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An Analysis of English Language Teaching and Learning Research Papers Published in Scopus Indexed Journals: The Structural Compliance with C.A.R.S. Model

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INTRODUCTION

Publication is an integral aspect of professional requirement and development for those who work in academia. The recent call for a more robust publication effort by the Malaysian institutes of higher education has compelled the academics to realign their professional scope and interests to meet this key performance indicator set by their faculties. This has also initiated a race among the academics to have their research papers published in high quality peer-reviewed publications, namely the ISI and Scopus indexed journals of their respective disciplines. To this end, academics need to keep abreast with the latest codes and conventions set by these journals for their papers to be accepted and published. One of the ways to refine their writing is to model the structure of their papers on the ones that have been published in the indexed journals.

PURPOSE/AIM & BACKGROUND

Genre analysis has been widely used to establish common rhetorical patterns in academic writing. CARS model developed by Swales (1990) is one of the writing frameworks that has been designed to facilitate academic writing. The Moves and Steps in this model provide clear and systematic guide for writers to create their research space, specifically in the Introduction section of their paper. As the rhetorical patterns are heavily subjected to the publication codes and conventions of each journal, there is a need for writers to understand the common trend prior to submitting their works for publication. This study identifies and analyses the rhetorical patterns of the Introduction section of 24 randomly selected research articles published in four Scopus indexed journals from the field of English Language Teaching and Learning by mapping their compliance with the Moves and Steps in CARS model.

METHODOLOGY

For this study, 24 published research articles from 2015 to 2019 were randomly selected from 4 Scopus indexed journals, namely Australian Review of Applied Linguistics (ARAL), CALL-EJ, ELT Journal, and Journal of Second Language Writing. 6 most recently published articles were selected from each journal for analysis. Most of the articles chosen were the ones published within 2018 and 2019, except for the ones from ARAL due to the limited online accessibility, which was only allowed up to year 2015. The Moves and Steps of the Introduction section of the 24 articles were identified, categorised, and analysed using CARS model adapted from Swales (1990).

FINDINGS/RESULTS

The results showed that the 24 selected articles followed all the Moves and Steps of CARS, albeit with different levels of compliance. The highest level of compliance was with Step 3 of Move 1 (100%), followed by Step 1 of Move 1 (95.83%). There was a rather scattered compliance in the Steps in Move 2, in which the highest was with Step 1d, and Step1a the lowest. There was a significantly low level of compliance in Step 2 of Move 3, where there was only 1 out of the 24 articles that followed the model. The highest compliance of Move 2 was seen in Step 1b (87.5%), followed by Step 1a (79.17%).

CONCLUSIONS/IMPLICATIONS

The empirical evidence gleaned from the textual analysis of the research articles in this study provides significant insights into the research of genre analysis, as well as the practice of scholarly writing for publication purposes. Language educators will also find value in the findings of this study to guide them in the teaching of academic writing, and consequently, to generate future writers who are adept at writing research papers of publishable quality.

Keywords: Genre analysis, CARS model, Rhetorical patterns, Scopus indexed journals