

GENRE ANALYSIS OF CONCLUSION CHAPTERS IN MASTER'S TEFL THESIS: EVIDENCE FROM INDONESIAN POSTGRADUATES

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Abstract: Writing a thesis in English is challenging for students, especially Indonesian Master's students for whom English is not their first language. Inherently, each chapter presents challenges to address when organizing a thesis. One of the crucial parts of the thesis is the conclusion chapter. It serves as a summary and a place to express suggestions and potential lines for further study. Thus, this study examined how Indonesian students wrote conclusion chapters of TEFL Master's theses. A total corpus of 3897 words was generated as the present study's data. Based on Chen & Kuo (2012) as the analytical framework of the present study, we found that move 2 step 1 (summarizing the study) was frequently used. Both move 1 (introducing the conclusion) and move 3 (evaluating) are obligatory. We also found optional moves and steps providing supporting and complementary roles: Move 4, step 2, and Move 3, step 1. These findings indicate that Indonesian master's students in the TEFL program used the conclusion writing of genre-based method characterized by the ability to adapt to conventional genre-framework and add additional steps. Understanding and using these variations can help Indonesian students craft concluding chapters that demonstrate scholarly engagement and the academic rigor of their study.

Keywords: *conclusion chapter, genre analysis, Indonesian postgraduates, TEFL master's thesis*

INTRODUCTION

Genre analysis was first coined in groundbreaking works on introductions to academic articles (Bhatia, 2002). Genre analysis is a broader study of language use to consider not only how texts are constructed, but also how they are interpreted, used, and exploited in specific contexts to achieve specific purposes (Swales, 2004 ; Bhatia, 2002). A discursive segment that fulfills a certain communication purpose is referred to as a move. Move analysis is one of the genre-based approaches that become increasingly important recently in identifying and determining the structure of a research article (RA) (Nguyen & Pramoolsook, 2016). Because move-based analysis focuses on the hierarchical schematic structure of the text, a move is a semantic unit that relates to the author's purpose (Nwogu, 1997). From a pedagogical point of view, it is believed that categorizing texts according to communicative purposes is beneficial because it can shift the attention of teachers and students (Swales, 2004) from the mere surface structure of the text to the social use of texts with specific purposes (Ali et al., 2011).

Nowadays, many studies conducted move analysis intensively on various aspects of RA in the English language. In addition, genre-based move analysis has also been widely used in comparisons of rhetorical aspects of RA in English and research articles in other languages (Nguyen & Pramoolsook, 2016).

The examination of concluding chapters in Master's Theses within the field of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) is a pivotal for understanding the nuanced strategies and rhetorical choices employed by scholars in their final scholarly endeavors (Moghadam & Meihami, 2016). This area of study delves into the intricate dynamics of how master's students in TEFL encapsulate and synthesize their research findings, discuss implications, and bring closure to their academic inquiries (Loan & Pramoolsook, 2015). The concluding chapter serves as the culminating reflection of the entire research process, offering insights into the researcher's ability to synthesize information, draw meaningful conclusions, and contribute to the broader academic discourse in TEFL (Zamani & Ebadi, 2016).

Highlights of concluding chapters in master's TEFL theses is one of the crucial things for scholars in their final scholarly endeavors (Paltridge, 2002). These studies employ frameworks for analyzing the conclusion chapters and reveal that non-native English writers may be familiar with the overall structure of the chapters. The concluding

chapter of a thesis typically summarizes the main points of the research and provides a final analysis of the results (Fitriyah, 2020). Based on a past study of PhD theses within computer sciences, the concluding chapter can be broken down into five moves: revisiting the study, consolidating research space, proposing practical applications and implications, recommending future work, and recapitulating the study (Bunton, 2005). In addition, a conclusion should be a summary of the most important points in the chapter and the key arguments made from the thesis (Rabie & Boraie, 2021). Conclusion should be written briefly and straightforwardly. The conclusion should also return to the focus that was established at the beginning of the study and include a final interpretation of the research as a whole and its results, as well as a discussion of the implications of the research and its results.

As investigated in the past studies conducted by Alyousef (2021), move analysis of the conclusion chapters in Master's TEFL theses brought up a number of concerns and questions. Among these queries and problems are the awareness of rhetorical functions. Non-native English writers may not be completely aware of the crucial roles of the moves and steps in their theses' final chapters (Graves et al., 2013). These queries and problems draw attention to the difficulties non-native English speakers encounter when writing the last sections of their Master's TEFL theses. The problems also emphasize the significance of students' understanding of the rhetorical function of the moves and steps in writing these chapters (Massoum & Yazdanmehr, 2019).

The present study attempts to unravel any rhetorical moves used and underlying patterns in the concluding chapters of Master's TEFL theses written by Indonesian students.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A considerable amount of literature on move-structure of theses has been published by many scholars. One of them by Shirani & Chalak (2018) who focused on the genre-based aspects of TEFL thesis conclusions, emphasizing the role of move analysis in understanding how researchers position their work within the broader discourse. Their study provided a nuanced exploration of the rhetorical strategies employed by authors to convey the significance of their contributions.

Swales (2004) conducted a seminal study on move structures of the concluding chapters of a diverse sample of TEFL theses. The findings illuminated recurring patterns in the rhetorical moves employed by researchers, offering valuable insights into the structural elements that contribute to the effectiveness of conclusions.

Nguyen & Pramoolsook (2016) explored how 24 English teachers in Vietnam wrote the conclusion chapter of their thesis. Using Chen & Kuo (2012), the results concluded that Move 4 was present in each chapter, while the other 3 moves (introducing the conclusion chapter, summarizing the research, and evaluating the research) were conventional.

Bunton (2005) also investigated the generic structure of conclusion chapters of 45 PhD theses on several disciplines. His findings showed that most of the conclusions served to restate the goal where various steps consolidate the research space.

Annuai & Wannaruk (2013) also analyzed 20 conclusion sections in international journals and 20 conclusion sections in Thai journals within the field of applied linguistics. Both corpora were analyzed with Ruiying & Allison (2003) framework. Their findings showed that all of three key moves in the framework occurred in both data but differed in their frequency of occurrence.

Based on the given review of previous research on the moves and steps in the conclusion chapter, a notable gap can be seen in the current literature. Although several studies have demonstrated and examined the structure of master's thesis, little research specifically focuses on the conclusion chapter of TEFL master's theses written by Indonesian students. Therefore, the present research is to explore the structure of thesis conclusion chapters written by Indonesian TEFL Masters students.

METHOD

This study employed a genre-based approach to analyze the move and step structure of the theses. This approach involves identifying and categorizing the rhetorical moves and steps within the text to understand how the authors organize and present their research. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns within the move and step structures. Our data consisted of five TEFL master theses written by Indonesian students in the English language education department.

Steps of Data Collection

We carried out the following steps to collect our data which are method chapters in the Master's theses written by Indonesian postgraduate TEFL students. First, we accessed the University Repository by navigating to the UINSU website or repository database. Second, we searched for English Education Theses using keywords such as "English education", "language teaching", and other related research terms or sub-areas in the search feature on the repository website. Then, to review and select relevant theses, we read the abstracts and titles of theses that align with our research focus. We selected the five theses that were most relevant to our search. Next, the five selected theses were downloaded, especially the research methods chapter due to its relevance to our research focus, namely analyzing simply the research method chapters. Finally, we organized the parts to enable us to proceed to further steps in the analysis.

The corpus under investigation consisted of the method chapter of five Master's theses written by Indonesian students at one Indonesian university. Five master's theses were chosen as data sources because they have relevance to the research objectives and the predetermined data collection criteria. The five theses were selected because they were compatible with this research discipline, covering diverse range of topics and subject areas in the fields of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English Language Teaching (ELT) such as challenges and strategies in writing research articles for publication, artificial intelligence-integrated language learning, the effect of Duolingo utilization on Indonesian adolescent EFL learners' vocabulary mastery and academic self-efficacy, utilizing computer-mediated corrective feedback in academic writing, and teaching higher-order thinking skills in English classrooms for junior high school students. They also have a final chapter as the closing part. Thus, the five theses were downloaded for the conclusion chapter and then combined into a corpus. Table 1 provides complete details of the corpus.

Analysis Framework

The analysis framework of this study is Chen & Kuo (2012) containing four main moves, namely: *Move 1: Introducing the conclusion chapter* (presented by Restating purpose, design, research question/hypotheses, result, or indicating how conclusion are presented), *Move 2: Summarizing the research* (Summarizing the study briefly), *Move 3: Evaluating the research* (presented by Indicating significance/advantage, Indicating

limitations, and Evaluating methodology), and *Move 4: Deduction from the study* (presented by Recommending further research, Drawing pedagogic implication, and Making suggestion).

Table 1. Description of the Corpus

Conclusion	Title of the Theses	The Length of Conclusion
Thesis 1 (Syahnaz, 2023)	Artificial intelligence integrated language an investigation of quillbot utilization in EFL students' academic writing.	1020 words
Thesis 2 (Batubara, 2022)	The effect of Duolingo Utilization on Indonesian Adolescents EFL Learners' Vocabulary Mastery and Academic Self-efficacy	1001 words
Thesis 3 (Adelita, 2023)	Challenge and strategies in writing research articles for publication: A case study of Indonesian EFL undergraduate students	832 words
Thesis 4 (Khairisya, 2023)	Utilizing computer mediated corrective feedback in academic writing: A focus on EFL master students' preferences and perceptions	547 words
Thesis 5 (Sari, 2023)	Teaching higher order thinking skills (HOTS) in English classroom for junior high school students: Exploring teachers' perspective and practices	497 words

Chen & Kuo (2012) model was used for analyzing master's TEFL theses written by Indonesian students. The main reason of choosing Chen & Kuo (2012) as the analytical framework in this research is that it is proved to be relevant and sufficient for analyzing the conclusion part of the thesis. In the context of theses writing, the conclusion section is often less considered yet central part in the interpretation of the overall research results, thus requiring a comprehensive analytical approach (Shaw, 1991). The second reason is that they are adopted in the field of research (theses) under present investigation: disciplines of Applied Linguistics and TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language). Thus, it fits the scope of the research that focuses on theses in our context. Another reason supporting that Chen & Kuo (2012) is feasible and appropriate to use for the analysis in this study is Nguyen & Pramoolsook (2016). They showed that Chen & Kuo's (2012) model can comprehensively explain the elements or steps that appeared in a corpus of 24 Master's theses in the context of TESOL in Vietnam. Their success gave us confidence to the selection of the model in our study. Based on the given rationales, Chen & Kuo's (2012) framework is claimed to be suitable for analyzing the conclusion part of the theses in the Indonesian context. The expected success of this model in outlining the steps of analysis in the fields of applied linguistics and TEFL gives confidence that it can assist

this study in uncovering the key elements and presentation of quality argumentation in theses in these fields.

Procedures of Data Analysis

The steps to conduct the present move analysis are as follows. First, we started by reading the conclusion thoroughly to gain a comprehensive understanding of the author's key points. The second stage was to determine main ideas of the sentences and paragraphs because they reflected on the communicative purpose of the move and step. The next stage was the identification of moves and steps and classify them according to Chen & Kuo (2012) model as analysis framework of the present study. After identifying and classifying the move and steps, our final stage was to reveal the overall structure of the conclusion texts.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The main purpose of the present genre analysis on configurations of moves and step of the conclusion chapter of thesis is to explore and identify some of the rhetorical moves, patterns, and ways of how Indonesian master's students wrote and organized conclusion chapters in their thesis. By better understanding the rhetorical structure of the conclusion chapter, we can craft more effective research articles.

Move and steps structure of the conclusion chapters from the five theses

Table 2 provides the overall findings of the analysis. *Move 1* (Introducing the conclusion chapter) and *Move 3* (Evaluating the study) are quite dominant with a frequency of occurrence 25% respectively. Both moves are found in the four theses (Thesis I, II, III, and V). In addition to the given findings, we found *Move 4* (Deducting from the research) is least used in our data. Its occurrence only in three theses (thesis I, II, and V) with a total percentage of 18.75%.

We found a total of 16 steps from the five concluding chapters analyzed in the thesis. Several steps are found dominant and have a quite high frequency; namely, *Move 2 step 1* (Summarizing the study briefly) with a frequency of occurrence of 5 times and has a percentage of 31.25%. Its appearances are found in all of the concluding chapters. We consider that *Move 2 step 1* is an obligatory move and important in writing the conclusion chapter. Following *Move 2 step 1*, we found that *Move 3 Step 1* (indicating

significance) appeared in two theses, constituting 18.75% of the presentation. *Move 3 Step 2* (indicating limitation) occurred only in one thesis, accounting for 6.25% of the occurrences. Within *Move 4*, we found one step that appears with a total percentage of 18.75%. *Move 4 step 1* (Recommend further research) aims to present suggestions for further research to create better research in the future.

Table 2. Frequency of Occurrence of Moves in Theses

Moves and steps	Total	Percentage
Move 1: Introducing the Conclusion Chapter	4	25%
Move 2: Summarizing the study	5	31.25%
Move 3: Evaluating the study	4	25%
Move 4: Deduction from the research	3	18.75%
Total	16	100%

To get a clearer picture and explanation of move and step analysis results presented in Table 3, we describe the most and the least frequent occurring moves. The signal lexical words are bolded and italicized in each piece of evidence.

Table 3. Frequency of Occurrence of Move and Steps in Theses

Moves and steps	Total	Percentage
Move 1: Introducing the Conclusion Chapter		
Restating purpose, design, research question/hypotheses, result, or indicating how conclusions are presented	4	25%
Move 2: Summarizing the study		
Summarizing the study briefly	5	31.25%
Move 3: Evaluating the study		
Indicating significance/advantage	3	18.75%
Indicating limitations	1	6.25%
Evaluating methodology	0	0%
Move 4: Deduction from the research		
Recommending further research	3	18.75%
Drawing pedagogic implication	0	0%
Making suggestion	0	0%
Total	16	100%

Move 2 Step 1: Summarizing the Study Briefly

Following Chen & Kuo (2012) model, Move 2 step 1 (Summarizing the study briefly) has the main purpose of summarizing and highlighting the findings of the study. Move 2 step 1 appeared in each of the five TEFL master's theses. The lexical signals found to indicate a conclusion include the uses of the present or past simple sentences. The following evidences indicate how the move was used in the data.

Writing articles for publication was challenging for all undergraduate participants in this study. Discursive challenges and non-discursive challenges are the two types of challenges they encounter. In discursive challenges, **the most common challenge students faced was writing** their research article's introduction. (Thesis 1)

The majority of students use *QuillBot* as a great digital tool to aid them in writing academic research. Consistent with the outcomes of this survey, **which revealed that the majority of students believed** that using *QuillBot* helped them improve their academic writing, students see *QuillBot* as a useful digital tool for producing high-quality academic writing. (Thesis 2)

Based on observation, interview, and documentation regarding the challenges of English teachers in Public and Private Junior High Schools in cultivating students' critical thinking skills, English teachers are required to develop HOTS-based learning implementation plans, develop methods and develop HOTS based questions. (Thesis 5)

Move 3 Step 2: Indicating Limitations

In our analysis framework, Chen & Kuo (2012) indicated that *Move 3 step 2* (indicating limitation) has the main purpose of highlighting the limitations of the study. It means that there are aspects that cannot be investigated further by the study. However, based on the analysis, we found that *Move 3 Step 2* appeared in one thesis with a total percentage of 6.25%. Thus, we conclude that indicating limitations in writing the conclusion chapter is not obligatory but only as a complement for other moves. The following evidence indicates how the move was used in the data.

The study **discovered six elements** which include in this external difficulty, **such as limited access or facilities**, inadequate time, a lack of tolerance or communication among participants, a lack of a course, a lack of reading, and a lack of writing practice. (Thesis 1)

Discussion

The main purpose of this study is to classify moves and steps and rhetorical used by Indonesian master's students in writing their concluding chapters. We attempt to provide an overview for readers, especially in writing the conclusion section based on the number of moves and steps obtained from the analysis. Five concluding chapters were retrieved from one Indonesian university repository. The theses are under the subject field, TEFL. The corpus size is 3,897 words. To classify the moves and steps, we used Chen & Kuo (2012) as our analysis framework. We found one move with the highest number of occurrences: *Move 2*. Our findings also reveal two moves with quite high frequency of 25% respectively: *Move 1* (Introducing the conclusion chapter), and *Move 3*

(Evaluating the study). *Move 4* (Deduction from the research) aims to shape and create an overall outline of the research, as well as explain in full the field of knowledge of the research.

Move 2 Step 1 (Summarizing the study briefly)

As displayed in the results section, *Summarizing the study briefly* is considered an obligatory move, because it appeared in the conclusion chapter of all theses. Under Chen & Kuo's (2012) model, *Move 2 step 1* is an important component in writing the conclusion chapter which should be designed and displayed significantly in scientific writing, especially TEFL master thesis. This finding is in line and consistent with Amnuai & Wannaruk (2013) which examined 20 Corpus English RA. They found *Move 2 step 1* (Summarizing the study briefly) in 85% of Thai corpus and 95% of international corpus. It showed that *Move 2 step 1* was obligatory. Shirani & Chalak (2018) analyzed PhD theses conclusion chapters. They concluded that *Move 2 step 1* (Summarizing the study briefly) was present in all theses showing that the move was obligatory. In line with that, our finding concludes that *Move 2 step 1* is an important move with a total occurrence percentage of 31.25%.

Move 1 (Introducing the conclusion chapter)

We also consider that *Move 1* (Introducing the conclusion chapter) is also significant. Thus, writing a conclusion chapter does not only rely on the aspect of summarizing and outlining a thesis, but there are other important aspects, namely the initial presentation and introduction of the conclusion chapter, which can be started by describing the purpose of the research, the design used in the research, as well as the hypothesis. (Nguyen & Pramoolsook (2016) analyzed the thesis conclusion chapter by Vietnamese Postgraduates. Their findings showed that *Move 1* was an obligatory move with a total of 20 occurrences and a total percentage of 83.3%. In line with their findings, we also found that *Move 1* was obligatory. Amnuai & Wannaruk (2013) findings are in line with the results of our study which concluded that *Move 1* is obligatory with a total percentage of occurrence was 80%.

Move 3 (Evaluating study)

In addition to Move 1, an equally important aspect of writing a conclusion chapter is *Move 3* (Evaluating the study). It has a significant role in reaching an efficient conclusion, where in this part of the move, Indonesian student-writers can explain the significance/advantages of their study as well as the limitations, and then evaluate the suitability of the methodology.

Although the findings of the present study have some consistencies with several previous studies, our findings contradict with several studies in some aspects. Amnuai & Wannaruk (2013) found that *Move 3* appeared with a percentage of 21% and they concluded that *Move 3* is optional, whereas in this study we consider that *Move 3* is obligatory. Nguyen & Pramoolsook (2016) have analyzed and found that *Move 3 Step 2* (Indicating limitations), appeared 17 times and became the dominant move step. These findings are inversely proportional to our findings.

Thus, with the total occurrence of the three key moves reaching 50%, we concluded that the moves play an important role that needs to be employed to write more efficient and accurate conclusion chapter.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

The present study analyzed the structure and rhetorical moves used by Indonesian master's students in writing concluding chapters of TEFL Master's theses. Data were obtained from five master's theses downloaded from repository of one university in Indonesia in the subject fields of TEFL. The analysis focused on move and step using Chen & Kuo's (2012) model. Our results showed that *Move 2* (Summarizing the study) was the most frequently occurring move, followed by *Move 1* (Introducing the conclusion chapter) and *Move 3* (Evaluating the study). We also identified that several steps such as *Move 3 Step 1* (Indicating significance) and *Move 3 Step 2* (Indicating limitation) appeared less frequently.

This study has limitations in the number of data analyzed. Our corpus or data size is only five master's theses written by Indonesian students. We thoroughly examined the overall format, writing style, and methodology employed by the students. Different practices in other contexts across countries and regions could shed new light in the

literature in order to spot any cultural and disciplinary variations. This study could offer any academic authors across different discourse communities a crucial perspective on how to arrange and structure their arguments, recommending and ending the conclusion sections. Overall, the analysis of the concluding chapters in TEFL Master's thesis provides valuable insights into the rhetorical strategies and move-step structure used by postgraduate students. By identifying recurring patterns and complementary steps, the study contributes to the development of academic writing practices in the field of TEFL.

Suggestions

Although this study has offered a contribution to understanding the essence of academic writing, we cannot ignore the limited size of the present corpus. Limiting the corpus size to only five theses from graduate students may produce results that may not embrace the entire complexity of the academic world regarding scientific writing. Therefore, for future researchers who will explore a relevant topic, it is highly recommended to expand the scope by analyzing more theses. By involving a larger number of theses, future research can achieve a higher level of comprehensiveness, covering a more diverse range of viewpoints and scholarly contributions on academic writing. Extending future studies on these areas can encourage a thorough exploration of the diverse discussions and perspectives offered by researchers, especially novice writers. Along with this, to ensure the robustness and applicability of future research, future researchers are expected to explore data from various levels of education, including bachelor's, master's, and doctoral theses. Future researchers are also expected to overcome the limitations that have been recognized in this study, paving the way toward a more comprehensive understanding of academic writing practices. Involving further variation in the research sample will not only increase the generality of the results but also provide a more in-depth and inclusive insight into academic writing practices at different levels of education.

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