Exploring the Organization and Framing of the Literature Review of English Language Education Study Program Theses

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Abstract

Literature reviews provide the literature that illustrates the common knowledge and the researchers' stand in their research. The literature review is designed with suitable organization and framing so the readers can build their knowledge. However, only few studies on the organization and framing of a literature review. Therefore, the researcher wanted to conduct a study on English Language Education Study Program (ELESP) theses. There are two research questions in this research: "How are the literature reviews of the ELESP students' theses organized?" and "How are the literature reviews of the ELESP students' theses framed?" The goal of this research is to explore the organization and framing of the literature review of the ELESP students' theses. This research used content analysis. The data were gathered from thirty theses in education and linguistic fields from batch 2016 to 2018. The instruments to gather the data were two structured observation sheets for the organization and framing. The result shows that for the organization, thirty theses used thematic organization, none of them used chronological organization, and combinations of organization existed. Regarding the framing, some elements, author, year, topic, and result, were always mentioned in every observed thesis.

INTRODUCTION

A literature review section is one of the results of reviewing literature. There are some steps in conducting a study and reviewing the literature is one of them (Ary et al., 2010; Creswell, 2012). A literature review is a place to present the past or present studies in a written summary (Creswell, 2012). The related information is presented by describing, summarizing, as well as including critical evaluation about it (Ramdhani, Ramdhani, & Amin, 2014). In analyzing the literature, the researchers need to make a critical evaluation to organize it so it can provide the knowledge as well as show the gap that the researchers want to fill (Carnwell &Dally, 2001).

The undergraduate students who conduct a study to graduate will make a study report. In this case, the literature review can help the students in either their report completion or in their study, as it can influence the study mechanism, help to improve the research problem, and evoke new researches (Cronin et al., 2008). To construct their literature review, the students first need paraphrasing skill to avoid plagiarism (Bram et al., 2016). Students also need to have good organization and framing in their literature review. The organization helps readers read through the literature review swiftly while constructing the whole picture (Ramdhani et al., 2014). The framing is a result of synthesizing and summarizing the literature (Creswell, 2012). That note, as the result of synthesizing the literature, is used to frame the literature review to deliver the information in a complete yet more concise way. By providing the already existed studies the researchers can justify their study (Mudavanhu, 2017), so a well-structured literature review also gives sense of confidence and readiness. However, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, there are still a few studies that analyze the organizational and framing skills to construct a literature review of undergraduate students' theses. Considering the roles that a literature review holds, the researcher saw it fit to make a study regarding this matter.

Research questions:
1. How are the literature reviews of the ELESP theses organized?
2. How are the literature reviews of the ELESP theses framed?

LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review is a part of academic writing which consists of the related literature that the students have already reviewed before. It can be integrated into the introduction, although it commonly stands alone as an independent section. In this study, the literature reviews were in undergraduate students' theses. A thesis is a way to report a study that is written by undergraduate students to fulfil the graduation requirements (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989). A literature review provides the already available information about the topic from many sources (Ramdhani, et al., 2014; Cronin et al., 2008; Taylor and Procter, 2008). To construct a literature review, the students read the related theories and studies, and create the summary (Creswell 2012; Mudavanhu 2017), though Ingram et al. (2006), stated that a literature review is more about an organization of the subtopics of the studied field. The information from many sources is presented in the literature review, while considering why it is presented and in what way it supports the students' study. The presented theories and studies are those which have direct relevance with the topic (Bram et al., 2016). Even so, not all theories and studies are elaborated in the literature review; the major studies are presented thoroughly, while the minor studies and theories complementing the topic are stated briefly (Fraenkel and

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Wallen, 1996). The well-presented literature review presents the authors' understanding of the already existing knowledge regarding their research topic (Mudavanhu, 2017).

The organization of a literature review can be seen as a way to facilitate the purpose of a literature review. It can also be seen as a way the students put the previous studies together. The organization is a way to structure the literature review so it can guide the readers and make them understand the necessity of the conducted research (Ramdhani et al., 2014). A literature review is organized like a map that presents studies and theories to reach the goal which is the readers' understanding (Ary et al., 2010).

The researchers can choose how to present the relationship among the theories and previous studies. The students can use thematic organization if they want to group the previous studies and theories based on their theme, by selecting the keywords and give elaboration with theories and studies (Carnwell & Dally, 2001; Lambert, 2012). Chronological organization is used to emphasize the development of a topic from time to time, and it groups theories and studies in temporal perspective (Wallwork, 2011; Carnwell and Dally, 2001). The students can make distinction between the theories and empirical evidence by using theories-empirical evidence organization. Here, the theories regarding the topic are presented first to give a more basic understanding of the topic before they are followed by the empirical evidence from the researches that have been conducted in the previous studies to show how the actual condition is like (Carnwell & Dally, 2001). If the distinction is for theories and methodologies, the theories-methodologies organization can be used. It focuses on presenting the theories first and then showing the researches that use different methodologies, which shows how different participant, sampling, or method can give different results. General-specific organization is another type of organization, which delivers theories from the general knowledge to the more specific information to lead the readers to read through the literature review swiftly (Ramdhani et al. 2014). Another type is compare/contrast organization. This type usually has pairs of studies or theories to be compared or contrasted points out the uniqueness or niche that they have (Lambert, 2012).

Aside from the organization, a frame is also needed to construct a literature review. It is a way to make the composition of the literature review consistent, especially for its theories and studies. The students need to be able to frame the theories and studies because it will show the difference from one to another. It is important in delivering information on an issue or event, as it "refers to the process by which people develop a particular conceptualization of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue" (Chong and Druckman, 2007a). In academic writing such as thesis, it is a way to build a certain point to the reader by emphasizing the facts that support that point, which is the case of frame in communication, the delivery of the highlighted information (Chong and Druckman, 2007a). Since there is an individual frame, which refers to the individual perception of each reader, there might be a different view between the writers and the readers (Chong & Druckman, 2007b, p. 101), the students should frame the literature review so that the readers can see the points like how the students see them to avoid misconceptions.

The framing of a literature review cannot be separated from the synthesizing process. To deliver the information, the elements of framing, as the product of synthesizing process, provide the fact and information about the reviewed literature. Several elements of framing theories or related studies include *year, author, topic, hypothesis, methodology, sampling, result, uniqueness, and page*. The year is an element

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in the literature review (Sally, 2013; Bram et al., 2016) which presents the time when the literature was published. This element is important for citation matters and time stamp. Similarly, author is important for in-text citation to avoid plagiarism. It is the people or organization who made the study reports or theories (Sally, 2013; Bram et al., 2016). The topic tells about what the studies or theories are about. It can be found from the title, research questions (Creswell, 2012), or aim of the study (Sally, 2013). A hypothesis is the theoretical answer that is proposed before the research is made, and it is noted when synthesizing (Creswell, 2012; Fraenkel & Wallen, 1996). Methodology refers to the method of a research, which may distinguish one study to the other, thus it should be mentioned in the synthesizing process (Creswell, 2012; Sally, 2013; Fraenkel &Wallen, 1996). In choosing the participant in the study, the type of sampling is also noted (Sally, 2013; Fraenkel and Wallen, 1996). The result is the findings and discussions of the research, as the main point of the reviewed studies (Creswell, 2012; Sally, 2013; Fraenkel and Wallen, 1996). It is also the main content of the citation, so it is mentioned alongside the author, page, and year (Bram et al., 2016). The uniqueness of the study is the niche part of the literature (Sally, 2013), "strength, weakness, or limitation" (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1996). or the students' voice, opinion, or comment after reviewing. The page helps the readers who are interested to read the literature further. As stated by Bram et al. (2016) that page is also a citation element, this is also included in in-text citation to avoid plagiarism (p. 7).

In identifying the organization and framing of a literature review, there is a tool to help the process, which is called a discourse marker. Discourse markers, according to Fraser (1996), are the signs which show the relationship between the discourse and the message (p. 196). Similarly, Zhao (2014) states that discourse markers are "linguistic items signaling coherence relations, marking pauses, transitions, or other aspects of communication" (p. 2107). The most common ones are in some types of conjunction, adverb, and phrase (Ali and Mahadin, 2016), so this study used conjunctions (in addition to that, compared to that, however), phrase, word repetition, adverb, word family (base word with different affixation), different words with similar semantic meaning (look, watch, see), organization or sections, the main ideas of citations, or the apparent framing elements such as year of publications, author, and page.

METHOD

This study employed content analysis method. The content analysis allowed the study on the content, structure, and message of a passage (Creswell, 2012; Reger & Kincaid, 2021), which allowed the researcher to investigate the structure of the literature review section in the students' theses, especially the organization and framing structures.

Data Sources

The object for this research were thirty literature reviews from English Language Education Study Program (ELESP) students in a private university in Yogyakarta. The literature reviews were taken from students' theses from batch 2016 to 2018 in education and linguistics fields. The education and linguistics fields were used since both of them were categorized as non-literature theses (Bram et al., 2016). That way, both had more or less similar structures in their literature review, so they could be compared.

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Data Gathering

This research used structured observation sheets as the data gathering instrument. They allowed the researchers to list the data that suit the criteria and record the number of data appearance (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1996; Cohen et al., 2018; Lambert, 2012). The researcher used the theories from Carnwell & Dally (2001), Lambert (2012), and Ramdhani et al. (2014) for the organization, resulting in four items (chronological, thematic, compare/contrast, and general-specific) and from Bram et al. (2016), Sally (2013), Fraenkel & Wallen (1996), and Creswell (2012) for the framing, resulting in six items for the observation sheet.

To gather the data, the researcher first selected the theses from the university's library repository, fifteen theses each from education and linguistic fields. Then, the researcher reviewed the literature review sections, especially the section and subsection titles, the wording of the paragraphs, the citations, the discourse markers, and other elements that indicated the organization and framing. The occurrences of the organization and framing types were then recorded in the respective structured observation sheet.

Data Analysis

The researcher coded the findings into each organization and framing type. The coding results then were recorded. In recording the data, the researcher used single checkmark (√) for the organization and single (√) and double (√√) checkmarks for the framing. The double checkmarks (√√) were used to indicate that the said element was frequently used (60% to 100% of the total citations). The single checkmark (√) was used if the said element was not used most of the time, but the appearance number was significant (25% to below 50% of the total citation). The data then were discussed descriptively based on the found organization and framing themes. The descriptive explanation used the theories as the basis and the collected data as the empirical results.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
The Organization of Literature Review

This research studied the organization of thirty literature reviews in two different fields. After analyzing the literature reviews, the researcher recorded the use of the different organization types. The observation results are shown in Table 1.

The table shows the comparison of OLR for education and linguistic theses. The OLRs were divided into chronological (CO), thematic (TO), general-to-specific (GSO), and compare-contrast (CCO) orders. From the table, all thirty theses used TO. There are four theses that used CCO in education and two in linguistics. For GSO, nine theses used this pattern in education, and only four used it in linguistics. Among those theses, none of them used CO.

The organization that stand alone without any combination with other patterns is TO. This pattern was used in all observed theses, but the use of TO without any combination existed in five education (16.7%) and nine linguistic (30%) theses. Below is the example from a linguistic thesis:

[1] 2) Impoliteness

Impoliteness is a part of human interaction. Even though it is outlawed by publics…, "*impoliteness* is behavior that…. *Impoliteness* definition is not a fixed term, depends on the situation. *Impoliteness* occurs in a situation…. that *impoliteness* comes about when…. the researcher understands how to differentiate between *impoliteness* speech

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acts and common speech acts. *Impolite* utterance has a purpose to attack somebody's face verbally. That is why *impoliteness* is categorized as a verbal aggression.

Table 1. *Comparison Table of the Organization of the Literature Review (OLR)*

Thesis ID	Pattern of Organization				Thesis ID	Pattern of Organization			
ET	Chrono-logical	Thematic	Compare-contrast	General-specific	LT	Chrono-logical	Thematic	Compare-contrast	General-specific
01		√			01		√		
02		√		√	02		√	√	
03		√		√	03		√		
04		√	√	√	04		√		√
05		√			05		√		
06		√			06		√		
07		√		√	07		√		√
08		√			08		√		
09		√		√	09		√		
10		√	√	√	10		√		
11		√	√	√	11		√		√
12		√		√	12		√		√
13		√		√	13		√		
14		√			14		√		
15		√	√		15		√	√	
Total	**0**	**15**	**4**	**9**	**Total**	**0**	**15**	**2**	**4**

Example [1] shows the use of TO in a linguistic thesis. TO organizes the passage by giving elaboration for a certain idea. The TO in this chunk can be identified by the use of repetition of the main idea (impoliteness). The student also used word family, the main word with different affixation which change the word class (*impoliteness*(n) and *impolite*(adj.)).

The first combination existed in the observed theses is the combination of both TO and GSO. The use of more than one organization is possible. That way, students can have more variations in delivering the theories and studies and be more flexible. a combination of TO and GSO was used in six theses in education theses (20%) and four in linguistic theses (13.3%). Below is the example from an education thesis:

[2] *1) Vocabulary Mastery*

Vocabulary Mastery is an ability to understand and to know words and implement the words in communicating with others. Nunan (2003) states that students who have *vocabulary mastery* are…

However, *knowing and understanding* vocabulary are not just… they are already *knowing* a word when he/she *knows* its form and its meaning." Furthermore, Schmitt (2000) added that learning words entails more than *knowing* its….

2) Teaching and Learning Vocabulary

The researcher divides this section into three parts…

Example [1] shows the use of TO-GSO combination. The TO can be identified from the use of repetition of the keywords in each paragraph (*vocabulary mastery* and *know*), the word family (*know, knows, knowing*), and the words with similar meaning (*know* and *understand*). The GSO can be identified from the main ideas of each section. In section 1), the first paragraph talks about general definition and the second one talks about a more specific argument. GSO also identified from the sectioning, where section

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1) talks about vocabulary and section 2) gets more specific, which is about teaching and learning vocabulary.

The next combination used in the observed theses is the TO and CCO combination. This combination was used in one education thesis (3.3%) and in two linguistic theses (6.7%). Below is the example from a linguistic thesis:

[3] a) The Types of Code-Switching

There are many *types of code switching* which… McCormick (1994) groups five *types of code switching* according to the length of juxtaposed utterances, which are situational code-switching, metaphoric code-switching, conversational code-switching, single-word code-switching, and integrated loanword…

Holmes (1992) suggests four types of code-switching, which are emblematic switching or tag switching, situational switching, metaphorical switching, and lexical borrowing…

The CCO-TO combination is used in both education and linguistic fields. In example [3], the TO can be identified from the use of repetition (types of code switching), and in the overall discussion of section a). the CCO is the way the student presented two theories (from McCormick (1994) and Holmes (1992)) about types of code-switching and discussed both theories. There, the student compared the two theories.

The last organization combination is the TO, GSO, and CCO combination. This combination was only found in three observed education theses (10%). Below is the example:

[4] *1) Motivation*

Everyone has a *motivation* to encourage themselves to do something. *Motivation* is like a force that pushes humans to take an action. The term *motivation* is derived… about *motivation* as something that gets us going keep us working, and helps us to complete tasks. It makes *motivation* has so many definitions. **Dornyei (2001)** described that "*motivation* as the choice of a particular action, the effort of doing something and the persistence with doing it" (p. 7). **Dornyei (2001)** also stated that "*motivation* explains… According to **Huffman (2008)**, "*motivation* is a set of factors that activate, direct, and maintain behavior, usually toward a goal" (p. 406). It indicates that people are *motivated* to do something because…

2) Motivation in Learning English

Motivation is important in *learning* a second language such as English. In *second language learning*, it is easy to claim a learner will be successful with *proper motivation* (Brown, 1994). **Ryan and Deci (2000)** divided *motivation* into two types, *intrinsic motivation* and *extrinsic motivation*. **Brown (2000)** stated that "*motivation* is also typically examined in terms of *the intrinsic and extrinsic motives* of the learner" (p. 162). So, extrinsic and intrinsic *motivation* are really needed by a *second language learner*.

The use of TO-GSO-CCO combination was only found in observed education theses. The use of TO in example [4] is seen from the use of repetition (motivation and learning), the word family (*motivation* and *motivated*, *learning* and *learner*), and word variations (varying *learning English* with *second language learning*). The used of GSO can be seen from the way the student organized the sectioning. Section 2) (*Motivation in Learning English*) is the more specific and narrowed down discussion derived from section 1) (*Motivation*). Aside from that, this thesis used CCO. It can be seen from how

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the student contrasted the theories from Dornyei (2001) and Huffman (2008) about motivation and compared the theories from Ryan and Deci (2000) and Brown (2000) for the types of motivation.

The Framing of Literature Review

This research also studied the framing of thirty literature reviews in education and linguistics fields. The researcher recorded the use of the different framing elements and table 2 is the observation results:

Table 2. *Comparison Table of the Framing of Literature Review (FLR)*

Thesis ID	Elements of Framing						Thesis ID	Elements of Framing					
ET	A	Y	T	R	U	P	LT	A	Y	T	R	U	P
01	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√		01	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√
02	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√		02	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√
03	√√	√√	√√	√√	√	√√	03	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√
04	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	04	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√
05	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	05	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√
06	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√	06	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√
07	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√	07	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√
08	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√		08	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√
09	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√		09	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√
10	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	10	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√
11	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	11	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√
12	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√	12	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√
13	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	13	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√
14	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√		14	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	
15	√√	√√	√√	√√	√	√√	15	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√
Total	**15**	**15**	**15**	**15**	**14**	**8.5**	**Total**	**15**	**15**	**15**	**15**	**15**	**13**

A: author; Y: year; T: topic; R: results; U: unique element (significance); P: page

Table 2 shows the comparison of FLR in education and linguistic theses. The observation was conducted on fifteen education theses and fifteen linguistic theses. From the table, the *author, year, topic,* and *result* elements were used in the FLR of all thirty theses. The uniqueness *element* was used in all of the linguistic theses. In education theses, however, there were two theses with single checkmarks (√) for uniqueness element. In page column for education theses, there are three theses with single checkmarks (√) and five theses with a blank table. On the other hand, in page column for linguistic theses, there are two theses with single checkmarks (√) and one thesis with a blank table.

There are several elements that are almost always mentioned in every citation in framing a theory or previous study. Those elements are author, year, topic, and result. Below is the example from an education thesis:

[5] *Bandura, Brim, Dustman, and Safford (1995)* stated that "*self-efficacy* is *the belief we have in our capability to succeed at any chosen endeavour*" (p. 66).

The observed education and linguistic theses included the author, year, topic, and result. Example [5] has all these four elements along with the page element. The authors are Bandura, Brim, Dustman, and Safford and the year of publication is 1995. We can see the topic of the original work there, which is about self-efficacy. The original work talks about things around self-efficacy. The result there is the "the belief we have in our

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capability to succeed at any chosen endeavour". The original authors conducted a study about self-efficacy and the result of their study is that definition of self-efficacy.

In the observed linguistic theses, the uniqueness element is also mentioned. It is the unique finding or niche of the cited work. Below is the example:

[6] Meanwhile, *Grosjean (1988)* considered *code-switching* as *"a complete shift from one language to other, either for a word, phrase or a whole sentence"* (as cited in *Scotton, 1993, p. 47*)

All observed linguistics theses used at least those five elements in the FLR. Example [6] shows the use of those five elements as well as a page element. The authors are the Grosjean, as the original author, and Scotton, as the author that the student cited from. The years are 1988, as the original year, and 1993, as the publication year that the student read. The topic is code-switching. The cited work is talking about code-switching as its study. The original author conducted a research and found that code-switching is a shift of language. The uniqueness here is the "either for a word, phrase or a whole sentence" part, since it deepens the result and shows the distinction that this work made from the other works.

There were some exceptions to the elements that always appeared, but they were very low in percentage. Those exceptions are:

a. No topic and result

[7] "English teachers still spend the majority of class time in reading and writing practice almost ignoring speaking skills" (Scarcella & Oxford, 1994: 165; *El Menoufy, 1997: 12 and Miller, 2001: 25*).

In this kind of framing, just like example [7], the students first gave one citation with at least author, year, topic, and result. Then the students wrote some other journals with the same idea as additional references.

b. No year

[8] …they can employ some strategies proposed by Harmer. The strategies can be in the forms of improvising, discarding, foreignizing, and pharaphrasing. *(data ID: ET 12)*

As seen in example [8], the year is not present. It may be because there was not any information about the year of the publication. Some students used "n.d." to indicate the absence of year and others did not.

c. No uniqueness element

[9] According to Asher (1994: 577) the term code refers to any system of signs or symbols which conveys information.

This case only occurred in linguistic theses, since not all education theses mentioned uniqueness. Some citations were more direct and concise, so in some cases, as in example [9], the students only added the topic and result of literature as the content of the citation without the uniqueness element. This framing was usually used to support a sentence, main idea, or keyword that they were going to talk about.

There are also elements that were not always mentioned, which are uniqueness and page. Though uniqueness was always mentioned in linguistic theses, in the observed education theses, however, it was not always mentioned. Though not always mentioned, the mention of uniqueness was on significant level (in 25% to 50% of the total citations). There are two theses with significant mention of uniqueness element (6.7%). Below is the example:

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[10] (Kemp, 1997) states that learning required active effort by the learners.

Example [10] is one of the citations that have no uniqueness element in it. from table 2, the uniqueness element in ED 03 and ED 15 theses was not totally absent from the framing. In fact, the number of citations with no uniqueness element was just a bit more than the number of citations that had uniqueness element. In other words, although the majority of the citations did not have uniqueness element in them, the number of citations that indeed had uniqueness element was significantly high, thus the single checkmark (√) was used in the element column in those theses.

The page element also was not always mentioned, in either education or linguistic theses. The use of page element varied the most. In seven education (23.3%) and twelve linguistic (40%) theses always mentions the page element. Example [5] and [6] are the illustrations of the use of page element. In three education (10%) and two linguistic (6.7%) theses, this element was used on significant level, though not always mentioned. For example, in LT 13 from table 1. had 10 citations that include page element out of 22 total citations, which is a significant amount (45.5%). In five education theses (16.7%) and one linguistic thesis (3.3%), the page element was almost never mentioned. In ET 08 thesis, for example, the number of citations with page element is 1 out of 34 citations (2.9%), which is a very low use.

CONCLUSION

The ELESP students were able to master organizational and framing skills. The students could combine both skills in the making of their literature review. From their theses, the students could use various organization types and combinations (TO, TO-GSO, TO-CCO, and TO-GSO-CCO), though one type (CO) was never used. Various organization patterns help to accommodate the flow of information in the literature review. The students could already use different organization patterns in their theses. The same thing goes to framing. The literature reviews were framed differently and their functions and tones could come out differently as well. There are four elements that were always used by the students, which are author, year, topic, and result, along with uniqueness element in linguistic theses. The students could use the elements of framing to frame the theories and previous studies that they used to accommodate their literature review. This research may be used to help the lecturers to give more elaboration about the organization and framing and how to do them. This research still has limitations in its discourse markers used to analyze the texts. There are many possibilities regarding framing and organization in various forms of texts that future researches can dive into.

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