UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

THEMATICITY IN ENGLISH ACADEMIC RESEARCH ARTICLES ACROSS DISCIPLINES IN HARD AND SOFT SCIENCES

SEYED FOAD EBRAHIMI

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THEMATICITY IN ENGLISH ACADEMIC RESEARCH ARTICLES ACROSS DISCIPLINES IN HARD AND SOFT SCIENCES

By
SEYED FOAD EBRAHIMI

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

July 2014
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Specially Dedicated to:

My beloved Family
My Aunt, My Parents, My wife and My son

This is just a small token of my love & affection and underlying gratitude & appreciation for all you have done for me.

Thank you and God bless you always
Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

THEMATICITY IN ENGLISH ACADEMIC RESEARCH ARTICLES ACROSS DISCIPLINES IN HARD AND SOFT SCIENCES

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SEYED FOAD E BRAHIMI

July 2014

Chairperson: Prof. Chan Swee Heng, PhD
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Theme which is defined as the starting point of the message and the element which the clause is mainly about plays a major role in text organization (Halliday, 1994). This study explores the types and discourse functions of theme in the research articles and its four rhetorical sections (introduction, method, result and discussion) across four disciplines: Applied Linguistics and Psychology representing soft science and Chemistry and Environmental Engineering representing hard science. This cross-disciplinary study was carried out on a corpus of 40 (10 from each discipline) research articles. The research articles sourced from 12 ISI journals (3 from each discipline) published from 2008 to 2012. The corpus was analyzed based on the modified model of the available models in relation to theme types and discourse functions. The results revealed that the theme type selections were guided by the nature of the rhetorical sections of the research article. However, the frequency of use of the theme types was constrained by the nature of the discipline. Discourse functions in relation to theme types were predominantly determined by the divisions of the hard and soft sciences, the specific disciplines within, and the internal structure of the rhetorical sections of the research articles. In addition, the results of this study manifest a new framework for the analysis of discourse functions of theme types in research articles. The results and analysis establish that the theme is an important means of highlighting the disciplinary variations in the writing of the rhetorical sections of the research article. The study has implications for novice research article writers, EAP instructors and EAP text developers. These results could be used to target at the awareness of linguistic features such as theme as a crucial element in dispensing of discourse functions of the rhetorical sections of the research article.

Keywords: Theme, discourse function, disciplinary variation, research article, rhetorical sections of research article
Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

TEMA DALAM ARTIKEL PENYELIDIKAN AKADEMIK BAHASA INGGERIS MERENTAS DISIPLIN SAINS DAN SASTERA

Oleh

SEYED FOAD EBRAHIMI

Julai 2014

Pengerusi: Prof. Chan Swee Heng, PhD
Fakulti: Bahasa Moden dan Komunikasi


Kata kunci: tema, fungsi wacana, perbezaan disiplin, artikel pengajian, bahagian retorik dalam artikel penyelidikan
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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 23 July 2014 to conduct the final examination of Seyed Foad Ebrahimi on his thesis entitled "Thematicity in English Academic Research Articles Across Disciplines in Hard and Soft Sciences" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy.

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