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## RHETORICAL STRUCTURE ANALYSIS ON INTRODUCTION CHAPTERS OF ENGLISH MASTER THESES BY INDONESIAN POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS

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### ABSTRACT

This study is aimed at investigating the rhetorical structure of Introduction chapters of English master theses written by Indonesian postgraduate students and identifying the frequency of communicative moves and their constituent steps as well as finding how the students justify their research projects reported in their Introduction chapters. The research design was mixed method research combining quantitative and qualitative method. Twenty Introduction chapters of English master theses were taken from two different fields; English language education and applied linguistics, and they were analyzed using checklists. The results: (1) three moves and fifteen steps are found in the introduction chapters of master theses and three newly identified steps other than those specified in Bunton's are also found in the corpus of this study and (2) three moves are considered obligatory moves, seven steps are classified as obligatory, four Steps are conventional and seven Steps are optional. Further, the majority of Indonesian postgraduate students tend to rhetorically justify their research project based on the knowledge gap found in the literature. This study concludes that the move and step model suggested by Bunton (2002) and modified from Swales' CARS is effective enough to capture the possible rhetorical structure of introduction chapter of master thesis written by Indonesian postgraduate students.

**Keywords:** rhetorical structure; move analysis; genre analysis; introduction chapters; master thesis

### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan pola retorika bab pendahuluan dalam thesis bahasa Inggris diantaranya mengidentifikasi bagian pendahuluan yang memiliki moves (tahapan), steps (langkah), dan menjustifikasi pentingnya penelitian dilakukan. Desain penelitian yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode campuran (mixed method) yang menggabungkan kuantitatif dan kualitatif, dan instrumen utama yang digunakan dalam menganalisis data adalah instrumen ceklist. Data penelitian ini diambil dari dua bidang thesis yang berbeda; pengajaran bahasa Inggris dan fitur linguistik. Hasil dari penelitian ini: (1) tiga Moves (tahapan) dan limabelas Steps (langkah) ditemukan dalam bab Pendahuluan thesis pada penelitian ini. Selain itu, ditemukan juga tiga Steps (langkah) baru yang tidak ditemukan dalam pola Bunton (2002); (2) tiga Moves (tahapan) dikategorikan harus/wajib ada, tujuh Steps (langkah) diiklasifikasikan harus ada, empat Steps (langkah) boleh ada, dan tujuh Steps (langkah) boleh tidak ada. Selanjutnya, mayoritas mahasiswa pascasarjana Indonesia cenderung secara retorik menjustifikasi proyek penelitian mereka berdasarkan pada celah (gap) yang terdapat dalam penelitian-penelitian terkait terdahulu. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa pola tahapan (Move) dan langkah (Step) yang dikemukakan oleh Bunton (2002) dan dimodifikasi dari pola retorika Swales yakni Creating a Research Space (CARS) cukup efektif digunakan dalam menggambarkan struktur retorika bab pendahuluan pada thesis yang ditulis oleh mahasiswa pascasarjana Indonesia.

**Kata kunci:** Struktur retorika; analisis tahapan; analisis genre; bab pendahuluan; thesis

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## INTRODUCTION

Currently, rhetorical structure of particular chapters in master thesis has been intensively investigated (e.g. Bunton, 2002; Dong, 1998; Dudley & Evans, 1986; Kwan, 2006; Loan & Pramoolsook, 2014; Manan & Noor, 2014; Shirani & Chalak, 2016; Thompson, 2005; Wuttisrisiriporn, 2017). These studies have examined how different chapters of master thesis in diverse disciplines were written using genre-based approaches. The purpose was for identifying predictable presence of rhetorical moves and steps embedded in a wide variety of text types particularly in a certain chapter of master thesis.

A large number of studies have investigated the organisation structure of particular chapters in master theses and dissertations including: Introduction on Ph.D. dissertations have been conducted such as by Bunton (2002), Dong (1998), Swales & Najjar (1987), Thompson (2005); Literature Review (Kwan, 2006); Discussion (Dudley-Evans 1986: 135); Conclusion (Dudley & Evans, 1986); Abstracts in Conservation Biology and Wildlife Behavior (Samraj, 2008).

Although there have been a remarkable numbers of investigations applying the rhetorical structure on particular chapters of master theses, but only few studies which focused on investigating Introduction chapter (Bunton 2002, 2005, Dong 1998,

Dudley-Evans 1986: 135, Hyland 2004, Kwan 2006, Loan & Pramoolsook 2014, , Shirani-Chalak 2016, Swales 2004, Wuttisrisiriporn, 2017). A study conducted by Bunton (2002) investigated the genre analysis of 45 Ph.D. thesis Introductions. It was built based on his own earlier study (Bunton, 1998) that analyzed the overall thesis structure of 21 Ph.D. and M.Phil. theses. He adopted Swales' CARS 1990 model to investigate the generic moves structure and steps of the Introduction chapters across eight disciplines. He found that all *Introductions* had sequences of text identifiable as the three moves in Swales's (1990) CARS model: *Establishing a Territory* (T), *Establishing a Niche* (N), and *Occupying the Niche* (O) and he proposed 10 newly identified steps in the third move to introduce the present research; *Defining terms, Indicating a problem or need, Method, Materials or Subjects, Product of research* (Eg)/*Model proposed, Chapter structure, Research questions/Hypotheses, Theoretical position, Application of product, and Evaluation of product.*

One of the latest discourse analysis studies on introduction chapters was conducted by Loan & Pramoolsook (2014). They employed the modified CARS' model by Bunton (2002) to analyze the rhetorical structure of Introduction chapters of 12 master theses from the three universities in the South of Vietnam. They found that three moves; *Establishing a Territory, Establish a Niche, and Occupying the*

Niche and 15 out of 24 steps described in Bunton (2002) were employed by this group of non-native English writers, although they had little or no formal instruction on how to write this genre. Last, they found one newly identified step in a separate section headed namely *Chapter summary*.

A study conducted by Shirani-Chalak (2016) on 40 master theses Introductions written by EFL learners from Iran found that three moves of the introduction section; (a) *Establishing a territory*, (b) *Establishing a niche*, (c) *Occupying the niche* were followed exactly in Iranian EFL learners' master theses with a high degree of distribution; Move 1 presents 70%, Move 2 presents for about 65% and Move 3 presents 82.5% and therefore, these three moves were categorized as an obligatory moves in Introductions of master theses.

Finally, the latest investigation on comparative rhetorical organization of ELT thesis introductions composed by Thai and American students was conducted by Wuttisrisiriporn (2017), he found that both Thai and American master students followed the moves and steps proposed in the framework proposed by Bunton (2002) to construct their Introduction chapters rhetorically. The results showed that 274 move occurrences were identified in the ASI (American student Introduction) corpus and 284 move occurrences were realized in the TSI (Thai student Introduction) corpus.

All the studies above investigated master theses focusing on Introduction chapters written by Native Speaker (NS) Students and Non Native Speaker (NNS) students in which the text are written in British, American, Australian, Vietnamese and Iranian. The studies mostly found that there were similarity of the move employment used by these two groups of students. Both NS students and NNS students used all three moves stated in framework of CARS model; *Establishing a Territory*, *Establish a Niche*, and *Occupying the Niche* and they provided the use of various steps to accomplish each move. In spite of those similarities, the studies carried out on introductions written by Non-Native Speaker (NNS) indicated that most NNS writers are more likely to follow a similar structure of thesis Introduction. They tend to follow the instruction of thesis guidelines from their universities and also conform thesis Introduction components formed in theses available in their libraries. In contrary, the studies carried out by Native Speaker (NS) student writers which focused on comparing some various disciplines found that the way rhetorical structures of Introduction sections of master theses vary across disciplines. This is due to the reason that native speaker (NS) students may not prefer to use a rigid structure of thesis in their local community.

However, the similar studies on English master thesis written by Indonesian postgraduate students have

been very rarely conducted. As far as the author is concerned, there is no published research reported on investigating the rhetorical structure of Introduction chapter of English master theses written by Indonesian postgraduate students in English education. Thus, this is the rationale for the study; in particular, it is aimed at investigating how Indonesian postgraduate students organize their Introduction chapters in their English master theses. The primary questions addressed in this study are as follows:

- a) What generic moves are found in the introductions chapter of English master theses written by Indonesian postgraduate students?;
- b) What moves and steps are obligatory, conventional, and optional found in Introduction chapters of master theses written by Indonesian postgraduate students? ; and
- c) How do Indonesian postgraduate students justify their research projects reported in their English master theses on introduction chapters?

## METHOD

### Corpus of the Study

This research is genre-based study and can be categorized as mixed-method study. The data of this study were taken from 20 Introduction chapters of master theses written by

Indonesian post graduate students majoring in English, particularly from University of Bengkulu, Indonesia. Applying stratified sampling technique, the theses Introductions were selected from two different fields. Ten were from students who had concerned in English Language Education field (EDU) and the remaining ten theses were selected from Applied Linguistics (APL) field. The distribution of Introduction master theses from those two fields represents the distribution of master theses available at English education study program at University of Bengkulu. The theses were generated during the years 2016-2017 and selected based on purposive sampling technique. Only the theses written during this period of time were selected because generic structures are subject to variation across time and the selection of these theses is intended to reflect the current practice of thesis writing written by Indonesian postgraduate students as non-native English speaker (NNES) students on English education.

The decision about the number of 20 thesis Introductions included in the corpus of this study is that with this size of corpus the thesis Introductions can represent the rhetorical style adopted by the authors in writing their Introduction chapters. This is also because according to Pett (1997) and Salkind (2004) as cited in Corder & Foreman (2009) the minimum requirement for the number of text to be included in a quantitative or qualitative analysis is 20. In addition,

another reason for selecting 20 introductions was also made based on the assumption that this present study focuses on only one discipline (English Education) so that the number of 20 Introduction chapters is acceptable (see Loan & Pramoolsook, 2014; p.64). This is also due to the review of the literature revealed that Dudley-Evans (1986) investigated only 7 master theses, Loan & Pramoolsook (2014) analysed only 12 master theses, Samraj (2008) analysed 24 *Introduction* chapters across three disciplines (an average of 8 each), while Bunton (2002) identified the structures of 45 *Introductions* across 8 disciplines (an average of 5.5 *Introduction*/a discipline).

## Data Analysis

Since this study concerned with genre analysis, the researcher employed checklists containing a conceptual framework as the main instrument in analyzing the data. The conceptual framework employed for analyzing the introduction sections of theses was drawn from Bunton's (2002) modified CARS model of Swales (1990) for Ph.D dissertation Introductions as shown in Figure 1.

It was used as a reference framework since Bunton (2002) accomplished the Swales' model by distinguishing and adding 10 new steps to the CARS model. Another reason for selecting Bunton's Modified Swales' (1990) CARS model is that, it has been the improvement of the most

comprehensive framework for analyzing the introduction and many other researchers have applied it successfully and extensively (Loan & Pramoolsook, 2014; Wuttisrisiriporn, 2017).

Figure 1. Modified CARS model for Thesis Introduction from Bunton (2002)

| Often present  | Occasionally present           |
|--|--------------------------------|
| <b>Move 1: Establishing a Territory STEPS</b>                              |                                |
| 1: Claiming centrality   |                                |
| 2: Making topic generalizations and giving background information          | Research parameters            |
| 3: <i>Defining terms</i>   |                                |
| 4: Reviewing previous research   |                                |
| <b>Move 2: Establishing a Niche STEPS</b>                                  |                                |
| 1A: Indicating a gap in research   | Counter-claiming               |
| 1B: <i>Indicating a problem or need</i>                                    |                                |
| 1C: Question-raising   |                                |
| 1D: Continuing a tradition   |                                |
| <b>Move 3: Announcing the Present Research (Occupying the Niche) STEPS</b> |                                |
| 1: Purposes, aims, or objectives   | Chapter structure              |
| 2: Work carried out  | Research questions/ Hypotheses |
| 3: <i>Method</i>   | Theoretical position           |
| 4: <i>Materials or Subjects</i>  | Defining terms                 |
| 5: Findings or Results   | Parameters of research         |
| 6: <i>Product of research/Model proposed</i>                               | Application of product         |
| 7: Significance/Justification  | Evaluation of product          |
| 8: Thesis structure  |                                |

## Data Analysis Procedures

The processes of identifying the communicative units or moves in the introduction chapter of master theses, following Dudley & Evans (1986) and Loan & Pramoolsook (2014), goes through the following 5 steps. First, the

title or section headings, sub-titles, and key terms in Introduction chapter of each master theses were read to get a rough understanding of the content of each Introduction. Second, the whole Introduction chapter was read to get better understanding. Third, the introduction chapter of each master theses was read again to look for the available discourse and linguistic clues, such as specific lexicons, discourse markers, formulaic expressions, particular lexical items and cohesive markers. Fourth, the possible communicative units in the master theses introduction were identified by using linguistic and discourse clues and by understanding and inferring from the text. Fifth, the common discourse structure of master theses introduction was identified by employing the framework of revised CARS model suggested by Bunton (2002), then the frequency of their occurrences were classified to distinguish whether moves and steps employed in the Introduction master theses were adequately qualified to be regarded as *obligatory*, *conventional*, or *optional*. Referring to Kanoksilapatham (2005), if the moves occurred in all master thesis Introductions they were categorized as *obligatory*, then if they occurred between 60-99% of the Master theses introduction they were categorized as *conventional*, but if they occurred less than 60% in the master theses they were categorized as *optional*.

## Triangulation Analysis

An independent rater involved in this study was an English teacher who has good capability in English and she is in the final semester of Magister Program at English department of education faculty of Bengkulu University. The co-rater was trained how to code the text into its possible communicative units or moves with the use of research instrument as previously explained in order to assure that the co-rater clearly understood how to code the master thesis introduction chapter. Then, the co-rater was asked to identify the possible moves in a sample of randomly selected introduction and if any miscoding act occurred then a discussion, negotiation and clarification was held in order to reach an agreement between the researcher and the co-rater. Last, the co-rater worked independently to code sample texts (25% of the entire corpus) randomly selected from the 20 introductions. Inter-rater correlation analysis results showed 88,2% agreement. It shows a strong agreement (above 88%).

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### The Generic Moves found in Introduction Chapters of English Master Theses

The data analysis results revealed that the generic moves found in Introduction chapters of master theses are as presented in Table 1.

Tabel 1. The Generic Moves found in 20 Introduction Chapters of English Master Theses

| Moves                        | EDU    | APL    | Total | %   | Categories |
|------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|-----|------------|
|                              | (n=10) | (n=10) |       |     |            |
| M-1 Establishing a Territory | 10     | 10     | 20    | 100 | Obligatory |
| M-2 Establishing a Niche     | 10     | 10     | 20    | 100 | Obligatory |
| M-3 Occupying the Niche      | 10     | 10     | 20    | 100 | Obligatory |

As can be noticed in Table 1, all Introduction chapters of master theses adopted three substantial moves proposed by Bunton (2002), namely: Move 1 (*Establishing a territory*), Move 2 (*Establishing a niche*) and Move 3 (*Occupying the niche*). The presence of these three moves in all introduction chapters have made them *obligatory* and confirms the finding of previous study on this definite chapter (Loan & Pramoolsook, 2014), which also showed that all three moves in Bunton's (2002) Modified CARS model occurred in their corpus. This result implies that all graduate students of both EDU and APL fields employed all these three moves to construct their thesis Introductions or to introduce general perspectives of their studies to the readers. The possible reason for this is probably in the guideline of thesis writing provided by the university

these three moves are necessary required or stated to be *obligatory*, therefore, all graduate students have to follow this thesis instruction guidelines as well as thesis Introduction components constituted in theses submitted to the university such as section headings, subheadings, and even feedbacks from thesis supervisors. This implies that if one student does not address these three moves in his/her thesis Introduction it will be categorized incomplete.

An interpretation of the finding is that the feedbacks from thesis supervisors and examiners during the process of supervision or examination have a great effect on an arrangement of thesis Introduction organization. When one student writes incomplete thesis introduction chapter, his/her supervisor or examiner may have to advise him/her to complete it. It can be inferred that the writers of master theses have been advised by their supervisors or examiners to include extensive information related to the topic under research by adopting these three moves in their introduction chapter in order to demonstrate their knowledge of the field and justify their claims toward topic of the research being investigated.

This finding is compatible with Loan & Pramoolsook (2014), in which the twelve *Introductions* of Vietnamese students in TESOL had all three moves in Bunton's (2002) Modified CARS model. They explained by the fact that these students followed the guidelines

provided by their universities. This result is also in line with Wuttisrisiriporn (2017) who compared the Introduction chapters of MA theses in ELT (English Language Teaching) written by Thai students to those written by American university students. He found that the entire ASI (American student Introduction) and TSI (Thai Student Introduction) corpora adopted all three moves shown in the analytical framework proposed by Bunton (2002). He stated that Thai students are more likely to follow a similar organization of thesis Introduction as well as thesis supervisors' comments. Similarly, this result conforms the finding of the study on analyzing introductory sections of 21 Ph.D theses written in Spanish conducted by Salom et al. (2008), these moves occurred in every Introductions text with different cyclical patterns and making them obligatory moves in Ph.D thesis Introductions.

The analysis results of this study found that the way to introduce the field of study or the background information related to the research topic and establish the niche for the current study conform the guideline of theses writing provided by English postgraduate study program of Bengkulu University, in which each Introduction is realized by some sections headings. The generic section headings employed in these Introduction chapters showed the field of the research (Move 1), the niche of

the current research would occupy (Move 2), and the announcement of the present research (Move 3). Move 1 and Move 2 as well as all of their Steps were recommended to be completed in the section heading of *Background of the study*. While Move 3, the way to announce the present research, was accomplished in almost all generic section headings except *Background and Roadmap of the study; Research questions /Hypotheses, Research objectives /Purpose, Significance of the study, Definition of Key terms, and Chapter Structure*. The following are examples of Move 1, Move 2 and Move 3 occurred in the corpus of this study:

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**Example 1** : **The ability to write in English effectively is becoming increasingly important in today's modern world since the communication through language has become more and more essential in such for education and work world. Lately, technology and internet are mostly needed by some people or students.** [M1-S1, EDU9]

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**Example 2** : *There are very few research with similar topic conducted in ...however the aspects of the both variables were not investigated.* [M2-S1, EDU6]

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**Example 3** : *The purpose of this study is to improve students' speaking ability...*[M3-S1, EDU8]

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Example 1 is coded as a **Move 1** (*Establishing a territory*). The research statement of thesis EDU9 in Example 1

clearly opens the Introduction. In this example, the author briefly claims that the research topic being presented 'ability of writing through technology and internet' is quite important and significant. The second example is coded as a **Move 2** (*Establishing a niche*). In this example, the author clearly states that there is a gap of knowledge left by previous studies in the field using contradiction connectors of 'however' or 'but'. The last example is coded as a **Move 3** (*Occupying the niche*). In example 3, the author tells explicitly what the present research is about by stating **the purpose** and/or **the significance** of the study. Clearly, the use of deictic center lexical item (*this*), in conjunction with the formulaic expression the purpose (*the purpose of this study*), is used to state the objectives pertaining to this particular study.

The feature of these three Moves in the corpus of this study is similar to the three-moves progression described by Loan & Pramoolsook (2014), where there was no move cycle occurred in their *Introduction* corpus. This implies that all three moves follow in a single progression; the beginning move of Move 1: Establishing a territory (establishing the topic), followed by Move 2: Establishing niche (justifying the present study), and concluded by Move 3: Occupying a niche (describing the present study). This is where the

authors previewed previous research, and then pointed out gaps or problems or raised questions, and finally went on to announce their own research.

Compatible with this moves feature, Dudley-Evans (1986) remarked that the writers of thesis *Introductions* seemed to lead the readers from very general to specific topics in a narrative style. Therefore this made the section of the *Background of the study* which was accomplished by Move 1 and Move 2 in these *Introductions* the longest, the length of Move 1 and Move 2 in these *Introductions* is more than half that of the whole chapter, then it followed by Move 3 which had relatively shorter length; occurred only in approximately one or two paragraphs for each section heading.

### Classification of Steps in Introduction Chapters of English Master Theses

The second analysis in this study is on identifying which steps are *obligatory, conventional, and optional* found in Introduction chapters of master theses. The result of identification and classification of the steps employed by the writers of graduate students in both fields of Introduction chapters is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Frequency of Steps Found in Moves in Introduction Chapters of Master Theses

| Moves         | Steps   | F   |     | Tot | %   | Categories          |
|---------------|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|---------------------|
|               |   | EDU | APL |     |     |                     |
| <b>Move 1</b> | 1: Claiming centrality  | 2   | 9   | 11  | 55  | <b>Optional</b>     |
|               | 2: Making topic generalizations and giving background information | 10  | 10  | 20  | 100 | <b>Obligatory</b>   |
|               | 3: Defining terms   | 6   | 4   | 10  | 50  | <b>Optional</b>     |
|               | 4: Reviewing previous research                                    | 6   | 10  | 16  | 80  | <b>Conventional</b> |
| <b>Move 2</b> | 1A: Indicating a gap in research                                  | 4   | 9   | 13  | 65  | <b>Conventional</b> |
|               | 1B: Indicating a problem or need                                  | 10  | 10  | 20  | 100 | <b>Obligatory</b>   |
|               | 1C: <i>Solution*</i>  | 8   | 2   | 10  | 50  | <b>Optional</b>     |
| <b>Move 3</b> | 1: Purposes, aims, or objectives                                  | 10  | 10  | 20  | 100 | <b>Obligatory</b>   |
|               | 2: Work carried out   | 0   | 2   | 2   | 10  | <b>Optional</b>     |
|               | 3: Method   | 4   | 3   | 7   | 35  | <b>Optional</b>     |
|               | 4: Materials or Subjects  | 1   | 0   | 1   | 05  | <b>Optional</b>     |
|               | 5: Significance/Justification                                     | 10  | 10  | 20  | 100 | <b>Obligatory</b>   |
|               | 6: Chapter structure  | 8   | 4   | 12  | 60  | <b>Conventional</b> |
|               | 7: Research questions/ Hypotheses                                 | 10  | 10  | 20  | 100 | <b>Obligatory</b>   |
|               | 8: Defining terms   | 10  | 10  | 20  | 100 | <b>Obligatory</b>   |
|               | 9: Parameters of research   | 10  | 10  | 20  | 100 | <b>Obligatory</b>   |
|               | 10: <i>Chapter Summary*</i>                                       | 8   | 5   | 13  | 65  | <b>Conventional</b> |
|               | 11: <i>Roadmap of the Research*</i>                               | 6   | 1   | 7   | 35  | <b>Optional</b>     |

As indicated in Table 2, there are 15 out of 24 steps described in Bunton (2002) and three newly identified steps were found in the corpus of this study (See Table 3). The most frequently used steps or *obligatory steps* found in Introduction chapters consist of 7 steps (Step 2 of Move 1 or *Making topic generalization and giving background information*, Step 1B of Move 2 or *Indicating a problem or need*, Steps of Move 3 *Purpose of the resarch, Research questions/Hypotheses, Significance of the study, Limitation of the resesarch/Research Parameters and Chapter structure*). The presence of these seven steps as *obligatory steps* in the corpus of this study is probably because in the guideline of theses writing, these seven

steps categorized as the main aspects that should be included in composing Introduction chapter of master theses. It is also quite noticeable that the students tends to follow a common writing pattern of completed theses submitted to the university. As commonly known, new thesis writers are likely to apply a repeated pattern of those theses submitted.

Below are the examples of *obligatory* steps realized in Move1, 2, and 3 taken from the corpus of this study:

Example 4 : *Lately*, technology and internet are mostly needed by...The available of internet connection *helps* the lecturers and others educators...By using

technology and internet as a media, students *will* enjoy and interest in the learning process.  
[M1S2-EDU6]

Example 5 : Beside that, *the students' speaking is not comprehensible*, because the content of their story is *not relevant* to the text, it's mean they *didn't comprehend* the text, and sentences are *not well organized*. [M2S1B-EDU5]

Example 6 : *The result of this research could be used* in the IELTS preparation writing classes to help the writers. [M3S7-APL17]

Example 4 is coded as a Step 2 (*Making topic generalization and giving background information*). In this step, the author uses a reference of time '*Lately*' and simple present tense verbs '*helps*', '*will*' to generalize the topic of the research. The application of these two linguistic features in this move reveals that the statement being presented depicts the topic generally known or accepted statement in the field.

Example 5 is coded as a *Step 1B*: (*Indicating a problem or need*). This step is shown by the presence of some negative statements like '*not comprehensible*', '*not relevant*', '*didn't comprehend*' '*not well organized*' and '*not able to*'. Through these negative statements the author obviously states some problems as the main obstacles faced during the first observation.

Example 6 is coded as a Step 5 (*Significance/Justification*). As illustrated in the example, the author addresses the usefulness as well as significance related to the study under investigated. The phrase '*The result of this research could be used*' is employed by the author to state the value of the research and to make the importance of the finding explicitly.

Related to the *conventional steps* found in the corpus of this study, Table 2 shows that there are 4 steps realized as *conventional* adopted by Indonesian postgraduate students in organizing their Introduction chapters, including; *Step 4 of Move 1 (Reviewing previous research)*, *Step 1A of Move 2 (Indicating a gap in research)*, *Step 6 (Chapter structure)* and *step 10 (Chapter Summary)*.

*Step 4 of Move 1 (Reviewing previous research)* was often realized in the introduction chapters of both fields EDU and APL. This is compatible with studies done by Bunton's (2002) and Loan and Pramoolsook's (2014), *Step 4* was observed as *conventional* as it played an important role in this study; to refer to previous studies to state the research gap or to continue the study they were conducting. This step often followed by *Step 1A of Move 2 (Indicating a gap in research)* in Introduction chapters.

In contrast, *Step 1B (Indicating a problem or need)* was the most substantial step in this move since it occurred in all introductions of the corpus in this study.

The occurrence of Step 1B (*Indicating a problem or need*) tend to be more frequent than Step 1A (*Indicating a gap in research*). This reversed result revealed that EDU students seemed to avoid employing step 1A to establish their research niche but they preferred to use the other steps (i.e Step 1B). This probably because the communicative purpose of Step 1A is to illustrate a gap after reviewing some related previous studies, therefore demonstrating a new gap in their present research (Step 1A) could be a very difficult task for some graduate students. Moreover, these graduate students were in the status of a novice researcher, therefore some of them seemed to avoid employing this step but using Step 1B instead to establish their research niche.

The contrastive occurrence of these two steps was compatible with the finding of Loan & Pramoolsook (2014) in which only few writers adopted step 1A in their thesis introductions; Step 1A was realized only in a small corpus. In contrast, the occurrence of step 1B was more substantial that the Vietnamese students preferred realizing Step 1B in their Introductions.

*Chapter summary* is one of three newly realized steps other than those specified in Bunton's (2002) model, it served as one of the final sections where some writers summarized their thesis Introduction chapters. As conventional step, the occurrence of this step is not compatible with the finding of Loan and Pramoolsook (2014) and

Wuttisrisiriporn (2017) in which this step was found as optional in their both Corpora; occurring in 2 ASI thesis Introductions and in 5 TSI thesis Introductions. However, another similarity appeared as *conventional* step was *Chapter Structure*. The interesting point to be discussed here was the difference in the step of *Chapter structure* between Bunton's model and in this Introduction corpus. *Chapter structure* was categorized as 'occasionally present step' and occurred as a part of an early move to occupy the niche in Bunton (2002). However, in this corpus this step appeared at the very beginning of the chapter with no heading, it opens the introduction by showing the organization of its content or section headings.

Below are the examples of a *conventional* steps realized in Move 1, 2 and 3:

- Example 7 : *Those previous researches* indicated there was a dominance of teacher in the classroom...[M1S4-APL12]
- Example 8 : *There are very few research* with similar topic conducted in...*however* the aspects of the both variables *were not investigated*. [M2S1A-EDU6]
- Example 9 : *This chapter presents* about the background, the research question, the objective of the research..[M3S8-APL20]
- Example 10 : *Based on the description above* the writer conducted a research entitled "The Effect of Subtitled Animated Cartoon Video on Students'

Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary Mastery at SDIT Al-Hasanah Bengkulu in 2015/2016 Academic Year". [M3S8-EDU6]

Example 7 is coded as a *Step 4 (Reviewing previous research)* of Move 1. In this step, the author reviews previous relevant studies by stating '*Those previous researches indicated..*' and then identifies the limitations of the finding/s or the inexistence of information on the same topic before using contradictory discourse markers to explain the need for the present study. The author clearly describes the function of contextualizing his/her study and demonstrating its connections to certain previous studies.

Example 8 is coded as a *Step 1A (Indicating a gap in research)* of Move 2. As illustrated in the example above, the author employs some linguistic features such as '*very few research*' and '*were not investigated*' to show that there is 'a gap' between the previous related researches and the present research. In other words, the author implies that the research project conducted give new or different information on the same important topic, and therefore it is necessary to read. The presence of contradictive discourse markers '*however*' adopted by the author in Example 8 above is to convince readers that the information given before and after the marker is different or contradictory.

Example 9 is coded as a *Step 6 (Chapter Structure)*. It is categorized as one of *Conventional* steps realized in Move 3. As shown in the example, in this step, the author begins his/her introduction by indicating how the chapter contents are organised. In some cases, most of the authors started their Introduction chapter by summarizing the chapter structure using some linguistics clues such as: *presents,.. includes,.. covers*.

Example 10 is a newly identified step in Move 3, *Step 10 (Chapter Summary)*. As can be seen in the above example, the statement of summarizing the chapter is shown by the presence of summarizing phrase '*Based on the description above*'. This linguistic clue originally comes from the researcher focusing on summing up the specific information of the present research, including; the title, the setting, the samples, the time, the technique or method and particular skill or ability involved in the present research. In some other cases, the authors summarized their study by presenting conclusive words '*concluded*', then it was followed by the appearance of Roadmap of the study. This step is oftenly found in the last paragraph at the end of introduction chapter.

Different from the *conventional steps* discussed above, Table 3 indicates that there are 7 steps categorized as *Optional* found in the corpus of this study, including; Step 1 of Move 1 (*Claiming centrality*), Step 3 of Move 1 (*Defining*

terms), Step 2 of Move 3 (*Work carried out*), Step 3 of Move (*Method*), Step 4 of Move 3 (*Materials or Subjects*), and two newly identified steps *Solution* and *Roadmap of the Research*.

In this corpus, Step 1 (*Claiming centrality*) was categorized as an *optional* step. The writers used this step to claim that their current studies are quite useful or relevant to the field of research interest. But apparently, it seems that Indonesian graduate students from English Education field neglected to employ Step 1 (*Claiming Centrality*) in their thesis introductions. The adoption of Step 1 in this current research corresponds to the finding of Wuttisrisiriporn (2017) where the step 1 (*Claiming centrality*) was observed as an *optional* step as it not significantly occurred in the ASI corpus and TSI corpus. It was also in line with the work of Loan & Pramoolsook's (2014) in which none out of 12 Introductions of Vietnamese TESOL master's students employed Step 1 (*Claiming Centrality*) in composing their Introductions. Most students rarely used references to support their claim in the first paragraph of introduction and therefore most Introductions are started with a very general or unrelated statement (Arsyad & Arono, 2016)

Similarly, Step 3 of Move 1 (*Defining terms*) seemed to be neglected by students from both EDU and APL fields. It was compatible with several studies e.g. Bunton (2002); Loan & Pramoolsook (2014) in which Step 3 was

failed to show up in their corpus. This is probably because the students of both fields tend to define specific keyterms in Move 3 in a separate section heading entitled *Definitions of Key Terms* and the defined terms were often clearly enumerated in a paragraph of text.

The other *optional* steps in Move 3 are (*Work carried out*), Step 3 (*Method*), and Step 4 (*Materials or Subjects*). These moves appeared to play an insignificant role in thesis Introductions. These steps were labelled *optional* since they were used to provide minor information of thesis Introductions. The realizations of Step 1 and Step 2 in the present study correspond to the work by Loan and Pramoolsook (2014). The occurrences of those three steps in move 3 are in line with Loan and Pramoolsook's (2014) finding in which *Method* and *Materials or Subjects* was also found as *optional* steps. These steps might not be required to be stated in thesis Introductions. However, it is possible to add one or more of these steps to support the topic being reported.

The last new *optional* step other than those specified in Bunton's (2002) is *Roadmap of the Research*. It is a chart of reviewing related previous studies to describe the field of their research in which they relate the previous studies conducted to that of the present study. It shows that the research of present study was quite differ from the previous research and it was oftenly adopted to strengthen the use of Step 4 of Move 1 (*Reviewing previous research*)

and the Step 2 of Move 2 (*Indicating a gap in research*). The *Roadmap of the Research* was enclosed at the end of the background section after chapter summary. Finally, since the corpus of this study belong to English language education and applied linguistics disciplines, some steps in Bunton's model such as *Materials*, *Product of research/Model proposed*, *Application of product*, and *Evaluation of product* which are in the science and engineering theses were not found in this corpus.

Below are some examples of *Optional Steps* realized in Move 1 taken from the corpus of this study:

Example 11 : Learning English *lately has experienced increasing challenges and pressure* along...[M1S1-EDU6]

Example 12 : '*Semantic mapping*' is a visual strategy for vocabulary knowledge by displaying...[M1S3-EDU2]

Example 11 is coded as a Step 1 (*Claiming centrality*). In this step, the author claims the importance or interest of the topic by employing some linguistic features including; present perfect tense (*has experienced*), and lexical items, adjectives or adverbs expressing 'importance' or 'popularity' (*Lately, increasingly, important*). As shown above in italics, the author clearly states '*lately has experienced increasing challenges and pressure*' to discuss the importance of the topic in the real world or by stating the current activity in that area of research.

Example 12 is coded as a Step 3 (*Defining terms*). As illustrated in above example, the author defines a key word '*Semantic mapping is...*' in order to share the common understanding of particular concepts to the readers. Similarly in some cases, some authors employ some linguistic features such as active or passive voice of simple present verbs or to be such as: *is, are, means, defines, is defined as*, to realized this step in their introduction.

Below is the example of an *optional* or newly identified step in Move 2:

Example 13 : *To solve this problem*, the teacher can use one technique for enriching students'...[M2S1C-EDU2]

Example 13 is coded as a newly identified step 'Solution'. This is an optional step in Introduction chapter of master theses. As shown in the example above, the language feature that is mostly employed by the author is '*To solve this problem...*'. As shown in the example above, the author proposes a particular technique, method, system and or improved models as solutions to overcome some problems faced during the observation of the research.

The following are the examples of *optional steps* realized in Move 3:

Example 14 : In identifying the problems, *two activities were carried out*, namely *observing* the English teaching learning process

at the classroom and *interviewing* the English teacher and students. [M3S2-EDU8]

Example 15 : It **was designed** by using descriptive qualitative and quantitative(mixed method) research design. [M3S3-APL17]

Example 14 is coded as a Step 2 (*Work carried out*). This step indicates the work done. It is shown by the presence of the sentence '*two activities were carried out*'. These refer to the works or aspects that fall inside the scope of the thesis and previous requirements including *observation and interview*.

Example 15 is coded as a Step 3 (*Method*). As shown in the example above, the author adopts this step by explicitly stating '**was designed...mixed method research design**' and employing the verb in passive form - *was designed*). It is possible to apply not only past tense but also present tense to describe the method discourse segment because the interpretation of the method propositions can be clearly recognized by the co-occurrence of research activity verbs and passive constructions.

### The Way Indonesian Postgraduate Students Justify Their Research Projects Reported In Their English Theses On Introduction Chapters

The third question in this research as stated in the research question is how

Indonesian postgraduate students justify their research projects reported in their English theses on introduction chapters in terms of the steps of Move 2 (*establishing a niche*). Based on the data analysis result, there are two types of justification reasons for the research, the first is research based on knowledge gap and the second is research based on problems. The analysis of the result is given in Tab 3 below.

Table 3. The Distribution of Justification Reasons for the Research

| NO           | TYPE OF JUSTIFICATION           | F   |     | Total     | %          |
|--------------|---------------------------------|-----|-----|-----------|------------|
|              |                                 | EDU | APL |           |            |
| 1            | Research Based on Knowledge Gap | 4   | 9   | 13        | 65         |
| 2            | Research Based on Problems      | 8   | 1   | 7         | 35         |
| <b>Total</b> |                                 |     |     | <b>20</b> | <b>100</b> |

Table 3 shows that the most dominant reason for justifying the research in Indonesian master theses introductions is research based on knowledge gap. This type of justification realized in 13 (65%) theses Introductions. This result indicates that the authors are trying to convince readers that the findings of previous relevant studies have some kinds of limitation or the results of previous relevant studies are inconsistent or even no or very few studies have been conducted on the topic.

An interesting point can be noted here that majority of Indonesian postgraduate students tend to

rhetorically justify their research project based on the knowledge gap. It implies that most graduate students justify their research project by pointing at the limitation, inconsistency or nonexistence of previous relevant studies and therefore the present topic of their research is necessary. In other words, the majority of Indonesian authors seem to prefer justifying their research project based on knowledge gap rather than based on problems; this is probably because the students have access to read research articles of International journal therefore they may have been quite familiar with rhetorical style of the Introduction chapter of International journal articles. Another possible cause is the influence of the supervisors and examiners during the supervision or examination process has great effect for graduate students in arranging their thesis Introduction organization.

The following is an example of author's justifying research based on knowledge gap taken from the corpus of this study.

Example 16 : Most researchers identify a potential total of five moves in the rhetorical structure of abstract...(p.6) **However**, the comparative study on various groups of writers **still rarely done** especially research article abstract in Applied Linguistics. **This is the rational of this study** that is to investigate the

similarities and differences on move structure of abstract written by...[APL12]

In example 16 above, the author reviewed previous relevant studies and then identified the limitations of the findings or the inexistence of information on the same topic before using contradictory discourse markers to explain the need for the present study. As illustrated in the example 16 above, the author uses not only a contradictory discourse marker '**However**' but also lexical negation of '**still rarely done**' to introduce the rhetorical attempt of indicating a gap of information or to show an inexistent of previous relevant studies.

Another type of justification found in Indonesian thesis introductions is research based on problems. As seen in table 3above, this type of justification realized in 7 introductions or 35% of the corpus of this study. The example of justifying research based on problems is given below.

Example 17 : Speaking is the most difficult part for the students when they learn English. These may be caused by the limitation of...(p.3). In this research, the researcher is **interested** to use Board Game in teaching speaking skill. The writer **assumes** that Board Game is a method that **can** encourage...[EDU8]

In example 17, the author justifies the research project by referring to the problems explained in previous paragraphs then followed by his assumption 'assumes' of proposing a particular technique as the solution of those problems. Thus, the author did not refer to what other researchers had claimed, done or achieved in order to be continued or improved. As shown in the example, the author is just simply saying that he/she is interested in investigating the topic.

The way of justifying the research project based on the knowledge gap in this current research confirmed the finding of previous research on genre-based analysis of the Introductions research articles by Indonesian academics conducted by Arsyad (2013), he found that most Indonesian writers tend to rhetorically justify their research topic using Step 2 (*indicating a gap*) of Swales' (1990) CARS model. According to Arsyad, the Indonesian writers seem to prefer justifying their research project using Step 2 (*indicating a gap*) rather than using Step 1 (*counter claiming*) because the Indonesian RA authors tend to avoid critiquing other people or pointing at the weakness/es or defect/s of previous relevant studies as logical reason for the present study. Because critiquing other people, as remarked in Keraf (1992), is considered culturally impolite in Indonesia as eastern culture, especially toward those who are older and from higher social and economic

status. Most of them are considering that this is not an ideal attitude especially when writing an academic text because the main purpose of academic text is to find and express the truth which involves evaluating what others have mentioned in their texts.

The current finding of this study also compatible with Swales (1990) who states that justifying a research project or activity was done by pointing at a gap found in the previous relevant studies or in current knowledge about a particular research topic. According to Swales, this is usually done by negatively evaluating or critiquing the results of previous studies in order to create a space or gap to be filled by the present research. Similar comment has been made by Hunston (1994), who says that research article writers have to consider two important reasons to conduct the research project in their introduction in order to be more convincing and persuasive. First, there should be a knowledge gap left from previous relevant studies and second, the knowledge gap occurs in an important topic. Although these two claims are equally important but they were expressed through different ways.

The existence of rhetorical work for 'the gap of the research' in the niche establishment in this study was also found by Wuttirisiriporn (2017) who claimed that the gap of the research was realised in all introductions of 30 TSI (Thai Students Introductions) corpus and considered as an obligatory step; it

was used as an attempt to justify the need of further research and, consequently, the pertinence of the topic under study. However, according to Wuttisrisiriporn, the absence of the rhetorical step of 'counter claiming' in the corpus of his research; as also similarly found in this study; was because the authors tend to avoid giving direct criticism of weaknesses in previous research; it might not be a common practice. It seems to be a common norm that criticizing others' works by pointing at their weaknesses or defects and getting the advantages of them is considered improper in the Thai culture as well as in other cultures. Therefore, these cultures may reflect the writing habits of the authors.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

From the result and discussion of this study, it can be concluded that the generic moves found in the introduction chapters of master theses were three *Obligatory* moves of Bunton's framework including: Move 1 (*Establishing a territory*), Move 2 (*Establishing a niche*) and Move 3 (*Occupying the niche*). There are 15 out of 24 steps described by Bunton (2002) and 3 newly identified steps were found in the corpus of this study. 7 steps are *Obligatory*, 4 Steps are *Conventional* and 7 Steps are *Optional*. In terms of the way how Indonesian postgraduate students justify their research projects reported in their introduction chapters, it can be concluded that majority of Indonesian

postgraduate students rhetorically justify their research project based on the knowledge gap. They frequently used this step, instead of the others, to convince readers that the findings of previous relevant studies have some kinds of limitation and therefore their present study is necessary to conduct.

Since this research was conducted on a small corpus of Indonesian master theses, it is necessary for further studies to include bigger corpus and conduct the research on other chapters of master theses in order to provide a more comprehensive picture of how this academic genre is written by this group of non-native English speaking writers in Indonesia. It is also interesting enough to investigate rhetorical structure of graduate master theses across disciplines as disciplinary variations exist in each specific genre. Since the finding of this study explained the majority of Indonesian graduate students in justifying their research projects by indicating a gap or limitation, inconsistencies or nonexistence of previous relevant studies and none of them critically analyze the finding of related previous studies or employing Step 1D (*Counter claiming*), Indonesian writers must modify their introduction rhetorical styles especially in justifying the research by addressing Step 1D (*Counter claiming*) or pointing at the weaknesses or defects of previous relevant studies.

The findings of this study also have drawn significant implications for EFL

lecturers as thesis supervisors and learners. Due to the fact that most master students have been facing difficulty in writing their graduate research, the lecturers are hopefully able to recommend a good rhetorical arrangement of moves and steps to their students in order to successfully compose their master thesis Introduction chapters. Therefore, this study is expected to trigger the students' awareness as well as to give examples of how to compose a better Introduction chapter and how to effectively construct their theses for publication.

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