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AN INVESTIGATION OF THE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ENGLISH LITERATURE AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING MASTER'S THESES IN TERMS OF SWALES' CARS MODEL

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Abstract

This study aims at identifying the differences and similarities between English literature master's theses and English language teaching master's theses in terms of John Swales' Creating a Research Space (CARS) model. John Swales originated this model for the introduction parts of the research articles and offered researchers a guideline to follow while writing the introduction parts of research articles. This research tries to fill a gap by adapting this model to examine the introduction parts of the English literature and English language teaching master's theses. For this end, the researcher chose 5 English language and literature (ELIT) MA (Master of Arts) theses and 5 English language teaching (ELT) MA (Master of Arts) theses all written in 2014 by Turkish students. The results indicated that there are differences between these two theses types in terms of Establishing a Territory (Move 1), Establishing a Niche (Move 2) and Occupying a Niche (Move 3) moves. Based on the findings, it is recommended that English literature master's theses and English language teaching master's theses be evaluated in a different perspective although literature and language teaching are related with each other.

Keywords

Academic Discourse, Organizing a Research Article, CARS

1. Introduction

When the researchers – especially the ones who are at the beginning of their careers – want to produce a piece of written work, be it a research article or a thesis, they find themselves encircled with a lot of questions. The questions in mind could be numerous such as “How am I going to do this?”, “I do not know how to start. What should I do?”. The prospective researcher may feel being trapped in a vicious circle and this may lead to a dead end when even a single letter is not put on paper yet. It is known that the prospective researcher could get professional help from the academia, but it will be him/her doing most of the research and putting it on a written work. Therefore, a researcher should know the basic rules of academia and conform to these regulations.

What is the purpose of writing an academic paper after all? Is it like writing a column for a newspaper or sending an e-mail to a colleague? The answer would be an absolute ‘no’ to this question; not to mention writing an academic paper is a more challenging task than the aforementioned activities. John Swales (1994) states that “even before you write, you need to consider your audience... To be successful in your writing task, you need to have an understanding of your audience’s expectations...” (p.7). In other words, the researchers would want to put forward something new so that their work could be appreciated by a specific scientific community. However, this is not supposed to be an easy task. According to Swales and Feak (1994) “the tasks become progressively more complex and demanding the further you go in the program. Second (with few exceptions), they need to be written ‘academically’” (p. 7, apostrophes are original).

As it is understood from this quotation, a researcher cannot write an academic paper the way s/he wants. In order to gain the consent of the particular scientific environment, the first thing a researcher should do is to develop the research article according to an organizational plan. The first part of the research articles tends to be the introduction part. Swales (1990) claims that an introduction of a research article is a “crafted rhetorical artefact” and a “manifestation of rhetorical maneuver” (as cited in Shehzad, 2008, p.27). Weissberg and Baker (1990) state “The introduction serves as an orientation for the readers of the report and gives them the perspective needed to understand the detailed information coming in later sections” (p.20). Therefore, it can

be said that the introduction shapes the upcoming chapters and the more attention it gets from the readers, the more possible that the rest of the research article will be read and appreciated by the audience. However, it might be the most troublesome part for the researchers. Swales and Feak (1994) stated “Writing the Introduction of an RP is particularly troublesome” (p.173, the abbreviation is original).

Writing the introduction is the first phase of writing a research paper. The ultimate goal of the researcher is to convince the readers. Swales and Feak (1994) say that in order to be accepted by the readers, the students should employ a widely used organization pattern, which is called rhetorical pattern. In other words, a research paper without a rhetorical structure is doomed to fail to grab the attention of the readers. Hult (1987) even states that “rhetorical frames can even affect students’ writing performances in writing assessments and consequently should be carefully defined as test-makers design and construct assessment instruments” (p.25). According to Swales and Feak (2012), “Readers have the expectation that information will be presented in a structured format that is appropriate for the particular type of text” (p.8). So it can be said that if the ideas in a research paper are organized in a pattern, it will be easy to follow and understand them. The question is: How will the researchers able to produce a linear rhetorical pattern after all?

John Swales developed his CARS (Creating a Research Space) model after he analyzed journal articles which were taken from diverse disciplines. Swales and Najar (1987) state that “It is an alternative to problem-solution models” (p.178). Dudley-Evans’ study stated the following:

Model captures the way in which academic writers justify and highlight their own contribution to the ongoing research profile of the field by first establishing a topic for the research and summarizing the key features of the previous research, then establishing a gap or possible extension of that work that will form the basis of the writer’s claims.
 (p.5)

Table 1.1: *John Swales CARS Moves and Respective Steps (Adapted from Swales and Feak (1994:175))*

MOVE	STEPS
1. Establishing the Territory	1.a. by showing that the general research area is important, central, interesting, problematic or relevant in some way (optional) 1.b. by introducing and reviewing items of previous research area in the area (obligatory)
2. Establishing a Niche	2.a. by indicating a gap in the previous research, raising a question about it, or extending previous knowledge in some

	way (obligatory)
3. Occupying a Niche	3.a. by outlining purposes or stating the nature of the present research (obligatory) 3.b. by announcing principal findings (optional) 3.c. by indicating the structure of the RP (optional)

It should be noted that the model was constructed for the introduction parts of the research articles intended to be published in scientific journals. The model basically consists of three moves and they all have sub-steps under them. The first move is called ‘Establishing the Territory’. In this first phase, the researcher is trying to give the message that his/her piece of work is important and it will bring new insights to the scientific community. The first step to do this is to show the audience that the research area or topic in particular is important, central, interesting or relevant in some way. The second step could be taken by introducing and reviewing items of previous research in the area. While the former is optional, the latter is obligatory. When the researcher carries out a sufficient and successful literature review, the readers could get the impression that the researcher might have found a gap to be filled after a thorough review. A research article with insufficient literature review could raise question marks in readers’ minds.

After the researcher puts the previous research in the work, he/she should ‘Establish a Niche’. The niche means that there is a question which is not answered before or there are more things to say about the results of a previous research. At this point, the researcher raises question or questions about the gap to be filled in the subsequent chapters.

The last move would be to fill i.e. occupy the gap. Here, the researcher outline the purposes or state the nature of the research that s/he conducted. This is an obligatory step, so when the readers go through the introduction, they should have at least have an idea about the aim of the paper. The purpose of the research articles are generally connected with the research questions because the general purpose should be to find answers to those questions. In this step, the researcher can also announce his/her principal findings, but this is an optional step.

Another optional step is the third step in filling a gap which is showing the structure of the research paper. It is kind of a road map for the reader because the researcher tells exactly what follows in the subsequent chapters after the introduction.

1.1. Aim of the Study

In the light of these information, the aim of this research paper is to examine the similarities and differences between English language teaching master theses and English literature master theses in terms of Swale's CARS model. The abbreviations used in this research are ELIT, ELT, and MA. ELIT stands for English language and literature while ELT stands for English language teaching. MA is the short form of Master of Arts.

1.2. Significance of the Study

As Zand-Vakili (2012) points out "Over the years, a huge body of studies has been carried out on Research Articles (RA)" (p.1). Most of the previous studies conducted on Swales' CARS moves deals with the research articles published in scientific journals. However, this research tries to fill a gap by analyzing the use of Swales' CARS moves in master's theses in a comparative manner.

1.3. Limitations of the Study

The most important limitation of this research is the number of the theses taken and the country in which they were written. Prospective or enthusiastic researchers could take more samples to compare. Also, the researcher used master theses written by Turkish students. More research should be conducted with theses written by other nationals or even a comparison could be made between a researcher's home country theses and other nationals' theses to enlarge the scope of this research.

1.4. The Research Questions

This research has two research questions. They are:

1- Are there any similarities between ELIT MA and ELT MA theses in terms of Swales' (1990) CARS model? If there are, what are they?

2- Are there any differences between ELIT MA and ELT MA theses in terms of Swales' (1990) CARS model? If there are, what are they?

2. Methodology

The research adapted Swales' (1990) CARS moves. First, the researcher went to Republic of Turkey Council of Higher Education Thesis Center online and chose 5 English language and literature (ELIT) MA (Master of Arts) theses and 5 English language teaching (ELT) MA (Master of Arts) theses all written by Turkish students in 2014. As it is known, John Swales originated this model for the introduction parts of the research articles, but this research tries to fill a gap by adapting this model to master theses. MA ELIT and MA ELT master theses

organization patterns differ from each other. And as they are not research articles, the researcher included only the introduction and review of literature parts of the theses. At this point, it should be noted that the MA ELIT theses do not have a specifically designated area for the literature review like MA ELT theses do, so the references from the introduction parts of the MA ELIT theses were taken into consideration.

The theses were open to public and they were free to download with the authors' consent to Council of Higher Education for public use. After downloading the theses, the researcher coded the MA ELIT theses with the letter 'D'. So the theses were ranked from D1 to D5. Similarly, the MA ELT theses were coded with the letter 'F' and they were numbered from 1 to 5. After this procedure is over, John Swales 1994 edition of CARS moves table was obtained from his book entitled as *Academic Writing for Graduate Students. Essential Tasks and Skills*. A checklist was prepared by the researcher on a piece of paper with the names of the theses (from D1 to D5 and from F1 to F5) and this checklist was used to check whether the aforementioned theses have the corresponding moves or steps. First, the MA ELIT thesis coded as D1 was checked whether it has the first move in the model entitled as 'Establishing the Territory'. In order to understand whether the thesis has it or not, the researcher examined the language that the writers of the theses used. For example, when the researcher claims the centrality or importance of his/her work, s/he tends to use phrases such as "The... has become a favorite topic for analysis" or "It is very vital to examine these points". The most frequently used linguistic devices for signalling Move 2 (Shehzad, 2008) are: (i) Contrastive Statements (however, while, but, although, nevertheless, as opposed to, rather than); (ii) Quantifiers and quasi-negatives (limited, few, little, none of, no [work/research/data/study]); (iii) "Negative" verbs combined with contrastive statements (disregarded, ignored, been limited to, overlooked); (iv) "Negative adjectives (incomplete, inconclusive, misguided, unconvincing, unsatisfactory, flawed, and many other adjectives (as cited in Adika, 2014, p.60). When the researcher captured these kinds of phrases in the introduction, a tick was put in the corresponding space provided for Swales' moves. The procedure was handed manually and there was no need for a computer because Hyland (2004) argues that computer-based "concordance techniques are unhelpful when dealing with move structure analyses... because the thematic structure that writers employ to shape their purposes for a particular readership are [sic] not always explicitly marked linguistically, but more often draw on pragmatic understandings" (as cited in Adika, 2014, p.63). The same procedure was carried out for every individual move and step for both MA ELIT and MA ELT theses. In

order to understand whether they have the second move which is “Establishing the Move”, the researcher checked if there are any research questions related with the gap. This step is the obligatory step for Swales’ CARS model. And finally, the last check was done for the third move.

After analyzing the checklist, the number of MA ELIT and MA ELT theses which have the moves and steps was figured out. Lastly, the numbers were put into tables to show the results of the research.

3. Results

The results are presented as graphs in the subsequent chapters.

3.1 Similarities and Differences between MA ELIT and MA ELT Theses for Move 1

- The results showed that both MA ELIT and MA ELT theses writers stated Move 1 in their theses.
- Both MA ELIT and MA ELT theses writers used citations from other sources for the Move 1.b.

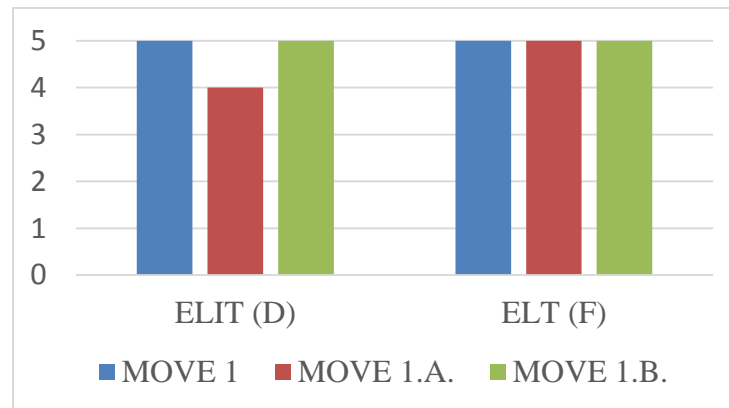


Figure 1: Similarities and Differences between MA ELIT and MA ELT Theses for Move 1

3.2 Similarities and Differences between MA ELIT and MA ELT Theses for Move 2

- The results showed a dramatic difference between D and F.
- All of the MA ELT theses writers used Move 2 and Move 2.a.
- None of the MA ELIT theses writers used Move 2 and Move 2.a.

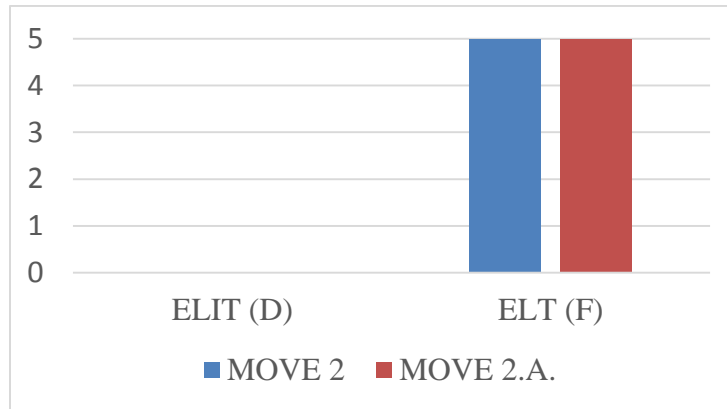


Figure 2: Similarities and Differences between MA ELIT and MA ELT Theses for Move 2

3.3 Similarities and Differences between MA ELIT and MA ELT Theses for Move 3

- Both MA ELIT and MA ELT theses state or outline the purpose of the study.
- Four of the MA ELIT theses announced principal findings in the Introduction.
- None of the MA ELT theses tend to show the outline or plan of the study in the Introduction.
- None of the MA ELT theses tend to announce principal findings in the Introduction.

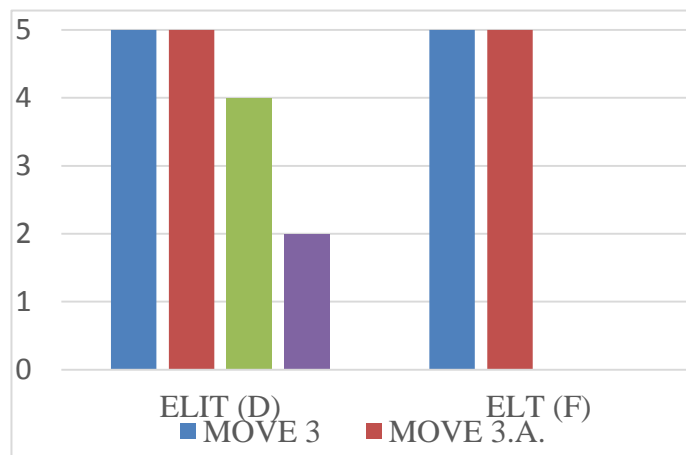


Figure 3: Similarities and Differences between MA ELIT and MA ELT Theses for Move 3

4. Discussion

The following observations were revealed with the final results.

4.1 Establishing a Territory (Move 1) (Move 1.a) (Move 1.b)

Although they are not research articles, the MA ELIT and MA ELT theses establish a research territory. The MA ELT theses differ from MA ELIT theses in that they have a specifically designated area for the review of literature part. Citations and quotations seem to be an inevitable part of both MA theses even when they do not have a specific review of literature part. And as the examples below show, both theses types try to claim centrality and attribute importance to their work.

Example (1)

To sum up, learner autonomy is of great importance in language learning and classroom contexts. (MA ELT Move 1.a.)

Example (2)

In this respect, a comparative study of literary texts from different nations and different periods of time is significant when their contributions to an ongoing tradition are taken into consideration. (MA ELIT Move 1.a.)

4.2 Establishing a Niche (Move 2) (Move 2.a.)

As it is the applied linguistics, the MA ELT theses are more likely to have research questions or hypotheses in order to find answers to a problem. On the other hand, the MA ELIT theses do not try to solve a problem. They do not have research questions or hypotheses. The MA ELIT theses are generally dealing with the comparison of literary texts and it can be framed under the Humanities branch. Here is an example from an ELT thesis showing the research questions clearly:

Example (3)

1. What is the impact of TPRS (Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling) on lexical competence?

2. What is the impact of TPRS on lexical competence regarding gender? (MA ELT Move 2.a.)

4.3 Occupying the Niche (Move 3) (Move 3.a.) (Move 3.b.) and (Move 3.c.)

Although MA ELIT theses do not have Move 2, they indeed state the purpose of thesis. The MA ELT theses tend to state the findings of the research either in the Abstract or in the conclusion or interpretation of the data parts. However, ELIT MA theses tend to give the results

of the study in the Introduction. Here is an example from an ELIT thesis indicating the aim of the study as for Move 3:

Example (4)

This thesis aims to make a comparative analysis of how medieval women are depicted in their two prominent works of art; *The Decameron*, by Boccaccio, and *The Canterbury Tales*, by Chaucer. (MA ELIT Move 3.a.)

5. Conclusion and Suggestions

The most significant differences between MA ELIT and MA ELT theses can be summarized like this. First, MA ELIT theses do not have a statement of the problem, research questions, significance of the study, assumptions, limitations and review of literature parts. MA ELIT theses do not have the aim of finding a gap in previous studies. They rather rely on selected text(s) to draw conclusions. Based on the findings and conclusion above, it is recommended that MA ELIT and MA ELT theses be examined differently according to Swales' CARS model. Although they share similarities in Move 1 and Move 3, the most significant difference is in Move 2.

6. Scope for Future Research

As it is mentioned in the previous chapters, John Swales developed the CARS model for the introduction parts of the research articles. In this study, the master's theses were analyzed and compared. The master theses in this research are in the linguistics and literature areas and the results indicated that the applied linguistics – which is the language teaching in this sense – and literature follow different patterns while being written by master theses writers. The prospective researchers could take other fields as samples in their studies and compare their master's or even doctorate dissertations according to Swale's CARS model. And this does not have to be in social sciences either. The researchers could take a biology master thesis and compare it with a chemistry master thesis. As the CARS model comparisons are relatively low in master's theses, this research could shed new lights on more similar research on different fields.

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