

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter elaborates the nature of research article as an academic genre in the realm of academic writing and corpus-based discourse analysis. It discloses the importance of having good rhetorical competence in translating the data into a research article and the importance of using move analysis method to explore EFL undergraduate students' RAs particularly on its findings and discussion section.

1.1 Background of the Study

The trend of English academic writing for higher education students has shifted from being the supporting course for accomplishing academic tasks only to being the pivotal competence for increasing academic contribution as well. One notable realization of such competence pinpoints the ability to write research article (RA) as the encouragement of participation in international academic discourse community through international publication in internationally reputed journals (Kanoksilapatham, 2005; Chang & Kuo, 2011), considering the 'publish-or-perish' culture (Garfield, 2000). The reason is that scientific journals promote the dissemination and circulation of a variety of scientific knowledge (Peacock, 2002; Tankó, 2017) leading to the development of professional interaction among the people in the community. Hence, with the exponentially increasing focus on genre studies, research articles keep becoming the central of attention within many academic investigations (Tankó, 2017).

In response to the needs, although English for Academic Purposes (EAP) through academic writing course is increasingly making an effort to promote non-native-speaker (NNS) students' communicative competence in writing an RA, discrepancy between such an effort and challenges remains in the surface of problem. The former is addressing the issues of macrostructure of the genre and its linguistic realizations (Chang & Kuo, 2011). Rhetorical moves become a prominent account since it delineates the organization of information in a limited word-count circumstance to achieve concise and clear written messages (Mishak, Marusic, & Marusic, 2005). Such an account supports the consensus of body of

research asserted by Berkenkotter, Huckin, & Ackerman (1991, p. 19) that “students entering academic disciplines need a specialized literacy that consists of the ability to use discipline-specific rhetorical and linguistic conventions to serve their purposes as writers.” The latter discloses the difficulty in translating the data into an RA (Flowerdew, 1999; Mishak, et al., 2005) as contributing factor behind the challenge to participate in the international discourse community. Several previous studies have also acknowledged that writing academic literary works particularly research articles is perceived difficult (Martinez, 2003; Swales & Feak, 2004; Amnuai, 2017). They consider the different conventional written patterns across sections and fields as the fundamental cause of such challenges.

The interface between the effort and challenges is evident at the main purpose of EAP course itself. The students are encouraged to face the transition of academic tasks (Januin & Stephen, 2015) like reading journal articles and books and writing extended essays, assignments, and reports. The familiarization of academic genres and relevant literacy practices under those genres is also emphasized. This circumstance triggers their difficulty in understanding the discourse norms (Bruce, 2006) because it inextricably differs from what they learnt in their secondary education.

With respect to the discrepancy between the demands and challenges, therefore, discourse analysis on research articles becomes a fundamental checkpoint to provide current exposure about the Indonesian EFL undergraduate students before the urgency of applying and producing the ‘eligible’ and internationally standardized structure is encouraged (Samraj, 2002). Discourse analysis has benefited English language teachers and analysts to seek the importance of how discourse portrays the interrelation between grammatical competence and communicative competence concerning the appropriateness of forms and meaning used in the process of producing the RA. Coulthard (2014) argued that discourse competence (the study of texts) and strategic competence (the ability to effectively convey their messages) become the latter terms of the former ones above respectively.

The practice of discourse analysis keeps changing employing corpus in the last 25 years primarily to capture better representation of a dynamic trend of

rhetorical moves. The milestone of Corpus-Based Discourse Analysis [CBDA] has led to the emergence of online database of language use across discipline where language teachers could examine or make comparisons on certain patterns that are changing from time to time. The interface between discourse analysis and corpus-based analysis has come up with the idea of integrating the analysis of the writer and the text in the creation of the contexts like move analysis (Swales, 1990). In other words, the process of top-down and bottom-up analyses through investigating the trends of textual organization and linguistic conventions within the discourse might contribute to a better understanding of EFL academic writing; particularly research articles.

The application of corpus-based discourse analysis through move analysis to disclose the manifestation of rhetorical moves (move-step patterns) in research articles is being studied. In the global scope, some empirical studies have addressed the issue from different lenses. The first lens encompassed all sections of the RA respectively, i.e. abstract (Saboori & Hashemi, 2013; Can, Karabacak, & Qin, 2016; Sidek, Saad, Baharun, & Idris, 2016; Tankó, 2017), introduction (Joseph, Lim, & Nor, 2013; Fazilatfar & Naseri, 2014; Afshar & Ranjbar, 2017), literature review (Fazilatfar & Naseri, 2014), method (Fazilatfar & Naseri, 2014), findings and discussion (Peacock, 2002; Ruiying & Allison, 2003; Atai & Falah, 2004; Kanoksilapatham, 2005; Rasmeenin 2006; Pho, 2008; Lim, 2010; Nodoushan, 2011; Basturkmen, 2012; Fazilatfar & Naseri, 2014; Moreno & Swales, 2018), and conclusion (Fazilatfar & Naseri, 2014; Zamani & Ebadi, 2016). The second lens encompassed the status of the authors, i.e. journal authors, professional authors in the field, and students (Master and Doctoral candidates). The third lens encompassed the source of the corpus, i.e. international reputed journals, national journals, conference proceedings, and students' final papers. The fourth lens encompassed different fields of study, i.e. soft sciences (e.g., TESOL, Language, Education, and Applied Linguistics) and hard sciences (e.g., Biochemistry, Law, and Engineering). The fifth lens encompassed the comparison between two language media of the RAs through employing a contrastive approach.

In the local scope, particularly Indonesia, there are two identified published articles focused on move analysis. Safnil (2013) sought the occurrence of communicative (move) and sub-communicative units (steps) on a corpus of 30 RAs in the field of Science, Engineering, and Medical Science from 3 international journals published in Indonesia. Additionally, the study also involved the identification of the linguistic features commonly used as the signal of those units. In the following year, Yasin and Qamariah (2014) used Swales' (2004) model as the measurement tool of determining whether the proposed three moves and their constituent steps occurred in three articles of professional writers compared to seven articles of an international journal on English education.

Because each section has its own conventions on the rhetorical moves, the present study particularly selected findings and discussion section to be the focus of exploration. Several studies have highlighted the importance of F&D section in a research article. It functions as the argumentation place in which the authors not only present the findings, but also comment on them (Lim, 2010; Basturkmen, 2012; Annuai, 2017). The emphasis of the argumentation lies on the realization of rhetorical competence manifested in employing critical thinking while making claims of their research. It involves the integration of the findings with other studies and self-interpretation and explanation behind the commonalities and dissimilarities between the findings and previous studies or literature to clarify the contribution of the research (Bitchener, 2010; Basturkmen, 2012) to the disciplinary knowledge.

The selection of findings and discussion section also relates to the discrepancy between what the government requires and what the international academic discourse communities demand considering the aforementioned function of F&D section in a research article. On the one side, the Decree of Higher Education General in 2012 mandates higher education students in all levels, i.e. undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral, to publish their research-based or scientific works in scientific journals without adequate preparation before the implementation of such mandate. The mandate is realized by obligating the students to make an undergraduate thesis (*Skripsi*) as well as a short report from the *Skripsi*, according to Indonesian Qualification Framework [IQF]

(Ministry of Research and Higher Education [MRHE], 2012, p. 8). The MRHE only obligates the students' ability to make a scientific description of a study. On the other hand, the general cognitive competence of S-1 graduates is emphasized on "the ability to apply logical, critical, systematic, and innovative thinking in the context of knowledge application and development (p. 26). The skill is also affirmed in ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework [AQRF] and The European Qualification Framework [TEQF]. The former encouraged undergraduate students to "involve independent and original thinking and research [...], involve critical and independent thinking as the basis for research to extend or redefine knowledge or practice (MRHE, 2012, p. 13). The latter emphasized the students' "advanced knowledge [...] involving a critical understanding of theories and principles" (p. 16). This indicates a mismatch between the urgency of applying critical thinking as the basis of constructing F&D section (Amnuai, 2017) of a research article to legitimate claims and the mandate of making a scientific description of a study only. It is no surprise that constructing the section is still problematic (Flowerdew, 2001; Swales & Feak, 2004; Bitchener & Basturkmen, 2006; Lim, 2010).

Given the prominence of findings and discussion section in a research article, challenges, and mismatch in the realm of EAP especially through academic writing course, an exploration of the manifestation of its rhetorical moves in undergraduate students' research articles becomes crucial to do. Furthermore, to the best of my knowledge, the exploration is to date intensively oriented to the fields under English for Specific Purposes [ESP] program. Scant studies examine how they are constructed in English education field RAs, so that the general portrait remains incomplete, whereas its aim produce the role models of rhetorically competent writers of English RAs. By doing the exploration, an extended understanding about rhetorical moves from the students' perspective can be achieved as the basis for EAP development. It encompassed: (1) the analysis of manifested moves and their constituent steps; (2) the analysis of manifested configuration of the move-step patterns; (3) and the relationship between both aspects and logical coherence as one of the indicators of discourse competence.

1.2 Research Questions

Under the aforementioned circumstances, this study is driven by the following questions.

1. What moves and their constituent steps are manifested in the Indonesian undergraduate students' research articles?
2. What configurations of the move-step patterns are manifested in the Indonesian undergraduate students' research articles?

1.3 Research Objectives

This study attempts to seek:

1. The manifestation of the moves and their constituent steps in the Indonesian undergraduate English education students' research articles.
2. The manifestation of configuration of the move-step patterns in the Indonesian undergraduate English education students' research articles.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The focus was on the manifestation of moves and their constituent steps in the findings and discussion section of research articles written by Indonesian undergraduate students majoring English education. The manifestation of configuration of move-step patterns also became another focus of this study. Both aspects were linked to the logical coherence. Related to the organization of the corpus, the labelling of the research method is verbatim from the chapter three of each research article. It is under the assumption that the article must be reviewed and tested by each author's *Skripsi* supervisors and examiners because it has been approved and published in the campus repository.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Theoretically, this study will provide a comprehensive portrait regarding the manifestation of move-step patterns within Indonesian undergraduate students' research articles, which will be associated with logical coherence. Practically, it is expected to benefit English teachers and practitioners in formulating a follow-up implementation of academic writing course by utilizing corpus and corpus-based softwares as a means of guiding the students to both

recognize the ins and outs of their writing before the production of RAs and enhance the quality of applying the move-step patterns. It is also expected to trigger the awareness of higher students on the synchronization between the move and patterns realized in the observed sections of the RAs. Socially, it intends to share insights for higher education institutions in Indonesia leading to the initiation of a possible framework of corpus-based academic writing course as an integral part in promoting international publication.

1.6 Definition of the Terms

1. Discourse analysis

Discourse analysis is the analysis of language in use that has two major approaches. First, it is utilized to investigate the content, the themes, and issues of a spoken or written work. Second, it also focuses on the grammar and how the grammar functions are used to make meaning in related contexts. (Gee, 2011).

2. Corpus

Corpus (plural ‘corpora’), in Latin, is defined as ‘body’, hence ‘any body of text’. In another perspective, corpus can be defined as “a collection of texts, written or spoken, which is stored on a computer (O’Keeffe, McCarthy, & Carter, 2007, p. 1).

3. Academic Writing

Academic writing is an activity producing a written product embracing the governing rules of academic discourse. In other words, it comprises any writing accomplished to meet higher education requirements at university or college level. This activity is aimed at giving information about a particular field of study or interest scientifically and objectively (Shannon, 2011).

4. Research Article

Research article is one of the academic literary works produced with the process of academic writing; in particular scholarly writing. The purpose of this work is to seek the trends within a specific field of study, prove, argue against, stand for, or expand the existing issues within the field (Shannon, 2011).

5. Rhetorical moves

Rhetorical moves are the discursal or rhetorical units that perform a coherent communicative function in a written or spoken discourse. It consists of one or several steps to realize each of the moves properly. Swales (2004, p. 228-229). In this study, the rhetorical moves were analyzed by looking over the manifestation of moves and their constituent steps. Move is defined as communicative units (e.g., Move 1=providing background information). Step is defined as sub-communicative units (e.g., Step 1 of Move 1=stating the context). Configuration is defined as the category of the manifestation discourse patterns (e.g., one-step configuration or one-move configuration). Pattern is defined as the code of the manifestation of the discourse structure as representing the type of the configuration (e.g., two-move configuration=(3-4)n). Sequence is defined as the description of the pattern (e.g., two-move configuration=(3-4)n=3, 4, 3, 4, 3, 4).

1.7 Organization of the Paper

Chapter One highlights some points regarding the introduction of this research. It consists of background of the research, research questions, the scope of the study, significances of the study, several definitions of the key terms, and the organization of the paper.

Chapter Two unpacks some points regarding corpus-based discourse analysis on academic writing. It comprises: the notion of academic writing; research article; discourse analysis; move analysis; corpus; the corpus tool; the overview of corpus-based discourse analysis particularly on move analysis; and previous studies.

Chapter Three unpacks the transparencies of research methods employed in the present study. It includes: research design, research settings, data collecting technique, research procedure, data analysis technique, and research timeline.

Chapter Four consists of two sections. The first section discloses three major themes: general description of the corpus; overall results of the manifestation of the identified move and step; overall results of the manifestation of configuration of move-step pattern; and implication of the configuration to

logical coherence. The second section covers two major themes: conformity and non-conformity evidence related to the results. Then, it will be elaborated by relevant implications to learning and teaching instructions.

Chapter Five consists of three sections. Sequentially, it provides conclusive points of the present study; limitations drawn from the present study; and some recommendations for future research in the realm of CBDA for ELT.