

**GENERIC STRUCTURES AND LINGUISTIC
RESOURCES IN RESEARCH ARTICLE
INTRODUCTIONS IN ETHNIC STUDIES
AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**

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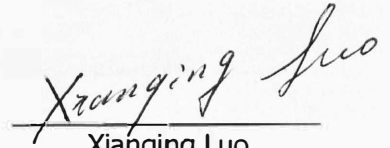
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the material in this thesis is my own except for quotations, excerpts, summaries and references, which have been duly acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

Academic scholars and postgraduate students across the world are generally expected to write and publish research articles in order to achieve professional advancement. Among the different sections of a research article, the Introduction section is known to be difficult, and practically all researchers acknowledge that it is more difficult to get started on a piece of research writing compared to other parts of a research article (Swales, 2004). This explains why there has been increasing interest in research relating to how the introductory section of a research article is written in different disciplines. Despite the voluminous literature, research article introductions (RAIs) in certain social sciences have received little attention in previous genre-based studies, and this is particularly evident from a cross-disciplinary perspective. Such gaps in past investigations into research article introductions are especially noticeable in some fields such as Ethnic Studies (ES) and Industrial Relations (IR). In response to such lacunas, this study aims to (i) ascertain the rhetorical structures and salient linguistic resources in research article introductions on ES and IR, and (ii) identify the possible cross-disciplinary similarities and differences in the two fields of study. With respect to research methods, a total of 60 research articles were collected from six established journals in the two disciplines, each of which was represented by 30 articles obtained from three international refereed journals indexed in Web of Science. The investigation was conducted using (i) Swales' (1990, 2004) framework for analysing rhetorical moves, (ii) Lim's (2006, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2017) techniques for describing salient linguistic resources for rhetorical steps, and (iii) statements elicited from six specialist informants in the disciplines concerned. In regard to research results, I have found that 10 of the 11 rhetorical steps in Swales' 2004 model can be found in both disciplines. In terms of frequencies, 'establishing a territory' (in Move 1) constitutes an obligatory move in both disciplines, distinct differences in the frequencies of specific rhetorical categories have been found across ES and IR. So far as niche establishments are concerned, 'revealing a limitation in previous research' in Move 2 is found in a vast majority of the IR RAIs, but only in a third of the ES RAIs. When it comes to 'presenting the present work' in Move 3, 'summarising methods', 'stating the value of the present research' and 'outlining the structure of the paper' are incorporated in the majority of the IR RAIs but only less than half of the ES RAIs. Despite the existence of similar rhetorical steps in both disciplines, the categories of information provided in specific rhetorical steps differ markedly across ES and IR. My specialist informants have attributed the difference in frequencies of the steps to the use of differing philosophical assumptions and research paradigms in the disciplines concerned. In terms of linguistic resources, I have found that specific categories of pronouns, adjectives, verb forms, noun phrases, adverbials and interrogative structures are recurrently used in both disciplines; nevertheless, it has also been found that some cross-disciplinary differences exist in the use of specific categories of verb phrases and noun phrases in 'establishing a territory', 'indicating a gap', 'presenting RQs or hypotheses' and 'outlining the structure of the paper'. Based on the findings, a broad array of recurrent linguistic resources can be flexibly used to help materials developers and EAP instructors make informed choices while advising learners about the connections between writers' rhetorical strategies and their associated linguistic realisations in ES and IR. This study has also revealed how a relevant theoretical model for writing research introductions needs to be adjusted to take into consideration the actual practices of expert writers across different social science disciplines.

ABSTRAK

STRUKTUR GENERIK DAN SUMBER LINGUISTIK DALAM PENGENALAN ARTIKEL PENYELIDIKAN MENGENAI PENGAJIAN ETNIK DAN HUBUNGAN INDUSTRI: SATU KAJIAN BERDASARKAN GENRE

Sarjana akademik dan pelajar pascasiswazah di merata dunia lazimnya perlu menulis dan menerbitkan artikel penyelidikan dalam usaha untuk mencapai kejayaan dalam profesion mereka. Antara pelbagai bahagian dalam sesuatu artikel penyelidikan, bahagian pengenalan sering dianggap sebagai satu bahagian yang sukar ditulis, dan hampir semua ahli penyelidikan mengakui bahawa mereka mengalami kesukaran yang lebih besar semasa menulis bahagian permulaan sesuatu artikel penyelidikan berbanding dengan bahagian-bahagian lain (Swales, 2004). Ini merupakan sebab mengapa penganalisis genre semakin berminat untuk mengkaji cara bagaimana bahagian pengenalan sesuatu artikel penyelidikan ditulis dalam pelbagai disiplin. Walaupun terdapat banyak literatur dalam lingkungan ini, bahagian pengenalan dalam artikel penyelidikan (BPAP) dalam bidang sains sosial tertentu masih kurang diberi perhatian dalam kajian-kajian genre yang lepas, dan keadaan ini amat jelas jika dilihat dari perspektif silang disiplin. Ruang-ruang dalam kajian lepas mengenai BPAP ini adalah ketara dalam bidang-bidang tertentu seperti Pengajian Etnik (PE) dan Hubungan Industri (HI). Untuk mengisi ruang yang wujud ini, kajian ini telah dijalankan untuk (i) mengenal pasti struktur generik dan sumber linguistik yang menonjol dalam BPAP bidang PE dan HI, dan (ii) menentukan persamaan dan perbezaan antara dua bidang tersebut. Mengenai kaedah kajian, sebanyak 60 artikel telah dipilih daripada enam jurnal terkemuka dalam dua disiplin berkenaan, dan setiap bidang tersebut diwakili oleh 30 artikel yang diperoleh daripada tiga jurnal antarabangsa berwasit yang terindeks dalam Jaringan Sains (Web of Science). Kajian ini telah dijalankan dengan menggunakan (i) rangka yang dipelopori oleh Swales (1990, 2004) untuk menganalisis gerak-gerak retorikal, (ii) teknik untuk menghuraikan sumber linguistik yang dicadangkan oleh Lim (2006, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2017) bagi setiap langkah retorikal, dan (iii) kenyataan yang diperoleh daripada enam orang pakar informan dalam dua bidang berkenaan. Berkaitan dengan hasil kajian, saya telah mendapati bahawa 10 daripada 11 langkah retorikal yang dicadangkan oleh Swales (2004) wujud dalam dua bidang tersebut. Dari segi kekerapan, 'membuka lingkungan kajian' (dalam Gerak 1) merupakan satu gerak yang wajib dalam kedua-dua disiplin, sedangkan perbezaan yang nyata boleh dikesan dari segi kategori retorikal yang khusus dalam PE dan HI. Mengenai nic-nic kajian, langkah tertentu seperti 'mendedahkan limitasi/kelemahan kajian lepas' dalam Gerak 2 telah dikesan dalam kebanyakan BPAP dalam bidang HI, tetapi hanya sepertiga daripada BPAP dalam bidang PE merangkumi langkah tersebut. Berkenaan dengan langkah 'mempersembahkan karya yang diperkenalkan' dalam Gerak 3, langkah 'merumuskan kaedah kajian', 'menyatakan nilai kajian yang diperkenalkan' dan 'mengemukakan struktur kertas kerja' didapati wujud dalam kebanyakan BPAP dalam bidang HI, tetapi kurang daripada setengah BPAP dalam bidang PE memasukkan langkah berkenaan. Meskipun terdapat langkah retorikal yang sama dalam kedua-dua disiplin tersebut, kategori maklumat yang wujud dalam langkah tertentu adalah berbeza antara bidang PE dan HI. Pakar informan menyatakan bahawa perbezaan kekerapan itu adalah disebabkan oleh andaian pemikiran dan paradigma penyelidikan yang berlainan dalam dua disiplin berkenaan. Dari segi sumber linguistik, saya mendapati bahawa penggunaan ganti nama, kata adjektif, kata kerja, frasa nama, unsur 'adverbial' dan struktur pertanyaan tertentu jelas digunakan secara menonjol dalam dua disiplin; namun demikian, telah didapati bahawa perbezaan silang disiplin memang wujud dari segi penggunaan frasa kata kerja dan frasa kata nama dalam langkah 'membuka lingkungan kajian', 'menyatakan ruang kajian (yang boleh diisi)', 'mengemukakan soalan kajian atau hipotesis' dan 'mengemukakan struktur kertas kerja'. Berdasarkan dapatan kajian saya, pelbagai sumber linguistik boleh digunakan untuk membantu pembangun bahan dan pengajar 'Bahasa Inggeris untuk tujuan akademik' (BITA) membuat pilihan dengan berdasarkan data sebenar semasa membimbing pelajar mengenai perkaitan antara strategi retorikal penulis dan realisasi linguistik dalam bidang PE dan HI. Kajian ini juga telah menunjukkan bagaimana satu model teoretikal untuk penulisan BPAP perlu diubahsuai dengan mempertimbangkan amalan sebenar penulis yang berkepakaran dalam pelbagai disiplin sains sosial.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BASE	-	British Academic Spoken English
BAWE	-	British Academic Written English
CaRS	-	Create a Research Space
EAP	-	English for Academic Purposes
EBT	-	English for Business and Technology
EFL	-	English as Foreign Language
EPC	-	English for Professional Communication
ES	-	Ethnic Studies
ESL	-	English as Second Language
ESP	-	English for Specific Purposes
GSP	-	Generic Structure Potential
IR	-	Industrial Relations
ISI	-	Institute for Scientific Information
L1	-	First Language
LERN	-	Literacy and Education Research Network
MICASE	-	Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English
Ob.	-	Obligatory
Op.	-	Optional
PISF	-	Possible in Some Fields
Q.	-	Quasi-obligatory
Q1	-	Quartile 1
Q2	-	Quartile 2
RA	-	Research Article
RAES	-	Research Articles on Ethnic Studies
RAI	-	Research Article Introduction
RAIR	-	Research Articles on Industrial Relations
SIA	-	Specialist Informant A
SIB	-	Specialist Informant B
SIC	-	Specialist Informant C
SID	-	Specialist Informant D
SIE	-	Specialist Informant E
SIF	-	Specialist Informant F
SFL	-	Systemic Functional Linguistics
SLA	-	Second Language Acquisition

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CHAPTER 1

SETTING THE CONTEXT FOR THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Academic scholars and postgraduate students across the world are generally expected to write and publish scientific papers in order to achieve professional advancement. However, many novice academic writers in different disciplines often encounter difficulties in comprehending research reports published in established journals and presenting their own reports in ways that meet the expectations of expert writers in their respective academic research communities (e.g., Lim, 2017; Martin and Perez, 2014; Swales, 1990, 2004). In this regard, the substantial body of research in the field of genre analysis (e.g., Basturkmen, 2012; Del Saz Rubio, 2011; Hyland, 2005; Kanoksilapatham, 2005, 2015; Lim, 2006, 2011a, 2011b, 2012, 2014, 2015, 2017; Lim, Loi and Hashim, 2014; Loi, 2010; Loi and Evans, 2010; Loi, Lim and Wharton, 2016; Ozturk, 2007; Samraj, 2002; Swales, 1981, 1990; Swales and Najjar, 1987) appears to have provided a great deal of information about how writers present their reports using conventional rhetorical structures and linguistic strategies in different sections of research articles. Such information can be used to help novice writers acquire related genre knowledge needed to meet the expectations of their relevant academic discourse community.

Among the different sections of a research article (RA), "introductions are known to be troublesome, and nearly all academic writers admit to having more difficulty with getting started on a piece of academic writing than they have with its continuation", and this explains why "there has been growing interest in the introductory portions of texts" (Swales, 1990: 137-138). Writing the introduction of a research article is in fact a challenge for both native and non-native English researchers (Del Saz Rubio, 2011). This explains why investigations into research introductions have attracted "unprecedented attention" (Del Saz Rubio, 2011: 259) of researchers in the field of English for academic purposes (EAP). Such genre-based investigations are significant in that they have important "theoretical implications and multifarious practical applications" (Lim, 2014: 66). The

applications of genre-based research, in particular, have prompted many researchers to devote their attention to the writing of research introductions in various academic disciplines (e.g., Chahal, 2014; Cortes, 2013; Feak & Swales, 2011; Kawase, 2015; Lim, 2012; Martin and Perez, 2014; Samraj, 2005, 2008; Shehzad, 2008; Swales, 2004; Wang and Yang, 2015). Despite the voluminous literature, research article introductions in some social sciences have received little attention in previous genre-based studies, and this is particularly evident when a cross-disciplinary perspective is taken into consideration. In this regard, Samraj (2002: 2) opined that there has been fewer studies that focus on the variations in research article introductions across different disciplines in spite of the increasing interest in cross-disciplinary distinctions in the domain of academic writing. The gaps in past research into RA introductions are especially noticeable in some fields, particularly Ethnic Studies (ES) and Industrial Relations (IR), which have yet to be explored. (The abbreviation 'ES' and its full form 'Ethnic Studies' will be used interchangeably in different parts of this thesis in order to facilitate descriptions and enhance clarity. Likewise, the abbreviation 'IR' and 'Industrial Relations' will be employed interchangeably so far as the sentences used are clearly constructed to facilitate comprehension.) In view of such gaps, this study aims to (i) investigate the rhetorical structures and linguistic resources of these two disciplines, and (ii) identify the possible cross-disciplinary similarities and differences. The focus is theoretically and pedagogically meaningful as it can enrich the theoretical knowledge in the field of genre analysis by enlightening us on the rhetorical structures and linguistic strategies used by writers in Ethnic Studies and Industrial Relations. More importantly, the results of this study are likely to help EAP instructors design related teaching materials that target both native and non-native novice writers in the disciplines concerned. Based on the need to study research introductions in both disciplines, this chapter presents the statement of the problem, the rationale for conducting the present study, the main and specific objectives, research questions, scope of the study, and significance of the research.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Ethnic Studies and Industrial Relations involve many countries in the world, especially in developing countries with multi-ethnic groups and rapid economic

development, such as the People's Republic of China. The issues in these two fields need to be tackled carefully as potential conflicts could arise in the related areas. Numerous scholars have devoted their attention to the studies of ethnic affairs and industrial issues, but very few scholars in non-English speaking countries, such as China where the researcher is working, are able to write their research articles in English, which has long been considered as the main channel for scholars of all disciplines to disseminate their knowledge and promote their academic advancement (Hyland, 2005; Ramon, 2015). In view of this situation, this section takes China as an example to present the actual social situation of Ethnic Studies and Industrial Relations in order to further point out the problems in writing research articles in English, experienced by researchers in both disciplines. This study is expected to make possible contributions by helping scholars in the fields of Ethnic Studies and Industrial Relations in China and other parts of the world in the two fields concerned comprehend and write research articles in English in line with the expectations and conventions existing in the respective research communities.

The People's Republic of China has 56 ethnic groups, among which Han constitutes over 90% of China's population, and the remaining non-Han groups, which include 55 ethnic groups, are officially called ethnic minority groups, such as Zhuang, Mongolia, Hui, Mao, Dong, Uygur, Manchu, Tibet and Yao. According to 2010 National Census, the combined population of minority ethnic groups constitutes 8.49% of the total population in China (The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, 2015). The top five largest minority ethnic groups in China are Zhuang (16,926,381), Hui (10,586,087), Manchu (10,387,958), Uygur (10,069,346) and Miao (9,426,007). Different minority ethnic groups have their own languages, favourite foods, customs, religious beliefs, architectural styles, and they are all equal members of the big family of ethnic groups in China. China's constitution and relevant laws guarantee equal rights for each ethnic group and accord special priority to ethnic minority groups as part of the efforts to promote social and economic development. The Chinese government established ethnic autonomous districts in order to guarantee the freedom of the daily life and all-round development of the minority ethnic groups.

Many research institutions, universities and professional organisations have been founded under the leadership of State Ethnic Affairs Commission of the People's Republic of China to teach and study ethnic affairs. These universities include Minzu University of China, Southwest University for Nationalities, Northwest University for Nationalities, Beifang University for Nationalities, South-central University for Nationalities and Dalian Nationalities University. Other institutions include China Ethnic Languages Translation Bureau, the Ethnic Publishing House, the Central Institute of Ethnic Administrators, which largely focus on the teaching and research relating to the ethnic affairs. A substantial body of research has been conducted in this field and has been published in discipline-related journals listed in Chinese Social Sciences Citation Index (CSSCI), which includes all the officially recognised high-ranking journals in China, such as *Ethno-national Studies*, *Chinese Tibetology*, *Journal of Northwest University for Nationalities*, *Journal of the Central University for Nationalities*. However, in recent years, universities have been placing more emphasis on English articles indexed by the Web of Science (Liu, Hu, Tang and Wang, 2015; Liu, Xu and Li, 2015) and owing to the national orientation of social sciences, many social science studies in China are still presented in Chinese journals rather than established international refereed journals (Liu, Hu and Li, 2018). Understandably, in Ethnic Studies and Industrial Relations, both being social sciences, very few scholars have been able to write their research reports in English and get their works published in established international journals. In a brief survey of the numbers of research articles published in three established international journals in Ethnic Studies by scholars of this discipline in China from 2013 to 2015 (see Table 1.1), I have noticed that only one research article was published in each of these three journals. (Journal articles published in 2013 to 2015 were chosen because they were the most recent research papers published at the point of commencement of this study. Three ISI-indexed journals in the field of Ethnic Studies are *Ethnicity*, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, and *Ethnic and Health*, and other reasons for choosing these three journals will be explained in Chapter 5 on the research methods of this study.)