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The Study of Rhetorical Moves in Applied Linguistics Research-Based Articles Written by Iranian Researchers

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Abstract

This study discussed rhetorical features of Iranian applied linguistics research articles (RAs) in English. The main focus of this research is on the examination of the patterns of communicative purposes or "moves" and their subsequent elements or "steps" of different sections of these articles. The researchers randomly chose 30 research articles from four Iranian journals of applied linguistics published within five recent years (2008-2012). The analysis includes the examination of communicative purposes of the texts following Pho's (2008b) model of move analysis in applied linguistics research articles. For the ease of comparison, this corpus was compared with Pho's (2008b) corpus of study. The results showed that the macro rhetorical structure of the Iranian research articles is relatively similar to that of non-Iranian RAs with some minor differences. However the communicative purposes in different sections in the two groups of RAs (Iranian and non-Iranian) are relatively different. The pedagogical implication of this study is that the English RAs genre needs to be explicitly taught to Iranian researchers.

Keywords: Rhetorical features, Applied linguistics, Research articles, Communicative purpose

1. Introduction

Genre analysis has been considered as a crucial way for text analysis particularly in the field of English for specific purposes (Dudley-Evans, 1994). Swales (1981, 1990) was the first person who used the term "genre analysis" in an ESP context (Connor, Upton & Kanoksilapatham, 2007; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). Bhatia (2002) defined "genre analysis" as the study of language in situation. He also emphasized that this kind of analysis can elaborate on the ways of construction as well as the interpretation of the texts. More specifically, in the field of applied linguistics, such an analysis accounts for the special organization and also the structural features of texts (Coffin, 2001).

Kaplan (1987) claimed that the rhetorical pattern or what swales (1990: 44) called "schematic structure" of the same text with in different languages may be different. So authors' native language may have the potential to influence their ways and styles of writing English research articles. Rhetorical segments that fulfill a comprehensible communicative function in a written or spoken discourse are called "rhetorical moves" (Swales, 2004: 228). These moves can be recognized through different linguistic features.

"Move analysis" is one of genre-based approaches for identification of the structural patterns of RAs. This special form of analysis has become the subject of many recent studies in the area of applied linguistics. Swales (2004) defined "move" as a textual unit that associate with writer's purpose. According to Nwogu (1997), discovering the conventional structure of texts is regarded as the main purpose of move-based analysis. Until now, move-based studies have been extensively applied on different genres especially on research articles (RAs).

Several researchers have conducted investigations on different sections of RAs (Abstract, Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion). Some of these studies emphasized on specific sections of RAs (e.g. Swales, 1990, 2004; Thompson, 1993; Brett, 1994; Holmes, 1997; Williams, 1999; Jogthong, 2001; Peacock, 2002; Samraj, 2002b, 2005; Yang & Allison, 2003; lim, 2006; Keshavarz, Atai & Barzgar, 2007; Peacock, 2011; Amnuai & Wannaruk,2013) and some others preferred to analyze the overall structure of RAs (Fazilatfar & Naseri, 2014; Kanoksilapatham, 2005, 2007; Li, 2011; Nwogu,1997; Posteguillo, 1999). Also the concept of move analysis has been extended to the comparison of rhetorical moves used in research articles across two languages (Lio & Evan, 2010; Yakhontova, 2006).

1.1 Corpus-based Move Analysis

Corpus-based approach investigates and compares the existing features in a prototypical assembly of texts of a particular genre. As Baker (2006) noted in order to have more generalizable findings, the process of encoding these texts is done electronically. Doing such a process by hand is too demanding on the part of researchers. In other words, statistical overview of large amounts of the data in question with a more quantitative approach is typical of corpus-based approaches to move analysis. Therefore, both qualitative and quantitative processes are involved in corpus-based move analysis, because the type of moves in each text is determined by a qualitative analysis. Also, after conducting the qualitative process on the data obtained from the first qualitative analysis, another qualitative analysis

should be conducted in order to interpret these statistical results functionally.

2. Background

Hijikata, Nakatani and shimizu (2013) examined the process of reading academic papers from different point of view. Their primary focus was on the effects of the rhetorical conventions of academic discourse, L2 proficiency and reading strategies. The results denoted the fact that the learners have had different purposes in using local and global strategies. Depending on their competence in L2, their background knowledge about the subject of the texts and, more important than others, their familiarity with discipline-specific academic discourse, they utilized different strategies.

Swales' (1990) believed that rhetorical particularities of every text made it easier to read. Furthermore, Swales (2004) claimed that an important necessity for ESL and EFL learners is to be aware of such moves or discourse strategies.

As a case study, Cheng (2008) analyzed the discipline-specific genre exemplars of native Chinese speaking graduate students. He could find two significant characteristics: a) rhetorical, both generic characteristics and underlying rhetorical parameters were proved to be important for the students. They paid attention to formal organization as well as the purpose, writer and reader of the texts. b) evaluative, students interestingly evaluated the generic organization of the genre.

In addition, Negretti and Kuteeva (2011) carried out another case study in an EAP class. He observed the performances of eight native speakers of Spanish using different sources (e.g.; observation, students' reflections on seminar activities, a textual analysis of online tasks and final assignments), they found that metacognitive strategies are useful tools in comprehending and appropriately producing generic patterns. Fallowing swales' account of move structure, ten different moves were identified in 34 grant proposals from European Union research grant proposals by Connor and Mauranen (1999).

This kind of analysis was done with the aim of recognizing both linguistically and rhetorically the features of such written texts in English by Finnish scientists in science and technology. Some of the obtained moves were similar to the moves which were found in other academic genres.

Nevertheless, they found that four moves could be regarded as distinctive functions performed in grant proposals, including achievements, benefits, importance, and compliance. Achievements are "prospective results of the project" (p.57). The benefits reveal the degree of usefulness of the projects in terms of "their value to the outside world, the study itself "(p.57). The Importance move shows the amount of significance of the proposal in the outside world or the related community. The Compliance move sets a correlation between the proposals and European Union.

A two-level rhetorical (moves and steps) for biochemistry research articles was proposed by Kanoksilapatham (2005). 15 moves were found in this structure. Three moves for the Introduction section, four for the Methods section, four for the Results section, and four for

the Discussion section. The kind of model which was suggested helps native and nonnative scientists in both writing research articles and understanding published research articles.

There existed certain criticism of swales' (1990) work on rhetorical structure of different sections of research articles across various disciplines. As Paltridge (1994) found determining more boundaries is so much dependant on semantic factors and not structural ones. This causes the objectivity of the judgment to be decreased. As a result, empirical validity and reliability of the process begin to be questionable. Furthermore, other researchers faced with some limitations while applying swale's move analysis. One phenomenon that also confined the generalizeability of the findings is the inclusion of a small corpus by many researchers (e.g., Peng, 1987; Williams, 1999; Wood, 1982). Of course, there are other studies (e.g., Nwogu, 1997; Posteguillo, 1999) which don't carry such a problem.

In addition in many studies (e.g., Brett, 1994; Hopkins & Dudley-Evans, 1988; Yang & Allison, 2003; Samraj, 2002a; Samraj, 2002b; Swales & Najjar, 1987) the emphasis was on individual sections of research articles, hence the analysis wouldn't be comprehensive in nature.

However, Swales' model of move analysis and other scholars' studies on rhetorical moves were continuously considered as essential works for understanding the organization of research articles.

Hyland (2004) Sought to analyze 240 texts selected from six disciplines. The texts were equally distributed among two related genres, namely RAs and PhD dissertations in order to determine their move structures. Two MA and two PhD students in each discipline were interviewed. He identified a "three-tier structure consisting of a main thanking move framed by optional Reflecting and Announcing moves" (p.308). Each move was broken down into some steps. Reflecting move was the first move found in Hyland's corpus. Via this move the writers had the opportunity to express their ideas on writing process and also their dissertations. The only move which was observed in all texts, was Thanking move (about 90% of all steps in the corpus).The sub-moves of thanking moves were introduced as: (1) presenting participants; (2) thanking for academic assistance; (3) thanking for providing resources; (4) thanking for moral support only 11% of the corpus included the third move, which is the announcing move. Accepting responsibility and dedicating the thesis were two steps of the third move.

Among all studies which were done on the concept of move analysis there exist some investigations on the combination of move structure and linguistic features. These linguistic features may be tense use (Malcolm 1987), personal pronouns (Harwood 2005, Mart ńez 2005), voice (Mart ńez 2001, Stotesbury 2003), vague language or hedging (Hyland 1996) and lexical phrases or bundles (Biber and Barbieri 2007, Strunkytė and Jurkūnaitė 2008). So there are very few studies that have made an association between rhetoric patterns and linguistic realization (Anderson and Maclean 1997, Lor és 2004, Pho 2008, 2009).

2.1 Significance of the Study

The communication among academic centers is achieved through academic cooperation

systems. In order to send word to the members of different academic communities about the latest findings developments in the field, university instructors draw on different forms of academic writing. They publish articles, books and research notes; they submit publications for conferences; they subscribe in different publications. However, some of these scholars face with problems in publishing their papers in international journals.

According to Berkenkotter, Huckin and Ackerman (1988), language users need to learn genre and writing conventions of members of a discourse community. The differences in rhetorical patterns may cause difficulties for second language writers. Besides, the importance of research articles has been increasing in recent years due to the explosion of information in the academic world.

Therefore, successful publication in the international community necessitates the scholars to acquire the awareness of move variation in text structures. Hence, this study seeks to investigate the following research question:

Is there any significant difference between the overall generic structure of different sections of RAs written by Iranian writers and the model proposed based on the examination of non-Iranian RAs moves?

3. Method

3.1 Corpus

To select the corpus for the study first the researcher collected a comprehensive list of journals published within five recent years (2008-2012) in the field of applied linguistics through searching the internet and checking library references of universities. From this list, four journals were selected by consulting the experts in the field. The selected journals in this study were: The Journal of Teaching Language Skills of Shiraz University, Iranian Journal of Applied Language Studies of Zahedan University, Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning of Tabriz University and Iranian Journal of Applied Linguistics of Tarbiat Moallem University.

Then 30 research articles were chosen randomly from the above mentioned journals. The type of journal and the number of articles per issue was not taken into consideration, therefore; the chance of selecting all of the articles was the same. The other set of articles were adopted from Pho's (2008b) data which was utilized as the corpus of his research article titled "How can Learning about the Structure of Research Articles Help International Students?". This corpus (Pho's corpus) comprised of 40 research articles selected from four non-Iranian journals in the areas of Applied Linguistics and educational technology. The journals were: The Modern Language Journal (MLJ) and TESOL Quarterly (TQ) in the field of applied linguistics, and Computers & Education (CE) and the Journal of Computer Assisted Learning (JCAL) in the field of educational technology. The current study utilized those journals which were related to the field of applied linguistics (N=20).

Table 1. Iranian corpus (Local journals)

Source	Date of publication	Number of selected articles
The Journal of Teaching Language Skills	2008	1
	2010	4
	2011	2
	2012	2
Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning	2009	2
	2011	3
	2012	1
Iranian Journal of Applied Language Studies	2010	2
	2011	1
Iranian Journal of Applied Linguistics	2008	3
	2009	1
	2010	6
	2011	2

Table 2. Non-Iranian corpus (International journals): Pho's (2008b) corpus

Source	Date of publication	RAs	Number of selected articles
TESOL Quarterly	2006	1, 6, 20	3
	2007	2, 7, 9, 10, 16, 17, 18	7
The Modern Language Journal	2006	3, 4, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15	8
	2007	5, 19	2

Pho (2008b) chose these journals as they were proved to possess high impact factor according to Journal Citation Reports (2007). Furthermore, ten more articles were selected from these two journals, i.e. The Modern Language Journal and TESOL Quarterly. These ten articles were published within recent five years (2008-2012).

Table 3. Non-Iranian corpus (International journals) (selected randomly)

Source	Date of publication	RAs	Number of selected articles
TESOL Quarterly	2010	23	1
	2011	24	1
	2012	25	1

The Modern Language Journal	2009	26, 27, 28, 29	4
	2010	22	1
	2011	21, 30	2

3.2 Instrument

Move analysis as articulated by pho (2008b) represent academic research articles in terms of hierarchically organized text made up of distinct sections; each section can be subdivided into moves and each move can be broken down into steps. Following pho's (2008b) model [1] a structure of 19 rhetorical moves five in the Abstract section, three in the Introduction section, two in the Method section, three in Results section, and six in the Discussion-Conclusion section were investigated.

The central thought on which this study is based is that two basic concepts play influential roles in detecting the generic structure of a genre, constituency and labeling. "Constituency" refers to the existence of optional as well as obligatory elements in the schematic structure of a genre. The second term "labeling" denotes the fact that each constituent as a discrete element of schematic structure contributes to the overall purpose of the genre (Eggins, 2004).

3.3 Data Analysis Procedure

The study used a top-down approach to identify the moves and steps in the articles that is based on the function or content of the texts. It drew on model of move structure in Pho's (2008b) study on various sections of the applied linguistics articles. These 60 research articles in Applied Linguistics (30 from Iranian journals and 30 from non-Iranian journals) were analyzed in terms of the realization of those 19 rhetorical moves, five in abstract, three in Introduction, two in Method, three in Results and six in Discussion and conclusion, following Pho's (2008b) model of move analysis. Therefore, textual analysis of RAs generally aligned with the move scheme proposed by Pho (2008b) in his article titled "How can learning about the structure of research articles help international students?" for AP RAs.

Then, exactly the same analysis was applied on those 30 non-Iranian research articles which were adopted from Pho's (2008b) corpus of study.

The unit of move analysis in this study was sentence. In line with previous studies if there were two moves in a sentence, it was assigned to the move that that was more salient; otherwise, the sentence is considered to have a dual move and therefore is accounted to have both moves.

Finally for the purpose of comparison between the type and frequency, as well as the sequence of moves in different sections of AP RAs written by Iranian and non-Iranian authors, Chi-Square test (2×2) of SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) was used. The Chi-Square test assumes that each cell has an expected frequency of five or more. In applying Chi-Square to determine statistical differences, Yates' Correction for Continuity values were referred to as the criterion. However when the assumption of "minimum

[1] See the appendix A

expected cell frequency" which should be five or greater (at least 80% of cells should have expected frequency of five or more), is violated, the researcher used Fisher's Exact Test (Pallant, 2001), which is part of the output from Chi-Square. To show significance both Yates' correlation for Continuity as well as Fisher's Exact Test should be less than .05.

In addition to Chi-Square the frequency of occurrence of each move and step in RAs is reported to determine whether they are optional or obligatory. A Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was conducted to compare frequency at which the moves in different sections of RAs were used in their right places.

3.4 Inter-rater Reliability Analysis

As it was mentioned in the previously, it is possible that two individuals judge the move boundaries of a genre differently. Such a deficiency present in genre-based studies necessitates the researchers to include the inter-rater reliability analysis in their papers. In this way, they can increase the accuracy of the analysis integrated in their studies. This study dealt with this problem of subjectivity in identification of moves based on content or functions by the inclusion of two coders i.e. the researcher herself and another individual. 30 of the articles (15 written by Iranian authors and 15 written by non-Iranian authors) were also coded by another coder who is an MA student in applied linguistics. As tabulated below, high inter-coder reliability rates were obtained.

Table 4. Inter-coder reliability analysis in percentage and Kappa value

Moves	percentage	Kappa measure of agreement value
Situating the research	96.4	.83
presenting the research	94.6	.70
describing the methodology	96.2	.77
summarizing the results	98.0	.94
discussing the research	89.7	.86
Establishing a territory	94.9	.38
Establishing a niche	92.3	.85
Presenting the present work	94.8	.55
Describing data collection procedures	91.1	.57
Describing data analysis procedure	96.6	.86
Preparing for the presentation of the results section	89.4	.78
Reporting specific/individual results	94.1	.76
Commenting on specific results	95.8	.90

Preparing for the presentation of the discussion section	88.6	.86
Highlighting overall research outcome	98	.88
Discussing the findings of the study	97.3	.85
Drawing conclusions of the study	93.3	.83
Evaluating the study	93.3	.91
Deductions from the research	94.3	.79

4. Results and Discussion

This study examined the generic structure of different sections of RAs written by Iranian writers and possible differences between overall structure of these articles and the model proposed based on the examination of non-Iranian RAs moves. To this end, the model used as the basis of analysis was Pho's (2008b) for overall rhetorical structure of applied linguistics RAs. Therefore, in order to explore the differences between the kinds of "moves" used in different sections of applied linguistics RAs written by Iranian and non-Iranian writers, Pho's (2008b) model of move analysis was utilized.

Table 5. Chi-Square test of researcher nationality * STR, PTR, DTM, STF, & DTR

Moves of Abstract section	Continuity Correction			Effect size
	Value	df	Sig.	Phi
Move 1: Situating the research	.603	1	.600	-.101
Move2: Presenting the Research	.000	1	1.000	.000
Move3: Describing the Methodology	.000	1	1.000	-.076
Move 4: Summarizing the Findings	.144	1	.704	-.098
Move5: Discussing the Research	.000	1	1.000	.37

The Phi coefficient value for this move was -.101, which is considered a very small effect. Therefore, the association between the nationality of writers and the use of this move in their papers was not strong. Just as the first move, observed Continuity Correction value for moves two, three, four and five (Presenting the research, Describing the methodology, Summarizing the results and Discussing the research respectively) are .000, .000, .144, and .000 which possess the alpha levels of 1.000, 1.000, .704 and 1.000 at one level of freedom. Therefore, there are no significant differences between the frequency of these four moves in Abstract sections of AP RAs written by Iranian and non-Iranian writers. The effect size (Phi coefficient value) for all moves in Abstract section was small except for the last move which showed a moderate effect for this association.

Table 6. Chi-Square test of researcher nationality * EAT, EAN, & APRP

Moves of Introduction section	Continuity Correction			Effect size
	Value	df	Sig.	Phi
Move1: Establishing a territory		-	-	a
Step1: Summarizing existing studies	0	1	1.000	.000
Step 2 : Drawing inferences from previous studies	8	1	0	111
Move2: Establishing a niche	.077	1	1.000	.036
Step 1 : Indicating a gap	.000	1	1.000	.036
Step2: Providing positive justification	8.864	1	**.003**	.384
Move3: Presenting the present work	.a	--	--	.000
Step 1 : Announcing present research purposefully	.185	1	.667	.111
Step 2 : Presenting research questions	5.104	1	.024	.333
a. No statistics are computed because *Establishing a territory* is a constant move across the corpora.				

The results of Chi-Square analysis for the second move (Establishing a niche) was .077 with the significance level of 1.00 at one level of freedom. Therefore, there is no significant differences between the frequency of move one in Introduction sections of AP RAs written by Iranian and non-Iranian writers. However, the significance level of 0.003 was reported for the second step of move two (PPJ Step) which is below the critical value of 0.05. Hence, the difference between these two groups in utilizing this step was considered to be significant.

The value of Chi-Square analysis for the third move (Presenting the present work) was not computed because this move is constant across abstract sections of AP RAs written by Iranian and non-Iranian writers. However, the significance level of .024 was reported for the second step of this move i.e. *Presenting research questions*. Therefore, there existed a significant difference in fulfilling this step in Introduction sections between local and international journals.

Table 7. Chi-Square test of researcher nationality * DDCP, & DDAP

Moves of Method section	Continuity Correction			Effect size
	Value	df	Sig.	Phi
Move1: Describing data collection procedures	.517	1	.472	-.186
Step1: Describing the sample	.000	1	1.000	-.052
Step2 : Describing research instruments	7.067	1	.008	-.392
Step3: Recounting steps in data	.445	1	.505	.129

collection				
Step4: Justifying data collection procedure	17.554	1	.000	.575
Move2: Describing data analysis procedure	.000	1	1.000	-.052

No significant differences were found in utilizing the two moves proposed by Pho (2008b) for an AP RA Method section (Table 7).

According to Table 7, among four strategies in fulfilling the first move of Method section of AP RAs, *Describing research instrument* and *Justifying data collection procedure* were used with an alpha levels of less than 0.05 in the two sets of corpus. This finding suggested that there were significant differences between articles published in local and international journals in employing these two moves.

Table 8. Chi-Square test of researcher nationality * PFTPOTRS , RSIR & COSR

Moves of Results section	Continuity Correction			Effect size
	Value	df	Sig.	Phi
Move1: Preparing for the presentation of the results section	.000	1	1.000	-.040
Step1: Restating data collection and analysis procedure	.293	1	.588	-.105
Step 2 : Restating research questions or hypothesis	.000	1	1.000	.034
Step3: Giving background knowledge	.000	.704	1.000	-.40
Move2: Reporting specific/individual results	.185	1	.667	-.111
Move3: Commenting on specific results	5.104	1	**.024**	-.333

As it is clear from Table 8, there was no significant difference in utilizing the first move of the Results section between the two sets of articles (Alpha level = 1.000)

The same results were found for the three steps present in this move i.e. the alpha levels for these strategies were all above the critical value of 0.05 (Table 8).

Table 8 represents the significance levels in employing the last two moves of this section between the two datasets. Unlike *Reporting specific/individual results* move which was utilized with an alpha level larger than 0.05, *Commenting on specific results* move was employed with an alpha level of 0.02 which denotes the fact that this move proved another aspect of significant difference between Iranian and non-Iranian articles.

Table 9. Chi-Square test of researcher nationality * PFTPOTDS, HORO, DTFOTS, DCOTS, ETS & DFTR

Moves of Discussion-Conclusion section	Continuity Correction			Effect size
	Value	df	Sig.	Phi
Move 1 : Preparing for the presentation of the discussion section	.000	1	1.000	.000
Move 2 : Highlighting overall research outcome	.000	1	1.000	.043
Move 3 : Discussing the findings of the study	1.697	1	.193	.202
Step 1 : Comparing results with literature	.600	1	.439	.133
Step 2 : Accounting for results	.000	1	1.000	.000
Move 4 : Drawing conclusions of the study	.000	1	1.000	-.034
Move 5 : Evaluating the study Step 1: Indicating limitations	1.148	1	.284	.175
Move 6 : Deductions from the research	.873	1	.350	.181
Step 1 : Making suggestions/ drawing implications	.356	1	.551	.115
Step 2 : Recommending further research	4.286	1	**.038**	.235

The statistical results in Table 9 reveal that there was no significant difference in the use of "Preparing for the presentation of the discussion" and "section Highlighting overall research outcome" moves in Discussion-Conclusion section of RAs across two groups.

The same results were found for the rest of the moves present in RA Discussion-Conclusion sections across the two sets of corpus (Table 9).

As it is clear from the alpha levels reported in such tables, there existed no significant differences in utilizing Discussion-Conclusion section moves between local and international journals.

5. Conclusion

The appearance of anomaly structured RAs among the Iranian articles in the field of AP could be due to the low share of knowledge of the move structure on the part of Iranian scholars. Such a phenomenon might also indicate the unwillingness of Iranian researchers to stick to rigidly predetermined principles in utilizing and ordering the move structure of Pho's (2008b) framework and their tendency for breaking away from what Pho put forward as "acceptable bound" for international journals such as MLJ as well as TQ.

Iranian L_2 writers employed the moves in Abstract sections of AP RAs with almost the same frequency compared with non-Iranian scholars whose papers had been published in International journals. The results indicated that "Situating the research (STR)" move in Abstract section were used with low frequency in both data sets (Iranian as well as

non-Iranian journals). However, "Presenting the research (PTR)" move appeared with high frequency in all articles. No significant differences were found in frequency of moves in Introduction section between Iranian and non-Iranian AP RAs. However, "Providing positive justification (PPJ)" was used more frequently in non-Iranian RAs than those having been published in local journals.

The results suggested that "Justifying data collection procedures (JDCP)" and "Describing research instrument (DRI)" in Method section was used significantly more frequently in the Iranian corpus. There existed no significant differences in fulfilling different moves and steps in Results sections of RAs between local and international journals except for "Commenting on results (COR)" move. Unlike the previous differences which were reported, this move was utilized more frequently in Iranian corpus than non-Iranian corpus.

Significant differences were found in the frequency of the use of "Recommending further research (RFR)" step in Discussion-Conclusion sections of RAs between Iranian and non-Iranian corpuses.

There observed some added moves in Iranian corpus of the study which were not considered as a separate category, either moves or steps, in Pho's (2008b) move structure. To illustrate this finding, an initial move found in Introduction section was "*Giving background knowledge*" move which may be considered as an embedded move within "Summarizing existing studies (SES)" move by Pho (2008b). "*Asserting the importance of the topic*" was another move detected in Introduction sections of Iranian corpus. Also, there observed a "*Describing the overall design of the study*" move at the beginning of Method sections of Iranian articles.

The discrepancy between introduction and Discussion-Conclusions section of RAs written by Iranian researchers suggested that this particular group of Iranian scholars had problem in making associations between the initial and final sections of RAs when they write Discussion-Conclusions sections. So they should be informed of such a generic convention existing in AP RAs. The findings of the study may have some implications for teaching generic organization of applied linguistics research articles in discourse classes held in universities. Also they may help Iranian scholars to facilitate the publication process of their papers in international journals.

By applying the process of move analysis to explore the significant variations between articles in local and international journals, this study has generated rich insights into the products related to this specific genre.

Yet, as the present study is just an introductory effort to explore the overall organization of Iranian RAs, more work needs to be done in the future research.

To begin with, the analysis can be conducted on a larger dataset in order to reach more reliable decisions. Enlarging the samples of both Iranian and non-Iranian research articles will help to confirm the results of this study.

In addition, move variations can be investigated across different sub-disciplines of applied

linguistics to make more valid generalizations on variations in different articles in the field of applied linguistics.

Finally, a future research investigating the application of move structure in AP RAs of two languages namely English and Persian can be used to understand why the researchers employ moves differently across these two languages. The writing conventions of the native language sometimes influence the specific ways of fulfilling various moves and steps.

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Appendix

Appendix 1. Pho's (2008) model of rhetorical moves in AL research articles

ABSTRACT

Move 1: Presenting the Research

Move 2: Describing the Methodology

Move 3: Summarizing the Findings

Move 4: Discussing the Research

INTRODUCTION

Move 1: Establishing a territory

Step 1: Summarizing existing studies

Step 2: Drawing inferences from previous studies

Move 2: Establishing a niche

Step 1: Indicating a gap

Step 2: Providing positive justification

Move 3: Presenting the present work

Step 1: Announcing present research purposefully

Step 2: Presenting research questions

METHOD

Move 1 : Describing data collection procedures

Step 1: Describing the sample

Step 2: Describing research instruments

Step 3: Recounting steps in data collection

Step 4: Justifying data collection procedure

Move 2: Describing data analysis procedure

Step 1: Recounting data analysis procedure

RESULTS

Move 1: Preparing for the presentation of the results section

Step 1: Restating data collection and analysis procedure

Step2: Restating research questions or hypotheses

Step3: Giving background knowledge

Move 2: Reporting specific/individual results

Move 3: Commenting on specific results

Step 1: Interpreting results

DISCUSSION-CONCLUSION

Move 1: Preparing for the presentation of the discussion section

Step 1: Giving back ground knowledge

Move 2: Highlighting overall research outcome

Move 3: Discussing the findings of the study

Step 1: Comparing results with literature

Step 2: Accounting for results

Move 4: Drawing conclusions of the study

Move 5: Evaluating the study

Step 1: Indicating limitations

Move 6: Deductions from the research

Step 1: Making suggestions/ drawing implications

Step 2: Recommending further research

Adopted from Pho (2008b, p. 8)

Appendix 2. Devised model of rhetorical organization for AP RAs written by Iranian scholars

ABSTRACT

Move 1: Presenting the Research

Move 2: Describing the Methodology

Move 3: Summarizing the Findings

Move 4: Discussing the Research

INTRODUCTION

Move 1: Giving background knowledge

Move 2: Asserting the importance of the topic

Move3: Establishing a territory

Step1: Summarizing existing studies

Step2: Drawing inferences from previous studies

Move 4: Establishing a niche

Step 1: Indicating a gap

Step 2: Providing positive justification

Move 5: Presenting the present work

METHOD

Move 1: Describing the overall design of the study

Move 2 : Describing data collection procedures

Step 1: Describing the sample

Step 2: Describing research instruments

Step 3: Recounting steps in data collection

Step 4: Justifying data collection procedure

Step1: Announcing present research purposefully

Step2: Presenting research questions

Move 3: Describing data analysis

RESULTS

Move 1: Preparing for the presentation of the results section

Step1: Restating data collection and analysis procedure

Step2: Restating research questions /hypotheses

Step3: Giving background knowledge

Move 2: Reporting specific/individual results

Move 3: Commenting on specific results

Step 1: Interpreting results

DISCUSSION-CONCLUSION

Move 1: Preparing for the presentation of the discussion section

Step1: Giving back ground knowledge

Move 2: Highlighting overall research outcome

Move 3: Discussing the findings of the study

Step1: Comparing results with literature

Step2: Accounting for results

Move 4: Drawing conclusions of the study

Move 5: Evaluating the study

Step 1: Indicating limitations

Move 6: Deductions from the research

Step1: Making suggestions/ drawing implications

Step 2: Recommending further research

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