A SMALL-SCALE GENRE ANALYSIS STUDY OF THE INTRODUCTIONS OF A CORPUS OF POSTGRADUATE ESSAYS IN THE FIELD OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS

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Abstract— Most English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses focus on developing general academic writing skills. Swales (1990) argues that prominence should be given not only to the general writing skills but also to discipline related specific skills in such study courses. Therefore, it is necessary to identify EAP and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) skills that students need to master. The present study analysed a corpus of 19 essays focusing on their introductions in order to identify both EAP and ESP features involved in writing assignment. Swales' (1990) CARS model was applied to analyse the features in these introductions. The findings reveal that the introductions in this corpus closely follow CARS model with some of the Steps described in the model receiving prominence in these essay introductions. The findings also reveal that the students in this study module need to master EAP skills as well as ESP skills, relating relevant discipline specific contexts into writing and using discipline specific terminology in order to produce successful writing assignments. Thus, it is suggested to incorporate both EAP and ESP features in pre-sessional and/or in-sessional courses aimed at students who take similar courses of study.

Keywords— **ESP, EAP, Genre, introduction**

Introduction

Academic writing is considered the most important language skill necessary for university studies and thus most EAP courses focus on developing academic writing (de Chazal, 2014; Bruce, 2011, p.10;). However, the features that are attempted to address in these courses are mostly general skills (Swales & Feak, 2012, Gimenez, 2008; Brennan, 1995; Hossain, Kummer & O'Leary, 2015) even though they are unique and complex (English, 2011, p.12; Greethem, 2013, p.01; Nesi and Gardner, 2012; Neville, 2009; Redman, 2006 and Andrew, 2003). Swales (1990) argues that prominence should be given not only to the general writing skills that students need to develop but also discipline related specific skills in such study courses. Therefore, incorporating specific features of EAP (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001, p.8; Jordon, 1997, p.1 & Hyland, 2006, p.1; Benesch, 2001) and academic discipline based features focusing ESP (Hutchinson and Waters, 1989: Munby, 1978; McDonough, 1984; Halliday et al, 1964; Wells, 1992; Hyland, 2011) in the study courses are required.

Genre analysis studies are used to analyse such discipline specific features in academic writing. This paper reports a study that analysed a corpus of 19 postgraduate essays in linguistics to identify the specific features in the introduction of those essays (see Tardy, 2011; Bhatia 1993 & 2008; Hyland, 2008)

The paper contains a literature review, methodology applied in the study, results, discussion and a conclusion.

Literature Review

Genre analysis of academic texts and the relevant researches can provide instruments and tools to identify the specific features of any discourse community and the same can lead to identify the specific needs of the academic discipline determined by the discourse community (de Chazal, 2014, p.22; Swales, 1989; 1990 and 2004; Bizzell, 1982; Faigley and Hansen, 1985).

The ESP school approach to genre analysis was initiated with the work of Swales (1990) and Bhatia (1993), and the main focus of this school is how to develop effective pedagogical approach based on the genre analysis. Moreover, genre analysis in ESP is based on the texts and their properties and purposes which are determined by the relevant discourse community. These communicative purposes are revealed by certain steps and moves (Flowerdew 2011b, p.121) in the texts produced in the discipline.

Swales (1990, pp.110-176) analyses the structure of the Research Article (RA), introducing the mechanisms for constructing the introduction, body and conclusion based on important moves. Here, the essays produced in postgraduate courses are also categorised under RAs. Thus, for this research Swales' approach is considered key because it provides a good basis to analyse essays since it is applied extensively in many researches (see. Ahamad and Yusof, 2012; Samraj, 2005; Ozturk, 2007; Hirano, 2009; Loi, 2010; Sheldon, 2011; Anthony, 1999)

Swales (1990, pp.137-138) points out that introductions in RAs are problematic, and it is a difficult venture to create an introduction which leads to continuation of ideas. Swales (1990, pp.138-140) identifies Zappan's adapted approach based on Toulmin's argument (Zappan, 1983 & Toulmin, 1972, as cited in Swales, 1990, p.138) as a "possible approach … to view RA introductions as encapsulated problem-solution text." Further, Swales analyses Zappan's approach of five rhetorical categories: Goal, Current Capacity, Problem, Solution and Criteria of Evaluation to see the possibility of adapting that to review RA introductions. By citing Smith (1987 as cited in Swales, 1990, p.140) he argues that the credibility of Zappan's approach is questionable since some RAs are not based on problems, or some are only based on observations initiating many problems.

Modifying Zappan's approach, Swales (1990, pp.140-166) creates Create A Research Space model (CARS) (Figure 1), This consists of different features observed in different sections in the RA. For the purpose of this study, the features related to introductions are discussed. CARS identifies that the introduction of RA consists of three major rhetorical Moves (M): "1. Establishing a territory", "2. Establishing a niche," and "3. Occupying the niche." Further, he distinguishes many supportive Steps (S) in each move. As Tardy (2011, p.148) mentions, Swales' findings are significant since the Move-Step approach is more rhetorical than grammatical which indicates "an important departure from text feature analysis."

Move 1 Establishing a territory
    Step 1 Claiming centrality
    and/or
    Step 2 Making topic generalization
    and/or
    Step 3 Reviewing items of previous research
Move 2 Establishing a niche
    Step 1A Counter-claiming
    or
    Step 1B Indicating a gap generalization
    or
    Step 1C Question-raising
    or
    Step 1D Continuing a tradition
Move 3 Occupying the niche
    Step 1A Outlining purposes
    or
    Step 1B Announcing present research
    Step 2 Announcing principal findings
    Step 3 Indicating RA structure

Figure 1. A CARS model for article introductions. Adapted from *Genre Analysis English in academic and research settings* (p.141), by J. M. Swales, 1990, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Based on empirical research findings that highlight that introductions in certain disciplines deviate from CARS model (E.g. Samraj, 2001), Swales (2004) proposes modifications to the original model (Figure 2).

Move 1 Establishing a territory (citations required)
    Via
    Topic generalisations of increasing specificity

Move 2 Establishing a niche (citations possible)
    via
    Step 1A Indicating a gap
    or
    Step 1B Adding to what is known

    Step 2 (optional) Presenting positive justification

Move 3 Presenting the present work (citations possible)
    Step 1 (obligatory) Announcing present research descriptively and/or purposively
    Step 2 (optional) Presenting RQs or hypotheses
    Step 3 (optional) Definitional clarifications
    Step 4 (optional) Summarising methods
    Step 5 (PISF) Announcing principal outcomes
    Step 6 (PISF) Stating the value of the present research
    Step 7 (PISF) Outlining the structure of the paper

Figure 2. A revised CARS model. Adapted from *Research Genres* (p.230, 231), by J. M. Swales, 2004, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
For the purpose of this paper, analysis is done based on only the first Move i.e. establishing a territory.

Methodology

Context

The genre selected to be analysed in this study was from linguistics discipline. The research was conducted based on assignments written by MA in ELT students at the Centre of Applied Linguistics (CAL) of the University of Warwick, UK. At CAL, under six postgraduate degree programmes, 24 study modules are conducted. Various types of assignments are given in each of these modules, and in 23 modules, written essays are considered the main mode of assessments. The maximum word limit of these essays is 2000 to 3000 words according to the course credits of the module. For the purpose of this study, essays written in *ET965 Issues and Research in ELT of MA in ELT* in 2015 module were selected. The 19 essays used in this study have received more than 50 marks (pass) and thus considered suitable for the study.

Analysis

The essays were first analysed to identify if they contained an introduction and the space devoted to the introduction if available. Then the introductions were analysed based on the sentences to identify the occurrence of CARS' first move: *Establishing a territory*. If it was noticed, further analysis was done to find out whether the Steps of the Move were available.

Results

Availability of an introduction

All the essays contain an introduction and out of them, 17 have labelled it. Out of the labelled essays, 16 have labelled it as 'Introduction' and the remaining one has the title 'Teaching Context' instead of 'Introduction.' The mean word count of the introduction of this corpus is 278.52.

Moves and steps

The first Move of the CARS: *Establishing a Territory* has three Steps, and Table 1 shows the Steps contained in the introductions of the nineteen essays. The three Steps are shown in the S1 (Claiming centrality), S2 (Making topic generalisation) and S3 (Reviewing items of previous research) columns respectively, and the essay codes are shown in nineteen rows. If a step occurs in the introduction, it is indicated with 'yes' in the relevant box. Accordingly, 13 introductions have the first Step of Move 1. Nine introductions have Step 2, and 14 introductions

have Step 3. Essays B, L, N and S contain all three steps of

Table (Essay code — occurrence marked with 1):

Essay code	S1	S2	S3
A		1	
B	1	1	1
C		1	1
D			1
E	1		
F	1		1
G	1	1	
H	1		
I		1	1
J	1		1
K	1		1

Table (No / Essay — yes/no, with numeric values):

No	Essay	S1	S2	S3
1	A	no	yes	no
2	B	1 yes	1 yes	2 yes
3	C	0 no	1 yes	7 yes
4	D	2 no	1 no	2 yes
5	E	2 yes	no	2 no
6	F	1 yes	no	1 yes
7	G	yes	yes	1 no
8	H	yes	1 no	no
9	I	1 no	1 yes	3 yes
10	J	yes	no	yes
11	K	yes	no	yes
12	L	yes	yes	yes
13	M	yes	no	yes
14	N	yes	yes	yes
15	O	yes	no	yes
16	P	yes	no	yes
17	Q	no	no	yes
18	R	no	yes	no
19	S	yes	yes	yes
Total		14 / 49	10	25

Move 1. Essays A, D, E, H, Q and R contain only one step.

Table 1: Occurrence of steps in Move 1

Table 2 presents the number of Steps occurred in each introduction of the 19 essays. Accordingly, Step 3 of M1 has the highest number of occurrences (25).

Table 2: Number of occurrence of Steps

Sentences

In the 19 introductions, 87 sentences occurred in M1 total. Among them, 35 were S1, 15 were S2 and 37 were S3.

Discussion

Step 1 Move 1

Swales (1990, p.144) elaborates the specific functions of Step 1 of Move 1 as "Claiming Centrality' which is maintained based on "claim[ing] [an] interest or importance," referring to "classic, central character of the issue" or presenting a claim based on prominent findings.

He further explains that Step 1 of Move 1 occurs in many academic disciplines, but in some academic fields such as "Physical Sciences", Step 1 is marginalized. In this study, Step 1 of Move 1 occurs in 12 essays out of the 19 essays. Therefore, the percentage of the occurrence of Step 1 of Move 1 is 63.16%. Further, 35 sentences in total are used in Step 1 of the Move 1 in the 19 introductions. Compared to the overall 186 sentences of the 19 introductions, the percentage of sentences occur in Step 1 of Move 1 is 18.81%, which is the second highest percentage of sentences for a Step. This finding reveals that students' ability to claim centrality in the introduction is a prominent feature in this academic discipline.

Considering the two definitions of EAP and ESP provided in the literature review, the ability to claiming centrality can be identified as an EAP feature because it is relevant to many academic disciplines. However, the ability to select appropriate theoretical explanations from the available literature in the particular discipline in order to claim centrality can be identified as an ESP feature. For example, in this essay, how an ELT issue is created, and on what basis ELT issues are created should be analysed based on the accepted norms of the ELT discourse community. Moreover, the terminology should be discipline specific to address the ELT discourse community to achieve the communicative purpose: claiming centrality. Thus, both EAP and ESP features can be observed in these introductions when claiming centrality.

Step 2 Move 1

Swales (1990, pp.146-148) shows that Step 2 of Move 1 presents a "general statement" without being bias to any theory or practice since its function is to make the topic generalized. Hence, accordingly to Swales (1990, p.146), Step 2 of Move 1 consists of statements of general facts based on "knowledge, practice or phenomena," and these statements "express in general terms the current state of the art – of knowledge, of technique … of current requirements for further progress." Moreover, Swales (1990, pp. 146-147) emphasizes that Step 2 of Move 1 shows "strong tendency for Phenomena" to generalize the topic in order to accomplish the Move 1 objective: *establishing a territory*. Research findings of this study show that Step 2 of Move 1 occurs in 9 essays out of the 19 essays, and the percentage of occurrence of Step 2 of Move 1 in the introductions of the corpus is 47.37%. Furthermore, 15 sentences are utilized for Step 2 of Move 1 of the 19 introductions with a percentage of 8.06%.

The data analysis shows that the 15 sentences in Step 2 of Move 1 express general statements constructed based on claims of the authors' experience, common beliefs or some phenomena. Following two examples show these features. First sentence explains the effectiveness of collaborative action researches based on solving problems and encouraging the progress of professional

practice. Any scientific proofs on how collaborative researches achieve these statuses is not given, but only author's view is presented. Second sentence contains a phenomenon as *"… learner autonomy is an influential factor..."* Further, the phenomenon is justified by creating a rationale which is not developed based on objective description. The rationale may be based on previous knowledge or what author learnt in practice.

> a. *Collaborative action research works as an effective approach not only to solve practical teaching problems but also to promote in-service teachers' personal and professional development worldwide*. (Essay A)

> b. *In an EFL context, learner autonomy is an influential factor because students do not have enough opportunity to encounter authentic English communication outside the classroom…* (Essay B)

The analysis shows that Step 2 of the Move 1 is mainly based on phenomena or general statements to make the topic generalized. Explaining a phenomenon of general statements based on common knowledge of the academic discipline is relevant to every academic discipline; therefore, generalizing a topic should be more relevant to EAP rather than ESP. However, relating it to the specific discipline and using discipline specific terminology can be features of ESP.

Step 3 Move 1

Research findings of this study shows that Step 3 of Move 1 occurs in 14 essays out of the 19 essays, and the percentage of occurrence is 73.68%. Furthermore, 37 sentences are used for this Step and percentage of sentences is 19.89%. This shows a higher occurrence of this Step in the corpus.

Function of Step 3 of Move 1 is "reviewing items of previous research". Swales (1990, pp. 148-154) explains that Step 3 of Move 1 is for sharing information related to other researches focusing on …*who has found what…* This step has a higher level of occurrence across many academic disciplines. Therefore, many relevant skills and appropriate knowledge are required to successfully develop sentences relevant Step 3 of Move 1 in any academic article. Thus, this Step contains EAP features. Swales (1990) discusses some salient features identified in this Step: one of such features is the tenses used in in-text citations. In-text citations are practiced in many academic disciplines; therefore, how English language features are used in proper in-text citations based on the accepted referencing system is directly relevant to EAP.

Although EAP is involved in dealing with the linguistic mechanisms of referencing, ESP aspects are also involved in this Step. For example, identifying specific aspects of the previous researches relevant to ELT in these essays is based on subject specific knowledge, and only English language skills accepted by the ELT discourse community should be utilized to identify the relevant features of the previous researches. In this regard, relevant terminology and the subject specific practices are also crucial. Therefore, proficiency in ESP relevant to ELT is required to develop appropriate sentences to review previous research.

Conclusion

The study discussed in this dissertation attempted to analyse the specific features in postgraduate essay introductions in the study module *ET 965 Issues and Research in ELT of MA in ELT* at *Warwick University*. In order to analyse the introductions, Swales' (1990) CARS model was used although the model was original proposed to be used to analyse research articles.

The study findings revealed that the majority of the essays have introductions and the first move of the CARS: *Establishing a territory* occurs in all the essays in the corpus. The findings also indicate that Step 3 is the most prominent steep in the move one. That indicates "reviewing items of previous research" more important in essay writing of the selected academic discipline. .

The study also reveals that the Steps that occurred most have both EAP and ESP features and thus the students in this module should have both EAP and ESP skills in order to write successful essays in this study module. In particular, ESP skills such as selecting appropriate literature from the available literature in the specific discipline, identifying trends and issues in the particular field and the ability to use technical jargon in writing are some of the ESP skills that have been observed in these introductions. Summarising, topic generalisation, in-text citations and counter claiming are some of the EAP features observed in the corpus. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on both EAP and ESP features when designing pre-sessional and/or in-sessional courses for students who are going to take this linguistic module.

The study has also several limitations. One is that the corpus is small and thus more research with more samples may be necessary to generalise the results obtained in this study. Moreover, statistical analysis may be necessary in order to come to conclusions based on the data obtained. This study only analysed the introductions of the essays in the corpus and thus the findings may be insufficient to come to a conclusion on what EAP and ESP features are prominent in essays in this particular module. In depth analysis of the other sections of the essays is necessary to identify the other features.

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