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Faculty of Languages and Literature
English Department

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Title:
**A Comparative Study of Rhetorical Moves and
Linguistic Features of Introduction Section of Civil
Engineering Articles**

Supervisor: Dr. A. M. Fazilatfar

Advisor: Dr. H. Allami

By: MahboubehEbrahimi

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Abstract

This thesis discusses the genre-specific features of introduction section of civil engineering articles written by native English speakers and Iranian civil engineers in Persian and English, in order to specify similarities and differences in the authors' use of rhetorical features and lexico-grammatical features in their writing. The data set consisted of 99 introduction sections of articles. 33 of these articles were written in English by native speakers of English. 33 of them were written in English by Iranian civil engineers and 33 of these articles were Persian articles written by Iranian researchers. In rhetorical features, the Move-step structure of the text analysis and the lexico-grammatical analysis were conducted by incorporating Kanoksilapatham's (2011) model. The lexico-grammatical and rhetorical features frequencies were recorded in SPSS and the percentages for each part were calculated. Then the three groups were compared using Chi-square. The analysis indicated that there was no significant difference between native English and Iranian civil engineers in rhetorical features. However significant differences were seen in some lexico-grammatical features in utilizing voice, tense, evaluative adjectives and nominalization in articles written by Iranian engineers. The pedagogical implication of this study was to enable instructors as well as researchers in the field of civil engineering to write their papers with regard to common patterns used in the introduction sections of civil engineering article.

Keywords: Lexico-grammatical features, Move, Research Articles, Rhetorical Features, Step.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1. Preliminaries

The question of how to teach writing in a second/foreign language has been at the center of attention for a good number of researchers and educators over the past several decades. Writing a research article is a hard task for both non-native speakers and native speakers of English (Canagarajah, 1996; Flowerdew, 2001). According to them there were lots of attempts at determining how to teach writing, and what to teach in writing courses, which resulted in the creation of many teaching methods, materials, and procedures, and the quest is still going on. Nowadays more and more people are learning foreign/second languages, and their needs are getting ever-more varied. However, a close look at the literature on teaching writing shows that most students, even those students with high scores in English, often have difficulties in writing. They have difficulties both in choosing appropriate vocabulary and correct grammar rules and in organizing the structure depending on topic.

Writing articles is an important task in students' academic and professional life. It is expected that L2 learners express their opinions, attitudes, and propositions with appropriate expressions and moves that are accepted by their readers in the academic community. When we write articles, we should consider that what we suggest can be a changeable reality and it can be criticized by others and we cannot have strict claims. Therefore, it is necessary for us to be aware of how we can manage this situation; for this purpose, considering the traditional moves suggested by scientists is an important factor in writing articles.

Discourse analysis emerged because there was a need for a better understanding of the language and as we know language is meaningful only in its context. Thus, the

interaction between the listener and the speaker for the discourse factors lead to the creation of a coherent text which help the speaker express his/her views clearly in an organized way(Kanoksilapatham, 2005). According to him, in contrast to linguists who mostly have studied the structure of the text considering the formal aspects of language, scholars always try to show the meanings incontext. The term discourse analysis is related to the analysis of both spoken and written texts, they are widely different. While it is more problematic to access instances of spoken data such as naturally occurring conversations in different contexts, in written discourse analysis, compared to oral analysis, more data is available in different genres. Accordingly, a great deal of research has been done on a variety of texts such as literary works on news, articles, and scientific texts. According to Kanoksilapatham (2005), among all academic genres, research articles are the most important genre which is used by scientific communities as a device for the transmission of knowledge

Discourse analysis is a field which is related to analysis of naturalness of language in spoken and written produced forms. Among the written samples of language, academic genres which occur in scientific fields have its own special place in the domain of discourse analysis.

For post graduate students, one of the challenges that they face is writing of their articles. Swales (1990, p.72) contend theses and dissertations are a path way to the "targeted discourse community, or an exit qualification" and an entry into the scientific world.

According to him genre analysts have reasons to argue that a genre-analytic approach to the understanding of text structure, and to the teaching of writing, will result in L2/FL written success. This approach will help readers to

understand and to achieve text objectives comprehensively. Through genre-analytic approaches to L2/FL language teaching, students will become able to make a difference between types of text, and they will obtain useful information about the nature of different types of texts which help them to write better even when they engage in writing such academically complex genres as articles.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The phenomenon of considering moves in academic discourse is one of the important issues in the linguistic field. If writers do not use these devices appropriately and if they do not pay attention to the norms and expectations of the community they are writing for, this may lead to misunderstanding and they cannot be good members of academic community. The problem, however, is that there is a limited number of research that describes the nature of written text from a genre-analytic perspective. This limitation can be seen more in Iran. There are only a few studies that have evaluated engineering articles from a genre-analytic perspective.

In recent years, several studies have been conducted to compare and contrast the use of moves in research articles of different fields; however, few studies were done regarding the discourse analysis of engineering articles. In addition, few studies have analyzed types and frequencies of moves in Persian research-based articles. Thus, in an attempt to contribute to inadequate literature on moves in research-based articles, this study focuses on master's articles and the way writers use these rules in the introduction section of these articles.