PROMOTIONAL RHETORICAL STRATEGIES IN TOPIC GENERALIZATIONS OF INCREASING SPECIFICITY

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Abstract: This study explores the rhetorical strategies employed in topic generalizations of increasing specificity in the introductions from the leading peer-reviewed journals. Specifically, we identified the substeps in Move1-Step1, which show how the writers promote the significance of the research area. The qualitative approach enabled us to distinguish eight substeps provisionally outlining the common patterning of the discourse and to analyze the linguistic choices enhancing the persuasiveness of claims. Citation, attitude markers, boosters and hedges have been found the most effective devices for preserving balance between assertion and concession. The quantitative analysis of the texts defined the frequency rate of the substeps discerned including their total sum of occurrences and percentages per introduction. The substep level analysis has contributed to scrutinizing the subtle communicative functions of the rhetorical strategies in the textual structure.

Keywords: rhetoric, move, step, strategy, discourse, metadiscourse.

INTRODUCTION

One of the challenges of reporting the research results in research articles (RA) is presenting a consistent text and promotional discourse that can emphasize the significance of the study and gain acceptance from prospective readers. Research articles as a special genre are considered as 'active performances rather than more passive replications of classes of texts' (Moreno and Swales, 2018: 42) which evolve in time as a result of changes in the social life and ideologies. With this regard, the academic performance in the RA genre is viewed as a social act of self-promoting and engaging with the audience (Hyland, 2005a, 2005b). The research findings presented in RAs promote the social value of the academic activities undertaken and provide new advancements in the disciplinary knowledge. For these purposes, an adequate presentation of research results in terms of textual organization, rhetorical patterning and linguistic shaping acquire more pertinence, as it has been noted, 'It is not so much the amount of news value that is remarkable in today's scientific journal arguments as it is the promoting of it' (Berkenkotter and Huckin, 1995).

A considerable number of studies present the rhetorical strategies of the realization of promotion in RA sections: Introduction (Swales, 1990, 2004; Samraj, 2002; Oztürk, 2007; Dahl, 2008; Loi, 2010; Sheldon, 2011), Methods (Lim, 2006, 2019; Cotos et al., 2017), Results and Discussion/Conclusion (Brett, 1994; Holmes, 1997; Peacock, 2002; Yang and Allison, 2003; Basturkmen, 2009, 2012; Lim, 2010, 2011; Moreno and Swales, 2018). Also, the rhetorically-oriented linguistic means of promotion in academic discourse have been allocated greater importance with the analysis of metadiscourse (Crismore et al., 1993; Hyland, 1998, 2000, 2005a, 2005b, 2010) and evaluation (Hunston and Thompson, 2000; Martin and White, 2005; Afros and Schryer, 2009; Hood, 2010; Wang and Yang, 2015). It can be concluded that textual strategies are considered as promotional devices writers use to "engage in the academic discourse in a meaningful and effective manner" (Dahl, 2009). Promotional devices are also connected to the authors' pragmatic aims to persuade the readers of the validity of their claims. For example, Haggan identified promotional effects in full sentences the writers use to construct the RA titles as they express "unqualified assertions, presented as statements of fact" (Haggan, 2004). Likewise, Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995) identified promotional features in newsworthy titles which declare the results of an investigation. The self-promotional behavior is also seen in the use of pronouns which publicize the writer and their work by "underscoring novelty and newsworthiness in the introduction", repeating "claims and findings at the close" and self-citing (Harwood, 2005).

The promotional view of the academic discourse rhetoric has been generally inspired by Swales' (1990) work which presented the 'Create a Research Space' (CARS) model aiming to explicate how writers can realize their communicative purposes due to a range of moves and steps. 'A 'move' in genre analysis is a discoursal or rhetorical unit that performs a coherent communicative function in a written or spoken discourse' (Swales, 2004). A 'step' is seen as a sub-move that fulfills the relevant move. The functional perspective in Swales' studies provides a more comprehensive understanding of the rhetorical structure drawing on the discursive strategies and underlying meaningful contents in RAs.

This study aims to present how the writers promote topic generalizations of increasing specificity (Swales, 2004) through the use of rhetorical strategies and helpful linguistic resources. The following section illustrates how the introduction has been treated in terms of its rhetorical features, before presenting our rhetorical and linguistic analysis of the 'topic generalizations of increasing specificity' step in the RA introductions. Analyzing the introductions on the substep level we aim to answer the following questions:

1) What substeps tend to be the most promotional for establishing a research territory?

2) What linguistic (metadiscourse) means are the most significant and how do they promote the effectiveness of the major substeps?

LITERATURE REVIEW

It is crucial to highlight that currently the RA introductions tend to deviate from the classic macro-structure because they comprise complementary subsections dedicated to literature review or description of the projects concerned with the topic in the article, or any background information deemed important by the authors. Consequently, most introductions tend to consist of the main section and the additional one (s) that by their propositional contents and communicative functions seem to differ and need in-depth analysis. The complexity of the introduction macrostructure definitely creates difficulties when analyzing the move/step organization and authorial stance. Most existing studies have focused on the classic introduction whose generic structure is more clearly defined than that of the complementary subsections. Moreover, there have not been explicitly determined the communicative function(s) of the introduction and, in particular, its rhetorical steps. For instance, Moreno and Swales argue that 'the typical Introduction is designed to draw the reader into the research topic and thereby appreciate its significance" (Moreno and Swales, 2018; Samraj, 2008).

Generally, the additional subsections are related to the literature review on the topic concerned. The Literature Review (LR) subsection shows that the established area has accumulated some background that needs to be (re) examined and cited in the author's study to display what seems to be insufficiently researched or needs expanding. LR 'can be regarded as an important means of demonstrating a researcher's mastery of "specialist knowledge"' (Lin and Evans, 2012). It is 'where the author engages in the crucial rhetorical work that has traditionally been located in I [Introduction] (i.e., CARS)' (Lin and Evans, 2012). Importantly, literature review is no longer categorized as a separate step in Swales' model (2004) any more as it used to be in Swales (1990) scheme. This can be explained by the fact that literature review is supposed to be obligatory, conceived at the very nature of research activities.

The introduction seems to have been examined more thoroughly compared to the other sections after Swales' (1990) prototypical pioneer model originally designed for the introduction section. However, it is still one of the most difficult and important parts of the article to write (Swales, 1990, Swales, 2004; Swales and Feak, 1994). The CARS model shows that the introduction consists of three rhetorical units: Move 1 is 'establishing a territory', Move 2 is 'establishing a niche', and Move 3 is 'occupying the niche' (Swales, 1990) or 'presenting present research' (Swales, 2004). The three moves including sets of steps outline the main communicative purpose, i.e. presenting the background for the author's own study. The steps tend to reveal multiple communicative functions within the introduction which indicate that this section cannot be viewed as a simple collocation of information but a strategic discourse of authorial aims and expectations.

Essentially, Move 1 has not been paid the attention it deserves, except for some studies (e.g. Lindeberg, 2004; Shaw, 2003; Sheldon, 2011), while Move 2 and 3 have been more comprehensively explored (Lim, 2012; Martin and Leon Perez, 2014; Shehzad, 2008). Move1 is definitely one of the densest in terms of rhetorical strategies used by authors, despite the fact that they are not explicitly presented in Swales' (2004) scheme. While analyzing the literature or generalizing the state of affairs in the academic domain the writers, in order to promote the research topic, use various argumentative policies. Some of them are highlighted in Swales' (1990) model, in particular 'claiming centrality' or 'reviewing items of previous research' but in Swales' (2004) revised version all the steps are included in one 'generalizations of increasing specificity'. However, this step hides a plethora of rhetorical strategies that need close examination. Specifically, the separate steps of Move 1 have not attracted much attention, except

for a particular mention which pertains to Wang & Yang's (2015) study on 'Claiming centrality' realized by 'appeals' determining the research area as 'lively, significant or well-established' (Swales, 1990). As can be noticed, the step level analysis has acquired some importance because it enables analysts to insightfully look into the 'subtle' discursive actions taken by writers to further their claims. This perspective is encouraged because 'move analyses might obtain more revealing results if RAs were also annotated at the step level' (Moreno and Swales, 2018). Similarly, the step and substep levels of analysis have been found very reliable in identifying cross-disciplinary divergences (Basturkmen, 2012).

This study focuses on the substep rhetorical structure of topic generalizations of increasing specificity actualized in Move1-Step1 in the RA introduction section. We consider a step as a 'text fragment containing 'new propositional meaning' from which a specific communicative function can be inferred' (Moreno and Swales, 2018). Propositional meaning is related to the out-linguistic component of the text referring to the world, which can be expressed by any kind of predicative form: sentence, clause or participle-based constructions. Based on Swales' (2004) framework, this study makes attempts to describe how writers promote their research in the introduction while interpreting prior knowledge on the topic and preparing a reliable grounding for their investigation. This study offers a tangible description of the way the writers report the existing knowledge on the topic that would help novice writers to reveal the more common strategies the expert writers employ in the introduction.

METHODOLOGY

The present analysis uses Sheldon's (2011) substep segmentation model for the Move1-Step1 organization in the Applied Linguistics introduction. Following this approach, our study presents a greatly complemented and considerably modified version of the substep structure of the introductions taken from reputable publications: Journal of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP), represented here by 12 excerpts from each set. The total number of introductions consists of 24 exemplars published during 2000-2018. The EAP introductions range from 330 to 2955 words with the total number of 16620 characters. The ESP introductions vary between 735 and 3600 words constituting the total number of 17745 characters. The average number for the introductions is 1385 and 1479 words respectively. The whole corpus comprises papers written by reputable expert researchers who themselves investigate the rhetorical structure and linguistics features of texts. Their articles serve appropriate examples for our analysis. Lim (2019: 35), in order to analyze the justifications of experimental procedures in the methods sections, also found it essential to opt for "papers in established international peer-reviewed journals".

Both quantitative and qualitative analyses were undertaken. The qualitative analysis, based on genre analysis (Swales, 1990, Swales, 2004), aimed to identify and examine the types of substeps used and their corresponding linguistic realizations. To this end, the text segments describing the research area were first delineated and then labeled as discursive units reflecting appropriate communicative functions. The discursive units were defined as substeps. After the substeps had been identified, a coding scheme was designed to conduct the quantitative analysis.

The identification of the rhetorical substeps draws both on the propositional content describing the research knowledge and linguistic features that shape a discursive unit. As the purpose of the study is to show how effectively the authors establish the pertinence of the research topic, it is deemed essential that the same propositional content recycled along the introduction in various linguistic forms should be separately counted. The substeps are not necessarily equal to a phrase or a clause (Cotos et al., 2015) but, as the data clearly suggest, in most cases they are expressed by a clause-based extended sentence. The linguistic resources aid in discerning the 'subtle' meanings and clarify the definitions of the substeps.

The quantitative analysis is based on the total number of occurrences, given that a substep can be recycled more than once in different linguistic manifestations. Thus, each occurrence of the same substep has been calculated (Table 1). In contrast, only one instance of a substep in an introduction enabled the calculation of percentages (Table 2), as the main purpose was to show the number of introductions where the substep sought emerged at least once.

Initially, all the 24 RA introductions were randomly selected and coded separately by the two authors. Then, the substeps identified were checked to provide inter-coder reliability and enhance the empirical validity of the analysis. The reiterated analyses of the texts enabled us to be certain of the results previously acquired and make some modifications after the discrepancies had been solved in discussion. The first researcher reanalyzed the corpus 3 months after the original analysis, and the intra-coder reliability score achieved 95.2 %.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the substeps

Sheldon's (2011) taxonomy includes eight substeps that 'justify the research in question': 'reporting conclusion of previous studies', 'time-frame of relevance', 'terminology/definitions', 'generalizing', 'narrowing the field', 'research objectives/process of previous studies', 'practical use' and 'writers' evaluation of current state of research area' (Sheldon, 2011). By partly using the labels for the substeps from Sheldon's (2011) framework, this study presents another version of the features that contribute to the promotional discourse of the authors. The substeps identified in this analysis are partly consistent with those from Sheldon's (2011) study because we have proposed the new ones which enrich the model as they reflect a very detailed propositional content and assume meaningful functions. The present study identified the following eight substeps: 'claiming centrality', 'referring to previous objectives/procedures', 'highlighting terminology/definitions', 'highlighting the writers' evaluation of current state of research area (positive/negative)', 'comparing and contrasting', 'furthering or advancing knowledge', "emphasizing implications for the present study" and "concluding based on previous studies". The substeps are presented in the order they deploy though the whole exposition of introduction. Their definitions have been improved to remove unwanted perplexities in coding.

As the findings illustrate, Move 1 is expectedly present in all the texts as it constructs the knowledge area for a new study. The statistical results outlined the main patterns of organization within Move1-Step1, and proved that these substeps realize specific rhetorical goals and indicated their prominence for the writers to achieve the intended objectives. Remarkably, the substeps in lengthier introductions are used in different cyclical configurations. As a result, Step 1 presented a number of strategic choices, which can be summarized in eight substeps (Table 1).

Table 1. Total occurrences of the substeps in Move 1-Step 1.

Step 1 'Topic generalizations of increasing specificity'	EAP No.	ESP No.	Total No.
Claiming centrality	93	110	203
Referring to previous research objectives/processes	103	77	180
Highlighting terminology/definitions	21	13	34
Highlighting the writers' evaluation of current state of research area (positive)	7	15	21
Highlighting the writers' evaluation of current state of research area (negative)	11	20	31
Comparing and contrasting	10	10	20
Furthering or advancing knowledge	11	9	20
Emphasizing implications for the writer's study	5	2	7
Concluding based on previous studies	81	95	176

It is to note that the figures in Table 1 exhibit the total number of occurrences, i.e., each instance of a substep in the introductions has been calculated. This explains quite high figures for the substeps which emerged recursively to promote the authors' claims. By contrast, Table 2 illustrates the number and percentages of introductions where the steps emerge at least once.

Table 2. Number and percentage of the introductions containing a substep.

Step 1 'Topic generalizations of increasing specificity'	EAP No.	ESP No.	Total No. (%)
Claiming centrality	12	12	24 (100 %)
Referring to previous research objectives/processes	11	12	23 (95.8%)
Highlighting terminology/definitions	8	4	12 (50%)
Highlighting writers' evaluation of current state of research area (positive and negative)	9	8	17 (70.8%)
Comparing and contrasting	6	4	10 (41.6%)
Furthering or advancing knowledge	7	6	13 (54.1%)
Emphasizing implications for the writer's study	5	2	7 (29.1%)
Concluding based on previous studies	9	11	20 (83.3%)

The substeps identified in the majority are as follows: 'claiming centrality', 'referring to previous research objectives/procedures' and 'concluding based on previous studies'.

'Claiming centrality' occurred in 24 out of 24 introductions analyzed (100%), with the total number of 203 instances, and presented the topic as worthy, interesting, challenging and significant to research. The writers describe intensive studies that have contributed to establishing the topic area to foster the idea of its importance and centrality. The figures prove that this substep is an essential feature to introduce a problematic issue to then research it in the author's own study. Claiming centrality arguably promotes the significance of research and demonstrates various linguistic realizations (Wang and Yang, 2015). For example, in discursive unit (1) the liveliness of the research territory has been emphasized by the evaluative "notable expansion", which can persuade readers of the topic importance:

(1) The past three decades have seen a notable expansion of linguistic and variationist research, especially in the field of English for Academic Purposes … (four citations).

The 'referring to previous research objectives/processes' substep provides high figures of occurrences (180) in 23 out of 24 introductions (95.8%), which shows that it is one of the main features in the analysis of the previous literature. This strategy highlights research aims, directions or aspects of the topic research to specify the area. Sheldon's (2011) findings concerning this substep do not show high figures compared to our calculations, which may be accounted for the divergence in the definitions given and the scope of the notion. The difference lies in the fact that in our study Sheldon's (2011) 'narrowing the field' and 'research objectives or process previous studies' are merged into one substep because in both cases the authors narrow the topic by considering specific issues and setting particular aims. This justifies a greater number of the occurrences of 'referring to previous research objectives/procedures' in our accounts, given that 'narrowing the field' has been excluded in our study. Almost all the introductions analyzed demonstrated a thorough and comprehensive scrutiny of the topic investigations. They seem to process and mention all possible directions of the topic studies and cite relevant works that contributed to exploring various sides of the matter in question. These high figures witness that the writers attempt to provide all the background information needed through an effective use of linguistic resources for its clear and persuasive presentation. The ESP set has proved to be more salient in emphasizing the substep in all the introductions analyzed, e.g.:

(2) A major aim of these move analysts has been the identification of the linguistic features characterizing the various RA rhetorical moves (e.g. 5 citations), often for pedagogic purposes.

Another substep increasingly providing a promotional endeavor of the writers appears to be 'concluding based on previous studies': it occurs at a high rate (127 in the total sum and 83.3%) which is in line with the findings by Sheldon (2011). This rhetorical feature summarizes the study on the topic and reinforces the authors' arguments. The linguistic features contributed to differentiating them from other substeps, as 'conclusions' were operated with *conclude, show, demonstrate, illustrate, point out, identify, argue, find, posit* and other metadiscourse that usually expresses the final point of the study, e.g.:

(3) Research has established that moves occur in regular patterns determined by propositional content.

(4) It has also been found that in some disciplines M [Method] and/or R [Results] rarely occur (e.g., two citations).

The 'highlighting writers' evaluation of current state of research area' substep also appears to be considerable making in sum 52 occurrences (70.8%). This feature is realized through negative and positive writer's commentaries on the knowledge negotiated in previous studies, more largely presented by the former (31) compared to the latter (21). The authors evaluate the other writers' work by employing the appropriate linguistic resources to make their discourse more convincing, primarily adjectives or adverbs:

(5) Studies of discipline-specific RA texts in forestry (one citation); legal writing (one citation); and Biology, History, Chemistry (two citations) provide interesting models in how to analyze the discourse of RAs using quantitative, frequency-based approaches.

The analysis of the introduction sections reveals some divergences between the two sets of journals. For instance, the ESP introductions appear to contain remarkably more 'evaluation (positive and negative)' occurrences than the EAP set, 35 and 18 instances in total, respectively. This disparity is warranted by presence of more critique of previous studies (mostly stressing on the lack of relevant pedagogical implications) in the ESP introductions. The substep is recycled from 2 to 6 times in the excerpts where it is identified. These findings prove that the substep is unevenly distributed in the introductions analyzed. Overall, at least one 'evaluation (positive and negative)' has been found in nine EAP and eight ESP introductions, which constitute 75% and 66.6% of occurrences, respectively.

Similarly, the 'highlighting terminology/definitions' substep shows considerable divergences: in the EAP introductions it is more frequently observed than in the ESP excerpts, which can be justified with topic choice made

by the authors. The topics that have more various and contradictory interpretations need an authorial clarification of the terms or definitions employed. Nevertheless, the frequency figures for both sets are not obviously high as only 12 out of 24 introductions (50%) contained this substep:

> (6) Stance has been defined as "the ways authors project themselves…", and the ways … (Hyland, 1999: 101). … Along similar lines, Conrad and Biber (2000) regard stance… In agreement with the above, appraisal has been defined as … (electronic reference).

The 'furthering or advancing knowledge in previous studies' strategy demonstrates how knowledge is negotiated and developed in prior investigations. This substep is found in just over a half of the corpus (54.1%). Generally, the whole step is dedicated to the examination of how the topic has been beneficially treated in the previous research but only half of the excerpts presented an explicit description of the topic knowledge developments:

> (7) The importance of the abstract is further underscored by a recent edited volume dedicated to this part-genre (one citation) and by the numerous publications dedicated to the classroom applications of genre research findings (four citations).

The 'comparing and contrasting' feature does not demonstrate very high figures of appearance (41%) but seems essential for revealing the convergences and disparities in the approaches, methods, frameworks or viewpoints identified by the writers in the previous studies. Also, the writers, while reporting the knowledge, compare and/ or contrast the claims, findings or conceptions used by previous researchers. This substep enables the writers to emphasize their presence by signaling the way they see the explorations not just mentioning and citing them but also finding the aspects to compare and contrast. They show their capability to understand and comment on the works and to engage addressees into the dialog:

> (8) There are clear parallels between this study [Halleck and Connor, 2006] and many descriptive studies of RA abstracts in how results have pedagogical implications.

The 'emphasizing implications for the writer's study' feature which shows how previous studies impacted the author's own research provides the lowest figures with 7 occurrences in total (29.1%). The authors discursively accentuate that certain investigations impacted their view of the topic and show it linguistically, like in examples (9) (*our understanding*) and (10) (*in this paper*). Such indications not only link the prior work with the actual one but also emphasize the authorial presence who limits the significance of the background to their own research:

> (9) Studies of these private, occluded genres have subsequently increased our understanding of the landscape of academic writing.

> (10) These researchers' suggestions were helpful indications of the kind of items that usually function as attitude, certainty and common knowledge markers, and formed the starting point of the taxonomy that is presented in this paper.

Overall, almost all the introductions analyzed consistently use substeps 'claiming centrality', 'referring to previous research objective/processes' and 'concluding based on previous studies', which obviously constitute the core of the literature review and build the research territory more effectively. Their considerably denser distribution in nearly all the texts compared to the frequency rate of the rest substeps may indicate that they are the most promotional strategies due to which the writers situate their own research. Claiming centrality of the area under consideration, looking into the research purposes and procedures in the existing studies and making their own conclusions of the knowledge negotiated the writers pave the way to how their topic could be established. The authors present the background knowledge in the perspectives they need for narrowing the topic and advancing the essential niche of investigation. The textual organization of the introductions is quite complex, given that the writers use a diverse and recursive range of substeps but the conventional ones in the sense that the main strategies are observed and powerfully accentuated. To promote the research, the authors use more subtle strategies than described in Swales' (2004) scheme. The findings seem to prove that the rhetorical texture becomes more adaptable to the communicative purposes intended by the writers and enables readers to understand the discourse more easily. Overall, providing solid background for the research seems to be a trademark of an expert professional writer demonstrating an appropriate familiarity with the existing studies, which contributes to his/her acceptance by the audience as a professional analyst and writer.

The major substeps and their linguistic realizations

The qualitative approach enables us to disclose how topic generalizations of increasing specificity are deployed across the introductions and construct the rhetorical patterning of texts. As noted before, the identification of the substeps drew on the linguistic features which express an ideational meaning, establish the textual coherences and fulfill interpersonal functions of the strategies undertaken. The factual information on the research topic serves

as a background for the authors' commentaries revealing their attitude to prior knowledge reports, because 'a crucial rhetorical function of introductions is to justify the study being reported' (Samraj, 2008).

In this section we present the most common substeps in the corpus and their linguistic realizations as due to their higher frequency rate they construct the more provisional rhetorical patterning of the discourse. Thus, they constitute the most promotional elements of the 'topic generalizations of increasing specificity' discourse and underpin the writers' strategy for effective writing. Understanding that enhancing the research significance largely grows due to a persuasive discourse the writers ascribe greater importance to the linguistic features. In this sense, the most salient discursive means appeared to be citations, epistemic attitude markers, boosters and hedges (Hyland, 2005a, 2005b, 2010) which reflect stance – 'the ways authors project themselves into their texts to communicate their relationship to subject matter and the readers' (Hyland, 1999: 101). Here, we do not present the statistics of the means utilized but illustrate the most common linguistic manifestations in the corpus. For example, claiming centrality of the topic, the writers reinforce their statements to move 'from general background to specific focus' (Moreno and Swales, 2018) by employing citations and strong attitudinal expressions boosting their certainty and commitment. In example (11) the metadiscourse employed, like *a key persuasive tool* (the 'key' has, in fact, turned out to be the most frequent as an attitude marker) and *vigorously researched,* aids in promoting the claims that citation is a leading convincing means and attracts numerous inquiries in various disciplinary domains. In doing so, the authors emphasize that this research territory is well-established and support it with six and then eight references. Furthermore, the citations introduced in the discourse endorse the authors' arguments for the authoritative statement that the topic has been 'vigorously' treated and, consequently, seems to be a recognized area engaging numbers of researchers. The authors' claims are referenced to provide reliable evidence so that they could seem very persuasive (Kwan and Chan, 2014):

> (11) As a key persuasive tool of scientific discourse (six citations), citation has been vigorously researched in various disciplinary domains. Within the field of Applied Linguistics, attention has been directed mostly to citations in texts produced by expert writers (e.g., eight citations).

The 'referring to previous research objectives/processes' substep has also provided the main patterning outlines of the topic generalizations of increasing specificity, notably in longer introductions with LR subsections. It is to note that the substep is in the direct opposition to the gap step, which indicates the lack or deficiency of investigations. Of course, the role of citations is hard to overestimate as they help to back up the writers' claims when focusing on the objectives and directions of previous studies on the topic. The authors refer to the literature indispensable for the topic unpacking and showing how it has been developed for so long. The corpus displays that the 'referring to previous research objectives/processes' step is presented as the authors' description of studies where the topic is treated. The choice of the linguistic resources is motivated by the authorial strategy to present a simple overview of the existing research on the matter in plain discourse, without explicit evaluation, yet Hunston (1989) argues that every linguistic feature is evaluative. The authors purposefully avoid self-promoting by foregrounding the other inquiries to create an idea of the certain topic knowledge established with the help of citations, like in example (13) where the writers previously pointed out the overall research on "promotion" and after centered on each strand specifically:

> (13) Some of them are bound to certain aspects of linguistic features carrying promotional tenor (e.g., first-person pronouns, Harwood, 2005; reporting verbs, Thompson & Ye, 1991). Some are case studies observing how maximal attractiveness of papers was sought during composing processes (e.g., two citations). Others bear relevance for exploring the realizations of move-based persuasion (e.g., one citation) or a step-based function (e.g., making new knowledge claims, Dahl, 2009).

Yet, the authors also show their overt assessment while analyzing the sources, which is reflected in another significant substep "highlighting writers' evaluation of the current state of research". By emphasizing the deficiencies or, conversely, merits of the previous research the writers illustrated a quite active participation in discussing and debating a broad area, such as methodology, findings and ideas proposed. Evaluation is a subjective positive and negative attitude to the subject discussed (Hunston and Thompson, 2000). The data show that the positive evaluation units are less common than the negative evaluation manifestations, which can be justified by a very critical stance the authors take to claims and finings in the existing literature. Such an approach is motivated by the writers' endeavor to find out more space for their research and an appropriate niche for investigation to establish. Even a minor shortcoming in prior research may be a sufficient niche to occupy for new developments.

Despite a larger presence of the negative evaluation in the corpus, the discursive units where the authors express their comments provide interplay of negative and positive assessment to balance the contractive and expansive strategies (Martin and White, 2005), which downplays the authors' categorical claims and creates some room to engage readers into dialog (Hyland, 2005b). The contracting and extending devices pave the way to effective argumentation by maintaining the balance between 'the researcher's authority as an expert-knower and his or her humility as a disciplinary servant' (Martin and White, 2005). These strategies are not only intended to

provide a real picture of the studies on the topic but also give the author' view enhanced with relevant linguistic features, as in example (14):

(14) As noted above, the body of research into the generic structures of RAs is at present somewhat limited [*downplayed negative evaluation*]. Among the few studies in this area, those of Yang and Allison (2004) and Posteguillo (1999) are perhaps the most illuminating [*downplayed positive evaluation*].

In example (14) the linguistic feature *limited* reflecting an experiential meaning of amount, describes an evoked attitude of a writer (Hood, 2010). Additionally, it is mitigated by *somewhat* to project a cautious evaluation and decrease an authorial full commitment for the opinion. By contrast, *the most illuminating* expresses an inscribed attitude (Hood, 2010) embodied in the semantics of the adjective, which acquires a specific frame of mitigation realized by *perhaps* hedging the authorial categorical stance. Both negative and positive evaluations keep balance of the whole discourse in the sense that despite *the few studies* on the generic structure of RAs, there are those that deserve citing and positive account. Furthermore, the attitudes they convey are hedged to anticipate and welcome feasible objections from readers engaged in the discussion and so 'open up dialogic space' (Chang and Schleppegrell, 2011). This dialogic (Bakhtin, 1981; Martine and White, 2005) stream of engagement between writers and readers may create a more promotional discourse on interplay of boosting expressions like *limited, few,* and *the most illuminating* and hedging words as *somewhat* and *perhaps*. The writers attempt to create a persuasive and alternative position when increasing their certainty on the one hand and decreasing their commitment on the other. In doing so, they show the right persona to be accepted by a research community.

When analyzing the research items the authors tend to generalize the knowledge obtained and infer conclusions. After citing them the authors come to concluding arguments, which is realized in the 'concluding based on previous studies' substep whose occurrence rate in the corpus is largely high and the linguistic devices in this discourse express more promotionalism and boosterism (Swales, 2004; Hyland, 2005a), especially strong categorical expressions that are associated with conclusion and final decision directed to make an impact on readers. To this end, the authors tend to employ more boosters and strong attitudinal markers. For instance, in excerpt (15) it is clear that the author is confident relying on the evidence presented in the explanations and exclude other alternative views so that he contracts the dialogism: *IMRD framework was not applicable [*strong negation], *in fact* [author's reference to true situation adding force to the claim*], no [*absolute negation] *systematic structural model could be identified to account for the majority* [boosting the amount] *of the papers*…. Such a confident stance demonstrates the authors' certainty of the position and, interpersonally, may influence the research community as a challenge to face:

(15) On the basis of his analysis, Posteguillo (1999) concluded [*booster*] that the traditional IMRD framework was not [*booster*] applicable and that, in fact [*booster*], no [*booster*] systematic structural model could be identified to account for the majority [*booster*] of the papers in his corpus. Posteguillo (1999) attributed his findings to the fact [*booster*] that computer science was not [*booster*] a well-established discipline at the time and thus a standard schematic structure had yet to emerge [*attitude marker of prospective result*]. Another explanation is that most of the RAs he examined were evidently [*booster*] of a theoretical nature as they were found [*booster*] to be organized in either a problem-algorithm pattern or a model-implementation pattern.

Our inquiry into promotional rhetorical features of the topic generalizations of increasing specificity in EAP and ESP introductions has revealed more similar features than distinctions. First, both sets contain the substeps identified and share the most and the least frequent constructs of rhetorical strategies. Linguistically, the rhetoric is realized through the use of the persuasive devices as citation, attitude markers, boosters and hedges that contribute to highlighting a subjective attitude, certainty or uncertainty for the knowledge reported. Overall, the metadiscourse used by the writers fulfills its relevant function: claiming centrality and evaluating prior knowledge is mostly promoted by attitude markers whereas reporting conclusions is mainly realized by boosters and occasionally by hedges. They are preferably employed in combinations in a whole discursive unit to equilibrate the authors' strong commitments and freedom of speculation. Moreover, they translate particular attitudes to readers by showing authority on the one hand, and respect and cooperation on the other. They aid to contract and expand the dialogic space as well as to preserve consistency of the discourse.

CONCLUSIONS

The study displays that step 'generalizations of increasing specificity' is conveyed by eight substeps: this multiplicity of strategies undertaken by the authors aims to persuasively stake the topic of research. This reflects a creative and considerably critical thinking approach of the authors to the background knowledge to present its consistent format and persuasive appeal to readers. The most frequent substeps, substeps 'claiming centrality' 'referring to previous research objectives/processes' and 'concluding based on previous studies', outline the rhetorical patterning of the establishing the territory discourse, significant for the development of the authors'

own research. The "highlighting the writers' evaluation of current state of research area" substep provides a more attitudinal flavor and dynamism to the analysis mainly drawing on the epistemic assessment of the academic field and real-world realities of teaching practices. The least frequent substeps like 'emphasizing implications for the writer's study', 'furthering or advancing knowledge' and 'comparing and contrasting' also witness that the writers analyzing the literature sometimes seek to demonstrate how the previous studies impacted the research area on the whole and the writers' own investigation, in particular. The analysis suggests that the recursive occurrences of the substeps aim to promote the authors' claims, especially in lengthier introductions which have become more common in academic writing. However, it seems important to clarify that the shorter introductions (without complementary subsections) do not necessarily display few instances of literature review or do not provide indispensible analysis of the existing study. In fact, the authors choose to present the classic introduction in case where the topic is not much multi-facetted or it overarches one–direction study. In contrast, the longer introductions are preferred when the topic covers multiple frameworks or conceptions to be used for the analysis.

The extended citations and evaluative comments markedly support the factual propositional content related to various academic and social issues. Extensive citations through the introduction text not only prove that the topic area is well established but also to persuade readers that they are relevant to the writers' own research and create a territory for new knowledge. The semantic meanings and communicative purposes of the substeps are clearly expressed with effective and persuasive linguistic choices, essentially attitude markers, boosters and hedges that create dialogic communication based on authority and cooperation.

The study demonstrates a pragmatic motivation of the writers in contextualizing their study to the purposes of communication, i.e. to gain acceptance from readers. But before, the writers had to gain positive feedbacks from reviewers of the journals to get international publication. They had to prove that their study provided insightful contributions to the overall topic area. Although the journal editors do not prescribe any particular structural organization to authors, the findings in our small corpus illustrate the most provisional guidelines to design the introduction rhetoric in Applied Linguistics. Prospectively, a further more thorough substep level analysis of the introduction rhetoric on larger corpus can reveal more detailed authorial strategies woven in the texture and make our preliminary conclusions more comprehensive.

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