

Rethinking PhD Thesis Introductions from Higher Education Perspective: Using the CARS Model

Nasreen Hussain^{1}, Mahwish B. Hussain², Muhammad Asif Khan³*

¹Nasreen Hussain*, Department of Education, Institute of Business Management, Karachi, Pakistan. E-Mail: nasreenhuss@gmail.com

²Education Consultant, Karachi, Pakistan.

E-Mail: mahwishinamullah84@hotmail.com

³Department of Education, Institute of Business Management, Karachi, Pakistan. E-Mail: asif.khan@iobm.edu.pk

Abstract

This research study analyzed the Introduction chapters of PhD theses in education that were available on the Higher Education Commission (HEC). Pakistan repository website to find out the level of academic writing skills and organizational abilities of the scholars. Eight PhD theses in the field of education were chosen at random from Pakistan's three provinces and the capital city, and two supervisors were interviewed for triangulation. To give voice and meaning to the academic work, qualitative content-document analysis was used. Create a-Research-Space (CARS) framework developed by Swales (1990) was deployed as the basis of data analysis. Introduction chapters were examined in relation to the thesis as a whole to study the CARS moves and steps used by the scholars. In addition, two colleagues who were teaching at prestigious universities and also supervised PhD scholars were interviewed to verify and triangulate the trends that had emerged through the content analysis. The data show that the sparse moves and steps utilized in few of the eight theses have an impact on the quality of academic writing, thesis production, and on the worth of the research. The findings will assist supervisors as well as research students in the region to understand and implement suitable moves during the supervision process and engage in long-term academic writing.

Keywords: Academic writing, CARS model, higher education, introduction chapter, PhD thesis

Introduction

Halliday and Hassan (1976) in their seminal work on the use of cohesion in English opine that academic English is written in a particular form and refers to the prescribed style of expression, which includes formal tone, clear focus on the issue, use of third person, preciseness, and conciseness by using specialized vocabulary. This type of writing is linear and develops from a central point or theme incorporating facts and research to inform the readers regarding the topic under discussion. Several research on PhD theses produced in English have revealed how they are organized in general (Paltridge, 2002; Thompson, 2001), specific features, such as intertextual discourse (Bunton, 1999), position (Charles, 2003), modal verbs and in-text citation practices (Thompson, 2001, 2005), and other academic writing features.

Written academic discourse is inextricably tied to the dissemination and exchange of knowledge and information among individuals, groups, and members of the discourse community across institutions. The process of distributing knowledge within academic disciplines is hampered by linguistic and cultural disparities. This noteworthy circumstance has piqued the interest of many linguists, educators, and researchers from various disciplines to undertake intercultural study on written academic speech.

Learners at the university level require a heavy prescription of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) for their assignments and other academic related work; however, research illustrates that non-native speakers (NNS) need concentrated help as they have deficient knowledge at discourse and linguistic level (Paltridge & Starfield, 2007) as compared to native speakers (NS). At the same time, it has also been proved that the experiences and challenges faced by NNS and NS are not similar (Flowerdew, 2000; Swales, 2004). Furthermore, problems are encountered in organization of ideas, arguments, and counter arguments at macro-level of the thesis and at surface-level, which include mechanics and grammar and cause problems for the students (Allison et al., 1998; Shehzad & Abbas, 2015). The division into two mutually exclusive opposed groups has been considered challenging indeed (Flowerdew, 2000; Kubota & Lehner, 2004; Swales, 2004); however, problems with organizing and presenting findings are almost at the same level (Mišak et al., 2005). Although different universities develop

handbooks and guidelines for their students and supervisors for assignments and thesis, the books do not include choices that the students can make and neither do the manuals provide rationale for using a particular style.

Situation in hand

Pakistan has a chequered history of education policies; budget, curriculum, teacher training, language of instruction, and governance. It is a country where students come to class with one or more languages before they are introduced to English; notwithstanding the fact that the class level of introducing English fluctuates from class 1 to 6 with the change of each government. Such uncertainties and irregularities build up the anxiety level of the students, who want to pursue higher education, but lack linguistic abilities and rhetorical and academic genres when writing term assignments based on research work or thesis. Shehzad and Abbas (2015) term this as an ‘imposter syndrome’ which leads to ‘writer’s block’. There is a general assumption from the faculty’s end that the students in the universities should write clearly and with precision on research related topics, forgetting that even though writing is the most focused skill, it is the least developed among students in Pakistan at all levels of education. Nevertheless, English language is consciously associated with academic and professional success for students in all fields at tertiary level. The Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan considering the in-house situation, has put in concerted energy to encourage quality and rigorous research by facilitating universities to increase the number of PhD candidates.

Purpose of the Study

What intrigued me to investigate the academic genre and rhetorical moves in theses was that the MPhil and PhD students who come to me for supervision although motivated, do not have the academic skills to use formal style of expression as well as devices or focus on the issues to put forth their ideas. Secondly, they lack the thought process to comprehensively state their objectives and use rhetorical strategies and other elements of academic writing to make their thesis a coherent piece of writing. In particular, there are no printed recommendations existing in a majority of the Pakistani universities for composing various researches, for

example, research articles, theses, and dissertations. (Shehzad & Abbas, 2016).

The discussion during the research consultations baffles my mind as the drafts are devoid of proper organization of genres and writing skills. Furthermore, writing a scientific work's opening is the most significant chapter in the thesis, and it has proven difficult for not only rookie authors and students, but also professionals as well as experienced authors (Gupta, as cited in Safnil, 2007). Flowerdew (1999) affirms that "The introduction chapter is challenging because it requires a persuasive style of writing in which the individual voice of the author(s) needs to come through" (p. 127). Swales and Feak (2012) strongly believe that in order to be able to write reader-friendly introductions, the students should engage in a broadly used organizational pattern, which is called rhetorical structure. These key issues propelled me to find out the reasons behind them. Swales (1990), Bhatia (1993), Connor and Mauranen (1999) and others in their studies have focused on the overall organization of genres by considering Create a Research Space (CARS) model moves, but a focused study on theses and theses introduction at PhD level has been limited.

Aim of the Study

The aim of this research study was to analyze the application of CARS model developed by Swales (1990), in the introduction chapters of eight PhD theses, selected from the official HEC website and to find out the academic/scientific writing and organizational skills used by the candidates. Chahal (2014) concedes that the CARS model has remained "The predetermined analytical tool in the examination of the introduction component of research articles" (p. 2). Golebiowski and Liddicoat (2002) maintain that CARS emerges as a central concept in Anglo-American academic writing. The model was created specifically for introductions, as this is the segment that is regarded as the most difficult (Flowerdew, 1999; Swales, 1990); it plays an important and significant role in showing the relevance of the research in hand to other research studies conducted in the same field; and illuminates the present research study in the knowledge base of the field (Loan & Pramoolsook, 2002). English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) writers as well as native writers are at the same wave

length. Paltridge and Starfield (2007) assert that “In fact it is the introduction that the writer makes claim for centrality or significance of the research in question and begins to outline the overall argument of the thesis” (p. 82).

Swales model (1990) has featured prominently to analyze the structure of research article introductions (Adnan, 2008; Kanoksilapatham, 2005; Shehzad, 2010); introductory section of conference presentations (Simpson & Swales, 2001); essays (Kusel, 1992); book reviews (Motta-Roth, 1998); different sections of theses at master’s level (Bhatia, 1993; Chen & Kuo, 2012; Samraj, 2008); MPhil theses (Shehzad, 2008, 2005; Shehzad & Abbas, 2015, 2016); PhD theses (Bunton, 2005; Kwan, 2006); and overall organization of genres (Connor & Mauranen, 1999; Swales, 1990), but a focused study on thesis introduction chapter has not been extensively explored globally and in Pakistan. Based on the 1990 model by Swales, an attempt was made to identify the research space that the writers had tried to allocate themselves through linguistic maneuvers to identify, review, and preview the content and the signals used for gap statements. The central question developed was: What structural elements of Swales (1990) CARS model can be applied to the organization of introduction chapters of PhD theses in the discipline of education, with special reference to Pakistan?

Review of Literature

The introduction of a research paper is the most critical and crucial segment in a thesis and is read with utmost care (Swales, 1990; Gupta, 1995) as it includes the purpose and summary of the thesis and therefore, takes a longer time to organize and write than the other chapters. It demands more preciseness in recognition of its importance in the thesis as it is upfront, which clearly states the problem and purpose of the research, research questions/hypotheses, and tells the readers what to expect in the thesis.

For the ESL writers, thesis writing issues may include inter alia attitudes to knowledge, values and culture, second-language academic writing, and identity. Students come from varied academic background where teaching and learning strategies differ at multiple levels of the study; thereby, affecting their understanding of the content and language.

The students on moving to tertiary level, shift from summarizing information to questioning, critiquing, judging, and synthesizing information; thus, generating novel knowledge and searching for new data and understanding (Jeyaraj, 2020).

Values and culture are attributes that the students should consider at the time of thesis writing. They should understand and realize to share the information that is important to their readers, display knowledge, highlight issues, draw boundaries that can be crossed, and the application factor (Kamler & Threadgold, 1997). Culture has its own unique stand when writing a literary academic piece (Loi & Evans, 2010) and contrastive rhetoric research compares academic writing patterns across languages and cultures, which has its origin in the work of Kaplan (1966). His research findings show that diverse languages and culture affect students' academic writing style. Kubota (1997) and Leki (1997) nullify the stance and debate that contrastive rhetoric culture tends to overgeneralize and oversimplify the role of cultural characteristics of writing style.

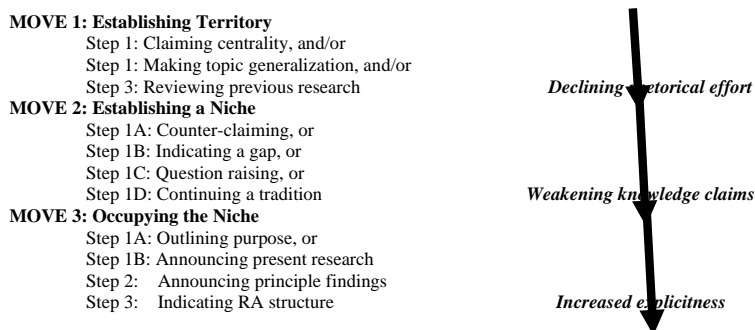
Theoretical Underpinning

The CARS (Create a Research Space) model by Swales (1990) was considered as the theoretical framework to identify moves and steps of the introductions from eight theses for this study. The model as a descriptive and analytical tool has gained world-wide acknowledgement since 1990s (Bunton 2002; Samraj 2002) and has been used extensively; validated and modified to analyze introductions for different genres. The Swales 1990 model is simple to understand and introduce to the students. It consists of three obligatory moves, which are broken down into optional steps for introduction chapters as given in Figure 1. Moreover, this model is flexible and accommodates evolving generic patterns and practices (Shehzad, 2005). This model was first proposed in 1981 to analyze moves and steps of research articles and later modified in 1990 and then in 2004. Bunton (2002) used Swales models to analyze generic moves for his study and added 10 new steps. In all, the moves remain the same, although the number of steps vary.

The model initiated a new concept of how the introduction for a research paper could be best structured and has since then become a capstone for the researchers. Golebiowski and Liddicoat (2002) endorse

that the model transpires as an important notion in a graphic form for English academic writing. This model has been used as an analytical tool to study the moves and step units in the Introduction sections of abstracts and articles to a large extent; however, its usage to analyze Introductions in thesis is limited. It should not be forgotten that the corpora for much of the study reports has been derived from the Western world, and has a comparatively weak presence in countries in the eastern hemisphere. This study has used theses at PhD level as the corpus to analyze the moves made in the Introduction chapters based on the CARS model by coding texts into moves and steps. It therefore, attempts to extend the discussion on the usefulness of the CARS model by applying it to analyze the data collected from the Introductory chapters of PhD theses in Pakistan.

Figure 1. Swales (1990), CARS model



As illustrated in Figure 1, the model suggests three obligatory moves, each entailing different optional and obligatory steps.; (a) establishing a territory-three steps, (b) establishing a niche-4 steps, and (c) occupying the niche-three steps for a recognizable text pattern to emerge.

Move 1 includes ‘Establishing a territory’ can be achieved through various topics selected for the research. It further defines the layout of the research territory by describing the situation and characteristics of the study area. This can be achieved by making use of various steps. Next follows Move 2, which is ‘Establishing a niche’ where the researchers present a gap by reviewing the literature, indicating how this can be filled in through justification and further investigation identified and discussed in Move 1. Research space is defined in terms

of the linguistic patterns embodied in the CARS model, that is, the expanse or breadth of the research territory negotiated, acknowledged or decreed through Move 2 and grounded in a depth of applicable items of previous research in Move 1. Move 2 also includes a mini critique (Swales, 2012) of the previous researches and points out the weaknesses and the new approach that the writer proposes to fill in the gap or extend the research further. Move 3 indicates the purpose of the research and how the niche or gap will be filled in by stating the purpose of the study, hypothesis, the research question and how the study will achieve its objectives as identified in Move 2. Establishing a niche is the most vital move where the need for the current research is indicated by linking it with the previous researches.

Methodology

The paper presents and discusses the findings of a small-scale qualitative research, deploying inductive exploratory case study approach. This is a precise procedure used to assess, uncover significance, achieve comprehension and advance empirical knowledge from printed and electronic documents (Cohen et al., 2018). The corpus was derived from HEC theses repository. The researcher randomly selected two theses each in the discipline of education from the provinces of Sindh, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and the Federal Capital City, Islamabad. Theses from the province of Baluchistan were not available on HEC website, thus the corpus for the study was drawn from eight PhD theses. Since the selection of the theses was done randomly, two theses were from private universities and the rest were from public sector universities; five were written by male and three by female PhD candidates and the submission years ranged from 2015 to 2020. The writers were kept anonymous for confidentiality. In addition, two supervisors were interviewed individually to cull first-hand information to find out the support given to the PhD scholars during their thesis writing process. This also enabled the researchers to validate and triangulate the findings.

The Procedure

CARS model (Swales, 1990) was used to analyze the eight Introductions taken from eight theses. The rationale behind using this model was due to its extensive applicability across academic genres in diverse linguistic

settings, for example, non-Anglophone academic background. Eight PhD theses written between 2015 to 2020 in the discipline of education were selected from HEC online repository. The identity of the writers and supervisors was kept confidential. The procedure followed for conventional content data analysis was as follows:

The procedure for data analysis was adopted from Santa (2015) in which the first step was to separate the introduction chapters from the eight theses that were randomly selected, cluster and number the sentences in these chapters in each move and step of the CARS model to arrive at an approximation of the number of moves and steps attempted by the authors.

Each thesis was first numbered and then categorized according to the year of publishing. Since the coding was done manually due to a small sample size, the researcher used colored highlighters to separate the moves and the steps to make meaning of them. These were then shared with the team of researchers to reconfirm the codings. Common words, phrases, and sentences that emerged to indicate the steps in each move were also identified. First these were clustered and included under each step of the three moves of the model. Then rows that corresponded with the moves and steps in CARS model, missing moves, and a summary of moves for each introduction was extracted and marked. Such analysis produces excerpts, quotations of entire passages, which are then organized into themes and categories before they are synthesized to make sense of the data. This procedure for document analysis is also recommended by Bowen (2009). To achieve rigor and trustworthiness of the study, two colleagues who were teaching at prestigious universities and also supervised PhD research scholars were interviewed to verify and triangulate the trends that had emerged through content analysis.

Findings and Discussion

Eight theses. When formal aspects are considered, some differences arise between the corpora. The introductions presented a great deal of variability as regards to the length. The introduction chapters ranged from 8 to 20 pages with an average of 2000 words in each introduction chapter. All eight chapters had sub headings and the number varied with the length of the chapter. GEÇİKLİ (2013) articulates that the number of moves and steps also depend on the length of the chapter. A template was designed to fill in the data for the number of

moves used in the eight theses (Figure 2). The findings of the study were done by considering the moves and steps deployed by the research scholars in the eight theses. Figure 2 gives an overall picture followed by findings and discussion

Figure 2
Frequency of Moves in each Thesis

Thesis #	Move 1	Move 2	Move 3	Total # of Moves
1	4	4	6	15
2	4	4	5	13
3	4	-	7	11
4	3	-	3	6
5	7	4	7	19
6	5	3	4	12
7	4	-	3	8
8	2	-	2	5
Total	33	15	37	89

One of the most striking features of the study was that all moves took a linear progression, which concurs with the study conducted by Loan and Pramoolsook (2014). It was worthy to note that the moves in all theses were not considered religiously, and neither were the steps followed, whereas Swale confirms moves to be obligatory, and the use of steps flexible. Moves 1 and 3 were observed in all introductions; Move 2 was observed in five out of eight theses. This is indicated in Figure 2 that all introductions did not conform strictly to M1-M2-M3 structure. A strong variation with regards to the sequencing, spiraling, cyclicling and embedding of moves were observed. The unexpected short length of the introduction chapters in the theses for this research was also responsible for the limited number of cyclical sequences and

embedding of such moves. The detailed observations are mirrored in Figure 2 as follows:

Figure 3

Move 1

	Thesis 1	Thesis 2	Thesis 3	Thesis 4	Thesis 5	Thesis 6	Thesis 7	Thesis 8
Step 1	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Step 2	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Step 3	√	√	×	×	√	√	×	×

Step¹ Claiming Centrality

Step² Making topic generalization

Step³ Reviewing previous research

Move 1. In this rhetorical move, the writers are required to relate the studies conducted previously to that of the present study. As mirrored in Figure 2, all eight theses started with Move 1, which is establishing territory, but these were marginal, as 3 writers failed to claim a point by referring them to the previous studies. This could have been due to the difficulty in choosing the research area and assessing the scope of the research zone. It was also observed that the steps of Move 1 were repeated to establish conformity of the scope of the thesis. In fact, the writers were on the look out to make their texts more stimulating, vivacious, and pertinent to the discipline (Farnia & Barati, 2017; Shehzad, 2006, as cited in Sheldon, 2011). A study conducted by Swale (1990) acknowledges that such signals are limited to Move 1, as the study proves from the below given excerpts:

Latest researches have shown a measurably substantial association between the behavior of the primary leadership and efficient schools (Hayat, et al., 2016)
Models of teaching (Jamil & Hamre, 2018) undertake goal line alignments along with brain-based learning approaches.

More statements that existed in Move 1 include:

Flowerdew (1999) established the importance of....

Recently, there has been a misconception among the Western researchers that....
The study of ... has been studied in depth

The above statements embrace centrality of the authors regarding the study, whether it is useful, redundant, interesting, reviewing of previous research and so on.

Figure 4
Move 2

	Thesis 1	Thesis 2	Thesis 3	Thesis 4	Thesis 5	Thesis 6	Thesis 7	Thesis 8
Step 1A	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Step 1B	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Step 1C	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Step 1D	√	×	×	√	√	×	×	√

Step^{1A} Counter claiming
Step^{1B} Indicating a gap
Step^{1C} Question raising
Step^{1D} Continuing a tradition

Move 2. Figure 2 shows limited moves in this category. Swales (2012) considers the second move, that is, Establishing a Niche functioning as a section having the mini critique. A marginal number of Move 2 indicates the low number of move instances (15), which may be due to the fact that the researchers failed to consider steps 1A, 1C, and 1 D as their reading was limited to identify the niche, gap or problem found in the previous researches. The authors of the theses may have found it difficult to understand the complicated structure of Introductions due to their rather low language proficiency and academic skills, as a result, their own study is presented in a less thorough manner (Gecikli, 2013). Another factor could be that the reading habits of the students are not developed right from the school level; secondly, due to limited availability of reading resources; and lastly, the grammar translation method used in the classroom prevents development of language skills (Koch & Spörer, 2017). Moreover, this method does not enable students to become

independent critical readers. Two candidates ignored Move 2 altogether, although Feak and Swales (2004) consider this move to serve the purpose of a hinge that joins Moves 1 with 3, that is, occupying the niche by linking it to the present research. This move also establishes the motivation level of the researchers to carry forward their study and fill in the gap. Swales (1990) identified few signals for this move, which were present in the eight theses, like:

Although the previous study suffers from....
Moreover, the controlled group could not catch up with the interpersonal skills of...

If noted carefully, the above examples include contrastive words to indicate a gap between the previous and the present studies. However, the eight theses included limited common signal words like moreover, although, but, and, also, etc.

Figure 5
Move 3

	Thesis 1	Thesis 2	Thesis 3	Thesis 4	Thesis 5	Thesis 6	Thesis 7	Thesis 8
Step 1A	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Step 1B	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Step 2	√	√	×	×	√	√	×	×
Step 3	√	√	√	×	×	√	×	√

Step ^{1A} Outlining purpose
Step ^{1B} Announcing present research
Step ² Announcing principle findings
Step ³ Indicating RA structure

Move 3. Move 3 in the study totaled to 37 in all eight theses, which was filling in the gap for the present study. This emerged very abruptly without laying a firm ground to identify the niche in the form of research objectives, research questions and hypotheses, although it was present in all 8 theses. Few examples from the theses are:

Taking into consideration the problem of the study, the following questions and hypotheses emerged:

The purpose of the study was to examine the perceptions of teachers and students of education department regarding student bullying and its repercussions on organizational politics.

Move 3 usually includes several important steps, like sharing the objectives of the study, announcing the purpose, and summarizing the introduction and method to be used. The eight theses had abrupt and blurred eruptions of such steps and summarizing the chapter was almost missing.

Supervisor Interviews

Since the theses were downloaded from the HEC repository, the authors as well as the supervisors were not only spread throughout the country, but contacting them was almost impossible due to missing contact information. To verify the findings, two outside supervisors were contacted to throw some light on the findings. Both experts reflected and opined that the interest spark is at a low ebb in both the supervisors and the scholars. Secondly, the supervisors stall to play multiple roles of a coach, teacher, friend, colleague, trainer, counselor, and a guide in combination or simultaneously, depending on the needs of the scholars (Carter & Kumar, 2017). However, due to time constraints and limited requisite skills, they fail to build trust and understanding with their research scholars. Thirdly, limited academic language skills of the supervisors and scholars put a further dent in the quality of theses. Devos, et al (2017) advocate that the process of guidance and mentorship is essential to assist students to develop writing skills in the completion process. The interviewees admitted that the above factors highly contributed to the attrition rate and untimely completion of the theses.

One supervisor claimed:

“The supervisors claim that they know everything-content, norms of academic writing, language, ec, but I think that we are assuming. The HEC gives us go ahead signal to supervise PhD scholars..., but no practical training is given. Supervision is a skill and all are not good at it, so....”

She added:

“Supervision time mostly is not officially allocated. Universities either pay extra or reduce a course. Remuneration is not worth mentioning...you know that and due to shortage of faculty, reduced course is impossible.”

Another supervisor, who was extremely upset with the attitude of the supervisors and scholars vehemently put forth:

“I wasn’t supported by my supervisor as such and had to take online academic courses. Like in Australia, where I went for my post-doc, all supervisors get a license to supervise and this is renewed annually-workshops are offered.”

“Both parties procrastinate and are silent negotiators and then we part our ways. Join Phd groups on Facebook to realize the problems that the scholars have to go through. Supervisors try to avoid confronting. This is good for all of us...hmmm... and the scholars’ motto that finished is better than perfect applies very comfortably.”

When asked about the mode of feedback techniques they use, a supervisor exclaimed:

“University policy states that it can be physical or online or hybrid, so this arrangement suits me, I fear to go through their work as I am sure that it would be...language coherence-flow of ideas are few elements that are hardly in sight.”

Another supervisor added:

“Just like the scholars, I procrastinate going through the draft thesis. I mean I sometimes...most of the times don’t have time. I think I am to be blamed as well.”

The above comments tally with the present research findings, in which

the moves as well as the steps were missing, which gave a disconnected and incoherent look to the eight theses. This may attribute to the frivolous attitude of the scholars. This results in delaying thesis completion unnecessarily, or producing a feeble and frail thesis, or leaving the program. Many university authorities play a very despicable and passive role and fail to control the quality as only the number of graduates passed annually really matters (Chahal, 2014). Language also plays a relatively important role in the quality of the introduction genre. They enter the university with a minimum language proficiency as L2 or L3 learners and appropriate language courses are not offered (Shehzad & Abbas, 2016). Research findings indicate that the scholars of the eight theses failed to comprehend the structures and stances of Introductions in Move 2, due to their academic writing skills.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study attempted to relay the importance of Introduction chapter in PhD genre and identify to what extent CARS model developed by Swales (1990) was adopted by the eight PhD scholars to display well-organized chapters for their theses in the discipline of education. The results proved that although the three moves of the model were considered to a large extent, the steps were not adhered to religiously due to the short length of the introduction. This corroborates with the findings of Abdulla (2016) and Fudhla, et al. (2014). The results of the document analysis also match with the interview findings, which reflect a huge communication gap between the two parties.

Although the corpora were limited for this particular study, it could be replicated for more valid and reliable findings by using different techniques and a larger sample size. Interviews with the research scholars and their supervisors could have opened new vistas in research findings. The innate needs of the students in terms of supervision and peer support, collaborative learning and workshops in the area of academic writing could benefit the scholars (Jamil & Hamre, 2018; Lee, 2017; Wilmot, 2018). Nonetheless, the findings of the present case study may broaden the perspectives of the research scholars as well as the supervisors to realize the importance of the use of academic genre in the Introduction chapters and the arrangement of content. It may also force them to develop deeper insights into the writing process in academic disciplines. The

findings will contribute to the genre of academic discourse particularly thesis writing; move analysis, authorial stance, and pedagogy. Academic support in the form of dedicated time and training are highly recommended. Davis et al (2016) endorse organizing doctoral writing retreat that could include specific skills development and how to establish a congenial relationship between the supervisors and the scholars. Although the findings of this small-scale case cannot be generalized, it is assumed that the results of the present case can provide useful information for similar situations and cases in other universities in the region and Pakistan.

References

- Abdullah, Suhaily. (2016). An analysis of cross-discipline research article introduction structures through a modified create-a-research-space (cars) model. *EFL Journal*, 1(1), 1-16.
DOI: [10.21462/eflj.v1i1.1](https://doi.org/10.21462/eflj.v1i1.1)
- Adnan, Z. (2009). Some potential problems for research articles written by Indonesian academics when submitted to international English language journals. *The Asian EFL Journal Quarterly*, 11(1), 107-125.
- Allison, D., Cooley, L., Lewkowicz, J., & Nunan, D. (1998). Dissertation writing in action: The development of a dissertation writing support program for ESL graduate research students. *English for Specific Purposes*, 17(2), 199-217.
- Bamgboe, A. (2001). World Englishes and globalization. *World Englishes*, 20(3), 357-363.
- Bhatia, V. K. (1993). *Analyzing genre: Language usage in the professional settings*. London: Longman.
- Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), 27-40.
<https://doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027>
- Bunton, D. (2002). Generic moves in Ph. D. Introduction. In J. Flowerdew (Ed.), *Academic discourse* (pp. 57-75). London: Pearson Education Limited.
- Carter, S., & Kumar, V. (2017). 'Ignoring me is part of learning': Supervisory feedback on doctoral writing. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 54(1), 68-75.
doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2015.1123104

- Chahal, D. (2014). Introductions in cultural studies: A genre analysis exploration of rhetorical structure. *The Journal of Teaching English for Specific and Academic Purposes*, 2(1), 1–20.
- Chen, T.Y., & Kuo, C.-H. (2012). A genre-based analysis of the information structure of master's theses in applied linguistics. *The Asian ESP Journal*, 8(1), 24-52.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). *The ethics of educational and social research*. London: Routledge.
- Connor, U., & Mauranen, A. (1999). Linguistic analysis of grant proposals: European Union research grants. *English for Specific Purposes*, 18(1), 47-62.
- Crookes, G. (1984). Towards a validated analysis of scientific text structure. University of Hawai'i Working Papers in *English as a Second Language* 3 (2).
- Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a global language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Crystal, D. (2006). English worldwide. In D. D. Hogg & M. A. Richard, *History of the English language* (pp. 420–439). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Davis, G., Wright, H., & Holley, D. (2016). Write away from it all! The value of running a writing retreat for doctoral students. *Practitioner Research in Higher Education*, 10(2), 54-66.
- Devos, C., Boudrenghien, G., Van der Linden, N., Azzi, A., Frenay, M., Galand, B., & Klein, O. (2017). Doctoral students' experiences leading to completion or attrition: A matter of sense, progress and distress. *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, 32(1), 61- 77.
DOI: [10.1007/s10212-016-0290-0](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10212-016-0290-0)
- Farnia, M., & Barati, S. (2017). Writing introduction sections of research articles in applied linguistics: Cross-linguistic study of native and non-native writers. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 7(2), 486-494. doi: [dx.doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v7i2.8357](https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v7i2.8357)
- Flowerdew, J. (1999). Problems in writing for scholarly publication in English: The case of Hong Kong. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 8(3), 243-264.

- Flowerdew, J. (2000). Discourse community, legitimate peripheral participation, and the nonnative-English-speaking scholar. *TESOL Quarterly*, 34(1), 127-150.
- Fudhla, N., Rozimlea, Y., & Ningsih, K. (2014). An analysis of students' research proposal introduction based on Cars Model at Stain Sjech M. Djamil Djambek Bukittinggi. *English Language Teaching (ELT)*, 2(2), 66-77.
- Geçiklî, M. (2013). A genre-analysis study on the rhetorical organization of English and Turkish PhD theses in the field of English language teaching. *International Journal of Business, Humanities and Technology*, 3(6), 50-58.
- Golebiowski, Z., & Liddicoat, A. J. (2002). The interaction of discipline and culture in academic writing. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*, 25(2), 59-71.
- Graddol, D. (1997). *The future of English? A guide to forecasting the popularity of the English language in the 21st century*. UK: British Council.
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Hassan, R. (1976). *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman.
- Jamil, F. M., & Hamre, B. K. (2018). Teacher reflection in the context of an online professional development course: Applying principles of cognitive science to promote teacher learning. *Action in Teacher Education*, 40(2), 220-236. doi.org/10.1080/01626620.2018.1424051
- Jeyaraj, J. J. (2020). Academic writing needs of postgraduate research students in Malaysia. *Malaysian Journal of Learning and Instruction*, 17(2), 1-23.
- Kachru, B. B. (1997). World Englishes and English-using communities. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 17, 66-87.
- Kachru, B. B. (2006). The English language in the outer circle. *World Englishes*, 3, 241-255.
- Kamler, B., & Threadgold, T. (1997). *Which thesis did you read?* In policy and practice of tertiary literacy. Selected Proceedings of the First National Conference of Tertiary Literacy: Research and Practice (pp. 42-58).
- Kanoksilapatham, B. (2005). Rhetorical structure of biochemistry research articles. *English for Specific Purposes*, 24(3), 269-292.

- Koch, H., & Spörer, N. (2017). Students improve in reading comprehension by learning how to teach reading strategies. An evidence-based approach for teacher education. *Psychology Learning & Teaching*, 16(2), 197-211. doi.org/10.1177/1475725717700525
- Kubota, R. (1997). A re-evaluation of the uniqueness of Japanese written discourse: Implications for contrastive rhetoric. *Written Communication*, 14(4), 460-480.
- Kusel, P. A. (1992). Rhetorical approaches to the study and composition of academic essays. *System*, 20(4), 457-469.
- Lee, S. (2017). Peer support for international doctoral students in managing supervision relationships. *Journal of International Students*, 7(4), 1096-1103
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v7i4.194>
- Leki, I. (1997). Cross-talk: ESL issues and contrastive rhetoric. *Writing in Multicultural Settings*, 32(4), 234-244.
- Leki, I., & Carson, J. G. (1994). Students' perceptions of EAP writing instruction and writing needs across the disciplines. *TESOL Quarterly*, 28(1), 81-101.
- Loi, C. K., & Evans, M. S. (2010). Cultural differences in the organization of research article introductions from the field of educational psychology: English and Chinese. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 42(10), 2814-2825.
doi:10.1016/j.pragma.2010.03.010
- Mišak, A., Marušić, M., & Marušić, A. (2005). Manuscript editing as a way of teaching academic writing: Experience from a small scientific journal. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 14(2), 122-131. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2005.05.001>
- Motta-Roth, D. (1998). Discourse analysis and academic book reviews: A study of text and disciplinary cultures. *Genre Studies in English for Academic Purposes*, 9, 29-59.
- Novoa, P. (1997). *Contrastive Rhetoric: Cross-cultural aspects of second-language writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Paltridge, B., & Starfield, S. (2007). *Thesis and dissertation writing in a second language: A handbook for supervisors*. New York: Routledge.

- Safnil. (2007). The dialogue technique of teaching writing research article introduction (RAI) in English. *Forum Pendidikan*, 26(2), 127-133.
- Samraj, B. (2002). Introductions in research articles: Variations across disciplines. *English for Specific Purposes*, 21(1), 1-17.
- Samraj, B. (2008). A discourse analysis of master's theses across disciplines with a focus on introductions. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 7(1), 55-67.
[10.1016/j.jeap.2008.02.005](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2008.02.005)
- Shehzad, W. (2008). Announcement of principle findings and value addition in computer science research papers. *IBERICA*, 19, 97-118.
- Shehzad, W. (2005). *Corpus-based genre analysis: Computer science research article introduction*. Doctoral dissertation, National University of Modern Languages Islamabad, Pakistan.
- Shehzad, W., & Abbas, A. (2002). Schematic sequence and moves in MPhil thesis introductory chapters: A genre analysis. *Journal of Language Research*. 18(1), 121-142.
- Shehzad, W., & Abbas, A. (2016). Genre analysis of generic section headings of MPhil theses' introduction section of linguistics and literature. *NUML Journal of Critical Inquiry*, 41(1), 67-79.
- Simpson, R. C., Simpson-Vlach, R. C., & Swales, J. M. (2001). *Corpus linguistics in North America: Selections from the 1999 symposium*. University of Michigan Press/ESL.
- Swales, J. M. (1990). *Genre analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Swales, J. M. (2004). *Research genres*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Swales, J. M., & Feak, C. B. (2004). *Academic writing for graduate students: Essential tasks and skills* (Vol. 1). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Wilmot, K. (2018). Designing writing groups to support postgraduate students' academic writing: A case study from a South African university. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 55(3), 257-265.
doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2016.1238775