

A Contrastive Analysis of Rhetorical Structures of English and Vietnamese Linguistic Research Articles

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports a contrastive genre analysis of rhetorical structures of linguistic research articles written in English and Vietnamese. The quantitative method was employed with data from a corpus of 35 English and 35 Vietnamese research articles randomly selected from internationally and Vietnamese reputable journals of linguistics published in the five-year period from 2015 to 2019. The rhetorical model of research articles in Applied Linguistics, as suggested by Pho (2008), was applied as a framework to analyse the corpus of this study. Findings reveal some similarities and differences in the structure of English and Vietnamese research articles. Generally, the macro-structure of Vietnamese articles is basically similar to that of English articles. However, in English articles, there are often more parts than in Vietnamese ones, and the discussion tends to be separated into a single section. The findings of this study can shed some light on the path of graduate students and novice scholars, especially Vietnamese researchers, who strive to publish their scientific achievements in reputable journals so that they will be accepted as new dwellers of the linguistic community.

Keywords: research articles; rhetorical structure; move; genre; contrastive analysis

INTRODUCTION

In the context of increasing globalisation and international research cooperation, the ability to read and write research articles in English is extremely necessary for academic and professional success. Thus, academic writing, especially the genre of research articles, has been of great concern to scientists worldwide. In the world, genre analysis of research articles has been studied for quite a long time (Swales, 1990) because journals and researchers all recognise the importance of creating a stage for scientific discussion. Studies on the structure of research articles show a strong development of this genre over time in terms of contents, length, format, linguistic features and disciplines (Bazerman, 1983). Selected corpora of research articles for investigation are diverse in terms of both disciplines and languages, for example, the discipline of Business Administration in English and Russian (Zanina, 2017), the discipline of Accounting in Thai (Amnuai, 2019), the discipline of Applied linguistics from a cross-cultural perspective (Ahmadi, 2022), the discipline of linguistics written in English by Egyptians (Rabie & Boraie, 2021). Most studies focus on part of a research article such as Titles (Cheng et al., 2012), Introductions (Bruce, 2014; Giannoni, 2002; Gledhill, 2000); Abstracts (Al-Khasawneh, 2017; Amnuai, 2019; Dahl, 2009; Doró, 2013; Hu & Cao, 2011; Storesbury, 2003; Zanina, 2017); Literature reviews (Rabie

& Boraie, 2021); Results (Dressen, 2003); Discussion and Conclusions (Ahmadi, 2022; Evrim Eveyik-Aydin, 2015), etc.

However, scientific writing does not seem to attract much attention from Vietnamese linguists. Till now, there have not been many studies on the corpus of scientific writing or articles in Vietnam. There are just some studies on articles approached from different perspectives, but none seems to be more prevalent than the others. Lâm Quang Đông (2017) clearly indicated that "there are not many theoretical studies on scientific writing in Vietnam, the writing manner, ways of expressing ideas, the format of content and language style of scientific texts have not yet been thoroughly studied in order to give detailed instructions for writers". Therefore, there are still some defects in Vietnamese scientific writing, and these texts do not fully meet the general international standards. Partly as a result of this, the number of Vietnamese publications in international journals is rather modest. For these reasons, a contrastive analysis of the rhetorical structures of research articles in English and Vietnamese linguistic journals is carried out to provide interested readers with some information on the design of English and Vietnamese research reports, which enhances the quality of research articles and the status of Vietnamese scientists in the context of international integration. The study is hoped to contribute to the theoretical sources of genre analysis in Vietnam and around the world, and the results will be helpful for related teaching and applied studies activities.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

DEFINITION OF RESEARCH ARTICLES

According to Ard (1983), research articles were developed from letters scientists shared with each other. Later on, the fact that journals recognised the importance of creating a forum or stage for scientific discussion, together with the development of the New Rhetorical Movement, led to the formation of a new genre (research articles) different from original handwriting letters. Swales (1990, p. 93), in his influential work on genre analysis, especially the genre of research articles, defines a research article as follows:

"The research article or paper (henceforth often RA) is taken to be a written text (although often containing non-verbal elements), usually limited to a few thousand words, that reports on some investigation carried out by its author or authors. In addition, the RA will usually relate the findings within it to those of others and may also examine issues of theory and/or methodology. It is to appear or has appeared in a research journal or, less typically, in an edited book-length collection of papers".

Previous studies on academic discourse divide journal articles into many sub-genres. For instance, Tarone et al. (1998) distinguished reports of experimental/ empirical studies and argumentation papers, Salager-Meyer (1992) classified this kind of discourse into three groups: research articles, case reports, and review articles, and Swales (2004, pp. 213) employed the sub-categories of theoretical articles, review articles, data-based research articles and shorter communications. Various classifications and sub-genres inspire us to use different approaches to study; however, within the scope of this study, we only focus on the sub-genre of empirical research articles, while other types of journal articles are for future studies.

MACRO-STRUCTURE AND RHETORICAL STRUCTURE OF RESEARCH ARTICLES

MACRO-STRUCTURE OF RESEARCH ARTICLES

Research articles are considered as a highly codified, institutionalised form with fixed structures (Bazerman, 1988, p. 259). According to Swales (1990), a research article consists of three main sections: Introduction, Methods and Results/Discussion/Conclusion.

The introduction section can be approached in various ways, in which the researcher defines the background or context of the research area (Toulmin, 1972). More specifically, the researcher clearly indicates the aims, current possibilities, and topics and evaluates the criteria of a certain discipline (Zappen, 1983, p. 130).

The methods section has been increasingly concerned and has become more and more important in almost all social studies. Methods is a listing of procedural formulae. Specifically, this section refers to methods and techniques used to collect and analyse data and ways to carry out the study.

Results/Discussion/Conclusion section: A survey by Swales (1990) showed differences in the format of this section. A majority of articles have separate Results and Discussion sections (the IMRD structure). Meanwhile, some combine these two sections (the IMR structure) or add some sub-sections such as Conclusion, Implication, Application, etc. Therefore, Swales decided to put the discussion in a Results/Discussion section. In terms of content, the Results section mainly presents and reports data and figures collected from the data analysis process and shows similarities and differences.

The macro-structure suggested by Swales has been applied and examined in numerous studies in different disciplines. Researchers have shown various evidence of differences or deviations from the original structure in different disciplines. For example, Posteguillo (1999) concluded that the conventional model IMRD could not be considered as a typical model for research articles in Computer Science. Yang and Allison (2004) revealed that the sections Introduction, Methods and Results appeared in all articles, while Discussion and Conclusion appeared in just two-thirds of the articles. The authors also show some optional sections, such as the theoretical basis, literature review, research questions between the introduction and methods, and pedagogical implications after the results.

It can be seen that the basic structure IMR(D) by Swales only consists of main sections; in reality, there can be variables. Though the structure has been proven not to be applied in all disciplines, it is the ground for us to collect data for analysis.

RHETORICAL STRUCTURE OF RESEARCH ARTICLES

With the desire to help non-native English speakers overcome barriers when writing scientific reports in English, Swales (1990) defined a new concept of the rhetorical structure of a research article. The rhetorical structure of a certain genre is built from rhetorical moves and steps. Moves and steps are utilised sequentially along the development of a text.

Swales and Feak (2000, p. 35) define move as a "functional term that refers to a defined and bounded communicative act that is designed to achieve one main communicative objective". Hence, each move belongs to a section with a certain communicative function, contributes to the fulfilment of the genre and forms a typical template for each rhetorical structure. Realisations of specific communicative purposes of a rhetorical move are called steps (Bhatia, 1993; Swales,

1990). From the perspective of English for a specific purpose (ESP), moves and steps are functional, recognised by meanings, contribute to general communicative purposes, and are realised by typical linguistic features in the text (Pho, 2008; Swales, 1990, 2004).

Numerous studies on genre analysis have been carried out. However, most of them focus on just one section of a research article (Brett, 1994; Hopkins & Dudley-Evans, 1988; Nguyen, 2018; Pham et al., 2019; Pham, 2022; Yang & Allison, 2004). In the field of applied linguistics, Pho (2008) can be said to be one of the most comprehensive rhetorical structure models in an article (from abstract to conclusion). The model she suggested (Table 1) was employed to analyse Iranian articles (Fazilatfar & Naseri, 2016). This disciplinarily suitable and comprehensive model is therefore also chosen as a theoretical frame to analyse our English and Vietnamese linguistic corpora.

TABLE 1. Rhetorical structure of Applied linguistic research articles (Pho, 2008)

(Sections)	Rhetorical moves and steps
Abstract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presenting the research - Describing the methodology - Summarising the findings - Discussing the research
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishing a territory + Summarising existing studies + Drawing inferences from previous studies - Establishing a niche + Indicating a gap - Presenting the present work + Announcing present research descriptively and/or purposively + Presenting research questions or hypotheses
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Describing the data collection procedure + Describing the sample + Describing research instruments + Recounting steps in data collection) + <i>Justifying the data collection procedure</i> - Describing data analysis procedure + Recounting data analysis procedure
Results (or Results Discussion)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparing for the presentation of results + (Re)stating data collection and analysis procedure - Reporting specific/individual results - Commenting on specific results + Interpreting results
Discussion Conclusions (or Conclusions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparing for the presentation of the discussion section + Giving background knowledge - Highlighting overall research outcome - Discussing the findings of the study + Interpreting / discussing results + Comparing results with literature + Accounting for results - Drawing conclusions of the study / Stating research conclusions - Evaluating the study + Indicating limitations - Deductions from the research + Making suggestions / drawing implications + Recommending further research

METHODS OF THE STUDY

CORPUS COMPILATION

The study is based on a corpus of 35 English and 35 Vietnamese research articles selected randomly from reputable linguistic journals in Vietnam and around the world. Specifically, Vietnamese articles were chosen from the three most reputable linguistic journals in Vietnam, namely (i) *Journal of Language*, (ii) *Journal of Lexicography and Encyclopedia*, and (iii) *Journal of Language & Life*. English articles were selected from 5 journals in the top 10 International Scientific Scimago Journal and Country Ranking ((i) *Applied Linguistics*; (ii) *Applied Psycholinguistics*; (iii) *Sociolinguistics*; (iv) *Language*; (v) *Functional Linguistics*).

The corpora were collected in a five-year period (2015-2019) to ensure the diversity of materials for analysis. Each corpus was coded: Eres 1- Eres 35 for English articles and Vres 1- Vres 35 for Vietnamese ones.

DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

The procedure to analyse each corpus of the study consists of the following steps:

- (i) Analyse the macro-structure of research articles by identifying different sections of the articles.
- (ii) Identify specific moves in each section of the articles.
- (iii) Describe the rhetorical structure of English and Vietnamese research articles.
- (iv) Compare and contrast the rhetorical structure of English articles with Vietnamese ones.

RESULTS

MACRO-STRUCTURE OF RESEARCH ARTICLES

As mentioned above, previous studies show that macro-structures of research articles vary according to discipline. However, all articles tend to cover the main sections as suggested in Swales (1990): I (Introduction), M (Methods), R (Results), and D (Discussion). Each section serves certain functions:

The introduction section gives information on the background of the study and states the aims of the study.

The methods section lists the methods of the study and the procedure to collect and analyse data.

The results section reports results/ statistics gained from the data analysis process.

The discussion section is sometimes combined with the Results section, sometimes separated as a single part after the Results. In this section, the author gives comments, provides a personal evaluation of the results, or contrasts the results with previous studies.

The macro-structures of the present corpora are as follows:

ENGLISH CORPUS

Almost all articles cover three main sections: Introduction, Methods, and Results. The final parts of articles may vary a little according to divisions and names, such as 9 out of 35 articles have separated Discussion and Results sections; 3 out of 35 articles combine Discussion and Results into one section; 4 out of 35 articles combine Discussion and Conclusion into one. Some articles add Further discussion (Eres 23) or General discussion (Eres 6) as discussion is already integrated into Results. Two articles do not have a Methods section.

Other sections have also been added. For example, 7 out of 35 articles have an Implication section, 2 articles have a Further study or Future direction, and one article (Eres 6) has a Recommendation.

According to the macro-structure model suggested in previous studies (Fazilatfar & Naseri, 2016; Pho, 2008), a Theoretical background or Literature review are often mentioned in the introduction, or in other words, there is no Theoretical background/ Literature review section. But now, almost all articles have one part to present related theories, literature review or information about the background/ context of the study: 10 out of 35 articles have the context of the study section, and many articles (25/35) have a Literature review section. For this reason, besides the main sections mentioned in Pho’s rhetoric model, this study adds another section named Theoretical Background after the introduction and before the Methods sections.

VIETNAMESE CORPUS

The quantitative results of the Vietnamese corpus are quite similar to that in English: 32 out of 35 articles have popular sections I-M-R-C; Only Vres 10 does not have a Methods section. Being aware of the importance of providing information about the theoretical background, 20 out of 35 articles have a separate part for Theoretical background, and 02 articles have the context of the study sections. The style of presenting results is quite diverse: 9 out of 35 articles combine Discussion and Results into one section; one article combines Discussion and Conclusion; in the others, the authors separate Results and Conclusion and do not include a Discussion section in the article. Besides, 04 authors end their articles by adding Recommendation sections.

COMMENTS

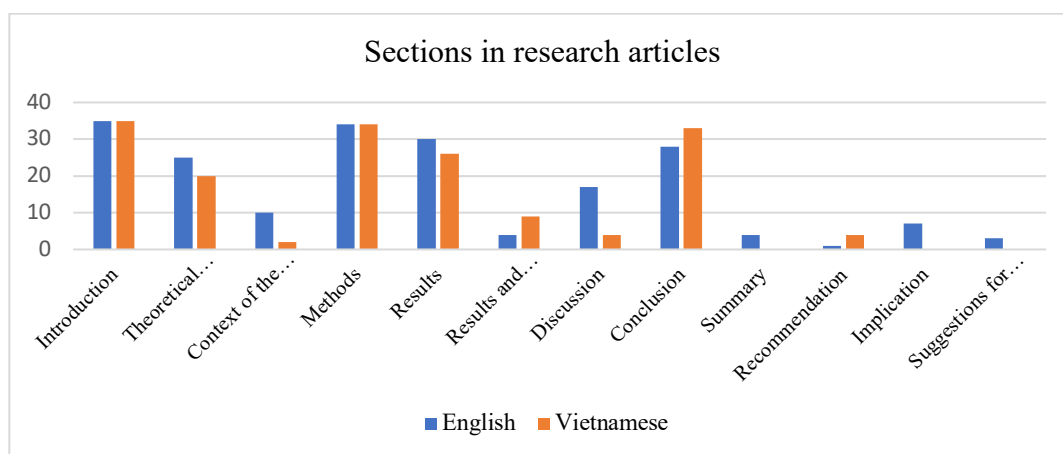


FIGURE 1. Sections in research articles

Comparing the two corpora, some similarities and differences can be identified: both English and Vietnamese articles cover main sections such as Introduction, Theoretical background, Methods, Results and Conclusion. The English corpus has a higher frequency of articles with the separated context of the study and Results sections than the Vietnamese corpus. Furthermore, English articles sometimes include optional parts not found in Vietnamese articles, such as summary, Implications, or suggestions for further study. On the contrary, the Vietnamese corpus has a higher frequency of articles with Results-and-Discussion sections and separate Conclusion sections than the English corpus. Meanwhile, English authors tend to make the discussion a separate section of the article. In addition, more Vietnamese articles have Recommendation sections than English ones.

INTRODUCTION SECTION

The Introduction section consists of three moves: M1, M2 and M3.

M1: Establishing a territory, i.e. the author announces the topic or the field of the study to the readers.

M2: Establishing a niche. This is when the author or researcher identifies the gap or niche that previous studies have not looked into and that this study can fulfil.

M3: Presenting the present work. This is when the author states the aims of the study, possibly accompanied by research questions or hypotheses.

ENGLISH CORPUS

Generally, the Introduction section often starts with the importance or popularity of the topic of the study. Therefore, M1 is an important move and often appears first in the article. According to the results of the study, 32 out of 35 articles use this move. Nearly half of the corpus (15/25) develops Introduction sections according to the typical model M1-M2-M3. Some authors make changes by mixing or rearranging the moves. For instance, they start the article with M2 – establishing a niche (Eres 20), or M3 - introducing the aims of the present study (Eres 2, 7, 33), especially in Eres 26 and Eres 31, the authors only utilise M3 in the whole Introduction section.

Of the three moves, M2 is the least frequently used, appearing in 25 out of 35 articles. In the typical model, M2 stands after M1 and before M3; however, some authors have changed the position of this move. For example, Eres 7 starts with M3, then M2; Eres 20 starts with M2 and then M1.

M3 is an indispensable move in the Introduction sections. Therefore, it appears in all articles. Maybe acknowledging its importance, many authors put this move at the beginning of the article; two authors even use only M3, while 07 only use M1 and M3 in the Introduction section.

VIETNAMESE CORPUS

Like English authors, Vietnamese authors also use M1 very frequently (in 34 out of 35 articles). Only Vres 22 does not have this move; instead, this article employs just M3. M2 is used the least frequently in 23 out of 35 articles. M3 appears in all articles. In the Introduction section, a majority of articles follow the typical order of moves (M1-M2-M3) (13/35) or M1-M3 (10/35) for those which do not employ M2. In seven articles, after developing the Introduction section in the order of M1-M2-M3, the authors reuse M1 or M3 at the end of the section. Vres 9 reorders the moves,

with M3 appearing first in the introduction, whereas, in Vres 14, M5 appears (describing the data collection procedure) in the introduction. Meanwhile, in three articles, M2 is also mentioned in the Methods sections.

COMMENTS

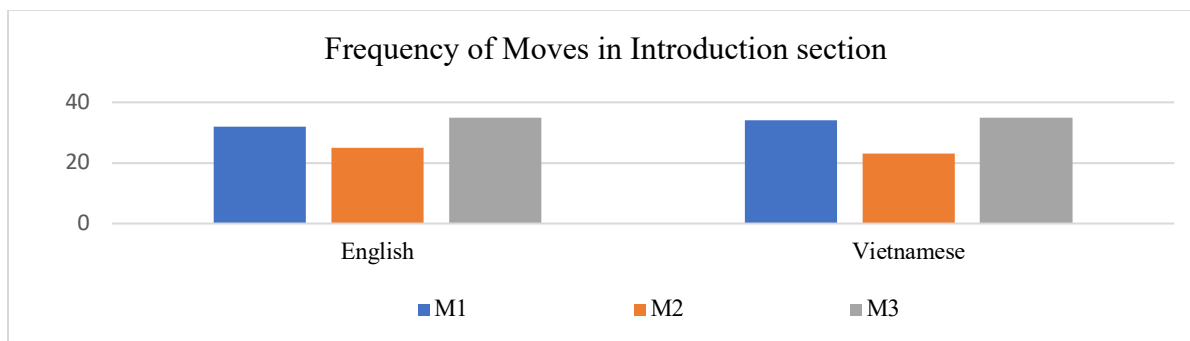


FIGURE 2. Frequency of Moves in the Introduction section

As can be seen from the above figure, M3 is employed in all English and Vietnamese articles. Vietnamese authors use M1 more frequently than English authors but use M2 less frequently. Though authors can format the Introduction section differently depending on their subjective intention, in general, most articles apply the typical model M1-M2-M3. The number of articles using the typical model in English is higher than in Vietnamese. Vietnamese authors reorder the moves less frequently than English authors.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND SECTION

As already presented, in the rhetorical structure suggested by previous studies, the Theoretical background or context of the study is not a compulsory, separated section but is usually integrated into the introduction. However, in the development of scientific research with richer and richer theories, we witness a more and more frequent use of a single section to present a review of the Literature, Theories or Context of the study after the introduction and before the Methods (Yang & Allison, 2004). Our corpus also shows a similar trend. Therefore, in this study, we add a section named Theoretical Background, including Theories and/or Context of the study in the macro-structure of a research article.

ENGLISH CORPUS

In the English corpus, 24 articles have separate Theoretical background sections, five of which present both theories and the context of the study. Ten articles have separate contexts of the study section, while nine articles do not have this as a separate part but integrate it into the Introduction sections.

VIETNAMESE CORPUS

In the Vietnamese corpus, 20 articles have Theoretical background sections which review previous studies and present related concepts and theoretical frameworks. Eight articles do not have a Theoretical background section or do not mention any related theories; seven articles present theories in the Introduction sections, and two articles mention the context of the study.

COMMENTS

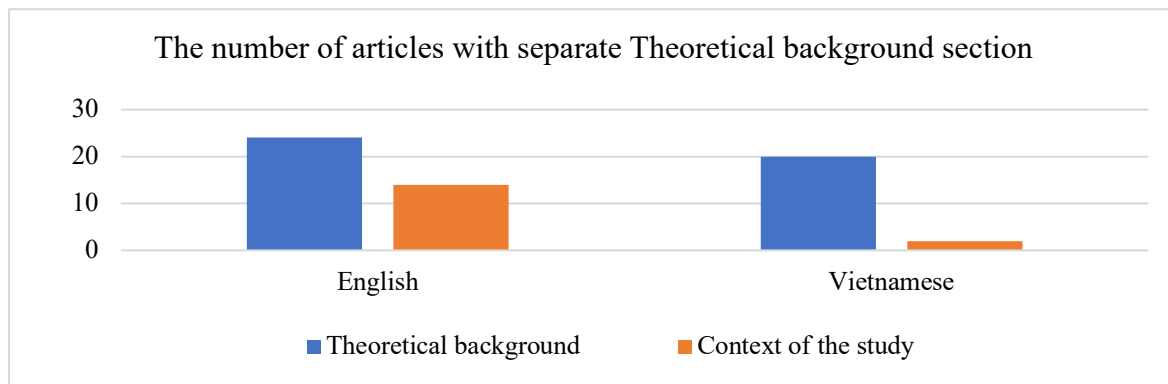


FIGURE 3. The number of articles with separate Theoretical background/ Context of the study section

Basically, both English and Vietnamese corpora have theoretical background sections (more in English than in Vietnamese) or theories mentioned in the introduction sections. The number of articles which mention the context of the study in English is higher than in Vietnamese. Specifically, in the Vietnamese corpus, there are some articles that do not mention the theoretical background or context of the study.

METHODS SECTION

According to Pho (2008), the Methods section consists of two moves: Describing the data collection procedure and Describing the data analysis procedure. Besides these two moves, Fazilatfar and Naseri (2016) reveal that many authors also describe the design of the study in this section. Our study discovered that in some articles, authors mention research methods used in their studies, give a general introduction to the study, or raise research questions or hypotheses. Therefore, we add one move in this section (M4). Thus, this section consists of three moves:

M4: Describing the overall design of the study (methods adopted, introduction, etc.)

M5: Describing data collection procedure (sample, research instruments, steps in data collection)

M6: Describing data analysis procedure

ENGLISH CORPUS

According to the study results, the frequency of moves employed from the highest to the lowest is as follows: M5 (31/35) – M4 (18/35) – M6 (16/35). Notably, one article (Eres 14) has no Methods section, and one article (Eres 32) presents Methods in the Results section.

Unlike the Introduction sections, in the Methods section, the authors rarely diversify the arrangement of moves but use them in the typical order M4- M5- M6. There are four ways to present Methods with similar frequency: (i) only M5 is employed (8); (ii) all three moves are employed M4-M5-M6 (7); (iii) only M5 and M6 are employed (7); (iv) only M4 and M5 are employed (6).

VIETNAMESE CORPUS

In Vietnamese corpus, the frequency of moves used from the highest to the lowest is as follows: M5 (33/35), M4 (19/35), M6 (5/35). There are some unpopular cases: Vres 10 does not have a Methods section but integrates it into the Introduction section; Vres 13 combines part of Results with the Methods section; Vres 14 mentions reasons to choose data in the Introduction section; Vres 20 presents aims of the study at the beginning of the Methods section; Vres 26 includes research questions in the Methods section.

Besides, like English authors, Vietnamese ones rarely reorder the position of moves (except for Vres 21, 26, 29: M5 is used before M4) and tend to employ just M4 and M5. 11 articles use two moves M4-M5; 11 articles use only M5; four articles employ two moves M5-M6; Vres 14 uses only M4; and only one article employs all three moves M4-M5-M6 (Vres 29).

COMMENTS

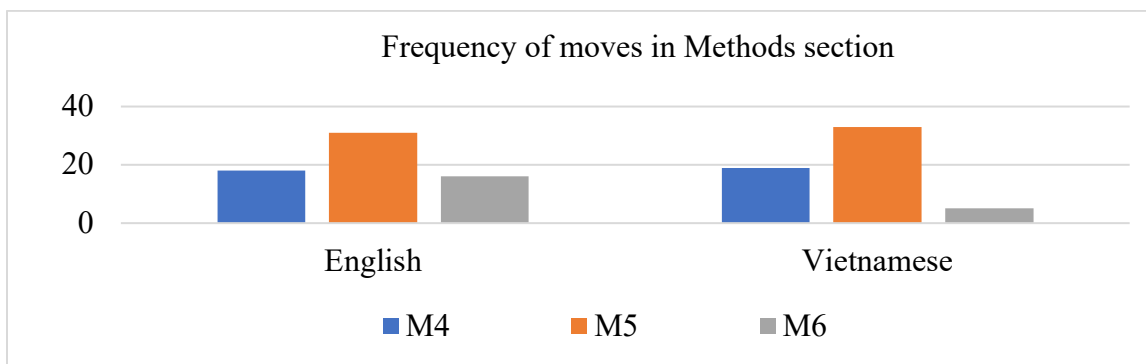


FIGURE 4. Frequency of moves in the Methods section

Vietnamese authors employ M4 - M5 as frequently as English ones but use M6 much less. The number of articles employing all three moves, M4-M5-M6, is higher in English than in Vietnamese. In other words, Vietnamese articles usually use only two moves in the Methods section. Moreover, Vietnamese authors do not organise the Methods section consistently or follow a certain order but design this section more flexibly than English authors.

RESULTS SECTION

The Results section consists of three moves: M7, M8, and M9. Move M7 is the act of preparing for the presentation of results by restating the data collection and analysis procedure. M8 is the centre of the Results section, which includes reports on specific results. M9 consists of comments and interpretation of specific results.

ENGLISH CORPUS

Results of the study show that the frequency of moves is different from each other: M8 appears in almost all articles; M7 appears in 19 out of 35 articles, whereas M9 is employed the least (in 15 out of 35 articles). More specifically, six articles cover all three moves M7-M8-M9, ten articles only use M7-M8, ten articles only focus on result analysis with M8, 4 out of 35 only use M8-M9. The authors do not use moves once in the section but reuse certain moves a number of times (in 16/35 articles). Besides, they have the tendency to reorder the moves. For instance, Eres 5 uses the moves in the order of M8-M9-M7-M9... and repeats this order many times; Eres 8 arranges the moves as M8-M7-M8-M9.

Remarkably, since M9 serves the function of giving authors' comments on specific results, this move does not only appear in the Results sections; it is also used in the Discussion/ Conclusion sections of Eres 9 and Eres 18. In some articles, besides M7-M8-M9, M11 and M12 (should be used in Discussion/ Conclusion) are also employed because the authors integrate analysing with discussing results.

VIETNAMESE CORPUS

In Vietnamese corpus, the frequency of moves is M8 (35/35), M7 (24/35) and M9 (21/35). In 16 articles, the authors present Results in the typical order M7-M8-M9. Moreover, some do not only use these three moves but also employ others which should frequently appear in Discussion/ Conclusion sections like M11 and M12 (M11 in Vres 19, M12 in 6 articles), and these orders are repeated in different parts of the Results section. Six articles only have M7-M8, five articles only have M8, and four articles use M8-M9 only. In 11 out of 35 articles, the authors reorder the moves.

COMMENTS

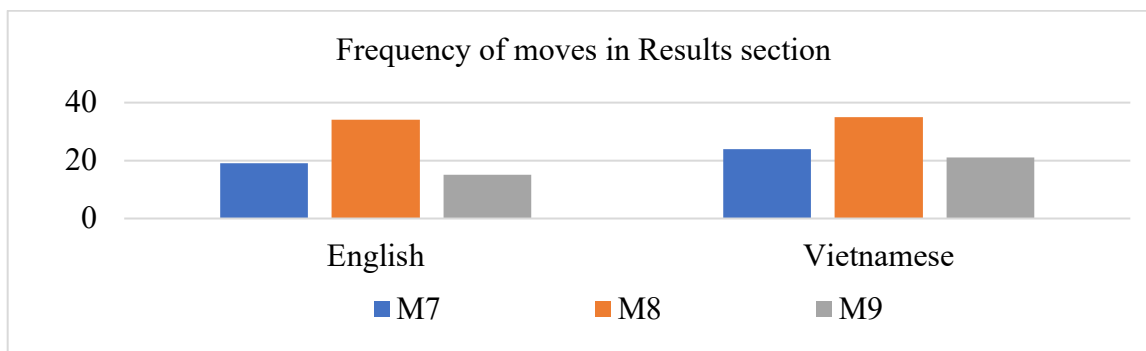


FIGURE 5. Frequency of moves in the Results section

Vietnamese authors employ all three moves more frequently than English authors. Vietnamese articles reorder and repeat the moves more frequently than English articles. Both English and Vietnamese articles sometimes use M11 and M12 in the Results sections, but more Vietnamese articles utilise this strategy than English ones.

DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION SECTION

The Discussion/ Conclusion section consists of six moves: M10 – Preparing for the presentation of the discussion section (giving background knowledge), M11 - Highlighting overall research outcome, M12 - Discussing the findings of the study (comparing results with literature and accounting for results), M13 - Drawing conclusions of the study/ Stating research conclusions, M14 - Evaluating the study (indicating limitations), and M15 - Deductions from the research (Making suggestions/ drawing implications and recommending further research).

This section can be identified as a Conclusion, Discussion, Implication, etc., in different articles. Therefore, we decided to group all these different names and parts into the Discussion/ Conclusion sections and analyse the content in terms of moves.

ENGLISH CORPUS

In the whole corpus, M10 and M14 are the least frequently used, with a frequency of 4/35 and 5/35, respectively; M12 is used quite regularly (in 18 out of 35 articles), while M13 and M15 are the most frequently used, with a frequency of 26/35 and 25/35 respectively. Hence, it can be said that research articles may not possibly give background knowledge for the discussion (M10) or limitations of the study (M14), but all draw conclusions of the study (M13) and implications/ suggestions for further studies (M15).

VIETNAMESE CORPUS

In Vietnamese corpus, moves are used with frequency from the highest to the lowest as M11 (23/35), M15 (22/35), M13 (16/35), M12 (14/35), M10 (8/35) and M14 (6/35). This means almost all authors appreciate the act of highlighting the overall research outcome and implication of the study. For many authors, background knowledge and limitations of the study are not necessarily mentioned in the articles.

COMMENTS

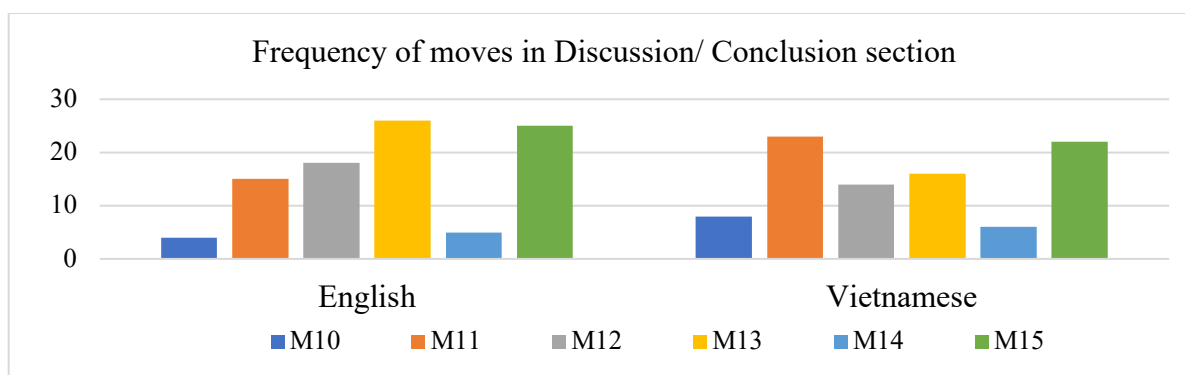


FIGURE 6. Frequency of moves in the Discussion/ Conclusion section

After presenting the results, English authors focus more on discussing the findings with reference to the theoretical framework or previous studies (M12) in order to draw conclusions (M13) and implications as well as suggestions for further studies (M15). Meanwhile, Vietnamese authors mostly focus on highlighting the overall research outcome (M11), the implication of the study (M15) and drawing conclusions (M13). In general, English articles use M12, M13, and M15 more frequently than Vietnamese ones, whereas Vietnamese articles use M10, M11 and M14 more than English ones. Both the two corpora rarely make use of M10 (Preparing for the presentation of the discussion section) and M14 (Evaluating the study (indicating limitations)).

DISCUSSION

The findings reveal some adding features not found in Pho's model. Based on the findings of this study, we suggest a rhetorical structure of linguistic research articles with some changes to Pho's: there are 15 moves; the Theoretical background section is added between the Introduction and Methods sections (this section includes Literature review and/or context of the study); in the Methods section, Move M4 (Describing the overall design of the study) is added; Results is separated as a single section; Discussion and Conclusion are combined into one section. Thus, the results of our study are presented according to the following model:

TABLE 2. Rhetorical structure of linguistic research articles applied in this study

Section	Rhetorical moves
Introduction	M1. Establishing a territory M2. Establishing a niche M3. Presenting the present work
Theoretical background	Literature review <i>And/or</i> Background of the study
Methods	M4. Describing the overall design of the study (methods adopted, introduction, etc.) M5. Describing the data collection procedure M6. Describing the data analysis procedure
Results	M7. Preparing for the presentation of results M8. Reporting specific/individual results M9. Commenting on specific results
Discussion/ Conclusion	M10. Preparing for the presentation of the discussion section M11. Highlighting overall research outcome M12. Discussing the findings of the study M13. Drawing conclusions of the study / Stating research conclusions M14. Evaluating the study M15. Deductions from the research

From the results presented above, some similarities and differences between the rhetorical structures of English and Vietnamese research articles can be drawn out as follows:

Similarities:

(1) All moves are employed. This means English and Vietnamese authors are all aware of the functions of these moves in developing and organising an article and know how to use these moves.

(2) M3 has the same frequency in two corpora; moves M4, M8 and M14 have quite similar frequency.

(3) Similar styles of using moves can be found in some sections: the ranking of moves from the highest to the lowest frequency: M3-M1-M2 in the Introduction section, M8-M7-M9 in the Results section; in the Discussion section, M10 and M14 are rarely used while M15 is common in two corpora.

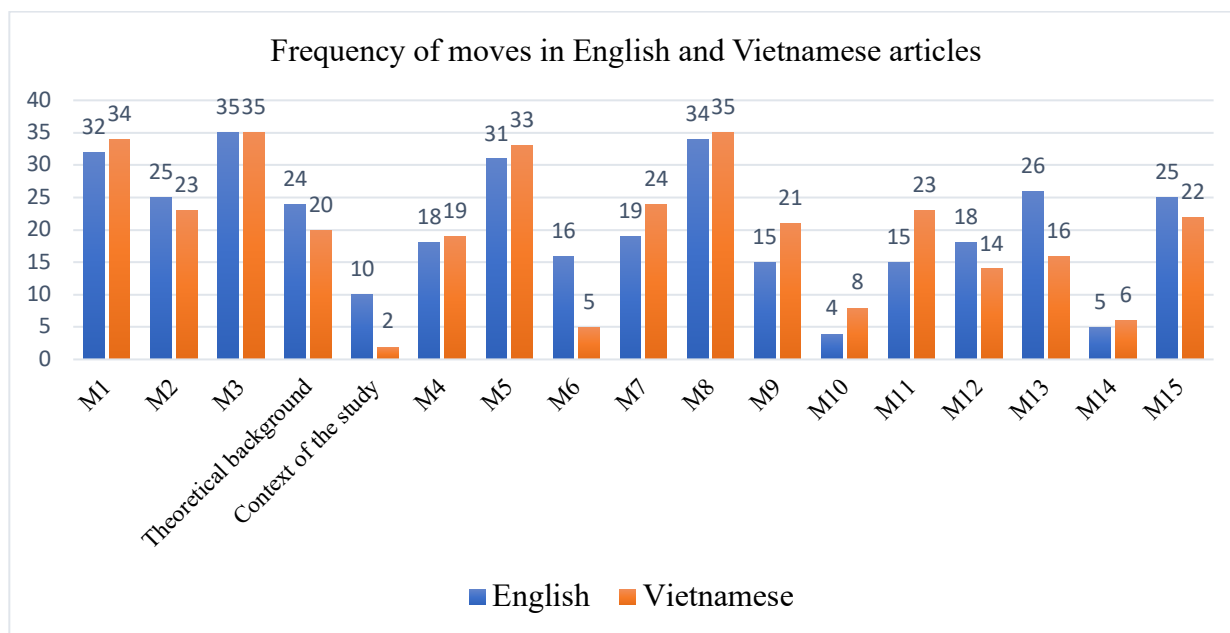


FIGURE 7. Frequency of moves in English and Vietnamese articles

Differences:

(1) In the Introduction section, English articles use M2 more frequently than Vietnamese ones, while Vietnamese articles use M1 more. This shows two different approaches to introducing a study. English authors place more importance on establishing the research gap in order to prove the rationale of the study. Meanwhile, Vietnamese authors focus more on the context of the study and the importance of the topic or field of study. This reveals the fact that Vietnamese authors tend to synthetically report related studies to highlight the prevalence or importance of a topic, rarely (or avoid) expressing personal or critical viewpoints on previous studies to indicate a gap that their present study can fill in. In other words, Vietnamese authors generally do not care much about demonstrating the novelty of their study in the overall picture at the beginning of an article to draw the attention of readers.

(2) In the Theoretical background section, the number of English articles with a separate section for literature review or context of the study is higher than Vietnamese articles. This means that English authors pay more attention to this section and invest more in presenting the theoretical frame of the study and the context to conduct the study. Vietnamese articles tend to present this part more briefly.

(3) In the Methods section, English authors place more importance on presenting the data analysis procedure (M6) than Vietnamese authors. Vietnamese authors often briefly present this section and ignore describing the process of collecting and analysing data. For many scientific reports, the Methods section can reflect many things, and it describes what researchers actually

did in their study. Unfortunately, Vietnamese authors do not seem to pay enough attention to this stage.

(4) In the Results section, it is surprising that Vietnamese authors use all three moves (M7, M8, M9) more frequently than their English counterparts. This means more Vietnamese articles present background information to prepare for the presentation of results and give comments on specific results than English articles. This shows that the Results section is often integrated with Discussion in Vietnamese articles, and this explains the reason why Vietnamese articles rarely have a separate Discussion section. After the results, a conclusion section often comes.

(5) In the Discussion/ Conclusions section, Vietnamese articles employ M10, M11 and M14 more frequently than English ones, while English articles focus more on M12, M13 and M15. This tendency indicates that many Vietnamese articles provide background information to prepare for the presentation of the Discussion section, highlight the overall research outcome, and evaluate the study. English articles tend to discuss the findings of the study by interpreting results or comparing results with literature, drawing conclusions and deductions from the study such as drawing implications or recommending further research. This difference shows that Vietnamese authors present their study more briefly than English authors and focus more on results and final conclusions, while English authors invest more in interpreting and discussing findings with reference to literature and drawing implications of the study. It seems that the writing style of English authors may provide readers with a deeper view of a scientific study.

CONCLUSION

Findings show that, essentially, Vietnamese and English articles have quite similar structures. However, English articles have more sections, and discussions are often presented in a single section. In terms of rhetorical moves to realise the functions of individual sections, English articles focus more on the data analysing process, discussing the findings, indicating the niche that the present study can fill in and the position of this study in relation to previous literature review. The implication of the study is also drawn out. Meanwhile, Vietnamese articles are more general and concentrate on the importance of the research topic, findings and final conclusions.

The similarities and differences identified in this study show that, in general, Vietnamese authors are all aware of ways to structure and develop different sections of a research article. However, the ways to organise the articles and evaluate the importance of each section may vary between English and Vietnamese authors. There might be numerous reasons for these differences. One of which might be the fact that many Vietnamese researchers, especially novice researchers, are not trained in scientific report writing. They often write their articles according to their writing habits or referring to other articles in Vietnamese journals. Though they may have precious research findings, they do not know how to report their findings attractively and persuasively or to show the value of their study in the general picture of the field. Therefore, to enhance the status of Vietnamese researchers and enable them to publish their writing in international journals, there should be specific instructions on how to design the best scientific report.

In general, the findings of this study can be beneficial in a number of ways. This study may help linguistic writers all over the world (not just in Vietnam) better understand the rhetorical structures of linguistic research articles. They are informed that the papers should not only have an Introduction section, a Theoretical background section, a Methods section, a Results section and a Discussion/Conclusions section, but each section should also follow a rhetorical

organisation of moves. Such information is rarely included in writers' manuals or writing handbooks. Furthermore, the English corpus consists of authentic papers published in the top 10 linguistic journals in the world (according to Scimago journal rank); rhetorical features of English articles are a valuable reference for postgraduate students in the areas of Linguistics and non-native English researchers around the world in making their research articles more acceptable for publication.

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