A Comparative Study of Introduction and Discussion sections of Sub-disciplines of Applied Linguistics Research Articles

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Abstract

Much has been written in the past few decades about the reasons why many research articles (RAs) do not find their ways into well-established academic journals. While some doubt viable comparison between "big" English-language journals (to use Swales' 2004 words) or international journals (IJs) and "small" ones published in other local languages, there is still a good many reasons to hope for the development of a typology of factors that cause these discrepancies. Among some possible factors, one of the main reasons,, as Yakhontova (1997) notes is the writers' unawareness of the generic structure of international RAs. Having this in mind, and drawing on Kanoksilapatham (2007), Nwogu (1991), and Swales's (1990) models and using top-down and bottom-up analytic procedures, effort was made to compare the generic structure of Introduction and Discussion sections of international and Iranian local (IL) RAs in sub-disciplines of Applied Linguistics. The findings showed no significant differences regarding the obligatory Moves of Introduction section across the two corpora; however, significant differences in the Discussion section were revealed. The obtained results can help both experienced and novice researchers in order to report their research findings in a more permissible style. Moreover, this study provides researchers with better analytical tools for use in academic writing.

Keywords: *Genre analysis, Move structure, Introduction and Discussion sections, Local and International RAs*

1. Introduction

In the past few decades there has been a growing interest in the study of genre analysis (Dudley-Evans, 1986; Hopkins & Dudley-Evans, 1988; Swales, 1990; Bhatia, 1993, 1999; Holmes, 1997; Williams, 1999; Henry & Roseberry, 2001; Samraj, 2002, 2005; Ge & Li, 2009; to name but a few). This attention is because of the researchers' essential needs and concerns both in Applied Linguistics and ESP for publishing their studies in prestigious journals. Although the topics they work on are among the most eye-catching ones, most of the time their papers are rejected. Among some possible factors, one of the main reasons, as Yakhontova (1997) notes, is the writers' unawareness of the generic structure of international RAs. To fill this gap, mounting work on the generic structure of RAs has been carried out in various academic contexts such as ESP, EAP, and Applied Linguistics (Bunton, 2002; Ge & Li, 2009; Hart, 2001; Kwan, 2006;)); However, despite the abundance of undertaken studies, "more needs to be known about this process" (Halleck & Connor, 2006, p. 85). Ahmad (1997), Paltridge (2003), and Tahririan and Jalilifar (2004) noted that the need for being aware of the generic structure of RAs is more critical for those non-native writers whose papers were unpublished because of their wrong organizational patterning in contrast with their international counterparts. These differences can be seen more in Introduction and Discussion sections of RAs which respectively provide the rationale for carrying out the study and persuading the readers that the results of the study make sense and are comparative with previous ones. Hence, in this study, generic structure of Introduction and Discussion sections of RAs in sub-disciplines of Applied Linguistics published in International Journals (IJs) and Iranian Local Journals (ILJs) were investigated by drawing on Kanoksilapatham (2007), Nwogu (1991), and Swales's (1990) Move analytic models.

Generally, the specific purposes of the study are as follows:

1. To analyze rhetorical characteristics of Introduction and Discussion sections of the RAs written in English across IJs and ILJs in sub-disciplines of Applied Linguistics.
2. To compare and contrast the rhetorical patterns of Introduction and Discussion sections of RAs across IJs and ILJs.

Determining the genre of academic texts for uncovering the communicative purposes of various discourse communities, not only in the area of ESP but also in the areas of EAP and Applied Linguistics, has received much attention (Swales, 2009; Yang & Allison, 2003). Of the exemplars of academic research genres, RAs have been under the focus of

most of the research to date (Jordan, 1997). Rhetorical Move analysis i.e., description of organization patterning of different sections of academic RAs has been deeply considered by many researchers, e.g. Introduction section (Bhatia, 1993; Hopkins & Dudley-Evans, 1988; Ozturk, 2007; Salom, Monreal, & Olivares, 2008; Swales, 1990), Discussion section (Biria & Tahririan, 1997; Fallahi & Erzi, 2003; Holmes, 1997; Peacock, 2002), Abstracts section (Hyland, 2000; Samraj, 2005; Tahririan & Jalilifar, 2004), and Results section (Brett, 1994; Fallah, 2004). In genre studies, Move analysis is essentially the identification of rhetorical structure of a text and "Moves are rhetorical instruments that realize a subset of specific communicative purposes associated with a genre, and as such they are interpreted in the context of the communicative purposes of the genre in question" (Bhatia, 2001, p. 84). In order to describe and analyze the schematic structure of RAs across different disciplines and academic texts, various models have been proposed by researchers. Among these models, Brett (1994), Dudley-Evans (1988), Nwogu (1991, 1997), Paltridge (1995), and Swales (1990) are taken extensively by many researchers. The fundamental assumption beyond these Move analysis models, as Dudley-Evans (2000) states, is that they are common to all academic disciplines but there are variations to be found, what Bhatia (2001) interprets as intertextual or interdiscurive perspectives of the genre. Occurrences of these variations justify further research on the applicability of these models.

Following the Swales's analytical model of the Introduction section of the RA, called "Create-A-Research-Space" model: *establishing the territory, locating a research niche, and occupying a niche*, many studies, cross-disciplinary, cross-linguistically or cross-culturally, have been conducted. Ahmad (1997), following Swales' (1990) model, examined the rhetorical structure of 62 RA Introductions in hard science journals in Malay. She found that Move 2 of CARS model (establishing the niche) was absent in more than half of the Malay articles in her corpus. She relates this absence to the existing differences between local scientific context in Malay and that of Anglophone countries. Salom et al. (2008), based on a modified version of Bunton's revised CARS model for PhD theses Introductions in 2002, present a research on the introductory section of the 21 theses in the discipline of Computing written in Spanish. Due to the nature of the research topics, the various objects under study and the need the graduate students feel to display their extensive knowledge in the field, their findings showed the complexities of introduction of the PhD theses in Spanish. Hirano (2009), using Swales' (1990) CARS model as an analytical tool, explores the rhetorical organization of 20 research article Introductions in Brazilian Portuguese and in English within a subfield of Applied Linguistics. The findings indicate that

Introductions in Brazilian Portuguese tend to follow a pattern different from that of the CARS model, whereas Introduction in English follows it closely. In contrast, there are some other studies which report no rhetorical differences across languages (see for e.g. Najjar, 1989; Taylor & Chen, 1991).

Parallel with cross-cultural comparative studies, cross-disciplinary comparative studies have received great attention from lots of researchers (Huckin, 2001; Keogh, 1994; Posteguillo, 1996; Salager-Meyer, 1990; Samraj, 2002 among others). Holmes (1997) analyzed the Discussion section of thirty social science research articles in terms of sequence and structure of their rhetorical Moves, from the disciplines of History, political science, and sociology. "It was found that, although there were fundamental similarities to the natural sciences, social science Discussion sections also displayed some distinctive features. History texts were particularly distinctive, and, of the three disciplines, bore the least resemblance to those of the natural sciences" (p.321).

Such studies illuminate genre variations across disciplines which have implications for ESP teaching (Bhatia, 2001; Dudley-Evans, 2000). Kanoksilapatham (2007), following Swales' (2004) Move analytical model for the Introduction section, analyzed a corpus of Biochemistry RAs written in Thai and English. Results of the analysis revealed a four-Move structure for the Discussion sections: **contextualizing the study, consolidating results, stating limitations,** and **suggesting further research**. Nwogu (1997), using Swales' Move analytic model, analyzed all the sections of 15 medical science research articles and he found that Introduction section in Medical Science RAs is similar to other disciplines except for Move1 (projecting background information) which had low frequency. Nwogu (1991) reported that Moves and sub-Moves presented in the model are presented in all the RAs.

Rhetoric structure of different sections of RAs and ESP texts have been widely touched upon by many researchers across Iranian context e.g. (Amirian, et al., 2008; Biria and Tahririan, 1997; Fallah, 2004; Fallahi & Erzi, 2003; Fallahi Moghimi & Mobasher, 2007; Habibi, 2008; Jalilifar, 2010; Keshavarz et al., 2007; Tazik, 2010). Nevertheless, despite the growing interest in the study of Move analysis and description of generic structure of RAs, and also, the importance of such studies for non-native writers, we are still far from a vivid picture of the standard and universal writing style in Applied Linguistics RAs. Therefore, along with the above cited text analysis studies and by considering the continuing need for training students, researchers, and academic writers seeking a higher place in the new local and international academic communities, this study attempted to analyze the

generic structure of Introduction and Discussion sections of sub-disciplines of Applied Linguistics RAs. Results can help both experienced and novice researchers in order to report their research findings in a permissible style. Moreover, this study aimed to provide these researchers with better analytical tools for use in academic writing. The rationale for the selection of sub-disciplines is twofold: 1) Applied Linguistics with its related sub-disciplines is a very wide area of study. Therefore, study of this discipline as a whole cannot provide researchers with rhetorical tools for writing in its sub-disciplines. 2) For it is believed that every sub-discipline can have its own generic structure, writers of these sub-disciplines need to be aware of the standard style of writing in these sub-disciplines.

1.2. Research questions

This study sought answers to the following research questions:
RQ1. What rhetorical patterns for research article Introduction and Discussion sections are preferred by international and Iranian local writers in the sub-disciplines of Applied Linguistics RAs?
RQ2. What rhetorical differences and similarities exist in Introduction and Discussion sections of Applied Linguistics RAs across international and ILJ?

3. Methodology

3.1. The corpus

Among different sub-disciplines of Applied Linguistics, Pragmatics, Language Testing, Second Language Research, and Second Language Acquisition were randomly selected for the analysis of their generic structure. Based on these sub-fields and following Nwogu's (1997) suggestions for the selection of the journals – representativeness, reputation, and accessibility – a list of ILJs and IJs in the sub-disciplines of Applied Linguistics were selected. In so doing, four ILJs – Teaching English Language and Literature (TELL), Iranian Journal of Applied Linguistics (IJAL), Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities of Shiraz University (JSHSU), and Journal of Pazhuhesh-e Zabanha-ye Khareji of the faculty of foreign languages of Tehran University (JPZTU) – and four IJs – Pragmatics, TESOL Quarterly, Language Testing, and Second Language Research (SLR) – were chosen. However, since in Iran journals are not specified to the particular sub-disciplines of Applied Linguistics as the international ones, those local RAs which matched the scope of the selected sub-disciplines were selected to account for valid comparison.

The sub-disciplines were selected based on the following reasons:
- They are among the main subjects of study in EFL/ESL contexts
- Lots of researchers are writing articles in these disciplines

The corpus of the present study consisted of 80 RAs written in sub-disciplines of Applied Linguistics across four ILJs and four IJs. ILJs selected for the study cover a good number of research articles written in Applied Linguistics. IJs are also all prestigious journals in the field with high impact factor. For the consistency of the results, all the articles chosen for this study were published between 2000 and 2009. From the table of contents of ILJs and IJs, ten articles from each journal were selected based on the following criteria:

- They were published in some of the major subfields of Applied Linguistics such as Pragmatics, Language Testing, Second Language Research and Second Language Acquisition.
- They were easily accessible in Internet databases or the local universities.
- The selected RAs followed Abstract, Introduction, Methodology, Results, and Discussion (AIMRD) structures.
- The selected RAs were complete RAs, with a length of 2500 to 4000 words.
- They were published in ISI and ISC indices with either high impact factors or enjoining the scientific research ranking position from the Iran Ministry of science, research and technology.

3.2. Analytical framework

The study used both top down and bottom up approaches to identify the Moves and steps based on the function or content of the text in the articles. In the top-down stage, Swales's (1990) CARS model for the description of the schematic structure of Introduction sections of RAs, Kanoksilapatham's (2007) model for the Move identification of Discussion sections, and Nwogu's (1991) model for the description of the overall schematic structure of RAs were drawn upon to analyze the schematic structure of the Introduction and Discussion sections of RAs. The proposed models identify the typical sequence of Moves and steps that form the structural organization of RAs in sub-disciplines of Applied Linguistics. The models also indicate cyclical patterning and frequency of occurrences of certain Moves. Swales's (1990) CARS model has three Moves; each has its own related steps. Move 1 **(M1)**, **establishing territory**, is a rhetorical tool used by the academicians to commence their research. The steps of M1 are: claiming centrality (M1S1)**,** making topic generalization (M1S2), and reviewing the related studies (M1S3) which in turn or cyclically occur at the beginning of the research. After claiming centrality, writers try to **establish a niche (M3)** by counter claiming (M2S1), indicating a gap (M2S2), question raising (M2S3), and

continuing tradition (M2S4) which respectively argue on the misguiding of the previous studies, indicate insufficiency of the previous studies, question the previous findings, and claim that new explanation for the findings is needed. In the last Move (**M3: occupying the niche**) of the CARS model, writers claim to represent the located gap in the second Move. This Move can be realized by outlining purposes (M3S1), announcing present research (M3S2), announcing principal findings (M3S3)**,** and indicating RA structure (M3S4)**.** The second Move analytical model, Nwogu's (1991) model, consists of 9 Moves which are ranked as initial, middle, and final Moves. The first four Moves with their related steps are specified for the structure of Introduction section. The three middle Moves used for the Methodology and Results sections, and finally the last two Moves, Move 8 and 9, are respectively represented the rhetorical structure of Discussion and Conclusion sections of academic RAs. The Moves proposed by Nwogu (1991) for the Introduction section are: **(M1) presenting background information** by reference to the established knowledge in the field (M1S1), reference to the main research problem (M1S2), reference to the local angle (M1S3), and finally by explaining principles and concepts; **(M2) highlighting overall research outcomes** by reference to main research outcome (M2S1); **(M3) reviewing related research** by reference to previous research (M3S1) and by reference to limitations of previous research (M3S2); **(M4) presenting new research** by reference to authors (M4S1) and by reference to the research purpose (M4S2). The Moves specified to the Discussion section are: **(M1) explaining research outcomes** by stating a specific outcome (M1S1), explaining principles and concepts (M1S2), indicating comments and views (M1S3), and indicating significance of main research outcomes (M1S4); (**M2) stating research conclusions** by indicating implications of the research (M2S1), promoting further research (M2S2), and stressing the local angle (M2S3). The third model used in the study was taken from Kanoksilapatham (2007). This model which represented the schematic structure of Discussion section was established based on the Swales's (2004) revised version of CARS model. Kanoksilapatham emphasizes that his four-Move model for the Discussion section of RAs can be generalized across different ESP contexts. The Moves are: (**M1) contextualizing the study** by describing established knowledge (M1S1) and making generalizations (M1S2); **(M2) consolidating results** by restating methodology (M2S1), stating selected findings (M2S2), referring to previous literature (M2S3), explaining differences in findings (M2S4), making claims (M2S5), and exemplifying (M2S6); **(M3) stating limitations;** and **(M4) suggesting further studies**.

In the second stage, a bottom-up procedure for Move analysis was adopted. All the Moves and steps, irrespective of the examined models, employed by the writers were coded and their frequency and rate were counted. Those Moves and steps which were not presented in Swales and Nwogu's models were labeled as new Moves and steps. The criteria for stability of the Moves and steps were, based on the Swales' (1990) index, the occurrence of a Move in more than 50% of the corpus. In such cases, the Move is obligatory; otherwise, it is optional.

3.3. Data analysis

Frequency and variation of Moves (if any) and their steps across the local and IJ were subjected to Chi-square to determine the significance of the results. However, if variation was not found in rhetorical structure of both groups of articles, results would support the Widdowson's (1979) beliefs in universality of rhetorical structure of RAs. Since analyzing the Move and sub-Moves is subjective, to enhance the reliability of the Move analysis, two raters (familiar with genre analysis) coded the Moves of each section separately. After completion of the coding process, Correlation-coefficient was administered to estimate the inter-coder reliability. Upon completion, the obtained r (0.87) indicated that the process of Move coding was satisfactory and reliable.

4. Results

Results of this study are represented in Tables 3 to 6. In Tables 3 and 4, the obligatory Moves in both Introduction and Discussion sections across international and Iranian local RAs are presented and Tables 5 and 6 show the comparison of Move frequencies in each sub-field across local and international RAs.

As Table 3 shows, the obligatory Moves followed in Introduction sections across the two corpora were the same. However, frequencies of these Moves in different journals were not similar. For example, M1S1, which was present equally in half of the two corpora, was more frequent in Testing RAs among local journals while it was more present in SLR RAs across international ones. Results also show that Language Testing RAs were the major platform for landing the majority of Moves and steps presented in the models. M1S1, M1S3, M2S2, M3S1 of Introduction section and M2S1, S2, S3, S4, S5 of Discussion section were utilized in more than half of the Language Testing RAs. In contrast, SLR and Pragmatics articles just used one obligatory Move in their Introduction and Discussion sections. These results signal (1) the flexibility of strategies that researchers draw upon to present their study more clearly and (2) the incompleteness of the preliminary

models which examine the schematic structure of the RAs across different sub-disciplines. As regards the Move structure of Introduction section, M1S1 was present in half of the local and international RAs. This presence is in line with Swales (1981) who reported that M1S1was utilized in half of his English sample introductions as the opening strategy. In the case of Discussion section, Iranian local authors just followed two Moves (M2S2, M2S3) in Discussion section as the obligatory Moves while international authors used three obligatory Moves (M2S1, M2S2, M2S3, M4) (Table 3). Absence of M2S1 and M4 of Discussion section in local RAs indicates that local Discussions are limited to report main findings and comment on these findings.

Table 3: Obligatory Moves across local (L) and international (I) RAs according to Swales (1990) and Kanoksilapatham's (2007) models

Swales'(1990) model		L		I	
Moves	No.	Rate	most frequent in:	N0.	Rate	most frequent in:
M1S1	20	50%	Testing	20	50%	SLR
M1S3	34	85%	Pragmatics, TESOL	37	92.5%	Pragmatics, Testing, TESOL
M 2S2	22	55%	Testing	30	75%	Testing
M3S1	26	65%	Testing, TESOL, SLR	29	72.5%	Testing
Discussion (Kanoksilapatham, 2007)						
M2S1	-	-	-	20	50%	SLR
M2S2	40	100%	all journals	40	100%	all journals
M2S3	26	65%	Testing	36	90%	Testing
M4	-	-	-	20	50%	SLR, Testing

Note. M: Move, S: step, SLR: Second Language Research

Results of Chi-square for determining the significance of observed discrepancies regarding the Move frequencies across two corpora revealed that international and ILJs have significant differences in the use of M3S3, stating the main findings of the study, of Introduction section and M2S6, exemplifying, and M4, suggesting further research, of Discussion section. These slight differences revealed that rhetorical Moves can just be one of the main factors that cause discrepancies between local and international RAs. There should be some other elements which genre analysts need to take into account.

Table 4: Obligatory Moves across local and international RAs based on Nwogu's (1991) model

Nwogu's model		L			I	
Moves	No.	Rate	most frequent in:	N0.	Rate	most frequent in:
M1S1	28	70%	TESOL, SLR	23	57.5%	TESOL
M3S1	34	85%	Pragmatics, TESOL	30	75%	Pragmatics, Testing
M 3S2	23	57.5%	Testing	27	67.5.5%	Testing
M4S2	31	77.5%	Testing, TESOL	24	60%	Testing
Discussion						
M1S1	40	100%	all journals	40	100%	all journals
M1S3	30	75%	SLR	38	95%	TESOL, SLR
M2S2	-	-	-	20	50%	Testing, SLR

Note. M: Move, S: step, SLR: Second Language Research

Table 4 shows the obligatory Moves used by local and international authors based on Nwogu's model. The obligatory Moves of Introduction section were the same as those introduced in Swales' model. The Discussion section was limited to two Moves in local RAs which were *giving main findings* and *comparing of findings with previous ones*, and three Moves for international discussions, *giving main findings*, *comparing of findings with previous ones*, and *stating further research* Move. M3S2, *stating a gap*, was frequently observed in Language Testing RAs across both local and international RAs. It seems that authors of this genre prefer more to locate a gap in previous studies in order to justify the pertinence of their study than authors of other genres. *Commenting on the results*, as an obligatory Move in Results section (Yang and Allison, 2003; Posteguillo, 1999; Nwogu, 1997), was found to be quasi-obligatory in Discussion sections of local and international RAs (it occurred in 95% of RAs). This high frequency of M1S3 in Discussion section across the two corpora coincides with Yang and Allison's (2003) findings that the main function of Discussion section is commenting on the results. For being assure of significance of the differences between RAs, intra- and inter-differences, Chi-square statistical analysis was run. Results showed that M2S1 and M4S1 of Introduction section and M2S2 of Discussion section were the Moves which had significant differences across two local and international RAs. There were no intra-differentiations, in terms of Move frequencies, among local and international RAs. To have an exact comparison between the two corpora and to see whether the comparison of Move occurrences across each sub-field have the same results as the comparison of the total occurrences of Moves within two corpora, Move frequency in each paired sub-field and Chi-square for the significance of Move distributions were used (Table 5 and 6).

Table 5: comparison of Move frequencies and Chi-square results for the significance of Move frequencies in international and ILJs based on Swales (1990) and Kanoksilapatham's (2007) models

sections	journals	Pragmatics			Testing			TESOL			SLR		
	Moves	**L**	**I**	**X²**	**L**	**I**	**X²**	**L**	**I**	**X²**	**L**	**I**	**X²**
Introduction section	**M1S1**	4	5	.11	6	2	2.0	4	6	.40	6	7	.07
	M1S2	2	3	.20	1	3	1.0	4	3	.14	2	-	-
	M1S3	10	10	.00	6	10	1.0	10	10	.00	8	7	.06
	M2S1	1	3	1.0	-	1	-	1	-	-	1	2	.33
	M2S2	2	7	2.7	8	9	.05	5	7	.33	6	7	.07
	M2S3	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
	M2S4	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	.00	-	-	-
	M3S1	5	7	.33	7	9	.25	7	8	.06	7	5	.33
	M3S2	-	4	-	4	1	1.8	3	3	.00	1	2	.33
	M3S3	-	5	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	-
	M3S4	2	5	1.2	1	2	.33	2	1	.33	-	2	-
Discussion section	**M1S1**	2	-	-	2	-	-	1	2	.33	1	-	-
	M1S2	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
	M2S1	1	2	.33	8	6	.28	4	4	.00	3	8	2.2
	M2S2	10	10	.00	10	10	.00	10	10	.00	10	10	.00
	M2S3	2	9	4.4*	10	10	.00	5	9	1.1	9	8	.05
	M2S4	-	1	-	6	2	2.0	1	4	1.8	1	4	1.8
	M2S5	-	2	-	7	2	2.7	3	6	1.0	3	3	.00
	M2S6	-	2	-	2	1	.33	2	7	2.7	2	6	2.0
	M3	3	1	1.0	5	7	.33	1	3	1.0	2	2	.00
	M4	3	4	.14	4	6	.40	1	4	1.8	1	6	3.5*

Note. L: local RAs, I: international RAs, x^2: Chi-square, -: indicates absence of steps, *p<0.05

Comparing Move frequencies across local and IJs in each sub-field, results showed that just frequencies of M2S3 and M4 in Discussion section were significantly different across Pragmatics and SLR sub-fields ($X^2 = 4.4$,

Sig. = .03 and X^2 = 3.5, Sig. = .05, respectively). In other subfields no significant differences were found (Table 5). According to Table 6, M1S3 was absent in Testing, TESOL, and SLR RAs. M1S4 which had low frequency in RAs across both international and Iranian local RAs was absent in TESOL RAs in two corpora. Obligatory Moves in both corpora have close frequency in each sub-field, for instance M1S1, M3S1, and M3S2 in Introduction section or M1S1 and M1S3 in Discussion section. M2S2 of discussion section was the only Move which its differences across ILJs and IJs were significant (X^2 = 3.5, Sig. = .05, p<.05).

Table 6: *comparison of Move frequencies and Chi-square results for the significance of Move frequencies in international and ILJs across sub-disciplines of Applied Linguistics based on Nwogu's (1991) model*

sections	journals	Pragmatics			Testing			TESOL			SLR		
	Moves	L	I	X^2	L	I	X^2	L	I	X^2	L	I	X^2
Introduction section	**M1S1**	6	6	.00	6	3	1.0	8	8	.00	8	6	.28
	M1S2	-	1	-	1	1	.00	2	2	.00	1	1	.00
	M1S3	1	1	.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	M1S4	1	5	2.6	1	4	1.80	-	-	-	1	3	1.0
	M2S1	-	5	-	1	1	.00	-	2	-	-	2	-
	M3S1	10	9	.05	6	9	.60	10	5	1.6	9	7	.25
	M3S2	3	5	.50	8	10	.22	6	4	.40	6	8	.28
	M4S1	-	2	-	1	-	-	-	4	-	1	3	1.0
	M4S2	5	7	.33	10	9	.05	10	6	1.0	6	2	2.0
Discussion section	**M8S1**	10	10	.00	10	10	.00	10	10	.00	10	10	.00
	M8S2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	-	-
	M8S3	6	9	.60	7	9	.25	8	10	.22	9	10	.05
	M8S4	2	4	.66	5	2	1.2	-	6	-	3	2	.20
	M8S5	2	9	4.4*	10	10	.00	5	9	1.14	9	8	.05
	M9S1	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	2	.00	-	3	-
	M9S2	3	4	.14	4	6	.40	1	4	1.80	1	6	3.5*
	M9S3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-

Note. L: local RAs, I: international RAs, x^2: Chi-square, -: indicates absence of steps, *p<0.05

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Analyzing generic structure of RAs, cross-linguistically and cross-disciplinary, have received remarkable attention by many scholars (Ahmad, 1997; Hirano, 2009). EFL researchers and writers need more thorough and comprehensive information about the rhetorical structure of RAs across various disciplines, particularly sub-disciplines of Applied Linguistics. However, a few studies have been carried out in Iranian context compared to the other EFL contexts such as Thai and Malay. Therefore, the current study tried to carry out a contrastive study on the generic structure of Introduction and Discussion sections of RAs in sub-fields of Applied Linguistics across ILJs and IJs. Moves of each group of RAs were counted through top-down and bottom-up procedures. In top-down phase, Kanoksilapatham (2007), Nwogu (1991), and Swales's (1990), and Move analytic models were taken up and applied in the selected corpus and the absence or presence of their Moves were analyzed. In the second phase, bottom-up phase, all the Moves regardless of the predetermined models were coded in the corpus. According to Swales (1990), those Moves which occurred in more than half of the RAs are obligatory Moves and those which occur in less than 50% of the RAs are optional Moves. The main findings of Move analysis along with a comparison between generic structures of two corpuses are discussed below.

5.1. Generic structure of Introduction sections of RAs across the two corpora

Firstly, the frequencies of the proposed Moves in Swales's (1990) CARS model are considered. Each Move of this model with its steps and related instances are given below.

Move 1: *Establishing territory*

M1, across the two corpora, was identified as an obligatory Move. M1S1 (50%) and M1S3 (85%) were found to be present in local RAs, hence they were obligatory Moves. The same was true for international RAs. M1S1 and M1S3 occurred in more than 50% of international RAs (50% and 92.5%, respectively). Chi-Square results indicate non-significance of differences between M1S1 and M1S3 (Ex. 1 to 4) across two corpora (x^2 =.00 and 0.12, respectively). As it can be seen, both local and international researchers try to centralize their concern around a topic that they claim it is attractive at the present time. Such attraction indicates that this step is fairly important in Applied Linguistics RAs. Swales (1990) states that the valuable function of this step is to persuade the members of the discourse community to accept that the research which is to be presented is taken from a lively, significant and well-established research area. Samraj (2005) also states that "The presence of centrality claims in more than half the Conservation Biology

abstracts seems to indicate that this rhetorical Move has a fairly important place in this genre."(p. 148).Therefore, not only in the area of Applied Linguistics but also in other fields of study such as medical sciences and biology this step is considered as a viable rhetorical tool. M1S3 was more present in international RAs (92.5% vs. 85%). It shows that international researchers try to present more background knowledge to the readers by referring to previous studies. Peters (1997) reported that the main function of M1S3 is to provide justification for the research being conducted. Similarly, Hart (2001) noted that this step helps the students to determine the scope of their research and enables them to locate the existing gaps in the previous studies. Samraj (2002) argues that M1S3 portrays the importance of the study being reported. On the other hand, M1S2 which is an alternative step for M1S1 was used in 20% of international RAs and 25% of local RAs. However, this presence is lower than the index determined for considering the steps as obligatory.

Ex.1: Research article, in particular, its structure, social construction and historical evolution, has been explored through a large number of studies on academic writing over the past years. (IJAL, 2008, 11(2), p. 89) **(ILJ, M1S1)**

Ex.2: Within generative approaches to second language (L2) acquisition, a number of researchers have offered versions of the Strong UG Hypothesis…….. (White, 1985a; 1985b; 1989; duPlessis, et al, 1987….). **(**SLR, 2001, 17(1), p. 1) **(IJ, M1S1)**

Ex.3: Diamond and Evans (1972), Sarnacki (1979) ……… have provided evidence regarding the positive relationship between test performance and knowing test-taking strategies in the literature of language testing, in taking tests. (TELL, 2006, 1(1), p. 158) **(ILJ, M1S3)**

Ex.4: Hence, as Potter (1998:234) points out, RP and DP, have, over the years, 'increasingly blurred together' and, indeed, many authors now use the two terms generically or interchangeably (see, e.g. Benwell and Stokoe, 2006; Condor, 2006) (Journal of Pragmatics, 2009, 41, p. 1360) **(IJ, M1S3)**

Move 2: *Establishing a niche*

Across the two corpora, S2 was the only obligatory step in M2 (ex. 5 and 6). This step was present in 22 (55%) local RAs. while the frequency of occurrence of this step in international RAs was higher (30/75%). In both corpora, authors explicitly indicate a gap in previous studies done in the areas they were investigating; however, it seems that international writers more

willingly tried to locate the existing gap in order to justify their research. Chi-square run for the significance of these differences did not confirm these differences (x^2= 2, sig. = 0.157). Other steps were not found in more than five articles, so they all were optional steps. Interestingly, M2S3 was completely absent among the local RAs and was present only in 1 RA in international RAs. The reason for such absence may be related to, firstly, the writers' preferences to find gaps in previous RAs rather than questioning the previous findings and, secondly, questioning previous findings with respect to the different contexts in which the studies under investigation have been done may not be valid and acceptable. Moreover, it needs strong knowledge on the topic which is more frequent in theoretical studies. These findings are in line with Kwan (2006) and Samraj (2005) who, in their studies, found that indicating a gap or what they called "the dearth" or "dearth of relevant studies" is present in RAs and doctoral theses. Xudong & She (2005) found that the "*Establishing a niche*" Move (indicating a gap in previous studies) was found in more than 70% of the Biomedical RAs. They also found that the second step in this Move, indicating a bap, was mostly used by the Biomedical researchers. Thus, these findings fit in with Swales' (1990) findings.

Ex.5: But it seems that with regard to the interaction between text type and gender of the subjects different studies yield contradictory results. (IJAL, 2008, 11(1), p. 102) **(ILJ, M2S2)**

Ex.6: Past research has not investigated whether self-initiations provide opportunities for NNSs to modify their output when they notice a gap in their IL capacity. (TESOL Quarterly, 2001, 35(3), p. 435) **(IJ**, **M2S2)**

Move 3: *occupying the niche*

In M3, S1 (ex. 6 and 7) is the most frequent step among others. It was found in 26 (65%) local RAs and 25 (62.5%) international RAs. The Chi-square computed for the significance of these differences did not support such differences (x^2= .164, sig. = 0.686). Other steps occurred lower than the determined index. It indicates that both local and international researchers prefer to outline their research purposes instead of stating what the research is established to present. Samraj (2002) found that "announcing the research purposes" was present in all the Introductions of Wildlife Behavior RAs. Similarly, Salom et al. (2008) reported that stating the aims or objectives of the study was the obligatory Move in the introductory sections of Spanish PhD theses. Xudong and She Qiongze (2005) investigated the Move structure of Biomedical Introductions. They found that M3S1 is present in all the

introductions of their corpus. Generally, results of this study as well as other findings cited here are in line with Swales' (1990) observation that M3S1 is an obligatory step across Introduction sections of RAs.

Ex.7: The purpose of the present study was to determine whether Farsi speaking learners of English used the same strategies that native speakers of English use in the process of speech segmentation. (Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities of Shiraz University, 2006, 23(1), p. 34) (**ILJ, M3S1**)

Ex.8: The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the value of using such an approach to study DIF and differential bundle functioning (DBF) on an ESL reading assessment (i.e., the Canadian Language Benchmarks Assessment (CLBA) reading subtest). (Language Testing, 2007, 24 (1), p. 8) (**IJ, M3S1**)

Nwogu's model which introduces the rhetoric structure of the Introduction section of RAs consists of five Moves. These Moves include steps which overlap some of the steps presented in Swales' model. That's why the frequencies of some steps in both models were the same. For example, M1S1 of Introduction section in Nwogu's model covers S1 and S2 of M1 in Swales' model. Thus, frequency of this step was 28 (70%) in both corpora. This step was the only obligatory step in M1. These results are consistent with Li and Ge (2009). They found that "the ''obligatory'' use of this Move has rhetorical usefulness in that it enhances the researchers' credibility by indicating that the reported research is based on a thorough knowledge of the subject under study, making their RAs more convincing and persuasive in the first place" (Li & Ge, 2009, P. 97). M2S1 which is highlighting overall research outcome by reference to main research outcomes is the Move presented as M3S3. It just occurred 1 time in the local corpus, but 9 times in the international corpus. Optionality of this Move across the two corpora of this study corroborated with what was reported by Li and Ge (2009). M3 in Nwogu's model consists of two steps. S1 in this Move is the same as S3 of M1 in Swales' model. So, its frequency across the two corpora is the same as discussed above (92.5% vs. 82.5% for IJs and ILJs, respectively). S2 of this Move is reviewing the previous studies by reference to their limitations. This step was present in 67.5% of international and 57.5% of local RAs. M4S2 is presenting new research personally or impersonally. In both local and international RAs, authors try to state their research by reference to the research purpose (72.5% and 60%, respectively). It shows that researchers themselves acknowledge that the findings are not predetermined; therefore, purposes are stated impersonally to indicate that without their interference the

study results would be gained. All these findings are in line with Nwogu's (1991).

On the whole, the Introduction rhetorical organizations i.e. Move structure, across two local and international RAs were similar in rhetorical structure. Obligatory Moves and steps were the same and the frequencies of the obligatory Moves were not significantly different. This lack of significant differences in the use of obligatory Moves across both local and international RAs indicate that just following the same Moves cannot guarantee the publication of RAs in prestigious journals. We cannot put our foci on the structure irrespective of the content. This implies that researchers in the area of Applied Linguistics need to take into account textual and lexico-grammatical factors as the internal factors as well as the rhetorical structure of RAs during their research process (Badger, 2003).

In the second phase of the analysis, bottom-up analysis, some interesting differences regarding the Move occurrences can be seen across local and international RAs which are not accounted for by the models given by Nwogu (1991) and Swales (1990). In the bottom-up phase, some new steps were found in both local and international Introductions. However, just two steps received the criteria to be among the obligatory steps of the Introduction section. Among international RAs "setting the ground by term definition/elaboration/exemplifying" occurred in 21 (52.5%) RAs (Ex. 13). Thus, it can be implied that international researchers prefer to set the ground by defining the variables and terms to make their research more specific and relevant. Presence of this step is in line with Anthony (1999) and Salom et al. (2008) who found that one of the new Moves which can be added to M1 is definition and exemplification of technical terms. This new step was added to M1 of Nwogu (1991) and Swales's (1990) models and is labeled as SGTDEE in the example below. So, in Swales' model M1 has four steps, the three first steps are alternatively or independently occur in RAs. Among all the new steps identified in local RAs, "stating RQs and RHs" (SRQ/RH) is the obligatory step added to the M3 in local RAs (20/50%) as in Example 14. Local researchers tend to present RQs and RHs at the end of the Introduction section which is lacked in international RAs (11/27.5%).

Ex.9: ''Suppose you're organizing a dinner party, and making lasagna. How would you rate ground beef which is 25% fat (condition 1) or 75% lean (condition 2). Please rate the beef on a scale from fat–lean, greasy–greaseless, high quality low quality and good tasting–bad tasting''. This scenario is an example of attribute framing, loosely based on Levin and Gaeth, 1988. (Journal of Pragmatics, 2009, 41, 2204) (**IJ, SGTDEE**).

Ex.10: More specifically the following five hypotheses are tested in this study:

Hypothesis 1: Teachers, adolescents and adult learners of English as a foreign language believe formal grammar instruction and error correction do not have a facilitative effect on learning. (TELL, 2008, 2(6), p. 53) (**ILJ, SRQ/RH**)

Presence of new Moves is, in fact, signaling the writers' step-by-step alternative strategies in expressing their research purposes conspicuously. Therefore, sometimes this is the context, purpose, writer, audience, and even research topic which determine what Moves and steps are needed. As a result, incompleteness of Move structure frameworks across different contexts and appearance of new Moves in each article seem to be natural.

5.2. Generic structure of Discussion sections across the two corpora

Discussion section of RAs where the researchers dare to make claims, the research findings are stated, new findings are discussed and compared to previous ones is an important and salient section in RAs. Analyzing the generic structure of this section has been under the focus of many researchers (Biria & Tahririan, 1997; Fallahi & Erzi, 2003; Holmes, 1997; Peacock, 2002). Results of these studies have led to the enumeration of different models for analyzing rhetoric structure of the Discussion section. Two famous Move analytic models, among others, which were used in this study, are Kanoksilapatham (2007) and Nwogu's (1991). Kanoksilapatham's (2007) model consists of 4 Moves and Nwogu's (1991) model consists of two Moves. Applying Kanoksilapatham's (2007) model in the two corpora, M2 and M4 were the obligatory Moves. Interestingly, the first three steps of this Move received the criteria for being among the obligatory steps across international RAs. However, just M2S2 and M2S3 were the obligatory Moves in local RAs. In contrast with Kanoksilapatham (2007) who suggests that Discussion section of RAs starts with a Move the same as M1 of Introduction, "contextualizing the study", international RAs began with restating methodology (M2S1, ex.8). The reason may be the researchers' concerns about the redundancy of the materials. Or, they may feel that restating methodology Move is more necessary to be mentioned in the first part of this section as a reminder for the readers.

M2S2, "stating selected findings," as an obligatory step, was present in 100% of international and local RAs. Thus, it can be concluded that all the researchers make it essential to state the main findings in this section. M2S3 was also found to be obligatory in both local and international corpora. This Move was present in 26 local RAs and 36 international RAs. It shows that international researchers are more eager to compare their findings with previous ones for the purpose of supporting or rejecting them. Results of

these analyses, especially for local RAs, are in line with Fallah (2004). She reported that although there were differences in frequency of steps across two local and international RAs, M2S2 and M2S3 (ex. 9 to 11) were the only obligatory steps in M2 across two corpora. She also stated that since the M2S2 was more frequent across two corpora, it can be the core element of the Discussion section of the RAs. M4 (ex.13) which is "suggesting further research" was found to be present in half of the international RAs; hence, it is an obligatory Move in international RAs. However, this Move was present only in 9 local RAs. It can be implied that international researchers make themselves more in charge of broadening the field to the other researchers in order to explore other unknown and untouched points. Other Moves and steps are optional across two corpora.

Ex.11: A statistical analysis of Form 1, Stage II of the CLBA Reading Assessment was conducted using SIBTEST to identify items that functioned differentially for Arabic and Mandarin speaking examinees. The guidelines suggested by Roussos and Stout (1996) were used to classify DIF items in the present study. **(**Language Testing, 2007, 27(1), p. 23) **(IJ, M2S1)**

Ex.12: This finding, in fact corresponds with the current belief in SLA research emphasizing the need to incorporate FonF instruction into meaning-oriented communicative language teaching (Long, 1991; Muranoi, 2000). (TELL, 2008, 2(5), p. 15) **(ILJ, M2S2)**

Ex.13: A gender difference was observed in the functions for which boys and girls use DMs, as predicted by hypothesis I, which is consistent with other studies of linguistic gender differences. (Pragmatics, 2009, 41, p. 2488) **(IJ, M2S2)**

Ex.14: The findings of this study support Romberg, Wilson, and Khaketa's (1990) claims that progress through the mastery of simple steps, the development of learning hierarchies, explicit directions, daily lesson plans, frequent quizzes, objective testing of smallest steps in learning facilitate students learning. (Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities of Shiraz University, 2006, 20(1), p. 8) **(ILJ, M2S3)**

Ex.15: In addition, the inverted format of multitrak items was not shown to be misfitting in the Facets analyses (Table 1), which is noteworthy, especially in light of North's (2000) experience with the calibration of the CEFR scales, where some negatively formulated descriptors were shown to be misfitting

and had to be taken out of the scales as a result. (Language Testing, 2007, 24(1), p. 93) (**IJ, M2S3)**

Ex.16: one branch of research to be furthered is neurolingustic research (Paradis, 1994; Perani et al, 1998….) (SLR, 2002, 18(3), p. 213). (**IJ, M4)**

Nwogu's model for analyzing Discussion section of RAs consists of 2 Moves and 7 sub-Moves. M1S1, M2S3, and M2S2 of Nwogu's model are the same as M2S2, M2S3, and M4 in Swales' model. However, M1S3, "indicating comments and views", in Nwogu's model includes both "comparing research findings with previous results" and the "researchers' comments and views" as two steps in Swales' model. This Move was present in 30 local RAs and 38 international RAs. Other additional Moves and steps given by Nwogu (1991) are all optional in the present corpus. For example, M1S4, "indicating significance of main research outcomes", was present in 12 international RAs and in 8 local RAs. Thus, it may be concluded that international researchers prefer to be more explicit in indicating their significant research outcomes, while local researchers do not hold on the responsibility and let their readers imply the significance of research findings. Along with top-down analysis of RAs, based on the given models suggested by Kanoksilapatham (2007) and Nwogu (1991), in bottom-up phase, all the Moves followed in two corpora were collected. In this phase some new steps used by local and international writers were found. However, none of them were among the obligatory Moves, except "statement of the data" which was present in all the RAs in which Discussion and Results sections were given together. In conclusion, it seems that ILJs respectively follow "*Claiming centrality, reviewing related research, Indicating a gap, Outlining purposes, Stating research questions and hypotheses*" and *" Stating selected findings, Referring to previous findings"* steps in Introduction and Discussion sections of sub-disciplines of Applied Linguistics. On the other hand, the general steps used in Introduction sections of IJs were *"Claiming centrality (or) setting the ground by term definition, elaboration, or exemplifying, reviewing related research, Indicating a gap, Outlining purposes"*, and the general steps that they used in their Discussions were *" Restating methodology, Stating selected findings, Referring to previous findings, Suggesting further research".*

5.3. Kanoksilapatham (2007), Nwogu (1991), and Swales's (1990) models as complements of each other

As many researchers have found (Bunton, 2005; Kwan, 2006; Salom et al., 2008) and with respect to all the researchers who have introduced different models regarding the rhetoric structure of RAs in the past few

decades, it seems that a model which can be generalizable across different disciplines is not available at the present time. As a result, a combination of all the given models can be considered more reliable. Having the above cited reasons in mind, and after applying three Kanoksilapatham (2007), Nwogu's (1991), and Swales's (1990) models in the corpus of the present study, it was found that these models, seems that, are just different in the ways of presenting the strategies which writers manage to use in their RAs in order to convince the readers to pick up on the given materials. At the heart of these models, intention has been the development of a model which designates the overall schematic structure of RAs. However, diversity of social contexts, readers' needs, writers' preferences, and the necessities that different fields of study hold on, led to some discrepancies within the overall organization and patterning of the models. Results of this study indicated that these diversities across the models do not determine the acceptance of one as a generalized, global, and world-broadened model and the rejection of another as a field- or content-specific model, but a combination of these models with respect to some plausible diversities can be a more applicable and reliable model across different social contexts. Moreover, taking the functions of each Move into considerations, it can be seen that the models do not look at the underlying assumptions of each Move in various contexts. That's why Yang and Allison (2003) believe that differences in the frameworks of analysis are the major reasons for the differences in the reported findings across different genre analysis studies. For instance, as Yang and Allison (2003) discuss, the function of 'Commenting on results' Move serves the purpose of meaning establishment and significance of research findings in relation to the relevant field, interpretations that go beyond the 'objective' results, the way results are interpreted in the context of the study, contribution of research findings to the field, accounting underlying reasons of the results, and commenting on the limitations, strength, and generalizability of the results. Therefore, M2S3, M2S4, M2S5 in Kanoksilapatham's (2007) model for Discussion section and M1S4, M1S5 of Nwogu's (1991) model which all related to these functions should be combined to completely provide a Move which reflects all the functions discussed above. Similarities of the RA organizations, at least in the case of obligatory Moves, support the complementary of the two above discussed models.

As the final remark, it can be concluded that rhetoric structure of RAs particularly in the area of Applied Linguistics seem to be universal. Both local and international authors follow the same structure. These results support the Widdowson's (1979) beliefs in universality of rhetorical structure of RAs. However, as Bonn & Swales (2007) quotes from Swales (2004) "it is doubtful whether viable comparisons can be made between "big" English-

language journals and "small" ones publishing in other languages." (P: 105), it would be a big claim to state the universality of the generic structure of RAs in the same field across various international and local journals. Therefore, While some doubt viable comparison between "big" English-language journals (to use Swales' 2004 words) or IJs and "small" ones publishing in other local languages, there is still a good many reasons to hope for the development of a typology of factors that cause these discrepancies. Among the main reasons for the given discrepancies, scholars unanimously agree on *Moves*, *information distribution and thematicity*, *lexical cohesion patterns*, and *content* which have been on the focus of attention for the past two decades. As a result, although findings of this study support the importance of Moves in the academic texts, i.e. RAs, it seems that finding out why articles with the same generic structures are not published in journals with equal academic values needs more exploratory studies. In fact, local writers should take this note into consideration that just being aware of generic structure of RAs is not sufficient to publish their studies in IJs. Of course, "understanding and manipulating complex inter-generic and multicultural realizations of professional discourse, which will enable learners to use generic knowledge to respond to novel social contexts" (Bhatia, 2002: 3), is a long and undertaking process which ESP/EAP practitioners should take into considerations.

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