

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes background of the study, research question, purpose of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, and previous related study.

1.1. Background of the Study

Writing a research paper, as a compulsory requirement for scholarly participants, is generally thought to be quite a difficult task to do. Student writers bear difficulty in developing thoughts and ideas into the written form for several reasons, be it inadequacy of knowledge, confusion of what to write, unfamiliarity with the kind of genre, and lack of experience in writing (owl.english.purdue.edu). Drawing from Isnaini's (2011) work on paraphrasing, it is stated that deficiencies of constructing sentences, selecting vocabulary words, and taking notes incorrectly are the cause for students to produce poor writing, as this is also claimed to lead to plagiarism. Such conclusion can be related to the fact that when taking information and setting it forth into words, proper "attributive tags" or "signal phrases" are needed (louisville.edu).

Signal phrases, as described by Hacker (2005), are any forms of groups of words ranging from phrases, clauses, to sentences used in citation which include the author's name to attribute his or her work (p. 603). The term signal phrase is more widely known as academic phrase. Academic phrases are phrases commonly

used in academic texts, e.g., research papers, journals, scientific reports, etc., to start a sentence and “act as signals to guide the reader through the text” (Allen, 2016). Although these phrases are often used to cite from the works of others to support one’s own work taken from various sources, they are also used to convey different communicative functions of academic writing (Greaves et al., 2010).

With a research paper being one of the most troublesome types of texts for students to write, writing its individual sections, especially the Introduction, is also considered to be distressing. In this regard, experts have lent support to this notion pronouncing that it is indeed a difficult, challenging task for students to write introductions to their research papers (Flowerdew, 1999; Shaw, 1991, in Hsu, 2009; Swales, 1990; Swales & Feak, 1994). Feldman (2004) asserts that not only is the difficulty ultimately experienced by EFL learners, native English language learners have also shared the same problem (in Kötze, 2007).

Meanwhile, based on the preliminary readings done by the writer, students of English Department of UNJ seem to be in a similar predicament. One of the reasons can be perceived by certain overused kinds of expressions in delivering ideas or citing literature from sources to put into their work. A premature, quick look-over on the issue had been taken prior to the present study as well and there was a sort of repetitive pattern students were inclined to fall into when fulfilling a particular communicative function in the introductory part of their paper. For instance, *According to . . .* was the most popular phrase to define a term which definition was taken from other people’s works (e.g., *According to X, Y is . . .*). The phrase *according to* was repeated in at least 3 out of 5 papers. Similarly, the

phrase *this study aims* was frequently used to state the purpose of the study, *the study will be focused on* to emphasize the limitation of the study, *the results of this study can be helpful* to offer the benefit of the study, etc.

It has become primary consideration therefore for the writer to further find out the academic phrases students of English Department of UNJ use in their final paper. *Skripsi* has been chosen as the kind of research paper to be analyzed for it is one of the requirements university students of *sarjana* degree have to accomplish.

1.2. Research Question

The writer formulates questions of the research problems based on the background above as follows.

Main question:

1. How is the use of academic phrases in the Introduction section of English Department of UNJ students' *skripsi*?

Sub-questions:

1. What academic phrases are used by ELESF students?
2. What academic phrases are used by ELLSF students?

1.3. Purpose of the Study

The writer carries out this study with the purpose of investigating the academic phrases students of English Department use in the Introduction section of their *skripsi*.

1.4. Scope of the Study

The writer sets a limit of this study on the academic phrases students of English Department of UNJ use in the Introduction section of their *skripsi*. The phrases are viewed by the way students express the importance of the topic, highlight a problem, propose research questions, refer to previous literature, point out drawbacks or knowledge gaps between previous and current studies, and state the purpose and significance of the study. Such elements generally appear in the introductory chapter of *skripsi*.

1.5. Significance of the Study

The writer believes what is found in this study can offer a reference and source to members of academic community, specifically English Department students in order to help them write *skripsi* and any kinds of research papers. The results are hoped to be of suggestions to those writing such texts and wishing to enrich vocabulary items and ways of expressing functions in the Introduction section with academic phrases. Besides referential use, the findings of this study can aid as relevant sources to those interested in extending the work on the same course.

1.6. Relevant Study

A study was done by Davis and Morley on academics' views of students' re-use of academic phrases in June last year. The scholars looked to find out whether academic phrases provided in their study was regarded as recyclable phrases. This study was conducted by using an electronic questionnaire which was carried on with an interview. They reported that 78% of the respondents seemed to have an agreement on the implication that student writers borrowing phrases used in academic English to be recycled as a "useful language learning strategy" would not commit the practice of plagiarizing. For the reusable phrases, there was a total of 18 phrases that 90-100% of the respondents felt could be re-used, 5 from 80-89%, 1 from 70-79%, 2 from 60-69%, 1 from 50-59%, 0 from 40-49% and 30-39%, and 4 from 29% and less.

The outcomes of the previous study should create space for the current study to be attempted since the results were higher than 50%. With the findings showing the acceptability of re-using academic phrases, the writer related to the past research to pursue the goals of this study on the actual use of academic phrases.