Metadiscourse and Rhetorical Moves in English Thesis Abstract

by Muhammad Saibani Wiyanto

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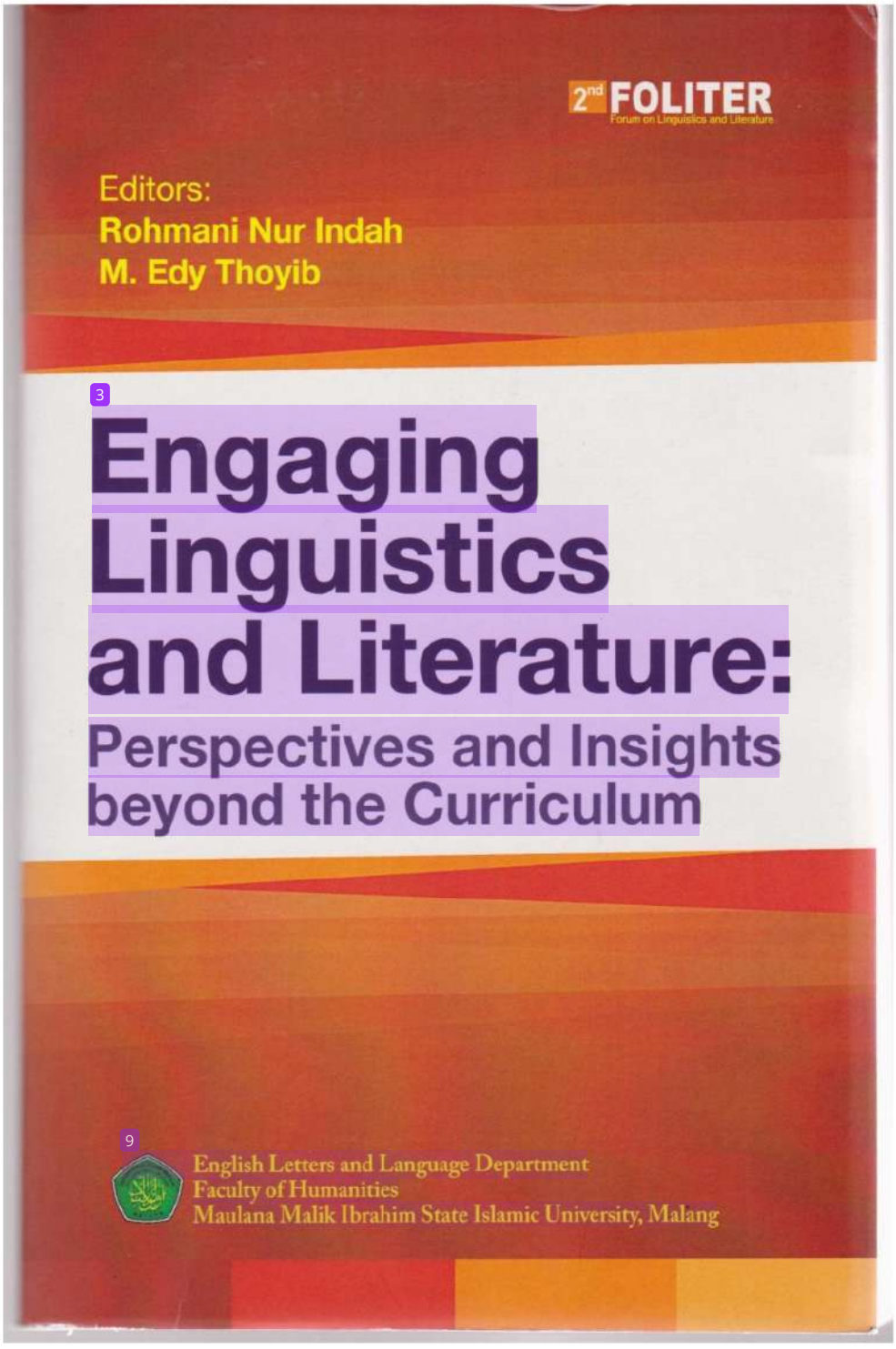
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Engaging Linguistics and Literature: Perspectives and Insights beyond the Curriculum

Rohmani Nur Indah & M. Edy Thoyib

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Metadiscourse and Rhetorical Moves in English Thesis Abstract

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Abstract

An abstract is a brief summary of the main components of a research project. It functions to save time in reading and gives salient information about the article enabling the readers to decide whether they would want to further pursue a full reading. The topic is very significant because it functions on two levels: informational and indicative. The informational function is designed to encapsulate the paper, so it can and should briefly state the problem, the method used to study the problem, and the principal data and conclusions. The indicative function is designed to illustrate the content of a paper, essentially serving as a table of contents, making it easy for potential readers to decide whether or not to read the paper. This research will share about how metadiscourse and rhetorical moves were applied in abstract writing. The method used is qualitative research. The data dealing with abstract writing (i.e. thesis) is chosen from and limited to (Master of English Education and Art) documents written by master's program of The State of Surabaya University. There are thirty sample theses from a total of sixty exactly, starting from 2010-2013.
Key words: abstract, metadiscourse, rhetorical moves

1. Introduction

An abstract is a brief summary of the main components of a research project. It functions to save time in reading and gives salient information about the article enabling the readers to decide whether they would want to pursue a full reading (Al-Ali & Sahawneh, 2011). Several past investigations have examined rhetorical moves in research article abstracts. Most studies have focused on the analysis of the organizational patterns of RA sections in terms of their constituent moves, such as the study of the introduction section (Samraj, 2002, 2005; Swales, 1990, 2004).

On the other side, metadiscourse, often wrongly characterized as 'discourse about discourse', is a concept familiar to many engaged in research and instruction in composition, reading, and text structure. Based on a view of writing as a social and communicative engagement between writer and reader, metadiscourse focuses our attention on the ways writers project themselves into their discourse to signal their attitude

towards both the content and the audience of the text. As a result, it has been taken up by researchers of both social constructionist and functional orientations to discourse and by corpus analysts attracted by the possibility of tracing patterns of interaction and cohesion across texts.

More elaborate model proposed by Hyland (2002) will be employed, which includes five moves: Introduction, Purpose, Method, Product and Conclusion. Compared with the IMRD model, this framework distinguishes the abstract's writing, because it has a different role from the introduction's typical purpose of providing a justification for the research. In this framework, a product move is adopted instead of the result move, as Hyland (2002) clarified that this move can better account for abstracts from the social science fields, which sometimes include not only a statement of empirical results but also a statement of the argument.the article was about metadiscourse. Hyland (2005:49) stated that it can be seen in two dimensions: interactive dimension and interactional dimension. These dimensions exist because an abstract has an organizational text and message from the writer to the reader.

2. Methods

This article used qualitative reseaarch and supported by content analysis. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990:17) in its analysis a qualitative research does not use statistical analysis or other quantifiers, even though quantitative method is often used for collecting the data. In this case, the research will be an analysis of abstract writing written by master's graduate of the state of Surabaya University. The analysis will refer to a "genre-based" analysis (Swales & Feak, 2009), and also use metadiscourse. One type of text, abstract writing, is discussed.

The source of data will be the abstract of English Thesis written by master's of education and Art of the state of Surabaya University. The data has taken 5 examples of English abstract thesis. As the instrument, the researcher collects the data and interpret them. The researcher employs a deep involvement in the process of the data processing until the end of the process, conclusion. In analyzing the data, the researcher becomes the main measurement device. It means that the researcher has a main function in conducting the analysis from beginning until the end of the analysis.

The data dealing with abstract writing (i.e. thesis) will be chosen from and limited to the (Master of Education and Art) written by students from The State of Surabaya University in the graduate program. The number of samples will be five thesis abstract samples of sixty thesis abstract exactly starting from 2010-2013 The main criteria of the samples are as follows: The abstracts have been examined in a thesis.

The analysis of the sample abstract writing covered two levels: micro structure, i.e. linguistic features focusing on the metadiscourse

pattern in relation to macro structure, i.e. and move pattern in abstract writing.

The next step will be to select and classify abstract writing as the data based on the format and structure of the abstract writing. Based on the selection, the collected data are used as the analysis materials. After the selected data are collected, the next step was to analyze the texts focusing on the macro structure (i.e. Abstract section). It will be analyzed in detail so that it could be seen whether the pattern moves) and linguistic features (i.e. metadiscourse pattern) written by Master's programe already in line with the principles of writing English abstracts. In other words, we would be able to find out the strengths and weaknesses of abstract writing written by Master's program of The State of Surabaya University.

3. Finding and Discussion

The result of the metadiscourse analysis is shown by the total of every words written in each thesis. It can be seen in the table 1.

Table 1. Metadiscourse

CATEGORY	ABSTRACTS				
	1	2	3	4	5
INTERACTIVE					
TRANSITION	17	29	14	23	16
FRAME MARKERS			1		1
ENDHOPHORIC MARKERS					
EVEDENTIALS					
CODE GLASSES				1	1
INTERACTIONAL					
HEDGES	2	1	1		1
BOOSTERS		5	1	3	3
ATTITUDE MARKERS	6	2			1
SELF MENTIONS		9	1	3	
ENGAGEMENT MARKERS					

The different numbers above represent every categorizes in the abstract writing. The categories are also shown in the chart below:

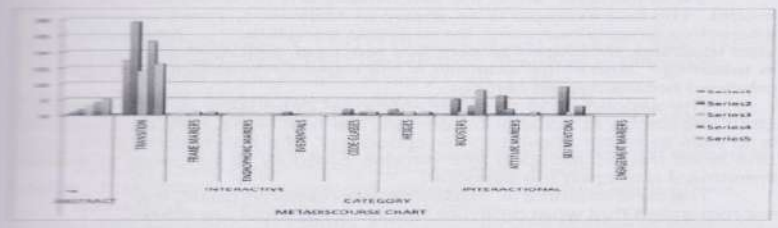

Figure 1. Metadiscourse chart

The next analysis deals with the rhetorical moves applied by the writers. The following is the sample of analysis of an abstract.

Abstract 1:

A lot of research has been compiled on students' motivations to learn, however, teachers' motivations for teaching have been rarely discussed. The study of teachers' motivations may be categorized into three parts: motivation to start teaching, motivation to continue teaching, and motivation to excel in teaching. This thesis focuses on identifying and analyzing the factors that affect novice teachers' motivations to excel at teaching, specifically in the context of Chinese language pedagogy. Furthermore, this study examines what factors create a successful Chinese language teacher training program, as well as highlight the strengths and weaknesses of current Chinese language teacher training programs. To answer these questions, I collected data through class observations, by distributing questionnaires and interviewing four Chinese language teachers. Two of the teachers participated in a Chinese language teacher training program at a large Midwest state university and currently teach at the same university, and two who are teaching at two different U.S. universities and attended training programs at a small state university in the Northwest. Although the two teacher training programs are at different locations, they follow a similar pedagogical approach. The questionnaire consists of eleven motivating factors for teachers that the four subjects have to fill out, with one representing the factor that motivates them the most and eleven being the factor that motivates them the least. In addition to the questionnaire, an interview consisting of two sections with eleven and seven open-ended questions respectively was administered. The questionnaire and interview are both written in English.

This thesis finds that novice teachers' primary motivations to excel stem from their personal interests and goals, which in the study include factors such as teachers' ambition to develop and manage a Chinese language program and choosing a career in Chinese language teaching. Moreover, regarding the Chinese language teacher training programs, the strengths of the investigated programs include combining the teacher training program with intensive language program. This provides opportunities for the trainees to teach and tutor real learners of Chinese, design course-related materials, and receive a series of informative lectures on theoretical and practical issues. On the other hand, the weaknesses of the investigated programs may include having imbalanced opportunities for the trainees to teach Listening & Speaking and Reading & Writing classes, as well as beginning level and higher-level classes and issues related to tight class schedule. However, this imbalance is actually by design; the real issue may be conveying this to trainees to better alleviate their concerns.

Based on the research results, it is recommended that what motivate teachers the most are those sustainable and continued intrinsic motivations, rather than those temporary and extrinsic ones. Additionally, by understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the current Chinese language teacher training programs as well as teachers' motivations, this study wishes to provide constructive insights for the design of future Chinese language teacher training programs associated with inculcating a sustainable motivation.

Move 1

Move 2

Move 3

Move 4

Move 5

All of the data show the two dimensions of metadiscourse model. The first example is as shown in Abstract 1. There were many interactive dimensions used, for example transition. " .... motivation to start teaching, motivation to continue teaching, and motivation to excel in teaching." *And* in the example is the transition functioning to express relations between main clauses.

The second example is interactional dimension in the sentence " ....,this imbalance is actually by design; the real issue may be conveying this to train to better alleviate their concerns." The interactional dimension of the word *may* is included into hedges category. It functions to withold commitment and open the dialogue.

The next example is "Based on the research result, it is recommended that what motivate teachers the most are those sustainable...". *Based on* belongs to evedentials which functions to refer to information in the text.

Another example of the interactional dimension in Abstract 1 is "moreover, regarding the Chinese language teacher training program with intensive language program". *Moreover* is an example of markers that functions to express writer's attitude to proposition.

Abstract 2 was dominated by the transition, hedges, and attitude markers. In addition, it also has boostersand self mentions. The example of booster is "for Isocrates, these men were successful Athenian politician such as Solon, Cleisthenes, Themistocles, and Pericles, whom the community generally esteemed to be excellent." *These* is the booster functioning to emphasize certainty or close dialogue. Another example is self mention "trough studying Isocrates' philosophy, we can fully understand the philosophical climate in Athens in the 4th century BCE". *We* is the self mention used as explicit reference the author. In the sentence, *such as* belongs to code glasses .
Its function is to elaborate propositional meanings.

4. Conclusion

Based on the explanation above, metadiscourse and rhetorical moves are very significant in academic writing. Both of them is complementary. It means that metadiscourse has meaning of words category, while the rhetorical moves means how to organize the text. That is one unity in academic writing. It can not be separated. As abstract is significant part of the research, its function is to convey abridgment of the research. There must be metadiscourse and rhetorical moves.

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Biodata

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