

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses introduction that becomes the foundation to conduct a study investigating the use of interpersonal resources in doctoral theses. Initially, Section 1.1 provides the background to conduct the study. It covers several issues concerning the central role of interpersonal resources in academic writing, the reasons for choosing appraisal theory as the analytical framework in academic writing, the studies on appraisal theory in academic writing, and the position of the study in filling the gap of previous research on appraisal theory. Section 1.2. provides scope of the study discussing the purpose the study to investigate the deployment of interpersonal resources in introduction section in doctoral theses and the tool used to unfold how the writers uses language for expressing attitude, engagement, and graduation. Section 1.3 and 1.4 respectively present research questions and purposes of the study. Section 1.5 focuses on the significance of the study as an attempt to address the problems. Apart from these matters, Section 1.6 clarifies definition of terms used in the study. As a closing, Section 1.7 provides an outline of the thesis.

1.1 Background

Interpersonal meaning realized in “interpersonal resources” (Lee, 2006, p. 11; Hood, 2004a) plays a vital role in academic writing. It can facilitate the writers to articulate positive and negative point of view, to engage with other voices, to anticipate alternative value positions and to raise or lower the writers’ argument (Martin, 1992; White, 1998; Martin & White, 2005; Martin & Rose, 2003; Hood, 2004a, 2010; Lee, 2006).

The utilization of interpersonal meaning in academic writing can be analyzed by making use of appraisal theory. In this study, the decision for opting appraisal theory as a lens to investigate the deployment of interpersonal resources in academic writing is set on two folds of reasons. First, it “facilitates an analysis of discourse that can bring together under a coherent framework a wide range of choices in lexis and constructions in grammar” (Hood, 2010, p. 27), which, in turn, can provide a more

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comprehensive analysis of interpersonal rhetorical character in academic writing. Second, it offers “a systematic typology of evaluative resources” (Hyland 2005, p. 174) packed in three domains of attitude, engagement, and graduation that can be used to investigate the writers’ strategy in adopting interactional and evaluative positions.

In academic writing, a number of studies on appraisal theory have explored the deployment of interpersonal resource crafted by university students (Mei & Allison, 2003; Hood, 2004; Lee, 2006, 2008; Swain, 2007; Nakamura, 2009; Xinghua & Thompson, 2009; Padmanabhan, 2011; Isaac, 2012; Fryer, 2012; Widhiyanto, 2012; Jalilifar, Hayati, & Mashhadi, 2012; Jalilifar & Moazzen, 2014; Yuliana & Gandana, 2018). Among these studies, a number of scholars touched specific aspect as attitude (Hood, 2004, 2004, 2010; Lee, 2008; Xinghua & Thompson, 2009; Jalilifar, Hayati, & Mashhadi, 2012; Jalilifar & Moazzen, 2014) and engagement (Swain, 2007; Lin, 2008; Fryer, 2012; Widhiyanto, 2012; Yuliana & Gandana, 2018).

In spite of the ample of research on appraisal theory in academic writing, studies on appraisal theory have not been well researched in Indonesian context. The studies on appraisal theory In Indonesian academic setting were performed by, among others, Widhiyanto (2012) and Yuliana & Gandana (2018) focusing on the domain of engagement. Yet, as these studies focus on one aspect of engagement, they do not provide a picture unpacking the essential roles of attitude and graduation in an academic writing. Based on this argument, this study tries to complete the puzzle unfolding how doctoral thesis writers utilize interpersonal resources as attitude, engagement, and graduation in introduction section of doctoral theses. To accomplish this purpose, this study attempts to identify the choices and the functions of attitude, engagement, and graduation to construct arguments in introduction section of doctoral theses.

1.2 Scope of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the utilization of interpersonal resources in academic writing, precisely, the dominant occurrences and the functions of attitude, engagement, and graduation for constructing arguments in introduction section of doctoral theses. This study employs Paltridge & Starfield’s (2007) framework of three key moves in introduction used to investigate the functions of interpersonal resources in

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all moves of introduction section. More importantly, this study is mainly framed by the appraisal theory proposed by Martin (1995, 1997, 2000); Hood (2004a, 2004b, 2010); Martin & White (2005); and Martin & Rose (2007) that stands under the umbrella of interpersonal meaning in the broader theoretical framework of SFL. This framework is deployed to unpack the dominant choices attitude, engagement, and graduation in introduction section of doctoral theses as well as to investigate their functions to construct a solid argument.

1.3 Research Questions

In line with the scope, this study tries to address the following questions:

1. What are the choices of attitude, engagement, and graduation in introduction section of doctoral theses?
2. What are the functions of attitude, engagement, and graduation to construct arguments in introduction section of doctoral theses?

1.4 Purposes of the Study

In line with the research questions, this study attempts to:

1. Investigate the choices of attitude, engagement, and graduation in introduction section doctoral theses.
2. Investigate the functions of attitude, engagement, and graduation to construct arguments in introduction section of doctoral theses.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is intended to complete the puzzle concerning result of research in academic writing in Indonesian setting. This study, therefore, attempts to contribute to the body of knowledge already established, both theoretically and practicality. Theoretically, this study offers two potential benefits in the area of research in academic writing. Firstly, this study can enrich the literature on academic writing by providing a document revealing the choices and the functions of interpersonal resource in introduction section of doctoral theses in Indonesian setting. Secondly, as this study tries to combine appraisal analysis and moves analysis, this study may provide “a more comprehensive and integrated” (Hood, 2010, p. 27) picture concerning the utilization and functions of attitude, engagement, and graduation in each move of introduction in doctoral theses.

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Practically, the result of the study can be beneficial for the students, the thesis supervisors, and policy makers. For the students, the result of the study can provide information regarding the important function of interpersonal resources for constructing arguments in the introductory section of doctoral thesis. In this regard, the result of the study can enlighten the students to be more aware to control and to manipulate the interpersonal resources (attitude, engagement, and graduation), that, in introduction section of doctoral thesis, can be effectively used for establishing a research territory, establishing a niche, and occupying the niche.

For the supervisors, this study can become a beneficial input for reaching a better understanding concerning how the writers manipulate interpersonal resources. In this part, this study provides information concerning the writers' success in exploiting resources of attitude, engagement, and graduation in constructing powerful arguments. However, regardless the writers' success, this study also explicates that, in several cases, the writers seemingly face challenges in communicating monoglossic resource that opens a room for "discussion and argumentation" (Isaac, 2012, p. 206; see also Martin & White, 2005) that, as a result, can make the writers' arguments become less powerful. Stepping on this information, then, the supervisors can provide an appropriate help to facilitate the writers to overcome the problems by providing supportive arguments as suggested by Martin & White (2005; see also Hyland, 2004; Emilia, 2008).

Lastly, for the policy makers, precisely, in the research site, or, in general, in other universities that have doctoral programs, this study can become the baseline information to design a curriculum accommodating the necessity for involving appraisal theory in the teaching of writing. In the university where this study was conducted, the doctoral candidates were required to publish paper in an international journal. Parallel to the need to publish paper in an international journal, the appropriate deployment of interpersonal resources realized in the use of attitude, engagement, and graduation. The appropriate deployment of interpersonal resources becomes a great demand, since, by means of these resources, the writers can 'sell' (Swales & Feak, 1990, p 29) their research by articulating positive and negative point of view, engaging with other voices, anticipating alternative value positions, and raising or lowering the propositions (Martin, 1992;

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White, 1998; Martin & White, 2005; Martin & Rose, 2003; Hood, 2004, 2010; Lee, 2006).

1.6 Definition of Terms

This section presents brief and technical definitions of concepts used in this study. It aims to avoid ambiguity, misunderstanding, and misinterpretation of the concepts employed. The terms include interpersonal resource, appraisal theory, and doctoral Thesis.

Interpersonal resource derives from the notion ‘interpersonal’ suggested by Martin & White (2005) referring to subjective presence of writers in texts as they adopt stances towards both the material they present and those with whom they communicate. Thus, interpersonal resource can be defined as kind of resources used by the writers to express their subjective position towards the material they present in the texts and to communicate their subjective position with the readers. More specifically, in this study, interpersonal resource matches with the appraisal features proposed by Martin & White (2005) consisting three major domains of attitude, engagement and graduation.

Appraisal theory is defined as semantic resources used to negotiate emotions, judgments, and valuations, alongside resources for amplifying and engaging with these evaluations (Martin, 2000). It is divided into three major systems, those are: attitude, engagement, and graduation. Attitude refers to “our feelings, including emotional reactions, judgement of behavior and evaluation of things” (Martin & White, 2007). Engagement is concerned with “type of resources for positioning the speaker's/author's voice with respect to the various propositions and proposals conveyed by a text” (White, 2004). Lastly, Graduation encompasses resources which strengthen or weaken Attitude, resource for adjusting the volume of items (Martin & Rose, 2003).

Doctoral Thesis is a document submitted for pursuing a doctoral degree. It commonly comprises five chapters, those are: introduction, literature review, research method, findings and discussion, and conclusion.

1.7 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is written in five chapters. Chapter I introduces the study covering subsections of background, scope of the study, research

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questions, purpose of the study, significance of the study, definition of key terms, and organization of the thesis. Chapter II explores relevant literature concerning the theories framing the study, mainly to do with discussing systemic functional linguistic (SFL), situating appraisal theory in SFL, appraisal theory, and previous studies on appraisal theory. Chapter III outlines the design and methodology used in the study including a detailed explanation regarding the purpose of the study, site and participants, samples, design of research, data collection techniques, and a tool to analyze the data through appraisal theory lenses. Chapter IV offers a discussion of the analysis on doctoral theses utilizing appraisal theory embracing the three subsystems of attitude, engagement, and graduation. As a closing, Chapter V provides conclusion drawn from the discussion in Chapter IV as well suggestion and limitation of the study.

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