

## RHETORICAL MOVES IN THESIS INTRODUCTION WRITTEN BY ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS

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### ***Abstract***

This study aims at investigating rhetorical pattern deployed by undergraduate students of English literature department in composing academic research introduction in their undergraduate thesis. By using CARS model (Swales, 2004), this study analyzed ten students' Research Introductions (RI) written by low and high achievers. Five set of students' RI written by high achievers was contrasted with five other sets of RI of their counterpart. This study is objected to investigate the rhetorical patterns employed differently by low and high achievers. The analysis reveals that both groups employed almost similar rhetorical pattern in writing their RAI and they still wrestle in arranging the well-established paragraphs as well as occupying the moves in CARS rhetorical pattern. The result of the study also indicates that both high and low level students experienced similar problem in writing successful RAI in their thesis.

***Keywords:*** Rhetorical move, undergraduate thesis introduction

### **INTRODUCTION**

It is undeniable that Indonesian EFL learners are still facing challenges in writing an academic paper (Ariyanti, 2016a; Ariyanti and Fitriyana, 2017; Husain and Nurbayani, 2017) due to the differences between Indonesian and English grammatical structures as well as their structural writing pattern (Husain and Nurbayani, 2017). To be more specific, in writing a scientific paper, Indonesian EFL students mostly wrestle with structural sentence patterns, vocabulary usage, and mechanics (Ariyanti and Fitriyana, 2017). Additionally, Ariyanti and Fitriyana also pinpoint that writing groove, as well as the rhetorical application of scientific paper writing technique, are the other problems faced by students in writing a paper (2017), especially for those who are working with writing an academic proposal and / or thesis (Husain and Nurbayani, 2017). However, as an undergraduate student, an Indonesian EFL learner needs to write a research paper — called a thesis to finish their study. Thus, they need to put much effort into writing an academic

research paper, which requires their writing skill to convey a clear, comprehensive, and purposeful academic written discourse, particularly in writing the introduction section.

However, most studies on Research Article Introduction (RAI) conducted by scholars, such as Adika, 2014; Atai and Habibie, 2009; Hirano, 2009; Mirahayuni, 2002; Ozturk, 2007; Suryani et al., 2014 have paid particular attention to the rhetorical move of RAI written on a research article published in international journals. Few published studies have explored the RAI written by students, particularly on writing theses. A study conducted by Uymaz (2017) revealed a notable finding, stating that RAI written by master students do not have a statement of the problem, research questions, significance of the study, assumptions, limitations, and review of literature parts. More importantly, she also found that RAIs, written by ELT master students, do not aim to find a gap in previous studies. On the other hand, Futasz (2006) confirmed different rhetorical patterns used by undergraduate students from different subfields of study. Thus, EFL teachers need to clarify and incorporate the rhetorical features by considering the different context of the field of study (Futasz, 2006), as well as students' local language common practice (Xu, Huang, You, 2016), and scholarly journal writing convention (Futasz, 2006; Xu, Huang, You, 2016).

To date, however, no previous study has investigated RAI written by undergraduate students in which different level of students' English proficiency is taken into consideration. As a matter of fact, students in undergraduate level are exceptionally in need of help to move from general writing practice to thesis writing (Xu, Huang, You, 2016), especially for those who are in low proficiency level. This paper attempts to explore the rhetorical pattern employed by undergraduate students of English department in writing their thesis introduction. The purpose of this study is twofold: First, it aims to find out the different pattern of ideas construction written in undergraduate thesis RI by high and low achievers of English Literature Department; second, it aims to reveal the different rhetorical pattern of undergraduate thesis RI written by High and Low achievers of English Literature Department. By following CARS rhetorical model proposed by Swales (1990), this research attempts to investigate undergraduate students' thesis introduction through the following research questions: what rhetorical pattern is employed by the high and low level of undergraduate students of the English Literature department in writing their thesis introduction?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

As many other research articles, the introduction section of the undergraduate thesis—henceforth called RAI, is an important part of the whole research report. The content of undergraduate thesis RAI reflects the complete information of the research, including the topic of the study and its importance, the research problem, the structure of the thesis, and the objectives and scope. The introduction part is the most decisive chapter (Lipson, 2005). The researcher needs to construct appealing paragraphs to convince the readers and persuade them to read further (Indrian and Ardi, 2019). Therefore, the writer should organize the RAI paragraphs in a structured format; thus, it enables the readers to

follow the report. In doing this, Swales and Feak (1994) mentioned that students need to occupy a widely used organizational rhetorical move in their RAI to be easily followed and understood by the readers.

According to Swales (2004), Move is "...a discursual or rhetorical unit that performs a coherent communicative function in a written or spoken discourse". RAI section is the most problematic part for most native and non-native English users (Yasin and Qamariah, 2014). Thus, Swales offered The Creating a Research Space (CARS) model to define and explain the structure in writing the introduction section that is acceptable in international journal publication. In CARS model, Swales established three moves within which sub-steps follow each of it. Below are the details of the move and steps in CARS RAI model proposed by Swales (1990).

***Move 1: establishing territory or the situation.***

In this move, the researcher needs to show that the selected topic is still important, problematic, critical, relevant, exciting, and worthy to be investigated and review prior research arguments. Following this move, three steps are provided. They are:

*Step 1: claiming centrality*

In this step, the researcher needs to describe the rationale of the importance of the topic. Some examples of the statement of claiming centrality are:

- *Recently, there has been growing interest in...*
- *The possibility of... has generated wide interest in...*
- *The development of... is a classical problem in...*

*Step 2: making topic generalization*

In step 2, the researcher needs to provide statements about the current state of knowledge, practice or description of phenomena. Here are the examples of statement of step 2:

- *Last century X was considered to be viewed as.... /seen as the most ...*
- *Initial / Preliminary / The first studies of X considered it to be ...*
- *Traditionally X / In the history of X, the focus has always been ...*

*Step 3: reviewing items of previous research.*

In this step, the researcher needs to provide previous studies which are relevant to the present study. The examples of common statement of this example are:

- *Many / Few studies have been published on ... [Ref]*
- *X has been shown / demonstrated / proved / found to be ... [Ref]*
- *A growing body of literature has examined / investigated / studied / analyzed / evaluated ... [Ref]*

***Move 2: establishing a niche (the problem)***

In this move, the researcher presents clear arguments about the research's importance by stating the research gap from a previous study, stating an acceptable assumption, raising questions, or revealing a hypothesis. The steps ensuring this move are as follows:

*Step 1a: Counter claiming*

In this step, the researcher states the opposite point of view or the weaknesses of the previous research. The examples of the statements are:

- *The research has tended to focus on... rather than on...*
- *These studies have emphasized..., as opposed...*
- *Although considerable research has been devoted to..., rather less attention has been paid to...*

*Step 1b: Indicating a gap*

In this part, the researcher presents the information about unexplored area by expanding the problem of the prior research. The example of statements indicating gap are as follows:

- *Few researchers have addressed the problem / issue / question of ...*
- *Previous work has only focused on / been limited to / failed to address...*
- *A basic / common / fundamental / crucial / major issue of ...*

*Step 1c: Question – raising*

In this step, the researcher questions the research gap discussed earlier. The statements are as follows:

- *However, it remains unclear whether...*
- *I would thus be of interest to learn how..*
- *If these result could be confirmed, they would provide strong evidence for...*

*Step 1d: Continuing a tradition*

This part is a follow-up section of the previous step in which the function is to expand the previous research or clarify the problem. The following statements are the example:

- *These recent developments in ... clearly have considerable potential. In this paper, we demonstrate...*
- *The literature shows that Rasch Analysis (RA) is a useful technique for validating multiple choice tests. This paper uses Rasch Analysis (RA) to...*

**Move 3: Occupying the niche (The Solution)**

The last move is a description of the present study as a result of reviewing the previous studies drawn in Move 1 and 2. The two steps are following this move:

*Step 1a: Outlining Purposes*

This part is opening position in which researcher explains the purpose of the study. The statements are as follows

- *The aim of the present paper is to give ...*
- *It is the purpose of the present paper to provide ...*

*Step 1b: Announcing present research*

In this step, the researcher presents the nature of the present study and the next plan of the researcher on the present study.

- *This study was designed to evaluate ....*
- *The aim of the present paper is to give ....*

*The main purpose of the experiment reported here was to ....*

## METHOD

In conducting this research, two sets of texts were collected from the English literature department students at one of the state Islamic Universities in Indonesia. The thesis was written in 2018. They were a set of five undergraduate thesis introductions written by high achievers—coded as HA, and a set of five undergraduate thesis introductions written by low achievers—coded as LA. The academic writing course's final score was used as a consideration to classify students with a high level of English proficiency and a low level of English proficiency. Students with final writing scores range from 75 to 100 were classified as high achievers, while students with final scores ranging from 60 to 74 were considered low achievers. The selection of the score range was based on the result of classroom observation. The result indicated that those who achieved a score between 75–100 had better academic essay writing performance with minor grammatical mistakes and well-established idea construction arranged in well-structured paragraphs. Therefore, they were classified as high achievers, while the others were classified as low achievers.

After classifying the text based on the level of students' proficiency, I conducted the first corpus analysis by counting down the number of words (WC) written in the students' RAI, the total number of sentences (SC), paragraphs (PC), sentence (SC) in a paragraph and the number of words (WC) in a paragraph (See table 2). This was identified to know how students develop their ideas in their RAI. Following this, I did the second corpus analysis using the CARS model proposed by Swales (1990) to reveal students' rhetorical patterns. Table 1 shows the rhetorical pattern code based on the initial letter of move and step.

Table 1: Move and Step Code

Move and Steps	Code
Move 1	M1
Step 1	M1S1
Step 2	M1S2

Step 3	M1S3
Move 2	M2
Step 1A	M2S1A
Step 1B	M2S1B
Step 1C	M2S1C
Step 1D	M2S1D
Move 3	M3
Step 1A	M3S1A
Step 1B	M3S1B

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### Ideas Construction in Undergraduate Thesis RAI written by High and Low Achievers of the English Literature Department

Prior to presenting the result of analysis on the undergraduate students' RAI rhetorical move pattern, below is the description of RAI corpus providing information of the number of Word Count (WC) for the whole of each students' RAI, the number of Sentence Count (SC) of the RAI, Paragraph Count (PC), SC in each paragraph and the detail of WC in each paragraph. This aims at revealing the way both student groups arranged their ideas in their undergraduate thesis RAI.

Table 2 Details of High Achievers' RAIs

RAI	WC	SC	PC	SC in Paragraph	WC in Paragraph
HA1	1344	54	8	7-8-13-6-9-4-6-1	227-217-290-148-175-85-151-51
HA2	681	33	4	16 -9-4-4	265-198-100-118
HA3	1563	63	10	4-7-9-8-10-3-5-3-6-8	131-191-203-192-200-74-143-69-131-230
HA4	1341	59	13	4-4-3-4-4-4-4-5-6-6-4-7-4	76-88-65-111-99-134-91-136-114-145-81-110-91
HA5	1044	44	5	10-7-9-4-14	250-165-201-110-318
<i>Average</i>	<i>1194.6</i>	<i>50.6</i>	<i>8</i>		

Table 3 Details of Low Achievers' RAIs

RAI	WC	SC	PC	SC in Paragraph	WC in Paragraph
LA1	1134	49	9	7 - 6 - 6 -4-7-5-3-4-7	141-146-132-105-184-96-87-80-160

LA2	1688	45	21	5-2-1-4-5-6-5-4-2-2- 2-3-4-3-3-4-3-3-4-2-5	85-56-83-92-110-103-80-67- 73-57-46-84-68-53-94-129- 71-60-91-53-133
LA3	975	42	9	7-3-7-4-5-3-4-4-5	137-49-160-56-87-49-50- 110-69
LA4	2018	94	13	16-6-1-11-5-9-6-7- 12-6-6-4-5	269-172-141-181-96-137- 145-131-338-71-123-84-127
LA5	913	37	9	7-5-4-4-4-4-5-4	134-73-122-79-106-73-87- 103-135
<i>Average</i>	<i>1345.6</i>	<i>53.4</i>	<i>12.2</i>		

The result of the study has indicated that both HA and LA undergraduate students used different length in writing their RAI. For high achievers, in terms of the number of words (WC), the HA corpus ranged from 681 to 1563. Meanwhile, the LA corpus was varied from 913 to 2018 for low achievers. Regarding constructing the RAI paragraph, HA tended to write fewer paragraphs varied from 4 to 13 than their counterpart, which ranged from 9 to 21 paragraphs. However, both groups had almost the same various numbers of sentences in each of the paragraphs. The maximum number was 16 sentences, and the lowest was one sentence for one paragraph. Besides, they also had diverged number of word counts for each paragraph. In one RAI, it can be found that some paragraphs were very long, while some others were concise. It seems that both student groups did not pay much attention to the length of each paragraph; even sometimes, the main idea conveyed in the paragraph was unclear.

Furthermore, from those two sub-corpora tables, it is interesting to note that one of the word counts in RAI written by LA exceeded 2000 words. This RAI was written in 94 sentences within 13 paragraphs (see table 3, LA4). It indicates that the paragraphs written in this RAI had a huge number of sentences. The number of WC in each paragraph of LA4's RAI had various lengths of sentences and words. One of the paragraphs consisted of only one sentence with 141 words, while the other paragraph consisted of 16 sentences with 269 words. Another paragraph consisted of 12 sentences with 338 words, within which it indicated that the sentences constructed were very long.

On the other hand, even though the word count in RAI written in by HA (see table 2) was not quite long on average, the number of paragraphs and the WC in a paragraph were varied. Generally, HA students tended to write longer paragraphs than those of LA. Some students wrote around 250 to more than 300 words in a paragraph, albeit one student wrote one sentence in a single paragraph (see table 2, HA1). Only one student from the HA group wrote the paragraphs to a slightly similar extent.

### **Rhetorical pattern used by High Achievers and Low Achievers of the English literature department in writing undergraduate thesis RAI**

The analysis of undergraduate students' RAI using CARS model shows that both groups of students employed almost all the moves in the CARS model, including move 1—which is establishing territory, move 2—establishing a niche, and move 3—which is occupying the niche (see table 3).

Table 4: Move and step occurrences in the Undergraduate Thesis Introduction

Code		HA (n=5)		LA (n=5)	
Move	Step	N	%	N	%
Move 1	M1S1	4	80%	4	80%
	M1S2	5	100%	4	80%
	M1S3	4	80%	5	100%
Move 2	M2S1A	1	20%	2	40%
	M2S1B	4	80%	4	80%
	M2S1C	0	0%	0	0%
	M2S1D	2	40%	0	0%
Move 3	M3S1A	5	100%	2	40%
	M3S1B	5	100%	5	100%

### Move 1

Both HA and LA also occupied move 1 in all steps; they are step 1 (M1S1)—claiming importance, step 2 (M1S2)—making topic generalization, and step 3 (M1S3)—reviewing an item of previous research. In occupying move 1, especially for step 2, students generalized a very broad topic. They do not focus on the specific topic of their study. The examples of move occurrences in move 1 step 2 for both groups are as follows:

1. "As social beings, people cannot live without others... In order to interact one another, people use language as one of the tools of their communication. *It is obvious that interaction among people in society to negotiate, communicate, and work is totally needed*" [HA2/M1S1/Par.1/Sent 1-4]
2. "*Impoliteness is not only performed in a verbal communication, but also in a written form of online social media; the new media in a digital era that has been desired by many people*" [HA4/M1S1/Par.6/Sent. 1]
3. "Fiction is a type of literary work. It is .... In fiction, an author intentionally and aesthetically poured out his or her ideas through *meaningful and structured words*. When an author encodes..... Nurgiyantoro (2017) stated that *the success of communication process in literary work is effected by the lexical choice of the author and readers' reading ability*" [LA1/M1S1/Par.1/Sent 1-6]
4. "In every interaction that happens in a society, *of course, communication is the most important thing*. People can get .... *One of the ways to do the interaction is by holding a communication*" [LA4/M1S1/Par.1/Sent 1-6]



From the data above, it can be seen that students tended to use a very broad topic to claim the importance of the research (M1S1), even for the student with a high level of English proficiency. From data 1, for example, student HA1 started his RAI by providing the information about the importance of interaction among people to claim the importance of conducting research, which was factually not the main topic of the research. This type of move is commonly used by students with low proficiency level (see data HA2/M1S1/Par.1, Sent. 1-4, data LA1/M1S1/Par.1, Sent. 1-6, and data LA4/M1S1/Par.1, Sent 1-6). Meanwhile, students with a high level of proficiency occupied different ways of a move. Some students wrote M1S1 in the middle of the RAI, as HA4 did it (see data HA4/M1S1/Par.6, Sent 1). HA4 started the RAI by using move 3 step 1A, which was outlining the purpose of the research and occupied move 1 step 1 in the following paragraph. This move pattern also occurred in the RAI of HA1 and HA5. This indicates that students did not follow a certain rhetorical convention of writing a research report in writing RAI.

This unstructured pattern also occurred in Move 1, 2, and 3. Both groups of students did not follow specific rhetorical structure patterns in which paragraph step 2 and step 3 were located. For example, student HA1, HA4 and HA5 started their RAI by occupying Move 3 step 1b in the first paragraph. This means that instead of identifying the importance of the topic, they explain the purpose of their study at the beginning of their RAI. Even though this rhetorical structure model rarely occurred in the low achiever group, the same case in both groups was the unstructured rhetorical move pattern arranged by undergraduate students.

### Move 2

In move 2, both HA and LA did not use step 1C (0%), question-raising (see table 4). 80% of HA and 100% of LA stated the previous studies in their chapter (M1S3) and 80% of students indicated the gap of the study (M21B). However, none of them problematize the previous research literature (Step M21C). While only 20% of HA and 40% LA stated the weaknesses of previous research (Step M1S1C) (See table 5 for the detail).

Table 5: Step occurrences in Undergraduate Thesis Introduction

Code	Move 1			Move 2				Move 3	
	M1S 1	M1S 2	M1S 3	M1S1 A	M1S1 B	M1S1 C	M1S1 D	M1S1 A	M1S1 B
<i>High Achiever</i>									
HA1	6	2	2	3	2	0	1	1	4
HA2	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	4
HA3	0	5	3	0	1	0	1	1	2
HA4	2	5	1	0	1	0	0	2	4
HA5	2	2	1	0	1	0	0	1	4

<i>Low Achiever</i>									
LA1	1	3	3	1	1	0	0	0	1
LA2	4	10	4	2	2	0	0	1	2
LA3	2	0	3	0	2	0	0	1	2
LA4	1	7	4	0	0	0	0	0	1
LA5	0	4	2	0	1	0	0	0	2

The examples of students' writing in occupying the M1S1A are as follow.

1. "Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis which is proposed by Lazar *also can assess the novelty* of the proverbs analysis *because although* many observation that *was true in the past may not continue to be true in the present*, the existence of proverb that relates to that particular observation perpetuates it and makes people take it for granted as a truth" [HA1/M2S1A/Par.7/Sent. 1]
2. "Though some previous studies have been done before, however, this research will be conducted differently. The researcher uses stylistics approach to identify the lexical features used by Poe to form imagery in his short story entitled —The Oval Portrait" [LA1/M2S1A/Par. 7/Sent. 1 & 2].

From those two data, H1 counterclaimed the argument to show the importance of his/her research topic. However, the counterclaim was not referred to previous research, yet it was for theoretical framework—feminist Critical Discourse Analysis, which will be used to analyze the present data [HA1/M2S1A/Par.7, sent 1]. This is indicated in the sentence "...Lazar *also can assess the novelty of ... because although...was true in the past may not continue to be true in the present*". This rhetorical pattern also occurred in low achievers [LA1/M2S1A/Par. 7, Sent. 1 & 2]. The LA did not counterclaim the previous research but the theoretical framework of analysis, as it can be seen from the statement, "Though some previous studies have been done before, however, this research will be conducted differently. The researcher uses stylistics approach...".

### Move 3

It can be seen from table 4 that all students both from HA and LA group occupied Move 3 step 1B, which is announcing present research. All students clearly stated the nature of their study, even though it was in a different sequence of a paragraph. Three students from HA group put the M1S1B in the first paragraph of their RAI, while only one student from LA group was found putting his M1S1B at the beginning of the RAI. In contrast, the other students arranged Move 1 Step 1B in a various sequences of a paragraph. An enormous difference occurred in the usage of Move 3 Step 1A (M3S1A). 100% of HA occupied the M3S1A, meanwhile only 40% of students employed this move and step, indicating that students did not state the purpose of their study in their RAI.

Based on the result of the study, it is also indicated that student occupied M3S1A and M3S1B in different sequence of paragraph. Below are the examples of the application of Move 3 in undergraduate students' RAI.

1. *In this research, the researcher focused on the types of slips of the tongue produced by the international students, and the possible conditions which cause the slips of the tongue* [HA2/M3S1B/Par. 3/Sent. 1]
2. This research investigated the identity representation of Malay-Muslims in Singapore on the book written by Rizwana Abdul Azeez, who is a Malay-Muslim and also the author of a monograph and various articles on Singapore Malays and Muslims [HA5/M3S1B/Par.1/Sent.1]
3. *In this research, the researcher focuses on Microstructures which exist in each text.... The researcher used the smallest element of van Dijk's dimension of discourse in order to know deeper the strategies ...* [LA2/M3/Par.13/Sent.1- 4]
4. *"This research investigates code-switching .... uploaded in Youtube, those are: Ini Talk Show and Good Afternoon on NET TV"* (M3S1B). *"The main purpose of this research is to identify the types and functions of ... which is uttered on those talk shows".* (M3S1A) [LA3/M3/Par.1/Sent 1 & 2]

As it can be seen from the data above, undergraduate students occupied Move 3 step 1B in different sequence of paragraphs. Some students either from HA or LA group, locate their Move 3 in the first paragraph of RAI (data HA5/M3S1B/Par.1/Sent.1 and data LA3/M1/Par.1/Sent 1 & 2), and some others put move 3 in the middle of RAI, as it was done by HA2 and LA2. Meanwhile, LA3 occupied Move 3 step 1A and Step 1B consecutively in one paragraph (see LA3/M3/Par.1/Sent 1 & 2).

From all of those rhetorical moves and structures found in the data, one interesting finding was that one student alloyed the structure of the move in a single paragraph (see HA3/Par.10/Sent. 1 – 8).

Based on the above-mentioned discussion, *this research aims to investigate* (M3S1B) the phonological assimilation produced ... *The basic considerations why this research is conducted are as follows* (M1S1): *... I believe that investigating the sound change in assimilation produced by native speakers is better* (M1S1) *in order to give broader phonological sight* (M1S1A) for EFL learners to the point of phonological aspect, especially in the types of assimilation occurred in their speech. *Second, mostly previous researchers focus to compare* (M21B).... *However, the present study focuses only* (M31B) the English assimilation applied... *in order to have deeper understanding* (M31A) in the English assimilation featured by the teachers. *The reason why this study takes the English teachers as the subject of study is because* (M1S1)... Moreover, the YouTube channel, "English with Lucy" provides fun and interesting ... *These significant reasons above become a significant guidance why this research is conducted* (M1S1). [HA3/Par.10/Sent. 1 – 8]

From the data above, the student occupied Move 1 to Move 3, with various steps in a single paragraph. In this paragraph, the student (HA3) started the first sentence of the

paragraph by employing Move 3 step 1B. Following this, the student supported the statement of the first sentence by claiming the importance of the topic (M1S1) and stating the research gap (M2S1B). Following this, the student emphasized the research focus by using Move 3 Step 1B and returned to Move1 Step 1 to claim the importance of conducting the study. Since many moves are applied in this paragraph, the paragraph's construction is slightly long, with 230 words written in 10 sentences in a single paragraph.

## DISCUSSION

Writing a research article introduction is a daunting task (Yasin and Qamariah, 2014), especially for non-native English novice writers, as well as for EFL learners (Ariyanti & Fitriyana, 2017). However, in Indonesian higher education, writing a research paper is obligatory for undergraduate students to fulfill their degree at the end of their studying. The results of the study show that generally, undergraduate students, both high and low achievers, are struggling to compose their thesis introduction. This is indicated by the way students construct their ideas in the introductory paragraphs. Most of the students did not pay much attention to the length of the paragraph, the main ideas of the paragraph, and the number of the paragraph. From all ten students' RAI under investigation, only one RAI was in a well-established structure in terms of its number of words in each paragraph and its clear-stated main idea in each paragraph.

Furthermore, as it can be seen from the result of the study on rhetorical patterns employed by students, it shows that most students employed various rhetorical moves that are not necessarily the same as those expressed by the CARS model proposed by Swales (Fustaz, 2006). However, the variety of moves in students' thesis introduction generally has a similar pattern. Generally, students of both groups employed the first and the second move, and barely occupy the second move. However, it is essential to note that most of the students under my investigation had already stated the research gap clearly in their RAI. This finding is not similar to that of Indrian and Ardi's research result (2019) who stated that the Indonesian writers under their investigation did not sufficiently review the previous studies and did not state the research gap, which is important to be written in the RAI. The way students of both groups present the research gap is based on a theoretical framework or current phenomena instead of the previous research gap, as indicated by 0% of students occupying Move 2 step 1C and step 1D. This result of the study is the same as the result of the study conducted by Yasin and Qamariah (2014); Huda, 2016; and Adika (2014). Even though presenting the research gap in such a way is acceptable in CARS model, yet this does not provide the strong critical point of the research (Yasin and Qamariah, 2014; Huda, 2016; Adika, 2014).

In regard to move 3, all students are aware of the importance of stating the nature of their research explicitly; therefore, both HA and LA occupied move 3 step 1B. Yet, there is a significant difference in the move 3 step 1A, in which all students from a high level of English proficiency are aware of stating the purpose of conducting the research. Meanwhile, only two students from a low level of English proficiency stated the purpose

of their study clearly in their RAI. This indicates that although both students group are generally still struggling in constructing the paragraphs in their RAI, yet by occupying the steps in move 3 indicates that the thesis authors are aware of the importance of stating the aims of the study (Yasin and Qamariah, 2014).

## CONCLUSION

Writing a thesis introduction is a complex task for both students with a high English proficiency level and students with a low level of English proficiency. Even though most of the rhetorical patterns in students' RAI followed the CARS model proposed by Swales, students from both groups are different in structuring the moves and the steps within the moves. Both groups mostly occupied move 1 and move 3 in various structures and rarely employed move 2, especially for step 1A, step 1C and step 1D. This indicated that students are aware of the importance of stating the research gap. However, they still have a feeble argument supporting the research gap as it was only based on the common phenomena. This may happen because students are also still struggling in arranging well-structured paragraphs. In short, the result of the study shows that all undergraduate students still need assistance in writing their thesis introduction even for a high level of English proficiency. Therefore, further assistance for both groups in writing a thesis, especially RAI, is necessarily needed.

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