own limitations is not immune to the influence of 'social desirability biases'. He added that the scale as a multiple-item instrument in particular circumstances of low motivation could also become victims to the response set.

This research focuses on argumentative analysis on the latest U.S presidential debate which concentrates on the measurement of arguments' strength. Research in the field of arguments' strength using Toulmin's theory has not been conducted much. However, two studies using the Toulmin Argumentation Model in the field of education and preliminary rulings have been conducted in Indonesia. The studies were conducted by Hidayati (2009) and Mehr (2010). In the research, Hidayati (2009) conducted collaborative classroom action research through the four stages of action research (planning, implementing, observing and reflecting) to improve students' ability in writing argumentative paragraphs. In her conclusion, she mentions that "the implementation of Toulmin's Method could help the students improving their ability in writing argumentative paragraphs under the following sequence of procedures"

(Hidayanti, 2009: 89). Whereas Mehr (2010), mentions that Toulmin's model of argumentation is not only relevant when analyzing and examining argumentation in academic texts, but it also can be used to analyze argumentation in Preliminary Rulings. In her conclusion, she made a statement that "argumentation is a vital thing when a ruling is made" (Mehr, 2010: 78).

Previous studies by Hidayati (2009) and Mehr (2010) seem to deal mainly with the implementation of argumentation in academic texts. In this case, the present study provides an overview of the steps in the measurement of arguments' strength using Toulmin's methods. Furthermore, the present study aims to prove theoretically about who deserves to be the winner of the latest American presidential debate 2012.

1.2 Research Questions

The research questions of the study are formulated as follows:

1. What are the argument structures of the latest debate between Obama and Romney?

2. Who is the winner of the latest U.S presidential debate, according to Toulmin's theory?

1.3 Aims of the Study

The study aims to prove theoretically about who deserves to be the winner of the latest 2012 American presidential debate.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The research focuses on rhetorical analysis, especially argumentative discourse, using the six elements of Toulmin' argumentation models (1958), namely: (1) claim: the proposition or assertion an arguer wants another to accept, (2) data: the proof or evidence an arguer offers, (3) warrant: a chain of reasoning that connects the data to the claim, (4) backing: additional justification for the warrant, (5) Counterclaim: A claim that negates or disagrees with the

thesis/claim, and (6) Rebuttal: Evidence that negates or disagrees with the counterclaim. Afterwards, the analysis has classified into three stages, namely *cogency analysis*, *soundness analysis* and *strength analysis*. The researcher gave a limitation to the data analysis by analyzing the latest debate of the two American presidential candidates on October 22, 2012 in Lynn University, Boca Raton-Florida.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to make a contribution to the related study toward language learners both theoretical and practical and useful information on effective public speaking. The study is also expected to be useful for the next researchers who are interested in conducting research in the same field. The researcher hopes that this study will contribute to the readers in presenting the arts of speaking. The students and the researcher herself, who read the outcomes of this study can positively apply the steps in measuring arguments' strength using Toulmin' Methods and give their friends motivation in order to be more curious in learning language(s).

1.6 Research Methodology

1.6.1 Research Design

The study used a descriptive qualitative method, because the data was not only explored in the form of words, but also included its numerical or statistical descriptions. The data of the study were interpreted and analyze descriptively, so the final outcome of the research is the description of the data. Whereas, the numerical or statistical description is needed as a comparation scale of the final outcome. The research data were the printed transcription of the latest debate of the two 2012 American presidential candidates, Barack Obama and Mitt Romney, on 22 October 2012 at Lynn University, Boca Raton- Florida. The research data were taken from non- profit public charity website www.debates.org.

After obtaining the data collection, the researcher applied the stages of analysis based on Toulmin's method.

1.6.2 Site and Participants of the Study

The study analyzed the latest debate transcription of the two American presidential candidates, Barack Obama from Democratic Party and Mitt Romney from Republic Party on 22 October 2012 in Lynn University, Boca Raton-Florida.

1.6.3 Data Collection

The data were printed transcription of the latest debate of the 2012 American presidential candidates; Barack Obama from Democratic Party and Mitt Romney from Republic Party. Later, the data compiled were analyzed using the six elements of Toulmin's models of argumentation (1969) and classified into three stages of analysis, namely *cogency analysis*, *soundness analysis* and *strength analysis*. The researcher limited the data analysis by analyzing the latest debate of the 2012 American presidential candidates on October 22.

1.6.4 Data Analysis

After the data sources were obtained, the researcher started to analyze the data. First, the researcher identified the data collection using Toulmin's argumentation elements such as, *claim, data, warrant, backing, qualifier* and *rebuttal*. Second, the researcher analyzed the *cogency level* of each element. Third, the researcher looked for the presence of additional elements, such as *qualifier* and *rebuttal*. Finally, the researcher counted and compared the outcome of the research in the form numerical or statistical description to achieve the final results.

Those are the steps of the analysis in this research. In the qualitative data analysis, several simultaneous activities engage the attention of the researcher such as collecting information on the field, intensive reading, sorting the information into categories, classifying the findings, and then writing the

qualitative text. The researcher has, therefore, begun the research because he attempted to find the data source.

1.7 Clarification of Terms

To avoid misunderstanding and misinterpreting, the researcher defines the operational definition of the key terms as follows:

1. **Toulmin Argumentation Model**

   Toulmin (1958) introduces six elements of persuasive argument, namely: claim, grounds, warrant, backing, rebuttal and qualifier. Toulmin's method has appeared as a very useful approach in argumentative analysis.

2. **Cogency**

   An argument is said to be cogent if it has factual grounds and a valid warrant (even though the argument's conclusion can be either certainty, possibility or preference).

3. **Soundness**

   The Soundness of an argument is delivered from a pattern of analysis where the elements of an argument are 'hanging' together (Toulmin's Argumentation Pattern). In this level, the elements require are claim, grounds, warrant and backing.

4. **Argument Strength**

   The last level of analysis deals with the strength of the connections on which the argument depends. In this level, we shall have to pay special attention to the notion of qualifier and rebuttal.

1.8 Organization of the Paper

The paper consists of five chapters, including Introduction, Literature Review, Research Method, Findings and Discussion, and the Conclusion of the study.

Chapter one or Introduction introduces the background of the study, the formulation of the problems or research questions, the aims of the study, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, the research method and design, clarification of the terms used in the study, and finally the organization of the paper.

Chapter two or Literature Review contains a review of Toulmin Models of Argumentation as the theoretical basis of this study along with the previous studies.

Chapter three or Research Method covers the methodology of the study, including the research design, participants of the study, the resources of the data or data collection, and the steps and procedures in analyzing the data which were gathered. Finally, the chapter displays examples of data analysis of the study presented further in chapter four.

Chapter four presents the results of the study. It consists of the findings of the research and the discussion of the findings that answer the problems of the study.

Chapter five provides the conclusions of the study, an interpretation toward the findings or the results of the study. It also presents suggestions for further future research in the same field.