A Genre-analysis Study on the Rhetorical Organization of English and Turkish PhD Theses in the Field of English Language Teaching

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Abstract

This paper presents a contrastive analysis of the introduction sections of 20 PhD theses in Turkish and in English in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT). The main aim of the study is to explore whether the authors from different academic institutions within the same discourse community performed the same rhetorical strategies in the introduction parts of doctorate dissertations. The study proceeded on a qualitative research design, through a content analysis including both genre and discourse analysis, which was carried on the basis of CARS model 2004 version under the scope of Swalesian approach. In general, the findings on the employment frequencies of each rhetorical strategy show that, although the dissertations have been written by the authors within the same discourse community (the realm of ELT), and context -Turkish context-, English thesis introductions have a more complex rhetorical organization than the introductory parts of Turkish theses.

Keywords: Genre analysis, Doctoral thesis, Introduction sections, Rhetorical strategies

1. Introduction

The increasing interest in the concept of genre, which are "defined as ways of recognizing, responding to, acting meaningfully and consequentially within, and helping to reproduce recurrent situations" (Bawarshi and Reiff, 2010; p.3), and the evolution of several genre models have led to an increase in the number of studies based on genre and genre analysis because genres are gradually seen not only as textual organization systems bu also the share of meaning across different disciplines, borders and people. In fact, the globalization , which leads to the supply-demand relation within the communication systems worldwide, naturally effects these systems, genres, which are one of the information networks in different, and even same, contexts. When it comes to academic written context, knowledge of genre and textural structure of the genres has great importance for the rhetorical and structural organization of several genre types within sciences as well and many investigators have recently conducted genre-analysis based studies focusing on genres from various perspectives.

Written and spoken genres such as research article, grant proposal, sales promotion letter..etc. have been investigated in several studies in the field of English for Specific Purposes (e.g.Swales, 1990;Connor & Mauranen, 1999;Bhatia, 1993). In these studies, much attention has been generally devoted to the overall organization of these genres through the textual analysis by dividing them under specific moves and presented features reflecting the characteristics of each move. On the other hand, some researchers in the field have explored how genres vary across linguistic and cultural communities (e.g., Ahmad, 1997; Connor, 1996) while some others have focused on genre variation across disciplinary lines, associating particular discursive features with disciplinary communities as well (e.g. Melander, Swales, & Fredrickson, 1997; Samraj, 2002b; Swales & Najjar, 1987) (Samraj, 2005;p.142).

The studies have been generally oriented around the organizational patterns of RA sections. Generally, most of them have focused on the rhetorical organizations of the RA article introductions (Swales, 1981, 1990) but there are examples of researches carried out on the organizations of other sections of RAs in several scientific fields *(e.g. Brett, 1994;Holmes, 1997; Lindeberg, 1994;Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995)*." The other genre type special attention has been paid on is PhD theses. Some of the studies have focused on the particular sections of the PhD theses by following specific approaches in the analysis, the mostly followed one of which is Swalesian approach (e.g. Bunton, 2002, 2005; Kwan, 2006; Ridley, 2000). In other studies, the overall organisation (e.g. Paltridge, 2002; Thompson, 2001) and textual features, such as metatextual references (Bunton, 1999), stance (Charles, 2003), modal verbs and citation practices (Thompson, 2001, 2005) have been studied.

Cross-cultural studies on PhD theses (e.g. Cooley & Lewkowicz, 1997; LoCastro, 2008) have investigated the contexts of both the situations and cultures of doctoral research work, comparing writings subject to different traditions and notions of what constitutes an acceptable thesis in different countries (Soler-Monreal, Carbonell-Olivares and Gil-Salom, 2011;p.5).

However, although considerable research has been devoted to organizational patterns of academic genres from different dimensions, there is little research done on the comparison of genres written in different languages (e.g. Soler-Monreal, Carbonell-Olivares and Gil-Salom, 2011). To the researcher's knowledge, In Turkish context and in international academic platforms, there is no study based on the comparison of genres written in Turkish and in English. It would seem, therefore, that further investigations are needed to get knowledge on the structural and rhetorical organization of genres written in these two languages. So, this study is the first one to focus on the organizational pattern of a genre type, PhD Theses, in two different languages, Turkish and English in genre research tradition. Thus, this study aims to explore the similarities and differences between the rhetorical organization of the introduction sections of 10 English and 10 Turkish PhD theses in the field of English Language Teaching, and gives preliminary results of the genre-analysis based on the Swalesian approach by continuing the tradition followed in many studies. This study was guided by the following particular research question:

1-What are the similiarities and differences between the rhetorical strategies employed in the introduction sections of PhD theses in English and Turkish in the field of English Language Teaching?

2. Data and Method of Analysis

2.1.Data

The corpus used in the present study consisted of 10 Turkish PhD Theses and 10 English PhD Theses written in the field of English Language Teaching. It was randomly selected from the web site of The Council of Higher Education(http://www.yok.gov.tr/en/). The selection of each thesis was made according to the two criteria: it is open to free access and it is written within the field of English Language Teaching. The theses were submitted between 2010 and 2012 to the related institutes of the universities in Turkey. In terms of the comparability of the corpora, we believe that texts are comparable, mainly considering two important aspects: Firstly, It is not always clear whether the authors were native English writers or not, however they are assumed to have produced texts of the same standard as those of native English writers since their theses were supervised and/or assessed by English-speaking academics (Soler-Monreal et al., 2011; p.5). Secondly, the theses selected were written within the same context and thus, they embody relevant examples of the academic writing processes followed in the academic institutions in Turkey.

2.2.Method of Analysis

Swales' CARS model is one of the explicit genre pedagogies which has been widely preferred both in the explicit teaching of different genres across disciplines, and the analysis of the rhetorical organization of them In the studies carried out, it has been used as a basic analysis model to present the overall structures of genres through the description of contextual factors behind rhetorical organization of the manuscripts in the writing process. According to Bazerman (2010;p183), John Swales' this groundbreaking work on analyzing genres as they carry out the communicative purposes of a discourse community has played a central role in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) pedagogical approaches. Moreover, he points out that the moves established in the model can lead students through a process of staking their claim and establishing the significance of their topic, to contextualizing the topic and the conversations surrounding it, to, finally, joining the conversation by presenting their claim or "occupying the niche."

In our study, the revised version of CARS model (2004;p.244) was used in the analysis of the introductions to investigate the macro organization of PhD theses introductions written in two different languages, in Turkish and English. The overall structure followed in the study is presented in Figure 1 below.

Moves in Research Paper Introductions

Move 1: Establishing a territory
   a.   by showing that the general research area is important, central, interesting, problematic, or relevant in some way(optional)
   b.   by introducing and reviewing items of previous research in the area(obligatory)

Move 2: Establishing a niche[a]
   a.   by indicating a gap in the previous research, or by extending previous knowledge in some way(obligatory)
Move 3: Occupying the niche:☐
   a.   by outlining purposes or stating the nature of the present research(obligatory)
   b.   by listing research questions or hypotheses(PSIF[b])
   c.   by announcing principal findings (PSIF)
   d.   by stating the value of the present research(PSIF)
   e.   by indicating the structure of the RP (PSIF)

Fig. 1. Swales' CARS model. (Swales and Feak, 2004:).

To supply the reliability of the analysis, the procedure followed by Soler-Monreal et al.(2011) was pursued. "First, each of the three raters independently identified and coded every segment of text. Then, individual codings were discussed in pairs by the researchers and agreement was reached where the codings differed. Finally, a consensus about the codings was reached by all three researchers."(Soler-Monreal et al.,2011;p.6)

3. Results and Discussion

The introduction sections of written genres are mainly divided into sections and/or subsections, which directly influences the distributions of moves. Actually, the length of the introductions result in a change in the number of moves. Generally, the longer the length of the introductions is, the higher the frequencies of moves. Therefore, the length of introductions are one of the determining factors in the rhetorical organization of mansucripts.
In this study, the findings show that there is a variability in terms of the length of Turkish PhD introductions and English PhD introductions . The introductions of the Turkish corpus range from 2 to 33 pages and 4 out of 10 theses have sections and subsections under each section. Coming to the English corpus, it is seen that the introductions range from 4 to 30 pages and 8 out of 10 theses include sections and subsections. In both corpora, the longest introductions have the highest frequency in the number of sections and subsections. As regards the length of each corpora, the number of moves and steps in the introduction sections in the Turkish and English corpus is parallel to each other. That is, as it is illustrated in table 1, the longest introductions in both corpora have the highest number of moves (e.g., T1(English PhD thesis) -page:30, total figure of moves:17; T8(Turkish PhD)thesis-page:33,total figure of moves:15) compared to the fewest number of those in the shortest ones(e.g., T2(English PhD thesis) -page:4, total figure of moves:5; T4 (Turkish PhD thesis) page:2,total figure of moves:3).

3.1.Move Analysis

Table 1 shows the frequencies of the three moves established in Swales' CARS model in the English and Turkish PhD theses introductions. As can be seen, the introduction sections in both corpora show considerable variation in the number of instances. The total number of moves in the English corpus is 102 while this number is 74 in the Turkish PhD introductions. According to this difference, it is assumed that the rhetorical organization of introduction sections of English PhD thesis is more complex than that of Turkish PhD thesis introductions. As to the distribution of Moves in each corpora, the analysis show some interesting results.

Table 1. Frequencies of moves in Turkish and English PhD Thesis Introductions

	ENGLISH				TURKISH			
	MOVE-1	MOVE-2	MOVE-3	Total[1]	MOVE-1	MOVE-2	MOVE-3	Total[2]
T-1	6	4	7	17	8		1	8
T-2	2		2	4	2	1	1	4
T-3	2		6	8	5			5
T-4	1	1	3	5	2	1		3
T-5	5	1	5	11	9		1	10
T-6	6	1	3	10	4		1	5
T-7	6	1	4	11	6			6
T-8	7	2	3	12	12	1	2	15
T-9	6	4	3	13	4		1	5
T-10	5	2	4	11	11		2	13
Total	**46**	**16**	**40**	**102**	**63**	**3**	**9**	**75**

[1]The total number of each move in English PhD introductions
[2]The total number of each move in Turkish PhD introductions

Move-1 is the only move present in each thesis in the study, which leads to the assumption that Move-1 is the obligatory part of the theses introductions in English and Turkish corpora in the field of English language teaching as researchers in both corpora generally tend to present the significance of the research territory by showing the centrality of the field and introducing the related literature. However, it is essential to indicate that , as it has been described in Table 1, writers of the Turkish PhD theses typically prefer to establish the research territory more profoundly than writers of the English PhD theses(the number of instances in the English corpus:46; the number of instances in the Turkish corpus:63).

As for Move-2, which forms the locomotive part of the introduction sections , and the more, the study through the description of the problematic situation in the research territory, Table 1 reveals that the introduction sections in both corpora present an important difference in terms of the number of instances of Move-2. In the English introductions, the move is employed in 8 out of 10 English theses while it is present only in 3 out of 10 Turkish theses. According to Feak and Swales(2004;p.257) it is the hinge that connects Move 1(what has been done) to Move 3 (what the present research is about), and Move 2 thus establishes the motivation for the study Considering this statement, it is possible to infer that writers of English Phd theses pay more attention to the establishment of a niche in their studies. Coming to Move-3, although it is present in each thesis introduction of the English corpus, the move is absent 4 out of 10 theses in the Turkish corpus. Indeed, the analysis of Move-3 in both corpora shows a striking result that the English PhD introductions presents a more complicated structure with 40 instances of the move than the Turkish PhD introductions with 9 instances. It seems that writers in the Turkish corpus focus on presenting their own research in a rather less comprehensive way than the witers of the English corpus do.

Swales(2004;pp.243-245) points out that in a corpus of non-English texts that can be considered to be equivalent to English ones, claiming knowledge and good performance in a specific field, seems to have a higher priority than establishing that there exists a gap in previous research that needs filling. Taking the results in Table 1 into consideration, we need to state that our study presents marked similiarities and differences to Swales' claim. From the dimension of claiming knowledge, the Turkish corpus as non-English texts shows a higher tendency than the English one, which is in parallel with Swales' statement. Pedagogically, this may be explained that the writers of the Turkish corpus compete for the claim of   the extended field-dependent knowledge they have by heavily presenting the background of the research territory, which is defined as " the work of others" by Swales and Feak(2004). In terms of the claim for good performance in the field, however, there is a noticable difference to what Swales state that, in our study, the English texts are more dominantly based on the presentation of the offer to fill the gap, in other words, the announcement of the research, than the non-English texts.

This leads us to the explanation that occupying the niche may seem to the researchers in the English corpus more appealing in the establishment of the fact that the immediate research "makes particularly good sense" (Swales and Feak, 2004;p.244) through the presentation of the scope specific to the study than those in the Turkish Corpus. As regards establishing that there exists a gap in previous research that needs filling, the study shows a similar result with the commentary of Swales that in the English corpus indicating the gap in the previous research is of importance in contrast to in the Turkish one, or in other words, non-English corpus. The rationale behind the major application of the establishment of the niche by the writers in the English corpus may be that it is seen as a tool to attract the attention of the target community (ones having dominant impact on the territory in which the research is carried out) in the field, through which the importance of the study is clarified by pointing out the raising problem to be answered and the role of the study as the original one to respond this need.

In general, from sociorhetorical perspective it is possible to reach that, while writers of the English corpus follow the pattern suggested by Swales(2004) more closely by not only competing for the readers but also for the research space, the Turkish corpus is generally oriented around the competition for the immediate readers actively involved in the research territory.

3.2.Step Analysis

3.2.1.Steps in M1

Table 2. Frequencies of steps in Move 1:Establishing a Territory

	Number of instances		Number of Theses	
	Turkish	English	Turkish	English
A[1]	**15**	7	**8**	4
B[1]	164	113	10	10

A[1] showing that the general research area☐is important, central, interesting, problematic, or relevant in some way

B[1] introducing and reviewing items of previous research in the area

As Table 2 describes, the steps in Move 1 are found in both corpora although they are more frequently employed in the Turkish corpus than in the English one. The most commonly applied step in both corpora(all theses in each corpus) is introducing and reviewing items of previous research in the area(B), which may show that the researchers in both corpora give priority to the presentation of the scope of the research field and of what has been done within this field. Additionally, we can also say that this step is typical of the introductions in both corpora.

The other step(A) ,which involves showing that the general research area is important, central, interesting, problematic, or relevant in some way, is mainly preferred by the writers in the Turkish corpus. Taking the number of instances into consideration (15 cases in 8 theses in the Turkish corpus vs. 7 cases in 4 theses in the English corpus), we may assume that much less attention is paid to the centrality of the research territory in the English corpus than it is in the Turkish corpus .

Generally, it is possible to indicate that , although ,compared to those in the the English corpus, the writers in the Turkish corpus has a striking tendency to occupy the niche by providing background information on the field in which they are involved through the presentation of the importance of that field as a trend topic in recent period.

3.2.2.Steps in M2

Table 3.Frequencies of steps in move 2:Establishing a Niche

	Number of instances		Number of Theses	
	Turkish	English	Turkish	English
A[1]	5	27	3	8

A[1] by indicating a gap in the previous research, or by extending previous knowledge in some way

As it is shown in Table 3, there is a noticable difference between two corpora in the employment of the step that it occured in 8 out of 10 theses in the English corpus while it is rarely found in the Turkish corpus (3 theses out of 10 theses). It seems that, compared to the number of instances according to the number of theses (27 cases in 8 out of 10 theses in the English corpus vs. 5 cases in 3 out of 10 theses in the Turkish corpus), the writers in the English corpus show a clear preference to indicate a gap in the previous research, or to extend previous knowledge in some way while in the Turkish corpus there is not any specific tendency for establishing the niche. It may be infered that, from the perspective of the writers in the English corpus, to emphasize the gap in the previous literature, or to present the possibility of the applying or extending the findings of the previous study appear attractive as a way to motivate and persuade the target community that the immediate study is worthy to promote in the field it is involved in.

3.2.3. Steps in M3

Table 4.Frequencies of steps in move 3:Occupying the Niche

	Number of instances		Number of Theses	
	Turkish	English	Turkish	English
A[1]	9	24	4	9
B[1]	20	28	7	9
C[1]		1		1
D[1]	2	10	3	8
E[1]	6	17	6	9

A[1]outlining purposes or stating the nature of the present research
B[1] listing research questions or hypotheses
C[1] announcing principal findings
D[1] stating the value of the present research
E[1]indicating the structure of the thesis

As Table 4 presents, except one of the steps, ***announcing principal findings***, the other steps of move 3 are applied by the authors of both corpora. Nevertheless, it is essential to indicate that the number of the instances of each step in the English corpus is considerably much more than that of the instances in the Turkish corpus. According to the number of the theses and of the instances of the steps, it seems that the authors of the English corpus prefer to present their original work through outlining purposes or stating the nature of their study, listing research questions or hypotheses, the announcement of the principal findings, the statement of the significance of their research and the presentation of the thesis structure more profoundly than the authors of the Turkish corpus. The only step, the frequency of which is closer between two corpora, is listing research questions or hypotheses with 20 cases in 7 out of 10 theses in the Turkish corpus and 28 cases in 9 out of 10 theses in the English corpus, which leads us to deduce that to present the key points around which the study is oriented through the statement of the research questions or hypotheses, and thus to make the audience focus on and look for the answers to these specific points in theses are of importance for the authors of both corpora. As for the other step, announcing principal findings, which is only found in the English corpus, there is just 1 case in 1 out of 10 thesis introductory sections written in English, and we may assume that generally the authors of the English theses do not prefer to announce what have been found in the study, as well , which may result from the fact that the general results of the study are presented in abstract sections at a formal level and the authors may believe that there is no need for reannouncement of the results in the introductions.

4. Conclusion

The findings of this study provide the qualitative and quantitative differences and similarities between Turkish and English PhD thesis introductions in ELT written in the same context, in other words, by the members of the same discourse community, by presenting the rhetoric performed. At the datum level, the aproximate result of this study is that English introductions are more complex as regards the presentation and organisation of the information provided than the Turkish ones.

The move analysis has revealed that The English corpus are more heavily adapted to the CARS model than the Turkish one in terms of the moves and steps application. However, it is important to state that, in each corpus, there are also theses, in the introductory parts of which the rhetoric suggested in the model is not fully performed. Move 1 seems the obligatory move of Turkish and English introductions, which shows that the authors of each corpus stress on the need to establish the research territory to prove their expertise claim on the field through the presentation of both historical and current biblographic identity of the field. As for the application of Move 2, it is seen that Englsih authors commonly emphasize the importance of the justification of the work done by establishig the gap and raising issue originating from the gap in the literature of the research area in the introductions while the authors of Turkish theses do not typically work for stating the limitations in the literature in their introductory parts. For the last move of the model, Move 3, it is seen that it is the other move which is performed in all the theses introductions in English corpus, and so seems the other obligatory rhetoric of the corpus. As to the Turkish one, on the other hand, there seems no requisite for the anouncement of the work done. According to these findings, there is a striking difference between Turkish and English corpus in terms of the conformity to the model although these theses were performed by the authors of the same discourse community, and even within the same context.

At this point, when compared to the Turkish corpus, comprehensive structure of English theses, and the nearly typical application of the rhetorial strategies of Swales (2004)' CARS model in this corpus may, then, lead to the assumption that the introductions of the English corpus more commonly and comprehensively serve for both "competing for a research space" (Feak and Swales; p.243) and " competing for readers" (Feak and Swales; p.243) in order to establish "the scholarly credibility of the author as a worthy member of the research community" (Yakhontova, 2002, p. 231) and "to promote the research in the Anglo- American market by making the discourse both persuasive and self-promotional" (Yakhontova 2002, p. 229; in Soler-Monreal et al. 2011, p.14) than the introduction sections of Turkish theses. In this regard, these findings of the move analysis remain consistent, to some extent, with the results of some previous studies in the related literature from the conformity dimension of the English and non-English texts to the model (e.g.Soler-Monreal, 2011; Burgess, 1997, 2002; Moreno, 2010; Ahmad, 1997;Mauranen, 1993);however, there are also studies which present different results in the rhetorical arrangement of the introduction sections (e.g. Ozturk,2007; Sheldon, 2011), which may show that the variability in the trends in terms of employment of rhetorical strategies in the introductory parts of academic genres result from the variability in the discursive factors which are the basic determiners of the tendency in each academic territory.

As for the step analysis, the findings suggest that the intoductory parts of Turkish corpus are representatively characterized with the information overload on the research territory (B^1 of Move 1), which agrees with the results of contrastive rhetoric based studies examining non-English texts as well as English ones (e.g. Soler-Monreal et al., 2011), and also promotes the introduction pattern of Swales' CARS model to a degree in which "the work of others is primary"(Feak and Swales;p.244), that is, background leads the introduction. Besides this, authors of the Turkish corpus, not heavily but clearly, prefer to inform the target community on the research questions and/or hypotheses of the study (B^1 of Move 3). The English introductions are, as in Turkish ones, predominantly devoted to introducing and reviewing items of previous researches in the area (B^1 of Move 1). Additionally, there is also a tendency among the writers of English theses to present the gap in the research field and/or to state the effort of the study to extend previous knowledge by applying different ways (A^1 of Move 2), and to anounce the work done by outlining purposes and/or stating the nature of the present research (A^1 of Move 3), by listing research questions or hypotheses (B^1 of Move 3), by stating the value of the research (D^1 of Move 3), and by indicating the structure of the thesis (E^1 of Move 3). At this point, the literature based on the analysis of English manuscripts suggests similar results in the tendencies of the rhetorical strategies identified in Move 2 and Move 3 in introduction sections with these results of the present study (e.g. Li and Ge ,2009; M. Milagros del Saz Rubio,2011).

Textual organisation of an academic manuscript demands deeper insights into the writing process in all academic disciplines including ELT. At this point, as a pedagogical writing tool, Swales' (2004) CARS model facilitates this process for not only professional writers but also writers who have just began their writing carriers , and in this light, by balancing both "to maintain the dynamism of its own cultural discourse" (Sheldon,2011;p. 247) and "to display the parameters of Englsih discourse"(Sheldon, 2011;p.247), practitioners in the Turkish context may use this model in both teaching and learning writing.

This study contributes to the literature by broadening the perspectives of ESP scholars and researchers with the introduction of the rhetoric style in a different context and with the clarification of characteristically culture-specific and culture-independent employments in an academic genre. It also strengthens its significance by expanding knowledge on the applicable ways, and on the content arrangement of the introduction sections of an academic genre, which is one of the problematic and demanding stage of writing process in terms of obligatory data and optional data, that is, which points should/may be presented. Moreover, this study has demonstrated the effect of English language as a device to create a space for a study in international academic platforms by appealing to a certain target community on the contextualisation of an academic genre by demonstrating differences between English and Turkish texts. In general, though this study is a limited one with an average size of corpora and needs replicating for more valid and reliable results with a larger corpus and different techniques, it is believed that, besides it serves as a good guidance for both professional and novice writers in the field of ELT in the writing process, it extends the genre research to new and different perspectives from cultural and linguistic dimensions by pointing to a nearly- uncharted context.

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