Rhetorical Structure of Discussion Sections in Undergraduate Theses Written by Students of the English T*adris* Study Program at IAIN Curup

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Abstract

This qualitative study investigated the rhetorical structure of discussion sections in undergraduate theses, addressing a notable gap in research concerning specific institutional contexts and the need to examine the source of guidance and references utilized. The objectives of this study were to identify the rhetorical moves and steps employed by students, to explore how these patterns evolved across academic years (2020-2024), and to analyze the sources of guidance and references used. A corpus of 35 undergraduate theses from IAIN Curup's English *Tadris* study program was subjected to manual text analysis using the Loan & Pramoolsook (2015) framework. Further insights were gathered through semi-structured interviews with seven students who have graduated, with data analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that fundamental rhetorical moves, such as Move 2 *(Reporting Results),* were consistently obligatory. However, significant absence and trend to be optional were observed in higher-order analytical and evaluative moves, with crucial steps within Move 4 *(Commenting on Results)* often being optional, and Move 5 *(Summarizing the Study),* Move 6 *(Evaluating the Study),* and Move 7 *(Deductions from the Study)* rarely incorporated. Furthermore, the study identified that students primarily relied on previous theses and supervisor feedback for guidance. Formal institutional resources, such as the guideline book and academic writing classes, were underutilized. This suggests a need for more targeted pedagogical interventions to encourage advanced rhetorical competence in undergraduate thesis writing among students in the English *Tadris* study program at IAIN Curup.

Keywords: *Rhetorical Structure, Discussion Section, Undergraduate Thesis, Thesis Discussion Section, IAIN Curup.*

Introduction

Rhetorical moves are analytical units used to deconstruct academic texts, such as theses and articles, aiding readers in understanding their organizational structure (Parodi, 2010). Nikpei (2016) defines a rhetorical move as a unit reflecting the author's objective and expression of ideas. Studying these moves involves examining a text to understand the writer's intent and the specific steps taken to convey messages, revealing the communication structure within the analyzed corpus (Zamani & Ebadi, 2016).

As Pratiwi & Kurniawan (2021) note, discourse pattern analysis identifies standard writing practices and textual differences. A move connects author intention with content, while a step is a smaller textual unit offering detailed structural options (Dudley-Evans, 1998). Thus, rhetorical moves are communicative units that convey the author's meaning through text organization, and steps are specific, lower-level actions for idea construction. Studying these patterns helps identify structural practices across diverse corpora, author backgrounds, fields, cultures, or native languages.

Move analysis (Swales, 2004) is a widely used method for examining academic genres, with rhetorical frameworks extensively applied to sections like introductions (Swales, 1990), results/discussions/conclusions (Yang & Allison, 2003), and methods (Farnia & Barati, 2017; Mosquera & Tulud, 2021; Musa et al., 2015). The undergraduate thesis effectively demonstrates the student's research and writing abilities, particularly in the discussion section. This section is vital yet challenging (Arsyad, 2013; Parkinson, 2011; Swales & Feak, 2012), requiring interpretation of findings, complex argumentation, and linkage to existing literature. Understanding these rhetorical structures offers key insights into how students navigate academic writing and organize arguments effectively.

Previous linguistic studies have extensively analyzed the rhetorical structure of discussion sections in academic texts, including research articles and theses. This body of work, utilizing models like Hopkins and Dudley-Evans (1998) and Yang and Allison (2003) has identified conventional moves and steps employed by experienced writers, providing a crucial point of reference. However, significant variations in move frequency, obligatoriness, and ordering across disciplines and contexts have been highlighted (Peacock, 2002). Further studies (Amnuai & Wannaruk, 2013; Arsyad, 2013; Sithlaothavorn & Trakulkasemsuk, 2016) have explored these variations, particularly among writers from diverse linguistic or cultural backgrounds, revealing differences influenced by writer background and publication contexts.

Beyond expert discourse, research has also examined the rhetorical structure of student-written discussion sections, primarily at the Master's level (Chen & Kuo, 2012; Loan & Pramoolsook, 2015; Varga & Pavičić Takač, 2024; Warsito et al., 2017; Wuttisrisiriporn & Tangkiensirisin, 2020). These

studies offer insights into how developing writers authorize this complex genre, often revealing patterns differing from published articles. However, research on undergraduate thesis discussion sections is less extensive, with only one study found by Wadison and Robert (2022).

While existing studies offer valuable insights into academic discussion sections' rhetorical structure, their applicability to undergraduate theses, especially within institution-specific contexts like the English *Tadris* Study Program at IAIN Curup, has not been proven. Studies focusing on expert writers provide a useful theoretical reference, but do not fully capture developing undergraduate students' unique writing patterns and rhetorical competence challenges (Peacock, 2002; Yang & Allison, 2002). In addition, extensive research on student-authored discussion sections primarily concentrates on the Master's level (Chen & Kuo, 2012; Warsito et al., 2017), which may differ significantly from undergraduate writing regarding rhetorical competence and available resources. Moreover, previous studies on student rhetorical structures have never investigated the specific sources of guidance and references students utilize in constructing their thesis discussion section. The result of uncovering the source of references and guidance utilized by students in constructing their thesis discussion section will contribute the necessary insights for understanding observed rhetorical choices and identifying areas where support might be insufficient for students in the process of writing the discussion section. The absence of those aspects in contextual institutional settings and sources of references and guidance gaps collectively emphasizes the necessity of the current study.

Theoretically, this study will enhance the understanding of L2 undergraduate academic writing by offering empirical evidence from a previously under-explored setting and, importantly, by establishing a clear connection between students' rhetorical decisions and their indicated sources of guidance and reference. It extends a description of rhetorical structures to investigate the key factors influencing them in developing authors. In addition, the results will offer practical insights for curriculum developers, academic writing lecturers, and thesis supervisors at IAIN Curup and related educational institutions. This research will immediately impact the development of customized academic writing instruction, the formulation of specific thesis writing guidelines, and the establishment of relevant and specific ways to improve students' rhetorical competence in constructing effective thesis discussion sections. As per the guidelines, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What rhetorical moves and steps are found in the discussion sections of undergraduate theses written by students of the English Tadris study program at IAIN Curup?

2. What sources of guidance and references do undergraduate students of the English Tadris Study Program at IAIN Curup rely on when constructing their theses's discussion section?

Research Method

Research Design

A qualitative approach was applied to investigate the rhetorical structure of the undergraduate thesis discussion section and the sources of references and guidance students utilized in writing their thesis discussion sections.

Corpus and Participants

35 theses discussion sections authorized by students of the English *Tadris* Study Program at IAIN Curup were analyzed to identify the rhetorical structures in their discussion construction. Additionally, 7 students who have completed writing the undergraduate thesis from the English *Tadris* study program at IAIN Curup were interviewed to gain the specific source guidance and references they relied on when writing their thesis discussion section.

Instruments

This study utilized a checklist consisting of a model for analyzing the rhetorical structure of the thesis discussion section. As displayed in the following table, the framework proposed by Loan & Pramoolsook (2015) was adopted as the model for analyzing the rhetorical structure of the discussion section. Furthermore, an interview guideline was utilized to guide the interview flow to uncover the source of guidance and references students used in writing the discussion.

Table 1. The instrument for analyzing Moves and steps (framework by Loan & Pramoolsook (2015) for the Discussion Section)

Moves and Steps

Move 1: **Introducing the Discussion chapter**
Move 2: **Reporting results**
Move 3: **Summarizing results**
Move 4: **Commenting on Result**
Step A: Interpreting results
Step B: Comparing results with the literature
Step C: Accounting for results (giving reasons)
Step D: Evaluating results

Move 5: **Summarizing the study**
Move 6: **Evaluating the study**
      Step A: Indicating limitations
      Step B: Indicating significance/advantage
      Step C: Evaluating methodology
Move 7: **Deductions from the (research) study**
      Step A: Making suggestions
      Step B: Recommending further research
      Step C: Drawing pedagogic implications
      Referring to Other Studies
      Providing support or justification
      Providing background information

Data Collection Technique

Data were collected from the thesis corpus and semi-structured interviews. 35 discussion sections were identified, downloaded, and manually coded for rhetorical moves and steps using the Loan & Pramoolsook (2015) framework. Additionally, Interview data were gathered from voluntarily participating students using an interview guide. Applying the purposive sampling technique, seven students who had graduated between 2020 and 2024 were chosen for the interview. According to Creswell (2012), in purposeful sampling, the participants or sites are selected based on their ability to provide insights and offer rich information regarding the research topic. In this study, the selection included the criteria, namely, having completed thesis writing and graduated between 2020 and 2024, and having the ability to provide detailed and reflective information on the source of guidance and references they referred to during the writing discussion section.

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed qualitative principles. For the thesis corpus (RQ1), rhetorical moves and steps were identified using the Loan & Pramoolsook (2015) framework, categorized as obligatory (100%), conventional (60-99%), or optional (<60%). Frequencies were calculated, patterns described, and findings interpreted. Interview data (RQ2) underwent thematic analysis. The reliability was ensured by an independent co-ratter's analysis of 20% of the thesis corpus using the Loan & Pramoolsook (2015) framework, achieving a final Cohen's Kappa of 1 after collaborative resolution of initial disagreements.

Result and Discussion

Rhetorical moves and steps found in the discussion sections of undergraduate theses written by English *Tadris* Study Program students at IAIN Curup.

Table 2 displays the analysis results of moves and steps in the discussion sections of undergraduate theses written by English *Tadris* Study Program students at IAIN Curup.

Table 2. Frequency and Distribution of Rhetorical Moves and Steps in 35 Discussion Sections Written by Students of the English Tadris study program at IAIN Curup Based on Loan & Pramoolsook (2015)

Moves and Steps	Total Occurrences	Appearances in Discussions	Percentage (%)	Average Frequency per Section	Category (Obligatory/ Conventional /optional
Move 1: Introducing the Discussion chapter	**53**	**31**	**89**	**1,51**	**Conventional**
Move 2: Reporting results	**199**	**35**	**100**	**5,69**	**Obligatory**
Move 3: Summarizing results	**41**	**23**	**66**	**1,17**	**Conventional**
Move 4: Commenting on results	**144**	**30**	**86**	**4,11**	**Conventional**
Step A: Interpreting results	48	22	63	1,37	Conventional
Step B: Comparing results with literature	38	19	54	1,09	Optional
Step C: Accounting for results (giving reasons)	58	14	40	1,66	Optional
Step D: Evaluating results	0	0	0	0,00	Optional
Move 5: Summarizing the study	**10**	**10**	**29**	**0,29**	Optional
Move 6: Evaluating the study	**2**	**2**	**6**	**0,06**	Optional
Step A: Indicating limitations	0	0	0	0	Optional
Step B: Indicating significance/advantage	2	2	6	0,06	Optional
Step C: Evaluating methodology!	0	0	0	0,00	Optional
Move 7: Deductions from the (research) study	**9**	**8**	**23**	**0,26**	Optional
Step A: Making suggestions.	4	4	11	0,11	Optional
Step B: Recommending further research.	1	1	3	0,03	Optional
Step C: Drawing pedagogic implications	2	1	3	0,06	Optional
Referring to other Studies (or Literature)	**111**	**30**	**86**	**3,17**	**Conventional**

Providing Support	64	24	69	1,83	Conventional
Providing Background Information	46	17	49	1,3s	Optional

Move 1: Introducing the Discussion chapter.

Move 1 was **Conventional (89%)**, appearing 53 times in 31 theses. This move functions as a transitional element, providing background information (e.g., study objectives or methodology) to set the discussion's context.

Extract 1 (M1-D30): *To discover students' perception of English club extracurricular activities in learning English in Rejang Lebong and Lebong District, the researcher used questionnaire to the 100 respondent.*

Move 2: Reporting results

Move 2 was the most frequent and only **Obligatory (100%)** move, appearing 201 times in all 35 theses. It involves objectively presenting study findings.

Extract 2 (M2-D4): *The researcher found that the post-test score decreased by 0.14…*

Move 3: Summarizing results.

Move 3 was Conventional (66%), appearing 41 times in 22 theses. This move consolidates multiple specific results into an integrated overview.

Extract 3 (M3-D10): *Therefore, based on the discussion above, **the researcher concluded that** there is no correlation between students' speaking ability and …*

Move 4: Commenting on Result

Move 4 was **Conventional (86%)**, appearing 144 times in 30 theses. This move establishes the relevance and meaning of findings, realized through several steps:

Step A: Interpreting results

Step A was **Conventional (63%)**, appearing 48 times in 22 theses. This step offers an understanding or conclusion from findings.

Extract 4 (M4-SA-D10): ***It is interpreted that*** *a correlation does not exist between the two variables. In other words, there is no correlation between students' speaking ability and writing achievement in …*

Step B: Comparing results with literature

Step B was Optional (54%), appearing 38 times in 19 theses. This step compares findings with previous studies, noting support or contrasts.

Extract 5 (M4-SB-D9): *...students' perception on advantages of Ruang Guru has percentages79.12 %. ...* **In line with this***, Syamsurijal in his research…, he found that Ruang Guru makes students' easy to learn, because ...*

Step C: Accounting for results, giving reasons

Step C was Optional (40%), appearing 58 times in 14 theses. This step provides explanations or reasons for the findings.

Extract 7 (M4-SC-D21): *...either Sederet.com or Bing Translator is still weak in translating. The Limitation of the characters in the translation machine system* **is the cause.**

Step D: Evaluating results

Step D was Optional and absent (0%) from the corpus. This step involves evaluating the strengths or weaknesses of findings.

Move 5: Summarizing the study.

Move 5 was **Optional (29%)**, appearing 10 times in 10 theses. Authors use this move to present a comprehensive summary of key findings within the study's context.

Extract 8 (M5-D7): **In sum***, based on the data findings, male and Female students have a same range of percentage, but Female students have a high average score than male students based on statistical calculations….* **In short,** *Gender take a different role to measures the motivation of student.*

Move 6: Evaluating the study.

Move 6 was Optional (6%), appearing twice in 2 theses. This move assesses the research by emphasizing limitations, contributions, or methodologies, realized through steps:

Step A: Indicating limitations

Step A was absent (0%) from the corpus. This step addresses possible study weaknesses or limitations.

Step B: Indicating significance/advantage

Step B was Optional (6%), appearing twice in 2 theses. This step highlights a study's importance or contributions.

Extract 9 (M6-SB-D20): *Basically, this study's finding is unique because the English teacher ...*

Step C: Evaluating methodology

Step C was absent (0%) from the corpus. This step evaluates the research methodology.

Move 7: Deductions from the study

Move 7 was Optional (23%), appearing 9 times in 8 theses. Authors interpret results by recommending solutions, suggesting future studies, or highlighting pedagogical implications, realized through steps:

Step A: Making Suggestions.

Step A was Optional (14%), appearing 5 times in 5 theses. This step recommends solutions to identified problems.

Extract 10 (M7-SA-D17): *Seeing this, **lecturers in academic writing, supervisors, or examiners in student proposals should** place more emphasis on…*

Step B: Recommending further research

Step B was Optional (3%), appearing once in 1 thesis. This step suggests lines for further study.

Extract 11 (M7-SB-D31): *…. For those factors discussed, **it is important for the next researcher aware of** factors that…*

Step C: Drawing pedagogic Implications.

Step C was Optional (6%), appearing 3 times in 2 theses. This step connects findings to instructional strategies or teaching practices.

Extract 12 (M7-SC-D24): *Therefore, the use of learning methods using English learning vlog media in the YouTube channel application **is necessary given** by the teacher in the learning process, so that achieve better learning outcomes.*

Referring to other Studies (or Literature)

This rhetorical unit, functioning as evidence or contextualization, appeared 111 times in 30 theses (Conventional, 86%). It is realized through two steps:

Providing Support or Justification

This step was **Conventional (69%)**, appearing 64 times in 24 theses. It involves boosting ideas with reasons or supporting details from literature, indicating an awareness of argumentation justification.

Extract 13 (Referring to other studies- Providing support or justification*):*
*…, **according to Tyner** sentence structure learners have a number of problems in their attempts to write in the foreign language... **Similarly, Kharma in Melese states that** students have problems with subject verb agreements, pronoun references, and connectors.*

Providing Background Information

This step was Optional (49%), appearing 47 times in 17 theses. It involves adding theoretical or contextual knowledge from literature to strengthen or introduce result discussions.

Extract 14 (Referring to other studies - Providing background information-D11):....
Dornyei defined code switching insert a word from their first language into their sentence and hope the interlocutor will understand. In this strategy teacher switches their English with the native students' language, in this case Thai language.

Sources of Guidance and Reference for Thesis Discussion Sections.

This section details the guidance and reference sources utilized by undergraduate students in the English Tadris Study Program at IAIN Curup for their thesis discussion sections, presenting findings topically with interview extracts.

Previous Theses: *Blueprint for Structure and Organization*

Undergraduate students primarily relied on previous theses as an indispensable, accessible guide for discussion sections. All participants found these alumni-produced models crucial for understanding expected structure and organization, actively observing practical idea arrangement. Participant 7 noted: *"Looking at previous theses. Indeed, I find that they are beneficial."* This preference for concrete, existing models over conceptual guidelines was consistently claimed as their primary source.

Supervisor Feedback: *Navigating Complexity with Direct Guidance*

Direct, ongoing supervisor feedback was a critical source. Students viewed supervisors as key authorities for the complex discussion section, seeking personalized advice and validation. Participants (e.g., Participant 2: *"Well, but the supervisor mostly directed it in the discussion part."*; Participant 3: *"The main one is the lecturer, the supervisor.")* highlighted supervisors' direct influence on content and direction, valuing this continuous, personalized interaction. However, feedback varied; while many received developmental guidance, a smaller group reported primarily corrective and approval-focused feedback. Participant 6 noted: *"What I feel, personally, is that the supervisor corrects it."* This suggests for some, supervision was more about final product evaluation, potentially driving them to other sources for developmental support.

Thesis Guideline Book: *A Resource for Formal Adherence, Not Content Development*

Nearly all participants acknowledged the thesis guideline book, but its use for the discussion section was limited to formal requirements and formatting (e.g., font, spacing, citation). Participant 1 stated: *"The thesis guideline book is more about the writing arrangement, how much the spacing is, what the font is, what size the font is, or something like that."* Many deemed it unhelpful for content or rhetorical guidance, perceiving its scope as too narrow. Participant 6 expressed this: *"Not at all, because it's not there, it's not listed in the campus guideline book, it's only writing format..."* This consistent finding indicates that students distinguish between formatting and content needs.

Research Methodology Lecturer: *A Selective Source of Guidance*

Participants had mixed views on the Research Methodology lecturers' help for the discussion section. Three consulted them for general writing strategies and broader references (e.g., Participant 4: *"I asked the research methodology lecturer, mainly about the writing style."*). Conversely, four did not, believing the course focused only on Chapters 1-3 (Participant 1: *"For the methodology course, it was only Chapters 1 to 3."*). This perceived curriculum limitation led non-consulting students to rely on other primary sources for discussion section guidance.

Referring to Academic Writing Class and Consulting Its Lecturers: *The Absence of Rhetorical Structure Interaction*

None of the participants consulted their Academic Writing class or lecturers for thesis discussion section . Students perceived that the course failed to adequately address thesis chapters, especially the discussion's complex rhetorical structure. Participant 7 stated: *"No, no. Never discussed the thesis discussion section. (she academic writing course)"* Participants felt general academic writing skills taught were insufficient for thesis-specific needs (Participant 4: *"If it was specifically writing the discussion, writing a thesis discussion, it was not there."*). This consistent finding suggests a significant absence in the curriculum of academic writing courses, making it an unhelpful direct source.

Discussing with Alumni *a Supplementary Resource: Practical Insights and Network Limitations*

Engaging with alumni was an additional, non-primary resource for some, offering practical insights and clarification. Participant 1 sought direct review: *"Yes, I also once asked an alumna. Asked him to review it, whether the discussion I wrote was complete, correct, or not."* Alumni were valued as experienced peer-mentors. However, many did not engage alumni due to limited personal connections or discomfort (Participant 7: *"No, I never asked alumni. Maybe because I rarely knew senior students, just knew them to say hi, so it was uncomfortable to ask too much."*). This indicates alumni's supplementary role, primarily for students with established networks.

Discussing with Friends (Peers): *Collaborative Learning and Emotional Venting*

Engaging with friends/peers was an essential and complex source of support for most students while drafting discussion sections. This interaction provided academic clarification, knowledge exchange, and crucial emotional/motivational support (Participant 2: *"But with friends, we also share information with each other."*; Participant 5: *"Yes, absolutely, because, you know, when working on a thesis, they always do it together."*). However, a minority avoided peer interaction due to perceived mutual confusion

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(Participant 1: *"Discussing with friends from the same batch, I don't think so, because we were equally confused."*) or a preference for more experienced guides like alumni.

Additional Guidance and References: *Academic Articles, Books and Online Repository*

Most participants actively utilized *external academic resources* (online/print journals, books, online repositories) to enhance discussion sections, deepen theoretical connections, and model argumentation. Academic articles were frequently used to link findings to concepts and analytical approaches, often supervisor-recommended Participant 2 exemplified: "*I also read and studied research journals... from the Taylor and Francis website, upon the supervisor's recommendation. I studied the arrangement/structure of the Discussion section... and used research journals as references in analyzing research findings, identifying strengths and weaknesses.*" Books occasionally provided theoretical references. Online repositories were briefly referenced for modelling academic argumentation. However, some participants reported *not using any additional references*, relying solely on previous theses and supervisor guidance (Participant 4: *"I think there were no additional references for the discussion. Maybe I just looked at the guideline book, then the senior students' theses, and guidance from the lecturer."*).

Discussion

The first objective of this study was to examine rhetorical moves and steps found in the discussion sections written by students of the English *Tadris* study program at IAIN Curup. The analysis revealed that Move 2 *(Reporting Results)* was an obligatory component (100% presence) in students' discussions, aligning with established research by (Varga & Pavičić Takač, 2024; Warsito et al., 2017; Wuttisrisiriporn & Tangkiensirisin, 2020; Yang & Allison, 2003). This consistent inclusion suggests students' fundamental awareness of explicitly presenting their findings. Additionally, Move 1 *(Introducing the Discussion section)* was classified as conventional (89%), broadly consistent withLoan & Pramoolsook (2015) and Varga & Pavičić Takač (2024),in their English L2 corpus findings, though it contrasts with some studies identifying it as obligatory in English L1 contexts (Varga & Pavičić Takač, 2024 English L1 corpus; Wuttisrisiriporn & Tangkiensirisin, 2020). This variation may reflect the impact of the students' second or foreign language background.

Moreover, Move 4 *(Commenting on Results)* was found to be conventional (86%), which contrasts with its obligatory status in most previous studies (Loan & Pramoolsook, 2015b; Varga & Pavičić Takač, 2024; Wuttisrisiriporn & Tangkiensirisin, 2020). This disparity
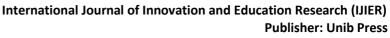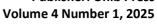
and the optional classification of crucial steps within Move 4, specifically Step B *(Comparing Results with Literature)* and Step C *(Accounting for Results),* are strongly affected by the students' background and experiences, such as the formal instruction for rhetorical structure they received and supervisor feedback. These findings suggest an unfamiliarity among the students that the study's findings should be compared to the previous literature to strengthen the explanation of such a finding revealed from the research. Furthermore, this result indicates the insufficiency of formal instruction, as revealed in interviews, where students reported curriculum limitations in academic writing courses regarding thesis-specific chapters, including discussion, which likely contribute to their inconsistent utilization of these rhetorical moves and steps. While Step A *(Interpreting Results)* was categorized as Conventional. It appeared in a lower percentage (63%) compared to previous research.

Furthermore, move 5 *(Summarizing the Study)*, 6 *(Evaluating the Study)*, and 7 *(Deducing from the Research/Study)* were predominantly optional or infrequently included. This aligns with Loan & Pramoolsook (2015) and Amnuai and Wannaruk (2013), though it contrasts with Warsito et al. (2017) regarding Move 5. The limited inclusion of Moves 6 and 7 might be due to their typical placement in the conclusion section of IAIN Curup thesis's structure. At the same time, the infrequent use of Move 5 could reflect students' limited understanding or feedback on effective study summarization. To sum up, these findings indicate that while students understand basic moves like Move 2 *(Reporting result),* there is a significant insufficiency in their engagement with other crucial Moves and Steps.

The second objective of this study was to identify the sources of guidance and references that undergraduate student of the English *Tadris* study program at IAIN Curup used for writing their thesis discussion sections. It was found that students utilized a range of sources, but their reliance varied. *Previous theses* were considered the most essential models for structure, and *supervisor feedback* was vital for personalized content direction. *Academic articles and online repositories* served as supplemental resources for theoretical depth, while *discussions with peers* offered collaborative learning and emotional support. In contrast, *the university's guideline book* was only used for formatting. *Academic Writing classes* were never referred to as the source of reference for discussion content due to the limited coverage for thesis writing. *Research Methodology class and alumni* were selectively engaged based on perceived

relevance or personal connections. This indicates students prioritize concrete models and direct personal guidance, often excluding formal institutional resources for content development.

In summary, this study shows that the English *Tadris* study program students at IAIN Curup are already familiar with basic rhetorical moves like *reporting results*. Still*,* they have problems with more complex analytical, evaluative, and deductive rhetorical moves in their thesis discussion sections. Students relying on previous theses and supervisor feedback affected the rhetorical structures discovered. Formal institutional guidance, such as guideline books or academic writing courses, was revealed to be insufficient for guiding students in constructing the discussion section, and some external academic resources are not used effectively, which shows that formal teaching support for rhetorical structure is needed.

Conclusion

Based on the findings above, the following conclusion can be drawn. Firstly, the analysis shows that Students consistently use basic rhetorical moves like Move 2 *(Reporting Results)* and Move 1 (*Introducing the Discussion).* However, they significantly struggle with analytical and evaluative moves, with key steps in Move 4 *(Commenting on Results)* mostly optional and a few steps was absent, and Move 5 *(Summarizing the study),* Move 6 *(Evaluating the study),* and Move 7 *(Deductions from the (research) study)* rarely integrated. This highlights a critical need for improved teaching of these rhetorical skills.

Secondly, regarding the source of references, students rely on *previous theses* as structural models and *supervisor feedback* for content direction. While *friends/peers* and external academic resources like academic *articles* and *online repositories* offer additional academic and emotional support, formal institutional resources such as the *thesis guideline book* were limited for formatting. *Academic Writing classes* are unused, mainly or perceived as unhelpful for thesis-specific discussion writing. This selective reliance on more informal or practical guidance, combined with the underutilization of formal instruction for rhetorical structure, likely contributes to the observed absences in students' rhetorical competencies in writing the discussion section.

Suggestion

Based on this study's findings and conclusions, several recommendations are proposed. First, formal instruction for rhetorical structure needs to be integrated into academic writing. Second, the institutional thesis guidelines book should include explicit directions regarding rhetorical structure for thesis writing. Finally, the supervisors should explicitly introduce the rhetorical structure framework to guide students' discussion writing.

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