

Occurrence Frequency of Rhetorical Moves in Introductions of Linguistics Research Articles From Non-Scopus and Scopus Journals

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Abstract—Serving as a fundamental opening section, the research article introduction (RAI) provides an entrance to a certain topic in the exploration of the unknown content of the research. It is a manifestation of rhetorical maneuver and establishes the context, identifies the challenges, and outlines the rationale for the study. Therefore, it is vital to make a well-crafted RAI to catch readers' attention. However, the disparities in rhetorical moves employed in English linguistics RAIs between non-Scopus-indexed and Scopus-indexed journals have received less scrutiny. The present study aims to investigate the rhetorical move structures in both types of corpora. The non-Scopus and Scopus corpus each contained 50 RAIs. Based on the adapted Swales' (1990) Create-A-Research-Space (CARS) model, the occurrence frequency of moves and steps was first analyzed, and the relationship between the frequency of moves and steps and the indexing of journals was then explored. The findings showed that the most frequent move in both corpora was Move 1, followed by Move 3 and Move 2. However, the higher number of overall moves in the non-Scopus corpus suggested that there was an overuse of moves by the less experienced writers, and through Chi-square, Move 3 Step 1B (announcing present research) was detected to have a significant relationship with the indexing of journals. The findings of this study pave the way for writers to construct well-organized RAIs and get their papers published in the field of linguistics.

Index Terms—rhetorical moves, occurrence frequency, research article introductions, Scopus-indexed-journals, non-Scopus-indexed journals

I. INTRODUCTION

The significance of publishing research articles in journals with high impact has long been recognized within the academic circle. As a bibliographic database, Scopus facilitates the exploration of academic works and empowers scholars to assert authorship of their contributions, thus ensuring appropriate recognition and promoting professional advancement. In terms of coverage, it has been demonstrated that Scopus has exhibited superior performance compared to Web of Science (WoS) across a majority of disciplines (Marina & Sterligov, 2021; Singh et al., 2021). In the area of linguistics and language, the Scopus list of 2023 included 1085 journals, of which 229 were open access, and a total of 222 journals were comprised in the list of Q1, Q2, Q3, and Q4. Due to the stringent selection procedure and positive reputation, research articles featured in Scopus-indexed journals are generally held in higher esteem by peer researchers compared to those published in non-Scopus-indexed journals. Therefore, it is essential to create a well-organized research article by following the Scopus-indexed conventions. Following the hourglass diagram IMRD (Introduction, Method, Results, Discussion) proposed by Hill et al. (1982), the introduction is the first section of a research article, and the purpose of it is to spark the reader's interest in the rest of the research piece in a short amount of time. When composing this section, writers are usually faced with numerous choices regarding the type and amount of background information to incorporate (Alsharif, 2023). Thus, adhering to the generic features and applying appropriate moves of RAIs in Scopus journals will inevitably assist writers in writing and publishing. The use of rhetorical move is one of the most important linguistic aspects, and according to Swales (2004, pp. 228-229), the rhetorical move is "a discursal or rhetorical unit that performs a coherent communicative function in a written or spoken discourse". Nevertheless, previous research has analyzed the moves of RAIs in the field of linguistics (Jalilifar, 2010; Oztürk, 2018), but none has considered whether various indexing sources will influence the use of moves and steps, especially the occurrence

frequency of moves and steps. Therefore, the current study tends to fill this gap and assist writers in crafting an RAI that follows rhetorical move conventions in Scopus-indexed linguistics journals.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The introduction section of research articles typically serves as the initial segment, providing a foundation for the context, scope, and significance of the research. According to Feak and Swales (2011), it should establish a clear setting that highlights the value of the topic being explored and conveys the rationale for pursuing it. Despite being the briefest section of an article, it plays a crucial role in determining the readers' interest in continuing to read the article (Grant & Pollack, 2011). This section accounts for around 5-7 paragraphs (initial two to three pages) of the study and serves as a road map. From the perspective of editors and reviewers, if they do not quite understand what the research article is about in their initial reading of the opening paragraphs, they are more inclined to look for reasons to reject an article to be published (Ahlstrom, 2017). Therefore, crafting a robust and effectively structured opening section holds immense importance. This section's readability and the likelihood of rejection are attributed to framing and organizational issues, as noted by Konrad (2008) and Ahlstrom (2010). Consequently, it is necessary to carry out an in-depth analysis of the introduction sections of research articles, and the application of rhetorical moves as fundamental building blocks warrants further consideration.

A rhetorical move is a schematic, discursual and rhetorical unit, performing the communicative or social function of a particular part of a text. Nwogu (1997) stated that it is a text segment consisting of a set of linguistic features (lexical meanings, propositional meanings, illocutionary forces, etc.) that provide the segment with a homogeneous orientation and signal the substance of the discourse. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) noted that a move is a unit in relation to both writers' purpose and the extent they prefer to communicate, and the step is a lower-level unit in the text, bestowing a detailed perspective to help writers designate certain moves in the introduction. The length of a move may vary between a single finite clause and several paragraphs because the move is shaped in a functional category. Through move analysis, the organizational pattern of a text can be described. The CARS model, which pertains to one of the frameworks of moves, was introduced by Swales in 1981, 1990, and 2004. Among these, the 1990 version has gained the most widespread acceptance and was deemed the most popular for analyzing moves. Though certain studies have utilized Swales' frameworks to discern the rhetorical structure of introductions, their attention has been directed toward various academic fields, such as computer science (Ebrahimi & Weisi, 2019), law (Afrizon & Arsyad, 2018), economics (Slaim & Mostari, 2019), forestry (Joseph et al., 2014), etc. Rarely has the study of move analysis in RAIs been conducted in the area of applied linguistics.

Moreover, regarding move analysis, previous studies have investigated the essentiality of moves (Can et al., 2016), which is about the covering range of moves and refers to the percentage of texts that contain a certain move at least once (Lu et al., 2021). However, less attention has been paid to the frequency of moves, which is about the number of moves and refers to the occurrence of a certain move in all the texts of a corpus. Hence, in the current study, the researchers aimed to fill this gap and explore how many times a target move or step is used and whether there is a significant relationship between the frequency of moves or steps and the indexing of journals. The objectives of this study include the identification of rhetorical moves and the investigation of the occurrence frequency of moves and steps in both corpora. The relationship between the frequency of moves and steps and the indexing of journals was also tested.

III. METHODS

A. Corpus Establishment

In the present study, the peer-reviewed non-Scopus-indexed and Scopus-indexed research articles published between 2019 and 2021 were first randomly collected from four English linguistics journals. The two non-Scopus journals were the *Journal of Applied Language Studies* and the *International Journal of English Linguistics*, and the two Scopus journals were the *Chinese Journal of Applied Linguistics* and *3L: Language, Linguistics, Literature*. Then, to balance the length of the introduction sections and minimize the variations in corpus size, purposive sampling was utilized in selecting the 50 RAIs from each type of journal. Altogether, there were 40327 words in the 50 RAIs from the non-Scopus corpus and 41124 words in another 50 RAIs from the Scopus corpus. Meanwhile, the paragraph numbers of each RAI in both corpora should not exceed 6 paragraphs (Nwogu, 1997).

B. Analytical Framework

In this study, Swales' (1990) CARS model was adapted in analyzing the rhetorical moves of a total of 100 English linguistics RAIs from the non-Scopus and Scopus corpora. The CARS model renders the rhetorical structure of introductions as three moves: establishing a territory, establishing a niche, and occupying the niche. The purpose of the first move is to describe the general terrain or layout of the research area using one or more of the steps. The second move presents the niche on the topic, asserting the need for new research by emphasizing existing gaps. The third move then reveals the solutions, demonstrating how they help to address a given gap. According to the communicative sub-functions in constructing the introductions, 12 steps were contained in Swales' (1990) original model. However, in our

pilot study, a new step Move 3 Step 5 was detected in another 10 introductions from each corpus. For the purpose of ensuring inter-rater reliability, two inter-coders in applied linguistics were included, and an agreement was reached (Cohen’s Kappa = 0.814) with the researcher on the identification of the rhetorical structures. Table 1 shows the adapted Swales’ (1990) CARS model.

TABLE 1
THE ADAPTED SWALES’ (1990) CREATE A RESEARCH SPACE (CARS) MODEL

Moves	Steps	Examples
Move 1 Establishing a territory	Step 1 Claiming centrality and/or	<i>a large body of data, important aspect of, a central issue, wide interest in</i>
	Step 2 Making topic generalization(s) and/or	<i>is known to, are believed to be, tend to consist of, are often criticized for</i>
	Step 3 Reviewing items of previous research	<i>Smith found that, in the literature, Peterson argued that...</i>
Move 2 Establishing a niche	Step 1A Counter-claiming or	<i>is challenged by, become increasingly unreliable</i>
	Step 1B Indicating a gap or	<i>but little research, a limited range of, were restricted to</i>
	Step 1C Question-raising or	<i>it is not clear whether, the question remains, has remained unclear</i>
	Step 1D Continuing a tradition	<i>need to be analyzed, it is of interest to, it is desirable to</i>
Move 3 Occupying the niche	Step 1A Outlining purposes or	<i>the aim of this paper is, our purpose was</i>
	Step 1B Announcing present research	<i>this paper evaluates the effect on, this research presents, this study focuses on</i>
	Step 2 Announcing principal findings	<i>this approach provides, our results indicate</i>
	Step 3 Indicating research article structure	<i>we have organized, this paper is structured as follows</i>
	Step 4 Evaluation of findings	<i>close to the optimum achievable bound</i>
	Step 5 Expectation from findings	<i>it is hoped that</i>

C. Data Analysis

The 100 English linguistics RAIs in both corpora were identified into hierarchical schematic structures (or Moves and Steps). The term “Move” was defined as a chunk of text consisting of at least one complete sentence that fulfilled a distinct communicative purpose (Zhang & Wannaruk, 2016). Therefore, regardless of length, the text coding chunk could be a single complete sentence or multiple sentences with consistent orientation signifying moves or steps. Based on the adapted Swales’ (1990) model, the coding was performed in a table template by manually tagging and highlighting the typical expressions that indicated the linguistic elements of each move (or step).

Meanwhile, in the coding process, if various steps of the same move were frequently found to cluster together without being interrupted by a different move or sub-heading, they would be considered as one move. However, if a certain move recurred after an intervening one, each occurrence of that move would be considered an individual instance of the move.

Similarly, within a move, if certain steps cluster together without being broken by another different step, they were counted as one instance of the step. However, if certain steps were broken by another different step, each occurrence of that step was counted as an individual instance of the step.

After identifying the occurrences of moves and steps in both corpora, the frequency and the distribution (percentage) of each move and step were generated by using the method of descriptive statistics and the auxiliary software SPSS. Then the method of inferential statistics Chi-square was used to test the correlation in the occurrence frequency of rhetorical moves between the non-Scopus and Scopus corpus.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. The Occurrences of Moves and Steps in Both Corpora

The occurrences of moves and steps refer to the total instances or the total number of moves and steps used in English linguistics RAIs from both corpora. Table 2 shows the occurrences of moves in a total of 100 English linguistics RAIs from both corpora.

TABLE 2
THE OCCURRENCES OF MOVES IN THE NON-SCOPUS AND SCOPUS CORPUS

Non-Scopus Corpus (N=50 introductions)	Moves	Move 1	Move 2	Move 3	Overall
	Occurrences of Moves	98	61	88	247
Percentage of Frequency	39.7%	24.7%	35.6%	100.0%	
Scopus Corpus (N=50 introductions)	Moves	Move 1	Move 2	Move 3	Overall
	Occurrences of Moves	95	68	72	235
	Percentage of Frequency	40.4%	28.9%	30.6%	100.0%

In the non-Scopus corpus, a total number of 247 moves were noticed. While in the Scopus corpus, the overall move patterns were 235. In the non-Scopus corpus, the results showed that there were 39.7% (98 occurrences) of Move 1, 35.6% (88 occurrences) of Move 3, and 24.7% (61 occurrences) of Move 2. As for the Scopus corpus, there were 40.4%

(95 occurrences) of Move 1, 30.6% (72 occurrences) of Move 3, and 28.9% (68 occurrences) of Move 2. In order of high to low frequency, the moves employed by writers from both corpora were Move 1, Move 3 and Move 2.

Among the three moves in both the non-Scopus and Scopus corpora, the proportion in the occurring frequency of Move 1 is relatively higher than the other two moves used in the linguistics RAIs. This is mainly because Move 1 (Establishing a Territory) is not only considered as an opening move to set an orientation for a general area of the research but also as a recurring move to add relevant information about the phenomenon. The cyclicity of this move is evident. It is a topic-related move that serves as a common tactic for writers in stating and describing the theme, for example, whether the research is important, critical, interesting, problematic, relevant, or otherwise worthy of investigation. Concerning linguistics corpora, the current finding is in line with Qian's (2005) study, which investigated 200 English RAIs in the field of linguistics. Her results showed that by L2 writers, the occurrence of Move 1 was 36%, followed by Move 3 (33%) and Move 2 (31%). Meanwhile, Sheldon's (2011) study also summarized that the total occurrences of Move 1 were 48 and its percentage of distribution was 40.33% in the linguistics Scopus corpus. Compared with the other two moves, Move 1 was used quite often. One likely reason for the dominant instance of this move is that by establishing a territory, the writer can situate his or her research in a certain research domain to obtain a sense of affiliation hoping to get accepted by his or her peer readers (Qian, 2005).

Followed by Move 1, the next dominant move that frequently appeared in both corpora is Move 3 (Occupying the Niche). This result is also consistent with Qian's (2005) study, which indicated that Move 3 was closely followed by the frequency of Move 1 in the area of applied linguistics. Meanwhile, in the Scopus corpus of medical RAIs, about 35% of Move 3 was discovered (Sheldon, 2011), and this result was quite close to 30.6% of Move 3 in the linguistics Scopus corpus in the current study. As a final move to announce how the research will answer the specific research questions or bring new insight in comparison to previous research, most writers can point out the objectives of a particular issue.

Concerning Move 2 (Establishing a Niche), writers from both corpora used it less frequently compared to Move 1 and Move 3. It suggested that Move 1 and Move 3 were used repeatedly and cyclically while Move 2 was seldom used multiple times, and this resulted in a lower percentage of their occurrences. Lindeberg (2004) asserted that the "niche" serves as a solid background that highlights the relevance or the magnitude of the present contribution. A compelling "niche" needs to be developed by analyzing, rejecting, or pointing out gaps in prior relevant work. As Move 2 was always closely linked to the past studies inserted in Move 1 rather than current studies that were involved in Move 3, the recurrence of it became less frequent.

After discussing each move, the smaller textual segments which were named steps were also investigated. Table 3 demonstrates the occurrences of steps in a total of 100 English linguistics RAIs from both corpora.

TABLE 3
THE OCCURRENCES OF STEPS IN THE NON-SCOPUS AND SCOPUS CORPUS
(N=50 IN EACH CORPUS)

Moves	Steps	Non-Scopus		Scopus	
		f	P	f	P
Move 1 Establishing a territory	Overall Steps	193	48.4%	163	47.4%
	Step 1: Claiming centrality	23	5.8%	14	4.1%
	Step 2: Making topic generalization	71	17.8%	55	16.0%
	Step 3: Reviewing items of previous research	99	24.8%	94	27.3%
Move 2 Establishing a niche	Overall Steps	68	17.2%	73	21.2%
	Step 1A: Counter-claiming	11	2.8%	11	3.2%
	Step 1B: Indicating a gap	41	10.3%	41	11.9%
	Step 1C: Raising a question	5	1.3%	2	0.6%
	Step 1D: Continuing a tradition	11	2.8%	19	5.5%
Move 3 Occupying a niche	Overall Steps	139	34.9%	108	31.3%
	Step 1A: Outlining purposes	40	10.0%	38	11.0%
	Step 1B: Announcing present research	71	17.8%	44	12.8%
	Step 2: Announcing main findings	0	0%	2	0.6%
	Step 3: Indicating structure of the paper	11	2.8%	6	1.7%
	Step 4: Evaluation of findings	10	2.5%	7	2.0%
	Step 5: Expectation from findings	7	1.8%	11	3.2%
Total		400	100%	344	100%

In terms of the use of steps in each move, there were overall 400 steps embedded in the three moves from the non-Scopus corpus. The steps used in Move 1 dominantly accounted for about 48.4%, followed by the steps in Move 3 and Move 2, accounting for 34.9% and 17.2% respectively.

There were various distinguishing characteristics in the utilization of steps in each move from the Scopus corpus. A total of 344 steps were embedded in the three moves, in which steps in Move 1 accounted for 47.4% of the total, followed by steps in Move 3 and Move 2, accounting for 31.3% and 21.2% respectively.

Table 4 shows the distribution of steps in Move 1 from the linguistics RAIs in non-Scopus-indexed and Scopus-indexed journals. In order of high to low frequency, the steps in Move 1 were Step 3, Step 2 and Step 1 in these two corpora.

TABLE 4
STEPS IN MOVE 1 FROM BOTH CORPORA

Move	Steps	Non-Scopus		Scopus	
		f	P	f	P
Move 1 Establishing a territory	Overall Steps	193	48.4%	163	47.4%
	Step 1: Claiming centrality	23	5.8%	14	4.1%
	Step 2: Making topic generalization	71	17.8%	55	16.0%
	Step 3: Reviewing items of previous research	99	24.8%	94	27.3%

Move 1 Step 1 (Claiming Centrality)

In the non-Scopus and Scopus corpora, Move 1 Step 1 was the least frequent strategy used by academic writers. This step occurred only 23 times and had a 5.8% distribution in the non-Scopus corpus, and occurred 14 times with a 4.1% proportion in the Scopus corpus. The results are different from previous results which showed that Step 1 occurred 15 times but had a proportion of 16.7% from the non-Scopus linguistics RAIs (Kheryadi, 2016). The reason could be that when considering how a certain step was distributed, its proportion would be influenced by how other steps were distributed in the overall three moves.

Example 1: The notion of autonomy has received increasing attention in educational research, especially in foreign language education.

Move 1 Step 1 was found in Example 1. The underlined “has received increasing attention” is an expression that makes a centrality claim, stating that the topic of the research is useful, important and worth investigating since it forms a lively, significant and well-established area. As a result, it serves as a topic sentence by claiming centrality to establish a territory.

Move 1 Step 2 (Making Topic Generalization)

To establish a territory, Move 1 Step 2 was sometimes used by academic writers in the non-Scopus corpus, accounting for 17.8%. The instances of this step were 71 in the non-Scopus corpus. This result accords with the earlier observations from Kheryadi (2016) who pointed out that this step had a proportion of 18.9% in the non-Scopus linguistics RAIs. In the Scopus corpus, this step accounted for 16.0% with a total number of 55 occurrences. The total instances of it were a bit lower than those used in the non-Scopus corpus. The reason could be that writers always used this step without the intervention of other steps in the Scopus corpus.

Example 2: Considering the ever-growing number of non-native speakers (NNSs) and learners of English, it is natural that the majority of English teachers are non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) and the ESL and EFL speakers would have been taught mainly by indigenous NNESTs.

Move 1 Step 2 usually consists of statements concerning the current state of either knowledge, consensus, practice, or description of phenomena. As can be seen in Example 2, the writer establishes a territory about “non-native English-speaking teachers’ professional identity” by describing the evolution and the number to make topic generalizations.

Move 1 Step 3 (Reviewing Items of Previous Research)

To establish a territory, Move 1 Step 3 was the most frequently used step by academic writers in the non-Scopus corpus, accounting for 24.8%. This step was used 99 times in the non-Scopus corpus. A possible reason for its recurrence could be that most of the writers preferred a closer connection with the work of others (Badib & Sutopo, 2012) to get acknowledge the current state of certain research. To create a research space, one has to compete for research space, primarily knowing what others’ opinions are and then going a step further (Kobayashi, 2003). Hence, the writers need to relate what has been found or claimed with who has found it or claimed it. Similar to the result found from the non-Scopus corpus, Move 1 Step 3 was the most dominant step by academic writers in Move 1 in the Scopus corpus, and this step has been used 94 times. This reflects the fact that the reviews of prior studies served as the main generators of content elaboration by arranging the definitions of terminologies, exemplifications of complex concepts, and assessments of the research provided (Samraj, 2002). As a result, the readers will get a clearer picture and explanation of the main background and aims of the research. This finding is indicative of the fact that more justifications are needed in addressing a situation of social science discipline - by providing potential readers with a wide and varied explanation- whereby the writers manipulate the introduction section to provide a plausible context for the subsequent findings to attract as many readers’ attention as possible to their perspective (Swales & Najjar, 1987).

Example 3: McGrath (2000) highlights the importance of teacher autonomy in teacher professionalism.

Move 1 Step 3 was used in Example 3. As shown in the expression “McGrath (2000) highlights the importance of”, the writer relates what has been found (or claimed) with who has found it (or claimed it) to describe a layout of the topic “teacher autonomy”.

Table 5 shows the distribution of steps in Move 2 from the linguistics RAIs in non-Scopus-indexed and Scopus-indexed journals. In order of high to low frequency, the steps in Move 2 were Step 1B, Step 1D, Step 1A, and Step 1C in these two corpora.

TABLE 5
STEPS IN MOVE 2 FROM BOTH CORPORA

Move	Steps	Non-Scopus		Scopus	
		f	P	f	P
Move 2 Establishing a niche	Overall Steps	68	17.2%	73	21.2%
	Step 1A: Counter-claiming	11	2.8%	11	3.2%
	Step 1B: Indicating a gap	41	10.3%	41	11.9%
	Step 1C: Raising a question	5	1.3%	2	0.6%
	Step 1D: Continuing a tradition	11	2.8%	19	5.5%

Move 2 Step 1A (Counter-Claiming)

Move 2 Step 1A was the parallel favored step of Move 2 Step 1D that the writers applied in the non-Scopus. It accounted for 2.8% with a total of 11 instances. However, the results of the proportion of this step in the current study differ from Kheryadi's (2016) study, in which the proportion of Move 2 Step 1A was much higher in the RAIs in *Cultural and English Language Teaching (CELT)* and *Teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Indonesia (TEFLIN)* journals. While in the Scopus corpus, this step was the next frequent step followed by Move 2 Step 1D. It accounted for 3.2% with a number of 11 instances. Regarding Move 2 Step 1A, a possible explanation for its comparatively lower frequency might be that in some situations, gaps are not detected by the writers, and instead, they are described as being generally known or discovered by other researchers (Shehzad, 2008). Instead of highlighting the flaws, the writer "merely reports them second hand, relying on previous authorities, presumably a less face-threatening act" (Lindeberg, 2004, p. 92). This is done to avoid "treading on the toes of other citizens of the academic universe" (Lewin et al., 2001, p. 43).

Example 4: However, the juxtaposition of identity's two perspectives, namely, personal voice and social voice, has been the subject of controversy.

Move 2 Step 1A was used in Example 4. The signal "has been the subject of controversy" expresses a contrast or negative evaluation to show that the previous study is not complete, or that there are aspects of the research field which still need further investigation.

Move 2 Step 1B (Indicating a Gap)

To establish a niche, Move 2 Step 1B was the most common move that the writers employed in linguistics RAIs in both types of journals. It occurred 41 times and accounted for 10.3% in the non-Scopus corpus, and occurred 41 times and accounted for 11.9% in the Scopus corpus. It indicates that in both corpora, the frequency of the usage of this step was the same, but due to the distribution of the overall steps in three moves, the percentages or the proportions of this step were different in both corpora. These findings further support the idea that the dominant step used in justifying the research gap in linguistics RAIs is Move 2 Step 1B, which shows the obvious absence, major limitation, and distinctness of certain research in the field (Samanhudi, 2017). Moreover, this result is consistent with Lim's (2012) study on the corpus of introductions of management research articles. Writers vastly applied Move 2 Step 1B could be a result of various alternative ways to indicate a gap. The four ways were widely taken by academic writers to indicate a gap. They are (i) "highlighting the complete absence of research bearing a specific characteristic", (ii) "stressing insufficient research in a specific aspect", (iii) "revealing a limitation in previous research" and (iv) "contrasting conflicting previous research findings" (Lim, 2012, pp. 229-245).

Example 5: While learner autonomy has been extensively investigated, teacher autonomy has not gained as much attention until relatively recently.

Move 2 Step 1B was used in Example 5. It frequently follows Move 1 Step 2. In this case, the expression "has not gained as much attention" is taken by the writer to make topic generalizations from another perspective, showing that the previous studies of "autonomy" are not complete and that there is another aspect of the research field "teacher autonomy" which still needs further investigation.

Move 2 Step 1C (Raising a Question)

Move 2 Step 1C was the least frequent step in both corpora. The writers were not so inclined to pose a question mark in a sentence or use a questioning tone about previous research to establish a niche. It only occurred 5 times, accounting for 1.3% in the non-Scopus corpus. This result is broadly congruent with Kheryadi (2016), who found that the recurrent frequency of this step is comparatively lower, accounting for 5.5% in the non-Scopus corpus. In the Scopus corpus, Move 2 Step 1C merely had 2 instances with a percentage of 0.6%. The possible reason for the rare usage of this step could be that the writers were not willing to pick on previous studies or pose questions that prior research had failed to answer. They seldom posed direct or indirect queries.

Example 6: Will the findings of studies carried out in ESL settings also be applicable in the EFL contexts considering the fact that the expanding societies bring to English an entirely different dimension in almost all aspects of ELT?

Move 2 Step 1C was used in Example 6. After reviewing the previous literature on the findings in ESL settings, the writer raises a question about if the findings are applicable in EFL contexts. By using "will the findings of studies...", the niche is pointed out in a questioning tone.

Move 2 Step 1D (Continuing a Tradition)

In Move 2, Move 2 Step 1D was the next preferred step followed by Move 2 Step 1B that the writers applied in the non-Scopus and Scopus corpora. It had a distribution of 2.8% with 11 occurrences in the non-Scopus corpus and a

proportion of 5.5% with 19 occurrences in the Scopus corpus. Inconsistent with what Kheryadi (2016) has found, this step was only scattered in the current study. This rather contradictory result may be due to the previous research’s small sample size (eight articles). As for this step, continuing a tradition is more like adding to what is known and what is unknown, and it is frequently signaled by logical connectors (Swales, 1990). This step may be driven by the notion that the present body of information is insufficient and hence requires more investigation through new studies.

Example 7: Therefore, there is a need to revisit the individual dimensions of what it means to be an autonomous teacher.

Move 2 Step 1D was used in Example 7. Logical connectors such as therefore, hence, consequently, and thus are frequently shown in this move. Here, the causative connector is “therefore”, followed by the lexical bundle “there is a need to” to indicate the requirement of further research.

Table 6 shows the distribution of steps in Move 3 from the linguistics RAIs in non-Scopus-indexed and Scopus-indexed journals. In order of high to low frequency, the steps in Move 3 were Step 1B, Step 1A, Step 3, Step 4, Step 5, and Step 2 from the non-Scopus corpus, and Step 1B, Step 1A, Step 5, Step 4, Step 3 and Step 2 from the Scopus corpus. Regarding the similarities, Steps 1B and 1A were used as the most and second most frequent steps in both corpora, while Step 2 was the least frequent in both corpora.

TABLE 6
STEPS IN MOVE 3 FROM BOTH CORPORA

Move	Steps	Non-Scopus		Scopus	
		f	P	f	P
Move 3 Occupying a niche	Overall Steps	139	34.9%	108	31.3%
	Step 1A: Outlining purposes	40	10.0%	38	11.0%
	Step 1B: Announcing present research	71	17.8%	44	12.8%
	Step 2: Announcing main findings	0	0%	2	0.6%
	Step 3: Indicating structure of the paper	11	2.8%	6	1.7%
	Step 4: Evaluation of findings	10	2.5%	7	2.0%
	Step 5: Expectation from findings	7	1.8%	11	3.2%

Move 3 Step 1A (Outlining Purposes)

Move 3 Step 1A, which accounted for 10% with a total instance of 40, was the second frequent step in this move that was used in the non-Scopus corpus. It was also the second most frequent step that occurred 38 times with a proportion of 11% in the Scopus corpus. The “aim” or “goal” of a study was highlighted and this step was usually identified by standard or collapsed structure, choice of the present tense, the absence of references to previous research, and the use of deictic references to the present text, such as “this, the present, we, here, now, I, and herein”, and the verb tenses employed vary depending on whether the writer is referring to a physical or abstract concept (Swale, 1990).

Example 8: This paper is an attempt to fill this research gap and thus aims to address the following question.

Move 3 Step 1A was used in Example 8. The writer introduces the solution to the problem described in Move 2 by stating the main purpose or aim of the study. In this case, the lexical bundle “an attempt to” clearly leads to the main purpose of the current study.

Move 3 Step 1B (Announcing Present Research)

To occupy a niche (Move 3), announcing present research (Move 3 Step 1B) was mostly used in the non-Scopus and Scopus corpora. With 71 occurrences, this step accounted for 17.8% of the use of all the steps of three moves in the non-Scopus corpus, and with 44 occurrences, it had a proportion of 12.8% in the Scopus corpus. Making announcements is typical in any research article. To provide a clear outcome of the paper, either human or inanimate agents were used as the subject.

Example 9: To this end, we conducted a study to investigate 14 College English teachers at a public university located in Wuhan, China.

Move 3 Step 1B was used in Example 9. Here, to occupy the niche, the writer announces the present research by using the human agent “we” as a subject. The phrase “we conduct a study to investigate” directly links the research objectives with the current study.

Move 3 Step 2 (Announcing Main Findings)

Move 3 Step 2 was the least frequently utilized in both corpora. In the non-Scopus corpus, none of the writers choose this step to state results. In the Scopus corpus, only 2 occurrences with a 0.6% of proportion could be detected. This could be because this step is not suitable to use in all disciplines. The result is in congruence with Abdullah (2016), who explained that this step was the most unfavorable one and it only occurred 3 times from the overall results in both the English Language Teaching (ELT) and Civil Engineering (CE) areas. Moreover, in a result-oriented discipline such as computer science, the introduction points out to the reader in various ways about the writer’s contribution, which is divergent from the discipline of social sciences (Shehzad, 2010).

Example 10: One of the main findings was that the positive group appeared to be more autonomous than the negative group in their teaching practices.

Move 3 Step 2 was used in Example 10. “One of the main findings was” shows that the writer considers the result to be an important aspect of the research. Therefore, it reports the findings.

Move 3 Step 3 (Indicating Structure of the Paper)

Move 3 Step 3 was the third most frequent step in the non-Scopus corpus, while the second least frequent step was in the Scopus corpus. It took up 2.8% with 11 occurrences in the use of all the steps in three moves from the non-Scopus corpus but 1.7% with 6 occurrences from the Scopus corpus. These findings suggest that there is a difference between the frequency of using this step in the non-Scopus and Scopus RAIs in the area of linguistics. More experienced writers mentioned the structure of their papers less frequently.

Example 11: The remainder of the paper is organized as follows.

Move 3 Step 3 was used in Example 11. The structure of the paper is introduced by the writer through the sentence “the paper is organized as follows”.

Move 3 Step 4 (Evaluation of Findings)

Move 3 Step 4 was the third least frequent step in Move 3 that was used in both the non-Scopus and Scopus corpora. It accounted for 2.5% with total instances of 10 in the non-Scopus corpus and took up 2.0% with total occurrences of 7 in the Scopus corpus. Typically, this step is the opposite of Move 2 in that it requires a positive evaluation of some aspect of the solution. According to Swales (1990), this step is often found in research that aims to develop new methods, such as chemistry and engineering. Hence, the result in the current study confirms the idea that this step was seldom applied in language and linguistics RAIs and it was usually left until the discussion section.

Example 12: The findings have pedagogical implications for L2 academic writing instruction.

Move 3 Step 4 was used in example 12, and “the findings have pedagogical implications for” is the marker to show the pedagogical significance of the current study.

Move 3 Step 5 (Expectation from Findings)

Move 3 Step 5 was the new step found in the pilot study of the present study. In the non-Scopus corpus, this step was the second least frequently utilized step. It occurred 7 times with a proportion of 1.8% in the total number of steps of the three moves. However, in the Scopus corpus, this step was the third most frequently chosen step. It had 11 occurrences with a 3.2% proportion in the use of all the steps. As it was a novel rhetorical strategy detected in the linguistics RAIs, previous studies had not focused on this step and no results had been mentioned. Different from Step 4, this step mostly shows the prediction of future studies or aspirations based on the findings. The results indicated that the more seasoned writers within the Scopus corpus preferred to view the future with optimism.

Example 12: It is hoped that this research can shed light on a deeper understanding of the teacher identity construction of female English learners from rural China.

Move 3 Step 5 was used in Example 12. The writer proposes the potential achievement and advantage of the research by drawing the blueprint “it is hoped that this research can shed light on... and can also help improve...”. This is a kind of expectation that aims to show achievable results. The lexical bundle used here is “it is hoped that”.

B. The Relationships Between the Frequency of Moves and Steps and the Indexing of Journals

Table 7 shows relationships in the occurrence frequency of moves and steps in English linguistics RAIs between the non-Scopus-indexed and Scopus-indexed journals.

TABLE 7
CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS IN THE RELATIONSHIPS OF MOVES AND STEPS OCCURRENCE FREQUENCY BETWEEN NON-SCOPUS AND SCOPUS CORPUS

Moves and Steps	N		Chi-Square Value	df	Asymp. Sig.
	Non-Scopus	Scopus			
Move 1	193	163	1.835 ^a	2	.399
Move 1 Step 1	23	14	2.189 ^a	1	.139
Move 1 Step 2	71	55	2.032 ^a	1	.154
Move 1 Step 3	99	94	.130 ^a	1	.719
Move 2	68	73	3.246 ^a	3	.355
Move 2 Step 1A	11	11	.000 ^a	1	1.000
Move 2 Step 1B	41	41	.000 ^a	1	1.000
Move 2 Step 1C	5	2	1.286 ^a	1	.257
Move 2 Step 1D	11	19	2.133 ^a	1	.144
Move 3	139	108	7.507 ^a	5	.186
Move 3 Step 1A	40	38	.051 ^a	1	.821
Move 3 Step 1B	71	44	6.339 ^a	1	.012
Move 3 Step 2	0	2	/	/	/
Move 3 Step 3	11	6	1.471 ^a	1	.225
Move 3 Step 4	10	7	.529 ^a	1	.467
Move 3 Step 5	7	11	.889 ^a	1	.346

Based on the results of the test of independence Chi-square, as the significant values (p) of the three moves all exceeded alpha ($\alpha = .05$), there was no sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis. That is, the occurrence of each move did not turn out to be significantly dependent on the indexing types of journals.

However, from a narrow sense, based on the results of the Chi-Square goodness of fit test, as the significant value (p) of Move 3 Step 1B was smaller than alpha ($\alpha = .05$), this step (announcing present research) was found to be significantly dependent on the indexing types of journals. This result corroborates the idea that at the step level, there was a relationship in the occurrence of steps of Move 3 between the non-Scopus and Scopus corpora. However,

concerning the specific step, the current results have not been previously described. In Soodmand Afshar and Ranjbar's (2017) research, they did not report the distinct finding in Move 3 Step 1B but they found that the associations significantly lay in the occurrences of Move 3 Step 3 (definitional clarifications), Move 3 Step 5 (announcing principal outcomes), Move 3 Step 6 (stating the value of the present research) and Move 3 Step 7 (outlining the structure of the paper) in linguistics RAIs between the four Scopus-indexed journals and four non-Scopus-indexed journals. Therefore, writers from the non-Scopus corpus seemed to overuse the announcement of their research and it would be better to reduce this repetition.

V. CONCLUSION

This paper investigated the occurrence frequency of rhetorical moves in introductions of linguistics research articles from non-Scopus-indexed and Scopus-indexed journals. Based on the findings on move identification, Move 3 Step 5, which pertains to the expectation from findings, is a novel step that enriches Swales' (1990) CARS framework from a theoretical standpoint. In the Scopus corpus, this step was the third most commonly selected step regarding Move 3. As prior investigations have not placed emphasis on this particular aspect and have not yielded any results in this regard, the current findings indicated that proficient writers exhibited a predilection for envisioning the future with assurance. Regarding the occurrence of moves, the writers from both corpora utilized Move 1, Move 3 and Move 2 in descending order of frequency, and there was no significant relationship between the frequency of moves and indexing types of journals. However, as for the steps, Move 3 Step 1B was found to be significantly dependent on the indexing types of journals. Overuse of this step may limit the possibility of publishing RAIs in Scopus-indexed journals.

The limitation of this research was the relatively small size of the corpora. More texts may be incorporated into both the non-Scopus and Scopus corpora in the future. This would allow for a more evident correlation between the frequency of each step of moves and the indexing of journals. Meanwhile, it is feasible to undertake interdisciplinary investigations aimed at move frequency in various sections, disciplines, and academic genres.

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