

# ANALYSIS OF RHETORICAL MOVES OF JOURNAL ARTICLES AND ITS IMPLICATION TO THE TEACHING OF ACADEMIC WRITING

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## ABSTRACT

*This research aims at analysing journal articles to find out how rhetorical moves proceed. Such an analysis is beneficial in teaching academic writing for undergraduate students. Eight articles written by native Indonesian and native English writers published in the international journals indexed by Scopus and national journals accredited by Directorate General of Higher Education (DIKTI) were taken as source of data. To analyse the data theoretical framework proposed by Swales was used for introduction section of the articles and Yang & Allison framework for discussion section. The research reveals the following results: (1) Native English writers and Native Indonesian writers recognize and apply the generic structure of English research articles with regard to Swales's and Yang & Alison's frameworks of rhetorical moves. (2) Breadth of application varies for each writer writing the articles in the two journals. These findings implicate that rethorical moves should be included as material of instruction to teach academic writing for students of undegraduate programs.*

*Keywords: Rhetorical moves, Journal Articles, Academic writing*

## INTRODUCTION

Rhetorical move is technique of using language effectively and persuasively. It is a skill of discourse which employs various ways to convince and influence an audience. Suryani, et al (2014: 30) defines a rhetorical move is as the ability and study on the use of language with persuasive effect, a more contemporary definition for rhetorical refers to skills on understanding the audience roles in shaping communication, identifying and responding to the audience in terms of writing situation. Therefore, rhetorical move it functions as a tool for writers which empower them to convince their readers about their points of view. Furthermore, rhetorical move it shows the writer's ability to process words in the language and rhetorical intent to achieve some purposes of the terms-expressed using such words.

The study of moves analysis was originally developed by John M. Swales (1981, 1990, and 2004) to functionally describe a part or section of Research Articles. This approach, which seeks to operate a text into particular parts, originated from the educational objectives of supporting the teaching of academic writing and reading for non-native speakers of English. Move is understood as a practical part of texts to achieve a communicative purpose or seeking attainment of a defined goal (Brett, 1994; Hopkins & Dudley-Evans, 1988; Martín-Martín, 2003; and Swales, 1990, 2004). Holmes (1998: 322) adds move is a realization of a specific overall communicative purpose through a variety of linguistic strategies, while Brett (1994) simply defines move as a communicative category. At the same time, students also learn how to access, select and evaluate information from different sources and to formulate ideas (Anderson and Poole, 2001:4). In other words, academic writing is arguably the most important language skill to English tertiary students whose grades are largely determined by their performance in written assignments, academic reports, term examinations and graduation theses (Nga, 2009:112).

As result, rhetorical move is the ability of processing language effectively in order to make the readers easily understand and direct what the message in our writing by moving the storyline through the complex to the climax.

## METHOD

The method used in this study is content analysis. Content Analysis is a qualitative research technique to analyse text data by which inferences are made. It is a systematic, replicable technique for compressing words of text into fewer content categories (Barelson, 1952; Weber, 1990). Holsti (1968) argued that content analysis is “any technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying special characteristic of message”.

The procedure to employ this study consists of some steps as follows:

1. Collecting published English research journal articles
2. Separate up-date journal by the year of publishing
3. Categorize journal derived from native Indonesian writers and native English writers from each journal.
4. Compiles and separate the appropriate data
5. Analyzing the data
6. Representing, interpreting the data and concluding the data.

In this study qualitative data of clauses from eight articles were collected. They particularly selected to include Introduction and Discussion sections. Two categories of journals were examined, first the research journal articles published in international English journal indexed by Scopus, SAGE Publication and TESOL quarterly, that's journals dominantly published in Scopus in the field of English language teaching. Second, the research journal articles certified and accredited by Directorate General of Higher Education (*DIKTI*) They are Cultural and English Language Teaching (CELT) and teaching of English as a foreign language in Indonesia (TEFLIN) journals. The clauses of articles are as theoretical sampling that used in this study to gain sufficient number of data. Coyne (1997) stated, “Sampling procedures in qualitative research are not so rigidly prescribed as in quantitative studies. This flexibility in sampling, however, may be confusing for some researchers and mistakes may be made. The thought is that the researcher collects data from any individual or any group of people who can provide the appropriate and relevant data for the generation of their theory. This sampling technique mentioned by Creswell (2008:217) as verifying and not verifying sampling which is “a purposeful strategy used during study to summarize on specific cases to test or explore further specific findings”. Since this sampling happen when data collection is being started, this sampling allows the researchers to suspend the data collection if the data analysis does not show the features.

The data are collected by the following procedures:

1. Find the articles from international and domestic research journals
2. Convert the articles into document in Microsoft word program
3. Specify the clauses from the articles as the basis of the unit of analysis
4. Identify the move and step of the clauses
5. Present the clauses into the analysis table.

Data analysis procedure in this study used textual/document analysis, the clauses used in particular parts of the articles are analysed and interpreted based on move analysis to find out the rhetorical moves of Research articles Introduction and Discussion sections. In this step, the identification of rhetorical move is conduct through underlining the typical features (words, statement, or phrase) of move elements. Furthermore, to find out the prominent move elements in Introduction and Discussion sections, each paragraph and clause in the text were analysed in detail to find out the position.

The writer used the theory proposed by Swales (1990) for introduction section, this model establishes the general topic being discussed, resorting to various step and then creates a niche within the territory, and eventually, presents occupying the niche. Chahal (2014) states that The CARS Swales' model (1990) has been the predominant analytical tool used in the examination of the Introduction component of RAs, then the move model proposed by Swales (1990) is has been well-known. Many researchers conducted his model. Such as Bhatia (1997), Samraj, (2002), Habibi (2008), Zhang, Hu (2010), Lakic (2010), Sheldon (2013), Widiastuti (2013), and Chahal (2014).

Furthermore the writer used the theory proposed by Yang & Allison (2003) for discussion section. The move model proposed by Yang and Allison (2003) was used as the framework for the move identification because it was developed from the analysis of research articles (RAs) in Applied Linguistics which is also the focus of the present study. The Yang and Allison (2003) framework, though not the only available framework, is the most comprehensive one. There are several other frameworks for move analysis (e.g., Hopkins & Dudley-Evans, 1988; Kanoksilapatham, 2005). The Yang and Allison's move model is, however, preferred for several reasons. The Yang and Allison's move model is the most suitable framework for applied linguistics research (Holmes, 1997; Kanoksilapatham, 2005; Nwogu, 1997). Moreover, this model is an extension and modification of several other models, and its developers have found it to be the most comprehensive model for move analysis in Applied Linguistics (Nodoushan, 2011).

## FINDINGS AND INTREPRETATION

### A. The Rhetorical Moves of Journal Article Introduction Section.

As shown in Table 1 the most frequent was existed in native English writers is move I step 1 (*claiming centrality*) with percentage 22.11 % .”. It means that claiming centrality seems to be made in two ways; either by assertions about the importance of the topic being discussed or by assertions concerning active research activity in the area concerned. Swales (1990) state that claiming centrality is “appeals to the discourse community whereby members are asked to accept that research about to be reported is part of lively, significant or well-established research area. And meanwhile the most frequent was existed in native Indonesian writers is move II step 1 (counter claiming) with percentage 23.33 %. The main communicative purpose of a move II step 1 (counter-claiming) is to use criticism or negative evaluation results in order to create a space for the present research. In order to achieve such communicative purpose, RA writers need logical arguments to convince and persuade readers to accept that the previous related studies have some kind of defect.

Table 1. The distribution of moves/steps Introduction section

Moves	Steps	Native English (Frequency)	Percentage %	Native Indonesian (Frequency)	Percentage %
Move 1 (Establishing a territory)	Step 1 Claiming centrality	46	22.1	15	16.7
	Step 2 Making topic generalization	28	13.5	17	18.9
	Step 3 Reviewing items of previous research	31	14.9	10	11.1
Move 2 (Establishing a niche)	Step 1 A Counter-claiming	38	18.3	21	23.3
	Step 1 B Indicating gap	20	9.6	1	1.1
	Step 1 C Question-raising	20	9.6	5	5.5
	Step 1 D Continuing a tradition	11	5.3	13	14.4
Move 3 (Occupying a niche)	Step 1 A Outlining purpose	6	2.9	3	3.3
	Step 1 B Announcing present research	2	0.10	2	2.2
	Step 2 Announcing principal findings	4	1.9	2	2.2
	Step 3 Indicating RA structure	2	0.10	1	
Total		208	100	90	100

Move I step 1, claiming centrality. Example:

1. *Given their intellectual and behavioral challenges associated with reading, it would seem particularly **important** that instruction for students with ID explicitly and systematically address phonics, a critical foundational skill identified in reading research*
2. *Monitoring and evaluating are **essential elements** of reflection process.*

The instances claim the importance of the research topic. The linguistic features used to express this particular move/step include the examples show that the noun is often strengthened by the adjectives such as *essential elements*. The authors may claim that the topic under investigation is important and significance for his/her own research such as *important, essential elements*.

Move I step 2: Making topic generalization.

In the current study Step 2 and its constituent strategies were fulfilled as mentioned by Swales (1990) through making either A) statements about the knowledge or practice or B) statements about the phenomena. See two examples in this regard below. Example:

1. *Whilst providing an L1 equivalent **may seem** a shortcut to developing understanding of that word, it could deprive the learner of the opportunity to attempt comprehension by inference.*
2. *The teaching style is **viewed as** one in which the activities in the classroom are predominantly teacher led and the students are considered to adopt a more passive role.*

Move 1 step 3: Reviewing items of previous research.

In step 3, the writer/researcher provides the academic circle with an account of previous studies, their findings and their conductors (Lakic, 2010). This is the very moment when the researcher specifically links claims, assertions, and findings with the person who has put them forward. Example:

1. ***Kassens-Noor (2012)** suggests that Twitter can enhance active learning in higher education outside of the classroom, finding that Twitter enhanced communication and supported informal learning practices.*
2. ***(Macaro, 1997) reported** that learners were often left floundering by L2-only instruction, particularly when teachers were giving instructions for carrying out a task, a finding echoed by other researchers (Clark & Trafford, 1996) and with different age groups.*

Move II: Establishing a niche, serve the function of establishing a need for research (Kanoksilapatham, 2005). After describing important features of the research territory (move I), academic writer typically try claim a “niche” for their research. They can do this by showing the previous research that the aspects of the research field still needing further investigation. Swales states that this often signalled by words expressing a contrast or negative evaluation such as in “Contrast” i.e. *however, but, yet, nevertheless, unfortunately, although*. “Quantity” i.e. *few, less, no, none*. “Verbs” fail, ignore, prevent, etc. “Adjective” difficult, restricted, uncertain, ineffective, scarce, etc.

Move II step 1 A: Counter-claiming. This step frequently follows move 1-step 3, and is used to introduce an opposing viewpoint or pinpoint weaknesses in previous research (Swales, 1990). Example:

1. *Moreover, the four options improved **not only** their knowledge in their disciplinary study **but also** in curricular aspects such as in making lesson plans and in applying teaching methodologies.*
2. ***However**, by far the most common function of L1 use is to provide information about the meanings of lexical items (Liu et al., 2004; Rolin-Ianziti & Brownlie, 2002).*

Move II step 1 B: Indicating a gap is characterized by the use of conjunctions; *however, but, yet*. Different lexical means are used to express the gap in the existing knowledge and it frequently follows move I step 2 making topic generalizations (Swales, 1990). Example:

1. All students in the Chaudron research (1983, cited in Topping et al., 2000) showed a similar pattern of improvement from the first draft to the final draft, regardless of the origin of the feedback.
2. The peer editors used the criteria to comment but did not assign grades. The researcher did assign grades for each performance trait.

The instances demonstrate explicit critical comments addressing a current gap on procedures, techniques, or existing research for being inadequate or limited by using lexical items with negative connotations (*regardless*). The use of contradiction connectors (*however*) indicates that existing knowledge stand some limitations, and thus remains to be ameliorated. Authors may also use negation within verb phrase (did not).

Move II step 1 C: Question-raising is another way of establishing the niche. The author puts forward the questions that previous research did not answer. The questions that the author raises may be both direct and indirect. The noun *question* is frequently used in sentences containing an indirect question (Lakic, 2010). Example:

1. How did peer editors engage in discovery mode interactions during the peer critique process?
2. How will this recommendation affect the company's Return On Investment (ROI)?

Move II step 1 D: Continuing tradition is frequently signalled by logical connector such as *therefore, hence, consequently, need to, or thus* (Swales, 1990). And this step can be motivated by the fact that the current body of knowledge is not enough and thus needs to be further investigated by additional research. Example:

1. It can be assumed, therefore that students having a high interest in writing, will have a higher achievement in their writing skill.
2. An appropriate instructional approach is needed to support some learning objectives, because suitable instructional approaches will determine the students' learning achievements.

Move III: Occupying a niche. In this move the writer/researcher reveal their solution to help fill the gap, answer the specific question or continue a research tradition that has been presented in Move II (Swales, 1990). This move is fulfilled through the following constituent steps: (1A) Outlining purposes (1B) Announcing present research. 2. Announcing principle findings, 3. Indicating RA structure (Swales, 1990).

Move III step 1A: Outlining purposes. The writer introduces his/her solution to the problem described in move 2 by stating the main purpose or aim of the study and the verb tenses used depend on whether the writer is referring to physical or abstract concept (Swales, 1990). The statement of purpose is the first of the two obligatory steps in move III. Swales identifies this step by the use of standard or collapsed structure, choice of present tense, the absence of references to previous research and the use of deictic references to the present text, such as *this, the present, we, here, now, I, and herein* (1990:159, 160). Example:

1. The current study was aimed at describing how reflective learning method can improve the students' pronunciation of English suprasegmental features.
2. The secondary purpose of the study was to determine how discovery mode (Lockhart and Ng, 1995) interactions were naturally present among the peer editors.

Move III step 1B: Announcing present research. This step represents an alternative strategy to that used in step 1A. Here, the writer describes the aims in terms of what the research sets out to do or accomplish (swales, 1990). Example:

1. In the present study, video is chosen to help create a condition which best favors reflective learning. Video has fixative property, with which it can record, save, and reproduce information when needed (Suwatno, 2012). With these characteristics, students can utilize video to record, play and replay events.

2. **The study** also sought to explore how or in what ways style of teaching affects attitudes towards Facebook.

Move III step 2: Announcing principal findings. In this step the writer considers the result to be the most important aspect of the research (swales, 1990). Example;

1. *One found that teaching English environmental print (e.g., store signs) words to four Spanish-dominant middle school students with ID produced **equally effective results** in both treatment conditions.*
2. **Findings to date have shown** that learners do not appear to want the L1 excluded from classroom interaction.

Move III step 3: Indicating RA structure. This step starts with an introductory sentence. Example:

1. **This latter study was conducted** with 32 older participants ranging in age from 9 to 20, a rarity in the extant literature.
2. *There are **two views** of out-of-school literacies. First, out-of-school literacies refer to any literacy practice– including school-like or school centric literacies occurring in contexts outside formal school settings. Second, those refer to any literacy practice that excludes school literacies from consideration (Knobel & Lankshear, 2003).*

#### B. The Rhetorical Moves of Journal Article Discussion Section.

As shown in Table2 the most frequent was existed in native English writers is move II (*reporting result*) with percentage 21.2 %. It means that move II as obligatory with focus on relevant evidence such as statistics and example of research result meanwhile the smallest showed in move III (summarizing result) it means that the researchers less to sum up the result of study on their journals and the most frequent was existed in native Indonesian writers is also move II (*reporting result*) with percentage 57.8 % and no frequency occurred in Move IV step 4 (evaluating result), Move VI step 3 (evaluating methodology), and Move VII step 3 (Implication)

Table 2. The distribution of moves/steps Discussion section

Moves	Steps	Native English (Frequency)	%	Native Indonesian (Frequency)	%
Move 1 (Background Information)		10	19.2	3	5.8
Move 2 (Reporting Result)		11	21.2	30	57.8
Move 3 (Summarizing Results)		0	0	1	1.9
Move 4 (Commenting Results)	Step 1 (A): Interpreting results	2	3.8	3	5.8
	Step 2 (B): Comparing/contrasting results with literature	5	9.6	3	5.8
	Step 3 (C): Accounting for results	2	3.8	4	7.7
	Step 4 (D): Evaluating results	0	0	0	0
Move 5 (Summarizing the study)		2	3.8	4	7.7
Move 6 (Evaluating the study)	Step 1 (A): Indicating limitation	1	1.9	0	0
	Step 2 (B): Indicating significant	1	1.9	3	5.8
	Step 3 (C): Evaluating methodology	2	3.8	0	0
Move 7 (Deduction from research)	Step 1 (A): Making Suggestion	9	17.3	0	0
	Step 2 (B): Recommending Research	6	11.5	1	1.9
	Step 3 (C): Implication	1	1.9	0	0
Total		52	100	52	100

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Move 1: Background information. This move is used to prepare the readers for the report or discussion of results that follows. This includes some main statements such as research questions, the aims and purposes of the study, theoretical background or established knowledge and the study's research methodology (Wirada & Amnuai, 2013). To realize this move, both present and past simple tenses in the form of active or passive voices were used (Yang & Allison, 2003). Realizations of this move are as follows. Examples:

- 1) ***This study demonstrates** that the students practiced various kinds of out of school English literacy activities.*
- 2) ***This study** has attempted to link the debate regarding the language background of English teachers (whether they can or cannot speak the learners' L1) with the issue of whether English-only instruction is preferable to allowing some switching to L1.*

Move 2: Reporting results. The function of this move is to present the results of the study. Move 2 was the first most frequent move in both Indonesian English journals and international English journal were the highest number appeared. Noticeably, the results being presented were also likely to be commented upon. To indicate this move, some linguistic signals or expressions associated with numerical values, reporting verbs, and statements about upcoming outcomes involving graphs, figures, examples, and tables were employed extensively (yang & Allison, 2003). Both past and present simple tenses were used in this move (Wirada & Amnuai, 2013). Examples:

1. ***The study shows that** the English literacy of the majority of the fourth grade students ( $\geq 60\%$ ) was in early advanced and advanced levels for almost all aspects of reading and writing skills.*
2. ***This study has filled some knowledge gaps** in the area of faculty/educators' use of SNSs and their attitudes towards using SNSs as an educational tool.*

Move 3: Summarizing results. The function of this move is to sum up the results. Linguistic clues used to identify this move were summarizing verbs/nouns/phrases such as *to sum up*, *to summarize*, *in summary*, and *in brief*, can be concluded. (Holmes, 1997)

Examples:

1. *From this it **can be concluded** that the data of the two experimental groups is homogenit. The variance homogeneity testing from the attribute categories of the groups in this study was done through the stages used from part (a) above.*

Move 4: Commenting on results. The objective of this move is to establish the meaning and significance of the research results in relation to the relevant field. Move 4 is considered as a central move in which the results of the study are commented on through four different steps, including 'Interpreting results', 'Comparing results with literature', 'Accounting for results', and 'Evaluating results'. The finding conforms to Yang and Allison's (2003) study in which the occurrence of this move was obligatory, and it could occur repeatedly in the Discussion sections.

Move 4 step 1: Interpreting results. This is the step where the authors make claims or generalizations based on the results of the study. This step was considered conventional for sets of Discussions. Examples:

1. *Taking this perspective into account, **it is quite possible that students in the current study** were afraid of losing face, so they avoided asking questions.*

Move 4 step 2: Comparing results with literature. This step allows the authors to compare their study's findings with those of previous works. Some distinct linguistic features were used to realize this step, particularly in the forms of 'be' plus some adjectives (e.g. *be consistent with*, *be similar to*) or

certain words or phrases such as *agree with*, *reported in*, *consistent with*, *in line with* and these linguistic signals coexisted with citations (Zahra, Amirian, et al, 2008).

Examples:

1. ***This is highly consistent with the views of many researchers and experts, including**Derwing (2009) that teaching pronunciation should be integrated into oral communication skills.*

Move 4 step 3: Accounting for results. In this step, the authors provide the readers with further explanation or give the reasons for the observed differences in findings or unexpected outcomes. The rational explanations used to realize this particular communicative purpose were highlighted by the use of words or phrases such as *possible explanation for*, *difference between*, *etc* (Khalili & Maryam, 2015). Examples:

1. *The results of Test 2 show an improvement in both aspects. Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 at the end of this section of the article illustrate clear **differences between** high, middle, and low performers' English proficiency.*
2. ***The difference** of out-of-school nonacademic English literacy activities **between** the high, middle and low performers is in the frequency of their engagement and the number of books they have in their home.*

Move 4 step 4: Evaluating results. This is the step where authors evaluate their results by stating the strengths and weaknesses of the results. Move 4 Step 4 was an optional step for both sets of Discussions, as shown in Yang and Allison's (2003) study. Noticeably no occurs in overall articles.

Move 5: Summarizing the study. The function of this move is to provide the readers with the main findings of the research study. The key words used to signal this move were similar to those found in Move 3; however, some differences were observed. The major difference is that summary or conclusive words or phrases, such as *in sum*, *in conclusion* were commonly followed by particular statements related to overall results, while those in Move 3 were followed by specific results (Wirada & Amnuai, 2013). Examples:

1. *The use of reflective method in teaching and learning has impact on students' mastery of suprasegmental features being taught. **Sufficient result** of doing in-class learning tasks **has affected their performance in completing outside class task.***
2. ***The study uncovers three significant characteristics of the students' English literacy practices:** 1) the students were engaged in more academic English literacy activities; 2) they were engaged in pleasurable light reading and writing; 3) their activities occurred in online, electronic audio visual and print environments.*

Move 6: Evaluating the study. The objective of this move is to evaluate the overall study by pointing out the limitations, indicating the contributions or evaluating the methodology.

Move 6 step 1: Indicating limitations. The objective of this step is to describe the limitations of the research being conducted. Examples:

1. *It is acknowledged that **the study was limited** in focus on discovery mode interactions during the peer critique process, with the exclusion of evaluative mode feedback.*

Move 6 step 2: Indicating significance/advantage. The function of this step is to allow the authors to point out the strengths of the study which may be significant for applications or implications. Statements in present simple tense, relating to the significance of research conducted, such as *value*, *benefit*, *fascinate*, *advantage*, *essential*, *encouraged* were commonly used. The realizations of this step are shown in the following examples.

1. ***Reflective learning method** using video which was integrated into communicative, meaningful language activities **has encouraged student involvement in the learning process.***



2. *Previously, the “menu” of classroom activity was not appealing; after reflective method was applied, the students perceived that the classroom instruction was fascinating.*

Move 6 step 3: Evaluating methodology. This step is used in realizing Move 6, and is used to comment on the strengths or weaknesses of the research methodology. Examples:

1. *This revealed that the PF group read significantly more words correctly at pretest than the DE group,  $F(1, 2) = 29.867$ ,  $p = .03$ , but there was no statistically significant difference in performance by the final BPST-III administration.*
2. *Resolving these questions requires research which not only asks young learners for their perceptions of EO instruction, but also documents their teacher’s attempts to put across meaning in English.*

Move 7: Deductions from the research. This is the move where authors draw inference about the results by suggesting what can be done to solve the problems identified by the research, proposing areas for further study or drawing pedagogical implication.

Move 7 step 1: Making suggestions. This step allows authors to highlight how the research contributes to the existing knowledge in the field. Also, Khalili (2008) stated that the authors provide some guidelines from the research findings for the readers in order to solve the problems identified by the research. Examples:

1. *Students’ concerns must be eased by understanding that they will not be assigning grades to the projects and that directed peer review (following a rubric) is well suited to students who have limited subject-matter and writing skills (Rieber, 2006).*
2. *Instructors must emphasize collegiality, professionalism and fair play.*

Move 7 step 2: Recommending further research. This step states some possible areas for future studies. This step can be signalled by words/phrases such as ‘*further studies/research*’, ‘*future studies/research*’, ‘*more studies are needed*’ (Nodoushan (2011), Wirada & Amnuai (2013), Khalili (2015). Examples:

1. *Van Den Berg et al. (2006) called for further study of these discoveries mode interactions, and Karegianes et al. (1980) recommended investigations of peer editing with different types of students.*
2. *Further analysis of the growth between the initial draft and final proposal revealed that the greatest gains occurred in support, followed by audience focus, writing, and, finally, organization.*

Move 7 step 3: Drawing pedagogical implication. This step allows authors to state the pedagogical significance of the study or indicate necessity for pedagogic changes. This may be due to the fact that there is a need to enhance. Research findings may serve this particular need. Examples:

1. *Despite its limitations, this study offers promise that middle school students with mild cognitive impairments enrolled in classes taught in a nonnative language can still profit from explicit reading instruction.*

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This research aims at analysing journal articles to find out how rhetorical moves proceed and its implication to the teaching academic writing because most students still have problems in achieving the communicative purpose of each major element/chapter in a research proposal, i.e. introduction, literature review, and methodology. In general, the students’ main problem was in presenting arguments in terms of justification. Most students have not been able to justify their research area to fill the gap in previous research, justify the literature review to be correlated to the proposed study, and justify the choice of research methodology to answer the research problems.

In order that these findings of the present study gives the beneficial to supports the extensive research into academic writing that emphasizes the importance of explicit teaching of the structure of specific written genres, particularly a research proposal of undergraduate students. The possible solutions that can be proposed to solve the students' problems are guidance, assistance, and explicit teaching in writing the elements and linguistic features of a research proposal to solve their problems in writing a research proposal.

Furthermore, concerning the results of the study, it is suggested to the practitioners that all the subjects related to writing and research in this site and other English-major programs should allow students to have the capacity needed in research and academic writing, especially in writing a research proposal.

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