CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the issues happening in the context of the research and the gap. Additionally, this chapter presents the research questions, the objectives of the study, the significance of the study, the scope of the study, the organization of the paper, and the clarification of the key terms.

1.1 Background of the study

Writing an English abstract is challenging for many EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students. This is because not only do they have to summarize the entire article but they also have to adjust it to the expectation of the journals (Joseph & Lim, 2018; Papanas, 2012). Sidek, Saad, Baharun, and Idris (2016) affirmed that abstract writing is incredibly frustrating and challenging because it is not only to elucidate the research we have done but also to think that it is written for specific audiences and specific purposes. Whittlestone (2016) also stated that abstract writing can be quite complicated because students are required to smoothly construct the idea and successfully communicate it to the target readers using correct knowledge on how to compose sentences in terms of the grammatical rules, feasibility, possibility, and appropriateness of the utterance and organization. Thus, to make abstract writing easier, the students are suggested to follow the elements of move-step in abstract. A move is defined as a part of text containing a certain form of structure that performs coherent communicative purpose (Safnil, 2000; Swales, 2004). The move in this case is the structure of an abstract such as introduction, aim, method, finding, and conclusion. Meanwhile, the step refers to an element that realizes the move (Crookes, 1986; Swales, 1990). In this study, the steps refer to the content of the moves proposed by Hyland (2000). For example, in the introduction, the students can describe the gap identification, definition of key terms, arguing for topic significance, or topic generalization. Mishak, Marusic, and Marusic (2005) state the move-step of abstract is pivotal to take into account because it helps to provide a clear and a brief organization of information in abstract

within a limited word. In addition, the elements of move-step have been perceived as an important in the decision of acceptance of an article (Swales, 1990).

For example, In English Review Journal of English Education's (ERJEE) guideline of abstract writing mentioned detailed requirement such as the abstract should be written within 150-250 words consisting of five elements of moves model (introduction, aim, method, result, and conclusion). This guideline is also similar in Scopus-indexed journal, Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics (IJAL). On the other hand, Glasgow FIP world congresses (2018) mentioned the abstract should have the subheadings describing the title, background study, aims, methodology, result, and conclusion, used British English and written in no more than 1,700 characters. The elements of moves requirement in the abstract helps to produce a well-written abstract. Meanwhile, well-structured abstracts can help express the idea in a condensed form (Katic & Safranj, 2018). Ideally, the structure of an abstract should consist of an introduction of the issues, the aims, the research method, the result, and the conclusion (Hyland, 2000; Swales, 2004). Fogarty and Farrell (2016) mentioned that the structure must be followed and presented clearly for the sake of publication and marketing, which is to persuade or encourage the readers to read the entire paper and to achieve a short and clear written message (San, Yik, & Tan, 2012)

Studies on abstracts in research articles have gained popularity for years and have been investigated quite extensively and thoroughly (Bonn & Swales, 2007; Hyland, 2000; Pho, 2008; Ren & Li, 2011; Saboori & Hashemi, 2013; Suntara & Usaha, 2013; Tseng, 2011). For instance, a study conducted by Çakır (2016) compared approximately 240 abstracts written by English and Turkish authors to analyze the linguistic features, specifically the adverbs. The study discovered that native authors used more adverbs in their writings. Similar to Çakır's, Abdollahpour and Gholami (2018) analyzed approximately 1500 abstracts on medical science. The investigation mostly focused on the kind of structure employed by the writers. The result of the study showed that most of the abstracts refered to Bunton's model (2002) that was adopted from Swales (2004) which involves summarizing the result

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(STR), presenting the methodology (PTM), presenting the study (PTS), and situating the research (STR).

A study about the moves was also conducted by Kurniawan, Lubis, Suherdi, and Arifin. (2019) in which they analyzed 28 abstracts from four applied linguistics journals to investigate whether the Scopus-indexed journal quartile affected the organization structure and linguistic realization. The findings revealed that the Scopus-indexed journal quartile determined the verb tense of five-move model adopted from Hyland (2000) but it did not necessarily affect the consistency of rhetorical organization, specifically on performing the moves in introduction and conclusion. Recently, Suherdi, Kurniawan, and Lubis (forthcoming) conducted a research study about the interplay between the authors' understandings of abstract moves and their writing products. The study involved 18 Indonesian authors (experts in journal writing). The findings showed that most of the authors tend not to demonstrate their understandings of abstract writings patterns, the step-move and their actual writing products. This is due to three main reasons such as the variations of journals' expectations, experience in writing the abstracts, and the level of familiarity of the abstracts move-step.

Referring to the previously mentioned studies, it can be inferred that studies on abstract analysis, the moves, have been done comprehensively and extensively ranging from grammatical features, rhetorical organization, to comparing the authors' understandings and their actual writing. The latter, however, is still conducted rather scantly even though some scholars state that the students' understandings of abstract pattern can influence their writing performance (McCuthen, 2011; Suherdi et al., forthcoming). This is in line with Supatranont (2012) who stated that students failed to write a good abstract reflecting the entire article due to the lack of understanding of the structure of an abstract. In other words, students' understandings of abstract structure were closely related. In fact, the aligment between the students' understandings and the actual writings may not be detected (Suherdi et al., forthcoming). Thus, this study focused on this matter.

According to Suherdi et al. (forthcoming), the author's understanding of structure of abstract is a part of genre knowledge which is related to his/her

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background knowledge. Tardy (2009) mentioned four types of genre knowledge: subject matter or content knowledge, process knowledge, formal knowledge, and rhetorical knowledge. This study, however, only focused on the formal knowledge of the students which deals with the students' understandings of move-step in research article abstract. Basically, this study is similar to Suherdi et al.'s study (forthcoming) which explored the comparison between the students' understandings of abstract pattern and the actual manifestation of move-step structure written in the abstracts. However, this study involved different participants which were novice writers, the scholarship awardees majoring English Education in the Indonesia University of Education year 2016 and 2017 who have published an article in Scopus-indexed journals or have participated in the proceeding of the international conferences. The selection is made because there maybe some differences between students' understandings and the actual writing (Magnifico, 2010). In addition, this research also looked at the challenges of abstract writing.

1.2 Research questions

Referring to the aforementioned background, this study sought to find the answers to the following research questions:

1.2.1 How are the graduates' understandings of abstract writing reflected in their writings?

1.2.2 What are the challenges the graduates' faced in writing the abstracts?

1.3 Objectives of the study

Following the research questions above, this study investigated the students' understandings of move-step structure which should present a clear introduction of the issues, aims, research method, result, and conclusion (Hyland, 2000). Additionally, this study also looked into the writing of abstract in order to compare the students' understandings to their actual writings. Lastly, it also aimed to explore the challenges in abstract writing for publication.

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1.4 Significance of the study

The finding of the study has the potential to provide better insight regarding the students' understandings of abstract construction and the types of elements of move-step that is mostly used in published abstract in a Scopus indexed journal or proceeding. The study is expected to benefit English lecturers, graduate students, and future researchers. For English lecturers, the study is expected to provide an insightful analysis and factual data of graduate abstracts so that they know what to add, what to omit, and what to improve in research or academic writing courses. Moreover, the study is also expected to give knowledge to graduates' students about the structure of internationally standardized abstracts. This study is also expected to share some benefits for future researchers as supporting data and data comparison, reference, and other related needs in conducting an extended study about abstract evaluation, for instance, analyzing the abstract from the readers' point of view.

1.5 The scope of the study

The primary concerns of the study were to conduct a deeper investigation and analysis of the English major graduates' understandings of abstract structure, the actual manifestation of move-step structure written by them, and the challenges they face. The abstract move-step evaluation guideline was taken from Hyland (2000) that involves five aspects of the following: (1) **introduction** (steps: making a topic generalization, defining key terms, arguing for topic significance, and identifying gaps); (2) **aims** (step: stating the research purpose); (3) **method** (steps: describing participant or data sources, instruments, procedure, and context); (4) **result** (step: describing the main result); (5) **conclusion** (steps: deducing conclusion, evaluating research significance, stating limitation, and presenting recommendation or implication).

However, this study also used Kurniawan et al.'s (2019) elaboration of Hyland's step, especially the step of move 3 (methodology) to get a clearer and easier definition of the moves. According to Kurniawan et al.'s (2019), the step of move 3 consists of design, data, or participant (step 1), instrument (step 2), collection

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procedure, and collection analysis (step 3). Meanwhile, in Hyland's (2000) study there were only describing participant, data source, instruments, procedure, and context. The term procedure and context was not easy to define. Thus, Kurniawan et al.'s (2019) elaboration is included.

In addition, this study adopted a genre knowledge analysis, specifically formal knowledge analysis in analyzing the students' understandings (Tardy, 2009). This study delimited the subject of the investigation to scholarship awardees majoring in English Education year 2016 and 2017 in the Indonesia University of Education who have published articles in a Scopus indexed journal or have participated in a proceeding of an international conference.

1.6 Organization of the paper

This paper consists of five chapters. The first chapter presents: (1) background of the study; (2) research questions; (3) significance of the study; (4) scope of the research; (5) clarification of key terms used in the study; and (6) the organization of the paper.

Chapter Two focuses on the literature review and some previous related studies that are used to analyze the data. This chapter primarily presents the theories and findings related to the understanding of abstract pattern, the moves-steps structure as well as the challenges of abstract writing.

Chapter Three provides detailed information about the research methodology. The research design, research setting, research participant, data source, data collection, and data analysis are also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter Four presents the result of the data analysis, highlighting the graduates' understandings of move-step, the challenges of abstract writing for publication or proceeding of an international conference, and to compare the students' understandings of abstract moves-steps and the actual writing according to Hyland's theory (2000). In addition, this chapter also discusses the result of the findings and relates it to the supporting theory.

Finally, Chapter Five presents the conclusion of the overall discussion, an implication of the research, puts forward some suggestions for English lecturers, graduates' students, and future researchers, and the limitation of the study.

1.7 Clarification of the key terms

1. Graduates' understandings

Understanding is a background knowledge of a text structure. In other word, the understandings in this study refer to the level of familiarity of the text. According to Suherdi et al. (forthcoming), the level of familiarity covers three things such as familiarity with the topic, familiarity with the genre and its features, and familiarity with the task requirement. This study, only focus on the familiarity with the genre and its features, the structure and component of research article abstract (the move-step). The level of familiarity can be determined by to what extent the graduates are able to communicate the idea of eligible structure (Magnifico, 2010). For example, the graduates are able to mention five type of moves and its step in the abstract and are able to implement and identify the types of step used in their writing. For instance, graduates are able to mention the introduction (move 1) consists of four steps and are able to correctly identify the type of step used in their writing such as stating that they use identifying the gap (step 4) in introduction.

The graduates' understanding of abstract structure is also a part of genre knowledge (Suherdi et al., forthcoming). According to Tardy (2009), There are four types of genre knowledge: subject matter or content knowledge, process knowledge, formal knowledge, and rhetorical knowledge (Tardy, 2009). This study only focused on the formal knowledge of the students which deals with the students' understandings of the move-step of a journal article abstract.

2. Graduates' actual writing

Graduates' actual writing refers to English major graduates' abstracts at Indonesia University of Education. The abstracts were taken from ten scholarship awardees who successfully published an article in a Scopus indexed journal or participated in proceeding of international conferences.

3. Challenges

The challenges in this study refer to some problems encountered by the students during writing the research article abstract. The challenge is classified into two categories, language-related challenges and non-language-related challenges. The former related to language challenges such as creating a well-structured paragraph, structuring argument, or making a claim. The latter refers to non-language problems such as plagiarism, emotional or psychological factors or lack of resources (Ferguson, 2011).

4. Academic writing

Academic writing refers to writing activity that aims to scientifically and objectively give information about a specific field of study or topic. It embraces the governing rules of academic discourse or the requirement at the university or college level (Lubis, 2018; Shannon, 2011).

5. Research article

A research article is a kind of academic writing or scholarly writing that reports an original study and is published in a scholarly journal. It generally consists of title, introduction, abstract, methodology, result, discussion, conclusion, and references. The aim of the research article is to seek the trend within a specific study, stand for, expand, or argue against the existing issues within a specific field (Lubis, 2018; Shannon, 2011).

6. Research article abstract

Research article abstract refers to a brief or short summary of the entire paper (University of Adelaide, n.d.). It usually consists of 150-250 words which begins with brief and precise introduction of the issue or topic of the research, followed by a description of a research method, major finding, and conclusion (Hyland, 2000). In this study, the abstracts refer to English Education abstracts published in Scopus-indexed journal or proceeding of the international conference.

7. Move-step in abstract writing

According to Swales (2004), a move is defined as a unit of a paragraph that performs coherent communicative purpose while the steps are an element that realizes the move (Crookes, 1986; Swales, 1990). The move-step in this study was

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analyzed using Hyland's theory (2000) which consists of several moves and steps including:

    a. Introduction which involves 4 steps such as: (1) S1: arguing for topic significance; (2) S2: making topic generalization; S3: defining key terms; and S4: identifying the gap,

    b. Aims which involves 1 step, stating the research purpose,

    c. Method which involves 3 steps: describing participants or data sources (S1), instruments (S2), procedure and context (S3),

    d. Finding which involves describing the main result (S1), and

    e. Conclusion which consists of 4 steps: deducing conclusion (S1), evaluating research significance (S2), stating the limitation of the research (S3), and presenting recommendations or implication of the study (S4).

This study also used Kurniawan et al.'s (2019) elaboration of Hyland's step especially the step of move 3 (methodology). The step of move 3 consists of design, data, or participant (step 1), instrument (step 2), collection procedure and collection analysis (step 3).

In this study, the rhetorical moves were analyzed by looking over the manifestation of moves and their constituent steps. The move is defined as communicative units (e.g., Move 1=providing background information). The step is defined as sub-communicative units (e.g., Step 1 of Move 2=stating the issue on the topic).

8. Graduates' claimed knowledge

Graduates claimed refers to the students' statement regarding the type of move and step used in their writing. This aspect is similar to the students' understandings. Basically, it is about identifying the type of move-step used their writing. For example, the graduates stated that they only used one type of step, identifying the gap in introduction section. This claimed is used to know in what extent they have understood the concept of move-step in abstract. To know whether they can identify each step they used in move 1 to 5 correctly.

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