# How do Writers Present Their Work in Introduction Sections? A Genre-based Investigation into Qualitative and Quantitative Research Articles

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**Abstract**
Research articles have received a wide interest in discourse studies over the last few decades. A vast number of studies have been centered on identifying the organizational patterns of research articles in various fields. Although Introduction section has enjoyed a lot of attention, very few studies have focused on rhetorical structure of qualitative and quantitative research articles. This genre-based investigation reports on a study of the Introduction sections of 15 qualitative and 15 quantitative research articles (RAs) in Applied Linguistics (AL) from five high impact journals published from 2008-2012. Based on Swales' (2004) move structure model, the present study focuses on Move 3 (introducing the present work) and examines how qualitative and quantitative research article writers introduce their work in Introduction section. The analysis revealed that there were similarities in the overall presence and use of steps in both groups. However, some differences in the overall presence and frequency of directive determinants were obvious which could be attributed to the different nature of these research designs. The findings reveal which options are available to the writers for presenting their own work in introduction sections of these two types of articles. By making explicit the norms and conventions of the community, which are normally implicit, the findings of this paper and similar genre studies can facilitate the participation of novice members in their discourse community. This, in turn, can lead to a successful academic writing.

***Keywords***: move 3, introduction, research articles, genre analysis, applied linguistics

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# INTRODUCTION

Research articles (henceforth RAs), as a central and preferred genre in exchanging and disseminating knowledge among academic community members and as means of establishing the personal reputation of the academics and an indicator of their achievement have gained a lot of attention. Meanwhile, writing a research report is a challenging task for writers as they need to be familiar with the norms of their discourse community to establish the importance of their research and to show that their study is worthy of attention.

One attempt to identify the discourse community norms has been made by ESP genre analysts. Grounded on Swales' seminal framework (1990, 2004), the approach is based on the assumption that genres are communicative events which are organized by conventions that belong to discourse communities. Thus, genre studies try to analyze and identify the conventions of genres in terms of organizational patterns (move structure). There is a vast amount of literature on the schematic structure of the whole empirical RAs or one section of them within the IMRD (Introduction, Method, Results, and Discussion) framework in various disciplines which have indicated similarities as well as disciplinary variations. These studies have been concerned with empirical RAs. Empirical research can be defined as "the construction of knowledge by means of systematic observation, analysis, and representation of behavior and/or its artifact" (Silva, 2005, p. 10). Based on this definition, qualitative and quantitative research, the two main paradigms in the social sciences (Cao & Hu, 2014), fall into empirical research. Having different ontological (what is reality?) and epistemological (what is knowledge?) assumptions, these paradigms are different in nature and the knowledge claim they make (Creswell, 2009; MacKey & Gass, 2016). It is believed that these differences in the assumptions shape the discourse and rhetorical conventions of presenting the empirical research (Cao & Hu, 2014). For instance, it was found that education RA writers used different persuasive strategies when writing qualitative and quantitative research (Firestone, 1987). Different degrees of tentativeness and assertiveness in sociological and ethnographical inquiries have also been reported (Hansen, 1988).

Despite the growing body of research on disciplinary influences on the rhetorical conventions of RAs, especially Introduction sections, there is a paucity of empirical investigation into the effect of different research paradigms on the organizational patterns of RAs. In fact, it is unclear whether variations in the type of research design (including qualitative

and quantitative) have a bearing on the schematic structure of these RAs. By focusing on move 3 of the introduction section, this paper aims to identify whether the use of different methodological designs (qualitative and quantitative) affects how applied linguists introduce their own work in introduction sections.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Swales (1981) investigated introduction section of 48 English (RAs) from various disciplines and found a consistent pattern in the introduction of those articles and introduced this pattern in a four-move structure. He revised this model in 1990 and 2004 into a three-move model which he called "CARS" (Create a Research Space) model for article Introduction. Describing generic structure, CARS model captures the communicative purpose of RAs' introduction sections. These communicative purposes are "… to establish the significance of the research, to situate the research in terms of its significance, and to show how this niche will be occupied and defended in the wider ecosystem" (Swales, 1990, p. 140). They are realized through *moves* and *steps* which might be accompanied by specific linguistic features. A *move* is a communicative unit which carries a specific communicative purpose and might consist of one or more *steps*. While the *move* carries the general communicative purpose of a segment, the *step* shows in detail the "rhetorical means of realizing the function of Move" (Yang & Allison, 2003, p. 370).

The CARS model which was introduced in 1990 suggests that Introduction section is governed by three moves or communicative units comprising: (a) establishing a territory, (b) establishing a niche, and (c) occupying a niche. Each of these moves can be realized by various steps or strategies, some of which are obligatory and some are optional. In 2004, Swales made some modifications to his 1990 model. However, this "simple version" (Feak & Swales, 2011, p. 55) of the CARS model still has three moves. The first move is labeled "establishing a research territory". The move can be realized by one optional step which shows that the topic under study is "important, central, interesting, problematic, or relevant in some way" (Feak & Swales, 2011, p. 55). The second step which is obligatory reviews some related literature on the topic. This can be followed by the second move labeled *establishing a niche* which can be realized via "indicating a gap" in the literature or "extending previous

knowledge" (Feak & Swales, 2011, p. 55). The move is an important one as it creates a space for the writers' present work and acts as "the hinge that connects Move 1 and Move 3".

The third and final move is *presenting the present work* by which the writers introduce their works and state what they are planning to do in order to fill the gap or solve the problem in the literature. It functions as a link between Move 1 and Move 2 and turns the established niche in Move 2 "into a research space that justifies the present article" (Swales, 1990, p. 159). The only obligatory step of this move is *outlining purpose or stating the nature of the present research*, which according to Swales (1990, p.159) is "a kind of promissory statement" where the writers make a "contract" with their audience. Four other steps which can be present in some fields and not in the others are *listing research questions or hypothesis*, *announcing principle findings*, *stating the value of the present study*, and *indicating the structure of the research paper* (Feak & Swales, 2011).

However, in both of the 1990 and 2004 models the only obligatory step is stating the purpose of the study. Statement of purpose "describes the objective of the planned study, explaining why the investigation is undertaken and what its potential significance is" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 73). In the later version (see appendix), presenting research questions and hypothesis have been introduced as an independent step which was absent in the 1990 version.

There has been much research on generic structure and organizational patterns of RAs since Swales' (1990) pioneering work on RAs (e.g., Basturkmen, 2012; Brett, 1994; Dobakhti, 2011; Dobakhti & Norizah, 2013; Hirano, 2009; Holmes, 2000; Kanoksilapatham, 2005; Lim, 2006; Lorés, 2004; Nwogu, 1997; Ozturk, 2007; Peacock, 2002; Posteguillo, 1999; Samraj, 2005; Sheldon, 2011; Soler-Monreal, Carbonell-Olivares, & Gil-Salom, 2011; Williams, 1999; Yang, 2001).

Based on Swales' seminal work (1990, 2004), these studies have analyzed either the whole article or one section of RAs within the IMRD (Introduction, Method, Results, and Discussion) framework in various fields, across different languages. However, Introduction sections have received a great interest in discourse studies probably because they "are known to be troublesome" (Swales, 1990, p. 137) and "extremely difficult, laborious, and outright frustrating" (Fakhri, 2004, p. 1119).

While a large number of studies have focused on identifying generic features of various sub-sections of RAs in various disciplines, recently

specific moves and even steps have attracted the attention of researchers. Move 3 and the steps used to realize it have gained the interest of some researchers (e.g., Lim, 2014; Shehzad, 2008, 2010, 2011). Move 3 is an important move in Introduction sections which acts as a linkage between Moves 1 and 2, in which the author promises to fill the gap that has been established in Move 2. Shehzad (2011), by focusing on Move 3, investigated 56 Computer Science (CS) articles. Her analysis showed that Move 3 in CS articles was purposive, descriptive, brief, complex and methodology oriented. Furthermore, she found explicit statement of research questions and hypotheses rare in her corpus. In another study Lim (2014) studied the frequency of research questions and rhetorical shifts and linguistics features that are used in doctoral theses in Applied Linguistics. He focused on quantitative experimental theses stating that they are "highly conventionalized" and are "fairly consistent across a wide variety of scientific disciplines" (Lim, 2014, p. 69).

Although it has been emphasized that research questions and hypotheses can be used in both qualitative and quantitative designs, they differ in the types of the questions they ask. While quantitative research asks precise questions about the relationship of the variables in descriptive, predictive and causal forms, qualitative research questions are more general ones about a process or exploring a phenomenon (Johnson & Christensen, 2012; Mackey & Gass, 2016; White, 2009).

However, qualitative and quantitative designs are different in the knowledge claim that they make, the main purpose that they follow, the research questions that they impose, the data that they collect, and the methods that they use to analyze data (Creswell, 2009; McKay, 2006). While quantitative research "examine causes that influence outcomes" (Creswell, 2009, p. 5), qualitative research "refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols and description of things" (Berg, 2001, p. 2).

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The present paper investigates Move 3 and the steps that are used to utilize it in qualitative and quantitative research articles. The purpose is to identify position of the move and the rhetorical strategies employed by applied linguists to introduce their qualitative and quantitative studies. Therefore, the following questions were addressed:

1. How 'presenting the present work' is positioned in Introduction sections of qualitative and quantitative research articles in Applied Linguistics?
2. What strategies are used to realize 'presenting the present work' in the two sets of articles and how frequent they are?

## METHOD
## Corpus

The corpus of the study consists of 15 qualitative and 15 quantitative RAs' Introduction section selected from five high impact journals in the field of AL. The latest list of the Journal Citation Reports (Social Sciences Edition) was examined. The list included the journals in the field of the Linguistics which covered both pure Linguistics and AL journals. For the purpose of the study the journals devoted to pure Linguistics (such as *Journal of Phonetics* and *Lingua*) were excluded from the list. In the next stage, upon checking the editorial policy of the remaining journals, another set of journals such as *Linguistics and Philosophy* were excluded as they were mostly dedicated to theoretical issues rather than empirical research. The next step was to ensure that the selected journals included both qualitative and quantitative research articles. Thus, a few recent issues of remaining journals were checked out one by one to ensure this matter. At this stage, the journals that were concerned mostly with quantitative research such as *Modern Language Journal* and *Language Learning* were excluded. The five selected journals were: *Applied Linguistics, English for Specific Purposes, Studies in Second Language Acquisition, Language Teaching Research* and *TESOL Quarterly*.

The articles were selected from the journal issues published from 2008-2012 based on the publication in the five years preceding the year in which the sampling was started. First, 10 RAs were selected randomly from each of these five journals which gave a total of 50 RAs. Next, they were examined carefully in order to be categorized into two groups of qualitative and quantitative. In categorizing the articles as qualitative or quantitative, the priority was given to the article writers' own explicit statement about the design they had used. If they had not mentioned the method explicitly, which mostly had not, the abstracts and the methodology sections were examined in detail. According to Perry (2005, p. 75), the characteristics of quantitative research is "the use of

numbers to represent its data", and the characteristics of qualitative research is 'verbal descriptions as its data'. Those articles that were experimental or completely dealt with statistics were categorized as quantitative and those articles that used qualitative methods and relied mainly on verbal description were classified as qualitative. It should be noted that categorizing the articles as qualitative or quantitative was done based on their methods of data collection and data analysis rather than attempting to identify their underlying philosophy and purpose. Benson, Chik, Gao, Huang, and Wang (2009) differentiate between the studies that *use a specific type of design* (qualitative and quantitative) and those that *represent a specific type of design* (qualitative and quantitative). The focus of this study was to identify the articles that *used* qualitative or quantitative research methods.

Among the 50 selected articles 12 employed mixed method design, 21 quantitative design and 17 qualitative design. As mixed method studies were not the focus of the present study, they were excluded from the corpus and 15 qualitative and 15 quantitative RAs were selected randomly as the corpus of the study. Given that, the present study is mainly a qualitative research which includes genre analysis along with some quantitative data, the modest size of the corpus was considered to be justified. Each RA in the corpus is referred to by an abbreviation of Qual. (for qualitative RAs), Quant. (for quantitative RAs). So, for example, the third RA in the qualitative sub-corpus is denoted by the abbreviation Qual.3.

**Table 1:** Summary of the corpus

| Journal | Quantitative | | Qualitative | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. of Texts | Year | No. of Texts | Year |
| Applied Linguistics | 3 | 2008, 2009 (2) | 4 | 2009, 2010, 2011 (2) |
| English for Specific Purposes | 3 | 2010, 2011 | 3 | 2008, 2010, 2011 |
| Language Teaching Research | 3 | 2011 (2), 2012 (2) | 5 | 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012 |
| Studies in Second Language Acquisition | 4 | 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012 | 1 | 2010 |
| TESOL Quarterly | 2 | 2008, 2009 (2) | 2 | 2009 (2) |
| Total | 15 | | 15 | |

## Data Analysis

As the purpose was to identify Move 3 (Presenting the present work) of CARS model, after selecting the data, the articles were checked to identify their Introduction sections. Interestingly, it was noticed that several articles did not have a section labeled as Introduction. To be specific, only 8 quantitative and 10 qualitative RAs in the corpus had a section labeled as *Introduction*. It was also noticed that 3 quantitative and 1 qualitative RAs' Introductions had sub-sections.

A quick overview of the data showed that the articles varied in heading greatly. While some followed IMRD format, others did not conform fully to this model. Some of them started with no heading, some with *Introduction*, and some had several subheadings between the beginning sections (whether labeled as Introduction or not) and *Method* section. Such variations were not surprising as they have been observed in previous studies as well. For instance, Holmes (1997) identified *Background* between *Introduction* and *Method* sections and Yang and Allison (2003) identified three possible sections of *Theoretical Basis*, *Literature Review*, and *Research Questions/Focus* between the *Introduction* and *Method* sections in applied linguistics RAs. Analysis of the corpus of this study revealed several subheadings such as the *Present study*, *Aims of the study*, *Research Questions*, *Background*, *Purpose of the Study*, *The experiment* and specific content sub-headings. Similar to Pho (2013), it was decided to consider the section from the beginning of the main article up to the method section as introduction.

Examining the data more precisely, it was also revealed that *Presenting the Present Work* was realized in various positions and sub-headings (see Results section for more details). Therefore, it was decided to read the data and to look for the communicative unit of *Presenting the Present Work* instead of limiting the analysis to a section labeled as *Introduction*. Therefore, the text which started immediately after the *Abstract*, regardless of whether it was labeled as *Introduction* or not, till the part before the section labeled as *Method/Methodology* were looked for identifying the communicative move under study.

The two sub-corpora (qualitative and quantitative) were analyzed separately. First, the whole introduction section of each article was read to obtain a general idea about it. The segment of a text which delivered one communicative purpose was labeled as one step unless it was interrupted by a segment with a different communicative purpose or it

was presented in two different parts. For example, if in Step 2, all the research questions and hypotheses were stated in a segment of a text in a continuous order, it was labeled as one step. However, if the research questions were presented and then there was an explanation about the methodology (Step 4) and after that the hypotheses were presented, Step 2 was counted two times in the text. Swales and Feak (2012, p. 192) refer to *secondary aims or features* in introduction as "a second sentence [which] is necessary to complete Move 3a". In these cases, it was labeled as Step 1. That is, if Step 1 was presented and then it was followed by a second sentence or segment of text, which provided additional information about Step 1, both segments were labeled as independent Step 1.

Upon identifying the move and its steps in each article, the findings from each sub-corpus were summarized in a separate table and the type of steps as well as their frequency and order were compared to come up with an understanding of their similarities and differences.

## RESULTS
### Positioning of the Move in the Corpus
The findings indicate that presentation of study (both in qualitative and quantitative corpus) is done in various sub-sections (see Tables 2 & 3). In the quantitative corpus, only in two cases, the study was introduced in *Introduction* section. In one of them the *Introduction* had several sub-sections and the move under study was realized in one of the sub-sections labeled as *Research aims*. In four other quantitative RAs, the study was presented in independent sections labeled as *The Aim of the Study/Research Question/Aim and Research Questions*. In one case while the research questions were presented in a section labeled as *Research Questions*, the aim of the study was introduced in one of the sub-sections of the *Introduction*. Only in one paper, the study was presented in a sub-section titled *Background* and *Research Questions*. In four RAs, the study was introduced in a section labeled as *The Current/Present Study*. In two other cases the introduction of the study was done in other sections or sub-sections. In one of these cases, it was positioned under *Background* section, and in the other article the study was introduced at the end of a content sub-heading which dealt with literature.

**Table 2:** Position of move 3 in the quantitative corpus

| Title of the section/ sub-section | No. of RAs |
| --- | --- |

| | |
|---|---|
| Introduction | 2 |
| Aim of the study/ Research questions/Aim & research questions | 4 |
| Aim + Research questions | 1 |
| Research question + Content sub-heading | 1 |
| Background & research questions | 1 |
| The current study/The present study | 4 |
| Background | 1 |
| Content sub-heading | 1 |

In the qualitative corpus, in four cases the study was presented in *Introduction* section. In two cases, an independent section labeled as *Research Aims* introduced the study. In five RAs, the study was introduced in an independent section labeled as *The Current/Present Study*. In one of these five cases, *The Present Research* was presented as a sub-section under the main section of *Previous Research*. In four other cases, the study was introduced in one of the content sections which dealt with literature though not labeled so.

**Table 3:** Position of Move 3 in the qualitative corpus

| Title of the section/ sub-section | No. of RAs |
|---|---|
| Introduction | 4 |
| Research aims | 2 |
| The current study/The present study | 5 |
| Content sub-heading | 4 |

## Frequency of Steps in the Corpus

As indicated in Tables 4 and 5, the most frequent step in both corpora was Step 1 (S1) −Announcing present research descriptively and/or purposively − which appeared in 14 quantitative and 15 qualitative RAs corpus.

**Table 4:** Occurrence and frequency of steps in the quantitative corpus

| RAs | Steps | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 5 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 7 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 8 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 9 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 10 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 11 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 12 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 13 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 14 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1* | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 15 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| No. of RAs | 14 | 15 | 1 | 6 | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| Frequency | 15 | 16 | 1 | 6 | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| Mean | 1 | 1.06 | 0.07 | 0.42 | 0 | 0.21 | 0.07 |

*Step is embedded in another step*

Step 2 (S2) − Presenting RQs and hypotheses− was the second most frequent step which was present in all the quantitative and two-thirds of the qualitative corpus. The other steps were not frequent in either corpus and were present between none to four times, some of which were embedded in other steps and will be discussed later in this section.

**Table 5:** Occurrence and frequency of steps in the qualitative corpus

| RA | Steps | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1* | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 1* | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1* | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1* | 0 | 1* |
| 5 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 6 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 7 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1* | 1 |
| 8 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 9 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 10 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 11 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 12 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 13 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1* | 0 |
| 14 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 1* | 3 | 1* | 0 |
| 15 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 1* | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| No. of RAs | 15 | 9 | 0 | 8 | 2 | 4 | 3 |
| Frequency | 31 | 9 | 0 | 8 | 4 | 4 | 3 |

| Mean | 2.06 | 0.42 | 0 | 0.57 | 0.26 | 0.26 | 0.2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

*\* Step is embedded in another step*

### Step1

Using this strategy, the authors presented their study either descriptively or purposively. It was the most frequent step in terms of its presence and the overall frequency in both corpora which appeared in all 15 qualitative and 14 quantitative papers. In some cases, after the aim or purpose was presented additional aims or purposes were added to complete it which Swales and Feak (2012) refer to as secondary aims or features.

> This study investigates language learning strategies used by […]. Additionally, the study compares the learner strategy use with that of other studies using […] (Quan.15)

In a few cases inter-step shifts were employed and the step was present more than one time in two different parts. For instance, article Qual.7, titled as *Wikis and academic writing: Changing the writer-reader relationship*, starts with a section numbered 1 and labeled as *Introduction: English for academic purposes (EAP) and communication technology*. In section 2, titled as *Wikis and academic writing*, after discussing the related issues and referring to literature, a gap for the study is created by raising a question. The writer then moves on to Move 3 S1 by stating the focus of the study and its aim and then explains the structure of the paper. This is followed by section 3, which is *Background of the study*. Towards the end of this section, which is about two pages, the author restates the focus of the study and presents the research questions.

**Table 6:** Inter-step shifts from announcing the present work to outlining the structure of the paper, announcing the present research and presenting research questions

| | 2. Wikis and academic writing |
|---|---|
| | ….. |
| Indicating a gap | In the context of EAP, how can we move away from using online tools exclusively for retrieving or exchanging information, and begin to foster learner collaboration? It seems that the more recent social web applications offer a greater potential for empowering learners to create online content in a collaborative way. |

| Move 3- Step 1 | <u>This paper focuses on</u> the use of wikis in the course of Effective Communication in English at Stockholm University; it aims to describe how the course wiki was used to teach writing for academic and professional purposes, and to analyse what impact using the wiki had on the writer–reader relationship. Following Kern (2006), who points out a need for more qualitative research into the application of ICT to language learning, <u>this study seeks to</u> make its contribution by particularly focusing on EAP. |
|---|---|
| Move 3- Step 7 | <u>The following sections set out</u> a theoretical framework for the ensuing empirical study, focusing on the importance of writer–reader interaction in academic writing. <u>Next, the background, method and results are presented</u> <u>and discussed</u> in the light of relevant previous research. |
| Presenting background of the study<br>Move 3-Step1 | 2. Background of the Study<br>…<br>The ensuing sections are dedicated to an empirical study focusing on the students' self-reported experiences of writing on the wiki and on the analysis of interactional metadiscourse resources in their argumentative essays. |
| Move 3-Step2 | More specifically, the following questions are addressed:<br> Does writing on the wiki make students' texts more reader-oriented?<br> Does writing on the wiki make students pay attention to structural organization and grammatical correctness?<br> What kind of interactional metadiscourse resources are used in argumentative texts published by students on the wiki? |

In a few other instances, after the authors discussed the gap in the literature, it was mentioned that covering the whole gap was beyond the scope of their study and the study was limited by stating its focus (Quan.12):

**Table 7:** Inter-move shifts from establishing a territory, stating the limitations, announcing the present work and presenting the research questions

| Stablishing a territory | It is clear that there is a need to better understand the construct of comprehensibility… To elaborate, although there is evidence of a recent increased interest in L2 pronunciation research and teaching, repercussions of the neglect of pronunciation over the past several decades is still being felt (Derwing & Munro, 2009; Foote, Holtby & Derwing, 2011; Gilbert, 2010 ). One area in which classroom teachers—who may not have a background in either pronunciation or assessment—could benefit from further support is in the provision of a formative assessment tool to describe and benchmark learner performance as it relates to pronunciation. |
| Stating the Limitation | Although the development of such a tool with fully elaborated and validated scale descriptors is beyond the scope of the present study, |
| Move 3-Step 1 | the focus here was to uncover the aspects of L2 comprehensibility that are most salient to raters and to distill these criteria into comprehensibility scale guidelines. |
| Move 3-Step 2 | To this end, research questions (1–3) were examined: 1. Which linguistic measures most strongly correlate with novice raters' L2 comprehensibility ratings? 2. Which linguistic aspects of speech do experienced teachers cite as most influencing their L2 comprehensibility ratings? 3. Which linguistic measures most efficiently distinguish between learners at low, intermediate, and high levels of L2 comprehensibility? |

### Step 2

The second most frequent step in both corpora was S2 (presenting RQs and hypotheses) where the authors stated their research questions/hypotheses. However, some differences were observed in its occurrence in both corpora.

In the quantitative corpus, the step was realized in all the 15 RAs. Four of these authors not only expressed their research questions but also formulated hypotheses. Only in one case, after the aim of the study was presented, the hypothesis was formulated without stating research questions.

In other words, in one of the 15 RAs S2 was realized only by stating hypothesis, in four cases not only research questions were present but also hypotheses were stated and in 10 cases the step was realized only by presenting research questions. The number of research questions ranged

from two to six. In one case, while the number of RQs was three, one of the questions consisted of 5 questions as it investigated the effect of the independent variable on five aspects of one dependent variable.

Whenever hypotheses were present, they were either introduced after each research question, for example research question 1 was followed by the related hypothesis, or after all research questions were presented.

Meanwhile, in the qualitative corpus, S2 was realized only in two thirds of the RAs (10 cases). In all the 10 cases, the step was used to present research questions and not hypotheses and it appeared after S1. The number of research questions ranged from one to four.

**Table 8:** Inter-step shifts from announcing the present work to presenting research questions

| Presenting the present work purposefully and or descriptively | Stating research questions and or hypotheses |
|---|---|
| This study was a between-groups design that <u>aimed to examine</u> the effects of simultaneous use of careful online planning and task repetition on accuracy, complexity, and fluency of EFL learners' oral production… (Quant. 6) | Based on the theoretical and empirical rationales expounded on so far, the following research questions and corresponding predictions were investigated: <br> 1. <u>Does careful online planning have any significant</u> effect on the accuracy of EFL learners' oral production? Building on the theoretical and empirical rationale discussed, <u>it was hypothesized that</u> careful online planning enhances accuracy of EFL learner's oral production. 2. <u>Does careful online planning have any significant effect on</u> the complexity of EFL learners' oral production? In keeping with Yuan and Ellis's (2003) results <u>it was hypothesized that</u> careful online planning will have beneficial effects on the complexity of EFL learners' oral production. (Quant. 6) |
| To address these limitations, <u>this study investigates</u> the methodological issue of … (Quant. 9) | Specifically, <u>the following research questions guided the study</u>: <br> 1. Does the type of verbalization … have an effect on …? 2. Does the type of verbalization … significantly affect the …? <u>On the basis of these research questions,</u> |

| | two hypotheses are posited. The first hypothesis states that… . The second hypothesis claims that … (Quant. 9) |
|---|---|
| The purpose of this study was to examine if certain Coh-Metrix variables can improve the prediction of text readability. Implicit within this purpose was the examination of variables that more accurately reflect the cognitive processes which contribute to skilled L2 reading. (Quant. 13) | It was hypothesized that an analysis of variables relating to lexical frequency, syntactic similarity, and content word overlap would allow for an improved measure of readability. (Quant. 13) |

### Step 3

In both corpora, the least frequent step was S3 − definitional clarification. It was absent in the qualitative corpus and appeared only once in the quantitative data (Quant. 14) immediately after S2, as it was used to clarify a term which was central in the research questions.

**Table 9:** Inter-step shifts from presenting the research questions to definitional clarification

| | |
|---|---|
| Move3- Step 2 | The current study seeks to address the following three research questions: 1. To what extent are reading and cloze tasks effective as tools for explicitly teaching collocation in the language classroom? 2. In what ways do the differences in the type of learning condition (receptive and productive) influence learning gains in receptive and productive knowledge of collocation and meaning? 3. What do the results show us about the nature of the relationship between collocation and meaning? |
| Move 3- Step 3 | For the purpose of this study, *collocation* will be defined from a statistical (Greenbaum, 1974; Hunston, 2002; Partington, 1998; Sinclair, 1991) rather than a phraseological (Cowie, 1994; Nesselhauf, 2003) standpoint ... |

### Step 4

S4 – summarizing methods – is another optional step in both corpora with six occurrences in the quantitative and eight occurrences in qualitative corpus. In Quant.4, a summary of method is presented after the aim of the study is introduced. It is followed by presenting the research questions. The research questions are followed by a long Method section which presents the method in detail.

> The present study investigated the effect of using English in product advertisements published in Polish women's magazines … [Move3-Step1] A sample of Polish women representing the intended target group (N = 62) was presented with two different versions of six product advertisements… Respondents' perceptions of product/brand image, their attitudes towards the ad, purchasing intentions and degrees of comprehension, were measured by means of a written questionnaire. The research questions were: … [Move3-Step4]

In another quantitative paper, Quant.8, after the aim of the study and research questions are presented, there is a discussion about the treatment material used in the study to answer the research questions. This is followed by research hypotheses. The materials that the authors used were different from those used in literature and the authors highlighted and justified their choice before moving to their methodology section.

**Table 10:** Inter-step shifts from announcing the purpose to presenting the research questions, summarizing the method and presenting the hypotheses

| | |
|---|---|
| Move3- Step 1 | The overarching goal of the present investigation is to ... |
| Move 3- Step 2 | Specifically, this study will be guided by the following research questions: … |
| Move 3- Step 4 | This study focuses on multiple-choice sentence-level tasks, as previous research on PI has done to measure comprehension abilities. Specifically, two different types of comprehension tasks are used: … Most research on PI has complemented interpretation data with production data. For practical reasons, this study employed a recognition task instead, … |
| Move 3- Step 2 | It is hypothesized that, if the claim made by PI proponents is correct, ... Furthermore, it is also hypothesized that ... |

Similarly, in Qual.13, after announcing the work descriptively there is a reference to the method with an emphasis that the employed methodology was a 'unique feature' of the work.

**Table 11:** Inter-step shifts from announcing the purpose to summarizing the method and presenting the research questions

| | |
|---|---|
| Move3- Step 1 | The present study is a large-scale examination of five potentially variable structures in Spanish and the forms that NSs and NNSs use in those contexts. |
| Move 3- Step 4 | One unique feature of this project is that the contexts are independently defined (i.e., no reference to the forms that occur is made) and the full range of forms used in those contexts is analyzed. The individual characteristics associated with variability in the learner group were also examined. It is only after research of this type is conducted that a closer examination of the predictors of any one of those forms becomes meaningful. |
| Move 3- Step 2 | The current study was guided by three research questions: … |

## Step 5

This step, announcing the principle findings, does not appear in the quantitative corpus, and is present only in 2 qualitative papers (Qual. 4 & Qual. 14). In both papers, the step appeared as making claims or deductions which can be used to generalize findings and show contribution of the study to the field. In both cases, *suggest*, an epistemic speculative judgmental verb (Hyland, 1998), was used to show that the stated proposition was the subjective opinion of writer and was based on some conjecture.

> This article aims to uncover the discourse practices that are ... [Move3-Step1] Finally the article will suggest that the relationships between researcher and researched could be enhanced by the researcher making data available to trainers who could access it for their own professional development purposes. (Qual.4) [Move3-Step5]

While only two authors showed the contribution of their study in the beginning sections of the paper, most seemed reluctant about such an effort and only preferred to present their work purposefully or descriptively and reserve presenting the findings to the related section.

### Step 6

This step – stating the value of the present research – indicates the contribution that the study will make to the field. It was not a frequent step and was identified only in three quantitative papers. It appeared immediately after the authors stated their aims to show how the study can contribute to the field (e.g., Quant. 15).

> This study investigates language learning strategies used by [...] Additionally, the study compares the learner strategy use with that of other studies using similar research methodology. **[Move3-Step1]** Knowing how to make use of appropriate strategies while learning a target language would help students make their learning more effective. This study would provide language teachers and researchers with a greater understanding of [...] The findings could further assist language teachers in ... **[Move3-Step5]**

### Step 7

S7 – outlining the structure of the paper – according to Swales (2004), can appear either when the paper does not follow the IMRD format or when the paper is on a new field. The analysis of the study showed that while most of the papers did not follow IMRD format, the step was frequent in neither corpus. In fact, it was used in one quantitative and three qualitative papers. It either referred to the organization of the text by referring to the sections (as in Quant. 5 & Qual. 8) or it offered a general view about the discussions of the paper and the content line of it (as in Qual. 14).

> The following sections set out a theoretical framework for the ensuing empirical study, focusing on the importance of writer–reader interaction in academic writing. Next, the background, method and results are presented and discussed in the light of relevant previous research. (Quant.5)

> What follows is first a description of the model of analysis applied to these books. Then, the procedures for data collection and analysis will be sketched and, finally, the results and general conclusions will be presented. (Qual.8)

> Following an overview of our studies, we present the perspectives of Australian teachers and Japanese students on [...] Additionally, we will go beyond usual ideas of cross-cultural mismatch to

explore how [...] <u>Importantly, we demonstrate</u> a commonality of teacher and student perceptions that […] (Qual.14)

## DISCUSSION

Investigating the position of *Move 3 − Presenting the Present Work −* in the introduction of the qualitative and quantitative RAs (Research Articles) in AL (Applied Linguistics) indicated that it can be present in various parts of RAs and is not restricted to a section labeled as *Introduction*. In both corpora, it was mainly presented in three main sections: *Introduction*, *The Aim/Research Questions*, and *The Current/Present Study*. Only in a few cases, it was presented under a content sub-heading or *Background*.

The analysis also showed that *Presenting the Present Work* was realized by 7 strategies though with different frequencies. According to Swales (2004), stating the purpose or aim of the study is the only obligatory step of Move 3. However, he has not specified what he means by obligatory. There is also no consensus in different studies on how to define it. While some researchers (Hopkins & Dudley-Evans, 1988; Yang and Allison, 2003) used obligatory for the moves that appeared in all the RAs and optional for all other moves, others (Kanoksilapatham, 2005; Salager-Meyer, 1994) used different conventions. In this study, following Sheldon (2011) and Soler-Monreal, Carbonell-Olivares, and Gil-Salom (2011), a step was considered 'obligatory' if it was present in more than 90% of the texts, 'optional' if it appeared in 51-89% of the texts and 'probable' if it occurred in less than 50% of the texts.

Based on this definition, S1 (announcing present research) can be considered as obligatory which confirms Swales' (1990, 2004) suggestion. S2 (Presenting RQs and hypotheses) is considered as optional by Swales (2004). However, in the present corpus, the step which was the second most frequent strategy seemed as obligatory in the quantitative corpus but optional in the qualitative one. Summarizing methods was the third frequent strategy which was optional in the qualitative corpus but probable in the quantitative data. Other strategies were infrequent in both corpus and were present between none to four times which can be considered as probable.

In both corpora, the least frequent step was S3 – definitional classification – which was absent in the qualitative corpus and appeared only once in the quantitative data. It might be due to the fact that the

introductory sections of the articles, the section between abstract and method, were prolonged and detailed. They were, most of the time, divided into subsections and related issues to the topics were presented and discussed in detail in these sections. Therefore, by presenting sufficient explanations and clarifications throughout these sections, the writers provided a certain amount of technical and/or theoretical information and S3 was not presented as a step of Move 3.

Regarding S4, it seems that neither group of authors favored summarizing their methods in the introductory sections of their papers, and reserve the detailed explanation to their method section. However, when they employ a method which is of significance because of any reason such as being different from others, they explain and justify their decision in the introductory sections along with introducing their research. Stating the findings and indicating the study's significance are communicative moves of Findings and Discussion sections. The absence or rare frequency of them in the Introduction, as S6, might be an indication of reserving it for those sections (Lui & Buckingham, 2018; Yang & Allison, 2003).

The main difference between the qualitative and quantitative data was observed in S2. While research questions were present in all the quantitative RAs, it occurred only in 60% of the qualitative data. Research questions have been emphasized in research guidebooks as the backbone of every piece of research and the first and starting stage for all studies which lead the investigations (Andrews, 2003; White, 2009). According to Dörnyei (2007, p. 73), formulating research questions is the "next step towards narrowing down and 'operationalizing' the research purpose". It has also been suggested that while purpose and aim can provide direction to a research and help the researcher to think about what they want to achieve, they are "less specific than research questions" (White, 2009, p. 34). While these authors assert that there is no difference in formulating research questions in the qualitative and quantitative design and only the type of these questions are different, the findings show that qualitative RA authors prefer the use of S1 where they either descriptively or purposively present their works.

This difference might be due to the different nature of these two research designs and the questions they attempt to answer. Quantitative research is based on the supposition that the world is governed by rules and therefore knowledge is created by examining the causes that influence outcomes to verify or refute these rules. In this way, specific

research questions and hypotheses are formulated to test the relationship among the specific variables. In fact, quantitative research is pre-structured and requires precision and "it is generally true that the more specific the research purpose/question, the better [it is]" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 75). Therefore, research questions are "prespecified" (Punch, 2005, p. 22) and research design and methodology are decided based on the research questions and the ultimate aim is to answer those research questions. On the other hand, qualitative research is based on the supposition that reality is multiple and can be studied holistically. Instead of trying to answer narrow and specific questions and testing/proving the research hypotheses, it aims to "interpret" the multiple meanings that "others have about the world" (Creswell, 2009, pp. 8-9). Therefore, research questions in qualitative research are "sufficiently open-ended to allow full exploration and the emergence of factors and issues during the process of the subsequent investigation, which the researcher might not have previously thought about" (Holliday, 2007, p. 31).

In other words, while research questions in quantitative research are mostly "prespecified and specific", qualitative research is guided by more "general guiding questions" (Punch, 2005, p. 22). According to Punch (2005, p. 35), "general" research questions "guide our thinking, and are of great value in organizing the project, but they are not themselves specific enough to be answered". Meanwhile, "specific" research questions "direct the empirical procedures, and are the questions which are actually answered in the research" (Punch, 2005, p. 22). As Mackey and Gass (2016, p. 19) state, while "research questions are integral part of quantitative research" in the qualitative design they "are often not as narrowly constrained as they are in quantitative studies".

Furthermore, as Johnson and Christensen (2012) state, research questions might be omitted in some investigations as they are to a great degree the restatement of the purpose of the study. Purpose statement, research questions and hypothesis are referred to as "directional determinants" (Feak & Swales, 2011, p. 112) whose presence depends on the field of the study. While in some fields, such as Linguistics and Education, all three can be present, in a field such as mechanical engineering only statement of purpose might be present (Feak & Swales, 2011). On the other hand, research questions, which are interrogative sentences, are less precise than hypothesis, which are declarative sentences, as they are based on some prior knowledge that the researchers intend to test (Andrews, 2003).

## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The findings suggest that the position of *Introducing the Present Work* can be mobile in Introduction of qualitative and quantitative RAs. Even, its steps can occur in different sub-sections of Introduction. While great similarities were observed in the presence and frequency of the steps in both sets of data, some differences were also evident in the occurrence of *directional determinants*. Steps 1 and 2 of Move 3 are referred to as "directional determinants" (Feak & Swales, 2011, p. 112), which are used to realize purpose statements, research questions and hypotheses. The findings showed that stating the purpose of the study was the obligatory step used in 14 quantitative and 15 qualitative RAs. This was in line with Swales (2004) suggestion that stating the purpose or aim is the only obligatory step of the move.

However, regarding S2 − stating the research questions or hypotheses − some differences were obvious in the two sets of articles. While they seemed as obligatory in quantitative corpus, only two thirds of qualitative RAs used it. In the quantitative corpus it was used mostly either to present research questions or research questions and hypotheses, in a few cases only hypotheses were formulated without presenting research questions. In the qualitative corpus, it was used to present only research questions and no hypothesis was formulated. It is concluded that, this difference can be attributed to the different nature of the two research designs.

Explicit description of how the article writers present their works in qualitative and quantitative RAs can help students and novice members of the community. Conducting a survey concerning issues of non-native English writers publishing in international refereed journals, Flowerdew (1999, p. 128) found that one of the strategies used by the successful writers was "using implicit knowledge of the "move" structure (discourse organization) of the key parts of the academic article". However, while senior members of the community have this "implicit knowledge" which they have gained by probably over years of interaction with their community, newcomers to the community lack such knowledge and experience. A large number of books are available in the market that provide some general guidelines on how to write a RA or thesis. These books usually give some general tips on the organization of the whole RA in IMRD format as well as the points that need to be covered in each section without considering the conventions of each

discourse community. By providing more detailed insights, the findings of this study and similar genre studies can empower the new comers and facilitate their entry to the community.

Given that the present study has examined the ways qualitative and quantitative RA writers structure their introduction sections, it is suggested that future research be conducted to identify the possible differences in the other main sections of the RAs in AL and other disciplines that employ both qualitative and quantitative designs.

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# Appendix

Move 3 Presenting the Present Work (citations possible)

Step 1 (obligatory) Announcing present research descriptively and/or purposively

Step 2 (optional) Presenting RQs or hypotheses

Step 3 (optional) Definitional clarifications

Step 4 (optional) Summarizing methods

Step 5 (PISF**) Announcing Principle outcomes

Step 6 (PISF) Stating the value of the present research

Step 7 (PISF) Outlining the structure of the paper

* Steps 2-4 are not only optional but less fixed in their order of occurrence than the others

** PISF: Probable in some fields, but unlikely in others