

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

The question of to what extent pronoun is used in academic writing has attracted some scholars to examine over the past decade, for instance, in master's thesis (Isler, 2018); argumentative essays (Luan & Zhang, 2015; MacIntyre, 2019); and students' English academic writing (Stormbom, 2019). The use of pronouns by students in academic writing has even become one of the topics to investigate since the last century (Tang & John, 1999). The analysis of pronouns is an essential focus not only in English, but also in some other languages, for example, the reason of selecting pronouns in three similar languages, namely Estonian, Finnish, and Russian (Hint et al, 2020). In addition, the study of pronouns has also been conducted in local language, specifically in a Papuan language called Maybrat (Waren, 2007). Some scholars have also considered to examine the interpretation of pronouns in a national language that is Japan (Yee & Wong, 2021). Two studies of pronoun in a Tibeto-Burman language, Longxi Qiang, have also been done by Zheng in 2020 and 2021. They are about the first-person singular pronoun in terms of getting attention (Zheng, 2020) and the metaphor of pronoun in Longxi Qiang (Zheng, 2021). These linguistic phenomena prove that the use of pronouns has evolved into a potential discussion in global practice.

The idea of bringing pronouns into the learning objectives makes some scholars consider it as a good need to conduct research, for example, the analysis of demonstrative pronouns in the students' writing. More specifically, in case of

teaching-learning purposes, the appropriate use of pronouns can really help students, for instance, direct pointing at the words needed, followed by the relevant number words it replaces, and the consistent use of viewpoint in a discourse (Paturusi, 2016). The study revealed some common mistakes made by school students in their writing, namely the students' problems in using demonstrative pronouns and the intermediate level of score in the objective test on the use of pronouns. The fact that the awareness on the correct application of pronouns has not reached the minimum standard eventually leads the present study to be conducted. Thus, the present study can contribute to the analysis of pronouns that can also improve the better understanding on the appropriate use of pronouns.

The previous studies of pronouns aim at reaching various objectives, such as recognizing the presence of the authors in the text (Li, 2021; Isik-Tas (2018); Hartwell & Jacques, 2014), the analysis of the most commonly used personal pronouns in such writing and how it is used in social life (Goddard & Wierzbicka, 2021), the interpretation of pronouns based on the Linguistics understanding (Arnold et al, 2018). Furthermore, the use of pronouns based on the discourse functions has also got much attention from some academicians (Dolphen, 2017; Harwood, 2007). Therefore, the urgency of conducting research on pronouns has become more obvious when some researchers also make some novel findings on the study of pronouns. Thus, this study observed the use of pronouns more deeply in Linguistics research articles which are also part of academic discourse, similar to some other previous studies. However, more intensive analysis on the concordances of pronouns was also enlarged to the study of author interaction.

Hence, this study can produce a novelty on the analysis of pronouns in Linguistics research articles.

First-person pronouns are common in academic writing. In research articles, the use of first-person pronouns is usually for substituting a noun. The significant use of first-person pronouns is not only for replacing another noun in order to avoid misusing of a noun but also for representing the roles of authors in research articles. According to Tang & John (1999), first-person pronouns in text can be a marker that the authors employed in order to reveal their identity. Thus, the analysis of first-person pronouns is an urgent issue in conducting research in research articles. That is due to the fact that the authors can represent their presence through the use of first-person pronouns. The present study tried to measure how far the exposure of the author's identity through their use of first-person pronouns in research articles. Moreover, this study also tried to know the ability of the authors in research articles through their use of pronouns. According to Musyahda (2019), the potential of the language users in matching sentences with the contexts become an important issue. Therefore, the present study also attempted to measure the authors' ability by their collocation of pronouns through the discourse functions.

Research article has become one of the subjects of debate in academic life. Students in higher education level have been very familiar with research. They are required not only to conduct research but also to transfer what they have observed and what they have understood into writing. Since writing is also academically significant, it is also an urgent need for the writers to have good writing comprehension. Either the students or the teachers must absolutely understand the

rules in writing so that they can apply their skill in order to create the good research article. Moreover, it is also mandatory for the students in the Indonesian higher education level to publish their research articles in the reputable scientific journals. It is declared in the Decree No. 152/E/T/2012 made by General Directorate of Higher Education of Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, Republic of Indonesia that is published on January 27th 2012. Since then, the trend of conducting research has been developing. The present study is hoped to be beneficial in giving knowledge to the candidate of authors in applying pronouns in their research articles.

Since research articles have become a fundamental issue in education, the further analysis of the research articles also emerges. The investigations of pronouns include the syntactic complexity in the cross-disciplinary research articles (Casal et al, 2021); the title content and form in research articles (Kerans et al, 2020); the analysis of interactive meta-discourse markers in research articles (Khedri et al, 2013; Kim & Lim, 2013); a move analysis of research articles in two languages (Loi et al, 2014); the list of phrase-frame in research articles (Lu et al, 2018); the word list and lexical bundles (Ni'mah, 2020); and the rhetorical functions of syntactically complex sentences in research articles (Lu et al, 2020). A highlighted purpose can be concluded from those previous studies. Research findings can be clearly important for writing research articles and, more significantly, for reaching the pedagogical implications in the English for Academic Purposes.

The analysis of research articles, particularly on the use of pronouns, has

been regarded as a noticeable topic among linguists. Several studies on pronouns of research articles were carried out under the corpus-based study (Basal & Bada, 2021; Padula, et al, 2020; Stormbom, 2020; Wang, et al, 2021; Yakut, et al, 2021; Harianjaja, 2019). Corpus was preferably adopted in investigating research articles because it has been designed to be specific in terms of discipline and it can represent the complete data with various items, such as period, size, and diversity of areas and domains (Padula, et al, 2020). Therefore, corpus was also the most appropriate data of the present study since the sufficient amount of data with specific category is required in the analysis.

Authorial presence has become the interest among some academicians. Authorial presence is regarded to be significant it can represent the authors in their writing (Dontcheva-Navrátilová, 2013). Authorial presence also addresses the degree of the authors' visibility and authoritativeness in order to assign themselves into their own writing to verify their statements (Dontcheva-Navrátilová, 2013). As the consequence, the study of authorial presence has also become an interesting topic for some writers, both in research articles (Hartwell & Jacques, 2014; Dontcheva-Navrátilová, 2013; Januarto & Hardjanto, 2020; Li, 2021) and in students' argumentative essays (Çandarlı et al. 2015). Authorial presence can be identified through the use of pronouns. Another research with the same analysis on the discourse functions of first-person pronouns also mentioned another term for authorial presence – authorial identity. First-person pronouns as the implications of authorial presence in the text can be manifested to either the referent or the multiple identities that the pronouns can be performed (Isik-Tas, 2018; Tang & John, 1999).

Due to the close relation between authorial presence and authorial identity, according to Ivanic (1998), as cited in Li (2021) and in Isik-Tas (2018), there are four major interrelated selves of authorial presence including self-hood, autobiographical self, discorsal self and authorial self. The latter is the most appropriate to represent the degree of authorial identity portrayed in the writing that is viewed by the existence of personal pronouns. A developing classification of authorial roles was also done by Tang & John (1999). Furthermore, Hyland (2002) also conducted study of pronouns in research articles and found that there are four major purposes of personal pronouns in research articles, such as stating a purpose or goal, explaining a procedure, elaborating an argument, and stating claims or results.

In addition, according to Tang & John (1999), one of the discourse functions of first person-pronouns is to create identities. The author identities are then known as authorial roles. Tang & John (1999) proposed the authorial roles that can stand for the representative, the guide, the architect, the recounter, the opinion holder and the originator. Those six roles can be represented by the use of first-person pronouns in academic writing. This is proven by Tang & John (1999) in their analysis in essays of University students.

Isik-Tas (2018) enhanced the previous studies by referring to Ivanic's (1998) classifications of elaborating the identity of authors. There are four interconnected items that are highlighted by Ivanic (1998). They are called as *possibilities for self-hood, autobiographical self, discorsal self, and authorial self*.

The four elements play different but closely-related role in understanding writer

identity. Possibilities for self-hood can create the author identity through the abstract positions of the social and cultural aspects in the text. Autobiographical self tends to discuss about the social aspects of the writer, such as where the writer comes from, and it also follows the private life of the author since it is also influenced by the author's life history. Meanwhile, discorsal self refers to the state that the authors established through their work. Authorial self can contribute to how the writers' authority of the authors is seen through the use of pronouns.

Among those results on the use of pronouns in research articles, Li (2021) compiled a combination of them. It consists of eight discourse functions of first-person pronouns. The first four categories are classified as low-stakes functions – organize the text, state a goal, define a term and describe methods. The latter plays the part of high-stakes functions – state opinions, state a hypothesis, propose a theory and report results. The study of first-person pronouns by Isik-Tas (2018) and Li (2021) adopted the similar theory with few improvisations – authorial roles by Tang and John (1999). Meanwhile, the present study employed the main theory of discourse functions by Tang and John (1999) since it is the most appropriate to represent the data of first-person pronouns in research articles.

Moreover, the study of first-person pronouns is also extended with the analysis of stance features. The analysis of stance features involves the feature of hedges and boosters. Those two features are chosen because they are also the concordances of first-person pronoun. The analysis of hedges and boosters have also been conducted by Wang and Zeng (2021). According to Hyland (1996), as cited in Wang and Zeng (2021), hedges simply let the authors to tell their opinions rather

than facts. Hedges are also open for possible opinions that are negotiable. Meanwhile, according to Hyland (1999), as cited in Wang and Zeng (2021), boosters, on the contrary, involve assurance, confirm opinions. In addition, boosters do not permit different perspectives.

Linguistics, the major discipline of research articles analyzed in this study, was adopted due to some primary reasons. Arsyad et al (2019) mentioned that there were not too many Indonesian researchers in the fields of social sciences and humanities that published their articles in scientific reputable international journals. There is a big discrepancy between published articles in those fields and those in the fields of science, technology, health and medicine. Moreover, the data from General Directorate of Higher Education of Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, Republic of Indonesia (2016) demonstrated that Indonesian academic publications are dominated by scholars from the fields of science, technology, health and medicine, e.g. Engineering (15.14%), Medicine (10.64%), Computer Science (10.2%), Agriculture and Biological Sciences (9.57%), Physics and Astronomy (5.39%). On the other hand, there were only few publications from the authors majoring Social Sciences, such as Applied Linguistics and Language Education (4.74%) while the fields of Arts and Humanities involving Linguistics are only 0.91%.

This academic phenomenon is not in line with the policy regarding publications for University students in the reputable scientific journals created by General Directorate of Higher Education of Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, Republic of Indonesia. Thus, this fact can be the

preceding cause to conduct the present study. Consequently, there is an urgent need in analyzing the first-person pronouns in Linguistic research articles in order to find out the authorial identity. This study is expected to help the researchers in the field of Linguistics so that it can increase the number of publications in reputable scientific journals.

Some scholars noted that pronouns in research articles of soft disciplines, such as Linguistics, are more preferred than those in hard disciplines (Li, 2021; Isik-Tas, 2018; Dontcheva-Navrátilová, 2013; Hartwell & Jacques, 2014; Basal & Bada, 2012). As a consequence, the authorial presence also obviously emerged in soft disciplines. Contrastively, writers in hard disciplines tend to be less visible in their academic writing. Hyland (2006), as cited in Hartwell & Jacques (2014), stated that the authors of natural sciences research articles tried to minimize their presence by using a formalized manner in reporting in their own way. According to Dontcheva-Navrátilová (2013), this is in line with the subjective interpretation and less measurable data of research in soft disciplines. Hence, the writers were in the attempt to build their identity through their claims in the text. However, Li (2021) also discovered that co-authors tried to be more secure with less –threatening ways for involving themselves in the text. On the other hand, single authors were more direct at proposing their statements.

Some previous research on first-person pronouns showed different trend in the results. Li (2021) remarked the research of Atkinson (1992) that there was the regular move from an author-centered style by the use of I to a non-author-centered in medical reports from 1735-1985. There was also a change from author-centered

in scientific prose from 1675-1975 in the investigation done by Atkinson in 1999. Meanwhile, according to Hyland & Jiang (2017), as cited in Li, 2021, an improvement on the use of pronouns also reflected the trend of making a more interactive and informal academic discourse. Due to the various discrepancies on the discourse functions of first-person pronouns in research articles, even when they are in the same category, the present study attempted to discover the discourse functions of first-person pronouns in one specific discipline (i.e. Linguistics). Linguistics, as one of the fields in social science and humanities, can contribute to the list of research that has been previously done on first-person pronouns in Linguistics research articles.

Following some previous studies that considered specific part of the research articles to be their object of analysis (e.g. introductions (Lu et al, 2018; Lu et al, 2021)), all of the parts in Linguistics research articles were employed in the present study, i.e. abstracts, introduction, materials and methods, results and discussion, and conclusion. The previous study of pronouns by Hyland and Jiang (2017) was conducted by considering the full-text of research articles by neglecting the abstracts. Furthermore, Li (2021) conducted analysis of first-person pronouns in the abstracts of research articles focusing on Applied Linguistics. This study particularly employed the whole parts of research articles by concerning on Linguistics. By conducting a particular study in Linguistics, it can improve the academicians' awareness in Linguistics as well. To provide a comprehensive investigation of Linguistics, the corpus of Linguistics was established by several sub-categories that represent the Linguistics sub-disciplines provided in AntConc,

such as Cognitive Linguistics, Computational Linguistics, Evolutionary Linguistics, Grammar, Historical Linguistics, Language Acquisition, Languages, Lexicography, Linguistic Geography, Linguistic Morphology, Neurolinguistics, Phonetics, Psycholinguistics, Semantics, Sociolinguistics, Speech, and Structural Linguistics.

The various genres of sub-discipline are regarded to be more representative in displaying the results of first-person pronoun analysis in Linguistics. In addition, each section of the research articles was separated in the analysis of this study. This aims to find the specific characteristics on the use of first-person pronouns in each part, i.e. Abstract, Introduction, Materials and Methods, Results and Discussion, and Conclusion. The author interaction to the readers can also be identified more deeply in each part of the research articles. Therefore, each part of the research articles can portray its particular characteristics that can be representative in academic writing.

Moreover, the extended analysis of first-person pronouns was also conducted in author interaction. Author interaction can be seen in two major ways - stance and engagement. This study concerns with the stance features that are established by the use of hedges and boosters. By deeply observing the stance features, we can find that the writers apply several rhetorical ways in order to share their opinions or present their claims. Thus, the authors' ways of persuading readers can be seen not only from the discourse functions of first-person pronouns that the authors employ but also from the author interaction. It is due to the fact that in academic writing where authors-readers can not have any direct communication,

the authors must find certain ways in order to present their persuasive claims and engage readers (Hyland, 2005).

The present study adopted Linguistics research articles published by PLOS ONE in 2021 because the data can represent the trend of employing first-person pronouns in 2022. In addition, the data was taken since the research was firstly started (i.e. in 2021). PLOS ONE was selected as the primary source to compile the data. As mentioned in <https://www.scimagojr.com/>, PLoS ONE is included in the Q1 and its H-Index is 332. This reputable scientific journal accommodates various disciplines of research articles. This is obviously stated in <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/s/journal-information> that PLoS ONE published multidisciplinary and often interdisciplinary research. PLoS ONE also comprises over two hundred subject areas across science, engineering, medicine, and the related social sciences and humanities. Regarding this information, all of the parts of Linguistics research articles published in 2021 were adopted as they might represent the latest Linguistic phenomena on the use of first-person pronouns in academic writing.

The present study employed AntCorGen and AntConc to collect the data. AntCorGen software was firstly adopted for collecting the Linguistics research articles published by PLOS ONE. AntCorGen was chosen because this can provide the latest data of research articles published by PLOS ONE. Then, AntConc was also employed for building the corpora and finding the concordances of first-person pronouns. The data carried out from AntConc was, then, analyzed by finding the roles of first-person pronouns and the stance features.

1.2 Research Questions

As a response to the emerging issue of authorial presence indicated through discourse functions and stances of first-person pronouns in Linguistics research articles, this study addresses the following questions:

1. What are the differences in the occurrence of discourse functions of first-person pronouns employed in Linguistics research articles?
2. Why are Linguistics research articles predominated by several discourse functions of first-person pronouns?
3. How do the authors of Linguistics research articles establish their interaction with their readers by the use of stance features?

1.3 Objective of the Study

The present study aims at gaining the implications of discourse functions of first-person pronouns in Linguistics research articles published by PLoS ONE in 2021. The purpose of this study is to discover the differences on the use of first-person pronouns in Linguistics research articles published by PLoS ONE in 2021. The discourse functions of first-person pronouns demonstrated the authorial identity in the research articles. The authorial identity represented the level of stakes employed by the authors in the research articles. In addition, the author interaction with the readers can be seen from their use of stance features, particularly in hedges and boosters.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to be beneficial in terms of Linguistics, especially for those who want to write Linguistic research articles that are planned to be published in

reputable scientific journals. The present study can be theoretically useful for the readers by understanding the use of first-person pronouns correctly, they can implement the use of first-person pronouns in the right order. The appropriate applications of pronouns can help them create a more qualified writing, especially in academic research articles. By having the sufficient knowledge about the use of first-person pronouns in the academic writing, academicians can develop the quality of their work. Furthermore, practically, understanding the correct use of the discourse functions can help the authors build their intended authorial identity. The identity is not only limited to the authorial identity in writing but also the identity in the real context through daily communication by the use of appropriate pronouns. In addition, beside enhancing the opportunity to be accepted and published the work in scientific reputable journals, this study is generally essential in the field of social and humanities since Linguistics is one of the disciplines in social and humanities. The present study can also be the reference for the authors to find the intended vocabulary that can establish their interaction with the readers.