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# Graduate Theses' Rhetorical Moves in the Introduction and Methodology Sections

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## ABSTRACT

This study aimed to analyze the rhetorical moves found in the introduction and methodology sections of the Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics' (MAAL) Theses of the Department of Communications, Linguistics, and Litera-ture (DCLL). Swales' (1990) CARS Model of Rhetorical Moves and the corresponding model of the method section by Lim (2006) served as the frameworks. All graduate theses, a total of 22, of the MAAL program from 2005 to 2018 served as data. The theses copies were retrieved from the library or from the authors. Findings revealed that discourse analysis, pragmatics, conversation analysis together with second language acquisition & bilingualism especially code-switch-ing have been mostly explored while Labov's (1999; 1967) framework in analyzing narrative structure was con-sidered overused. Swales' (1990) three 'moves' in writing an introduction were employed following this pattern: Es-tablishing a territory (Move 1) by Claiming Centrality (Step 1A under Move 1) followed by Establishing a niche (Move 2) by indi-cating a gap (Step 1B under Move 2), and Occupying niche (Move 3) by outlining purposes (Step 1A under Move 3) as the most prevalent pattern. On the other hand, in terms of moves in the methodology section, this pattern is applied: Describing Data collection procedures (Move 1) by describing the location (Step 1A), population size (Step 1B), and recounting the steps in data collection (Step 2) followed by Delineating procedure/s for measuring variables (Move 2) by presenting an overview of the design (Step 1), and Elucidating data analysis procedure/s (Move 3) by relating data analysis procedure/s (Step 1). Findings suggest that the research design (i.e. qualitative and quanti-tative), environ-ment, participants/respondents, instruments, and procedures are highly important in describing the methodology of the study. Significant implications for research writing are also discussed.

*Keywords:* Applied Linguistics, Graduate Theses, Rhetorical Analysis

## INTRODUCTION

Swales (1990 in Martin 2013) defined genre as "a class of communicative events with some shared set of communica-tive purpose." These purposes are recognized by members of the professional or academic community in which the genre occurs, and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre (https://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/bitstream/2123/1701/4/04chapter3.pdf). He added that as each follow a distinctive communicative goal, the structure of research articles, presentations, and proposals differ from one another. Further, Bhatia (1993) indicated that genre analysis helps in the functional explanation of specific genres. In this sense, genre analysis approach can help illuminate not only how genres are written but also why they are written the way they are.

The genre-based approach is often used by many to understand research articles. Swales (1990 in Maswana et al., 2015) proposed and developed the concept of a move, a structural segment that has a specific communicative function and purpose to analyze textual structure. According to Bhatia (1993), a move has a characteristic specific to a genre, thus knowledge about the function of each move and the structural pattern of the text will allow for a greater understanding of a specific genre.

Much work has been done applying move analysis (e.g. Ding, 2007; Maswana et al., 2015; Peacock, 2011; Fazilatfar & Naseri, 2014). Some researchers have conducted move analysis across disciplines: Puebla (n.d.) focused on the different moves found in Psychology research articles; Maswana et al. (2015) analyzed the research articles across five engineering fields; Martin (2013) investigated the teaching of academic writing using move analysis and a functional genre-based approach; and Brett (1994) examined research articles from the discipline of sociology. How-ever, studies that applied move analysis in the field of Applied Linguistics are much fewer (e.g. Lores, 2004 in Dara-bad 2016; Amnuai & Wannaruk, 2013; Fazilatfar & Naseri, 2016), and

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tend to focus on the research abstracts, discus-sion section and/or the entirety of linguistic article. The present study thus attempted to make a contribution to knowledge by examining Applied Linguistic researches focusing on their rhetorical structures commonly used in the Introduction and Methods sections.

Before the inception of the Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics Program, there were already studies related to linguistics evident in the Master of Arts in English Language Teaching which was offered by the Department of Languages and Literature, now named Department of Communications, Linguistics and Literature. However, as the Master of Arts in English Language Teaching was replaced with the Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics program, the interests of graduate students were on discourse and pragmatics (e.g. Alcisto, 2005 & Gonzales, 2005) that pio-neered the said program. Then, the other new researchers explored the Cebuano language (Enricuso, 2016), teacher talk and commentaries (Maghanoy, 2018 & Unabia, 2017), Philippine languages (Tubac, 2013) and genre analysis (Barabas, 2017). Most of the theses writers chose discourse and pragmatics (e.g. Malimas, 2010; Opina, 2014; Cacha, 2013, Constantino, 2013, Villaruel, 2014, etc.) aside from second language acquisition (Magno, 2011) and phonology and phonetics (e.g. Bedio, 2014 & Cuizon, 2013). Consequently, this observation prompted the present study to help future researchers apply new research approaches, aside from the repetitive existing MAAL researches, and explore more relevant and timely issues that will respond to the needs of the community.

Hence, there is a need to fill the research gap through analyzing the introduction and methodology including the designs and theories of these master's theses to provide opportunities for graduate students as well as undergraduate students to explore new topics, theories, and research designs.

**Review of Related Literature**

The following subsection is the review of the related studies on these move analysis.

**Moves in the Introduction Section**

Fazilatfar and Naseri (2014) investigated the move analysis of research articles in applied linguistics Iranian journals and negotiation of researchers' identities. Pho's (2008) model of move analysis and Hyland's (2002) framework of writer identity were applied in analyzing 30 published research-based articles randomly selected from four journals of Applied Linguistics. The overall organizational structure of the articles were looked into, that is, Pho's 19 rhetorical moves (i.e. four in Abstract, three in Introduction section, four in the Method, four in Result section and four in Discussion section) as well as Hyland's (2002) first person func-tional taxonomy. Findings revealed that the 3 moves in introduction section occurred frequently with minimal variation in the order such as the occurrence of presenting the present work immediately after the first move, establishing a territory. An additional move such as drawing implication was also found. With the same in-tent, the present study intended to analyze the rhetorical moves of MAAL theses and looks into distinct rhe-torical features applied in this discipline.

Second, Fazilatfara and Naseri (2014) examined the relationship between generic organizations of re-search articles in applied linguistics Iranian journals as well as the identities of researchers. This study used Pho's (2008b in Fazilatfara & Naseri, 2014) model of move analysis in analyzing the thirty published re-search-based articles were selected randomly selected from the four journals. Pho (2008b in Fazilatfara & Naseri, 2014) identified the four moves in the methods section. These moves are the following: move 1, de-scribing data collection procedure"; move 2, describing how the data is analyzed; and move 3, describing the overall design of the study. The findings showed different percentages of writer identity categories across dif-ferent moves of articles. However, this study used another model in analyzing both the introduction and methods sections of the applied Linguistic articles. Third, Peacock's (2011) study analyzed a corpus-based analysis of the communicative move structure of 288 research article methods sections across eight disci-plines, namely, physics, biology, chemistry, environmental science, business, language and linguistics, law, and public and social administration. The findings showed the evidence of these three moves such as materi-als, procedure, and data analysis.

Salom, Monreal and Olivares (2008) conducted a study on the move-step structure of the introducto-ry sections of 21 Spanish PhD Theses based on a modified version of Bunton's (2002) revised CARS model for English PhD theses introduction. He added new steps to Swales' model to clearly express the research per-spective, the purpose of their work, the positioning and organization of their texts such as defining terms, in-dicating a problem or need, method, materials or subjects, product of research/ model proposed, justifica-tion/significance and thesis structure. Introduction chapters were collected from an online library of *Proquest Information and Learning* and identification of predominant lexico-grammatical features, each text segment was examined individually and coded according to its communicative function. This individual coding was then peer-reviewed. Results showed that although Bunton's (2002) steps many moves are unaccounted; hence, the researchers proposed their own model according to the context and organization of Spanish graduate stu-dents' introduction of their PhD Theses. Unlike Salom et al.'s (2008) study, the present study examined 22 MAAL theses from the university's library.

Another study was done by Badib and Sutopo (2017) who collected 20 journal articles from science journals written by Indonesian lecturers of five state universities. Swales' move analysis, was employed in finding out non-native speakers' conformity to the principles of writing introduction in a research article. Findings indicated that the English research articles' introduction section written by non-native speakers did not meet the criteria or principles suggested by experts representing Anglophone's scientific work. Further, rhetorical functions vary especially in non-IMRD (Introduction-Method-Results-Discussion) papers. Results also show that non-IMRD papers contain incomplete moves while IMRD papers contain complete moves. Although the present study used Swales' model, the present study focused on introduction and methodology sections.

**Moves in Methods Section**

There have been studies that explored and analyzed the rhetorical moves of the method section of the research papers such as Cotos and Link (2017), Fazilatfara and Naseri (2014), and Peacock (2011). In the first study, Cotos and Link (2017) looked into the rhetorical structures of the huge multi-disciplinary corpus of the research article methods sections by using a top-down analysis of a corpus of nine hundred texts which repre-sented the thirty academic fields. The data that were gathered consisted of a specialized corpus of nine hun-dred research articles from thirty disciplines through compiling the corpus with the collaboration with active researchers & strong publication records and consultants of the field.

Then, the Demonstrating Rigour and Credibility (DRaC) model was used as a framework in analyz-ing the data. Results revealed that the methods section of research articles contained three moves (i.e. move 1, contextualizing study methods; move 2, describing the study; establishing credibility) and the corresponding sixteen steps. In addition, this study is similar to the present study since it also focused on the methods section and the same model was used in the analysis but the data of the present study consisted of the master's theses of the single discipline only, that is, Applied Linguistics. To sum up, these empirical studies are very helpful to the present study in figuring out similarities and differences of these moves to the moves applied by the graduate students in the Applied Linguistics program of the University of San Carlos.

On the contrary, most of the reviewed studies were done abroad and there was no study that analyzed both the introduction and methodology sections. Hence, there is a need to fill the research gap through analyzing the introduc-tion and methodology including the designs and theories of these master's theses to provide opportunities for graduate students as well as undergraduate students to explore new topics, theories, and research designs. This study will also strengthen the awareness of the graduates on the rhetorical moves in writing theses.

**Statement of the Problem**

This study aimed to determine and analyze the rhetorical moves found in the introduction and methodology sections of Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics' (MAAL) Theses from 2005 to 2017. Particularly, this study sought to answer the following questions

1. What style is employed in MAAL graduate theses from 2005 – 2017 in terms of:
    1.1 Discipline
    1.2 Theoretical Framework
    1.3 Research Design
2. What rhetorical moves as proposed by Swales (1990) CARS' model are present in the introduction sections of these graduate theses?
3. What rhetorical moves as proposed by Lim (2006) are evident in the method sections of these graduate theses?

**Theoretical Framework**

Swales' (1990) Model of Rhetorical Moves i.e. Create a Research Space Model (CARS) and the correspond-ing model of the method section by Lim (2006) serve as the frameworks for the current study.

**Table A**

*Swales* (1990 in *Musa and Khamis*, 2015) *CARS Model*

| | |
|---|---|
| Move 1 Establishing a Territory | |
| | Step 1 : Claiming centrality |
| | Step 2 : Making topic generalization |
| | Step 3 : Reviewing items of previous research |
| Move 2 Establishing Niche | |
| | Step 1A : Counter Claiming |
| | Step 1B : Indicating a Gap |
| | Step 1C : Question-Raising |
| | Step 1D : Continuing Tradition |
| Move 3 Occupying Niche | |
| | Step 1A : Outlining purposes |
| | Step 1B : Announcing present research |
| | Step 2 : Announcing principle findings |
| | Step 3 : Indicating RA Structure |

Swales (1990) CARS' model

The notion of communicative purpose is central to Swales' (1990) move analysis. Swales (1990 in Moyano, 2009) stated members of a discourse community share genres that achieve their own communicative purpose. In the writing of research articles (RA), researchers follow specific organizational patterns in writing RAs. One of the gen-re-based approaches in identifying the structure of research articles is *Move Analysis*.

Swales (1990) proposed a framework for the move analysis known as CARS (Create a Research Space) based on research conducted on research article introductions in physics, medicine and social sciences. The first version of the model (Swales, 1981) comprised of four moves and was based on an analysis of short RA introductions. Later, he modified his analytical model to adequately capture the rhetorical movement in introductory sections of research arti-cles from different contexts. The CARS model proposes a move structure for research article introductions. The re-vised CARS model (Swales, 1990) comprises 3 Moves: (1) Establishing a territory, (2) Establishing a niche, and (3) Occupying the niche. Each of the moves proposed consists of steps or sub-moves within it.

**Move 1: Establishing a Territory**

In this move, the author sets the context for his or her research, providing necessary background on the topic. The researcher establishes the field of study by claiming the research topic in terms of specific areas of the study, the importance of the topic, and providing the background of it. Related research is also reviewed to provide readers the main points of the literature (Tongsibsong, 2012). This move includes one or more of the following steps:

*Step 1: Claiming Centrality*
The author asks the discourse community (intended audience) to accept that the research about to be reported is part of a lively, significant, or well established research area.

*Step 2: Making Topic Generalizations*
The author makes statements about current knowledge, practices, or phenomena in the field.

*Step 3: Reviewing Previous Items of Research*
The author relates what has been found on the topic and who found it. In citing the research of others, the author may use integral or non-integral citation.

In Move 1 "Establishing a territory", the writer points out the relevance of his/ her research to issues and propositions agreed upon by the academic community to contribute to the understanding of the pertinent issues that are of interest to that of the academic circle.

**Move 2: Establishing a Niche**

In this part, the author argues that there is an open "niche" in the existing research, a space that needs to be filled through additional research. The author can establish a niche in one of four ways:

*Counter-claiming*
The author refutes or challenges earlier research by making a counter-claim.

*Indicating a Gap*
The author demonstrates that earlier research does not sufficiently address all existing ques-tions or problems.

*Question-raising*
The author asks questions about previous research, suggesting that additional research needs to be done

*Continuing a Tradition*
The author presents the research as a useful extension of existing research.

In Move 2 "Establishing a Niche" the writer/ researcher challenges the claim and findings of previous researches. The author highlights the shortcomings, gaps and unanswered questions regarding the established territory and consequent-ly to emphasize the necessity for further and more profound investigations (Habibi 2008).

**Move 3: Occupying a Niche**

The author turns the niche established in Move 2 into the research space that he or she will fill; that is, the au-thor demonstrates how he or she will substantiate the counter-claim made, fill the gap identified, answer the ques-tion(s) asked, or continue the research tradition. The initial step (lA or 1B) is obligatory,

*Step lA: Outlining Purposes*
The author indicates the main purpose(s) of the current article.

*Step 1B: Announcing Present Research*
The author describes the research in the current article.

*Step 2: Announcing Principal Findings*
The author presents the main conclusions of his or her research.

*Step 3: Indicating the Structure of the Research Article*
The author previews the organization of the article.

In Move 3, the writer reveals his/her solution to help fill the gap, answer the specific question or continue a research tradition that has been presented in Move 2. The Move Analysis model put forward by Swales (1981, 1990) is an example of such a specific genre-level analysis to analyze the discourse structure of texts from a specific genre; the text is described as a sequence of 'moves', where each move represents a stretch of text serving a particular com-municative function (Upton & Cohen, 2009).

Rhetorical Moves in the Method Section

The Method Section in research articles plays a vital role in providing the readers information on the aspect of reliability, validity, and a description of research steps taken. The Method section comprises the specific research procedure, material and analysis. Without the Method section in an RA, the author might not be able to convince the readers on how the findings were obtained and the validity of the research itself. Lim's (2006) comprehensive model for analyzing Methods section in research articles was employed as the analytical framework for the study.

**Move 1: Describing Data collection procedures**

In this section of the research method, subheading are used to signal the beginning of Move 1 which includes "Sample", "Subjects", "Data Sources", "Selecting Participants and Collecting Data", "Setting, Subjects and Proce-dures", and " Research Site". The description of data collection procedure involves specification of the characteristics of a sample while the procedures involved in collecting may be mentioned as a series of steps or actions which are often justified.

*Step 1: Describing the sample*

This step includes statements on: (1) the location or source of the sample, (2) the size of the popula-tion, (3) the characteristics of the sample and (4) sampling techniques or criteria.

*Step 2: Recounting steps in data collection*

This step includes procedural verbs denoting steps taken in collecting data were used to recount sam-pling activities.

The data collection process consists of a series of steps, which are successive actions expressed in the past simple tense even though some actions also occurred simultaneously. In recounting steps in data collection, time-relationship adjuncts may be in the form of adverbs denoting temporal sequence or prepositional phrases indicating temporal relationships. They are generally used as transitional expressions introducing steps taken at different stages of a data collection process.

*Step 3: Justifying the data collection procedures.*

Step 3 exists only if Move 1-Step 3 does. It enables the presumed readership to understand the char-acteristics and acceptability of the procedures concerned. Writers justify the data collection proce-dures by: (1) highlighting the advantage/s of using the sample in comparison to other samples used in previous studies, and (2) indicating the extent to which to which the sample is representative of the population.

In signaling justifications, words with positive connotations that highlight the size and representativeness of the sample are used. In terms of negative connotation, mechanisms of negation can be used to provide a positive de-scription of the sampling technique. A negative expression may be negated by a negative determiner "no", a negative adverb "not", or a negative adjective, thus forming expressions with positive connotation that justify the sampling technique. In this part, writers also make reference to previous research methods in an attempt to demonstrate justifia-bility of the data collection.

**Move 2: Delineating procedure/s for measuring variables**

This includes explanation on how measurements of dependent and independent variables could be made. Sub-headings that are generally used to signal the beginning of Move 2 include "Research Design", "Measures", and "Measurements of the Independent Variables".

*Step 1: Presenting an overview of the design*

The writer begins with a general statement of the type of design which is usually described in terms of the types of independent variables included in the designs.

*Step 2: Explaining method/s of measuring variables.*

This step begins with (1) the specification of items used in questionnaires or databases, (2) procedures used in observations, or (3) definitions of variables. Procedural verb may be used in either the pas-sive or active voice.

*Step 3: Justifying the methods of measuring variables.*

In this part, the writer gives justifications in order to indicate the degree of acceptability of the re-search design. Citing previous research is an important step that can help future researchers replicate or modify the study. The methods are highlighted as those that have been tested and proven in prior research.

Moreover, writers indicate the extent to which certain procedures are justifiable by highlighting the accepta-bility of some methods of measurements. For this step, a more overt way of indicating methodological acceptability is to make specific reference to the validity and/or reliability of a method for measuring variables.

**Move 3: Elucidating data analysis procedure/s**

Subsequent to the delineation of procedures for measuring variables, the writers may continue to elucidate the data analysis procedures by describing some statistical techniques aimed at: (1) analyzing data, (2) testing the research hypotheses, and (3) seeking answers to the research questions.

*Step 1: Relating (or recounting) data analysis procedure/s*

The focus in this section is on the steps taken in analyzing the data. The steps taken in the process of data analysis are usually recounted in chronological order.

The most salient features of Move 3-Step 1 are (1) the use of time-relationship adjuncts (e.g. "first", "second", "then", "finally) , (2) temporal adverbial clauses that indicate the completion of a particu-lar step taken in analysis, and (3) lexemes denoting inception of a process (e.g. "started" and "start-ing).

*Step 2: Justifying the data analysis procedures*

In this step, writers provide a rationale for selecting certain analysis procedures in order to demon-strate that the data have analyzed in appropriate way.

*Step 3: Previewing results*

This part resembles certain steps found in the subsequent result section in that the data

**Table B**

*Lim's model (2006) for RA Methods*

| Rhetorical Move | Constituent step |
|---|---|
| Move 1: Describing data collection procedure/s | Step 1: Describing the sample<br>(a) Describing the location of the sample<br>(b) Describing the size of the sample/population<br>(c) Describing the characteristics of the sample<br>(d) Describing the sampling technique or criterion<br>Step 2: Recounting steps in data collection<br>Step 3: Justifying the data collection procedure/s<br>(a) Highlighting advantages of using the sample<br>(b) Showing representatively of the sample |
| Move 2: Delineating procedure/s for measuring variables | Step 1: Presenting an overview of the design<br>Step 2: Explaining method/s of measuring variables<br>(a) Specifying items in questionnaires/databases<br>(b) Defining variables<br>(c) Describing methods of measuring variables<br>Step 3: Justifying the method/s of measuring variables<br>(a) Citing previous research method/s<br>(b) Highlighting acceptability of the method/s |
| Move 3: Elucidating data analysis procedure/s | Step 1: Relating (or recounting) data analysis procedure/s<br>Step 2: Justifying the data analysis procedure/s<br>Step 3: Previewing results |

reported ap-pear like preliminary results that can be further interpreted to produce specific findings.

## METHODOLOGY

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were applied in this study. The rhetorical analysis was used as re-search design. Specifically, the rhetorical moves in the rationale of the study and methodology was analyzed using Swales' (1990) Create a Space Model (CARS) and Lim's (2006) rhetorical framework for methodology, respectively.

Research Environment

This study was conducted in the University of San Carlos where most of the theses of the graduates of the Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics (MAAL) are accessible. Some copies were retrieved from the Filipiniana Li-brary JB Learning Resource Center while others are from the authors who are also faculty members of the said univer-sity.

Research Data

All graduate theses, a total of 22, of the MAAL program from 2005 to 2018 served as data. Particularly, sec-tions on introduction and methodology were looked into in terms of rhetorical moves, disciplines, theoretical frame-works and research designs. These theses employed topics ranging from phonetics and phonology, morphology and syntax, semantics and pragmatics, discourse, second language acquisition and bilingualism.

Research Procedures

Gathering of Data. Before gathering the data, the researchers asked a complete title list of the MAAL pro-gram graduate theses from 2005 to 2018 from the University of San Carlos library. The researchers then contacted and wrote a transmittal letter to ask permission from the theses owners to use their theses as part of the research data. The introductions and methods sections of 22 graduate theses of the MAAL program from 2005 to 2018 were compiled, photocopied and retyped for the purpose of analysis. The different rhetorical moves evident in the introductions and methods sections in the graduate theses were identified, tallied, and tabulated.

Treatment of Data. The data were analyzed using both quantitative (frequency count) and qualitative (con-tent-based) analyses. To identify the Moves that characterize the MAAL theses, a total 22 Introduction and Methodol-ogy portions of the theses were individually analyzed using Swales' (2004) CARS Model and Lim's (2006) frame-work. For the methods sections, the framework of Lim (2006) was used to do a move-based genre analysis to deter-mine the moves and steps found in the method sections. The researchers looked into the occurrences of steps. The next step was to account for the percentage of the presence of these rhetorical moves in the introduction and method section. The rhetorical moves were coded, classified, and tabulated according to the categories specified in the sub-problems. For data coding and analysis, each of the researcher tabulated, coded, and analyzed the 22 MAAL graduate theses. Then, the researchers discussed together and verified one another's analyses of the data. Other possible rhetori-cal moves that are distinct in MAAL theses were also looked into.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows that discourse analysis, pragmatics, conversation analysis together with second language acqui-sition and bilingualism especially code-switching were explored by the thesis writers. These could be attributed to the fact that discourse analysis and conversation analysis are approaches in data analysis. According to Heritage (1984, p. 245 in Hua, Wei and Yuan, 2000 p. 85), conversation analysis is "primarily concerned with the ways in which utter-ances accomplish particular actions by virtue of their placement and participation with sequences of actions.... (p. 85).

Pragmatics, Second Language Acquisition, and Bilingualism are observed to be very relevant topics to these writers due to the language setting in Cebu where speakers are usually bilinguals and multilinguals. Such researches that look into multilingualism contribute to the stakeholders' understanding of the importance of mother tongue-based multilin-gual education (MTBMLE) specifically in terms of pedagogical strategies. Others also choose topics where they could easily gather data due to the time constraint and deadlines given to the writers who need to finish their master's de-gree. This directive was also mandated by the Commission of Higher Education. CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 40, s. 2008 required all higher education institutions (HEIs) faculty to have

**Table 1**

*Disciplines/Courses in the MAAL Theses*

| Courses | f | Theses Samples |
|---|---|---|
| (i) Discourse Analysis | | |
| Political Discourse | 1 | T1 |
| Narratives | 3 | T2, T13, T17 |
| Discourse Markers | 1 | T9 |
| Fillers/Verbal Mantra | 2 | T11, T16 |
| Other subfields | 2 | T8, T15 |
| Sub-total | 9 | |
| (ii) Pragmatics | | |
| Politeness | 2 | T2, T8 |
| Speech Acts | 2 | T3, T19 |
| Apology | 1 | T19 |
| Humor | 1 | T22 |
| Sub-total | 6 | |
| (iii) Conversation Analysis | 4 | T1, T9, T16, T22 |
| (iv) Second Language Acquisition | 4 | T7, T13, T14, T21 |
| (v) Bilingualism: Code Switching | 4 | T4, T13,T15, T2 |
| (vi) Syntax | 3 | T1, T10, T12 |
| (vii) Language and Gender | 3 | T7, T16, T22 |
| (viii) Varieties of English (World Englishes; Philippine Englishes) | 3 | T12, T6 |
| (ix) Introduction to Language Study | 2 | T4, T21 |
| (ix) Anthropological Linguistics | 2 | T4, T21 |
| (x) Sociolinguistics: Language Choice and Language Shift | 2 | T4, 20 |
| (xi) Advanced Phonetics and Phonology | 2 | T6, T7 |
| (xii) Semantics: Collocation | 2 | T3, T5 |
| (xiii) Morphology | 2 | T10, T20 |
| (xiv) Advanced Composition | 2 | T12, T14 |
| (xv) Methodologies of Teaching | 2 | T14, T21 |
| *(xvi) Critical Discourse Analysis* | 1 | T5 |
| *(xvii) Modern Grammar/Grammatical Theories* | 1 | T12 |
| *(xviii) Acoustic analysis* | 1 | T7 |
| *(xix) Cebuano* | 1 | T10 |
| **(xx) Assessment* | - | |
| **(xxi) TESOL* | - | |
| **(xxii) Psycholinguistics & First Language Development* | - | |
| **(xxiii) Theories in Translation* | - | |

*multiple answers

at least a master's degree that was im-plemented by AY 2011-2012 ("Faculty Development Program", 2017).

Moreover, the following disciplines that need to be explored are: *Critical Discourse Analysis, Modern Gram-mar/Grammatical Theories, Acoustics & Cebuano*. As observed in the research agenda of DCLL before it was revisited during 1st semester 2017-2018, critical discourse analysis was not included in Linguistics probably because this disci-pline is very challenging. Also, the areas in *Grammar, Advanced Phonetics and Phonology* where acoustics could be integrated, and Cebuano were understudied. The lack of tools, training, and expertise in acoustic study as well as the lack of academic mastery in one's own Cebuano language could be a factor in the non-preference for a grammatical field of study.
The result further implies that these topics/disciplines are very technical that other thesis writers tend to avoid these topics. For Cebuano, only Enricuso (2015) attempted to deal with it while in fact Cebuano is very relevant to the K to 12 Basic Education Program (RA 10533). The rarity of studies in Cebuano could be attributed to its exclu-sion in the list of courses in the master's degree program of Applied Linguistics but is now offered in the undergradu-ate program of Applied Linguistics.

In addition, courses and topics in (*Language) Assessment, TESOL, Psycholinguistics and First Language De-velopment, and Theories in Translation* that are evident in the latest prospectus of the Master of Arts in Applied Lin-guistics program of DCLL, which took effect during the AY2014-2015 were never yet explored by the thesis writers. This result suggests that thesis writers venture into these unexplored areas relevant to competencies mandated by De-partment of Education for Kindergarten, Grades 1-4, Grades 11-12 on the successful implementation and evaluation of the K to 12 policy and TESOL that is trending in acquiring certification to apply for teaching jobs within the coun-try, any ASEAN countries with the implementation of ASEAN integration. Moreover, Psycholinguistics and First Language Development could be integrated in K to 12 implementation, and Translation Studies supporting glocaliza-tion and internationalization and the preservation of cultural heritage through literary and non-literary texts.

The data in Table 2 reveal that the elements of Labov (1999) and Labov and Waltezky (1967) were found to be very overused in analyzing the narrative structures; code-switching, the categories of Poplack (e.g. Poplack, 1980; Poplack & Sankoff, 1988) and politeness was also explored in various frameworks. Despite being commonly utilized, Labov's (1999) framework of the narrative structures paved the way for thesis writers in their analysis of narratives. This repetitive usage of frameworks suggests the "existing weaknesses and gaps of a particular field in the member of a disciplinary community" (Shezad, 2008 in Amir, Darus, & Rahman, 2017). By knowing the uncovered and identify-ing other current frameworks, the discipline of applied linguistics could continue to move forward.

Concerning code-switching, Poplack (1980) has been well used even though there have been other researchers such as Pascacio (1988), Bautista (n.d.) and Gonzalez (n.d.) who already categorized code-switching in the Philippine context. This demonstrates how thesis writers are still attached to the theories developed by foreign researchers through benchmarking. This result suggests that master's thesis writers should be confident to contribute to theory building than using theories developed abroad. New theories which were developed by Filipino researchers could be utilized in the Philippine context. To support this claim, Barabas (2017), Enricuso (2016) and Unabia (2017) contrib-uted to the building of theories through benchmarking and coming up with new categories based on their actual data.

Table 3 demonstrates that the majority of the master's theses used the quantitative-qualitative research



**Table 2**

*Frameworks Used in the MAAL Theses*

| Topics | Frameworks/Theories | Theses |
|---|---|---|
| Narrative Structures | Labov & Waltezky (1967) | T2 |
| | Lavov (1999) | T13 |
| Code-switching | Poplack (1980); | T13 |
| | Poplack & Sankoff (1988 | T15 |
| | Hammink (2000) | T15 |
| Discourse functions of CS | Fuentes (2005) | T15 |
| Philippine Code-switching | Pascasio (1988) | T15 |
| Politeness strategies | Holmes (1995) | T2 |
| | Brown & Levinson (1987) | T8 |
| | HO (n.d.) | T8 |
| | Maynard (1980) | T8 |
| Advertisement Context | Cook (2001) | T1 |
| Emotive effects and legitimizing strategies | Chilton (2004) | T1 |
| Collocation | Crystal (1995) | T3 |
| Collocation classification | Kalediate & Palevicienne (2008) | T3 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Speech act | Searle (1976) | T3 |
| Textual analysis | Fairclough (1993) | T5 |
| Rhetorical moves | Hui (2009), Askehave (2007) | T5 |
| | Hajibah (2006) | T5 |
| Intelligibility | Field (2005) | T6 |
| Accommodation Theory | Gilbert and Coupland's (1991) | T7 |
| Taxonomy of discourse markers | Fraser (1999) | T9 |
| Types of pragmatic functions | Verdonik (2007) | T9 |
| Communicative functions | Wray & Perkins (2000) | T10 |
| Ritual insults | Labov (1972) | T10 |
| Syntactic categories | Bygate (1988) | T10 |
| Routines or frames identification | Raupauch (1984) | T10 |
| Formulacity of the identified language | Moon (in Schnmitt 1997) | T10 |
| Function/case frames | Fillmore (1968) | T12 |
| Misuses and use | Brown (2000) | T12 |
| Interlanguage | Selinker (1960) | T13 |
| Rating Scale for revisions | Ferris (1997) | T14 |
| Survey questionnaire (modified) | Straub (1997) | T14 |
| Elements of genre | Moon (1985) | T15 |
| Types of sermons | Sermon (2009) | T15 |
| Types of talk | Fisher (1993) | T16 |
| Verbal Communicative behaviors | Dindia and Pearson (1995) | T16 |
| Coding Categories | Ely *et al* (2001 | T17 |
| Lexical access in speech production | Costa, Colome and Caramazza (2001) | T20 |
| Form al and functional features of teacher talk | Chaudron (1988) | T21 |
| Taxonomy of humor | Monro (1953 | T22 |
| Discursive norm | Mullany (2004) | T22 |
| Semantic script | Rasken (1985) | T22 |
| Maxims violated to effect humor | Attardo (1993) | T22 |



design. This has now become a trend in conducting research in combining quantitative and qualitative research designs to validate the results. Most researchers tend to use the mixed quantitative and quantitative methods in supplementary or complemen-tary forms. Dornyei (2007) indicates that qualitative methods direct the quantitative and the quantitative feedback into the qualitative in a circular and evolving process with each method contributing to the theory in ways that only each can. The use of converging trends from quantitative data and specific details from qualitative data contribute to a bet-ter understanding of complex phenomena such as language use. In addition, the nature of applied linguistic research-es tend to emphasize various approaches to conceptualizing, analyzing and representing knowledge about language and at the same time embracing new contexts of language learning and use (Kaplan, 2010). Quantitative approach is usual-ly linked to experiments and surveys while qualitative method is associated with ethnography, case study, and narra-tive inquiry in applied linguistics. Further, thesis writers and researchers could easily explain with the prevailing pat-terns found in the data. Nevertheless, exposure to other methods of research design could further enrich data gathering and analysis.

As observed, only a few used correlational (Socong, 2010) and grounded theory (Unabia, 2017), and none of the thesis writers used experimental research design. This could be attributed to the research interests of the thesis writers where only few of them took the challenge in exploring correlational and grounded theory. It was very chal-lenging and time-consuming to use grounded theory because the researchers had to focus on occurrences in the local study and data rather than referring to the established categories developed by the theorists. Since Psycholinguistics and first language acquisition were not given much attention as shown in the topics selected, experimental research designs could be used in testing hypotheses in relation to language acquisition and specific topics of Psycholinguistics.

Rhetorical Moves in MAAL Introduction

Swales's (1990) framework on the rhetorical moves in research paper introductions is a practical guide for researchers to write their introduction clearly and convincingly. It guides readers in understanding the context of and available knowledge on the topic, the reason(s) why there is still a need to conduct further investigations regarding the topic, and the ways in demonstrating how to

**Table 3**

*Research Designs Used in the MAAL Theses*

| Research Designs | f | Theses |
|---|---|---|
| Quantitative-Qualitative | 14 | T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8, T10, T12, T13, T14, T16, T20, T22 |
| Qualitative–Descriptive (Descriptive/ Descriptive-Comparative Non-experimental) | 9 | T1, T15, T19, T21, T2, T9, T17, T11, T18 |
| Correlational research | 1 | T18 |
| Grounded Theory | 1 | T21 |
| Experimental | - | |

**Table 4**

*Rhetorical Moves in Research Introductions*

| Theses | Move Sequence | MOVE 1: Establishing a Territory | MOVE 2: Establishing a Niche | MOVE 3: Occupying the Niche | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T1 | M1(S1), (S2) – M2 (S1B) – M3 (S1A) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| T2 | M1(S1), (S2), (S3) – M2(S1D) – M3 (S1A) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| T3 | M1(S1), (S3) – M2(S1B) - M3 (S1A) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| T4 | M1 (S2), (S3) – M2(S1B) - M3(S1A) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| T5 | M1(S1), (S3) – M2(S1D) – M3(S1A) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| T6 | M1(S1), (S3) – M2(S1B) – M3(S1A) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| T7 | M1(S1), (S2), (S3) – M2(S1B) – M3(S1A) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| T8 | M1(S3) – M2(S1A), (S1B) – M3(S1A) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| T9 | M1(S2), (S3) – M2(S1D) – M3(S1B) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| T10 | M1(S1), (S3) – M2(S1B) - M3(S1A), (S1B) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| T11 | M1(S1), (S3) – M2(S1B) – M3(S1A) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| T12 | M1(S3) – M2(S1B) – M3(S1A), (S1B) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| T13 | M1(S2) (S3) – M2(S1B) – M3(S1A), (S1B) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| T14 | M1(S2), (S3) – M3(S1A) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| T15 | M1(S2), (S3) – M2(S1B) – M3(S1A) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| T16 | M1(S1), (S3) – M2(S1B) – M3(S1A) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| T17 | M1(S3) – M2(S1B) – M3(S1A) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| T18 | M1(S1), (S3) – M2(S1B), (S1C) – M3(S1A), (S1B) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| T19 | M1(S1 – S3) – M2(S1B), (S1D) – M3(S1A) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| T20 | M1(S1), (S3) – M2(S1B) – M3(S1A) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| T21 | M1(S2), (S3) – M2(S1B) – M3(S1A), (S1B) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| T22 | M1(S2), (S3) – M2(S1B), (S1D) – M3(S1A) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |

*T1-T22 refers to MAAL Thesis



fill in the research space (e.g. how to fill the gap or continue the research tradition). Table 2 presents the moves applied in the master's thesis introduction section while Table 2.1 summarizes the theses incorporating the moves as well as the respective steps.

As illustrated in Table 4, all master's theses (T1-T22) employed Swales' (1990) three 'moves' in writing an introduc-tion with M1(S1A) – M2(S1B) – M3(S1A) as the most prevalent pattern. Clearly, the researchers were able to estab-lish the importance and relevance of the research area, indicate the need to add to the existing knowledge, and demon-strate how the need can be substantiated. Varied steps under those moves were observed to be evident: Under Move 1, Step 3 [Reviewing items of previous research] occupies the most number of usage (i.e. 22 out of 22), followed by Step 1 [Claiming Centrality] and Step 2 [Making Topic Generalization]; For Move 2, Step 1B [Indicating a Gap] tops the spot with 18 out of 22 usage; and lastly, for Move 3, Step 1A [Outlining the Purposes] garners the highest number of use with all thesis (i.e. 22 out of 22) stating the nature of the present research. Since all obligatory moves were uti-lized, these researchers are assumed to be well-versed in lay outing the background of the study. As emphasized by Swales (1990 in Rahman, Amir & Darus, 2017), "the functional role of introduction of

RAs (Research Articles) is to situate them contextually in a research study by discussing the literature relevant to the study, by presenting the origi-nality of the study, and also by describing principal aspects of the study".

Data reveal similar findings with those of Fazilatfar and Naseri (2014) where the 3 moves in the introduction section occurred frequently with minimal variation in the order such as the occurrence of presenting the present work imme-diately after the first move, establishing a territory. As observed in the present study, despite differences in steps used in each move, the common pattern still starts with Move 1 followed by Move 2 and Move 3 establishing a coherent section.

Table 5 specifies the steps under each move with S3 [Reviewing items of previous research] having the most number of usage (22 out of 22 theses) under M1 [Establishing a Territory] and S1A [Outlining purpose] of M3 [Oc-cupying the Niche]. Reviewing related literature is important in research writing since it establishes the relevance of the field of study and provides a better understanding of the concepts, methodologies and techniques of the discipline. The focus of the review allows the discussion of certain areas, methods and findings that may be replicated or further explored. As observed, these thesis authors find it essential to incorporate their analyses and synthesis of research liter-ature to demonstrate the contribution of their work to the body of knowledge. Although M2 [Establishing a Niche] was also utilized, not all theses exhibit the application of the same step. In this case, S1B [Indicating a gap] has the majority shares (18 out of 22) which indicate that researchers identify the need to conduct a research investigation or contribute additional knowledge to the community because a gap (e.g. in the methodology, context, or framework) needs to be filled in. The need to identify areas which have not been researched surfaced in the process of reviewing the literature where the gap is revealed. This study supports the findings of Fazilatfara & Naserib's (2014) study where indicating a research gap predominated among the steps.

On the other hand, some steps from M3 [Occupying a Niche] were observed to be absent particularly in S2 [Announcing principal findings] and S3[Indicating RA structure]. Unlike S1A or S1B, these two (i.e. S2 and S3 of M3) are optional; thus, researchers exclude them in the introduction. Moreover, announcing the principal findings of the research will already be made available in the succeeding chapters (i.e. Chapter 2 for the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data, and Chapter 3 for the summary of findings). Although this strategy emphasizes the main results of the study by placing the report in the introduction, not all disciplines allow its inclusion in the said section (Pen-nington, 2015). Three theses have, however, projected what their study attempts to achieve as presented in T5:

**T5**: The results of the study **may further enhance the contents of these brochures** in terms of rhetorical moves, verbal phrase, and word combinations

Furthermore, the nonexistence of indicating the research article structure indicates that there is no need to ex-plicitly mention the structure of the paper, unlike other disciplines, since the main goal of the introduction section is to point out why the study needs to be conducted in the first place which was already achieved following the three moves. The result also implies that the thesis writers had to be acquainted with Swales' (1990) rhetorical moves to en-rich their skill in writing the introduction or rationale of the papers. However, presenting the flow of research in this section can easily guide readers.

Below are examples of the application of rhetorical moves in the introduction taken from the gathered data.

**M1 - Establishing a Territory [the situation]**

Authors set the tone or context of their research to give readers a background or layout of the topic including its importance and relevance. This move is employed using

**Table 5**

*Summary of Rhetorical Moves in Research Introductions*

| Move 1: Establishing a Territory | | | Move 2: Establishing a Niche | | | | Move 3: Occupying the Niche | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Step 1: Claiming Centrality | Step 2: Making topic generalization | Step 3: Reviewing items of previous research | Step 1A: Counter Claiming | Step1B: Indicating a gap | Step 1C: Question raising | Step 1D: Continuing a Tradition | Step 1A: Outlining purposes | Step 1B: Announcing present research | Step 2: Announcing principal findings | Step 3: Indicating RA structure |
| T1, T2, T3, T5, T6, T7, T10, T11, T16, T18, T19, T20 | T1, T2, T4, T7, T9, T13, T14, T15, T19, T21, T22 | T1-T22 | T14 | T1, T3, T4, T6, T7, T8, T10, T11,T12, T13,T15, T16,T17, T18, T19,T20, T21, T22 | T2, T18 | T2, T5,T9, T19 and T22 | T1-T22 | T3, T9, T10, T12, T13, T18 and T21 | None | None |
| 12 Thesis | 11 Thesis | 22 Thesis | 1 Thesis | 18 Thesis | 2 Thesis | 5 Thesis | 22 Thesis | 7 Thesis | None | None |

*T = thesis

one or more of these steps:

S1. Claiming Centrality

T13: Another phenomenon that is of great importance in the field of language transfer in the learning of second language is crosslinguistic influence (CLI) which was first popularized by Weinrich (1953 in Ilomaki, 2005) then investigated further by Lado (1957 in Malmkjær, 2004).

Majority of the thesis (12 out of 22) employed S1 since it gives the topic a level of importance and significance. Re-searchers would point out that the research topic is worth looking into. As exemplified by T13, crosslinguistic influ-ence and written commentary on student writing are well-established researched topics since these have been investi-gated by other experts in the field. Academic Writing in English (2017) even pointed out that centrality claims fre-quently "serve as *topic sentences* and are therefore usually followed by evidence to support this statement"

S2. Making topic generalization(s)

**T16**: classroom talk studies **generally** focus on conversations in the classroom setting between the students and the teacher rather than among students alone

Aside from claiming the significance of a topic, making generalizations of such topic was also evident with 11 theses illustrating this step. Here, statements concerning 'current state of either knowledge concerning practice or description of phenomena' are found. Phrases such as *generally accepted, well known/documented, common findings* and such contribute to the identification of such step. T16 illustrates this strategy.

S3. Reviewing items of previous research

**T8**: **Petitti (2010) studied** the politeness theory in online communication spontaneous talk

As indicated in Table 2.1, all introduction sections of MAAL theses reflect a review of the previous research relating what has been found and who has found it. Evaluating experts' opinions and claims are valuable in supporting the argument and rationale of the study under investigation; hence, the researchers included these in establishing why the topic needs to be explored. Referring to previous research is represented by citing the author(s), date of research publication, useful verbs such as *suggest*, *study*, and *adopt* followed by an explanation on their views. These views can either support or counter the present study which contributes a holistic element to the discussion. In terms of format, this step is different from reviewing related literature where studies are presented in an abstract manner. The variation of writing styles suggests that the perspectives of the thesis writers could be widened as they are exposed to a genre. Bhatia (1997 in Fazilatfara & Naserib, 2014) emphasized that novice writers can benefit from the results of genre analysis because they can generate more complex genres.

**Move 2: Establishing a Niche [the problem]**

In order for the current study to find its relevance and significance in the field, it must establish that there are aspects in previous reports or investigations that have not been addressed. One way of incorporating this move is pointing out oversights of existing study by using 'negative evaluation'. Swales and Feak (2004 in Tulpesh, n.d.) sug-gested several phrases that might be helpful in establishing a niche such as 'Quasi-negative' phrases (e.g. however, little information/few studies), contrastive phrases (e.g. these studies have emphasized..., as opposed to...), raising a question/hypothesis/a need (e.g. however, it remains unclear whether), and ways to show extension of previous knowledge (e.g. It is of interest to compare...). Although this move gives the researchers the opportunity to claim a niche for their research by showing that previous studies are incomplete or need further investigation, not all theses exhibit this.

Data show that one or 2 steps, particularly that of indicating a gap, have been utilized.

S1B Indicating a gap

**T3**: However, **there is a scarcity** of related literature on studies involving the environment within the context of applied linguistics

S1B frequently follows M1 – S2 (Making topic generalizations) (Pennington, 2005). Key words such as "...has been extensively studies. However, less attention has been paid to...; Despite the importance of... few re-searchers have studies; Research has tended to focus on... rather than..." were used in identifying how to indicate a gap in the field. 18 out of 22 theses explicitly pointed out that a gap exists in previous research; thus, the need to establish the importance of conducting the present study. As shown in example T17, the limited number of local studies seems to demand this call for a research investigation which is usually the case in other theses. Although the procedure is repeated or the topic is similar, replication is one way of confirming the findings and contextualizing the results in the local arena. Another reason for asserting the need to study a topic is its dearth in a different context (T3).

S1C Question-raising

**T2**: As Holmes (1995:1) investigated the relationship of gender and politeness, she said that "Women tend to be more polite than me n" but to prove that 'women are more polite than men' among Filipinos is a **corollary generalization**. The reason why this study needs to be conducted is to find out what local empirical data can be gathered to confirm this claim.

Raising a question about previous researches was seldom applied in establishing a niche since only two out of 22 theses were observed to have identified this step. The ambiguous and doubtful findings that arise from other litera-ture's claims may still be contested due to variation in cultural and societal background. In this case, the results of existing studies may either be supported or opposed in light with new findings and other contributing factors. Lio and Evans (2010 in Fazilatfara & Naserib, 2014) claimed that generic awareness would aid novice writers in both generat-ing complex genres and enjoying the explicit knowledge of genre organization.

S1D. Continuing a tradition

**T9**: Consequently, the **researcher found it interesting** to look into the kind of pragmatic function which is evident in the discourse markers used by the speakers following the framework of Verdonik et al. (2007).

Continuing a tradition presents the research as a 'useful extension of existing research' (Swales, 1990) and is frequently signaled by logical connectors, such as *therefore, hence, consequently, or thus* (Pennington, 2005) which are helpful in one's line of reasoning. Using S1D strategy signals the necessity to examine further studies in line with existing studies albeit different framework, methodology, or contexts. However, this step is seldom used in MAAL theses (i.e. only 5 out of 22) perhaps because the gap that is intended to be filled in has already been pointed out (in S1B) by most researchers.

**Move 3: Occupying the Niche [the solution]**

After establishing a niche, writers have to reveal their solution how they can help fill the gap, answer specific questions or continue a research tradition. Using Move 3 already guides the readers how the research space can be oc-cupied by outlining the purpose or aim of the current study. Tulpesh (n.d.) pointed out two main ways to occupy the niche particularly, by indicating the study's purpose (i.e. purposive), and describing the main feature of the research (i.e. descriptive). Swales (1990) also revealed that S1A or S1B is obligatory.

S1A. Outlining purposes

**T1**: That is why the **present study aims** to investigate what empirical data can be obtained to analyze the discourses of televised political campaigns.

S1B. Announcing present research

**T18**: The **study focused** on apologies on campus, for it is believed that the school is one of the major institutions that teach proper manners like politeness.

An alternative strategy to S1A of M3 is announcing present research (S1B) where the writer 'describes the aims in terms of what the research sets out to do or accomplish' (Pennington, 2005). Phrases such as '*we sug-gest/propose/attempt/provide/describe/present as well as this study evaluates/presents/focuses/tests/proposes/introduces* **guide readers** in identifying how they occupy the niche.

To sum up, data from 22 MAAL theses indicate that the three rhetorical moves were applied in writing the introduction section with M1(S1A) – M2(S1B) – M3(S1A) as the most prevalent pattern indicating that the researchers were able to establish the importance and relevance of the research area, indicate the need to add to the existing knowledge particularly by filling in the gap in the research field, and demonstrate how the need can be substantiated by outlining the purpose of their research study. Certain phrases also prove useful in identifying the rhetorical moves and their corresponding steps.

**Rhetorical Moves in Methodology Section**

The methodology section is another challenging part of any research project because this is where the process of accomplishing the need to occupy the niche is presented in detail. Rosal (2008) pointed out that "this portion of the research process is pivotal as it endows the research with a scientific aura, that the steps taken to answer specific prob-lems are well thought of, and not haphazardly nor hastily done" (p. 73).

Moreover, Lim (2006 in Soodmand Afshar and Ranjba, 2017) added that this section is "worth investigating since it functions like a thread that links a particular research method with previous methods of research or with other sections, especially with the introduction and result sections" (p. 48). Using Lim's (2006) framework in analyzing the method section is practical since he is the only person, as of 2008, to provide a "detailed move-and-step analysis linked to linguistic features" (Bruce 2008, in Soodmand Afshar and Ranjba, 2017:49). Table 3 where the rhetorical moves in MAAL theses' methodology section appears on the succeeding page.

Table 6 shows that all three rhetorical moves were applied in the theses' methodology section. Although all theses (i.e. T1 – T22) described the location (M1S1A) and size (M1S1B) of the sample/population as well as recount-ed steps in data collection (M1S2), presented an overview of the research design (M2S1) and related data analysis pro-cedures (M3S1), some steps under those moves are absent such as defining variables (M2S2B), describing methods of measuring the variables (M2S2C), highlighting the acceptability of the methods (M2S3B) and previewing the results (M3S3). The absence of these steps (i.e. M2-S2B, M2-S2C, M2-S3B, and M3-S3) could indicate that researchers fo-cused on the basic sections enumerated in Rosal's (2008) research textbook which includes the research method (i.e. strategies/techniques/design), research environment/site, research participants/respondents, research instruments, and research procedure inclusive of the gathering of data and treatment of data.

Among the four non-science disciplines studied by Peacock (2011), language and linguistics showed the shortest and simplest methods sections. Despite its brevity, it encompasses a detailed explanation of the research sub-ject/participants/respondents and a step-by-step description of method together with the research tools and materials and procedures - from gathering to analysis and interpretation of data. The research aims, hypothesis and limitations are also stated. Peacock (ibid) described the inclusion of these sections as a "discipline convention".

Evidently, a pattern is observed among the methodology sections of MAAL Theses: M1 [S1 (A-B-C-D) - S2] + M2 [S1] + M3 [S1]. First, an overview of the research design serves as the introductory paragraph where either a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed method is used. Second, the research environment explains where the data are col-lected or where the study is conducted. Third, the research participants/respondents/data are identified and described together with the sampling method (e.g. cluster, purposive, non-probability) used in gathering this

**Table 6**

*Rhetorical Moves in Research Methodology*

| Move 1: Describing data collection procedure/s | | | | | | | Move 2: Delineat-ing procedure/s for measuring variables | | | | | | Move 3: Elucidating data analysis procedure/s | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Step 1: Describing the sample | | Step 2: Recounting steps in data collection | Step 3: Justifying the data collection procedure/s | | Step 1: Presenting an Overview of the design | | Step 2: Explaining method/s of measuring variables | | Step 3: Justifying the method/s of measuring variables | | Step 1: Relating (or recounting) data analysis procedure/s | Step 2: Justifying the data analysis procedure/s | Step 3: Previewing results |
| A. Describing the location of the sample | B. Describing the size of the sample/ population | C. Describing the characteristics of the sample | D. Describing the sampling technique or criterion | | A. Highlighting advantages of using the sample | B. Showing representativity of the sample | | A. Specifying items in questionnaires /databases | B. Defining variable | C. Describing methods of measuring variables | A. Citing previous research method/s | B. Highlighting acceptability of the method/s | | | |
| T1-T22 | T1-T22 | T1-T22 except T10 and T18 | T1-T22 except T3 and T12 | T1-T22 | Only T7, T14 and T17, T22 | Only T1, T4, T18, T20 | T1-T22 | T18 | None | None | T4, T14 and T22 | None | T1-T22 | T1, T2, T4, T5, T15, T18, T20, T21 | None |



sample popula-tion/data. Fourth, the research instrument or tools indicate the materials utilized in gathering data. Lastly, the research procedure specifies how the data are gathered and treated. Gathering of data involves the explanation of how and what kinds of data are collected while the treatment of data specifies what is being done to the gathered data including sort-ing, tallying for frequency occurrences, converting to percentages, computing statistical data, constructing tables or charts, ranking, analyzing and interpreting. Since most if not all the researchers were under the tutelage of the author of a technical writing book used in the thesis writing course, the same steps have been employed in the Methodology section. In the same way, the Philippine Association for Graduate Education Region 7 (n.d.) provided guidelines in writing the thesis to the Higher Education Institution in the region as part of their project led by the late Dr. Saniel who was the former president of PAGE 7.

Few exceptions in Step 1 of Move 1 were identified where T10 and T18 exclude describing the characteristics of the sample, and where T3 and T12 exclude describing the sampling technique or criterion.

**Move 1: Describing data collection procedure/s**

S1A. Describing the location

**T2**: This study was conducted in **Cebu Institute of Technology (CIT), located in Norberto Bacalso Avenue, Cebu City along the Cebu South Express Hiway**.

Clearly, as observed in all MAAL theses, to establish where data are collected or where the research is conducted, de-scribing the location is prerequisite to describing the data. Rosal (2008) pointed that the description of research envi-ronment "is equally important for it complements the appropriateness of the site to the study" (p. 76). Most of the location described in the study occurred within the school context such as the one exemplified in T2 (i.e. CIT). How-ever, aside from the physical entity, describing the location may also mean the source where the data are retrieved such as the one indicated by T15 (i.e. TV stations Channels 3 and 47), from a Youtube website (T1), radio station (T8), brochure (T5),

S1B. Describing the size of the sample size/ population

**T3**: Approximately, **100 green advertisements** were collected and studied

Since the discipline does not require experimental method, unless of course the topic is on psycholinguistics which did not occur, most if not all data revolve around participants/respondents or printed materials such as essays, advertisements, brochures, or newspapers which are simply counted. Obviously, all writers specified the sample size/population of their study. Sampling, the process of choosing the participants, could either be probability or non-probability where the latter is preferred in the theses particularly for qualitative data. According to Rosal (2008), non-probability includes convenience/ haphazard (where individuals are available and willing), purposive/judgmental (where individuals fit criteria laid down by the researcher), and quota (where individuals are grouped and a quota from each group is set). Majority of the data indicate a combination of these samplings.

S2. Recounting Steps in Data Collection
**T12**: From each school, **essays of 200–250 words were collected from 150 students**. These essays were converted to digital text format by encoders. These texts then served as the corpus inputted into the corpus-analysis tool.

As the name suggests, recounting steps in data collection is simply enumerating the steps in gathering data which is evident in all MAAL theses. In a research textbook utilized by the writers under the MAAL program, gather-ing data is paired with the treatment of data under the research procedure section. This step allows not only the writers but the readers, especially the panel members, an overview on how the data will be collected and if such procedure is feasible. During proposal hearing, the research methodology is one of the most challenging sections to defend since its planning and implementation is vital in the desired outcome of the study. Transition phrases enumerating steps such as '*first, second,...; ...and then...; Consequently...*' are useful in achieving coherent paragraphs. Although Zhang & Wannaruk (2016) used Pho's (2008a in Zhand & Wannaruk, 2016) framework, they found the predominance of data collection procedures in their study which are quite similar to the present study. The results imply that the research procedure is very essential in writing the paper since the readers would tend to read the methods and learn from the articles whether the method could be replicable or not.

**Move 2: Delineating procedure/s for measuring variables**

S1. Presenting an overview of the design
**T4**: This study employed **mixed methods** research design with concurrent embedded strategy identified by the use of one data collection phase, during which both quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously (Creswell, 2009).

All theses (T1-T22) present the overview of their research design in the introductory paragraph of their meth-odology section. Most studies deal with a triangulation technique where the qualitative-quantitative method is applied. According to Rosal (2008), "a combination of textual impressions and generalizations would be more credible when backed up by numerical data; in the same way, purely numerical information would be rendered more understandable when supported/elaborated by textual analysis" (p.74).

**Move 3: Elucidating data analysis procedure/s**

S1. Recounting Data Analysis/Procedure
**T11**: After gathering the profiles of the students, the researcher identified the qualified participants who were included in this study. After the participants presented their verbal narrative, the researcher analyzed each of the narratives. The words, which were considered isolated linguistic mantra, were categorized according to their functions such as filler words, hedges and boosters. The occurrence of the isolated linguistic mantra were tallied and tabulated. The results were then subjected to a frequency distribution table.

As mentioned, research procedure in Rosal's (2008) research textbook comprises the gathering of data and treatment of data where the former details how the data are gathered while the latter enumerates what to do with the gathered data in order to answer the identified research problems. In Lim's (2006) framework, steps in data collection are placed in M1(S2) while steps in recounting data analysis are placed in M3(S1). Examples T11 and T12 show that data are subjected into tallying, coding, frequency count, tabulation, analyses then interpretation.

The steps identified in the treatment of data are aligned with the order of the specific sub-problems. Statistical treatment (e.g. ANOVA, SPSS, PP-MCC, Pearson Chi-square Test), software tools, and inter-raters/verifiers/ translators are dedicated in this section. Further, some theses also specify the end product of their in-vestigation such as instructional materials (e.g. T12), reinforcement material (e.g. T9), or guideline (e.g. T14). All theses used this step.

Data from the 22 MAAL theses revealed the application of the three rhetorical moves in describing their methodology section albeit different steps; however, M1 [S1 (A-B-C-D) - S2] + M2 [S1] + M3 [S1] is observed to be the prevalent pattern applied in these theses. Considering the same research textbook used in outlining this section, describing the research design (i.e. qualitative and quantitative method), environment, participant/ respondent, instru-ment/tool, and research procedure (i.e. gathering and treatment of data) is highly crucial in guiding the research study. Similarly, all articles applied M3 (S1) in which they relate their data analysis procedure/s. Majority have also specified the location and size of sample population though not thoroughly discussed. Evidently, the MAAL theses have not given importance in discussing the variables in their study. The findings showed how the researchers justify their decisions in choos-ing the appropriate data and procedure that aided them in answering their respective sub-problems. Their choices in the steps to follow depend on the concepts they want to emphasize. Evidently, the rhetorical moves of a methodology section are designed to describe in details the collection and treatment of data. The use of Move 3-Step 1 in all theses revealed the criti-cal manner of explaining the research procedure which is similar to Smagorinksy's (2008 in Cotos, Huffman and Link, 2017) observation on the explicit presentation of the procedures particularly in gathering and analyzing the data. Lim (2006) also pointed out that “while little has been written on teaching move structures, a first step to teaching them is to understand how communicative functions are linked to linguistic features’’.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, these are the conclusions of the study:

1. The research style preference of the MAAL theses is attributed to contributing factors: availability of data re-sources and practicability of the research topics. Also, the choice of theoretical frameworks varies depending on the goals of the researchers. It is also important to take note that however varied these frameworks are, the re-searchers are geared toward exploring and enriching the literature of the local language (Cebuano). In terms of the research design, the researches reflect a tendency to look for patterns rather than hypotheses. The research design is descriptive, exploratory, and discovery oriented depending on the researchers’ purpose. The aim is to describe events, attitudes and sets of behavior in detail and depth.
2. The research introductions demonstrate organizational tendencies reflective of the rhetorical model constructed by Swales (1990) with minor variations and characteristics that come out in each steps. The identified organizational structure ensures that the intended ideas shared can help readers’ understanding of new knowledge.
3. The research methods employed by the researchers are attributed to the fact that most if not all researchers were under the same tutelage of a technical writing author who conceptualize the program in the DCLL. Consequently, the researchers used the same source as their guide in organizing their research methodology. Moreover, the lim-ited number of experts in the field is also a contributing factor to the move cyclicity evident in the research methods.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following are recommended:

1. Master’s thesis writers should try to use theories developed by Filipino researchers if possible and contribute to the theory-building.
2. The department could provide an updated index of master’s theses (every time there are new MAAL graduates who submit the hardbound copies of their theses).
3. Swales’ (1990) CARS Model should be introduced not only to MAAL students while writing their final paper and theses, but also to undergraduate students who are writing their theses. Further, other updated models may be ex-plored.
4. Since the rhetorical moves in the introduction section i.e. M1(S1A) – M2(S1B) – M3(S1A) and methodology section i.e. M1 [S1 (A-B-C-D) - S2] + M2 [S1] + M3 [S1] prove prevalent in MAAL Theses, these patterns can be employed or enhanced by writers who are about to write or are in the process of writing their research manu-script. Such patterns are likewise useful for revising their manuscripts to fit journal requirements for publication.

Proposed Moves in writing the Introduction of the Master’s Thesis

Move 1: Establishing a Territory [the situation] (Step 1A: Claiming Centrality)

Move 2: Establishing a Niche (the problem) (Step 1B: Indicating a gap)
Move 3: Occupying the Niche (the solution) (Step 1A: Outlining purpose)

Proposed Moves in Writing the Methodology Section of the Master’s Thesis

Move 1: Describing data collection procedure/s
Step 1 A: Describing the location of the sample
B: Describing the size of the sample/population
C: Describing the characteristics of the sample
D. Describing the sampling technique or criterion

Move 2: Delineating procedure/s for measuring variables
Step 1: Presenting an overview of the design

Move 3: Elucidating data analysis procedure/s
Step 1: Relating (or recounting) data analysis procedure/s



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