CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to introduce the background of the study, research questions, objective of the study, theoretical framework, significance of the study, and definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

Every year, college students need to write a thesis as their last assignment. The thesis they write may prove some theories, analyze some literature works, look for someone's opinion toward something, etc. The content should provide the description of the problem that is being studied, the causes, the processes, and the solutions to encounter the problem. A thesis which is already put in the repository is also very helpful for future studies as a guideline in solving the same problem in the future. For college students, it helps them to think critically and structurally.

Thesis contains very detailed data and can be confusing for readers to understand. To make sure that the readers know the purpose, data, and results of the research easily without being lost whilst reading, the abstract of the thesis should be provided. Abstract is the summary of a thesis and it is very helpful for readers to quickly understand general information about the thesis. A thesis abstract usually consists of around 200 words long about the short summary of the entire study, including the problem, methods used, and major findings

(McMillan 1992, p.15). It helps the reader to quickly understand what the study is about.

It is not easy to compose an abstract and students find it is difficult to write a thesis abstract. They encounter some problems to put their thoughts into paper since there are too many important things in their thesis that need to be written.

Despite the fact that a thesis abstract is quite brief, it must contain as much information as the thesis itself (Koopman, 1997). Thus, if it is written well, thesis abstract induces the readers to learn more about the whole work (Krajnakova, 2014). People usually search a thesis through search engines, but they only get the abstract and not the whole thesis, they need to buy the thesis in order to download it. Therefore, a well-written abstract can convince the reader to buy the thesis or go look for a copy of the thesis in the library to study the thesis. Although it is placed at the beginning of their paper, the abstract should be the last thing that one writes, once one is sure of the conclusions (The University of Melbourne, 2010).

English Department students, especially in Indonesia, may have double challenges regarding writing their thesis abstracts in English, the linguistic challenges and the structure of the text challenges.

What makes the thesis abstract of English Department students different from the other students is the English Department Students need to write their thesis abstracts in English, while the other student just need to write their thesis abstracts in Bahasa Indonesia. Their competence in English linguistic may influence their performance in writing thesis abstracts.

The second challenge is related to the structure of the thesis abstract. English Department students may not be familiar to the thesis abstract text structure since they are not exposed to the genre until they are ready to write their thesis. The challenges may be reflected in the thesis abstracts that they have already written.

A Study by Diana Krajnakova in 2014 entitled *"A Structural Analysis of English Thesis Abstracts in Slovak Academic Setting*" gives an enlightenment for the writer to conduct this study. In her study, she analyzed the thesis abstracts' structure of the Slovak students to find whether the thesis abstracts had already reflected the Koopman's five abstract's parts which are the Motivation, Problem Statement, Methods, Results, and Conclusions. Her study is used as a reference in this study to analyze the English Department students' thesis abstracts' generic structure. The ratio of the occurrence of each part found in her study are 11% for the motivation, 45% for the problem statement, 38% for the method, 4% for the result, and 4% for the conclusion.

Another study by Monica Holtz in 2011 entitled "*Lexico-grammatical Properties of Abstracts and Research Articles*" is also used as a reference in this study to analyze the English Department students' thesis abstracts' lexico-grammatical features. The study aims to explore the observable linguistic features at both lexical and grammatical levels, and evaluate them qualitatively and quantitatively. The lexico-grammatical features analyzed in her study consist of 3 parts, they are: shallow features, lexical features, and grammatical features. However, this study only analyzes the lexical and grammatical

features. To be specified, in lexical features, the parts analyzed are the lexical density and the most frequent lexical items and in grammatical features, the parts analyzed are the modal and voice.

The challenges faced by the English Department students in writing their thesis abstracts and the previous studies conducted by Diana Krajnakova (2014) and Monica Holtz (2011) inspire the writer to focus on exploring the lexico-grammatical features (the lexical density, the most frequent lexical items, modals, and voice) and investigating the generic structure of thesis abstracts of the English Department students in this study.

1.2 Research Questions

The research questions for this study are:

1. Do the abstracts' structure of the English Department students contains the Background, Problem Statement, Method, Result, and Conclusion of their theses?

2. What lexical features are frequently used in the English Department students' abstracts?

3. What grammatical features are frequently used in the English Department students' abstract?

1.3 Objective of the Study

The purposes of this study are:

1. To find whether the English Department student's abstracts contain the Background, Problem Statement, Method, Result, and Conclusion of their theses.

2. To find out the lexical features which are frequently used in the students' abstract

3. To find out the grammatical features which are frequently used in the students' abstracts

1.4 Theoretical Framework

Since this study analyzes the structure and the lexico-grammatical features of English Department students' thesis abstracts, this study is based on the theory of Academic Writing, Text Structure, and Lexico-grammatical features of abstract. One type of academic writing is thesis which contents are summarized in the abstract.

This study analyzes the text structure of abstract using Koopman's (1997), Bhatia's (1990), and Hyland's (2000) structure model of abstract. Three of them stated that an abstract should contain the background, problem statement, method, result, and conclusion of the thesis.

Beside the structure, this study also analyzes the lexico-grammatical features to check the quality of the students' abstracts. Since an abstract must be as informative as the thesis and shorter, the Lexical Density is going to be

analyzed to find out how much informative the thesis is. The lexical items are needed in order to count the lexical density, therefore, the writer also wants to analyze the most frequent lexical items. The grammatical features which are analyzed are the modals and voice used by the students in their thesis abstracts.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study are: first, this study attempts to find out whether the thesis abstracts of the English Department students are meaningful and structurally corrected or not based on the Koopman's (1997), Bhatia's (1990), and Hayland's (2000) structure model of abstracts. Second, this study can be used to help the English Department students to write a meaningful and structurally correct thesis abstract.

1.6 Limitation and Scope

This study analyzes the structure and the lexical features, which are the lexical density and most frequent lexical items, and grammatical features, which are the modal and voice, of the thesis abstracts of the English Department students of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya who graduated in 2016, 2017, and 2018. The lexical features that are analyzed in this study are the lexical density, most frequent lexical items, while the grammatical features which are analyzed in this study are modals, and voice. The samples used in this study are limited to 28 abstracts, 8 abstracts from 2016 (three quantitative researches and five qualitative researches), 10 thesis abstracts from 2017 (five

quantitative researches and five qualitative researches), and 10 thesis abstracts from 2018 (five quantitative researches and five qualitative researches).

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

1. Thesis abstract

   A thesis abstract contains the idea of the research paper or entire thesis. It is a well-developed text of approximately 200 words in length, which is indented and single spaced. The function of the abstract is to outline briefly all parts of the paper (The University of Melbourne, 2010).

2. Abstract's Generic Structure

   An abstract, according to Bhatia (1993), Koopman (1997), and Hyland (2000), consists of the motivation/background, purpose, method, results, and conclusion of the study

3. Lexical Features

   Lexical features are related with words or vocabulary of a language. There are two lexical features which are analyzed in this study, one is the lexical density or the measure of the density of information in a text (Holtz, 2011), and the other is the lexical item that is frequently used by the English Department students in their thesis abstracts (noun, verb, adjective, and adverb).

4. Lexical Density

One of the lexical features analyzed in this study is the lexical density. It is a measurement of the density of information in a text. Halliday (1993) defines lexical density as the number of lexical words per clause.

5. Grammatical Features

Grammatical features are related to the grammar. There are two grammatical features which are analyzed in this study, they are the modals and the voice used by the English Department students in their thesis.