

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

It is prevalent for the undergraduate students of the English Department to write their thesis in English language as part of their graduation requirements. A thesis is considered as a prominent task of academic writing as well as final written assessment.

In the academic context, students are required to produce specific writing tasks such as essay, summary, critical review, research paper and thesis. All those writing tasks give different challenges for students, and the challenge is even greater when students have to write in English as a foreign language. It is because they have to do it in a language with different rhetorical convention than their first language. Furthermore students still need to fit themselves to the disciplinary discourse they belong.

The most challenging writing task in university for undergraduate students is thesis. Unlike the other writing tasks in university context, thesis is a book-length written task and needs longer time to write, and the most important thing is that the thesis will be assessed not only based on the intellectual content but also for its presentation. Writing high-quality research such as

thesis is very challenging for academic members especially the undergraduate students as novice writer. The challenge is mostly caused by the limited knowledge of undergraduate students in university academic writing. For example, it is because they have not received proper information and instruction about how to write a good writing (Murphy, 2007 as cited in Emilia 2008), especially writing a thesis.

A thesis is a special academic writing genre, because it takes the form of research report with specific organization pattern such as Introduction, Method, Result, Discussion and Conclusion section that are usually known as IMRD pattern. Each section has its own function and organization, which is known as sub-genre of thesis. As Swales and Linderman (2002 as cited in Carstens, 2009) considered those sections as part-genre or sub-genre, it is important to notice that each sub-genre will contribute to the whole thesis accomplishment. Accordingly, the structure of the thesis explains the purpose, the method use, and the findings of the project. Most universities use a five-chapter format: 1) an introduction, which introduces the research topic, the methodology as well as its scope and significance, 2) a literature review, reviewing relevant literature and showing how this has informed the research issues, 3) a methodology chapter, explaining how the research has been designed and why the research methods, population, data collection and analysis being used have been chosen, 4) a finding chapter, outlining the findings of the research itself, 5) an analysis and discussion chapter,

analyzing the findings and discussing them in the context of the literature review (commonly found, the findings and the discussion of the findings sections are combined in one chapter), 6) conclusion

Similar to thesis that has the organizational structure in the forms of IMRD sections, each section such as result and discussion also have its own organizational structure, which is called rhetorical moves. The purpose of rhetorical moves in the result section of thesis is to present findings that can be displayed in form of tables and figures and give comment on those findings. While the purpose of rhetorical moves in the discussion section of thesis is to explain the result, relate result with theories and hypothesis, and give limitations and recommendation for future research.

The prominent work about rhetorical movements is the work done by Swales (1990). Swales' work suggests rhetorical movement analysis or move and step analysis as the basis for defining genre. Swales' work specifically sees the rhetorical moves in introduction of research articles. Generating from Swales work, there are some researchers who conducted research about moves in result and discussion section before, but mostly focus on one sub-genre (Brett, 1994; Bruce, 2009; Dudley-Evans, 1994; Yang & Allison, 2003). The prominent study of result section was conducted by Brett (1994) who examined twenty result sections of sociology research articles and proposed three moves of result. Brett's findings displayed what he calls three

communicative categories: meta-textual, presentation and comment. Brett's study influenced model of rhetorical moves mentioned by Paltridge & Starfield (2004). While the prominent study of discussion section came from Dudley-Evans (1994) who conducted research into biological science MSc dissertation and proposed nine moves of discussion section. His findings seemed to be the most complete construction of discussion section. In his study, Dudley-Evans modified the discussion move from his previous work of eleven moves to nine moves: Informative move, statement of result, finding, (un)expected outcome, reference to previous research, explanation, claim, limitation and recommendation. Since discussion section in research report involve commenting on result therefore these two parts of thesis are usually closely related. Furthermore, particularly for discussion section, this section is considered as a complex and difficult section to be written. As Dudley-Evans (1994) stated that "*discussion section has had less attention than the introduction and also because it is the section that students claim to have the greatest difficulty with*" (p.220). Similar to Dudley-Evans, several researcher such as Flowerdew (1999), Martinez (2003), Bitchener & Basturkmen (2006) (as cited in Pojanapunya & Todd, 2011) also asserted that the discussion section is probably the most difficult section to write in the thesis. The same statement also came from Bunton (2005) who argued that either students or supervisor consider introduction and discussion as the most difficult parts of theses.

Acknowledging that the result and discussion section play an important role in the research report but are difficult to write and bothersome, therefore it is worth to investigate the result and discussion sections in order to get better understanding about rhetorical structure of result and discussion section in research reports. Afterward, thesis as one of the research reports and its lexical expressions has been less investigated using move analysis. Although some researchers have studied theses, but usually they are limited to the MA or Ph.D theses which were written by relatively expert writer, while the undergraduate theses were written by novice writers. Writing thesis in a second language particularly result and discussion section might be troublesome for undergraduate students as novice writers since it is their first experience in writing thesis in the language other than their first language. In addition, academic writing poses some challenge for student writing in English as a second language because of their lack of familiarity with the convention and expectation of academic writing in English medium university. The students could be unfamiliar to the thesis writing convention and it might be caused by limited instructions that had been received by the undergraduate students about how to write an appropriate result and discussion section. Therefore, the writer is interested to conduct a study to analyze theses focusing on rhetorical moves of result and discussion section written by undergraduate students. By analysing result and discussion sections of theses, it is expected that she would find a better understanding about rhetorical structure of research report especially for the result and

discussion section of theses and might be able to encourage the academic writing instructor or teacher to improve the instructional strategies in teaching academic writing in order to improve students' ability, especially in writing result and discussion section of theses.

Basically, the main purpose of this study was to identify the moves of result and discussion section of thesis written by the English department undergraduate student of UNESA as a non-native speaker writer. As it was said earlier, this study was generated from the concern that the undergraduate students as a non-native speaker writers might have some obstacle in their first experience in writing result and discussion sections of theses. It raised the inquiry about how the undergraduate students composed their result and discussion section. There are two initial research questions for each section that have to be answered in this present study which are what moves are used and what language expressions are used in the result section; and what moves are used and what language expressions are used in the thesis discussion section. To answer those research questions, the writer analyzed the result and discussion section of theses written by the English department undergraduate students of UNESA. Furthermore, the result section would be analyzed by using rhetorical moves model from Paltridge and Starfield (2007) originated from Brett's three communicative moves of result section. This particular model was used because it has comprehensive point of move and still refers to Brett's work that commonly used in the most result section of research

articles. According to Thompson (1993 as cited in Bruce, 2009), Brett's model is the most adequate model for result section. Lastly, the writer analyzed the discussion section by using rhetorical moves model from Dudley-Evans (1994) because it is relevant in the longer writing genre such as dissertation and theses.

In this present study, the writer used a descriptive qualitative study, with discourse analysis method. The source of data in this study was taken from the English department undergraduate students of UNESA experimental research theses. The analysis particularly focused on the result and discussion section. The samples of data source can be examined in the appendices. Furthermore, concerning the subjectivity in qualitative study, the writer also conducted triangulations with two co- analysts who have learned about the result and discussion moves. The writer discussed the data analysis with the two co- analysts and after finishing the triangulation, the writer drew the conclusion about overall research.

1.2 Statements of the Problems

In line with the background above, this study is trying to identify the rhetorical moves and lexical expressions used by English department undergraduate students of UNESA in writing their thesis. The study specifically observed the result and discussion part of the thesis. Therefore, the research questions for this study are:

- 1.2.1 What are the typical rhetorical moves used by the English department undergraduate students in writing the result section of their thesis?
- 1.2.2 What are the typical rhetorical moves used by the English department undergraduate students in writing the discussion section of their theses?
- 1.2.3 What are the typical lexical phrases used by the English department undergraduate students in writing the result section of their theses?
- 1.2.4 What are the typical lexical phrases used by the English department undergraduate students in writing the discussion section of their theses?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

The purposes of the study are as follows:

- 1.3.1 To identify the typical rhetorical moves used by the English department undergraduate students in writing the result section of their theses.
- 1.3.2 To identify the typical rhetorical moves used by the English department undergraduate students in writing the discussion section of their theses.
- 1.3.3 To identify the typical lexical phrase used by the English department undergraduate students in writing the result section of their theses.
- 1.3.4 To identify the typical lexical phrase used by the English department undergraduate students in writing the discussion section of their theses.

1.4 Theoretical framework

This study is based on the theories of result and discussion section of theses, rhetorical moves and lexical expressions. Essentially, according to the general standards of academic writing, undergraduate theses should also include the result and discussion section. The main purpose of the result section is to present the findings in a clear and straightforward manner. Based on the model of result section proposed by Paltridge & Starfield (2004) originated from Brett (1994), the elements of result section are the introductions to the result, the presentation of data in tables or figures and statement on the significant data and the author comment. While, the discussion section serves as a means to discuss the findings of the research. The discussion of findings has the purpose to interpret the results, explain their significance and provide proof for the researcher's research questions. Based on the model of discussion section proposed by Dudley-Evans (1944), the elements of the discussion section that the writer includes are the recap of the study's major findings, the interpretation of the findings -especially in the context of their importance, discussion of the findings in the context of similar studies, suggestion of alternative interpretations or explanations to discuss the finding, statement of limitations of the study, suggestion for further research and improvement (Retrieved [:http://www.asmgap.org/documents/TheSynthesisofProgressIIBlanke.pdf](http://www.asmgap.org/documents/TheSynthesisofProgressIIBlanke.pdf))

Furthermore, result and discussion sections have its own specific rhetorical moves as the organizational pattern. The purpose of rhetorical moves is basically to organize the segments of text to achieve a unified purpose of the result and discussion section. Based on the model of result section, rhetorical moves of result section consist of three typical moves: introduction stating the purpose of collecting the data, presentation of result and it ends with the data commentary. In the result section, the moves mostly occur in cyclical manner depending mostly on the research question or research methodology. While the rhetorical moves of discussion section based on the model, typically start from: introduction stating the original aim of the research and the works that was carried out in the research, summary of the main result to the detailed comment on the key issues and the writer claims before making recommendation about future work that represents in nine moves (Dudley-Evans, 1994). Moreover, according to Connor, Davis & de Rycker, "Moves" are functional units in a text which together fulfill the overall communicative purpose of the genre" (1995 as cited in Biber, Connor & Upton, 2007), this definition supported by Attai (2011) who argued that move represents semantic and functional units of text that have specific communicative purposes. Generated from Swales work in rhetorical moves of introduction, Dudley-Evans (1994) made inquiry for the rhetorical moves in discussion section, while Brett (1994) made inquiry for the rhetorical moves in result section. Additionally, in the result and discussion sections, there are lexical expressions used in their moves.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

- 1) The findings of this study are expected to be useful for teaching English, especially in academic writing fields.
- 2) Result of this study can give consideration for the thesis advisor to guide the advisees to compose good result and discussion in their thesis.

1.6 Assumption

In writing a thesis, undergraduate students follow the format of organization of the thesis from the English Department

1.7 Scope and Limitation of the Study

Considering the limitation of time, ability and equipment the writer intends to limit the scope of the study as follows:

1. The data of the study was taken from the theses written by the undergraduate students of UNESA.
2. The writer only chose the theses of quantitative experimental study.
3. This study also focused on the rhetorical moves of result and discussion sections of theses.
4. The theses were randomly selected from library disregard of the grade since there was no written grade printed on each thesis.

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

Moves

Moves are functional units in a text which together fulfill the overall communicative purpose of the genre” (Connor, Davis & de Rycker ,1995 as cited in Biber, Connor & Upton, 2007),

Rhetorical Moves

Rhetorical moves is rhetorical organizational pattern that typically consists of series of moves that represent the functional units to fulfill the overall communicative purposes of certain genre. (Biber, Connor & Upton (2007))

Rhetorical moves of result and discussion section

Rhetorical moves of result and discussion sections of thesis are organizational structure that typically used to present the result and discussion section of theses. It typically consists of series of moves that represent the functional units to fulfill the overall communicative purposes of the result and discussion section (Connor, Biber & Upton, 2007).

Undergraduate thesis

Undergraduate thesis is a written final-year project for undergraduate students. Thesis submitted for an academic degree. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thesis>).

Result section of thesis

Result section of thesis is part of the thesis in which the writers present the findings of the study and briefly comment on them (Weissberg & Buker, 1990)

Discussion section of thesis

Discussion section of thesis is part of the thesis in which the writers present the analysis of the findings and examine the work in the larger context of their field (Weissberg & Buker, 1990)

Undergraduate students:

Undergraduate students are ones who are studying for their first (bachelor's) degree or certificate or diploma.

(The University of Canterbury (retrieved from <http://www.qualityresearchinternational.com/glossary/undergraduate.htm>))

Lexical Phrase

Lexical phrases are multi word chunks of language of variety length, phrases like as it were, on the other hand, as X would have us believe, and so on (Nattinger & Carrico, 1992)

I.8 Organization of the thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters: Chapter I deals with the background of the study, the statements of the problems, the objectives of the study, the significances of the study, the scope and limitation of the study, the definition

of key terms, theoretical framework, and the organization of the proposal, Chapter II presents review of related literature; Chapter III describes the research method; Chapter IV presents the result of data analysis and discussion of the result and; Chapter V conclusion of the research.