CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Within the past few decades, the research interest has been dragged to genre, one of the genre that draws many attention is, Research Article (RA) in the Discussion section (Holmes, 1997; Posteguillo, 1999; Peacock, 2002; Ruiying & Allison, 2003; Basturkmen, 2012) in several field of studies since the pioneer work of (Swales, 1990) that analyses moves in the Introduction section of Research Articles (RA).

In the field of Computer Science, Posteguillo (1999) analyzed 34 RAs in discussion section using Swales' moves (1990). In the field of Social Sciences Holmes (1997) conducted a study on the discussion section of 30 RAs in consisting of 10 articles in each discipline of History, Political Science and Sociology disciplines to find the communicative moves. In the field of Linguistics, Yang & Allison (2003) chose to studied the organizational choices (Moves and Steps) in Discussion section. In the field of Dentistry, Basturkmen (2012) examined discussion sections of articles in Dentistry with reference to a schematic framework of discussion sections in Applied Linguistics. However, the cross field of study researches were conducted by Holmes (1997) using 30 social science Research Articles in Discussion Section as data, 10 each from the disciplines of history,

political science and sociology, to find out the moves or communicative categories, while Peacock (2002), studying the moves within the Discussion section of Physics, Biology, Environmental Science, Business, Language and Linguistics, Public and Social Administration, and Law fields of study.

This present study lies its focus on the Discussion section. Discussion is chosen because of its uniqueness compared to other sections. In the Discussion section writers show the knowledge contribution of their research findings to the public. This is also where the writers explain why their research findings are in the ways they are and what they mean (Hess, 2004). However, most student writers find writing the RA Discussion very hard to write because "... it involves complex causal, conditional and purposive argument; this argument guides the reader from acceptance of the relatively uncontroversial data to acceptance of the writer's knowledge claim." (Parkinson, 2011).

Other similar comment on the importance of and the difficulty to write the discussion section of RAs is:

> This [the discussion section of RAs] is the most difficult section to write and yet the most important. How you write this section can determine your article's rejection or acceptance. Even if you have a great data, your article can get rejected for poor or incorrect interpretation. Structuring your discussion around your argument will best enable readers to understand the significance of your study for their own research and the field.
>
> (Belcher, 2009)

The importance to write down the discussion section carefully, especially for the students is what Belcher tries to elaborated there. Therefore, the attention to the Discussion Section is actually needed.

While the previous studies in Discussion sections focusing on the Moves and Steps (Holmes, 1997; Posteguillo, 1999; Peacock, 2002; Ruiying & Allison, 2003; Basturkmen, 2012), this present study will analyse the Discussion section using Thematic Structure of Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) proposed by Halliday. Thematic structure is the grammatical system of Theme/Rheme which is one of the bipartite structures realization known as textual metafunction (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). In English, the first "slot" from a clause is the departure point of the writer's message. This is commonly known as the theme of the clause, while Rheme is the part in which the Theme is developed (Halliday, Michael A.K., 1985).

Other works of thematic structure, focusing on Theme-Rheme are not only found in the works of Halliday, but also in later studies from Fries (1981, 1992, 1993) and Berry (1987, 1992). Besides those researches, a number of researches related to theme in many aspects are also risen. Themes in different languages are examined in plenty researches, which are as follows: Chinese (Fang & Cheng, 1987; Li, 2011), French (Carter-Thomas, 2002; Fries, 2002), German (Kirkwood, 1970; Steiner & Ramm, 1995), Spanish (Mundays, 1998), and Japanese (Teruya, 1998; Thomson, 2005).These show that Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) proposed by Halliday can be used in many languages, because language is universal—and also built upon a common grammar although the Theme-Rheme slot in other languages is not always in the beginning of the sentence. For example in Japanese, the theme of a clause is followed by the particle wa or ga (Halliday, 1985 while in Tagalog, to identify the theme, one just needs to find the particle ang.

Many studies focusing on ESL writing has demonstrated how L2 students' mistakes are common in clause level, such as: misplaced punctuation, unnecessary tenses shift, fragments, lack of subject-verb agreements, and inappropriate passive/active voice (Ancker, 2000; Ferris, 2002). However, Theme-Rheme has been widely studied and proved to be a cohesive element in the discourse level because the flow of thoughts of the writer appears in it (Fries P. H., 2002). Therefore, theme is needed in the Discussion section of RA.

Undergraduate students in English Education in State University of Jakarta is required to make a Skripsis (mini-thesis) as a requirement to get the bachelor degree. There are also a large number of Skripsis focusing on error analysis made by English Education students' in writing. Therefore, the expand of students' writing is also needed, not only in clause level but also in discourse level. Using this Thematic Structure, the writer will analyse the Theme-Rheme of the Skripsis made by L2 writers (English Educational students study program of UNJ) compared to Theme-Rheme of the RAs in TESOL Quarterly (TESQ), focusing on the Discussion section. To see the theme within the Discussion Section means to see the flow of thought of the writer in the Discussion section. By seeing the gap of themes used in Skripsis of English Department in Universitas Negeri Jakarta and RAs from TESOL Quarterly, one can see the coherence in the flow of thematic structure and also the needs of English Department students in academic writing.

1.2. Research Questions

Based on the background above, the main research question is:

1) How are the themes structured in the Discussion Sections of English Department Skripsis and RAs of TESOL Quarterly?

Under the main research question, there are three sub questions, which are:

1) How are the topical themes structured in the Discussion Sections of English Department Skripsis and RAs of TESOL Quarterly?

   a) How are the participants as themes structured in the Discussion Sections of English Department Skripsis and RAs of TESOL Quarterly?

   b) How are processes as themes structured in the Discussion Sections of English Department Skripsis and RAs of TESOL Quarterly?

   c) How are the circumstances as themes structured in the Discussion Sections of English Department Skripsis and RAs of TESOL Quarterly?

2) How are the textual themes structured in the Discussion Sections of English Department Skripsis and RAs of TESOL Quarterly?

   a) How are continuatives as themes structured in the Discussion Sections of English Department Skripsis and RAs of TESOL Quarterly?

   b) How are structurals as themes structured in the Discussion Sections of English Department Skripsis and RAs of TESOL Quarterly?

    c) How are conjunctives as themes structured in the Discussion Sections of English Department Skripsis and RAs of TESOL Quarterly?

3) How are the interpersonal themes structured in the Discussion Sections of English Department Skripsis and RAs of TESOL Quarterly?

    a) How are the vocatives as themes structured in the Discussion Sections of English Department Skripsis and RAs of TESOL Quarterly?

    b) How are the modals as themes structured in the Discussion Sections of English Department Skripsis and RAs of TESOL Quarterly?

    c) How are the mood-markings as themes structured in the Discussion Sections of English Department Skripsis and RAs of TESOL Quarterly?

1.3. Purposes of the Study

The overall purpose of this study is to investigate how are thematic structure structured in Skripsis of English Department of Universitas Negeri Jakarta's students and Research Articles of TESOL Quarterly. This overall purpose of the study is divided into two other purposes: to find out the gap between the novice writers (English Department students of Universitas Negeri Jakarta) and the RAs writers (researchers of TESOL Quarterly) and to see the needs of students in writing Discussion Section. To locate the differences, this

study will analyse the textual themes aspects: continuative, structural and conjunctive; the interpersonal themes aspects: vocative, modal, and mood marking; and lastly the topical themes aspects: participant, process, and circumstance.

1.4. Limitation of the Study

Although this study was prepared and guided carefully, there are some unavoidable limitations. The first limitation lies on the time allocation. During six months, the researcher could only analyse the themes in 3 Discussion Sections of Skripsis of ED UNJ's students and 3 Discussion Sections of TESOL Quarterly. The second limitation lies on the limited experience of the researcher on the curriculum. This might make the suggestion to the English Department lacks in terms of knowledge.

1.5. Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is to contribute in the thematic structure progression and to be one thing to analyze the needs of ED's students' writing.