

The Contrastive Move Analysis: An Investigation of Persian and English Research Articles' Abstract and Introduction Parts

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Abstract: *The study of the generic and rhetorical structure of the research article genres and sub-genres is of crucial importance in academic writing investigations. While the majority of such studies have mostly focused on articles written in English, the analysis of the 'moves' in other languages might shed some light on cultural and linguistic variations in functional levels. The present study investigated ten Persian and English Linguistics articles in terms of their moves in abstract and introduction parts. Analysis was conducted by incorporating Hyland's (2000) Information-Purpose-Methods-Products-Conclusion (IPuMPrC) model and Swales' (1990) the Create-A-Research-Space model (CARS) for abstract and introduction parts, respectively. Findings revealed that while the moves mentioned by Hyland (2000) and others are totally typical to English research articles, some significant variations exist in Persian articles.*

Keywords: *contrastive move analysis; linguistics; genre; research articles; abstract and introduction parts*

1. Introduction

Over the recent years, a huge body of studies has been carried out on Research Articles (RA) and more specifically, on their structure, social construction, historical evolution and etc. A number of these studies have dealt with the overall organization of various parts of the research article, such as the abstracts (e.g., Salager-Meyer, 1992), the introduction (e.g., Swales, 1981, 1990; Swales & Najjar, 1987), the result section (Thompson, 1993), discussion (Hopkins & Dudley-Evans, 1988). Various lexico-grammatical features of the research article, ranging from tense choice to citation practices, have also been investigated. The social construction of this genre (Myers, 1990) and the historical development of the research article (Salager-Meyer, 1999) have been studied as well. In academic prose, abstracts, "a part-genre of the RA" (Swales & Feak, 2009) have become an essential and inalienable part of research articles. Almost every scholarly journal, written either in English or in other languages, would require an abstract to be submitted along with the original research article (Marti, 2003). Abstracts have become a gateway into the research literature (Hartley & Benjamin, 1998) and are a useful tool of mastering and managing the ever increasing information flow in the scientific community (Ventola, 1994). The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) defines abstract as follows: "[it] is an abbreviated, accurate representation of the contents of a document, preferably prepared by its author(s) for publication with it" (Lorés, 2004: 281). This is especially true in today's busy information world. Nowadays, more and more research articles are accompanied by an informative abstract. Previous studies of research article abstracts have covered several different disciplines, such as medicine, psychology, and applied linguistics, and have mainly focused on two dimensions of abstracts: *the rhetorical organization* or *the move structure* (e.g., Cross & Oppenheim, 2006; Lau, 2004; Santos, 1996) and *the linguistic realizations of the moves* (e.g., Busch-Lauer, 1995; Pho, 2008).

Introduction, as one of the most researched sections of the RAs, has started to attract scholarly attention since Swales' (1981, 1990) work on the move structure of RA introductions, and since then the proposed

CARS model (Create-A-Research-Space) has been applied to other sets of texts. In 1990, Swales revised his previous four-move structure to a three-move pattern, called the CARS model: 1. Establishing a territory, 2. Establishing a niche, and 3. Occupying the niche. The CARS model has influenced numerous later studies on the structure of the introduction (Bhatia, 1997; Samraj, 2002, 2005). As Swales (2004) said, "the basically three-part model for English language introductions in many leading journals is or has become prototypical" (p. 226). The cyclical nature of introductions, the use of references in introductions, the investigation of texts written in different languages and cultures using Swales' model (e.g., Fredrickson & Swales, 1994), the analysis of citation practices of 'expert' writers (e.g., Pickard, 1995), the investigation of citation practices in academic texts (e.g., Thompson, 2000), extending Swales' division of citation forms (e.g., Thompson & Tribble, 2001), and the investigation of RA introductions from two disciplines (e.g., Samraj, 2002, 2005) are among various studies conducted on the RA introduction. In spite of such studies in academic writing, there has been less research on analysis of two types of sub-genres, namely, abstract and introduction parts, written in two different languages of Persian and English, in terms of the moves in each language's articles. Moreover, although several studies have analyzed research article abstracts and introductions, only a few studies have focused on articles in *linguistics* (e.g., Lorés, 2004; Pho, 2008; Santos, 1996). Hence, the question probed in the present study was whether there was any difference in the use of functional moves in sub-genres (i.e. abstracts and introductions) of theoretical linguistics articles written in Persian and English.

2. Theoretical Terms and Background

2.1. Concept of Genre

"The past decade or so has seen increasing attention given to the notion of genre and its application in language teaching and learning" (Hyland, 2004: 303). A genre has been defined by Swales and Feak (2009) as "a type of text or discourse designed to achieve a set of communicative purposes" (p. 1).

Scholars usually try three different approaches to genres: New Rhetoric approach, the ESP (English as Specific Purpose) approach, and Systemic Functional Linguistics (Hyland, 2003). In the New Rhetoric approach, Halliday (1994) develops classroom perspectives on the genre based the theory of systemic functional linguistics. He focuses on social actions rather than form itself, which is a different feature from systemic functional approach. He also argues that genres are resources for getting things done, and people all have a repertoire of appropriate responses. The New Rhetoric school puts less emphasis on the form of discourse and more emphasis on the action which is used to accomplish its purposes, seeking to establish the connections between genres and repeated situations and to identify the way genre is seen as recurrent rhetorical actions (Hyland, 2002). The ESP scholars define genre as a class of communicative events such as a university lecture, or an academic essay (Paltridge, 2001). They also add that the events are linked by shared purposes recognized by the members of a particular community and that the purposes are the rationale of the genre. This point of view is based on Swales' work (1990) on the discourse structures and linguistic features of scientific reports.

In Systemic Functional Linguistics, a genre is more often defined as a kind of text with related form, function and context, such as a description, procedure, or exposition (Paltridge, 2001). In the view of Systemic Functional Linguistics, a genre involves the interactions of participants using language in a conventional, step-wise structure (Hyland, 2002). Thus, there are different views on how to define and identify a genre. Some hold that a genre can be identified by the examination of textual structures alone, and others present the view that genre identification requires a more complex perspective on the notion of genre. The broadest of these views takes the position that several aspects contribute to the identification of a communicative event as an instance of a particular genre and that this cannot necessarily be done with reference to text structure alone (Paltridge, 2001).

Swales (1990) states that a genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style. Bhatia (1993) asserts that a genre is a recognizable communicative event characterized by a set of communicative purpose(s) identified and mutually understood by the members of the professional or academic community in which it regularly occurs. Most often it is highly structured and conventionalized with constraints on allowable contributions in terms of their intent, positioning, form, and functional value. He focuses on discourse within the academic community and on the genre characteristics, conventions and constraints that are recognized and understood by its professional members.

2.2. *Move and Move Analysis*

According to Samraj (2005), most of the studies in genre analysis have focused on single genres and not on the relation among them. On the other hand, each 'macro genre' can be divided to some sub-genres comprising a genre set. In other words, in the context of research articles, which can be viewed as a macro-genre, there are some sub-genres like abstract, introduction, literature review, method, conclusion, etc parts that are observable in most internationally acclaimed research articles. Accordingly, each sub-genre is believed to be made of some functional moves revealing the purpose behind the linguistic expressions written in that part. Richard and Schmidt (2002) define *move* as "a unit of discourse which may be smaller than an utterance" (p. 344). Therefore, they are functional units that are realized through the text.

Move analysis has also been employed in Contrastive Rhetoric (CR), studying cultural variation in discourse structure. Kaplan stated, "the cultural background of the author might lead to variation of the rhetorical structures of texts, and that such variation should be considered in ESL teaching programs" (as cited in Li, 2011: 2). Considering the variations of RA structures among languages, researchers who wish to succeed through publication in the international community will need to acquire awareness of cross-linguistic differences in text structures. With the growing internationalization of the academic community, more and more non-native speakers (NNS) of English want to develop awareness and mastery over the writing conventions of the Anglo-American academic community in order to acquire international recognition. Due to this fact, in the majority of cross-linguistic analyses of the RA structure, English RAs have always been compared with RAs in other languages. Researchers who study the rhetorical patterns of 'RA' abstracts often use *move* as the basic unit when conducting analysis. The analysis by *move* is also called that of information structure. Santos (1996) gave a clear definition of *move* after Swales (1990) that "As genres are purposed, staged activities, the *move* was chosen as the unit of analysis. A *move* is to be considered as a genre stage which has a particular, minor communicative purpose to fulfill, which in turn serves the major communicative purpose of the genre" (p. 485).

2.3. *Previous Studies*

In addition to *move analysis*, other features of abstracts in RAs in several disciplines, including both hard and soft fields, have been examined. Some analyzed rhetorical structures of abstracts: for example, Lau (2004) conducted a study using the corpus in the discipline of life science; Santos (1996) conducted analysis using a corpus in applied linguistics. Others investigated verb-tense and modality used in three types of English medical journal abstracts. Still others analyzed the rhetorical organization and thematic structures of journal articles abstracts in linguistics. Lau (2004) compared RA abstracts written by 50 Taiwanese Ph.D. students and those written by 30 foreign scholars in academic published journal papers of life science in an attempt to show factors and beliefs that might affect structural patterns of academic abstracts. He used the abstract structural patterns proposed by Hyland (2000)—Introduction, Purpose, Method, Product, and Conclusion for

the analysis of his corpora, substituting Result for Product used by Swales. After manual coding and analysis of the 80 abstracts, results show that abstracts written by foreign scholars contain the assumed five moves, with the exception of Method. Student abstracts do not contain all the five moves, and the percentage of those with a five comprehensive move structure is relatively low compared with those of foreign scholars. Three representative types in student abstracts were found: (a) BPuRC (B stands for background), (b) BRC, and (c) RC. Lau gave three reasons for the findings of student abstracts: academic immaturity, linguistic inadequacy, or word limit set for abstracts. He suggests the need to familiarize our graduate students with various structural patterns. As for pedagogical implications, the five-move structural patterns and the problematization process (Situation, Problem, Response, and Evaluation) can be useful in the teaching of academic English.

Santos (1996) examined the moves structures of applied linguistics. He took a close look at the features that constitute 94 published RA abstracts at the macro-level of textual organization and content as well as at the micro-level of textual analysis taken from journals in the field of applied linguistics. Santos then raised a number of issues based on the results of his study. First, there is an apparent mismatch between recommendations in the technical writing textbooks and the way writers compose their articles. Second, the proposed schematic pattern he used can be used as a pedagogic tool. Lastly, Santos expressed the concern of the genre-specific conventions governing abstracts. Specifically, three major genre-specific features are: the size of textual space allocated for each move (move balance), the blending of moves into the same statement (move embedding), and the reversed sequence of moves (move reversal), might vary in different disciplines (p. 497).

Similarly, Salager-Meyer (1992) conducted text-type and move analyses of verb tense and modality distributions in English medical article abstracts. He aimed to find out how finite verb tenses and modals were distributed across the different moves in abstracts of Medical English (ME) scholarly papers and across different ME text types of all papers in his analysis. 84 abstracts of ME scholarly papers were collected for analysis. Salager-Meyer concluded that a close relationship between the rhetorical function of each abstract move and the use of verb tenses and modality has. Further, the communicative function of each ME text type also determines the use of verb tenses in research papers. Lastly, it reaffirms the relationship between suggestive discourse and the use of modality (or hedging), which reflects a limitation of claims and helps writers move their findings away from the fact-like status. As for teaching implications, Salager-Meyer (1992) suggested that when teaching verb tenses to scientists for reading or writing purposes, it is crucial to point out their communicative purpose in the different rhetorical divisions of ME abstracts and in the different ME text types. Lores (2004) analyzed the rhetorical organization and thematic structure of 36 research article abstracts in applied linguistics. It was found that the rhetorical organization analysis showed that the indicative type of abstracts followed the CARS (Swales 1990) structure other than the traditional IMRD structure. Also, the finding in this study confirmed with previous ones that the two main types of thematic pattern (simple linear and constant) are often combined in RA abstracts.

Hyland (2004) in his study of the generic structure of dissertation acknowledgements mentions about the neglect of acknowledgement parts in such analyses. He identifies 3 macro moves, namely reflecting, thanking and announcing moves. In reflecting move, the author gives his introspective comment on the writer's research experience; this macro move does not have any sub-move. On the other hand, 'thanking' move has 4 sub-moves, namely presenting participants, thanking for academic assistance, thanking for resources, and thanking for moral support. In the 'presenting participants' sub-move, the author introduces those to be thanked; in 'thanking for academic assistance' the authors thanks for intellectual support, ideas, analyses feedback and etc; in 'thanking for resource', the writer thanks for data access and clerical, technical and financial support; in the last sub-move, 'thanking for moral support', the author gives his gratitude for encouragement, friendship, sympathy and patience. The last macro move is 'announcing' move in which the writer accepts the responsibility of the study and states inspiration. This macro move in turn is divided into 2 sub-moves, namely 'accepting responsibility' and 'dedicating the thesis'. In the former, the author gives

assertion of authorial responsibility for possible flaws and errors, and in the latter he gives a formally dedicated thesis to individual(s).

Ding (2007) in another study analyzed the moves in applications essays to medical and dental schools. He also mentions that contrary to the significant role of personal statements in graduate school application, little research has been done on its functional features and little instruction has been given about it in academic writing courses. He therefore conducted a multi-level discourse analysis on a corpus of 30 medical/dental school application letters, using both a 'hand-tagged' move analysis and a computerized analysis of lexical features of texts. He finally identified five recurrent moves, namely explaining the reason to pursue the proposed study, establishing credentials related to the fields of medicine/dentistry, discussing relevant life experience, stating future career goals, and describing personality.

Despite the bulk of research conducted into the analysis of research article genres and sub-genres rhetorical structure and moves, most of such researches are conducted with the focus on articles written in English, whether by natives or non-natives. This was the reason for the present study to address the inter-linguistic difference in terms of the moves in Persian and English languages. Investigating the contrasts and similarities in two languages' articles, may help Iranian students to be familiar with the structure of the same-filed research articles in English as an international language. Hence, academic writing needs to be explicitly taught to those who want to participate in the academic circle. From the results of her lexical bundle study, Cortes (2004) points out that simple exposure to research articles in one's field does not guarantee acquisition of the writing convention; thus helping students 'notice' and become aware of the different contexts and discourse functions in academic disciplines is an important task for teachers.

3. Procedure and the Corpus

Having surfed the net, the researchers shared the list of related research articles with an outside expert and the preliminary corpus (consisting of 13 RAs) was drawn from a range of articles refereed by the expert to be central in the intended discipline (theoretical linguistics). The corpus was restricted to a period of 5 years (2003-2008) to control for potential rapid changes within the discipline. The final corpus, 10 RAs (5 for each language), was selected based on the importance and reputation of the journals and the extent to which the journals were research-oriented. Moreover, to qualify for the final corpus, all the RAs had to report original research. Furthermore, due to the fact that different disciplines may have different conventions to write abstracts and introductions, and in order to present a more detailed analysis, the present study examined 10 theoretical linguistics articles' abstracts and introductions from the dimension of move structure.

As Table 1 shows, the five English research articles were chosen from international journal of linguistics. To recap, assuming that the type of journal might have a bearing in text organization, and to make the analysis more reliable, only articles published in the international journal of linguistics were chosen and included in the study.

Table 1. Five English Research Articles Selected from International Journal of Linguistics

No.	Articles
1	ZHIMING, B. (2005). <i>The aspectual system of Singapore English and the systemic substrates explanation</i> . J. Linguistics 41, 237-267.
2	ASUDEH, A. (2005). <i>Control and semantic resource sensitivity</i> . J. Linguistics 41, 465-511.
3	HENGEVELD, K. (2004). <i>Parts-of-speech systems and word order</i> . J. Linguistics 40, 527-570.
4	GIEGERICH, H. J. (2005). <i>Associative adjectives in English and the lexicon-syntax interface</i> . J. Linguistics 41, 571-591
5	SILVERMAN, D. (2003). <i>On the rarity of pre-aspirated stops</i> . J. Linguistics 39, 575-598.

Moreover, the five Persian research articles, two from *Pazand Linguistic Journal*, and three from *Journal of Language and Linguistics*, were chosen from two national journal articles (see Table 2).

Table 2. Five Persian Research Articles Selected from Pazand Linguistic Journal

Articles	No.
میرعمادی، ع و محیدی، س. (86). تحلیل معنایی واژگان مرکب مفعولی در زبان فارسی. مجله زبان و زبانشناسی: سال سوم، شماره اول. مجله انجمن زبانشناسی ایران.	1
آقاگل زاده، ف و غیاثیان، م. (86). رویکرد غالب در تحلیل گفتمان انتقادی. مجله زبان و زبانشناسی: سال سوم، شماره اول. مجله انجمن زبانشناسی ایران.	2
زعفرانلو کامبوزیا، ع و شعبانی، م. (86). برخی از فرایندهای واجی در گیش گیلکی رودسر. مجله زبان و زبانشناسی: سال سوم، شماره اول. مجله انجمن زبانشناسی ایران.	3
ساسانی، ف. (87). شناخت زبان بنیاد در زبانشناسی نقشگرا و شناخت مفهوم بنیاد در زبانشناسی شناختی. فصلنامه پازند، نشریه علمی زبان: سال چهارم-شماره دوازدهم، بهار 87.	4
گلفام، ا و ممسنی، ش. (87). بررسی راهبردهای شناختی استعاره و کنایه تصویری در اصطلاحات حاوی اعضای بدن. فصلنامه پازند، نشریه علمی زبان: سال چهارم-شماره دوازدهم، بهار 87.	5

In order to probe the difference between Persian and English article journals of theoretical linguistics in terms of the functional moves, the abstract and introduction parts of the five intended articles in each language were compared based on Hyland's (2000) Information-Purpose-Methods-Products-Conclusion (IPuMPrC) model and Swales' (1990) the Create -A- Research- Space model (CARS) for each part, respectively (Tables 3 and 4).

Table 3. The Number of Moves in Abstracts

Articles Functional Moves	Number of Persian Articles Having This Move	Number of English Articles Having This Move
Introduction: (Statement of the Knowledge)	1	4
(Statement of the Problem)	-	1
Purpose of the Study	5	5
Method	3	2
Results	4	5
Conclusions	1	4

Table 4. The Number of Moves in Introductions

Article Journals Functional Moves	Number of Persian Articles Having This Move	Number of English Articles Having This Move
1. Establishing a Territory		
A: Claiming Centrality:	-	1
B: Making Topic Generalization:	3	4
C: Reviewing Previous Research:	-	-
2. Establishing a Niche		
A: Counter Claiming:	-	3
B: Indicating a Gap:	-	2
C: Question Raising:	1	-
D: Continuing a Tradition:	1	-
3. Occupying a Niche		
A: Outlining Purposes:	3	4*
B: Announcing Present Research:	-	4*
C: Announcing Principal Findings:	-	5*
D: Indicating R Structure:	2	4*

*Each introduction has three or all four sub-moves in the 'Occupying the Niche' move. This case was not observed in Persian articles.

4. Results

Results of the present study revealed that there are noticeable differences in the frequency of moves in Persian and English articles' Abstract and Introduction parts. The 'purpose of the study' move in Persian articles was found present in all 5 research articles, then 'results' move was found prominent in frequency with 4 articles having it. 'Introduction' move was only observed in one Persian article. Regarding English articles, the 3 moves of 'Introduction, Purpose, and Results' were used in all articles. 4 English articles out of five also had the 'conclusion' move. To sum up, the results showed the significance of the 'purpose of the study' move in both Persian and English articles. The 'results' section was also prominent in both Persian and English abstracts. But 'conclusion' move was found prominent only in English but not in Persian (only one out five articles had this move in Persian).

Dealing with introduction part, significant difference was observed. 3 Persian articles' introductions met the 'establishing a territory' move, 2 met 'establishing a niche move', and 5 met 'occupying the niche' move. But it was found interesting that all English articles met all these three 'macro moves' and variations were only observable in the 'sub-moves' as shown in Table 4.

Another finding was that most of the English introductions included most of the sub-moves of the 'occupying the niche', but each Persian introductions met only one of these sub-moves. Therefore, the results of the comparison and contrast showed that those articles written in Persian and those counterparts written in English are significantly different in terms of the functional moves in their abstract and introduction parts.

5. Conclusions

The findings of the current study revealed that although moves are functional units which show the purpose

of linguistic expression used in academic settings, there might be some linguistic-cultural differences between the uses of the moves in research articles. It is safe to assume that the English research articles conform mostly to the moves identified by the experts due to the fact that their studies solely have focused on genres and sub-genres in English language. But other languages, like Persian here, might incorporate (to some degrees) different generic structures. As the current study showed, Persian articles, while having the overall structure like English articles, contrary to English articles make use of more 'general' macro moves and less specific detailed sub-moves. This genre-based study offers, to linguistic researchers as well as EFL/ESP teachers, insights which can be used in instruction. Foreign language teaching can benefit from it, mainly because it is an authentic sample of language in use. However, one important point has to be made in order to avoid an over-use or misuse of it. Genre approach is a useful tool if one is looking for a holistic teaching methodology but it has to be understood as a clarificatory description rather than prescription (Swales, 1990; Bhatia, 1993). The findings of this research can be applied in English for Academic Purposes courses for non-native English-speaking researchers or graduate students to contribute to the development of learners' awareness of the structures and grammatical forms that typify the discursal patterns of the RAs. Learners in such courses may profit from a pedagogical approach that raises their awareness about the structures that exhibit syntactic-semantic distance. This can be achieved through activities that require, within a discursal framework, discriminating and judgment through alternative evidence provided on the basis of appropriacy. Thus congruent and incongruent structures can be observed or contrasted across the introductions of the RAs or contrasted with other scientific genres, allowing the learner to judge on the basis of appropriacy rather than on the basis of grammaticality.

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