Students' Argumentative Ability in the Graduate Thesis Introductions

Annisa [1], Ratna Dewi[2], Erwin Akib[3]
annisasastringumi15.email@gmail.com[1] ratnadewi23.rd@gmail.com[2] erwin @unismuh.ac.id[3]
Graduate Program, Master of English Language Education, Muhammadiyah University of Makassar, Indonesia

Abstract

The research aimed to explore the students' argumentative ability in their thesis introduction and to explore the most difficult moves for students in their thesis introduction. Students' argumentative ability refers to the way students write their thesis introductions by following swales' pattern (1990). Swales' Pattern consist of three moves, establishing a research territory, establishing a niche, and occupying the niche.

This research used a Descriptive Quantitative Method. The sample of this research were graduate Students thesis from the Graduate Program of English Language Education at Muhammadiyah University of Makassar who completed their studies in 2021. The total sample was sixteen graduate Students thesis. The procedure of this research was collected by analysing the students' thesis introduction by using a rubric.

The results of research found that 1) Students' argumentative ability in the graduate thesis introductions was good which the students wrote their introduction by claiming the importance of the research (move 1 step 1), reviewing items of previous research (move 1 step 2), indicating a gap (move 2 step 2) and outlining the purposes (move 3 step 1). 2) The most difficult moves for students were move one step two (reviewing items of previous research), and move two step one (indicating a gap). It was identified based on the lowest score got by the students in each move. Therefore, it can be concluded that in writing thesis introductions, the students from Graduate Program of English Language Education at Muhammadiyah University of Makassar who completed their studies in 2021 followed Swales' Pattern (1990).

Keywords: Argumentative Ability, Swales' Pattern.

Introduction

Writing a thesis for graduate students is a requirement to achieve their master's degree. Since writing a thesis has been determined to be a necessary prerequisite for success in an academic field, they have to write a thesis where their text should be understandable to the readers. Starting the introduction as the first part, then the body, and the conclusion as the end. In the introduction, the writers need to make their readers curious and persist in reading the academic text until the end. According to Anderson (2002) cited in (Anita, 2012), an introduction is the first place readers focus on the writing as a whole and the author's perspective. Therefore, the introduction serves not only as the paper's initial entry point but also as a potent tool for developing and maintaining the reader's interest, which was sparked by the title. To be easily understood and logically accepted by the readers, writing an introduction may follow the pattern of an academic text introduction. The patterns are establishing a research territory, establishing a niche, and occupying the niche (Swales, 1990). Swales pattern is a model which was developed by John M. Swales (1990) to define and explain the structure of scholarly research studies' introduction sections.

According to Swales (1990), there are three main parts of the introduction. The first is Establishing a research territory by introducing the topic, saying why it is relevant to be investigated, and reviewing previous research on it. The second is Establishing a niche by indicating a gap in the previous research, posing a query about it, or enhancing existing knowledge in some way the third is occupying the niche by stating the purpose or nature of the current research and the research problem's structure. Swales' Pattern can be useful because it can help to locate each important point in the introduction in its place. In other words, Swales' Pattern helps to understand the way in writing introductions. Swales' Pattern gives the students direction to explain their structure of ideas, especially when the student expresses their ideas as stated in the Swales' pattern.

Students can build their arguments in their thesis introduction by following Swales' pattern. Students' argumentative ability is how the students explain their idea, personal experiences, descriptions, examples, facts, and quotes from experts (Whitaker, 2009). For instance, the first move is the way students put their research topic among similar research, the way students explain the previous research, and the way they make relate to the research that they will do to establish the gap. The second move is the way students review the previous research and then describe the gap in this research topic. The last move is to restate the topic to be investigated and to restructure the step of research that will be done.

There are several studies related to students' argumentative ability. Shinta &

Filia (2020), conducted a study on "Improving EFL students' arguments through collaboration". According to the findings, students can produce more parts of the argument, resulting in a higher level of argument, through collaborative learning. In the learning process, they can also use their thinking skills to remember, comprehend, apply, and analyze. In conclusion, collaborative learning can be thought of as a way to improve students' arguments in the classroom. It involves generating claims, data, and guarantees in arguments and raising awareness of how to apply the supporting, refuting, and other qualification components.

Kristiyanti, et.al (2018), researched "Improving the argumentative skills of high school students through teachers' questioning techniques and argumentative assessment". The finding shows that there are changes and improvements in the ability of students to argue after teachers use questioning strategies and argumentative assessments. The claims and arguments made by students have been improved according to the level of argumentation. Most students have reached level 3 of argumentation, where they can support their arguments with evidence and logic.

Amielia, et.al (2018), conducted research related to "Enhancing Students' Argumentation Skills Using an Argument-Driven Inquiry-Based Module". The finding shows that including argument-driven inquiry-based modules in the learning process is a good way to improve students' ability to argue.

Fitriani, et.al (2022), conducted a study on "Enhancing Students' Skill in Writing an Argument through Brainwriting". The finding shows that using brainwriting might help students write better arguments. Because students were able to create well-written texts and comprehend text types that were deeply related to the context in which they were used through brainwriting. It could be concluded that using brainwriting to improve students' argumentative writing was a good way to teach the learning process, especially how to write arguments.

The previous research above just explains how to improve the students' argumentative ability in some ways. The studies don't explain the way students ability to write arguments in the thesis introduction. This makes this research different from the previous research. Based on the previous explanations, the researcher will examine the students' argumentative ability in the graduate thesis introductions using Swales' Pattern.

Method

This study used a quantitative descriptive research with the total sample were all thesis of students in the Graduate Program of English Language Education at Muhammadiyah University of Makassar who have completed their studies in 2021. The sampling in this study was total sampling. The total were 16 master's theses. The variables in this research was Graduate Students' Argumentative Ability. Graduate Students' Argumentative Ability were shown through: (1) The ways students claim the importance of area research are problematic, critical, relevant, interesting, and worthy to investigate, and the ways students support the claim are

by giving examples, showing facts, and giving an explanation. (2) The completeness of the previous research to depict the research trend on this topic. (3) The differences between the student's research topic with the previous topic. (4) Revisiting the coverage of the topic that will be investigated.

To collect the data, this research used one instrument was argumentative ability rubric that analyzed the graduate thesis introductions to elaborate students' argumentative ability and to elaborate the most difficult moves for students in thesis introductions. To obtain data related to students' argumentative ability in the graduate thesis introductions the researcher used a procedure, they were: (1) Students' Argumentative Ability. The first step is to elaborate the students' argumentative ability by analysing the students' thesis introduction using a rubric. (2) The Most Difficult Moves for Students in their Thesis Introductions. After that, the researcher defined the most difficult moves for students in their thesis introductions.

To analysis the data, the result of the calculating classification is classified into five levels, as follows:

Table 3 1 The classification of the students' score

No.	Score	Classification
1.	4	Excellent
2.	3	Good
3.	2	Fair
4.	1	Bad

The researcher used the following formula to know the percentages of number of students who got score at each level.

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

Where: P = percentage
N = number of students
F = frequency

Sudjana (2015)

Finding and Discussion

1. *Students' Argumentative Ability in their Thesis Introductions*

Students' argumentative ability in the introductions refers to the way students write the introduction of their thesis by following swales' pattern. Swales' pattern consists of move 1 establishing a research territory (step 1 claiming importance and step 2 reviewing items of previous research), move 2 establishing a niche (step 1 indicating a gap), and move 3 occupying the niche (step 1 outlining purposes).

Table 4.1 expresses the mean scores of argumentative ability got by

the students in writing the introduction of their thesis.

Table 4 1 Mean Score of students' argumentative ability in writing thesis introduction.

	Establishing a research territory		Establishing a niche	Occupying the niche	Mean Score in Writing Introduction
	Claiming Importance	Reviewing Items of Previous Research	Indicating a Gap	Outlining Purposes	
High	4	4	4	4	4
Average	4	2	3	4	3
Low	4	1	1	4	2

Based on table 4.1, the average score of establishing a research territory in claiming importance was 4 and the average score in reviewing items of previous researches was high 2, the highest score is 4, and the lowest score is 1. The average score of establishing a niche in indicating a gap was 3, the highest score is 4, the low score is 1. The last is occupying the niche, where the average score in outlining purposes is 4.

The average score of the students' argumentative ability in writing the introduction based on the total score got from each item is 3, the highest score is 4, and the lowest score is 2. The distribution of the students' frequency score in writing thesis introduction is seen in Table 4.2

Table 4. 2 Frequency Distribution of Students' Argumentative Ability Scores in Writing Thesis Introduction

No.	Criterion	Students' Score Frequency	Percentage
1.	Excellent	9	56,25%
2.	Good	3	18,75%
3.	Fair	4	25%
4.	Bad	0	0%
Total		16	100%

Table 4.2 shows that 9 of the 16 students or 56,25 % of the students, get score 4 which categorized as excellent, 3 students or 18,75 % of the students, get score 3 which categorized as good, 4 students or 25 % of the students get score 2 which categorized as fair, and none students or 0 % of the students get score 1 which categorized as bad.

From the nine students who got *excellent,* one of the students was

represented by S-04. She wrote a thesis entitled "A Content Analysis of the Language Skills Activities on the English Textbook for Tenth Grade of Secondary Schools". She wrote the introduction in step one of establishing a research territory by claiming the importance of the research. Then wrote the facts in the area researches. After that wrote supporting explanations to made their reasoning strong. In step two of establishing a research territory, S-04 has reviewed much items of the previous research related their topic being investigated. But, she didn't complete the previous research in the five previous year. She also wrote several old research to depict research trend. Then, in step one of establishing a niche, S-04 indicated a gap by wrote the differences between previous research and present research. She didn't follow the previous research suggestion, they prefered to investigate different research. At the end, in step one of occupying the niche, S-04 outlined the purposes by retold the coverage of the topic that will be investigated to help the reader know researcher objectives conduct reserch.

In other research entitled "Comparative Rhetorical Organization of ELT Thesis Introductions Composed by Thai and American Students" written by Wuttisrisiriporn (2017), students who got an excellent score wrote all steps from every moves.

From the three students who got *good*, one of the students was represented by S-01. She wrote a thesis entitled "The Effect of Picture Word Inductive Model (PWIM) on the students' English Writing Achievement at Junior High School in Soppeng". S-01 wrote the introduction in step one of establishing a research territory by claiming the importance of the research. Then wrote the problem that happened or facts in the area researches. After that wrote supporting explanations to made their reasoning strong. In step two of establishing a research territory, S-01 reviewed little item of previous research related their topic being investigated. But, she didn't complete the previous research in the five previous year. She also wrote several old research to depict research trend. While in step one of establishing a niche, S-01 indicated a gap by wrote the differences between previous research and present research. She didn't follow the previous research suggestion, they prefered to investigate different research. At the end, in step one of occupying the niche, S-01 outlined the purposes by retold the coverage of the topic that will be investigated to help the reader know researcher objectives conduct reserch.

In other research entitled "Rhetorical Structure Variations in Abstracts and Introductions of Applied Linguistics Master's Theses by Iraqi and International Students", written by Ebadi, et al. (2019), students who got Good scores claiming importance of the research, but didn't review items of previous research. Then, the students was indicating a gap. At the end, students outlined the purposes.

From the four students who got *fair*, one of the students was

represented by S-03. She wrote a thesis entitled "The Strategies in Reducing the Students' Anxiety in Speaking English at SMA Pergis Yapki Maros". S-03 wrote the introduction in step one of establishing a research territory by claiming the importance of the research. Then wrote the problem that happened or facts in the area researches. After that wrote supporting explanations to made their reasoning strong. In step two of establishing a research territory, S-03 didn't review items of previous research related their topic being investigated. She also didn't complete the previous research in the five previous year. While in step one of establishing a niche, S-03 didn't indicate a gap. She didn't write the differences between previous research and present research. She directly wrote the purposes of their research. At the end, in step one of occupying the niche, she outlined the purposes by retold the coverage of the topic that will be investigated to help the reader know researcher objectives conduct reserch.

In other research entitled "The Student's Ability and Problems in Writing Introduction of Research Proposal" written by Kheryadi (2018), students who got fair score claimed importance of the research, but didn't review items of previous research and didn't indicate a gap. At the end, the students outlined purposes.

The researcher decided that students' argumentative ability in their thesis introduction of students' thesis graduate Program in English Language Education at Muhammadiyah University of Makassar who completed their studies in 2021 was good which the students wrote their introduction by claiming the importance of the research (move 1 step 1), reviewing items of previous research (move 1 step 2), indicating a gap (move 2 step 2) and outlining the purposes (move 3 step 1).

2. *The Most Difficult Moves for Students in their Thesis Introductions*

The most difficult moves written by the students were identified based on the lowest score got by the students in each move. The total students got 1 score in move one step two (reviewing items of previous research) there were 4 students, and in move two step one (indicating a gap) there were 6 students. The moves identified were two, they were move one, step two (reviewing items of previous research), and move two, step one (indicating a gap). The two moves got score 1.

In step two of move one, all of students didn't review items of previous research related to their topic being investigated. Students didn't complete the previous research in the five previous year to depict research trend. The result was similar with what was written by Ebadi, et al. (2019) entitled "Rhetorical Structure Variations in Abstracts and Introductions of Applied Linguistics Master's Theses by Iraqi and International Students", stated that move one step two (reviewing items of previous research) could be a very

difficult task for the students. As shown in the findings, only a small number of students used this step

Then in step one of move two, all of students didn't indicate a gap. None student wrote the differences between previous research and present research. They directly wrote the purposes of their research. The result was similar with what was written by Kheryadi (2018) entitled "The Student's Ability and Problems in Writing Introduction of Research Proposal", claimed that indicating a gap was not applied by all students.

Conclusion and Suggestion

The students' argumentative ability in their thesis introductions was good. It can be proved by the students' mean score (3) which is classified as a good score. which the students wrote their introduction by claiming the importance of the research (move 1 step 1), reviewing items of previous research (move 1 step 2), indicating a gap (move 2 step 2) and outlining the purposes (move 3 step 1).

The most difficult moves for students in their thesis introduction were, move two step one (indicating a gap), and move one step two (reviewing items in the previous research).

The students neeeds to pay attention on the way to write arguments in the thesis introduction, to understand the pattern in writing thesis introduction, and to apply every moves appropriately based on the pattern in writing introductions is Swales Pattern (1990). The lecturer or advisors need keep guiding the students to use the pattern in writing thesis introductions based on Swales' Pattern (1990). The other researchers can use this research as reference in investigating the pattern of thesis introductions.

Acknowledgements

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