

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is the introduction of the present study. The chapter consists of the background of the study, research questions, aim of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, clarification of key terms, the organisation of the paper, and conclusion of chapter one.

1.1. Background of The Study

Writing is considered one of the most important skills for a student to have (Husin & Nurbayani, 2017). Especially for university students, writing is a prominent element in academic discourse which can manifest itself in the form of essays, projects, lecture notes, and theses (Van de Poel & Gasiorek, 2012). Furthermore, Husin and Nurbayani (2017) emphasises that writing is one of the skills required for students to advance their academic career as it is often required in students' assessment such as reports, reflection, and theses. In the case of Indonesian students writing in English, writing an essay requires a considerable amount of language competence as a foreign language (Van de Poel & Gasiorek, 2012). In addition to that, Prihatni (2017) noted that in English academic writing, students are required to master the ability to convey a meaning or an idea in a writing form and to understand the basic aspects of writing such as content, vocabulary, form, grammar, and the mechanics of writing. Hence, the mastery of presenting an authorial voice is critical.

In the Systemic Functional Linguistics, authorial voice is located under the heading of interpersonal metafunction in which this study refers to as Appraisal (Martin & White, 2005). The Appraisal system in the interpersonal metafunction is interested in the ways and forms of interactions made by speaker and/or writer to its putative addressee or readers in negotiating social interactions including feelings (Martin & White, 2005). Appraisal is located under the interpersonal metafunction because it is concerned with how writers/speakers establish connections and relationships among each other (Martin & White, 2005). The interaction in which this study is interested in is specifically focused on the

heteroglossic nature of academic discourse, meaning that the study aims to dissect how the authorial voice presents itself in academic essays and the strategies used by beginner writers of undergraduate students in presenting themselves subjectively and objectively alongside and/or against the existing voices within the discourse.

Various linguists have established the frameworks in analysing reader-writer interactions with different nomenclature such as *stance* (Hyland, 2005; Du Bois, 2007), *evaluation* (Hunston & Thompson, 2000), and *Appraisal* (Martin, 1997, 2000a; White, 2003, 2011; Martin & White, 2005). In the past decades since the invention of Appraisal, it has gained popularity over the years. Appraisal has been used by many scholars to analyse various written texts in the academic discourse such as dissecting the persuasive power in research article introductions (Hood, 2006), adolescent writing in history subject (Derewianka, 2009), discussion essay writing by undergraduate ESL students (Swain, 2004), authorial stance in research article introduction in education (Chang & Schleppegrell, 2011), voices in argumentative writing (Miller et al., 2014), high-graded and low-graded persuasive essays (Lee, 2015), and English L2 Spanish scholar publication (Oliver, 2015).

Systemic Functional Linguistics have provided scholars with an unrivalled framework in modelling, analysing, and interpreting texts, interactions, and events involving language (O'Halloran et al., 2019). Halliday and Hasan (1989) defines culture as an integrated network of semiotic systems that holistically map human culture. Halliday and Mathiessen (2014) perceive language as one of the semiotic systems in the culture and approach it as it serves its function in society. Therefore, SFL has shown its superiority in approaching language phenomenon as a cultural practice rather than a rigid structure where polarity of right and wrong exists. Within the same perspective, Appraisal also holds the same principle. It is concerned in mapping speaker/writer interaction without presenting a barrier of which practice is right and which practice is wrong. Therefore, this study used Appraisal to describe and analyse linguistic phenomena as it unfolded in students' text.

Engagement in Appraisal have also previously been looked into by many scholars such as Miller et al. (2014) in mapping Engagement resources in history subject writing at university level, Mori (2017) in mapping Engagement and dialogism in migrant undergraduate students in the U.S., and Sun and Crosthwaithe (2022) in mapping negation in 120 across-discipline Ph.D theses. In those previous studies, there have been attempts to describe the linguistic occurrences that depict how writers engage with external voices in an established academic discourse. Engagement has been proved to be useful to analyse the interaction between writers in academic writing and model how linguistic resources are being deployed for writers to advance their own opinion and how they interact with alternative points of view. However, there is no previous study that attempts to examine international students at undergraduate level where the participants were subject to EFL classrooms before. There also has not been any study that specifically examines how Indonesian undergraduates interact with alternative perspectives in an academic discourse and how they advance their own opinion in the academic backdrop.

Therefore, this study employed the Appraisal framework (Martin & White, 2005) to examine undergraduate Indonesian international students' essays during their study in Australia. The study will employ the Appraisal framework to examine how the students engage with other voices within the established academic discourse. The essays taken as samples will be in the form of emails of the students given a scenario as an expert in intercultural communication giving advice to an imaginary second party hence the study also aims to examine the means and strategies used by the students to convey their own subjective judgement as an expert.

1.2. Research Questions

The study is answering the following questions:

- 1) How do the students given a scenario as an expert engage using Appraisal resources with other voices in an established academic discourse?

- 2) What are the strategies used by the students given a scenario as an expert in advancing their own proposition using Appraisal resources towards the established academic discourse?
- 3) How do the strategies implemented by the students contribute to the genre writing practice in a professional context?

1.3. Aim of The Study

The present study investigated the following:

- 1) Means and strategies used by students given a scenario as an expert to engage using Appraisal resources with other voices in an established academic discourse; and
- 2) Means and strategies used by students in advancing their own proposition using Appraisal resources towards the established academic discourse.
- 3) Purposeful strategies to achieve genre communicative purposes in a professional context.

1.4. Scope of The Study

The study was conducted on 6 essays written by undergraduate international students from Indonesia studying in an Australian university. The essays are in the form of an email where the students were given a scenario as an intercultural communication expert to give advice to an imaginary second party regarding some specific topics related to intercultural communication.

The essays consist of two emails each, answering to two different third parties with different topics as well. The study analysed both essays and coded the Engagement markers throughout the text and discussed the findings under the Appraisal framework established by Martin and White (2005). The genre writing practice was approached under the consideration of Critical Genre Analysis (Bhatia, 2017) and Martin and Rose (2008) approach to genre.

1.5. Significance of The Study

This study presents a theoretical significance to the overall discourse in the Appraisal studies. Many publications have dealt with the frameworks prior to this

study, however, there are few present studies that attempt to dissect essays that do not fit the conventional genre writing practice written by undergraduate students using English as a foreign language.

The study also presents a practical significance for readers and writer to be able to reflect on our own practices of writing. This study unpacked the strategies used by beginner writers upon engaging in an established academic discourse which will benefit writer and readers to reflect on how we would engage with such voices in the academic field.

Furthermore, this study will not only enrich the established discourse in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL, henceforth) which can provide resourceful insight in undergraduate academic writing. But also to further enrich the discourse on English academic writing pedagogy practice especially in English for Academic Purposes discourse.

1.6. Clarification of Key Terms

Below are the key terms mentioned throughout the paper which holds central importance to this study:

- 1) Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL): SFL, also known as Sydney school (Hyland, 2004) in linguistics refers to the interlevel system of meaning developed by the early works on grammar of M. A. K. Halliday inspired by Saussure (1961) and Hjelmslev (1961).
- 2) Appraisal Framework: Appraisal is a framework located in the interpersonal discourse semantic of SFL interlevel system developed by J. R. Martin. This study refers to one of his latest publications on Appraisal where Martin works with P. White (2005). Appraisal aims to offer a framework to dissect writer/speaker relationships with others through communicative texts.
- 3) Engagement: Engagement is one of the resources in Appraisal to model, map, analyse, and define speaker/writer relationship through the means and way speaker/writer interacts with alternative point of views and how they put their own stance responding to it. Engagement stands alongside Attitude and Graduation as one of the resources in Appraisal.

- 4) Heterogloss: Heterogloss, or in this paper heteroglossic texts, refers to a text in which, by nature, responds to, influenced by, or taken an account to prior utterances within the discourse. This view is influenced by Bakhtin's (1981) observation that no utterances are ever original in this world. Meaning that, a text is always related to a relevant social context.

1.7. Organisation of The Paper

The paper is organised as the following:

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The chapter consists of the background of the study, research questions, aim of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, the organisation of the paper and conclusion to chapter one.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a relevant literature review for the present study. This chapter consists of five sections namely: 1) Systemic Functional Linguistics: An Overview; 2) Modelling the Discourse Semantic; 3) Appraisal: Attitude, Engagement, and Graduation; 4) Engagement in The Appraisal System; 5) Genre as A Cultural Practice; 6) Genre Writing and Professional Identity; and 7) Conclusion of Chapter II.

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The chapter provides an explanation of the research methodology used in the present study. The chapter consists of the explanation of research design, participants of the study, data collecting methods, and data analysis methods.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The chapter lays out the findings presents in the study and discusses it under relevant theoretical framework. The chapter consists of two sections namely: 1) Engaging with Other Voices; 2) Advancing One's Opinion; and 3) Contributing to Genre Writing Practice.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The chapter provides conclusions of the present study alongside with recommendations for future research and consideration upon limitations of the study. The chapter consists of four sections namely: 1) Conclusion; 2) Limitations

of The Study; 3) Implications of The Study; and 4) Recommendations for Future Research.

In addition to the organisation of the paper, this paper would also differentiate between the nomenclature used in SFL with other English words. The nomenclature that act as one of the heading under SFL will always have its first letter in uppercase, i.e. Appraisal, with uppercase ‘A’ as the first letter, refers to the Appraisal framework popularised by J.R. Martin, while appraisal, with lowercase ‘a’ as the the first letter refers to the noun form of appraise, the byproduct of the verb appraise; and Entertain with uppercase ‘E’ as the first letter refers to Entertain resources under Engagement in Appraisal, while, entertain with lowercase ‘e’ refers to the act of entertaining someone or something, to provide someone or something with amusement.

1.8. Conclusion of Chapter One

This chapter has provided the introduction of the study alongside with the aims and objectives of the study. This chapter has also provided the technical introduction of the paper. The following chapter will lay out the relevant theoretical frameworks used throughout the study.