

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Recently there has been a growing interest in the assessment of student academic writing using Systemic Functional Linguistics for college students (Baba 2014). Prior to the previous study, Baba (2014) reported that the assessment of students' academic writing using SFL can help teachers to determine the level of student's writing skills in academic writing. On the other hand, based on research by Zhihui & Zhijun (2011), teachers often feel unprepared to evaluate students' writing linguistically. In fact, many teachers stop at less specific assessments of writing, such as spelling, capitalization, punctuation, subject-verb agreement, tense, and idiomatic expressions (Christie & Derewianka, 2008; Martin, 1996; Schleppegrell, 2004; Zhihui & Zhijun, 2011).

One of the most important parts of academic writing for students is when they write their thesis on their final project. In attracting readers so that they want to read the entire research article, one of them is the introduction (Asyad, 2016). In the introduction section in the academic context, students are expected to be able to produce writings that display technicality, density, abstractness, and formality (Baba, 2014). While in reality there are still many students who do not understand how to write. For example, Baba's (2014) research it was found that there were incompetent student writing, most of them had difficulty in building themes. In addition, Miki's research (2017) students have difficulty in constructing ideational functions or their experiences with literature. In Milagros' research (2011) it is also stated that the introduction presents a big challenge because in this section they show themselves for the first time, as the result of that, the writing of the introduction must be prepared properly.

Writing an interesting introduction requires the ability to process rhetoric and use words as well as a good thematic. Not only SFL is used in analyzing the introduction, in many studies researchers use the theory of Swales (1990, 2004) to determine the development of the rhetoric. Studies conducted by researchers (e.g Wang & Yang, 2015; Fang & Wang 2011; Cortes, 2013; Rubio, 2011; Tshotsho,

2014; Baba, 2017; Motlagh & Pourchangi, 2019) were mostly carried out using a lot of data collected from various participants and not using both of SFL and Swales theories. So, this research discusses in detail student introduction using both of the theories is quite rare in the literature.

Baba (2014) assessed student writing using a qualitative method that involved students writing academic essays, obtaining data using 'impression' to assess essays with a total of 20 participants. In another hand to this research, in this research, the researcher divides SFL into three important points in the analysis, that are content, organization and style using the assessment rubric developed by Zhihui Fang and Zhijun Wang (2011), and identifying CARS theory in the introduction.

1.2 Rational Research

Academic writing is not an easy thing to do. In the process, students must practice compiling, developing, and analyzing ideas well (Myles, 2002; Baba and Mzwamadoda, 2015). Therefore, many students find it challenging to compose academic writing. According to Zhihui Fang and Zhijun Wang (2011), writing is an essential skill in students' academic success. It feels more difficult for non-native speakers or EFL students to build English academic writing, such as a thesis, or it can be narrowed down to the introduction section (Milagros and Saz, 2011). They must adjust the language and writing style, look for diction and organize the text well.

Use of SFL in Baba (2014) reports that SFL can help teachers to determine the level of student's writing skills in academic writing. That way, the teacher can guide students' writing skills to be better, not only based on improving vocabulary, capitalization, punctuation, and idiomatic expressions (Christie & Derewianka, 2008; Martin, 1996; Schleppegrell, 2004; Zhihui Fang & Zhijun Wang, 2011). So the assessment to measure the extent to which students' skills in writing an introduction using SFL is exciting research.

Previous research on student writing assessment has been carried out by Fan Wei-Kung (2015), Zhipora & Ayelet (2016), and Baba (2014). Fan Wei-Kung (2015) examines the use of blogs in improving writing skills as one of the breakthroughs. Zhipora & Ayelet (2016) used an academic writing course with the same goal as Fan Wei Kung, which is to find out whether the ability is increasing or not. However, in Baba's previous study (2014), the purpose of this study was slightly different, not to improve students' writing skills directly but rather to contain an assessment of 20 student essays that were assessed using SFL. This research is oriented toward assessing students' writing cohesion, coherence, and thematics. However, to get a complete picture of how students write as a whole, this study is still not enough because it has many participants, so it is not focused on just a few participants. Therefore, this study offers more detailed data in addition to the literature.

In addition to SFL, which has been widely used in research, then considering the diverse needs of students regarding academic writing. One of them is about rhetorical writing in the introduction, so the researcher uses an additional theory, namely the theory of Swales (1990, 2004), which examines the rhetoric or student writing approach in the form of a pattern commonly known as Move 1, Move 2, and Move 3. Many previous studies used the rhetorical pattern in their research as a benchmark (e.g., Ahmad, 1997; Ahmed, 2004; Jogthong, 2001; Najjar, 1990; Tailor and Chen, 1991; Chek Kim, 2010; Baba, 2017; Zhihui, 2011). The few studies combine the two theories in the assessment of student writing, even though these two theories have the opportunity to improve student writing. For example in Baba's research (2011) chose to use SFL instead of rubrics because it was considered to be able to assess student writing in more detail and Hadi and Susan's (2019) research with CARS theory examined the generic structure of writing as a fulfillment of readers' expectations. The researcher uses a qualitative approach in the form of the same assessment as Baba (2017), namely the 'impression' sign to obtain data.

1.3 Urgency of the research

Assessment of student academic writing is not the first research that many researchers have undertaken (e.g., Baba, 2017; Fan Wei-Kung, 2015; Zhipora & Ayelet, 2016). This is because the topic of the assessment of student academic writing is an exciting topic to explore more deeply. It can be in the form of ways to improve in the form of media such as Fan Wei-Kung (2015) or through activities such as those that have been carried out by Zhipora & Ayelet (2016) or using theories such as Baba (2014). However, each of these studies is broad in scope or less specific. In this study, the researcher narrowed the research to only the student's introduction. In addition, one thing that will continue to happen every year is graduation. Millions of students, especially EFL students who write the thesis in English, have difficulty, especially in writing the introduction, because this is the first time they project themselves (Milagros, 2011). According to Asyad and Arono (2016), the introduction is the most important part because, with an unattractive introduction, the reader will not want to read or pay attention to the whole article. In addition, using SFL and CARS theory in order and rhetoric is an exciting combination to add knowledge to the literature.

1.4 Research Questions and Objectives

1.4.1 Research Questions

Based on the background of study above, the researcher is interested in assessing the introduction in students' thesis. The question that will be answered through this research is: "How the CARS and SFL can analyze the introduction part of an EFL students' thesis?"

1.4.2 Research Objectives

The objective of this research is to assess the introduction in students' thesis to identify how the CARS and SFL can analyze the introduction part of an EFL students' thesis.